

The Use of Textual Paralanguage in Expressing Emotions

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of textual paralanguage (TPL) in expressing emotions among students at Isabela State University. The research aimed to determine the frequency of TPL elements, such as emojis, repeated letters, typed laughter, excessive capitalization, and punctuation, in digital communication. A total of 100 respondents from the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies program were surveyed during the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between demographic variables (age, sex, and year level) and the use of TPL. The findings indicated that emojis, repeated letters, and typed laughter were the most frequently used forms of TPL for expressing emotions, while excessive capitalization and punctuation were less commonly used. Additionally, there was no significant difference between the respondents' age or sex and their use of TPL. However, a significant difference was found between year levels and the use of typed laughter, although no such difference was observed for emojis, excessive capitalization, repeated letters, or punctuation. The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory, which emphasizes the role of signs and symbols in meaning-making. Barthes' concepts of signifiers (symbols or words) and signified (the meanings evoked) provide a lens through which to understand how TPL elements convey emotional meaning beyond their literal form. The study also highlights the cultural and contextual factors influencing the interpretation of these textual cues. Using an adapted survey instrument based on Durante (2016), data were collected and analyzed using simple random sampling. The study concludes that TPL significantly enhances emotional expression in digital communication, particularly in informal settings, and that it plays a vital role in clarifying emotional intent in online conversations.

Keywords: Textual paralanguage, Emojis, Excessive punctuation, Repeated letters, Excessive Capitalization, Typed laughter, Barthes' Semiotic Theory, Emotional Expression, Digital Communication, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Online communication is increasingly prominent in today's digital age. Instant messaging is widely used for text-based communication. However, text-based messaging lacks the ability to communicate nonverbal information, such as through facial expressions and voice tones (Choi & Azawa, 2018). The onset of the pandemic led to a significant rise in online interactions. Nowadays, the majority of people engage in social interaction through various social media platforms. With the use of electronic devices, individuals are able to engage in long distance communication with their relatives, acquaintances, loved ones, and other social connections. The act of expressing emotions through digital means presents a complex set of challenges, which may arise from a variety of factors. In face-to-face interactions, emotions are expressed through body language and tone of voice whereas none of these physical cues are present in online texting, making it difficult to interpret the precise emotions expressed online. Moreover, the way individuals communicate emotions with their friends online will be different from how they express emotions with their family, partners,

and acquaintances because ambiguity can occur online in which it might perceive the message negatively. Expressing emotions clearly is important to avoid misunderstandings between the people engage in digital conversations.

Informal communication among this generation has resulted in creating modern texting language where textual paralanguage such as excessive punctuation marks, excessive capitalization, repeated letters, and typed laughter are widely used. Textual paralanguage serves as the voice and body language in online communication where it helps to express emotions effectively. It adds emotional richness and nuance in communication leading to convey the intended message of the text. Luangrath.et al, (2017) have studied how textual paralanguage has an influence within the context of emotions in online world. They found that, textual paralanguage can create emotion signals such as happiness, sadness, anger, and fear when combine with other linguistic elements.

To effectively interpret the emotions communicated in online interactions, individuals must be aware with various forms of textual paralanguage. Determining the frequency in which textual paralanguage is used online is important for acquiring more knowledge on how individuals communicate and convey their emotional states through written language because emotions are essential for communication and understanding others' intentions. Considering the increasing observation of the importance of emotions in online communications, there is a lack of investigation on how individuals used textual paralanguage to express their emotions in written communication. Previous studies have concentrated on the effect of textual paralanguage in conveying emotions, rather than examining its frequency of use. The goal of this study is to examine the frequency in the usage of textual paralanguage in expressing emotions.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine the frequency in the usage of textual paralanguage in expressing emotions. Specifically, this study sought the answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of the following:
 - 1.1 Sex
 - 1.2 Age
 - 1.3 Year Level
2. How frequent do the respondents use the textual paralinguistic devices in terms of:
 - a. emoji
 - b. excessive capitalization
 - c. typed laughter
 - d. repeated letters
 - e. excessive punctuation
3. Is there a significant difference between the respondents' profile and their frequency of usage of paralinguistic devices?

