People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret

Faculty of Letters and Arts

Department of English

Investigating the Incorporation of Emojis in Online Formal Communication

A Case study of First year EFL Students-Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master's Degree in Linguistics

Candidates: **Supervisor:**

Miss. Abir Abdelhadi   **Dr**. Khaled Belarbi

Miss. Fatima Zahra Bellag

Board of Examiners

President	Prof. Ammar Benabed	Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret
Supervisor	Dr. Khaled Belarbi	Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret
Examiner	Dr. Mostafa Toubida	Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret

Academic Year   2023-2024

Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

"My mother and my father for their patience and sacrifice"

"My sisters and brothers for their love and support"

"To all my teachers and my friends"

To my deceased brother 'Benamar Abdelhadi'

may Allah bless him and grant him paradise.

✍

A. Abdelhadi

I dedicate this work to:

"My loving family whose heartfelt support have been the driving force behind my academic journey."

"My parents for instilling in me the passion of learning."

"My siblings Souad, Mohamed and Ahmed for their unconditional love, care and endless encouragement."

"All my friends"

✍

F.Z. Bellag

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Emojis serve as pivotal tools in shaping online discourse, facilitating expression, and enhancing engagement. Understanding their role within specific formal academic contexts is essential for effective communication practices. In this regard, the research at hand investigates the incorporation of emojis in online formal communication, focusing on first-year students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret within the Algerian context. With limited research on this topic in Algeria, this research work aims to explore different aspects of emoji usage and interpretation among students, along with their significance in online formal communication between students and their teachers. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data is gathered through a questionnaire administered to a one hundred and two (102) students and semi-structured interviews conducted with eight (08) lecturers. The findings reveal a notable gender discrepancy in emoji usage, with female students displaying a proclivity for frequent utilization, whereas lecturers tend to prioritize maintaining professionalism and clarity by refraining from emoji incorporation. This in fact highlights the need for further research to refine communication strategies and bridge gaps between educators and students.

Keywords: Emojis, online communication, Algerian context, professionalism, formality.

List of Figures	Pages

List of Tables	Pages

| Table of Contents | Pages |

General Introduction

Recently, the rapid use of online communication platforms, especially among younger demographics, has been remarkable. Within this context, emojis play a pivotal role in shaping the nuances of online communication, facilitating expression, and enhancing engagement. In other words, Emojis as ubiquitous tools for conveying emotions, attitudes, and ideas, have become an integral part of online conversations, transcending linguistic barriers. However, while emojis serve as tools for enhancing communication, their interpretation and usage can vary significantly across different cultural and social contexts. To state it differently, there remains a gap in understanding the use, interpretation, and the impact of emojis within specific cultural and linguistic communities, such as Algeria. In other words, the specific ways in which emojis are utilized and interpreted within the Algerian online communication landscape remain relatively underexplored. Existing research on emojis predominantly originates from Western contexts, overlooking the socio-cultural intricacies that influence emoji usage patterns in Algeria. This gap in the literature underscores the need for a localized investigation of emojis usage among Algerian individuals, particularly within the context of online communication among university students and their teachers.

By addressing this gap in research, the present study seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of emojis usage, interpretations, role, and impact within the Algerian context, with a specific focus on the communication practices of higher education learners in digital/online spaces.

1. Research Motivations

The motivation behind this research stems from the observation of the evolving nature of online communication practices among higher education learners and their instructors. With the increasing reliance on digital platforms for interpersonal interactions, investigating how emojis are utilized and perceived in this context becomes imperative.

2. Research Aims

The primary aim of this study is twofold: first, to explore the usage and interpretation of emojis among first-year students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret in the Algerian online communication landscape. Second, to examine the role and impact of emojis on formal communication between Algerian learners and teachers in online settings.

3. Research Significance

This research holds significance in contributing to both academic scholarship and practical applications. Academically, it expands the understanding of the role of emojis in cross-cultural communication and sheds light on the specific issues shaping emoji usage in Algeria. Practically, the findings can inform educators, policymakers, and digital platform developers on optimizing online communication tools to better suit formal contexts.

4. Research Questions

To achieve the aims of the present research, three research questions are addressed:

1. To what extent do Algerian learners differ in their use, preferences, and interpretation of emojis in online formal communication?

2. What role do emojis play in online formal communication between teachers and learners?

3. How do Algerian higher education teachers perceive the integration of emojis into online formal communication platforms?

6. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are set as anticipated answers to the previously addressed research wh-questions:

1. There may be significant variations in emoji usage, preferences, and interpretation among Algerian learners based on various factors such as age and gender.

2. Emojis may enhance clarity and understanding in informal online communication but may lead to ambiguity or misinterpretation in formal contexts.

3. Algerian higher education teachers may perceive the integration of emojis into formal communication channels as a means of enhancing expressiveness and fostering interpersonal connection.

7. Research Methodology

This research attempts to employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. A questionnaire is distributed to gather data on emoji usage patterns, preferences, and interpretations among one hundred and two (102) first-year students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. Additionally, a semi-structured interview is conducted with eight (08) lecturers in the same research setting to identify prevalent themes and contexts of emoji usage, thereby shedding light on their role and impact on online communication.

8. Research Structure

The research is structured into three distinct chapters, each providing a unique perspective on the topic being studied. Beginning with a general introduction and concluding with a general conclusion, the study at hand navigates through various aspects of this evolving field. The first chapter delves into specific aspects of digital communication within educational settings, offering insights into its role and implications. Following this, the second chapter focuses on emojis as a new form of language in the digital realm, examining their significance and impact. Finally, the third chapter delves into the methodological framework of the study, elucidating the approach, data collection tools, and findings. Through this structured approach, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of digital communication dynamics and emojis integration, while adhering to the guidelines of the 6th edition APA style.

Chapter One: Digital Communication in Educational Settings

Introduction

Conclusion

Introduction

In the context of education, effective communication serves as the cornerstone for successful teaching and learning experiences. As classrooms integrate digital technologies and adapt to new instructional methods, comprehending the intricacies of human communication becomes increasingly vital. This chapter delves into the complex dynamics of human communication and digital interaction within educational environments, emphasizing the significance of effective communication in learning environments and fostering student achievement. From verbal exchanges to nonverbal cues, communication nuances shape interactions between educators and learners, significantly influencing engagement and comprehension. Educators must adeptly navigate diverse communication models and digital platforms to cultivate inclusive learning environments. Through mastery of digital communication skills and strategic use of technology to facilitate meaningful dialogue, educators can elevate student engagement and propel academic success. In this respect, this chapter unveils the multifaceted nature of communication in educational settings, highlighting its pivotal role in shaping the future of learning.

I.1. Human Communication Definitions

Communication, originating from the Latin term communicare, denotes the act of sharing thoughts, hopes, and knowledge, aiming to establish common understanding (Cambridge dictionary, 2020). As articulated by De Jong et al. (2013, p. 894), communication is described as "the process of creating or sharing meaning," embodying a reciprocal exchange where participants share information and collectively interpret words and concepts (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). Defining communication is intricate, encompassing all forms of conveying thoughts or emotions between individuals. It involves the effective and appropriate sharing of ideas and sentiments among communicators, influenced by their relational dynamics (Wood, 2010). To comprehend the essence and role of speech, it is imperative to scrutinize the broader process of communication, of which speech serves as an expression. Put it simply, within the scope of this study, communication pertains to the exchange of thoughts, information, and opinions among teachers and learners, as well as among learners themselves, within a classroom setting.

Tubbs and Moss (2008) define human communication as the sharing of experiences, that is an essential activity shared by most living organisms. They explain that it entails making sense of communicated information and exchanging thoughts among individuals. In addition, they emphasize that human communication is a vital skill, enabling the creation of symbols to share experiences and knowledge, fostering mutual understanding. According to them, it is suggested that as our understanding of others' minds grows, we become better equipped to discern specific intentions in various situations.

Communication, as elucidated by Tubbs and Moss (2008), is intimately connected with one's self-definition. Individuals form a sense of identity and worth through comparison with others. Feedback from others and the attention garnered during communication contribute to self-identity. Thus, human communication is understood as the "process of creating meaning between two or more people" (2008:8). In essence, effective communication can enhance interaction and achieve clarity when individuals select appropriate words, organize their messages in advance, and articulate them precisely. The sensory organs serve as channels for oral communication, with individuals primarily relying on hearing, touch, and sight. Generally speaking, "the more channels utilized, the greater the number of communicative stimuli transmitted" (Tubbs & Moss, 2008:12).

Psychologists and sociologists analyze communication, focusing on the effectiveness and precision of encoding and decoding messages (Mentoor, 2015, Pereira, 2019). They also explore how the actions of one person can impact the behavior or mindset of another. Consequently, individuals engaged in conversation must understand each other's communication mediums to provide feedback effectively. This exchange of messages and their associated meanings has been conceptualized by Fiske (2010) into a communication triangle, as illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Figure I. 1. Fiske Model of communication: Messages and Meanings

As explained by Tubbs and Moss (2008), the communication process consists of the following core elements as follows:

a. Communicator 1: Sender/Receiver 1
b. Communicator 2: Sender/Receiver 2
c. Feedback
d. Time

Communicator 1 is the sender of a message in a communication exchange, while *Communicator 2* acts as both sender and receiver simultaneously. Various factors such as knowledge, emotions, and attitudes influence the message transmitted by *Communicator 1,* which can be intentional or unintentional and conveyed verbally or nonverbally. Interference during the communication process, either technical or semantic, can distort the intended message. *Communicator 2*, traditionally the receiver, decodes the message and provides feedback, crucial for relationship development. *Feedback,* described as the return of behavior generated, reinforces or extinguishes behaviour, and is vital for relationship growth. *Time* is a critical element in the communication process, affecting message delivery and relationship dynamics over multiple cycles. Tubbs and Moss (2008) emphasize that each communication process is unique, learner -lecturer communication is not an exception.

I.2. Types of Human Communication

Effective communication involves both verbal and nonverbal elements, each playing a vital role in facilitating meaningful interaction between learners and instructors. This research emphasizes the importance of understanding these intertwined aspects.

I.2.1. Verbal Communication

Verbal communication involves conveying encoded meanings through spoken or written words, extending beyond literal interpretation as recipients grasp the intended sense. In other terms, it can be transmitted orally or in writing, with oral communication being dynamic and psychologically engaging, while written communication tends to be more logical and organized. The functions of language in verbal communication encompass intrapersonal communication, socialization, and exerting control in various situations (Fer, 2018).

Spoken communication allows for immediate feedback and clarification through tone, volume, and pacing. For instance, a sarcastic remark delivered in a monotone voice can be easily misinterpreted compared to one delivered with a playful inflection. Written communication offers permanence and allows for precise wording. Emails, reports, and letters provide a record of the message and enable the reader to revisit it at their own pace. However, it can lack the richness of nonverbal cues, making it more susceptible to misinterpretation. Oral communication can take on direct or indirect forms, with direct communication being straightforward and revealing true intentions, while indirect communication may appear submissive and ambiguous. Intentional oral communication involves speaking with awareness of the message's aim and its impact on others, playing a significant role in language acquisition and expressive language development (Mentoor, 2015).

In teaching and learning contexts, verbal communication is foundational, facilitating interaction and understanding among individuals in classrooms. It involves asking questions, sharing thoughts, and engaging in instructional tasks to verify comprehension. In this light, some studies put a great emphasis on strategies to help students improve their verbal communication skills and speech etiquette (Abdikarimova et al, 2021).

.

I.2.2. Non-Verbal Communication

Nonverbal communication encompasses gestures, facial expressions, silence, and accentuating or emphasizing verbal messages. It includes various cues like tone, speed, and body language, significantly contributing to everyday interactions. Nonverbal cues complement verbal communication, playing a crucial role in interpreting individuals' messages and generating a community of care and commitment (Wilson et al, 2020).

Hickson and Stacks (1992) defined nonverbal communication as intentional or unintentional behaviour influenced by prescribed actions and expectations beyond words. This includes facial expressions, body movements, attire, grooming, and other bodily signals. Nonverbal communication can be powerful, conveying emotions and attitudes that words may inadequately convey. Therefore, effective communication requires refinement to foster meaningful human interaction. Nonverbal cues such as eye contact, smiles, and gestures play a pivotal role in enriching communication and ensuring its effectiveness. Without conveying meaning, communication falls short of achieving its communicative goals (Knapp & Hall, 2007).

In summary, communication can sometimes be ambiguous, leading to misunderstandings or even conflicts. For example, human affection is frequently conveyed through physical gestures like hugging, touching, and eye contact, each carrying nuanced meanings (Forsell and Åstrom, 2012). However, the appropriateness of these gestures varies, and obtaining consent is crucial to prevent misunderstandings or discomfort, especially in adult relationships (Anyadike-Danes et al., 2024), including formal relationships such as learner and teacher interactions. Despite its significance, nonverbal communication is often overlooked in formal educational settings, revealing a gap in educational communication practices.

I.3. Classroom Communication

Classroom communication occurs when teachers and students engage in dialogue during class, playing a vital role in learning when information is conveyed in a way that everyone can understand (Hamm, 2006), and when both sides actively pay attention and respond (Malimabe,

1997). To fully elaborate this, it can be said that communication is key for learning, not just about classroom stuff, but also about how we see the world and each other. When teachers understand how students talk and listen, they can help them better (De Vito, 2009), especially in classrooms with different cultures and languages.

Understanding how communication works in the classroom is critical, and on this basis, next section is dedicated to two different models of classroom communication and their impact on learning a second language.

I.4. Classroom Communication Models

Classroom communication models are like guidelines for how to talk between teacher and learner, or between learners themselves. Being able to talk well in class is crucial for a teacher (Malimabe, 1997). As already stated, speaking and listening carefully are key to good classroom communication. Teachers need to understand how their students use language, figuring out how to deal with any problems in communication during class. Consistently, in today's diverse classrooms, it is crucial for teachers to recognize the significance of effective communication, as demonstrated by the following models including Vreken's classroom communication model and the western cultural model that clearly show the major role of oral communication in language teaching and learning.

I.4.1. Vreken's Classroom Communication Model

Classroom communication models serve as structured frameworks for conveying messages between teachers and learners or among learners themselves (Mentoor, 2015). Vreken's model (1996) is an interactive model that involves both teachers and learners in the communication process, emphasizing the intricate nature of classroom communication and highlighting seven key facets crucial for effective teaching and learning. These facets illustrated in Figure 2 below include:
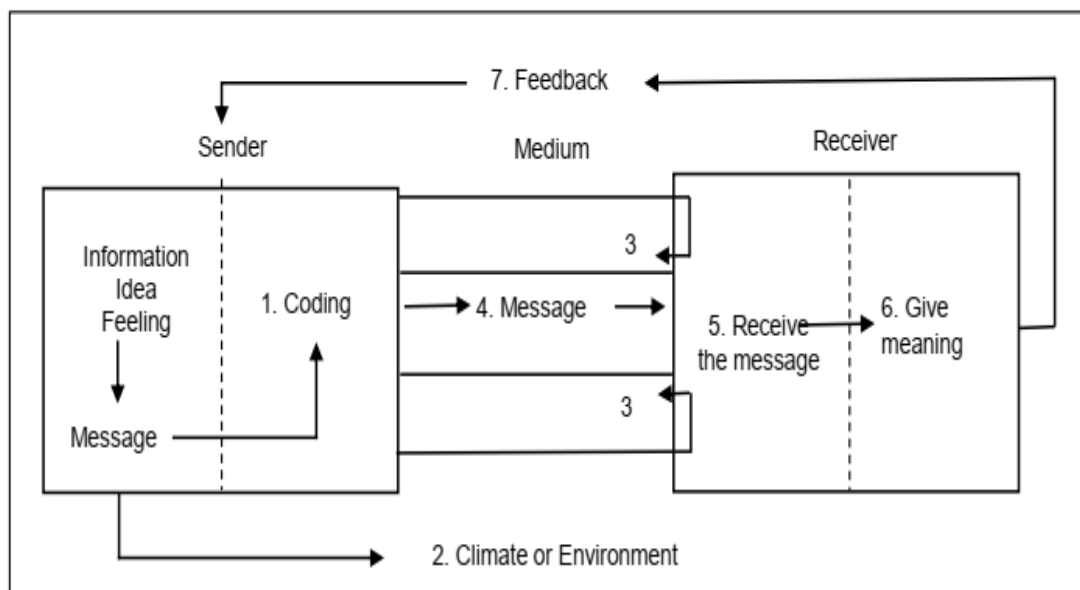
Figure I. 2. Vreken's classroom communication model (1998).

a. **Coding of a message:** Teachers prepare clear messages, crucial for teaching, especially for second language learners.

b. **Climate:** Creating a positive learning environment is vital for effective teaching, promoting student participation and trust.

c. **Message:** Teachers must deliver clear messages, ensuring students are ready to receive them in a friendly environment.

d. **Message Decoding:** Messages should be clear and structured, especially for second language learners.

e. **Message Reception:** Students receive messages through their senses, impacting their response and understanding.

f. **Conveying Meaning:** Students interpret and give meaning to messages, facilitated by teachers through questioning.

g. **Feedback:** Feedback from both teachers and students is crucial for learning, aiding in adjustment and evaluation.

I.4.2. Western Cultural Communication Model of Second Language Learning

The Western cultural communication model of second language learning focuses on active, learner-centered approaches to teaching, highlighting communication skills development. It

shows the importance of teachers being aware of cultural influences and learners' anxiety in language classrooms (Woodrow, 2006). According to the model (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998 cited in, and explained by Mentoor, 2015), five key aspects should be considered:

a. **Learner-centered teaching**: this approach, based on constructivism, involves active learning where learners construct their knowledge with guidance from the teacher.

b. **Problem-based learning** involves engaging learners with real-world problems to enhance critical thinking and motivation, encouraging cooperative learning and decision-making.

c. **Development of Communication Skills**: Learners should engage in various communication activities such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing to acquire communicative competence. Teachers should adapt materials and activities to keep learners interested and provide individual support to enhance communication skills.

d. **Interaction between Teacher-Learner and Learner-Learne**r: Effective teaching and learning require interaction between teachers and learners, as well as among learners themselves. Classroom interaction is crucial for constructing knowledge and creating effective learning environments.

e. **Function or Use of Message:** Language teachers aim to equip learners with tools to be effective communicators. The manner in which a message is conveyed is essential, and teachers can use visual aids to enhance understanding and correct misunderstandings.

