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# Semantic differences in visually similar face emoji

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## Abstract

We present an experimental study with German speakers, which investigates semantic differences in two groups of face emoji pairs: (AU+) emoji pairs show a small visual difference that corresponds to a difference in a human facial expression according to an adaptation of the Facial Action Coding System for emojis by Fugate & Franco (2021); (AU-) emoji pairs contain a small visual difference without correspondence to a facial expression. Our results show that the differences between the two emojis are meaningful in all pairs. This supports a lexicalist approach to emoji semantics, which treats face emojis as conventionalized linguistic signals.

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