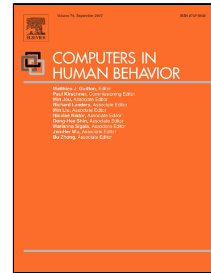


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The Communicative Role of Non-Face Emojis: Affect and Disambiguation

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### Abstract

Emojis have evolved from imitations of facial expressions meant to communicate affect into pictures of objects, food, and places that are not directly linked to affect. While emojis that resemble facial expressions are well-researched, emojis that resemble objects and items are much less so. The current experiment is an exploration as to whether these non-face emojis disambiguate messages and communicate affect in the same manner in which face emojis do. Participants rated the affective content and ambiguity of text messages that are either accompanied or not by a non-face emoji. Results suggest that non-face emojis may disambiguate messages and transmit affect, and that these roles interact such that the extent to which an emoji communicates affect is related to how much it disambiguates a message. These results are discussed through the lens of the sociological theory of emotion work. The author also suggests ways in which research on non-face emojis might uncover more flexible communicative roles not possible with face emojis.

Keywords: emoticon, emoji, computer-mediated communication, nonverbal, emotion, affect

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