Overall, the above models clarify the importance of effective communication and cooperation in the language learning process, particularly in EFL classroom settings.

I.5. Dynamic Classroom Communication Aspects

Communication is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, playing a pivotal role in various contexts and aspects including interpersonal communication, small-group communication, intercultural communication, public communication, organizational communication, and intrapersonal communication.

I.5.1. Interpersonal Communication: It is described by De Vito (2009) as the exchange of a message between two or more individuals. Tubbs and Moss (2008) note that classroom interactions exemplify interpersonal communication, shaping educational experiences and impacting learners' attitudes and behaviors.

I.5.2. Small-group Communication: according to Tubbs (1998), it involves the exchange of messages among three or more individuals with the aim of influencing one another. This mode of communication facilitates idea exchange, problem-solving, and decision-making within groups (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). In educational settings, group discussions encourage participation and build confidence among learners (Mutonen et al., 2008). Additionally, small-group work fosters learners' autonomy and organizatinal skills (De Vito, 2009), providing opportunities for intercultural learning.

I.5.3. Intercultural Communication: Intercultural communication, for Tubbs and Moss (2008), involves interactions among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Teachers must navigate cultural dynamics in the classroom to promote inclusive communication (Monyai, 2010). By acknowledging cultural diversity, educators can enhance classroom interactions and language acquisition.

I.5.4. Public Communication: defined by Tubbs and Moss (2008), encompasses formal speeches, debates, and presentations in public settings. Unlike informal communication, public speaking demands preparation and organization offering learners opportunities to express themselves confidently in front of an audience (Chenaksara, 2005). In educational contexts, it is essential for teachers to equip learners with public speaking skills.

I.5.5. Organizational Communication: Organizational communication, as described by Goldhaber (1990), involves message exchange within educational institutions' interconnected relationships. It plays a crucial role in achieving curriculum outcomes and educational goals (Erasmus-Kritzinger et al., 2008), facilitating collective oral communication among learners in a supportive environment.

I.5.6. Intrapersonal Communication: involves self-talk and internal reflection, shaping individuals' self-concept, perceptions, and expectations (Jemmer, 2009). This communication form is integral to self-evaluation and language proficiency development among learners.

Understanding and leveraging these aspects of communication are essential for educators and learners alike in navigating educational environments, fostering meaningful interactions, and facilitating effective teaching and learning experiences.

I.6. Teacher-Student Communication in Digital Learning

The digital age has significantly impacted communication, especially among young learners growing up in a world saturated with digital technologies. Today's youth are often labeled as "digital natives," representing a generation profoundly shaped by digital technologies. This necessitates a reevaluation of educational approaches to effectively meet their learning needs (Prensky, 2001). In other words, digital tools have become integral aspects of learners' lives, significantly influencing their educational experiences. This generation, known as the Net Generation, no longer aligns with the educational system designed for previous generations, prompting calls for educational reform. Marilee Sprenger (2010) presents a compelling argument that today's students possess intelligence and talent, with a mission in both school and life that differs from that of their predecessors. In line with this perspective, student-instructor communication is seen as beneficial, offering interactive digital environments (Roddy et al., 2017).

As classrooms evolve to support the interface between digital technologies as educational and social tools, particularly after COVID-19, which accelerated the adoption of online learning processes (Daubney & Fautley, 2020; Alanzi, 2023), it is essential to understand how engaging with digital tools shapes the social interactions of today's learners. For example, student-instructor communication in online and blended learning environments is considered crucial for enhancing student engagement and satisfaction (Gray & DiLoreto, 2016). Similarly, inclusive interactive learning environments that prioritize communication between teachers and students have been shown to benefit students (Roldán et al., 2021) by providing automatic feedback in online learning environments that can also facilitate communication between instructors and students. Additionally, the impact of artificial intelligence on learner-instructor interaction in online learning environments underscores the importance of communication for facilitating

questions and answers related to course topics (Seo et al., 2021). Overall, creating a positive and inclusive classroom climate through effective communication between instructors and students is essential for promoting academic excellence and student success.

I.6.1. Digital Classroom

Digital classrooms, as defined by the utilization of electronic devices or platforms such as social media, multimedia, and mobile phones for teaching students, have reshaped today's educational landscape, fostering improvements (Oliver, 2005). Digital learning, characterized by the integration of technology to deliver the entire curriculum swiftly and effectively, is a prominent instructional strategy (Pacheco, Lips, Yoong, 2018). Emphasizing teaching through technology, digital classrooms rely on students' use of technological devices like laptops, tablets, and Chromebooks, with course materials predominantly delivered online through engaging and interactive platforms, rather than traditional note-taking methods (Turgut & Aslan, 2021). Despite education being inherently communicative, the internet's emergence has introduced new communication channels, expanding options for disseminating and accessing educational content. As shown by Haleem et al. (2022), various components of digital classrooms are depicted in Figure 3:
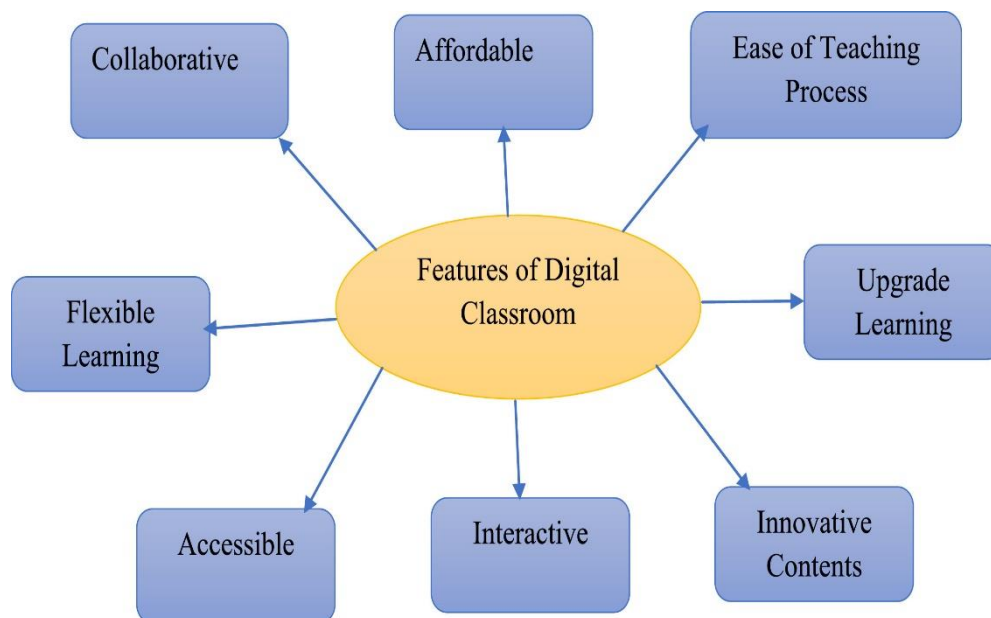
Figure 1.3. Features of Digital Classroom

I.6.2. Digital Communication

Digital communication refers to the exchange of information through digital devices and platforms. Clear enough, it has become increasingly prevalent in modern society due to the widespread adoption of digital technologies such as computers, smartphones, and the Internet Sitnik-Warchulska. Et al., 2023). It encompasses various forms of communication facilitated by technology, including but not limited to text messages, emails, social media interactions, video calls, and instant messaging. Unlike traditional forms of communication, which rely on physical mediums such as paper or face-to-face interactions, digital communication relies on electronic devices and networks to transmit information (Nguyen, 2023).

Digital communication, often understood as computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Herring, 2005), offers advantages such as real-time communication, global reach, and multi-media capabilities, but it also presents challenges related to privacy, security, and information overload (Szombathelyi, et al, 2015). Understanding the real-time nature of online communications is crucial. For instance, social media platforms have played a pivotal role in reshaping communication norms by integrating various multimedia elements into personalized and inter-connected formats, and therefore revolutionizing the dissemination of information and communication styles (Fenton & Helleu, 2018). Media tools involve more social interaction, such as talking on the phone or having video chats. During the COVID-19 pandemic, using digital communication helps people feel more connected, but how they use it and how different people respond can change how helpful it is (Haryanti & Rusfian, 2018).

I.6.3 Communication in Online Learning Spaces

Overall, as already mentioned, individuals commonly utilize Internet, mobile phones, and many other digital gadgets for interpersonal communication and social interaction. Moreover, Communication in online learning spaces plays a crucial role in facilitating effective interaction between students and educators. Digital platforms like Google Classroom and Canvas, social media giants like Facebook, and dedicated communication platforms such as Zoom, Whatsapp, and Microsoft Teams have become essential for professional and educational interactions, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. These tools facilitated the adaptation of higher education institutions to government restrictions, ensuring continuity of educational activities and enabling students to engage in discussions, ask questions, and receive feedback from instructors, creating an interactive learning environment (Li et al., 2023).

Online communication also enables collaboration among peers, allowing for the exchange of ideas and perspectives regardless of geographical location. Moreover, online learning spaces foster inclusivity by providing opportunities for students with diverse backgrounds and learning styles to participate actively (Xia at al., 2022; (Ling & Elgort, 2024). Contemporary students view online communication as a pathway to success, emphasizing the need for inclusive design considering factors such as health issues, accessibility, and language limitations (Sitnik-Warchulska et al.,2023). While online communication presents opportunities for skill enhancement, community formation, and relationship maintenance, it also introduces challenges. As a result, further research is essential to comprehend the impact of effective communication in these spaces with clear guidelines.

I.7. Effective Digital Communication Skills

Skills needed in the twenty-first (21st) century encompass a group of skills, including creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, leadership, information literacy, and numerous others (Binkley et al., 2012).Good communication skills are essential for successful teaching and learning. Teachers' effective communication not only helps in delivering learning content but also shapes students' understanding. Teachers should possess strong speaking and writing abilities to deliver lessons effectively and should also grasp students' verbal communication to assist them in improving. Verbal communication encompasses vocabulary, word choice, and logical structuring (Abdikarimova et al., 2021).

Similarly, Mike Ribble's book "Digital Citizenship in Schools" (2015) underscores nine fundamental principles aimed at equipping students for responsible technology use. In alignment with the focus of this research on digital (virtual) communication, these principles guide students in navigating cyber information exchange and encourage thoughtful deliberation on what and how to communicate, recognizing that information remains in cyberspace even after deletion.

In the context of digital communication for education and learning, it is imperative to master interpersonal communication principles. This entails active listening, clear expression, respectful etiquette, and constructive feedback, alongside conflict resolution skills. Additionally, this focuses on fostering inclusive workplaces, leveraging digital tools for education means engaging with e-learning platforms, collaborative tools, online resources, video conferencing, and

discussion forums. Moreover, implementing strategies such as setting clear goals, organizing tasks efficiently, fostering connections, adapting to diverse contexts, and reflecting on outcomes is essential for success. By adhering to best practices like clarity, conciseness, courtesy, constructive engagement, and collaboration, individuals can optimize their use of digital communication for effective learning experiences (Interpersonal Communication, Oct 17, 2023)

Conclusion

In conclusion, effective communication is fundamental for successful teaching and learning experiences in today's educational landscape. This chapter emphasized the importance of understanding human communication dynamics, especially in digital learning environments. By exploring various models, tools, and skills, it provided insights into optimizing communication practices for educational excellence. From verbal to nonverbal cues, communication issues shape interactions between educators and learners, influencing engagement and comprehension. Mastering digital communication skills can significantly enhance student engagement and academic success. As we move forward, the next chapter explores an innovative aspect of communication which is the use of emojis.

Chapter Two: Emojis: A New Language of Digital Communication

Introduction

II.1. Defining Fundamental Concepts

    II.1.1. Emoji

    II.1.2. Emoticon

II.2. Evolution and Popularization of Emojis

II.3. Emojis: A New Language Across Different Contexts

    II.3.1. Emojis and Linguistic Features

    II.3.2. Emojis, Meaning and Culture

II.4. Emojis on Social Media Platforms and Artificial Intelligence Chatbots

II.5. Gender and Use of Emojis

II.6. Emojis Incorporation in Formal Communication

Conclusion

Introduction

Emojis have become essential in modern communication, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps to convey emotions, ideas, and sentiments in digital interactions. This chapter delves into fundamental concepts such as emojis and emoticons, clarifying their definitions and differences. Additionally, it covers the evolution and widespread adoption of emojis as a universal new language across various contexts, examining the question of linguistic features and the impact of culture, as well as other factors, on their interpretation. The chapter also explores their integration into social media platforms and artificial intelligence chatbots, along with their implications for gender differences. Through an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of emojis and their role in formal communication, this chapter aims to offer insights into the evolving landscape of emojis.

II.1. Defining Fundamental Concepts

In modern online communication, people use emoticons and emojis to express emotions since texts alone may not always convey feelings. Therefore, it is important to understand the difference between these two terms because they are often mixed up.

II.1.1. Emoji

Emoji, also called emoji or emojis for short, are pictures used in digital messages. They are widely used and can be found in almost half of all Instagram posts, as reported by Facebook in March 2015. Originating in Japan with the rise of smartphones, the word "emoji" comes from two Japanese words: 'picture' and 'character.' Unlike emoticons, one cannot type emoji directly from his/her own keyboard; instead, they can be selected from a menu of options. Emojis are like emoticons in expressing emotions, but they include a variety of images like animals, objects, and symbols. This makes emoji a modern replacement for emoticons. Examples of emoji include 😅, 🚗, 🐣, 💍, and 🌸 (Macourková, 2022).

II.1.2. Emoticon

Emoticons, or emoticons in plural, primarily consist of characters representing facial expressions. They are considered as predecessor to emoji but have since been adapted to incorporate Unicode characters[1]. Comprising punctuation marks, letters, or numbers commonly found on keyboards, emoticons serve as a means to convey the writer's mood, attitude, or emotions in digital communication. These symbols inject a sense of drama into written text. Notably, the most iconic emoticons include faces, such as :-) and :-(, which were first introduced in 1982. Occasionally, when individuals type these symbols, they are automatically converted into visually enhanced forms, such as 🙂 (Miller, 2018)
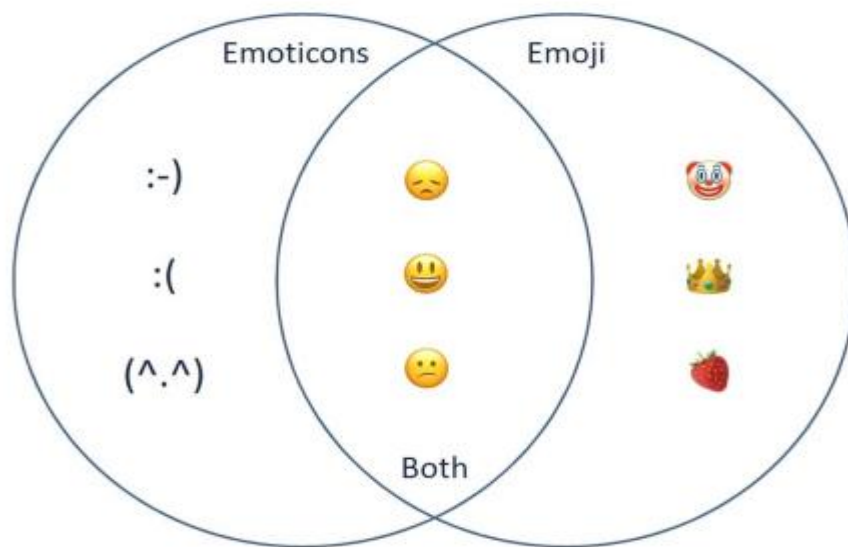
Figure II.1. Difference between Emojis and Emoticon (from Macourková, 2022)

II.2. Evolution and Popularization of Emojis

Emoji originated in Japan in the late 1990s but only became part of the Unicode Standard in 2009. Since then, they have become hugely popular, with nearly half of Instagram posts including emoji (Miller, 2018).

For further details, Macourková, (2022) expands on, the emoji story begins in 1999 when Japanese designer Shigetaka Kurita created 176 symbols for NTT Docomo's I-mode, a mobile internet platform. Initially designed for small-screen phones, these icons aimed to simplify conveying information. They gained popularity after Apple included them on the

---

[1] Unicode is a widely used method of encoding characters, like punctuation marks and symbols, with unique numbers (Macourková, 2022)

iPhone, but this caused issues as different phone companies had their own emoji sets. However, emojis proved effective in bridging cultural gaps by expressing emotions hard to describe with words.

Figure II.2. First emoji list created by Shigetaka Kurita (from Emoji: The Complete History)

Emojis, as small digital images or icons conveying ideas, emotions, or objects, are extensively utilized across various social media platforms (Chen et al, 2018). According to Rong et al. (2022), an analysis of over 68 million tweets reveals that nearly one in five tweets (19.04%) includes at least one emoji. Additionally, data from Facebook indicates that Messenger users send an average of 5 billion emojis daily. Furthermore, emojis significantly enhance engagement on Instagram, with posts featuring emojis experiencing a 48% increase in interaction compared to those without emojis. Specifically, emoji-laden posts have an interaction rate of 2.21%, while posts devoid of emojis garner only 1.77% interaction.

To standardize the use of emojis and improve effective communication, guidelines have been proposed for incorporating emojis into commit messages. For instance, the rocket emoji

signifies deployment according to the established guideline. Emojis serve not only to convey meanings based on their appearance but also to express context-dependent meanings. For example, in the phrase "wow you are fast," the rocket emoji may imply a sentiment, whereas in "Think we are done, let us deploy," its usage adheres to the meaning outlined in the guideline (Git, 2024).