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to determine the frequency in the usage of textual paralanguage in expressing emotions. Specifically, this study sought the answers to the following questions:

1. Determine the profile of the respondents in terms of the following:
 - o Sex
 - o Age
 - o Year Level

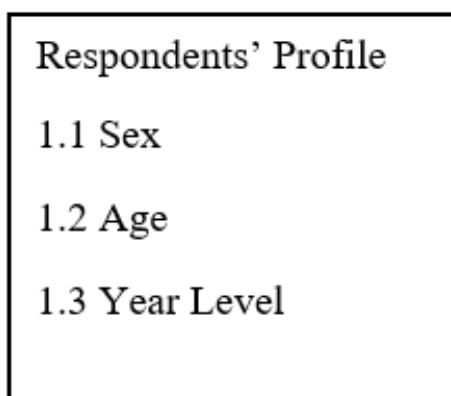
2. Determine how frequent do the respondents use the textual paralinguistic devices in terms of:
 - a. emoji
 - b. excessive capitalization
 - c. typed laughter
 - d. repeated letters
 - e. excessive punctuation
3. Analyze the significant difference between the respondents' profile and their frequency of usage of textual paralinguistic devices

Theoretical Framework

Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory offers a valuable foundation for understanding how meaning is created and communicated through signs and symbols. This theory helps analyze the use of textual paralinguistic devices in expressing emotions. Barthes' key concepts, such as signifiers and signified, denotation and connotation, and the role of cultural context in interpretation, are particularly relevant when studying textual paralinguistic devices. In the context of textual paralinguistic devices (TPL), Barthes' idea of the signifier (the word or symbol) and signified (the meaning it evokes) can be applied to understand how textual elements convey emotional meaning. For example, in digital communication, symbols like emojis, capitalization (e.g., all caps), and punctuation marks serve as signifiers that convey meaning beyond their literal interpretation. Barthes also distinguishes between denotation (the literal meaning of a sign) and connotation (the emotional or cultural meanings attached to it). In written text, elements of paralinguistic devices like punctuation, capitalization, and emojis can communicate emotional intensity. Furthermore, Barthes emphasized how cultural codes shape and influence meaning. This framework highlights the complex relationship between the literal and cultural meanings of TPL elements, as well as how technological and social factors impact their interpretation and use.

Conceptual Framework

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE



DEPENDENT VARIABLE

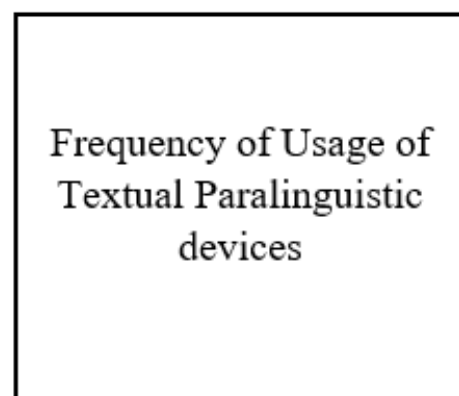


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study aims to determine the frequency in the usage of textual paralinguistic devices in expressing emotions. In order to achieve these goals, the independent and dependent variable illustrated. The independent variable representing the profile of the respondents. The dependent variable shows the frequency usage of textual paralinguistic devices.

Hypothesis of the Study

There is no significant difference between the frequency in the usage of textual paralinguistic devices in expressing emotions and their profile.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher used a descriptive-correlation design method in this study. The descriptive correlation is used to define the difference between two variables. The whole purpose of using correlation in research is to figure out which variables are connected. This method provides essential knowledge about the concepts used in the study as well as their difference with each other.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the 1st to 4th year students of Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies at Isabela State University-Echague who are using messenger as a means of communication.

Research Instrument

The researcher used an adapted research questionnaire. This questionnaire used to determine the frequency in the usage of textual paralanguage in expressing emotions. The survey questionnaire was adopted from Durante, C. (2016) from the thesis entitled: Adapting nonverbal coding theory to mobile mediated communication: An analysis of emoji and other digital nonverbal cues. The questionnaire will be divided into two (2) parts. The first part of the survey will be the profile of the respondents, which direct the respondents to answer their details on sex, age, and year level. The second part consists of questions regarding the usage of emoji, excessive capitalization, typed laughter, repeated letters, and excessive punctuations, in order to determine the frequency usage of textual paralinguistic devices. The respondents will be asked to choose from five choices given which are: very frequently, frequently, sometimes, rarely, and never.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher utilized the following steps and procedures in gathering the data needed in the study. First, the researcher wrote a request letter seeking permission to conduct the survey. After receiving the permission, the researcher administered the questionnaires to the respondents. The 1st to 4th year students of Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies of Isabela State University-Echague were requested to provide responses to the questionnaire. This procedure was conducted during vacant period to avoid disruption of classes. After gathering all the information needed in the study, the researcher organized, analyzed and interpret the data gathered from the respondents.

