

Interactions of emoticon valence and text processing

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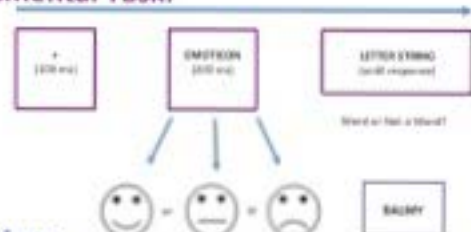
Research Question:

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.

Do emoticons and words share a lexicon?

In the present study we bring emoticons into the laboratory to examine the interrelation of emoticons and words in lexical decision (LD) experiments with spatially superimposed emoticon-word pairs.

Experimental Task:



Procedure:

Lexical Decision (LD): Word or not a word?

emoticon prime-word target

Emoticon Decision (ED): Happy or Sad? (or neutral)

word prime-emoticon target

Expt.1: Emoticon primes repeat over trials.

LD and ED tasks performed with different ss

Expt.2: Word primes repeat. Task: Lexical Decision (only)

Different ss see verb and adjective (adj) targets

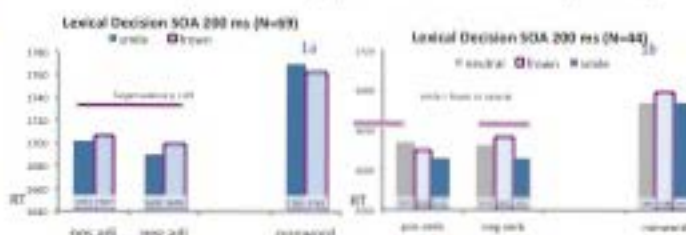
2a: cheer vs. groan w/adj target; 2b: sigh vs. grin w/ verb target

Materials:

Expt. 1a/c adjective; Expt. 1b verb

Positive valence		Negative valence	
ADI (n=36)	VERB (n=51)	ADI (n=36)	VERB (n=51)
ADEPT	ARISE	BALD	ANNOY
AGILE	BLUSH	BLAND	BLAME
AMPLE	BOOST	BLEAK	BLEED
AVID	CITE	BOSSY	DROWN
AWED	ELOPE	DAMP	FAL
BALMY	FEED	DIZZY	HURT
BRISK	GUDE	DRAB	ITCH
BUFF		DUSTY	

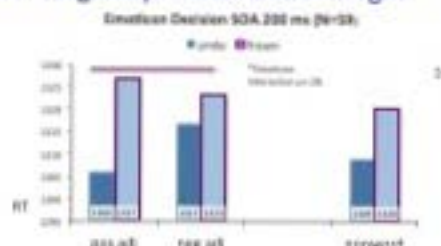
Results Expt1. abc (repeated emoticon prime):



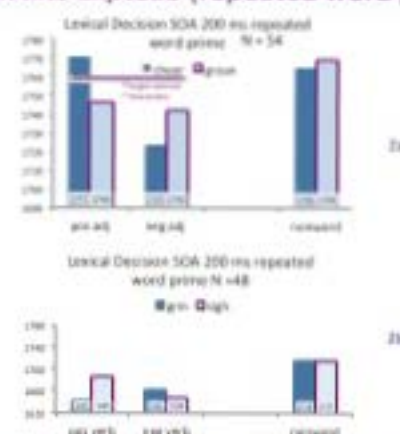
Summary:

Lexical decision task: no interaction of emoticon valence with target valence.

Emoticon decision task: emoticon valence is significant and marginally interacts with target valence.



Results Expt2ab (repeated word prime):



Summary: Prime-target valence congruity slows LD (adj targets) when prime word repeats.

Discussion:

- Effect of target valence also evident w/ D':
 - adjectives (Expt1a) but not verbs (Expt1b).
 - word (Expt1a/2a) and emoticon primes.
- Valence congruity facilitation evident only in emoticon-target pairs in ED positive (Expt1b).
- Valence congruity inhibition from repeated word primes in LD (Expt2a).

Do emoticons and words share a lexicon?

Prime (😊/word)-target valence congruity:

- LD suggests not easily.
- ED suggests possibly.
- Asymmetry warrants further research.

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