Given the widespread use of emojis as shown previously, researchers have recently begun exploring emoji usage in software development tasks. Lu et al. (2018) for example observed an increasing trend of emoji usage on GitHub and identified sentimental usage (e.g., expressing emotions, reinforcing an emotion, etc.) as the primary purpose of using emojis in issues, pull requests, and comments. For instance, "Thank you for reviewing my code" employs emojis to convey gratitude. Besides, non-sentimental intentions exist when using emojis, such as drawing attention or replacing a phrase. For instance, "Please review the contributing guidelines before creating and pushing any content" uses emojis to attract attention. Additionally, researchers have initiated investigations into techniques for sentiment analysis of emojis in the context of software engineering (SE) tasks, assessing the sentimental polarity (positive, negative, neutral).

In line with this research direction, our investigation seeks to bridge the knowledge gap by examining the usage of emojis within the Algerian scope, encompassing both its usage and interpretation in formal online communication in educational context.

II.3. Emojis: A New Language Across Different Contexts

Emojis are prevalent in contemporary communication (Bai et al, 2019). Individuals frequently utilize symbols like thumbs-up to signify agreement, a sad-smile face to express dissatisfaction with a dirty public restroom, and rows of fire emoji to convey excitement for an upcoming event in text messages. The success of emojis lies in their distinct semantic and emotional associations, enabling straightforward, uncomplicated, and impactful communication (Miller et al, 2016).

As our society becomes more digitalized and interconnected, the importance of emojis is widely recognized. They span various fields such as marketing, forensics, education, and healthcare (Lotfinejad et al., 2020). To fully elaborate, for example the ability of emojis to represent the Earth's tree of life, it is found that the 'Animals & Nature' section of Emojipedia contains 214 icons, with 150 representing identifiable extant organisms like animals, plants, fungi, or microorganisms. While vertebrates dominate the animal emojis, accounting for 76% of taxa, arthropods, the most biodiverse group, are underrepresented, comprising only 16%. Other groups such as mollusks, cnidarians, and annelids are also sparsely represented. Certain species-rich animal phyla like platyhelminthes and nematodes have no emoji representation. There is a notable taxonomic bias, with vertebrates being overrepresented and arthropods being underrepresented compared to their actual diversity (Mammola et al., 2023).

Linguists argue that language serves multiple purposes, with emojis reintegrating non-verbal information into digital text. Emoticons serve more than just decorative purposes; they can convey meaning through a string of characters, akin to a language requiring its own grammar. Grammar structures sentences, providing rules to ensure coherence and meaning. Each grammatical unit, such as verbs and nouns, contributes to the overall significance of a sentence, allowing for flexibility in sentence construction. Even when emojis are used independently, they adhere to basic rules as they possess inherent meanings (Macourková, 2022).

II.3.1. Emojis and Linguistic Features

Emojis are everywhere in our digital conversations, helping us express feelings and jokes. They are more than just cute icons; they shape how we talk online. Emojis add fun and meaning to messages, making communication easier and more colorful. re like a new language, changing how we express ourselves in the digital world. But are emojis like language in their different features?

Emojis, like ancient pictographic writing systems such as Egyptian hieroglyphics or Chinese characters, hint at a return to these visual forms of communication. However, scholars like Dresner and Herring (2010) argue that emojis lack essential linguistic traits found in English, like letters. Therefore, they cannot be considered a language or a formal writing

system. Emojis do not follow strict grammar or rules; their usage evolves naturally. Despite this, some suggest that emojis have a linguistic basis, similar to logographs, representing words or concepts (Kavanagh, 2016).

II.3.2. Emojis, Meaning and Culture

In face-to-face (FtF) interactions, facial expressions play a crucial role in helping individuals understand others' emotional states and the emotional tone of verbal messages. Similarly, research on emoticons suggests that emojis may serve similar functions, influencing the perception of the sender's emotional state and enhancing the interpretation of emotional tone when congruent with verbal messages. However, inconsistencies arise in studies examining whether the valence of emojis outweighs the interpretation of verbal messages (Boutet et al, 2021).

There are various reasons why interpreting emojis can be unclear and inconsistent. Many emojis seem to prioritize aesthetics, often resulting in inaccurate depictions of real facial expressions. Even emojis designed to convey specific emotional signals can be open to interpretation. For instance, the so called 'tear emoji' 😪 can be seen as either crying or sleepy. Additionally, emojis may appear differently across devices and social media platforms, adding to the confusion. Moreover, users typically do not refer to official lexicons to understand emoji meanings but rely on common usage or cultural context, making it challenging for inexperienced or culturally diverse users to interpret emojis confidently in digital interactions (Boutet et al., 2023). This reliance on common usage and cultural context highlights the complexity of interpreting emojis accurately across different contexts. For instance, the table displayed below, based on research by Macourková (2022), provides some examples of emoji face interpretations, illustrating the variability and nuances in their meanings.

Emoji	Emoji name	Emoji meaning
😌😊	**Smiling-Happy Faces**	Very often used when ex-pressing happiness.
😅		This emoji is used to ex-press happiness in texts

		that depict a negative event, however with a positive impact.
😂	**Face With Tears of Joy**	this emoji shows a laugh and is usually used as a reaction to a funny event.
😏	**Smirking Face**	Surprisingly, this emoji is used in messages that convey affection.
😉	**Winking Face**	This emoji means that the message should not be taken so seriously.
🥲	**Smiling Face with Tear**	Emoji with tear expresses gratitude or also an attempt to look happy though is sad.
🤔	**Thinking Face**	The emoji with the index finger placed on the chin can be used to question.
😎	**Smiling Face WithSunglasses**	It is used to show selfconfidence and composure.
😞	**Smiling Face With Heart-Shaped Eyes**	Emoji expressing love, gratitude or affection.
😈😈	**Devil Faces**	Both emojis express devilish or immoral thoughts.
😍	**Unamused Face**	This emoji is often associated with expressing disappointment.

🤩	**Star-Struck**	Emoji with stars instead of eyes can express fascination or impressiveness.
😥	**Crying Face**	Used in response to sad news
😐 😑	**Neutral Faces**	It is often used to express boredom or lack of emotion
😳	**Flushed Face**	This emoji expresses shyness or embarrassment. However, it could be used to express surprise or amazement
😓	**Face With Cold Sweat**	This is an emoji with a drop of sweat falling from its forehead. It is used when stress is manifested
😭	**Loudly Crying Face**	This emoji expresses very intense sadness or ironic intent
😟	**Worried Face**	An emoji often associated with worry or fear.
😠 😡	**Angry and Pouting Faces**	These emojis express anger, red is more intense in this case.

Table 2.1. Examples of Emoji face interpretations (adapted from Macourková, 2022).

Research (e.g: De Sonneville et al., 2002; Walther, 2014; Coyle & Carmichael, 2019) suggests that emoticons convey social information and somewhat influence perceptions of personality, but the impact of emojis on personality is less clear. Additionally, how emojis affect

information processing and interpersonal connections in digital interactions remains uncertain. While emojis may offer contextual cues like nonverbal cues, more research is needed to understand their role in cognitive processing and social dynamics online.

It can be argued emojis are not the same everywhere, they can be used differently based on where you are, your age, and other factors, just like how people talk differently in different places. This means emojis get their meaning from the culture and society they are used in. To conclude, while research on emoticons provides insights into affective communication and message interpretation, it may have limited relevance to present-day digital interactions due to the widespread use of emojis, which offer richer and more realistic representations of facial expressions. Studies on emojis indicate their potential to enhance emotion communication and interpretation, yet methodological limitations and the need for further research persist (Hall et al., 2019).

II.4. Emojis on Social Media Platforms and Artificial Intelligence Chatbots

In recent years, the widespread use of online technology and social platforms has become increasingly prevalent. Digital communication encompasses a variety of channels, including emails, instant messaging, and video calls, catering to diverse needs (Pertegal et al., 2019).

Emoji are graphic symbols that represent a wide range of concepts, including facial expressions, emotions, and activities. People generally have positive attitudes toward emoji, perceiving messages containing them as more. They use emoji to emphasize their intentions, express emotions, or clarify messages (Tang & Hew, 2018). Sampietro (2019) analyzed over 2,074 messages exchanged between WhatsApp users and found that emoji served three main purposes: reinforcing positive messages, initiating, or concluding conversations in a friendly manner, and adapting writing style to the tone of the interaction. Emoji usage tends to vary based on the relationship between individuals, with people using them more frequently with close contacts like romantic partners or friends (Jones et al., 2020). However, emoji interpretation and appropriateness can differ depending on the context of use. Certain emoji may have multiple interpretations or convey different meanings based on contextual cues. This variability in interpretation underscores the complexity of emoji usage, particularly in interpersonal communication contexts (Weissman, 2019).

The prevalence of chatbots, as types of systems that simulate human conversation through video, voice, and text chat, in human-computer communication has seen a significant rise in recent times (Luo et al., 2022). Emojis, recognized as a form of emotional expression, have garnered considerable attention for their potential to enhance satisfaction with chatbot services. Yu and Zhao (2024) seek to address this gap and contribute to the rapidly evolving field of human-chatbot communication research. The findings of their recent study elucidate that emojis can indeed enhance the perceived warmth of chatbots, although they may not necessarily augment their perceived competence. This increase in perceived warmth subsequently leads to heightened service satisfaction, particularly evident when chatbots serve hedonic purposes and operate with pre-programmed responses rather than high levels of autonomy. However, it is noteworthy that the impact of emojis on chatbot warmth is not as potent as it is for human interactions.

II.5. Gender and Use of Emojis

Individuals exhibit unique behaviours and thought processes, and these differences may manifest in emoji usage, particularly between genders. Research suggests that women tend to use emojis more frequently than men, and they also have a propensity to utilize multiple emojis in their messages. These gendered patterns in emoji usage, both in frequency and preference, may be implicitly influenced by the expression of sentiment. Common perceptions suggest that women are more emotionally expressive than men, which aligns with findings indicating a higher percentage of female emoji users (Chen et al., 2018). This suggests that women tend to convey more emotion through emojis compared to men. However, Chen et al. (2018) found no significant disparity in the intensity of emoji usage between genders. Nonetheless, differences emerge in the selection and quantity of emojis employed by men and women to convey the intensity of meanings and emotions within their messages.

II.6. Emojis Incorporation in Formal Communication

Emojis have become an integral part of internet communication, particularly on social media platforms, where it is hard to imagine conversing without them, especially among friends and family. In our fast-paced digital age, emojis are continually updated and

new ones are created. Originally intended to express emotions, these colorful icons have now transcended their initial purpose, infiltrating realms such as fashion and even political discourse. They grace the pages of magazines and are frequently utilized in professional correspondence. However, while emojis may enhance communication for some, they are not universally embraced; some find them irritating. In other words, despite their many benefits, emojis also pose several drawbacks that warrant consideration in digital communication. One significant drawback is the potential for misinterpretation due to the ambiguity of certain emojis and their context-dependent meanings. Different individuals may interpret the same emoji differently, leading to misunderstandings or miscommunication in online interactions. Moreover, overreliance on emojis may detract from the clarity and professionalism of written communication, particularly in formal or professional contexts. Additionally, the use of emojis in digital communication raises concerns about privacy and data security, as emojis can be used to track user behavior and preferences on social media platforms and other online platforms. Therefore, while emojis offer numerous benefits, it is essential for users to exercise caution and discretion in their usage to mitigate potential drawbacks and ensure effective communication in the digital realm. To put it simply, according to Macourková, (2022), here are some specific pros and cons:

Some significant advantages of Emojis include:

a. Add warmth and friendliness: Emojis make messages feel warmer and friendlier.

b. Universal language: Emojis help people from different cultures understand each other better.

c. Simplify messaging: Emojis express emotions quickly, saving time on explanations.

d. Branding tool: Emojis can enhance engagement in business emails and marketing.

Despite their advantages, emojis also pose challenges. Major drawbacks may be:

a. Confusion from abundance: With so many emojis, people can misunderstand each other.

b. Professionalism concerns: Using too many emojis in professional messages might seem unprofessional.

c. Hiding emotions: Emojis can hide true feelings, making communication less genuine.

d. Limitations: While helpful, emojis cannot replace face-to-face communication, which is important, especially for kids' language development.

Conclusion

In summary, emojis have become crucial in today's digital communication, helping us express feelings and ideas online. The present chapter explained what emojis are and how they differ from emoticons. We also looked at how emojis have become a universal language, influenced by both language features and culture. Exploring their use on social media and in AI, we considered how emojis might affect communication between genders. Furthermore, by weighing the pros and cons, we gained insights into the changing world of emojis.

Moving forward, the next chapter will dive into the methods we used, analyze the data, and discuss what we found.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology: Data Analysis and Findings Interpretations

Introduction

III.1. Research Design

III.2. Mixed Method: Qualitative vs. Quantitative approach

III.3. Research Setting, Population, and Sampling

III.3.1. Setting

III.3.2. Population

III.3.3. Random Sampling

III.3.3.1. Students

III.3.3.2. Teachers

III.4. Data Collection Instruments

III.4.1. Description of the Questionnaire

III.4.2. Description of the Interviews

III.4.3. Pilot Study

III. 4.4. Methods of Analysis

III.5. Data Analysis and Discussion

III.5.1. Questionnaire Obtained Results Analysis

III.5.2. Questionnaire Obtained Results Interpretation

III.5.2. Interview Obtained Results Analysis

III.5.3. Interview Obtained Results Interpretation

III.6. Synthesis of the Findings

III.7. Recommendations

III.8. Limitations

Conclusion

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to bridge the gap between the theoretical and practical aspects of this study, concentrating on the crucial methodological and conceptual frameworks necessary for elucidating the research methodology. It places emphasis on elucidating the methodological design and the systematic steps undertaken to investigate perceptions regarding the usage of emojis in formal communication for educational purposes. Specifically, it delves into the chosen mixed-method approach, providing an overview of the sample selection, data collection methodologies, the nature of the research questions addressed, methods of analysis, and the interpretation of the obtained data.

III.1. Research Design

Davis (2019) compares communicating scientific research to building a house. It is suggested that just like building a house requires the right materials and knowledge, effectively communicating scientific research also demands effort and attention to detail. These materials derive from one's own study and research efforts. A research endeavor is ongoing and necessitates a structured plan outlining the research problem, data collection methods, study subjects, and data analysis techniques (Kothari, 2004).

Thus, the research design for the current study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, reflecting the nature of the inquiry into Algerian EFL students' integration of emojis in their formal communication with their instructors. As Crotty (1998) suggests, research methods may be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both approaches, irrespective of the research type. It is essential for researchers to devise a research process tailored to their objectives, one that effectively addresses their research question. On this basis, the specific details of the research design employed in this study are illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

Research Design	

Mixed Method	
Quanititative Approach	Qualitative Approach

Data Collection Instruments	
Questionnaire	Interview

Selected Random Sample	
102 First Year EFL Students	8 EFL Teachers

Setting	
English Department	Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret

Interpretation of the Findings	
Descriptive & Critical Synthesis	

Recommendations	
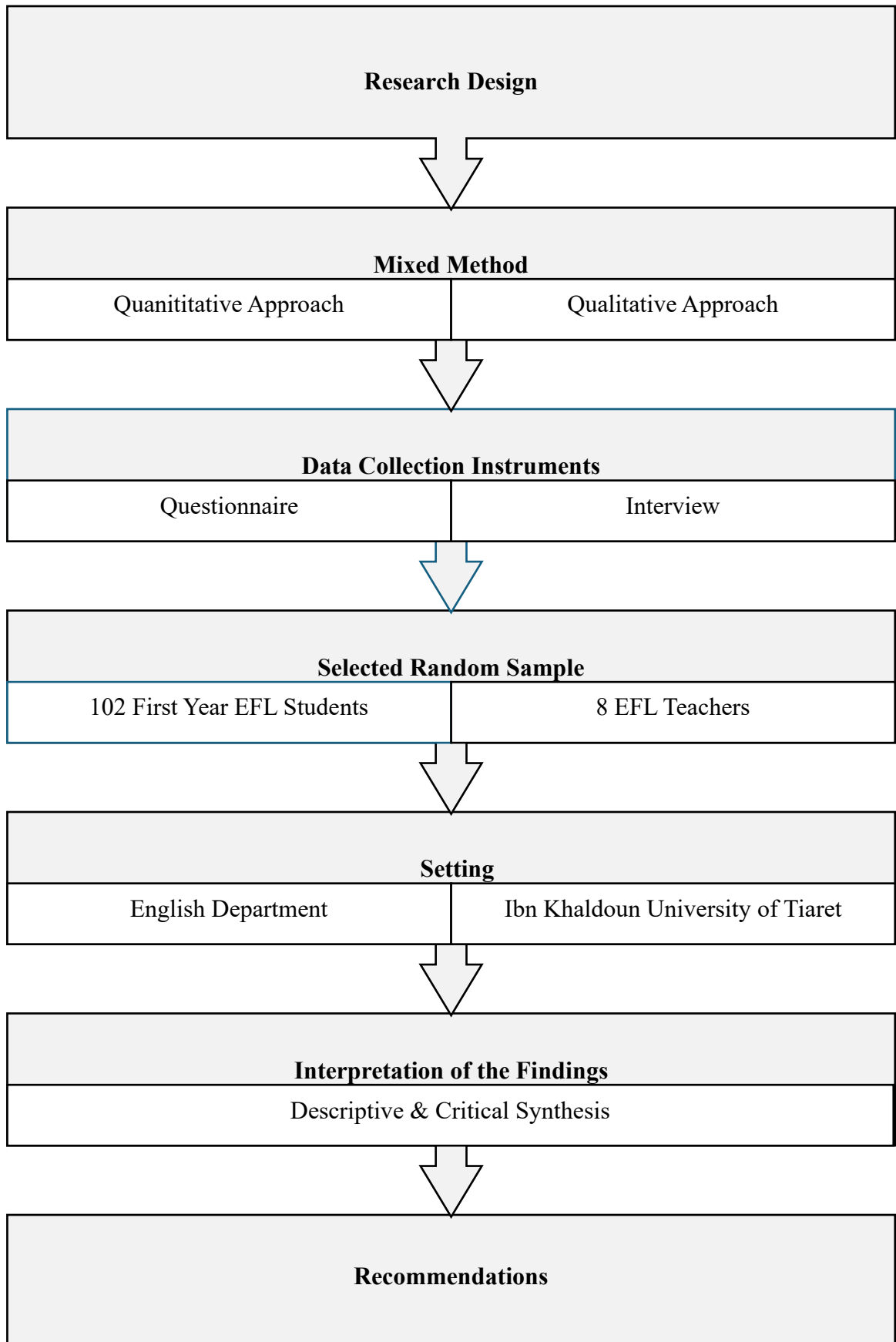
Figure III.1. The Research Design

III.2. Mixed Method: Qualitative vs. Quantitative approach

Mixed method research refers to a methodology that combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches within a single study. Rather than merely juxtaposing these approaches, they are integrated to produce comprehensive results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Wisdom, et al., 2012). According to Wisdom and Creswell (2012), employing a mixed method enables the collection and analysis of both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, while also facilitating the integration of these data throughout the process of data collection, analysis, or discussion.