Sampling procedure and Sample

The respondents of this study comprised of 1st to 4th year students from Bachelor of Arts in English Language of Studies of Isabela of State University- Echague. The researcher used simple random sampling in their respondents in which researcher will randomly select a subset of participants from a population where 1st to 4th year ELS students have an equal opportunity to participate in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percent
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	17	17.0
Female	83	83.0
<i>Age</i>		
18	19	19.0
19	22	22.0
20	24	24.0

21	26	26.0
22	8	8.0
23	1	1.0
<i>Year level</i>		
First Year	25	25.0
Second Year	25	25.0
Third Year	25	25.0
Fourth Year	25	25.0

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, 83% of the respondents were females and 17% were males. As reflected on the table 1, out of 100 respondents twenty-six (26%) students were aged 21 followed by twentyfour (24%) students were aged 20, twenty-two (22%) were aged 19, nineteen (19%) students were aged 18, eight (8%) aged 22, and one (1%) student was aged 23. On year level, 25% of the respondents were 1st year, 25% were 2nd year, 25% were 3rd year, and 25% were 4th year students.

Table 2. Usage of Emoji

Items	Mean	Description
1. How often do you use emojis while text messaging?	3.57	Frequently
2. I use emojis in text messaging to convey my emotions or depict my emotional state.	3.80	Frequently
3. I use emojis when texting my family. (i.e. parents or siblings)	2.98	Sometimes
4. I use emojis when texting my friends.	3.84	Frequently
5. I use emojis when texting a romantic partner / a romantic interest (i.e. boyfriend/girlfriend or spouse.)	3.33	Sometimes
6. I use emojis when texting an acquaintance	3.06	Sometimes
GRAND MEAN	3.43	Frequently

Table 2 presents the statistical analysis of the usage of emojis of the respondents in expressing emotions. The data reveals that among the 6 items, 3 items got the highest mean having the “Frequently” description. These are the items: 4 “*I use emojis when texting my friends*”, with 3.84 mean; item 2 “*I use emojis in text messaging to convey my emotions or depict my emotional state*” with 3.80 mean; and item 1 “*How often do you use emojis while texting*”, with 3.57 mean. This indicates that the respondents frequently use emojis to express their emotions when talking to their friends online. This means that they used emojis often to convey their emotional state when communicating with their friends online because they are sure that their friends will interpret them correctly as they share the same understanding of the various emojis used online. Communicating with friends online are more casual or informal as it involves using various emojis in different context or colloquial language in a conversation because it allows the online interactions more relax and making the online interactions feel more natural and friendly.

The results of the study agrees with the study of Bosch and Revilla (2018) about the use of emojis by Millenials it is found that individuals in Spain and Mexico frequently use emojis in expressing their emotions when interacting with their friends. It is more appropriate to express emotions through emojis towards friends as it is representing positive mood and make the conversation flow smoothly (Park et al., 2014). In addition, emojis used to lessen the ambiguity of the conversation (Jolic, 2023) where emojis facilitates the intended tone of a message (Neel et. al, 2022). As Hand et al. (2021) found that the type of emoji used had an effect of how participants viewed otherwise-neutral sentences: sentences + happy emoji were rated as emotionally positive, sentences + sad emoji were rated as emotionally negative. In a study conducted by, they explore the features of social media platforms that affect users’ emotional self-expression and strategies employed to express their emotions online. The researchers utilized semi-structured interviews with ten regular user of social media platforms like Facebook and Zalo to collect data. The results revealed that users used emojis and punctuation marks to convey their emotions. However, some users used punctuation marks and emojis to express positive feelings while others used verbosity to express negative feelings.

The respondents gave a sometimes mark on the three (3) items specifically, item 5 “*I use emojis when texting a romantic partner / a romantic interest (i.e. boyfriend/girlfriend or spouse.)*” with a mean of 3.33, item 6 “*I use emojis when texting an acquaintance*” with a mean of 3.06, and item 3 “*I use emojis when texting my family. (i.e. parents or siblings)*” with a mean of 2.98. This implies that respondents do not often used emojis when texting their romantic partner, acquaintance, and family. Furthermore, this shows that respondents do not often used emojis to express their emotions when communicating with their romantic partner, acquaintance, and family. This means that when communicating with romantic partner and family, there are times that formal language is used due to maintain the clarity and respect in the conversation especially when talking about serious topics and conveying important conversations. Using emojis in online communication conveys informality that may misinterpreted in online interactions.

