

Multimodal Metaphors Study—Take the Expression of Negative Emotion in Emojis as an Example

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Using the multimodal metaphor theory, this article studies the multimodal metaphor of emotion. Emotions can be divided into positive emotions and negative emotions. Positive emotion metaphors include happiness metaphors and love metaphors, while negative emotion metaphors include anger metaphors, fear metaphors and sadness metaphors. They intuitively represent the source domain through physical signs, sensory effects, orientation dynamics and physical presentation close to the actual life, and the emotional multimodal metaphors in emojis have narrative and social functions.

Keywords: multimodal metaphor, negative emotions, emojis

Introduction

Emotion is a kind of abstract, vague, invisible emotion, lack of connection with the material image characteristics. It can influence cognition and be influenced by cognition. Therefore, people often use their vague emotions as metaphors in order to vividly describe and clearly understand them, which is the so-called emotional metaphor. Shaver et al. (1987, pp. 1061-1086), based on the study of emotion classification by some psychologists, established the basic diagram of emotion concept with linguistic methods, and proposed two categories including five basic emotion metaphors from the perspective of cognitive nervous system: positive emotion metaphors and negative emotion metaphor includes anger metaphor, fear metaphor and sadness metaphor. It is defined as the emotional needs, mental behaviors, or verbal behaviors that an individual cannot meet because of external or internal stimuli. There is still much room for research on the multimodal metaphor of emotion.

The Multi-modal Metaphor Construction Model of Emotions in Emojis

The development of the information society and the increase in the number of channels for expressing meaning make multimedia technology work together with language in daily life to convey meaning. Metaphors not only take the form of language, but also other forms, including a variety of perceptual multimodal symbols, from pictures to sounds, from smells to gestures. Among them, language is the most robust of all modal symbols in terms of meaning generation principle and syntax system (Lacey, 2023, p. 40). In order to meet the continuous

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development and growth of linguistics and human cognition, Forceville believes that metaphor of multiple modes should be comprehensively studied and analyzed. Therefore, multimodal metaphor comes into being. With the deepening of practical research and development, some scholars have found that Forceville's definition of multimodal metaphor limits the scope of research and the application of multimodal metaphor in practical analysis (Egg-ertsson & Forceville, 2009). In a word, there are more than two ways to express the metaphorical meaning of source domain and target domain. The properties that map from the source domain to the target domain are the mapping items. Different from conceptual metaphor, the source domain and target domain of multimodal metaphor use two or two different modes to carry out meaning mapping.

In Emojis, emotional metaphors are jointly constructed by language modes and image modes, and different modes are interdependent and complementary to each other. Abstract emotional metaphors are visualized and vivid through multi-modal metaphors with interwoven images and images.

The Meaning Construction of Emotional Multimodal Metaphors in Emojis

On the basis of the existing theories of emotional metaphor and multimodal metaphor, this study chooses emojis as the research corpus. Based on the classification of emotional metaphors proposed by Shaver et al. (1987, pp. 1061-1086), this paper reclassifies emotional metaphors in emojis into three categories and six subcategories. Emotional metaphor can be divided into positive emotion metaphor, neutral emotion metaphor and negative emotion metaphor according to emotional factors and basic emotion categories. Negative emotion metaphor can be divided into anger metaphor, fear metaphor and sadness metaphor.

Sadness Metaphor

The cognitive experience of spatial orientation occupies an important position in the conceptual system of human beings. With the help of spatial orientation cognition such as up and down, front and back, inside and outside, abstract conceptual fields such as time and emotion can be described more intuitively.

"Sadness is down/down" is a typical conceptual metaphor in the field of emotion based on the perception of up and down. In tangible space, above and below are relative and mutually referential relationships, and joy and sadness, which are also relative emotions, can also be understood with the help of the above schema. Human beings are upright animals, when the mood is low, the will will affect the body's natural physiological response, resulting in a droopy state of the body, showing symptoms such as bowing, limbs down, so when in the lower square or low place of the spatial position, it means that the mood is in a low state. In Figure 1, we see that the frog's eyes are looking down, and the overall temperament expresses a kind of sadness.