The incorporation of both quantitative and qualitative data in the form of a mixed method in the present research holds significant potential for enhancing rigor and enriching the analysis and findings. This approach allows for the exploration of research questions using a variety of tools, thereby gathering data of diverse nature from multiple sources, which in turn leads to

and increases the validity of the findings. For instance, the quantitative analysis in this study involves administering a questionnaire to first year EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, allowing for the gathering of information and data through tables and graphs. As noted by Patton (1987), The quantitative approach is beneficial because it allows for the assessment of responses from a large group of people to a small set of questions, making it easier to compare and statistically analyze the data.

On the other hand, the qualitative analysis aims to describe and analyze facts (Cohen et al, 2007). In this study, the qualitative approach entails conducting interviews with English language teachers at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret to draw conclusions about the integration of emojis in formal communication among lecturers and students. This may serve to organize and explain the data.

III.3. Research Setting, Population, and Sampling

The research at hand is situated at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria, within the English Language department, offering insights into EFL education. Focused on EFL students and their teachers, the research employs random sampling to ensure representative data

collection. The following sections provide further details about the target setting, population, and sampling methodologies.

III.3.1. Setting

The research setting denotes the physical and social context within which the study is conducted. The current research is situated at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria, specifically within the English Language department. Ibn Khaldoun University, as a non-profit public higher education institution, is situated in the southwestern region of Algiers, in the western high plains, approximately 150 km from the Mediterranean coast.

III.3.2. Population

The entire population is occasionally referred to as the 'target population,' while the selected subset is known as the 'study population'. When conducting research, it is essential to strive for a sample that accurately represents the target population, minimizing errors and avoiding substitution or incompleteness. This process of choosing a sample population from the target population is termed the 'sampling method' (Elfil & Negida, 2017).

In statistical terms, a population denotes the complete group for which certain information needs to be determined based on characteristics and factors such as age, gender, occupation, location, and field of study (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). The target population for this study comprises EFL students enrolled in the Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria, along with their corresponding EFL teachers within the same academic setting.

III.3.3. Random Sampling

Sampling involves obtaining a manageable portion of a population that shares similar qualities with the whole. There exist two primary classifications of sampling techniques: probability sampling methods, wherein every individual within the target population has an equal opportunity for selection in the sample and non-probability sampling methods, where the sample population is chosen through a non-systematic process that does not ensure equal

chances for each subject in the target population. Samples derived from probability sampling methods tend to be more reflective of the target population (Shorten & Moorley, 2014).

A sample is considered random when every individual in the population being sampled has an equal chance of inclusion. Random sampling is employed when researchers have access to the entire population and a list of all the people in it, known as the 'sampling frame.' From this list, they randomly select a sample either by picking names out of a hat or using a computer to generate a random list. In this process, each element has an equal chance of selection independent of any other event (Sampling, 2012).

III.3.3.1. Students

For the questionnaire method in our study, a random sample of eighty (102) first year EFL students is selected, representing the target population of 500 students across ten groups. Gender and age are the sole variables of interest, with thirty-two (32) males and seventy (70) females included in the sample. Other factors such as location and class are not considered.

	Gender	Age
Males	32	Less than 25
Females	70	Less than 25

Table III.1. Demographic variables

III.3.3.2. Teachers

For the semi-structured interview component, a sample of eight (8) EFL teachers from Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret's English Department is chosen. The selection process ensures representation across different genders, ages, PhD fields, and teaching experience levels. Teacher identities are kept confidential for privacy reasons.

III.4. Data Collection Instruments

To fulfill the research objectives and test hypotheses, two data collection instruments 'a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews' have been chosen in a mixed-method approach.

We believe these instruments are tools designed to gather data and measure knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions.

III.4.1. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire contains standardized inquiries aimed at collecting the necessary data for testing your theory, with a focus on ensuring the reliability of responses and the validity of research findings. In designing questionnaires, attention must be given to five key issues, as shown in figure III.2. below, including selecting appropriate categories of questions that collectively fulfill research objectives, limiting the number of questions to maintain clarity and relevance, organizing the structure and layout effectively, starting with familiar questions before progressing to content-related inquiries, and wording socio-demographic items sensitively to avoid causing offense. This meticulous approach ensures that the questionnaire elicits valuable information while encouraging high participant response rates (Annan, 2019).
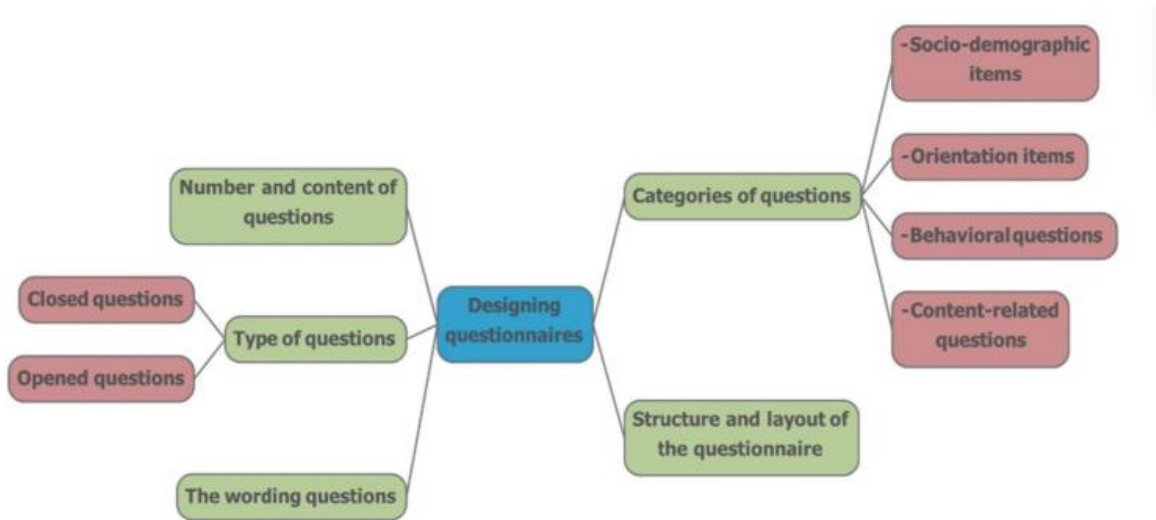
Figure III.2. A mind map of designing a questionnaire (from a guide to research writing, 2019)

The questionnaire employed in this research comprises twelve (12) questions organized into four (4) sections, featuring a mix of closed and open-ended formats. The initial /section is dedicated to gathering background information, including gender and age demographics. Following that, the second section delves into the utilization, preferences, and understanding of emojis among students. The third section examines the functions of emojis in formal communication. Lastly, the fourth section evaluates the impact of emojis in formal communication.

III.4.2. Description of Interview

Interviews are a commonly used method of data collection, particularly in descriptive research like surveys, and they can also yield reliable and valid data in other research contexts. Unlike questionnaires, interviews typically employ open-ended questions and are often associated with qualitative, phenomenological research, using purposive sampling. Conducted through direct verbal interaction, interviews allow for follow-up questions, deeper exploration, and greater depth of understanding compared to other data collection methods. Various types of interviews exist, ranging from highly structured to unstructured, each serving different purposes such as quantitative surveys or qualitative exploration. Interviews can enhance the reliability of findings when used alongside other methods, like structured questionnaires or semi-structured interviews. The design of interviews varies in terms of structure, with some having predetermined questions while others remain open-ended. During interviews, it's crucial to avoid behaviors that could bias the results, and recording methods should be carefully chosen to minimize interference. Despite its strengths, interviews are subjective and prone to biases, necessitating caution in interpretation (Annan, 2019).

To explore the influence of emojis in Algerian online communication, specifically focusing on first-year students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, semi-structured interviews consisting of eleven (11) questions are conducted with eight (8) lecturers from the university. These interviews are tailored to gather supplementary qualitative data, augmenting the insights obtained from the questionnaire.

III.4.3. The Pilot Study

Performing a pilot study is crucial for pinpointing potential areas necessitating revision and adjustment, aiming to enhance both the instrument and data analysis methodologies to align with the research objectives, and reassessing the selection of statistical tools. The insights gained from the pilot study offer valuable guidance in implementing necessary modifications to research instruments, as well as refining data collection and analysis strategies (Annan, 2019).

To assess the feasibility, clarity, and effectiveness of the questionnaire design, it was first administered to a pilot group of 12 students. Their feedback played a crucial role in refining the questionnaire's final structure, intended for the entire sample. Furthermore, a pilot stage

involving 2 teachers was conducted using the interview questions to evaluate the clarity and relevance of the planned inquiries.

Pilot studies in this research serve the following purposes:

1. Testing the instruments

2. Assessing feasibility

3. Assess sampling method and technique
4. Uncover possible problems

III.4.5. Methods of Analysis

To analyze the results obtained from the questionnaire, a manual process is employed. Follow these steps to calculate the percentage of answers for each question:

1. Count the total number of responses for each question.

2. Multiply the result by 100 to obtain the percentage.

3. Divide this by the total number of responses. Repeat this process for each question in your questionnaire to determine the percentage of responses for each answer option.

For the interview analysis, each question is qualitatively examined based on the responses of the eight (8) teachers, who showed no reluctance in answering the ten (10) questions prepared. This analysis aims to identify major themes, similarities, and differences among their responses.

III.5. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section analyzes and interprets the questionnaire and interview results. The questionnaire responses are examined, and then statistical measures are calculated. The interpretation of the questionnaire results aims to draw meaningful conclusions and explanations to the research questions addressed. The interview results are analyzed by identifying common themes or perspectives that emerge using the theoretical framework and existing literature to provide comprehensive explanations. Overall, this section aims to provide a thorough analysis and interpretation of the results obtained.

III.5.1. Questionnaire Obtained Results Analysis

Section 1: Personal Demographics (Frequency %)

		Female	Male
Gender		68.7%	31.3%
Age	**Less than 25 = 100%**	68.7%	31.3%
	Above 25 = 0%	/	/

Table III. 1. Participants Characteristics in terms of gender and age
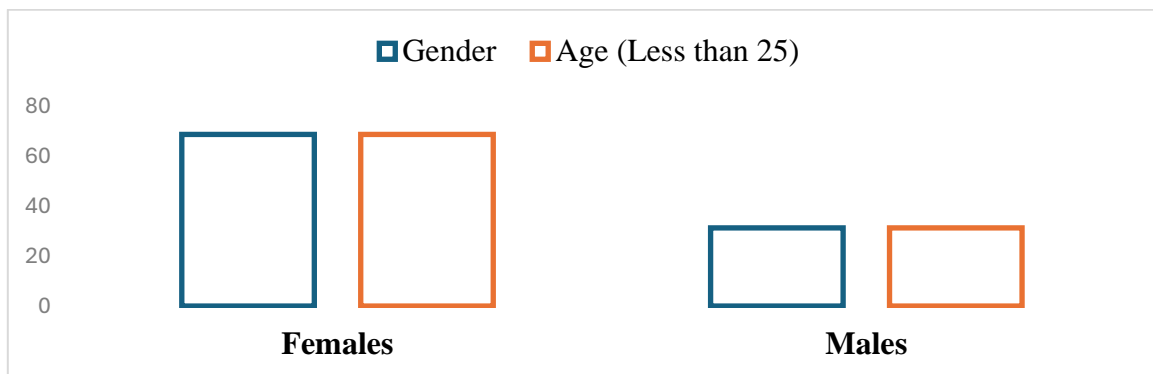
Figure III. 1. Participants Characteristics in terms of gender and age

The data provided in Table III.1 highlights a significant gender gap among participants, with a higher proportion of females (68.7%) compared to males (31.3%). Notably, all participants are below 25 years old, with no one above this age represented in the data. This disparity in gender distribution suggests potential differences in how genders may perceive emojis in formal communication.

Section 2: Utilization, Preferences, and Understanding of Emojis by EFL Students

Q1: How often do you use emojis in your formal online communication with lecturers?

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Always
Females	4.9%	9.8%	29.4%	24.5%
Males	1.9%	6.8%	12.7%	9.8%

Table III. 2: Frequency of using emojis in formal online communication with lecturers
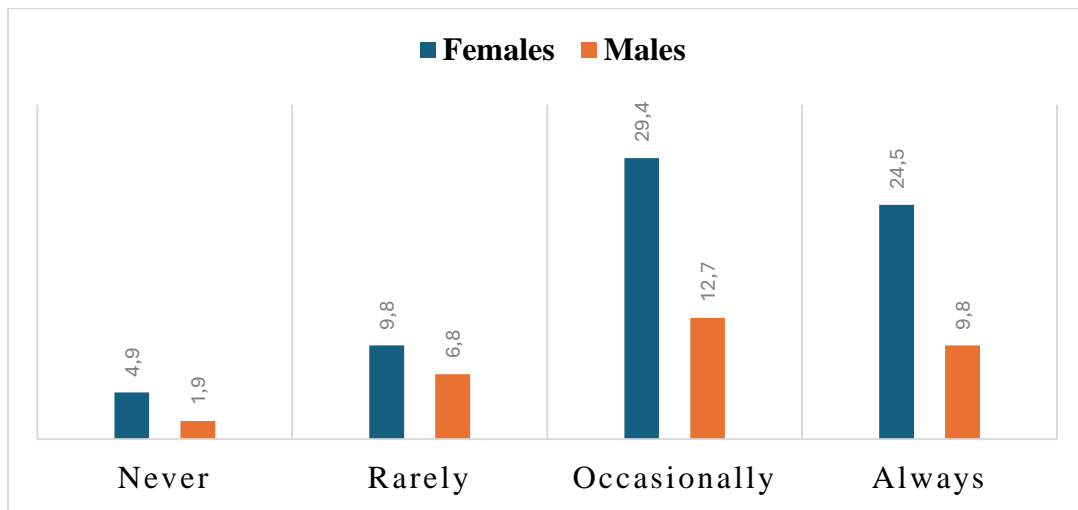
Figure III.2: Frequency of using emojis in formal online communication with lecturers

The data presented in both table and figure III.2 illustrates the frequency of emoji usage in formal online communication with lecturers among female and male respondents. Among females, the majority (29.4%) reported using emojis occasionally, followed closely by 24.5% who claimed to always use them. In contrast, a smaller percentage of females reported rarely (9.8%) or never (4.9%) using emojis in such communication. For males, the usage percentage is notably lower, with only 12.7% reporting occasional usage and 9.8% claiming to always use emojis. A smaller proportion of males reported rarely (6.8%) or never (1.9%) incorporating emojis in their formal online interactions with lecturers. This data suggests that females tend to use emojis more frequently in formal communication with lecturers compared to males, with a significant portion of both genders employing emojis occasionally or always, but with varying proportions.

Q 2. What types of emojis do you prefer using in your communication with lecturers?

	Facial Expression	**Gestures**	**Objects**	**Others**
Females	37.2%	16.6%	14.8%	/
Males	13.7%	9.8%	7.8%	/

Table III.3: The Preferred type of Emojis in Communication with Lecturers
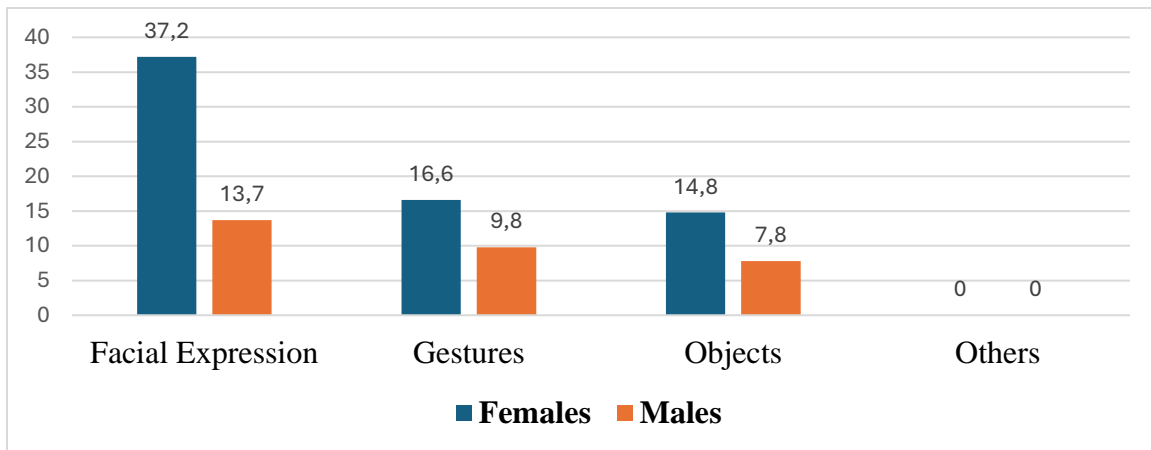
Figure III.3: The Preferred type of Emojis in Communication with Lecturers

The data displayed in table and figure III.3 highlights the preferred types of emojis used in communication with lecturers among female and male respondents. Among females, facial expression emojis are the most favored, with 37.2% indicating a preference for them. This is followed by gestures (16.6%) and objects (14.8%). Interestingly, no specific preference is mentioned for the "Others" category. For males, facial expression emojis are also the most preferred, albeit with a significantly lower percentage (13.7%) compared to females. Gestures (9.8%) and objects (7.8%) are less commonly preferred among males. The "Others" category is left unspecified for males as well. In brief, both genders demonstrate a preference for facial expression emojis in their communication with lecturers, but with variations in the proportions of usage between females and males.