The results contradicts with the findings of Jones et al. (2020) study on Sex differences in emoji use, familiarity, and valence, which found that majority of the participants stated using emojis “frequently” or “usually” when communicating with their intimate partner. Moreover, the result of the study agrees with the study of Shi et al. (2019) that emojis were less likely to use by individuals when interacting with acquaintances as to avoid miscommunication caused by different interpretations of emojis; interacting using emoji with family can lead to misinterpretation because they may create their own meanings for some emojis (Kelly,2015).

Overall, the grand mean is 3.43 with a descriptive equivalent of “frequently”. This implies that respondents used emojis frequently to express their emotions when messaging online. The data suggest that emojis are helpful to express emotions more effectively in online communication.

Table 3. Usage of Excessive Capitalization

Items	Mean	Description
1. How often do you use excessive capitalization in text messaging? (i.e. "excessive capitalization" here means having several letters or words capitalized without grammatical need such as YES, ARE YOU KIDDING ME, NO WAY, etc.)	3.05	Sometimes
2. I use excessive capitalization in text messaging to convey my emotions or depict my emotional state.	3.46	Frequently
3. I use excessive capitalization in text messaging to emphasize a word or phrase.	3.57	Frequently
4. I use excessive capitalization when texting my family. (i.e. parents or siblings)	2.50	Rarely
5. I use excessive capitalization when texting my friends.	3.19	Sometimes
6. I use excessive capitalization when texting a romantic partner / interest (i.e. boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, etc.).	3.03	Sometimes
7. I use excessive capitalization when texting an acquaintance.	2.58	Rarely
8. I use excessive capitalization when texting only if the other person uses it first.	2.94	Sometimes
9. I use excessive capitalization when text messaging to imply shouting or yelling.	3.53	Frequently
10. I use excessive capitalization when text messaging to imply excitement or surprise.	3.53	Frequently
GRAND MEAN	3.14	Sometimes

Table 3 presents the statistical analysis of the respondents’ usage of excessive capitalization in expressing emotions. The data reveals that among the 10 items, 4 items got the highest mean having the “Frequently” description. These are the items: 3 “*I use excessive capitalization in text messaging to emphasize a word or phrase*”, with a 3.57 mean; item 9 and 10 “*I use excessive capitalization in text messaging to imply shouting or yelling*”, “*I use excessive capitalization when text messaging to imply excitement or surprise*”, with a 3.53 mean; and item 2 “*I use excessive capitalization in text messaging to convey my emotions or depict my emotional state*”, with a mean of 3.46. This suggest that respondents frequently used excessive capitalization when expressing their emotional state. This means that using all-capitalized letters can express a range of emotions such as anger, happiness, excitement, and surprise. It also helps to emphasize certain words or phrases, to clearly understand the intended tone of the message online.

The results of the study agrees with the study of Mwangi et. al (2014) about Textual Emotion Communication with Non-verbal Symbols in Online Environments where it is found that capitalization is often use in expressing emotions. Writing in all capital letters can evoke emotional responses, for instance, the use of full capitalization in positive sentence like “HAPPY TO HEAR THAT” which conveys a sense of extreme joy (Choi et al., 2010). Additionally, emphasizing words through capitalization can convey intense emotions (Riordan, 2011), such as anger and excitement (Drum, 2015). Furthermore, the respondents gave “Sometimes” mark on (3) items specifically, item 5 “*I use excessive capitalization when texting my friends*” with a mean of 3.19; item 6 “*I use excessive capitalization when texting a romantic partner / interest (i.e. boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, etc.)*” with a mean of 3.03, and item 8 “*I use excessive capitalization when texting only if the other person uses it first*”. This implies that respondents sometimes used excessive capitalization when communicating with their friends, romantic partner, and when other person uses it first. This shows that excessive capitalization do not often use in expressing emotions when texting their friends and romantic partner due to its association with yelling or anger that may misinterpreted in online communication. This also shows that formality is involve when communicating with friends and romantic partners as it can help to set boundaries and to ensure that the message is viewed with the intended meaning of the text. Excessive capitalization is inappropriate to use when the conversation needs clarity and requires certain level of seriousness. Using excessive capitalization of words might accuse of yelling and it could lead as an indicator of anger (Heath, 2018).

