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The Perspective of Laboratory High School Students on Tone Indicators

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ABSTRACT

This study's purpose is to describe the importance of tone indicators in computer-mediated communication through gathering the opinions of high school students. This study employed a generic qualitative approach that allowed us to comprehend five students' perspectives on tone indicators. A thematic analysis helped us to identify significant statements, generate initial themes, formulate, and name relevant themes. The results showed that the participants of the study are not fully aware of tone indicators. In fact, the tone indicators are important, especially facing the problems and applying for facing special needs people. Their narratives indicate that misidentified tones of messages stimulate preconceptions to form in the minds of virtual readers, leading to miscommunication. The students expressed relief, enlightenment, and approval upon the introduction and application of tone indicators. They described the roles of tone indicators as tools to make messages clear. Therefore, tone indicators hold relevance in computer-mediated communication. This study promotes tone indicators awareness and tranquility in online communication.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Albert Mehrabian's book *Silent Messages* shows that the amount of misunderstanding among computer-mediated communication is very high (Winer, 2018). In the digital age, netizens acknowledge tone indicators as paralinguistic signifiers that help people comprehend each other's statements (Siricharoen, 2013). This study among the Laboratory High School students' views on tone indicators was conducted to determine the significance of tone indicators in text messaging.

The conducted studies related to the research include Face-to-face versus computer-mediated communication: A synthesis of the experimental literature (Bordia, 2007), Effects of emotional cues transmitted in e-mail communication on the emotions experienced by senders and receivers (Kato *et al.*, 2007), The capacity to delineate and interpret emotion in text messages (Madianou & Miller, 2013), Computer-mediated communication (Mahdi & El-Naim, 2012), and Dealing with miscommunication, distrust, and emotions in online dispute resolution (Bellucci *et al.*, 2020).

However, there has been little literary work exploring the importance of tone indicators. This study's purpose is to describe the importance of tone indicators in computer-mediated communication through gathering the opinions of Laboratory High School students. The main novelties in this study are (1) The Laboratory High School students' views on tone indicators, (2) emotions and approval of Laboratory High School students on the introduction and application of tone indicators, and (3) tone indicators as tools to improve the clarity and meaning of messages.

2. METHODS

To understand how the Laboratory High School students perceive tone indicators and their importance based on their online communication experiences, the study employed a qualitative design focusing on a generic qualitative approach. Purposive sampling, where the researchers rely on their judgment when selecting participants, was used in choosing five (5) Laboratory High School students active on social media applications to participate in the study.

The researchers used a semi-structured interview guide as an instrument to gather insights from the participants. The interviews were via google meet to ensure each one's safety due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One personal interview was possible, so the researchers and interviewee observed health protocols.

The narratives of the participants were then evaluated through thematic analysis. The researchers transcribed the discussions, formulate and named codes and themes, presented the results, and provided a conclusion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 76 students, respondents that chose social media as their general medium of interaction is 21.06%, which is 16 respondents. Whilst for the respondents who have chosen face-to-face, they got a percentage of 78.94%, of which are 60 respondents. On the given topics, the frequency of the respondents choosing face-to-face interaction in each topic is also significantly higher than Social media Interaction as shown in **Table 1**. This is in line with references (Hashim, *et al.*, 2020); Haristiani and Rifa'i, 2020).

Four (4) finalized themes emerged from the participants' narratives:

- (i) Tone Indicators Awareness

- (ii) Online Interaction
- (iii) Handling Miscommunication
- (iv) Perception and Emotion

The researchers found that there were netizens ignorant, familiar, and aware of the paralinguistic signifiers through the theme Tone Indicators Awareness. The theme Online Interaction presents that the Laboratory High School students communicate online for school and emergency reasons.

The theme Handling Miscommunication shows that preconceptions form in people's minds because of misidentified tones of messages. Unclear messages make them feel bad or frustrated. If there are miscommunications, they either discuss it, fix the issue, or let the time heal the problem (Wachs *et al.*, 2014; Nielsen, 2009).

Through the theme Perception and Emotion, the researchers were able to describe the participants' relief and enlightenment and their approval on the application of tone indicators. Their sentiments show hope that tone indicators may lessen miscommunication, and expressing statements online may become more transparent (Robertson *et al.*, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

The study results show that the Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School students are not comfortable with messages that tones are hard to identify; they reach out and discuss with the sender immediately. Their emotion on the introduction and application of tone indicators express relief and enlightenment. Based on their narratives, tone indicators avoid miscommunication and make the messages clear. Therefore, the researchers conclude that tone indicators are essential to online interactions.

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5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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