Q 3. How would you rate your understanding of the meanings and implications of emojis in formal communication?

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Females	6.8%	11.7%	40.1%	9.8%
Males	1.9%	5.8%	13.7%	9.8%

Table III.4: Assessing Understanding of the meaning and impact of Emojis in formal communication
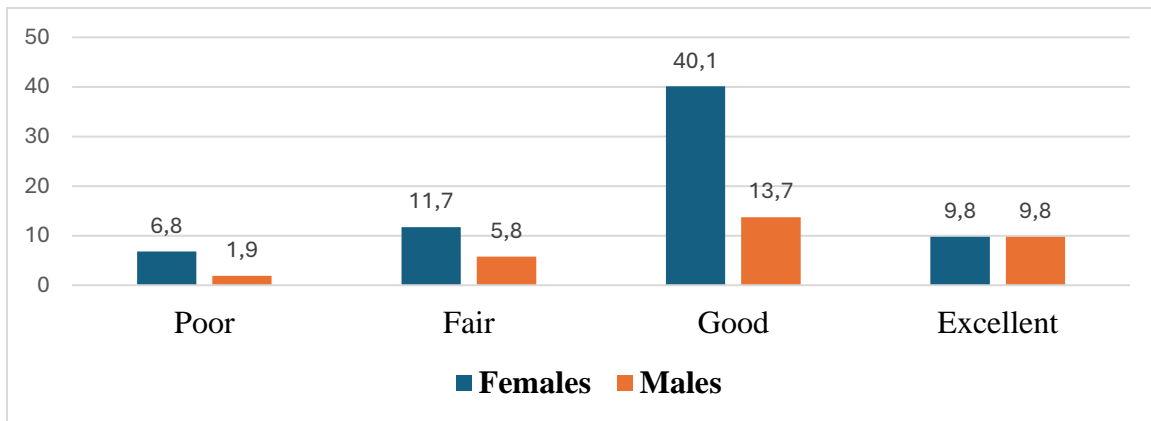
Figure III.4: Assessing Understanding of the meaning and impact of Emojis in formal communication

Regarding question four in section two, table III.4 assesses the understanding of the meanings and implications of emojis in formal communication among female and male respondents. Among females, the majority (40.1%) rate their understanding as good, followed by 11.7% reporting a fair understanding. A smaller percentage indicate poor (6.8%) or excellent (9.8%) understanding. For males, the distribution is similar, albeit with lower percentages across all categories. Only 13.7% of males rate their understanding as good, with 5.8% reporting a fair understanding. A smaller proportion of males indicate poor (1.9%) or excellent (9.8%) understanding. In summary, both genders demonstrate a range of perceived understanding levels, with females showing a slightly higher proportion rating their understanding as good compared to males.

Q4. These are 9 examples of emojis, can guess the meaning of:

	Smily Face	Gestures	Objects	Others
Females	39.2%	15.6%	13.8%	/
Males	19.6%	5.8%	5.8%	/

Table III.5: Guessing the meaning of some examples of Emojis
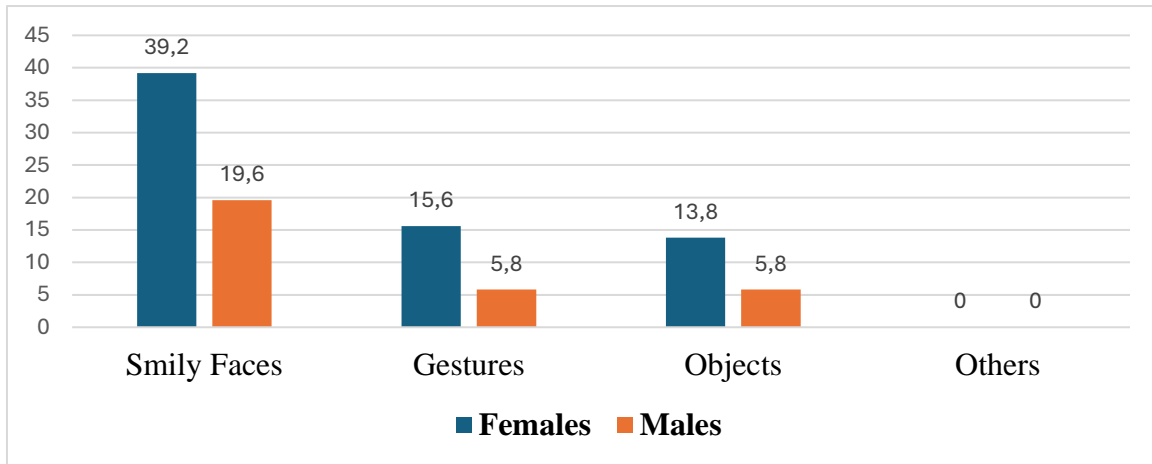
Figure III.5: Guessing the meaning of some examples of Emojis

For the meanings of the nine emojis provided, having a look at table and figure III.5, it can be observed that the "smiley face" is the most guessed emoji for both genders, with 39.2% of females and 19.6% of males selecting this option. "Gestures" and "objects" are also deciphered, however less frequently. Overall, there may be a common tendency to associate the emojis with facial expressions, indicating their widespread familiarity in digital communication.

Section 3: Functions of Emojis in Formal Communication

Q6. Do you think emojis can convey intentions effectively in academic communication?

	Yes	**No**	**Not sure**
Females	49.01%	3.9%	15.7%
Males	12.7%	2%	16.6%

Table III.6: Exploring effective intentions of emojis in academic communication
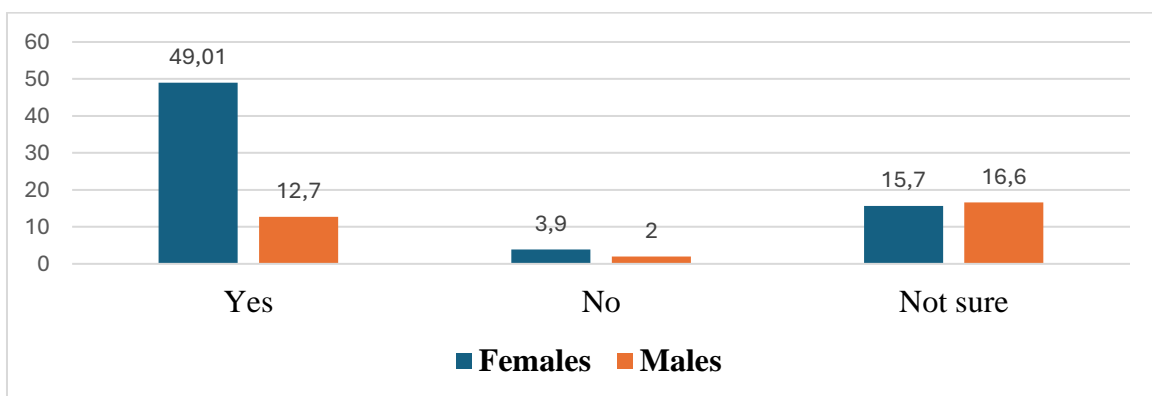
Figure III.6: Exploring effective intentions of emojis in academic communication

The data obtained and displayed in table and figure III.6 explores perceptions of whether emojis can effectively convey intentions in academic communication among female and male respondents. Among females, nearly half (49.01%) believe emojis can convey intentions effectively, while only a small percentage (3.9%) disagree. However, a notable portion (15.7%) are unsure. In contrast, among males, a smaller percentage (12.7%) believe emojis are effective in conveying intentions, with a similarly low percentage (2%) disagreeing. A slightly higher percentage of males (16.6%) are unsure. Overall, females are more inclined to believe in the effectiveness of emojis in conveying intentions in academic communication compared to males.

Q7. In your opinion, what functions do emojis serve in formal communication between students and lecturers? (Select all that apply)

	Emotional Expression	Emphasis	Clarity (avoid misunderstanding)	Humor	Others	
					Saving time and space	Indicating reactions
Females	0.9%	19.6%	36.2%	2%	6.8%	3%
Males	/	5.8%	19.6%	1%	2.9%	1.9%

Table III.7: Emoji Functions in Formal Student-Lecturer Communication
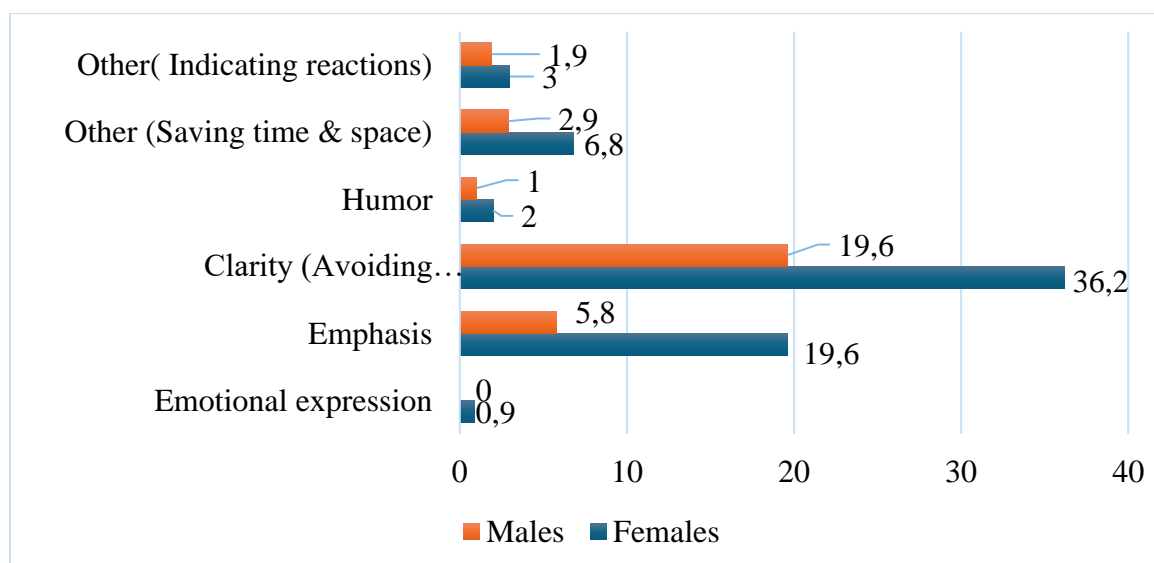
Figure III.7: Emoji Functions in Formal Student-Lecturer Communication

Wha is examined in table and figure III.7 is the perceived functions of emojis in formal communication between students and their teachers. It can be deduced that the most selected functions include "Clarity (avoid misunderstanding)" (36.2%) and "Emphasis" (19.6%). Additionally, "Saving time and space" (6.8%) and "Indicating reactions" (3%) are also mentioned. However, functions such as "Emotional Expression," "Humor," and "Others" are selected by only a small percentage of females. Conversely, among males, "Clarity (avoid misunderstanding)" (19.6%) and "Emphasis" (5.8%) are the most selected functions. Other functions, such as "Indicating reactions," "Humor," and "Others," are chosen by only a small percentage of males. Notably, "Emotional Expression" is not selected by any males. Overall, both genders perceive emojis primarily as aids in clarity and emphasis in formal communication, with less emphasis on emotional expression or humor. This suggests a common understanding of the practical functions of emojis in formal communication, however with slight differences in emphasis between genders.

Q 8. How do you think the use of emojis can influence (hinder or enhance) your communication with lecturers? Please indicate the relevant answer on a scale of 1 to 5, ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), to strongly agree (5).

	Impact (Rate 1-5)	1	2	3	4	5
Females %	**I. Emojis may enhance communication:**					
	a. By adding emotional context to messages.	21.5	20.5	7.8	10.7	7.8
	b. in informal settings	5.8	9.8	15.6	17.6	17.7
	c. by making messages more engaging and expressive.	23.5	15.6	14.7	6.8	7.8
	d. by helping convey tone and emotions effectively.	15.7	11.7	13.7	17.6	9.8
	e. by fostering a more friendly and approachable tone.	18.6	11.7	23.5	14.7	9.9
	II. Emojis may hinder communication:	3.9	2	19.6	23.5	19.6
	a. by potentially being misinterpreted or unprofessional.	1.9	5.8	19.6	29.4	21.5
	b. in formal contexts.	2	11.7	19.6	15.6	19.6
	c. if overused or used inappropriately.	4.9	8.8	12.7	20.5	21.5
	d. by distracting from the main message.	4.9	5.8	19.6	18.6	19.6
	e. by creating ambiguity or confusion in messages.	3.9	4	9.8	31.3	19.6
	f. by detracting from the seriousness of academic discussions.					

		1	2	3	4	5
Males %	**I. Emojis may enhance communication:**					
	a. By adding emotional context to messages.	2.9	3.9	5.8	8.8	9.8
	b. in informal settings	1.9	4	5.8	11.7	7.8
	c. by making messages more engaging and expressive.	3.9	5.8	7.8	9.8	3.9
	d. by helping convey tone and emotions effectively.	7.8	9.8	5.8	4.9	4.9
	e. by fostering a more friendly and approachable tone.	17.6	9.8	2	1.9	/
	II. Emojis may hinder communication: **a.** by potentially being misinterpreted or unprofessional.	1.9	0.9	11.7	13.7	6.8
	b. in formal contexts.	1	2.9	0.9	13.7	11.7
	c. if overused or used inappropriately.	0.9	11.7	9.8	8.8	1
	d. by distracting from the main message.	1.9	4	9.8	9.8	1.9
	e. by creating ambiguity or confusion in messages.	1.9	3.9	10	9.8	5.8
	f. by detracting from the seriousness of academic discussions.	0.9	2	2.9	12.7	12.7

Table III.8: Emojis' Impact on Communication with Lecturers: Rate 1-5

This data, gathered from both female and male respondents, assesses the perceived influence of emojis on communication with lecturers on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 5 indicates strongly agree. The content of table III.8 can be summarized as follows:

I. Emojis Enhancing Communication:

- Across all subcategories (a to e), females consistently rate higher than males in agreement that emojis enhance communication, particularly in adding emotional context (average percentage: 17.7% for females vs. 6.3% for males).

- The highest agreement among females is seen in making messages more engaging and expressive (23.5%), followed closely by helping convey tone and emotions effectively (17.7%).

- Males generally show lower agreement percentages across all subcategories compared to females, with the highest agreement seen in fostering a more friendly and approachable tone (17.6%).

II. Emojis Hindering Communication:

- Females and males show varying levels of agreement that emojis can hinder communication.
- For females, the highest agreement is in potentially being misinterpreted or unprofessional (19.6%), followed by creating ambiguity or confusion in messages (18.2%).

- Males demonstrate higher agreement percentages than females in several hindering factors, such as if overused or used inappropriately (average percentage: 8.5% for males vs. 6.6% for females), and in formal contexts (average percentage: 9.7% for males vs. 5.8% for females).

Section 4: Impact of Emojis on Formal Communication

Q9. Have you received feedback from your lecturers regarding your use of emojis in formal communication?

	Yes	**No**	**Not sure**
Females	9.8%	46.09%	9.8%
Males	4.9%	24.5%	1.9%

Table III.9: Reception of teachers' feedback on Emojis use in formal communication
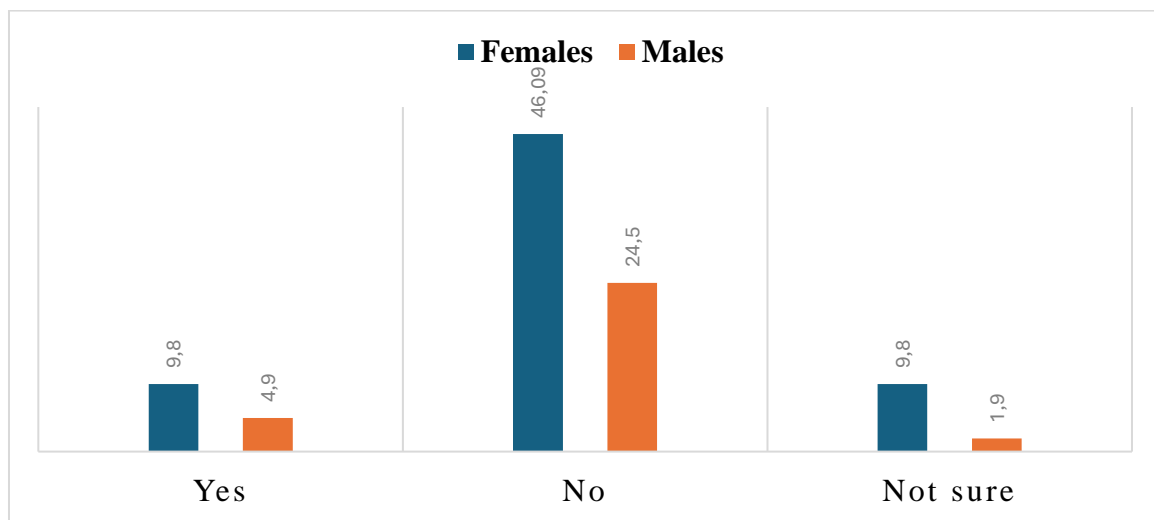
Figure III.9: Reception of teachers' feedback on Emojis use in formal communication

Table and figure III.9 clearly show whether respondents, both female and male, have received feedback from their lecturers regarding their use of emojis in formal communication. Among females, only 9.8% report receiving feedback, while 46.09% state they have not, and another 9.8% are unsure. Similarly, among males, only 4.9% report receiving feedback, with 24.5% stating they have not, and 1.9% are unsure. This suggests that a minority of both females

and males have received feedback on their emoji usage, indicating a potential gap in communication between students and lecturers regarding the appropriateness or effectiveness of emoji usage in formal contexts.