The grand mean is 3.14 with a descriptive equivalent of “sometimes”. This implies that the respondents do not frequently use excessive capitalization to express their emotions as it can convey negative emotions that could be misinterpreted in digital communication.

Table 4. Usage of Typed Laughter

Items	Mean	Description
1. How often do you use typed laughter in text messaging? ? (i.e. typed laughter here means “LOL,” or “haha,” or “ha ha,” etc.)	4.1	Frequently
2. I use typed laughter in text messaging to convey my emotions or depict my emotional state.	4.11	Frequently
3. I use typed laughter when texting my family. (i.e. parents or siblings)	3.43	Frequently
4. I use typed laughter when texting my friends.	4.22	Very frequently
5. I use typed laughter when texting a romantic partner / interest (i.e. boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, etc.).	3.70	Frequently
6. I use typed laughter when texting an acquaintance.	3.26	Sometimes
7. I use typed laughter when texting only if the other person uses it first.	3.53	Frequently
GRAND MEAN	3.77	Frequently

Table 4 presents the statistical analysis of the respondents’ usage of typed laughter in expressing emotions. The data reveals that among the 7 items, 1 item got the highest mean having the “Very frequently” description. This is the item: 4 “*I used typed laughter when texting my friends*” with a mean of 4.22. This implies that respondents very frequently used typed laughter when texting their friends. The findings suggest that respondents used typed laughter more often in expressing emotions when texting their friends online. According to the W&M Writing Resources Center (2018), “LOL” or “haha” are often used casually in text conversations with friends when something is funny or to indicate that you are laughing. Typed laughter is used more often to express positive emotions with friends as it creates a sense of closeness and strengthen social bonds in digital communication. It is common to use casual or informal language when communicating with friends online especially when conveying humor in the conversation. Casual conversation includes the used of typed laughter as it express friendliness. Describing how individuals are comfortable talking with each other online.

Furthermore, the results of the study reveals that respondents mark “Frequently” on 5 items specifically, item 2 “*I use typed laughter in text messaging to convey my emotions or depict my emotional state*” with 4.11

mean; item 1 “How often do you use typed laughter in text messaging?? (i.e. typed laughter here means “LOL,” or “haha,” or “ha ha,” etc.)” with a 4.10 mean; item 5 “I use typed laughter when texting a romantic partner / interest (i.e. boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, etc.)” with 3.70 mean; item 7 “I use typed laughter when texting only if the other person uses it first” with 3.53 mean; and item 3 “I use typed laughter when texting my family. (i.e. parents or siblings)” with 3.43 mean. This also implies that respondents frequently used typed laughter to express emotions when other person uses it first, when texting their romantic partner and family. This also shows that communicating with family members are often informal when sharing inside jokes and personal experiences in the conversation, it fosters the closeness and emotional connection of the family. On the other hand, intimate register is involving when communicating with romantic partner because it characterized casual or personal conversation that enhances the emotional bond between the individuals. It can help to express their affection and thoughts effectively.

This confirms Palacio and Gustilo’s study that the frequency of using “LOL” and “haha” in texting is high among Filipino youth where the respondents used “Haha” to express happiness and appreciation on something funny (Palacio and Gustilo, 2016). Nevertheless, a “Sometimes” description with the lowest mean of 3.26 was given to item 6 “I use typed laughter when texting to an acquaintance”. The result implies that typed laughter do not use often to express emotions when texting an acquaintance. This means that when talking to acquaintances, formal language is used as it helps to foster respect in the conversation because acquaintances are not close as friends, family, and romantic partner.

Generally, the grand mean is 3.77 with the descriptive equivalent of “frequently”. This implies that the respondents used typed laughter frequently to express their emotions in online conversation. This also suggests that typed laughter is a non-verbal cue that helps to convey emotions effectively and maintain social connection because it delivers positive emotions, such as happiness, amusement, and affection.