Figure 1. Sadness.

Anger Metaphor

Anger is an intensification of the body's mental and physical response to external events. G. Lackoff and M. Johnson believes that special physiological changes in the human body can indicate certain feelings or emotions. And in the case of anger, its physiological effects are mainly understood in two aspects: one is the common belief

that Anger is heat, or anger is regarded as the flow of liquid, Anger is the heat of a fluid in a container. Anger is the heat of a fluid in a container. The second aspect is Anger is fire. When a person is angry, the body heat rises, the face and neck become red, (e.g. figure 2) causing anxiety, which in turn affects other parts of the senses.



Figure 2. Anger.

Fear Metaphor

Fear is one of the four basic human emotions. Fear is an emotional experience that occurs when an individual tries to get rid of or escape from a certain situation. This experience is caused by a lack of ability to deal with scary situations.

G. Lakoff (1987) and Z. Kovecses (2000) all attach importance to the role of image schema in metaphorical conceptualization. This metaphor sees the body and its parts as containers, while the emotions are seen as the liquids and substances in the containers. “Fear is a liquid in a container” is a traditional metaphor in which the body is thought of as a container for emotions so that after they have “taken up a certain place”, they can overflow, they can be dumped.



Figure 3. Fear.

The Function of Emotional Multimodal Metaphor in Emojis

The Narrative Function of Emotional Multimodal Metaphor in Emojis

The main purpose of communication is often to transfer information interactively and pay attention to eliminating the uncertainty of information. When people use mobile phones for daily communication, it is usually difficult to see facial expressions and body movements, and plain text communication can not reflect the intonation and rhythm of words. When words alone are not enough to express emotions and emotional factors are crucial to interpersonal communication, emotional packets, with their vivid, convenient and flexible use, often restore emotional factors in daily social life to the network world through exaggerated expressions and actions, making up for the lack of emotional burden, to a certain extent Resolve the problem of emotion and information loss caused by spatial differences.

The Social Function of Emotional Multimodal Metaphors in Emojis

Nowadays, the communication and cooperation between people are becoming more and more complicated, and interpersonal relationships will become closer due to the complexity of interests. All these put forward new requirements for social communication: First, we should express our personal emotions timely, accurately and efficiently, and show others our values and social relations to obtain necessary social resources; In addition, we

should recognize and understand the emotions expressed by others, and promptly, clearly and efficiently clarify their value needs for others, only in this way can we better carry out social activities and cooperation. The widespread use of memes in everyday communication has been established primarily through the medium of mobile phones. When face-to-face communication is not possible, memes are a tool for verbal communication. People are social entities, and emojis can reflect social emotions. Subjectively speaking, the popularity of memes is highly related to people's lifestyle and mental state in modern society. With the change of production mode, social structure and communication mode, people's emotional content becomes more complex and rich. In addition to love, hate, anger, shame, sadness and other basic emotions, there are also a series of special emotional states such as hatred of wealth, weakness and deprivation. Emotion is inseparable from social activities, and the richness of social emotion inevitably leads to a variety of needs for emotional expression. No matter the number, type, or the relationship between images and language, emojis have inherent advantages in expressing the richness and vividness of emotions to realize social functions.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of emojis, this article summarizes the representation ways and characteristics of emojis' multimodal metaphors, and further discusses the two functions of emojis' multimodal metaphors: narrative function and social function. On the one hand, the study of multimodal metaphors in emojis is helpful to understand the uniqueness of multimodal metaphors, and to strengthen the understanding and application of multimodal metaphors by combining their emotional expression content, characterization characteristics and dissemination rules. On the other hand, it will help to supplement and enrich the theoretical research of emotional metaphor and multimodal metaphor.

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