Q10. Have you ever encountered challenges or misunderstandings due to the use of emojis in formal communication?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Females	24.5%	29.4%	24.5%
Males	19.6%	9.8%	1.96%

Table III.10: Challenges encountered when using Emojis in formal communication
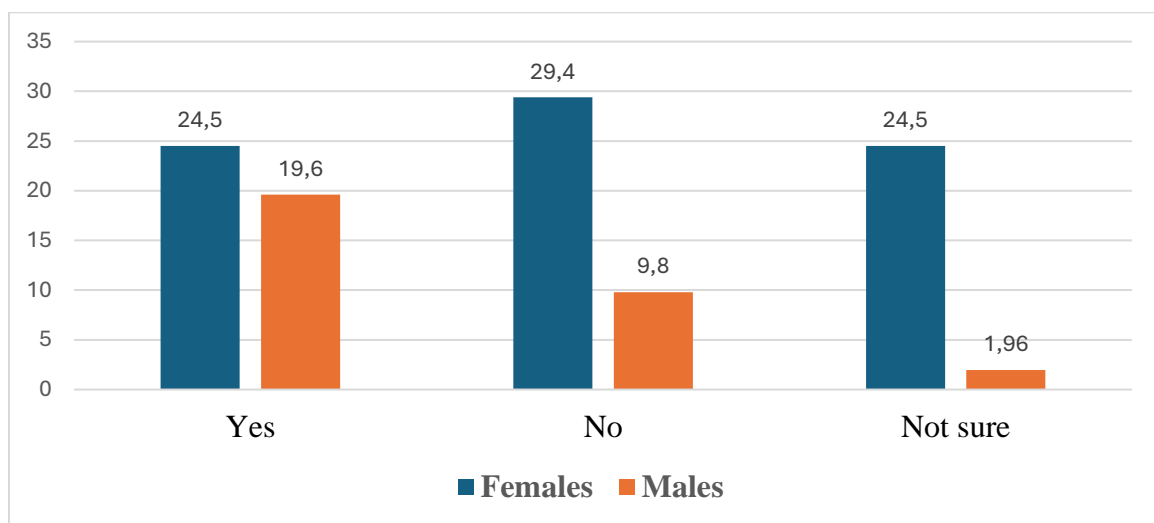
Figure III.10: Challenges encountered when using Emojis in formal communication

Table and Figure III.10 investigate challenges or misunderstandings encountered due to emoji usage in formal communication among respondents. Approximately a quarter of females (24.5%) report facing such challenges, with a similar percentage unsure. For males, the percentage encountering challenges is slightly lower at 19.6%. Notably, a higher proportion of females are unsure compared to males.

11. Do you think the perception of emojis in formal communication varies across different contexts?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Females	35.2%	23.5%	5.8%
Males	15.6%	2%	13.7%

Table III.11: Perception of emojis in formal communication across contexts
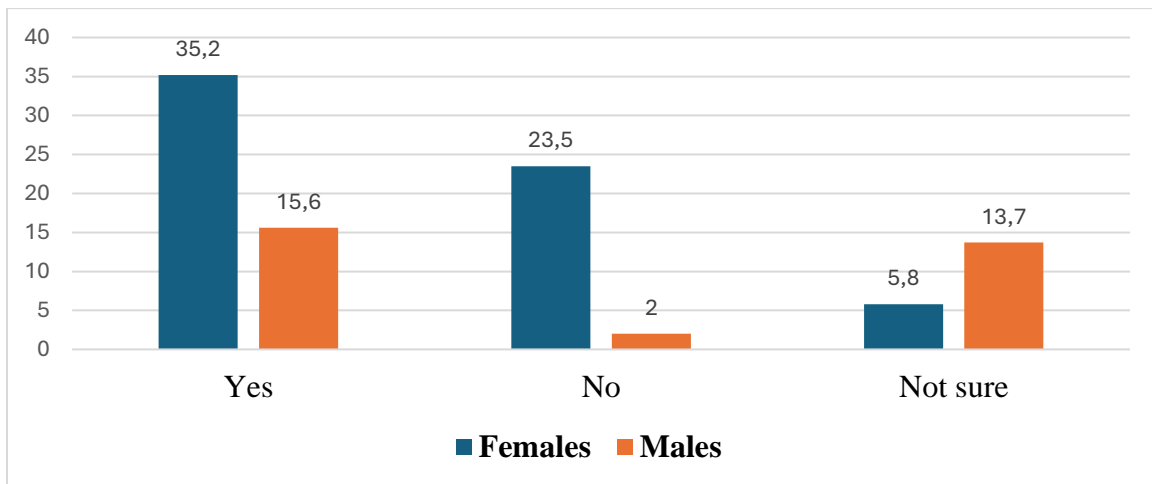
Figure III.11: Perception of emojis in formal communication across contexts

Question 11 examines whether respondents believe the perception of emojis in formal communication varies across different contexts. Among females, 35.2% indicate they think perception varies, while 23.5% disagree, and 5.8% are unsure. For males, a smaller percentage (15.6%) agree that perception varies, with 2% disagreeing, and 13.7% unsure. Overall, a notable proportion of both females and males in table and graph III.11 believe perception of emojis in formal communication does vary across different contexts, suggesting a recognition of the contextual complexity in emoji usage.

12. Do you think there are specific guidelines or etiquette to follow when using emojis in formal communication?

	Yes	**No**	**Not sure**	**Others**
Females	43.1%	9.8%	11.7%	/
Males	30%	0%	1.96%	/

Table III.12: Specific guidelines for emojis use in formal communication
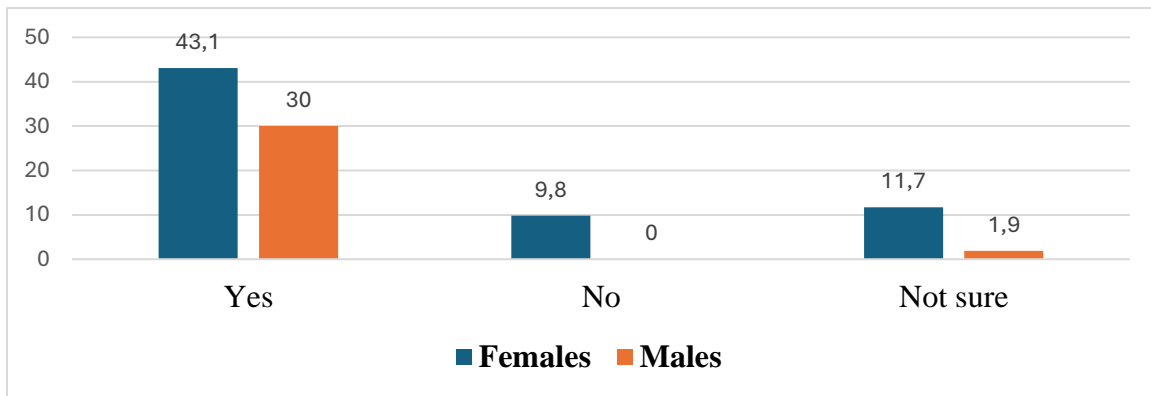
Figure III.12: Specific guidelines for emojis use in formal communication

The last question in section four explores whether respondents believe there are specific guidelines or etiquette to follow when using emojis in formal communication. Among females, 43.1% agree that such guidelines exist, while a smaller proportion (9.8%) disagree, and 11.7% are unsure. No responses are categorized under "Others." For males, 30% believe in the existence of specific guidelines, while none disagree, and 1.96% are unsure. This data indicates that a significant portion of both females and males recognize the presence of specific guidelines or etiquette for emoji usage in formal communication, suggesting an awareness of the need for clarity and appropriateness in employing emojis in formal contexts.

III.5.2. Questionnaire Obtained Results Interpretation

The findings obtained from the questionnaire designed for the present research shed light on how EFL students use and perceive emojis in formal communication. Firstly, the demographic analysis highlights a gender gap among participants, with more females than males, suggesting potential differences in how both genders view emojis in formal settings. Both genders mostly reported occasional or frequent emoji use, with females leaning towards more frequent usage. Facial expression emojis were the top choice for conveying emotions across genders, emphasizing their importance in formal communication.

When it comes to understanding emojis, both genders showed varying levels of comprehension, with females slightly more confident in their understanding. Emojis were widely associated with facial expressions, indicating their familiarity in digital communication. Perceptions of emojis' effectiveness in academic communication varied, with females generally more positive than males.

In terms of functions, both genders saw emojis primarily as aids for clarity and emphasis, but also recognized their potential to hinder communication if misused. Surprisingly, few students received feedback from lecturers on their emoji usage, suggesting a communication gap. Additionally, many students faced challenges or misunderstandings due to emojis, highlighting the need for clearer guidelines. Overall, these insights inform educators on effectively integrating emojis into formal communication, with further research warranted to explore gender differences and motivations behind emoji usage.

III.5.3. Interview Obtained Results Analysis

As it mentioned before, this research attempts to employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. A semi-structured interview, consisting of eleven (11) questions, is conducted with **eight (08)** at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. Lecturers in the same research setting to identify prevalent themes and contexts of emoji usage, thereby shedding light on their role and impact on online communication.

- Interview Questions

1. Do you engage in communication with your students on digital platforms? If so, could you specify whether it is primarily formal or informal communication?

Teacher 01: . Yes, I engage in communication with my students on digital platforms, primarily for formal communication related to course announcements, assignment submissions, and feedback.

Teacher 02: " Yes I do"

Teacher 03: "Formal"

Teacher 04: "Yes"

Teacher 05: "Yes, I do engage with my students on digital platforms primarily for formal communication, ensuring clarity and organization in our interactions."

Teacher 06: "Absolutely, I use digital platforms extensively, focusing primarily on formal communication to facilitate learning beyond the classroom."

Teacher 07: "Yes, I'm active on digital platforms for communication, emphasizing professionalism to maintain a conducive learning environment."

Teacher 08: "Indeed, I engage with students digitally, balancing formal communication for academic purposes with informal touches to encourage active participation."

All teachers affirm their engagement in communication with students on digital platforms, with a predominant focus on formal interactions related to academic matters such as course announcements, assignment submissions, and feedback. While some emphasize the structured nature of their communication to maintain organization and clarity, others underscore the importance of utilizing digital tools to facilitate learning and support outside the classroom. There is a consensus among teachers on the significance of professionalism in digital communication, with an understanding of the balance between formal and informal interactions to foster a conducive learning environment and promote student engagement.

2. Which platforms do you commonly utilize to communicate with your students? For example, do you use email, Google Classroom, LMS Moodle, or any other platforms?

Teacher 01: "The platforms I commonly utilize to communicate with my students include email, Google Classroom, and LMS Moodle."

Teacher 02: "I use email."

Teacher 03: I use email."

Teacher 04: "I use email and google classroom."

 Teacher 05: "I primarily use email to communicate with my students, occasionally integrating Google Classroom for interactive learning experiences."

Teacher 06: "Email is my main tool for communication, supplemented by Google Classroom for extended learning opportunities."

3. Teacher 07: "I rely on email for communication, and I also utilize LMS Moodle to provide structured support and resources."

4. Teacher 08: "I commonly use email to communicate with students, but I also find Google Classroom useful for fostering engagement and collaboration."

All teachers commonly utilize email for communication with students, with some also incorporating additional platforms such as Google Classroom and LMS Moodle. This indicates a reliance on digital communication tools to disseminate information, facilitate

learning, and provide support to students. The prevalent use of email suggests a traditional approach to electronic communication, while the integration of platforms like Google Classroom and LMS Moodle reflects a recognition of the benefits of interactive and organized digital environments for academic purposes. Overall, the responses demonstrate a commitment to leveraging diverse digital platforms to enhance communication and foster a conducive learning experience for students.

3. Do you incorporate emojis in your communication with students? If yes, in what contexts and for what purposes?

Teacher 01: Personally, I do not incorporate emojis in my communication with students, as I believe formal academic communication should maintain a professional tone and clarity without the use of emotive symbols.

Teacher 02: "No I don't , I use formal language"

Teacher 03: "No".

Teacher 04: "No, I do not"

Teacher 05: "I don't use emojis in my communication with students; I prioritize professionalism and clarity in academic discourse."

Teacher 06: "Emojis aren't part of my communication style with students; I focus on clear and professional language for academic discussions."

Teacher 07: "I refrain from using emojis in my communication with students, aiming for a professional tone and clear exchange of academic information."

Teacher 08: "I don't incorporate emojis in my communication with students; maintaining professionalism and clarity is my priority in academic discourse."

All teachers avoid using emojis in their communication with students, stressing the importance of maintaining a professional tone and clarity in formal academic discourse. They prioritize clear and direct communication without the inclusion of emotive symbols, reflecting a collective commitment to upholding professionalism and effectively conveying academic information to support learning objectives.

4. Can you describe your personal stance on the use of emojis and their appropriateness in formal academic communication?

Teacher 01: My personal stance on the use of emojis in formal academic communication is that it can detract from professionalism and clarity. While emojis may convey emotions, they can also introduce ambiguity and distract from the main message.

Teacher 02: "I have never used emojis in formal communication ."

Teacher 03: "They can never be used in academic situations."

Teacher 04: "I do not agree with the use of emojis in academic communication."

Teacher 05: "I firmly believe emojis have no place in formal academic communication, as they can introduce ambiguity and detract from the primary message."

Teacher 06: "I share the view that emojis should be avoided in formal academic communication, as they may compromise professionalism and clarity."

Teacher 07: "I align with the consensus against using emojis in formal academic communication, as clarity and professionalism are paramount in scholarly discourse."

Teacher 08: "I agree with the stance that emojis are inappropriate in formal academic communication; clarity and maintaining a professional tone are essential in scholarly exchanges."

All teachers unanimously oppose the use of emojis in formal academic communication, citing concerns about professionalism and clarity. Teacher 01 emphasizes how emojis can introduce ambiguity and detract from the main message, echoing sentiments shared by Teachers 02, 03, and 04, who assert that emojis have no place in academic settings. Their collective perspective underscores a consensus on the inappropriateness of emojis in formal academic communication, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a clear and professional tone in scholarly discourse.

5. How do you typically respond to students who use emojis in their formal communication with you?

Teacher 01: When students use emojis in their formal communication with me, I typically respond in a neutral manner, focusing on addressing the content of their message rather than acknowledging the use of emojis.

Teacher 02: "I respond formally."

Teacher 03: "Neutral."

Teacher 04: "I try not to give it much importance."

Teacher 05: "I focus on addressing the substance of the message and maintain a neutral stance toward emojis in students' formal communication."

Teacher 06: "I respond to students' formal communication by maintaining a neutral tone, prioritizing professionalism over the presence of emojis."

Teacher 07: "I adopt a neutral approach in responding to students' formal communication, emphasizing professionalism and the content of the message."

Teacher 08: "I choose not to assign significant importance to emojis in students' formal communication, prioritizing professionalism and clarity in my response."

All teachers maintain professionalism in responding to students using emojis in formal communication, prioritizing the message's content. They adopt a neutral or formal tone, focusing on academic standards rather than emotive symbols. Teacher 01 prioritizes substance over emojis, while Teachers 02 and 03 also remain neutral. Teacher 04 takes a pragmatic approach by downplaying the importance of emojis. Overall, their responses reflect a shared commitment to professionalism and clarity in academic discourse, regardless of emojis.

6. Do you believe the use of emojis has an impact on the professionalism or credibility of student online communication in academic settings?

Teacher 01: " Yes, I believe the use of emojis can impact the professionalism and credibility of student online communication in academic settings. Emojis may convey informality or lack of seriousness, which can undermine the credibility of students' messages."

Teacher 02: "Yes of course, I consider that emojis can only be used among friends."

Teacher 03: "Yes, a negative one."

Teacher 04: **"**Yes I believe it does I see that it is not professional to use emojis."

Teacher 05: "Emojis may convey informality and undermine the credibility of student messages in academic settings."

Teacher 06: "I believe emojis should only be used among friends, and their inclusion in academic communication is inappropriate."

Teacher 07: "The use of emojis in academic communication has a negative impact on professionalism and credibility."

Teacher 08: "Emojis are unprofessional and diminish the credibility of student online communication in academic settings."

All teachers agree that emojis affect the professionalism and credibility of student online communication in academic settings.   . Overall, there's a consensus on the negative impact of emojis on the credibility and professionalism of student communication in academic settings.

7. Based on your experience, how prevalent is the use of emojis among students in their formal academic communication?

Teacher 01: Based on my experience, the use of emojis among students in their formal academic communication is prevalent, particularly in informal settings such as discussion forums or group chats.

Teacher 02: "Emojis are very frequently used by female students ,but not boys."

Teacher 03: "Not too much."

Teacher 04: "I have encountered very few similar cases where students prefer use the emojis to break the ice and feel closer to the teachers."

Teacher 05: "Students use emojis a lot, especially in casual places like chats."

Teacher 06: "Girls use emojis more, but not everyone uses them."

Teacher 07: "Not many students use emojis in academic stuff."

Teacher 08: "I've seen some students use emojis, but not too often."

Teachers' views on the prevalence of emoji usage among students in formal academic communication vary. Some note a significant prevalence, especially in informal settings like discussion forums or group chats, while others highlight a gender discrepancy, with female students using emojis more frequently. However, some participants suggest a lower prevalence, encountering few cases where students use emojis to establish rapport with teachers. Overall, responses collectively indicate a moderate prevalence of emoji usage among students in formal academic communication, influenced by contextual factors.

8. Do you think the perception of emojis in formal academic communication differ among different generations of students?

Teacher 01: Yes, I believe the perception of emojis in formal academic communication may differ among different generations of students. Younger generations may be more accustomed to using emojis in digital communication and may perceive them as more acceptable, while older generations may view them as unprofessional.

Teacher 02: " No idea!"

Teacher 03: " This cannot be ,let alone differ!"

Teacher 04: "Yes, it differs ."