Table 5. Usage of Repeated Letters

Items	Mean	Desc.
1. How often do you use repeated letters in text messaging? (ex. "Hiiiiii," or "Nooooo," or "Yessss" or "No wayyyyyy," etc.)	3.81	Frequently
2. I use repeated letters in text messaging to convey my emotions or depict my emotional state.	3.76	Frequently
3. I use repeated letters when texting my family. (i.e. parents or siblings))	3.04	Sometimes
4. I use repeated letters when texting my friends.	3.84	Frequently
5. I use repeated letters when texting a romantic partner / interest (i.e. boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, etc.)	3.63	Frequently
6. I use repeated letters when texting an acquaintance.	3	Sometimes
7. I use repeated letters when texting only if the other person uses it first.	3.04	Sometimes
8. I use repeated letters in text messaging when I want to emphasize a word or phrase.	3.57	Frequently
GRAND MEAN	3.46	Frequently

Table 5 presents the statistical analysis of the respondents’ usage of typed laughter in expressing emotions. The data reveals that among the 8 items, 5 items got the highest mean having the “Frequently” description. These are the items: 4 “I use repeated letters when texting my friends” with 3.84 mean; item1 “How often do you use repeated letters in text messaging? (ex. “Hiiiiii,” or “Nooooo,” or “Yessss” or “No wayyyyyy,” etc.)” with 3.81 mean; item 2 “I use repeated letters in text messaging to convey my emotions or depict my emotional state” with 3.76 mean; item 5 “I use repeated letters when texting a romantic partner / interest (i.e. boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, etc.)” with 3.63 mean; and item 8 “I use repeated letters in text messaging when I want to emphasize a word or phrase” with mean 3.57.

This implies that respondents frequently used repeated letters in expressing emotions when texting their friends and romantic partner. This means that they often used repeated letters to express emotions when

communicating with their friends and romantic partner online. This was because they knew that their friends and romantic partners would understand the intended emotional meaning behind the repeated letters since they shared common understanding in online communication. Casual conversation with friends and romantic partner is common online. It feels more relaxing as it avoided misunderstanding and ambiguity in the conversation, making it suitable for addressing casual topics and interactions.

This also proves the findings of Drum (2015) that repeated letters are often used to convey emotional perspective. It is used to express happiness (Kalman and Gergleb, 2014) and to show excitement like “yesssss” (Gray et al., 2020). Moreover, repeated letters are often used to emphasize the text message (e.g., “I have to work laaaatttee”) (Durante, 2016).

Furthermore, the study reveals that respondents mark “Sometimes” on (3) items specifically, item 3 “*I use repeated letters when texting my family. (i.e. parents or siblings)*” and item 7 “*I use repeated letters when texting only if the other person uses it first*” with 3.04 mean; and item 6 “*I use repeated letters when texting an acquaintance*” with 3 mean. This indicates that respondents sometimes used repeated letters in expressing emotions when texting their family, if the other person uses it first, and when texting an acquaintance. This also shows that it is not often to used informal language when talking to family and acquaintances. Repeated letters in considered as informal language in online conversation. In this case, formal language is used when communicating with family and acquaintances as it helps to establish respect in the conversation online. In response to this, Kalman and Gergleb (2014), see that repetition of letters are used frequently, but not always because adding extra letters can imply as sarcasm that can lead to misinterpretation of the text message (Gray et al., 2020).

The grand mean is 3.46 with the descriptive equivalent of “frequently”. This implies that the respondents often used repeated letters to express their emotions online. The data also indicates that repeated letters can be an effective way to convey and emphasize emotions in online communication.

Table 6. Usage of Excessive Punctuation

Items	Mean	Description
1. How often do you use excessive punctuation in text messaging? (i.e. "excessive punctuation" here means using several punctuation devices at once, such as “!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” or “.....” or “???????”)	3.15	Sometimes
2. I use excessive punctuation in text messaging to convey my emotions or depict my emotional state.	3.28	Sometimes
3. I use excessive punctuation when texting my family. (i.e. parent or sibling)	2.67	Sometimes
4. I use excessive punctuation when texting my friends	3.2	Sometimes
5. I use excessive punctuation when texting my romantic partner / interest (i.e. boyfriend, girlfriend, or spouse).s	2.95	Sometimes
6. I use excessive punctuation when texting an acquaintance.	2.66	Sometimes
7. I use excessive punctuation when texting only if the other person uses it first.	2.9	Sometimes
8. I use excessive punctuation in text messaging to emphasize a word or phrase.	3.15	Sometimes
9. I use excessive punctuation in text messaging to imply shouting or yelling.	3.32	Sometimes
GRAND MEAN	3.03	Sometimes

