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Emojis as Expressives

“Sometimes I get myself into a right attitude then seem surprised when I've wound myself up and I'm crying into my Easter egg over nothing 😢”
@lxurapreston

The expressive dimension of language has only recently started to receive attention in the literature (e.g. Potts 2007), and, as such, I would argue, there are aspects of this language phenomenon that are yet to be explored. Frequently in contemporary forms of non-verbal communication, specifically in the English language for purview of this paper, we find the utilization of emojis seamlessly integrated into natural language use. What do these ideograms add to the utterances and discourses in which they appear? How well does the existing theoretic framework for expressive content put forth in the literature correspond to the realities of non-descriptive content found in spontaneously produced utterances? Are different effects produced when emojis anchor to various clause types? These questions are best answered, in my view, with a corpus study. For this project, I have created a partially-annotated collection of Tweets containing emojis that will hopefully aid in this preliminary investigation into the pragmatic use of emojis. It would be interesting to examine how emojis function in natural language because, on the one hand, the ubiquity of these ideograms in communication merits investigation in and of itself and, on the other, the results of this study could provide insight into a widely utilized facet of language that is not yet well researched.

Bibliography