Teacher 05: "Yes, probably, generations change."

Teacher 06: "Yes, views change with generations."

Teacher 07: "Yes, each generation's different."

Teacher 08: "Yes, perspectives change with time."

Teachers present varied viewpoints on whether generational differences affect the perception of emojis in formal academic communication. Teacher 01 suggests younger generations may find emojis acceptable due to digital fluency, contrasting with older generations. Teacher 02 is uncertain, while Teacher 03 denies generational disparities. Regarding challenges, Teacher 01 acknowledges them, contrasting with Teacher 02's uncertainty. Teacher 03 argues these challenges are not comparable, while Teacher 04 acknowledges differences. Teachers 05 to 08

also acknowledge potential generational differences, indicating diverse experiences and perspectives on this issue.

9. Have you encountered any challenges or misunderstandings arising from the use of emojis in formal academic communication?

Teacher 01: "Yes"

Teacher 02: "No idea"

Teacher 03: "These two cannot be put on the same level."

Teacher 04: "No I have not.

Teacher 05: "Yes, maybe, different views."

Teacher 06: "Not sure, opinions vary."

Teacher 07: "No, same for all."

Teacher 08: "Maybe, depends on age."

The responses to the question about encountering challenges or misunderstandings arising from the use of emojis in formal academic communication are varied. Teacher 01 confirms having encountered such challenges, indicating personal experience with the issue. Teacher 02 expresses uncertainty, suggesting a lack of personal insight or experience on the matter. Teacher 03 makes a nuanced assertion, suggesting that the challenges and misunderstandings arising from emoji use cannot be equated with the challenges faced in other contexts. Teacher 04 outright denies having faced any challenges, presenting a contrasting viewpoint. Teachers 05 and 08 express a degree of uncertainty or ambiguity in their responses, indicating differing perspectives or experiences. In contrast, Teachers 06 and 07 assertively state their positions, with Teacher 06 indicating varying opinions among individuals and Teacher 07 suggesting a uniform experience for all. Overall, the responses reflect a range of perspectives and experiences regarding challenges or misunderstandings associated with the use of emojis in formal academic communication.

Regarding challenges arising from the use of emojis, Teacher 01 acknowledges encountering them, while Teacher 02 is uncertain. Teacher 03 asserts that these challenges are not comparable. Teacher 04 hasn't faced any, and there's a range of opinions among the other teachers, suggesting varying experiences and perspectives on this issue.

10. Do you think there are specific contexts or situations where the use of emojis is more appropriate or less appropriate in formal academic communication?

Teacher 01: "Yes, I believe there are specific contexts or situations where the use of emojis is more or less appropriate in formal academic communication. For example, in formal emails to faculty or in academic papers, emojis may be considered less appropriate, whereas in informal discussion forums or peer interactions, they may be more acceptable."

Teacher 02: "No"

Teacher 03: "No"

Teacher 04: "No ,there isn't "

Teacher 05: "Yes, depends on context."

Teacher 06: "Response omitted."

Teacher 07: "No, same always."

Teacher 08: "No, always same."

       Teacher 01 recognizes the complex appropriateness of emojis in formal academic communication, suggesting their suitability varies by context, such as being less appropriate in formal emails or academic papers but more acceptable in informal forums or peer interactions. In contrast, Teachers 03 and 04 assert there are no specific contexts where emojis are more or less appropriate in formal academic communication, rejecting the notion of contextual appropriateness. Teacher 02's response is omitted. Overall, there's a range of perspectives on the contextual appropriateness of emojis in formal academic communication.

11. In your opinion, what role do emojis play in terms of enhancing or hindering formal academic communication? (enhancing clarity, adding warmth, causing confusion)?

Teacher 01: "In my opinion, emojis can both enhance and hinder formal academic communication."

Teacher 02: "Emojis may cause a misunderstanding between teachers and students."

Teacher 03: "They provide easy and inaccurate alternatives to expression."

Teacher 04: "I believe that the use of emojis causes confusion more than it enhances clarity."

Teacher 05: "Help and confuse sometimes."

Teacher 06: "May cause misunderstandings, unclear."

Teacher 07: "Easy but imprecise expression."

Teacher 08: "Confusion, clarity hindered."

The teachers present a range of views on emojis in formal academic communication. Teacher 01 suggests emojis can both enhance and hinder it. Teacher 02 is concerned they might lead to misunderstandings. Teacher 03 sees emojis as easy but imprecise expressions. Teacher 04 believes they cause more confusion than clarity. Teacher 05 finds emojis helpful but sometimes confusing. Teacher 06 worries they may cause misunderstandings and be unclear. Teacher 07 notes emojis provide easy but imprecise expression. Teacher 08 thinks they lead to confusion and hinder clarity.

III.5.4. Interview Obtained Results Interpretation

The interview with eight lecturers from Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret provides valuable insights into the role and impact of emojis on formal academic communication. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, to explore prevalent themes and contexts of emoji usage. All interviewed lecturers confirm their engagement in communication with students on digital platforms, primarily for formal academic purposes, utilizing email as the predominant mode of communication, with some also incorporating platforms like Google Classroom and LMS Moodle. Interestingly, none of the lecturers incorporate emojis in their communication with students, citing a preference for maintaining professionalism and clarity in formal academic discourse. This collective stance underscores a shared commitment to upholding academic standards in their interactions with students. Moreover, the lecturers express concerns about the impact of emojis on the professionalism and credibility of student online communication, with a consensus that emojis may convey informality or lack of seriousness, potentially undermining the credibility of messages. While the prevalence of emoji usage among students varies among the lecturers, there is acknowledgment of potential generational differences in the perception of emojis in

formal academic communication. Regarding the appropriateness of emoji usage, there are differing opinions, with some lecturers highlighting specific contexts where emojis may be more or less appropriate. Finally, the lecturers offer varied perspectives on the role of emojis in formal academic communication, with some recognizing their potential to enhance communication clarity or add warmth, while others express concerns about their potential to cause confusion. Overall, the interview provides a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding the use of emojis in formal academic communication and highlights the need for further research in this area to inform best practices.

III.6. Synthesis of the Findings

The synthesis of findings from both the questionnaire administered to EFL students and the interviews conducted with lecturers at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret offers comprehensive insights into the incorporation, role, and impact of emojis on formal academic communication. Regarding students' perspectives, the demographic analysis reveals a gender gap, with more females participating and showing a tendency towards more frequent emoji usage, particularly favoring facial expression emojis to convey emotions. While both genders exhibit varying levels of emoji comprehension, females generally demonstrate slightly higher confidence in their understanding. Therefore, to address the **first research question**, we can conclude that perceptions of emojis' use, interpretations, preferences and effectiveness in academic communication vary by gender, with females generally exhibiting more positive attitudes.

For the second research question, it is evident that the role of emojis in online formal communication remains uncertain. Lecturers prioritize professionalism and clarity in formal academic discourse, and none incorporate emojis into their communication with students., Concerns regarding the potential informality and credibility issues associated with emoji usage are shared among the lecturers, reflecting a commitment to upholding academic standards. Despite varying levels of emoji prevalence among students noted by the lecturers, there is acknowledgment of potential generational differences in perception. **For the third research question**, despite the hypothesis suggesting that Algerian higher education teachers perceive the integration of emojis into formal communication channels as enhancing expressiveness and fostering in-

terpersonal connection, especially in contexts with limited traditional linguistic cues, it is discovered that the majority of lecturers do not acknowledge the potential benefits of emojis in improving communication clarity or adding warmth. Some even express concerns about their potential to cause confusion. Overall, these findings highlight the nuanced dynamics surrounding emoji usage in formal academic communication and emphasize the importance of further research to inform best practices and bridge communication gaps between educators and students.

III.7. Research Recommendations

The present research recommendations may encompass various aspects that support the need for further research in the future.

a. Expanding and diversifying the sample beyond first-year students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret may capture a more comprehensive picture of emoji usage within the Algerian context.

b. Conducting comparative studies across different regions within Algeria to explore regional variations in emoji usage and interpretation. Triangulating findings from different data sources and research methods can offer richer insights.

c.   Extending the analysis beyond interactions within educational settings to include formal communication contexts in various sectors, such as government, business, and media. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of its implications and challenges.

d. Developing educational initiatives or workshops that aim at raising awareness about effective and culturally sensitive emoji usage in formal communication settings.

III.8. Research Limitations

This study, like many others, has limitations, notably regarding:

a.   Respondents' hesitance to participate in questionnaires and interviews.

b. *Generalizability and Sampling bias:* The study's findings may lack generalizability beyond the specific context of first-year students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. Emojis' usage and interpretation might vary significantly across different age groups, educational levels, and regions within Algeria.

c. *Subjectivity in Qualitative Data Analysis:* Despite the triangulation of data from both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the interpretation of qualitative data might still be subject to researcher bias or subjectivity, potentially influencing the conclusions drawn from the study.

d. *Limited Scope of Formal Communication Analysis:* The focus on interactions between lecturers and students within an educational context may not fully capture the complexities of emoji usage in various formal communication settings.

e. *Overemphasis on Quantitative Data:* the quantitative aspect (questionnaire surveys) may dominate the analysis, potentially overshadowing nuanced insights and perspectives that could emerge from the qualitative interviews with English language teachers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter serves as a crucial link between theory and practice, focusing on the methodological framework for exploring emoji usage in formal education. It outlines the mixed-method approach used, including sample selection, data collection, research questions, analysis methods, and data interpretation. By providing a solid methodological foundation, this chapter sets the stage for further exploration of the findings and their implications, emphasizing the importance of further research frameworks in understanding and potentially shaping emoji use in educational settings.

General Conclusion

The research at hand aims to explore the role and impact of emojis in Algerian online communication, specifically focusing on first-year students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. Emojis, versatile tools for expressing emotions, attitudes, and concepts, significantly shape digital discourse dynamics. However, their usage and interpretation are context-dependent, requiring a localized investigation within the Algerian cultural context.

As it is already stated, this research delves into the complex landscape of emoji usage, preferences, interpretations, and perceptions among Algerian individuals. This is done by triangulating data from multiple perspectives to enhance the validity of its findings. To put it simply, this research employs a mixed-method research design involving both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews enhances the depth of analysis. Quantitative data collection includes distributing questionnaires to first-year English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, while qualitative methods involve interviewing English language teachers at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret to understand emojis' role in formal communication.

Situated within the English Language department at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, the research targets students and teachers using random sampling techniques to ensure data representativeness. Previous sections elaborated further on the specific setting, population characteristics, and sampling methodologies. For the findings, for both EFL students' questionnaire and lecturers' interviews, it is revealed female students show a preference for frequent emoji use, mainly favoring facial expressions, while lecturers prioritize professionalism and clarity, avoiding emoji incorporation. These findings emphasize the need for further research to inform effective practices and address communication gaps between educators and students.

In conclusion, this research contributes to understanding emojis' impact on Algerian online communication, bridging academic inquiry with practical applications to enrich digital communication experiences and promote cultural inclusivity in Algeria.

List of References

1. Abdikarimova, M., Tashieva, N., Tashbolot k.A. & Abdullaeva, Z. (2021). Developing students verbal communication skills and speech etiquette in English language teaching. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 11(n/a), 83-89. DOI: 10.4236/ojml.2021.111007

2. Alanzi, Khalid, A. (2023). Determinants of accounting remote learning performance: Evidence from Kuwait in the context of COVID-19 pandemic *Journal of Education for Business*, 98:6, 315-323, DOI: 10.1080/08832323.2023.2172373

3. Allan,H. & Budd,M.J. (2023). A case for emojis, more or less: An analysis of word and emoji expressivity in text messaging for high and low alexithymia levels. *Computers in Human Behavior,* 147(107845), 1-10. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2023.107845.

4. Anyadike-Danes, N., Reynolds, M., Armour, C., Lagdon, S. (2024). Defining and measuring sexual consent within the context of university students' unwanted and nonconsensual sexual experiences: a systematic literature review. *Trauma Violence Abus*, 25 (1), 231–245. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221147558

5. Bai, Q., Dan, Q., Mu, Z. &Yang, M. (2019). A systematic review of emoji: Current research and future perspectives. *Front. Psycho,*. 10 (2221), 1-9.

6. Banerjee, A., & Chaudhury, S. (2010). Statistics without tears: Populations and samples. *Industrial psychiatry journal*, *19*(1), 60–65. https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-6748.77642

7. Binkley, M., Erstad, O., Herman, J., Raizen, S., Ripley, M., Miller-Ricci, M., & Rumble, M. (2012). Defining twenty-first century skills. In P. Griffin, B. McGaw & E. Care (Eds.), *Assessment and teaching of 21st century skills.* (pp. 17-66). New York, NY: Springer.

8. Boutet, I., Guay, J., Chamberland, J., Cousineau, D. & Collin,C. (2023). Emojis that work! Incorporating visual cues from facial expressions in emojis can reduce ambiguous interpretations. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports,9(*100251), 1-13. DOI:10.1016/j.chbr.2022.100251.

9. Boutet, I., LeBlanc, M., Chamberland, J.A. & Collin,C.A. (2021). Emojis influence emotional communication, social attributions, and information processing. Computers in Human Behavior,119 (106722),1-13. DOI:10.1016/j.chb.2021.106722.

10. Cambridge dictionary. (2011). Communication definition, Retrieved16 March, 2024, from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english/communicate

11. Chen, X., Lu, Z., Ai, X., Li, H., Mei, Q. & Liu, X. (2018). Through a gender lens: learning usage patterns of emojis from large-scale android users, in: *Proceedings of the 2018 World Wide Web Conference*, 763–772.

12. Chenaksara, P. (2005). *Needs analysis for English communication skills of Thai Airways International cabin crew.* (Magister Scientia), Gradute School Karserstrat University, Kaserstrat.

13. Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). Research Methods in Education (6th ed.). London and New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.

14. Coyle, M. A., & Carmichael, C. L. (2019). Perceived responsiveness in text messaging: The role of emoji use. *Computers in Human Behavior, 99*, 181–189. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2019.05.023

15. Creswell, J.W. and Plano Clark, V.L. (2011) Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research. 2nd Edition, Sage Publications, Los Angeles.

16. Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London : SAGE Publications Inc.

17. Davis, A. (2019). *A simple guide to research writing.* USA : Fort Lauderdale Florida

18. De Jong, N. H., Steinel, M. P., Florija, A., Schoonen, R., & Hulstijn, J. H. (2013). Linguistic skills and speaking fluency in a second language. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 34*(05), 893-916. DOI: 10.1017/S0142716412000069

19. De Sonneville, L. M. J., Verschoor, C. A., Njiokiktjien, C., Op het Veld, V., Toorenaar, N., & Vranken, M. (2002). Facial identity and facial emotions: Speed, accuracy, and processing strategies in children and adults. *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology, 24*(2), 200–213. DOI: 10.1076/jcen.24.2.200.989

20. De Vito, J. A. (2009). *The interpersonal communication book* (12 ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Allyn and Bacon.

21. Decrop, A. (19991). Triangulation in qualitative tourism research. *Tourism management*, 20(1),157–161.

22. Donkoh , S. & Mensah, J. (2023). Application of triangulation in qualitative research. *J Appl Biotechnol Bioeng*. 10(1), 6-9. DOI: 10.15406/jabb.2023.10.00319

23. Dresner, E. & Herring, S. C. (2010). Functions of the nonverbal CMC: Emoticons and illocutionary force. *Communication Theory,* 20, 249-268.

24. Elfil, M., & Negida, A. (2017). Sampling methods in Clinical Research; an Educational Review. *Emergency (Tehran, Iran)*, *5*(1), e52.

25. Erasmus-Kritzinger, L. E., Bowler, A., & Goliath, D. (2008). *Effective communication: Getting the message across business* (12th ed.): Van Schaik Publications.

26. Fenton, A., & Helleu, B. (2018)*. Digital and social media.* Routledge Handbook of Football Business and Management*.*

27. Fer, S. (2018). Verbal Communication as a two-way process in connecting people. SSRN, n/a. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.3128115

28. Fiske, J. (2010). *Introduction to Communication Studies*. Routledge.

29. Forsell, L.M. & Åstrom, ¨ J.A. (2012). Meanings of hugging: from greeting behavior to touching implications. *Comprehensive* Psychol. 1. (n/a). DOI : 10.2466/ 02.17.21.CP.1.13

30. Gardner, R. C., Tremblay, P., & Masgoret, A. (1997). Towards a full model of second language learning: An empirical investigation. *The Modern Language Journal*(81), 344-362

31. Goldhaber, G. M. (1990). *Organizational communication*. Dubuque, IA: Brown.

32. Gray, J.A. & DiLoreto, M. (2016). The effects of student engagement, student satisfaction, and perceived learning in online learning environments. *NCPEA International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 11(1),1-10.

33. Greene, J. & McClintock, C. (1985). Triangulation in evaluation: Design and analysis issues. *Evaluation review,* 9(5), 523–545.

34. Haleem, A., Javaid,M., Mohd, Qadri, A. & Suman, R. (2022). Understanding the role of digital technologies in education: A review. *Sustainable Operations and Computers,*3(n/a), 275-285. DOI: 10.1016/j.susoc.2022.05.004.

35. Hall, J. A., Horgan, T. G., & Murphy, N. A. (2019). Nonverbal communication. *Annual Review of Psychology, 70*, 271–294. DOI: 10.1146/annurev-psych-010418-103145

36. Hamm, P. H. (2006). *Teaching and persuasive communication: Classroom presentation skills*. Brown University: The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning.

37. Haryanti, S. & Rusfian, E., Z., (2018). Government Public Relations and Social Media: Bridging the Digital Divide on People with Social Welfare Problems. *KAP (Jurnal Kebijakan dan Administrasi Publik)* Vol.22 (2),128-145

38. Heale, R. & Forbes, D. (2013). Understanding triangulation in research. *Evidence–based nursing*.,16(4), 98–98.

39. Herring, S. C. (2005). Computer-Mediated Discourse. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H. E. Hamilton (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (1st ed., pp. 612–634). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470753460.ch32

40. Hickson, M.L., Stacks, D.W., 1992. *Nonverbal communication: Studies and applications*. McGraw-Hill Humanities, Social Sciences & World Languages

41. Interpersonal Communication. (Oct 17, 2023). Retrieved from : https://www.linkedin.com/advice/1/what-best-ways-use-digital-communication-1c. Accessed on March 20th , 2024.