Table 6 presents the statistical analysis of the respondents’ usage of excessive punctuation in expressing emotions. The data reveals that among the 9 items, 9 items got the highest mean having the “Sometimes” description. These are the items: 9 “*I use excessive punctuation in text messaging to imply shouting or yelling*”

with 3.32 mean; item 2 “I use excessive punctuation in text messaging to convey my emotions or depict my emotional state” with 3.28 mean; item 4 item 1 “I use excessive punctuation when texting my friends” with 3.20 mean; item 1 and 8 “How often do you use excessive punctuation in text messaging? (i.e. “excessive punctuation” here means using several punctuation devices at once, such as “!!!!!!!!!!!!” or “.....” or “????????”)” and “I use excessive punctuation in text messaging to emphasize a word or phrase” with 3.15 mean; item 5 “I use excessive punctuation when texting my romantic partner / interest (i.e. boyfriend, girlfriend, or spouse)” with 2.95 mean; item 7 “I use excessive punctuation when texting only if the other person uses it first.” with 2.90 mean; item 3 “I use D8889excessive punctuation when texting my family. (i.e. parent or sibling).” with 2.67 mean; and item 6 “I use excessive punctuation when texting an acquaintance.” with 2.66 mean. This implies that respondents sometimes used punctuations in expressing emotions when texting their friends, romantic partner, when the other person uses it first, and family. This means that the use of excessive punctuations in online conversation when talking to friends, romantic partner, family, and acquaintances demonstrates informal conversation online that is not appropriate to used often. Therefore, they preferred to used formal language when communicating with them as to avoid misunderstandings, especially when the message needs to be clear.

The results contradict the findings of Mwangi et al. (2014) that excessive punctuations like exclamation marks and question marks were the most frequently used patterns of communication by students to express their emotions. Most of the participants used exclamation marks to express happy emotions and to indicate anger, it is also interpreted as the person is yelling (Sullivan, 2019).

Summing up, the grand mean is 3.03 with the descriptive equivalent of “sometimes”. This implies that the respondents do not frequently used excessive punctuations in expressing emotion when communicating online. This also indicates that excessive use of punctuations can be misinterpreted as it conveys different emotional connotations in digital communication.

Table 7. Significant difference between respondents’ sex and their frequency of usage of textual paralinguistic devices

Usage	F	p value
Usage of Emoji	1.991	.161ns
Usage of Excessive Capitalization	.254	.615 ns
Usage of Typed Laughter	.002	.968 ns
Usage of Repeated Letters	.927	.338 ns
Usage of Excessive Punctuation	.427	.515 ns

Legend: ^{ns} – not significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table 7 shows the difference between the respondents’ sex and their frequency of usage of textual paralinguistic devices: none of the statement was found to be significant.

This implies that the sex of the respondents does not affect their usage of emoji, excessive capitalization, typed laughter, repeated letters, and excessive punctuation. The result revealed that there is no significant difference between sex and their usage and their usage of emoji, excessive capitalization, typed laughter, repeated letters, and excessive punctuation.

This in line with the study of Alburaidi (2023) that there is no significant difference between male and female in using emojis. Both sexes used emojis most often when communicating with their friends, intimate partners, family, and co-workers (Jones et al., 2020). As for using excessive capitalization, typed laughter, repeated letters and excessive punctuation, there is no differences found in both sexes. However, the way men and women used these tools shows some differences (Buchner, 2013).

Table 8. Significant difference between respondents’ age and their frequency of usage of textual paralinguistic devices

Usage	F-test	p value
Usage of Emoji	1.982	0.088 ^{ns}
Usage of Excessive Capitalization	0.937	0.461 ^{ns}
Usage of Typed Laughter	1.217	0.307
Usage of Repeated Letters	0.432	0.825 ^{ns}
Usage of Excessive Punctuation	0.488	0.785 ^{ns}

Legend: ^{ns} – not significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table 8 shows the difference between the respondents’ age and their frequency of usage of textual paralinguistic devices: none of the statement was found to be significant.

This implies that the age of the respondents does not affect their usage of emoji, excessive capitalization, typed laughter, repeated letters, and excessive punctuation. The result showed that there is no significant difference between age and their usage and their usage of emoji, excessive capitalization, typed laughter, repeated letters, and excessive punctuation.

A prior study confirmed the results of the present investigation. According to Grace and Kemp (2014), age does not affect their overall usage of nonverbal cues in online communication. However, age may influence the use of text languages online in which adolescents’ used of textual paralinguistic cues is higher compared to adults since they are the most prolific users of instant messaging (Grace, 2013). Students suggested that it was more appropriate to use nonverbal cues when sending a message to a friend or sibling, than to an older family member and strange (Grace et al., 2015). In the study conducted by Waterloo et al. (2017), the researcher examined the norms of expressing emotions online. Six discrete emotions (i.e, sadness, anger, disappointments, worry, joy and pride) were investigated across social media platforms. They suggest that gender differences are not equally evident in social media platforms. It is more pronounced on private platforms, where people tend to share personal emotions.

