

## 34. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION ON THE INTERNET

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The paper aims to explore various non-verbal means of communication employed in online interactions and to investigate their frequency of use. The survey is conducted to study the elements such as emoticons, emoji, GIFs, voice and video messages that Internet users employ to communicate non-verbal information.

Non-verbal communication refers to the transmission of information without the use of words or spoken language. It includes a large variety of signals or cues that people use while talking. These cues can be used either consciously or unconsciously. Non-verbal communication, which includes elements such as facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice, plays a crucial role in conveying emotions, attitudes, and intentions in face-to-face interactions. In the context of online communication, these non-verbal cues are largely absent, leading to a reliance on alternative non-verbal means of communication. By understanding the prevalence and impact of these non-verbal signals in online communication, valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of human interaction in the digital era can be gained.

Non-verbal communication functions through the instrumentality of nonverbal cues as colors, symbols and signs [1]. On the Internet, non-verbal communication is limited due to the lack of visual contact, but it is presented in the form of emoticons, stickers, punctuation marks, letter case and much more. Non-verbal communication on the Internet has its own peculiarities, but it remains an important tool for transmitting information and connecting people. The research on emoji has become a hot topic in the academic field, and more and more scholars, behavioral science and so on are studying them [2].

The survey was conducted to investigate what non-verbal means of communication are used when communicating on the Internet [1]. The interviewed people were requested to take a survey in which they were asked about which of the proposed means of non-verbal communication on the Internet they use and how often (Figure 1). It should be noted that the ratio of male and female users who participated in the study was 1.3. The ratio is basically equal. Hence the results can be fully evaluated. The results of the survey show that emoji are used more frequently in network communication. The results also indicate that the way emoji are used is becoming more and more diversified as well. The evidence of this survey suggests that female users use emoji in messages more often than male users do. It is also important to point out that some male users do not use emoji in their messages at all, unlike female users.

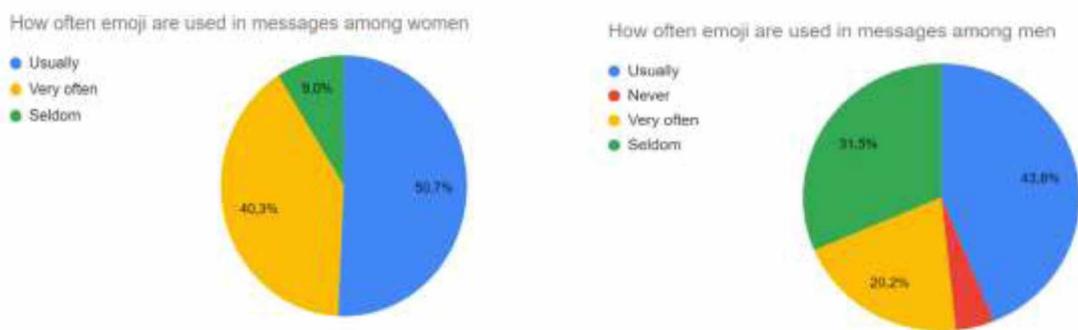


Figure 1 – How often emoji are used in messages among female and male users

It was found out that the most popular emoji are emotions (88.9 %), hearts (53.6 %) and animals (9.2 %) [3]. It was also revealed that there are people who have an individual communication style and use their favorite thematic and unusual emoji. It should be stated that people who use emoji when communicating on the Internet are also quite emotional in verbal communication too.

As messaging has grown, communication, too, has evolved. Whereas plain text messages were the norm a decade ago, we gradually replaced or supplemented text with visual emoticons, then emojis and even GIFs. Now, stickers are dominating the world of digital communication. Stickers can be made on the theme of food, animals and much more, so each person can individually select and use the stickers they like.

The interviewed people were asked about how they use stickers and how often. According to the results of the survey, it was found out that most people prefer to use stickers as they help express their emotions better. (Figure 2). People usually use stickers with characters from famous artworks, animals or paintings. People usually use stickers with characters from famous artworks, animals or famous paintings. The study also found out that the popularity of stickers among female and male users is about the same as the use of emoji. There are men who do not use stickers at all, similar to emoji. It is important to mention that although stickers appeared much later, they are used more often than emoji (Figure 2).

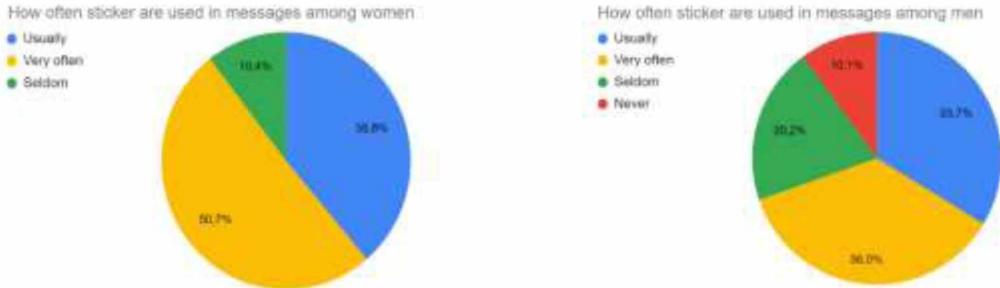


Figure 2 – How often stickers are used in messages among female and male users

The interviewees were also asked if they use video and audio messages. It should be stated that video messages are short recorded videos that you can share in chats, and audio messages are voice recordings sent via messaging apps. Video messages convey visual content, while audio messages allow you to share spoken information and emotions without any text. Due to the fact that they are short and easy to write down, they are also popular with the interviewees (Figure 3). Furthermore, this method of communication is gaining popularity, and the results of the survey prove that it is the most popular means for communicating emotions through a smartphone screen. But along with other non-verbal methods of communication, video and audio messages have detractors, people who oppose, criticise and speak against them. But the results of the survey show that more and more people consider voice and video messages to be convenient and easy to use. Voice messaging is often argued for quick information transfer, transfer of emotions or when hands are full. The number of people using this type of communication at all is not unequivocal and varies rapidly due to the fact that this method is gaining popularity.

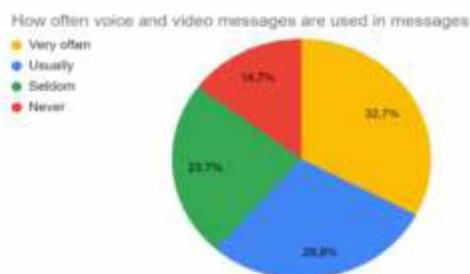


Figure 3 – How often voice and video messages are used

The findings of this survey could have significant implications for various fields, including but not limited to, psychology, sociology, linguistics, and computer-mediated communication. They could also provide valuable insights into the designing of more effective and empathetic digital communication platforms in the future. Summarising the results of this study it is worth saying that the sphere of technology does not stand still, with a high probability that in the future there will be new ways of non-verbal communication in the Internet. It can also be noted that the female part uses more ways of non-verbal communication than the male part does. Today more and more communication is moving to the Internet, so these areas will remain relevant and will only grow. And finally, non-verbal communication is an important part of communication and will continue to be an important part of communication regardless of the way of communication.

**References:**

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