42. Jemmer, P. (2009). Intrapersonal communication: The hidden language. *European Journal of Clinical Hypnosis, 9*(1), 37-49.

43. Jin, L., & Cortazzi, M. (1998). The culture the learner brings: A bridge or a barrier. In M. Byram & M. Fleming (Eds.), *Language learning in intercultural perspective: Approaches through drama and ethnography* (pp. 98-118). New York: Cambridge University Press.

44. Jones, L.L., Wurm, L.H., Norville, G.A. & Mullins, K.L. (2020). Sex differences in emoji use, familiarity, and valence. *Comput. Hum. Behav.* 108 (106305),1-10. DOI:10.1016/j.chb.2020.106305.

45. Kavanagh, B. (2016). Emoticons as a medium for channeling politeness within American and Japanese online blogging communities. *Language & Communication,* 48: 53-65

46. Knapp, M.L., Hall, J.A., 2007. Nonverbal communication in human interaction. Thomson Wadsworth, Belmont, CA

47. Kothari, C.R. (2004). Research Methodology: methods and techniques. New age international Publishers: New Delhi

48. Li, S., Hong, YC. & Craig, S.D. (2023). A Systematic Literature Review of Social Learning Theory in Online Learning Environments. *Educ Psychol Rev* 35 (108), n/a. DOI: 10.1007/s10648-023-09827-0

49. Ling, M., & Elgort, I. (2023). New Types of Evidence in Online Learning Spaces: A Corpus-Based Study. *RELC Journal*, 54(2), 410-425. DOI : 10.1177/00336882231175236

50. Lotfinejad, N., Assadi, R., Aelami, M.H., and Pittet, D. (2020). Emojis in public health and how they might be used for hand hygiene and infection prevention and control. *Antimicrob. Resist. Infect. Control*, 9 (27), 1-10.

51. Lu, X., Cao, Y., Chen, Z. & Liu, X. (2018). A first look at emoji usage on GitHub: an empirical study, arXiv preprint, n/a. DOI: 1.48550/arXiv.1812.04863

52. Luo, B., Lau, R.Y., Li, C. & Si, Y.W. (2022). A critical review of state-of-the-art chatbot designs and applications. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery,* 12 (1), e1434

53. Macourková, A. (2022). *Analysis of usage emoji in Internet communication on WhatsApp.* Published PhD thesis. Západočeská univerzita v Plzni Fakulta filozofická

54. Malimabe, M. M. (1997). *Communication apprehension in QwaQwa secondary school.* (MEd Minidissertation), University for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom

55. Mammola,S., Falaschi, M. & Ficetol, G.F. (2023). Biodiversity communication in the digital era through the Emoji tree of life. *iScience*, 26(10856), 1-10. DOI: 10.1016/j.isci.2023.108569

56. Mentoor, Z.M. (September 2015). *An analysis of the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners.* Doctoral thesis, Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University.

57. Miller, H. (2018). *Identifying the Risks of Miscommunicating with Emoji.* Published PhD thesis. University of Minnesota

58. Miller, H., Thebault-Spieker, J., Chang, S., Johnson, I., Terveen, L., and Hecht, B. (2016).''Blissfully happy'' or ''ready to fight'': Varying interpretations of emoji. In Proceedings of *the Tenth International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media (ICWSM 2016)*, 259–268

59. Monyai, S. C. (2010). *Meeting the challenges of Black English Second Language South African learners in ex-model C primary schools.* (Magister Educationis Dissertation), University of Pretoria, Pretoria. Retrieved from upetd.up.ac.za/thesis/available/etd-01202012-115418

60. Muttonen, M., Olkinuora, E., Tynjala, P., & Lehtinen, E. (2008). *"Do I need research skills in working life?"- Student's motivation and difficulties in quantitative methods coursers*. Turku, Finland.

61. Nguyen,G.,B.,H. *How to be impolite with emojis: a corpus analysis of Vietnamese social media posts*. Master's thesis (December 2023). School of Languages and Cultures West Lafayette, Indiana.

62. Oliver, R. (2005). Ten more years of educational technologies in education: how far have we travelled? *Australian Educational Computing*, 20 (1), 18-23

63. Pacheco, E., Lips, M.& Yoong, Y. (2018). Transition 2.0: Digital technologies, higher education, and vision impairment. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 37 (n/a), 1-10.

64. Padres, A. (2019). Emoji: The Complete History | WIRED. Accessed on (31 March 2024)

65. Patton M.Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Serv Res,* 34(2),1189-208.

66. Patton, Q. M. (1987). *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation*. Newsbury Park, London, New Dehli: Sage Publications.

67. Pereira, M. (2019). *Communication skills training intervention based on automated recognition of human emotion and non-verbal behaviour.* Doctoral thesis, Brunel University London.

68. Pertegal, M.-A., ´Oliva, A., Rodríguez-Meirinhos, A., Sudzina, F. (2019). Development and validation of the Scale of Motives for Using Social Networking Sites (SMUSNS) for adolescents and youths. *PLoS ONE*, 14 (12), 1-10. DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0225781.

69. Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants part 1. *On the Horizon*, 9 (5), 1-6. DOI: 10.1108/10748120110424816

70. Ribble, M. (2015). Digital Citizenship in Schools: Nine Elements All Students Should Know. International Society for Tech in Ed

71. Roddy Ch., Amiet D. L., Chung J., Holt C., Shaw L., McKenzie S., Garivaldis F. Lodge J. M. & Mundy M.E. (2017). Applying Best Practice Online Learning, Teaching, and Support to Intensive Online Environments: An Integrative Review. *Frontiers in Education*. 2(n/a), 1-10. DOI=10.3389/feduc.2017.00059

72. Roldán, M.S., Marauri, J., Aubert, A., Flecha, R. (2021). How Inclusive Interactive Learning Environments Benefit Students Without Special Needs. *Front Psychol.*12(661427), 1-12. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.661427.

73. Rong, S., Wang,W., Mannan,U.A., Santana de Almeida, E., Zhou, S. & Ahmed,I. (2022). An empirical study of emoji use in software development communication. *Information and Software Technology,*148(106912), 1-13. DOI: 10.1016/j.infsof.2022.106912.

74. Sampietro, A. (2019). Emoji and rapport management in Spanish WhatsApp chats. *J. Pragmat.* 143 (n/a), 109–120. DOI: /10.1016/j.pragma.2019.02.009.

75. Sampling, P. (2012). Guidelines P, Choices MS, Oaks T. *Choosing the Type of Sampling*, 125-74.

76. Seo, K., Tang, J., Roll, I., Fels, S., Yoon, D. *(2021).* The impact of artificial intelligence on learner–instructor interaction in online learning. *Int J Educ Technol High Educ,* **18** (54), 1-10. DOI: 10.1186/s41239-021-00292-9.

77. Shorten, A. & Moorley, A. (2014). Selecting the sample. *Evid Based Nurs,* 17 (101747). DOI:10.1136/eb-2014-101747

78. Sitnik-Warchulska,K., Izydorczyk,B.,& Wajda, Z. (2023). E-Attachment and online communication: The Changing Context of the Clinical Diagnosis and Psychological Treatment. Routledge: London. DOI: 10.4324/9781003221043

79. Sprenger, M. (2010). *Brain-Based Teaching in the Digital Age* (-). Alexandria: ASCD.

80. Szombathelyi, M.K., Waldbuesser, P., & Tench, R. (2015). Digital age: Information and communication technologies, tools and trends for communication management. *2015 6th IEEE International Conference on Cognitive Infocommunications (CogInfoCom)*, 229-233.

81. Tang, Y. & Hew, K.F. (2018) *Emoticon, emoji, and sticker use in computer-mediated communications: Understanding its communicative function, impact, user behavior, and motive*. In: Deng, L., Ma, W., Fong, C. (Eds.), New Media for Educational Change. Springer, pp. 191–201

82. Tubbs, S., & Moss, S. (2008). *Human communication* (11th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill

83. Turgut,Y.E. & A. Aslan, A. (2021). Factors affecting ICT integration in Turkish education: A systematic review. *Education and Information Technologies*, n/a, 1-24.

84. Turner P. &Turner, S. (2009). Triangulation in practice. *Virtual reality,* 13(3),171–181

85. Vreken, N. J. (1996). *Classroom communication skills: A manual for B.Ed-students*. Potchefstroom: Keurkopie.

86. Walther, J. B., & D'Addario, K. P. (2001). The impacts of emoticons on message interpretation in computer-mediated communication. *Social Science Computer Review, 19*(3), 324–347. doi/ 10.1177/089443930101900307

87. Weissman, B. (2019). Peaches and eggplants or. . . something else? The role of context in emoji interpretations. *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America*, *4*(1), 29- 1–6. DOI: 10.3765/plsa.v4i1.4533.

88. Wilson, G, Teresa Pinto O.M., Brown, M., Tucker, K. (2020). Non-verbal communication, emotions, and tensions in co-production: Reflections on researching memory and social change in Peru and Colombia. *Emotion, Space and Society,* 37(100717), 1-7. DOI: /10.1016/j.emospa.2020.100717.

89. Wisdom, J., Acri, M., Onwuegbuzie, A. & Green, C.. (2011). Methodological Reporting in Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods. *Health services research,* 47 (n/a), 721-45. DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-6773.2011.01344.x.

90. Wood, J. T. (2010). *Interpersonal communication: Everyday encounters* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning

91. Woodrow, L. (2006). Anxiety and speaking English as a second language *English Language Communication, 37*(3), 308-328. DOI: 10.1177/0033688206071315

92. Xia Y, Hu Y, Wu C, Yang L, Lei M. (2022). Challenges of online learning amid the COVID-19: College students' perspective. *Front Psychol.* 13(1037311),1-13. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1037311.

93. Yu,S.& Zhao, L.(2024).Emojifying chatbot interactions: An exploration of emoji utilization in human-chatbot communications. *Telematics and Informatics,*86(102071),1-12. DOI: 10.1016/j.tele.2023.102071.

Appendix One: Questionnaire addressed to EFL Students

> # Questionnaire

Dear Participants,

We cordially invite you to participate in our research study by completing the following questionnaire. This questionnaire serves as a vital data collection tool for our academic research titled **"Probing into Perceptions about Emojis Usage in Formal Communication.** Your responses will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and will be utilized exclusively for research purposes. Your valuable time and contribution to our study are greatly appreciated.

Section 1: Personal Demographics

Gender: Female ⬭   Male ⬭

2. Age: Less than 25 ⬭   Above 25 ⬭

Section 2: Utilization, Preferences, and Understanding of Emojis by Students

1. How often do you use emojis in your formal online communication with lecturers?

- a. Never ⬭
- b. Rarely ⬭
- c. Occasionally ⬭
- d. Always ⬭

2. What types of emojis do you prefer using in your communication with lecturers?

- a. **Facial expressions** (Smily Faces) such as 😊 (smiling face) ⬭
- b. **Gestures** like 👍 (thumbs up), ✌️ (peace sign) ⬭
- c. **Objects** such as 🚗 (car), 🍔 (hamburger) ⬭

Other (please specify): _____

3. How would you rate your understanding of the meanings and implications of emojis in formal communication?

- a. Poor ⬭
- b. Fair ⬭
- c. Good ⬭
- d. Excellent ⬭

4. These are 9 examples of emojis, can guess the meaning of:

Smiley Faces:
1. 😁
…………………
2. 😍
…………………
3. 😂
…………………

Gestures:
1. 👏
……………
2. 🖐️
…………..
3. 🤝
…………

Objects:
1. 🎁
……………
2. 📚
……………
3. 🎧
……

Can you provide others please?.   _____

Section 3: Functions of Emojis in Formal Communication

6. Do you think emojis can convey intentions effectively in academic communication?

Yes ⬭   No ⬭   Not sure   ⬭

7. In your opinion, what functions do emojis serve in formal communication between students and lecturers? (Select all that apply)

a. Emotional expression   ⬭

b. Emphasis   ⬭

c. Clarity(avoid misunderstanding)   ⬭

e. Humor   ⬭

Other (please specify): _____

8. How do you think the use of emojis can influence (hinder or enhance) your communication with lecturers? Please indicate the relevant answer on a scale of 1 to 5, ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), to strongly agree (5).

	1	2	3	4	5
I. Emojis may enhance communication:					
f.By adding emotional context to messages.					
g. in informal settings					
h. by making messages more engaging and expressive.					
i.by helping convey tone and emotions effectively.					
j.by fostering a more friendly and approachable tone.					
II. Emojis may hinder communication:					
g. by potentially being misinterpreted or unprofessional.					
h. in formal contexts.					
i.if overused or used inappropriately.					
j.by distracting from the main message.					
k. by creating ambiguity or confusion in messages.					
l. by detracting from the seriousness of academic discussions.					

Section 4: Impact of Emojis on Formal Communication

9. Have you received feedback from your lecturers regarding your use of emojis in formal communication?

Yes ⬭   No ⬭   Not sure   ⬭

10. Have you ever encountered challenges or misunderstandings due to the use of emojis in formal communication?

Yes ⬭   No ⬭   Not sure   ⬭

11. Do you think the perception of emojis in formal communication varies across different contexts?

Yes   ⬭   No   ⬭   Not sure   ⬭

12. Do you think there are specific guidelines or etiquette to follow when using emojis in formal communication?

Yes   ⬭   No   ⬭   Not sure   ⬭

If yes, (please specify): _____

Appendix Two: Interview directed to EFL Teachers

<div style="border:1px solid green; border-radius:20px; padding:10px; text-align:center">

Interview addressed to University Teachers

</div>

Dear Lecturers,

We extend a warm invitation to you to participate in this interview about views on *the use of emojis in (online) formal communication: A Case study of Lecturers and Students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret*. Your insights and experiences are invaluable to our research endeavor. We assure you that your responses will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and will only be used for research purposes, not forgetting that your participation is highly valued and appreciated.

1. Do you engage in communication with your students on digital platforms? If so, could you specify whether it is primarily formal or informal communication?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………….

2. Which platforms do you commonly utilize to communicate with your students? For example, do you use email, Google Classroom, LMS Moodle, or any other platforms?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………….

3. Do you incorporate emojis in your communication with students? If yes, in what contexts and for what purposes?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………….

4. Can you describe your personal stance on the use of emojis and their appropriateness in formal academic communication?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………….

5. How do you typically respond to students who use emojis in their formal communication with you?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

………
…….

6. Do you believe the use of emojis has an impact on the professionalism or credibility of student online communication in academic settings?

………
………
………
…….

7. Based on your experience, how prevalent is the use of emojis among students in their formal academic communication?

………
………
………
…….

8. Do you think the perception of emojis in formal academic communication differ among different generations of students?

………
………
………
…….

9. Have you encountered any challenges or misunderstandings arising from the use of emojis in formal academic communication?

………
………
………
…….

10. Do you think there are specific contexts or situations where the use of emojis is more appropriate or less appropriate in formal academic communication?

………
………
………
…….

11. In your opinion, what role do emojis play in terms of enhancing or hindering formal academic communication? (enhancing clarity, adding warmth, causing confusion)

………
………
………
…….

Summary

The research examines the role of emojis in formal online communication, focusing on first-year students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret in Algeria. Emojis play a crucial role in shaping online discourse and engagement but their use in formal academic contexts remains understudied, particularly in Algeria. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study surveys 102 students and conducts interviews with 8 lecturers. Findings indicate a gender discrepancy in emoji usage, with female students using emojis more frequently than male students. Lecturers, however, prioritize professionalism and clarity, refraining from emoji use. The study underscores the necessity for further research to refine communication strategies and bridge gaps between educators and students in online formal communication contexts.

Résumé

La recherche examine le rôle des emojis dans la communication en ligne formelle, en se concentrant sur les étudiants de première année de l'Université Ibn Khaldoun de Tiaret en Algérie. Les emojis jouent un rôle crucial dans la formation du discours en ligne et de l'engagement, mais leur utilisation dans les contextes académiques formels reste peu étudiée, en particulier en Algérie. En utilisant une approche mixte, l'étude interroge 102 étudiants et mène des entretiens avec 8 conférenciers. Les résultats indiquent une disparité entre les sexes dans l'utilisation des emojis, les étudiantes utilisant des emojis plus fréquemment que les étudiants. Les conférenciers, cependant, accordent la priorité au professionnalisme et à la clarté, en s'abstenant d'utiliser des emojis. L'étude souligne la nécessité de recherches supplémentaires pour affiner les stratégies de communication et combler les écarts entre les éducateurs et les étudiants dans les contextes de communication en ligne formelle.

ملخص

تتناول الدراسة دور الرموز التعبيرية (إيموجي) في التواصل الإلكتروني الرسمي، مع التركيز على طلاب السنة الأولى في جامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت في الجزائر. تلعب الرموز التعبيرية دورًا حاسمًا في تشكيل الحوار عبر الإنترنت وتعزيز التفاعل، لكن استخدامها في السياقات الأكاديمية الرسمية لا يزال قليلاً مدروسًا، خاصة في الجزائر. باستخدام نهج مختلط، تقوم الدراسة بتحقيق 102 طالب وإجراء مقابلات مع 8 محاضرين. تشير النتائج إلى وجود اختلاف جنسي في استخدام الرموز التعبيرية، حيث تستخدم الطالبات الرموز التعبيرية بشكل أكثر تواترًا من الطلاب. أما المحاضرون، فيعطون الأولوية للمهنية والوضوح، ويمتنعون عن استخدام الرموز التعبيرية. تؤكد الدراسة على ضرورة إجراء المزيد من البحوث لتنقيح استراتيجيات الاتصال وتعزيز الفجوات بين المعلمين والطلاب في سياقات التواصل الإلكتروني الرسمي.