In contrast, this results disagrees with the findings of Verheige’s (2014) study, which states that age does affect their usage of textual paralanguage cues because young adults use it differently. Also, young adults might be misinterpreted when using it in older generations (Shim, 2016).

Table 9. Significant difference between respondents’ year level and their frequency of usage of textual paralinguistic devices

Usage	F-test	p-value
Usage of Emoji	1.062	.369 ns
Usage of Excessive Capitalization	1.853	.143 ns
Usage of Typed Laughter	9.006	.000
Usage of Repeated Letters	.471	.703 ns
Usage of Excessive Punctuation	1.968	.124 ns

Legend: ^{ns} – not significant at 0.05 level of significance

As shown in table 9, the majority of the respondents’ year level is not significantly different. However, the usage of typed laughter found to be significant.

This implies that the year level of the respondents does affect their usage of typed laughter. According to Manokaran and Nian (2020), typed laughter is an important part of communication that students represent. It is proved that students used typed laughter to handle or manage the conversation. Students used typed laughter to convey humour and express emotion (laughter) where it is a perfect tool to express their playfulness while texting so that it makes the conversation real among the chatters.

On the other hand, the rest of the usage of textual paralinguistic devices have no difference with the year level of the respondents, which means that the profile of the respondents specifically their year level is not significantly different with the usage of emojis, excessive capitalization, repeated letters, and excessive punctuation. Students used emojis without being aware of the significance of enhancing their writing skills through texting or chatting on social media platforms. Learners preferred to use emojis because they feel that using this medium in social interactions can help them to convey the message clearly and faster than written language (Al-Garaady and Mahyoob, 2021). However, Students who are using textual paralinguistic cues in online communication are still engage in formal English as they attain good grades in writing tasks and eager to learn English vocabulary in order to effectively communicate with various group of people (Javed and Mahmood, 2016). In the study conducted by Glazer (2001), also investigated how emotions are communicated in an online classroom. To collect the data, the researcher divided the students in collaboration groups and let them communicate through a conferencing software called First Class, The results showed that students used punctuation marks to express excitement and remorse. Students also used capitalization (to emphasize) and emoticons to convey their emotions when communicating with their group members.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study revealed that emojis, repeated letters, and typed laughter are frequently used by the students who serve as respondents in the survey. Results of the analysis showed that there was no significant difference between the respondents' sex and age and their usage of textual paralinguistic. It was further revealed that there was a significant difference between the year level of the respondents and the usage of typed laughter while there was no significant difference between the respondents' year level and the usage of emojis, excessive capitalization, repeated letters and excessive punctuation.

The results of the study further revealed that emojis, repeated letters, and typed laughter are used often in expressing emotions. These non-verbal cues are helpful and effective to express emotions, enhancing emotional impact of the message online. However, excessive capitalization and excessive punctuation can be used in expressing emotions but use it in a proper way as it can dilute the intended tone of the message online. Additionally, these can be misinterpreted because it may have perceived as shouting, anger, and unprofessionalism. Moreover, the use of excessive capitalization and punctuation varies depending on the context of the conversation. These textual paralinguistic cues such as emojis, excessive capitalization, typed laughter, repeated letters, and excessive punctuations are often used in an informal conversation when interacting with friends. It is further concluded that textual paralinguistic can be definitely contribute to express emotions when communicating with friends, family, romantic partner, and acquaintance. The researcher therefore concluded that the textual paralinguistic can be used by the online users to express their emotions in virtual conversation as it helps to clarify intentions and convey emotional state when communicating online. Online users should understand the different types of textual paralinguistic in online environment. It should explore how textual paralinguistic is used across different cultures.

It is important to understand how generations use and interpret textual paralinguistic cues in online communication and how different emotions are expressed through textual paralinguistic to avoid miscommunication. Additionally, online users should be cautious of using textual paralinguistic when communicating in professional setting. Students should avoid letting their academic writing be influenced by the use of textual paralinguistic in digital communication. The researcher also recommends to future researchers to examine how adults or older generations interpret textual paralinguistic when expressing emotions online.

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