

Interactions of emoticon valence and text processing

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Abstract: Emoticons in informal text communication are common worldwide. They have the potential to reveal emotion and social functions, analogous to facial expression and body gestures in face-to-face verbal communication. Our findings from a corpus study of online text communication by a group of scientists, some of whom were bilingual and others monolingual, suggested that patterns of emoticon use depend on a variety of factors, including emoticon valence and language of texting (Aragon et al., 2014). In the present study we bring these effects into the laboratory by examining the interrelation of emoticons and words in lexical decision (LD) experiments with sequential (SOA 200 ms) but spatially superimposed emoticon-word pairs. Monolingual speakers showed a reliable interaction of emoticon valence with lexicality but interactions with word valence were unreliable. Results will be compared to those from comparable word-word pairs.