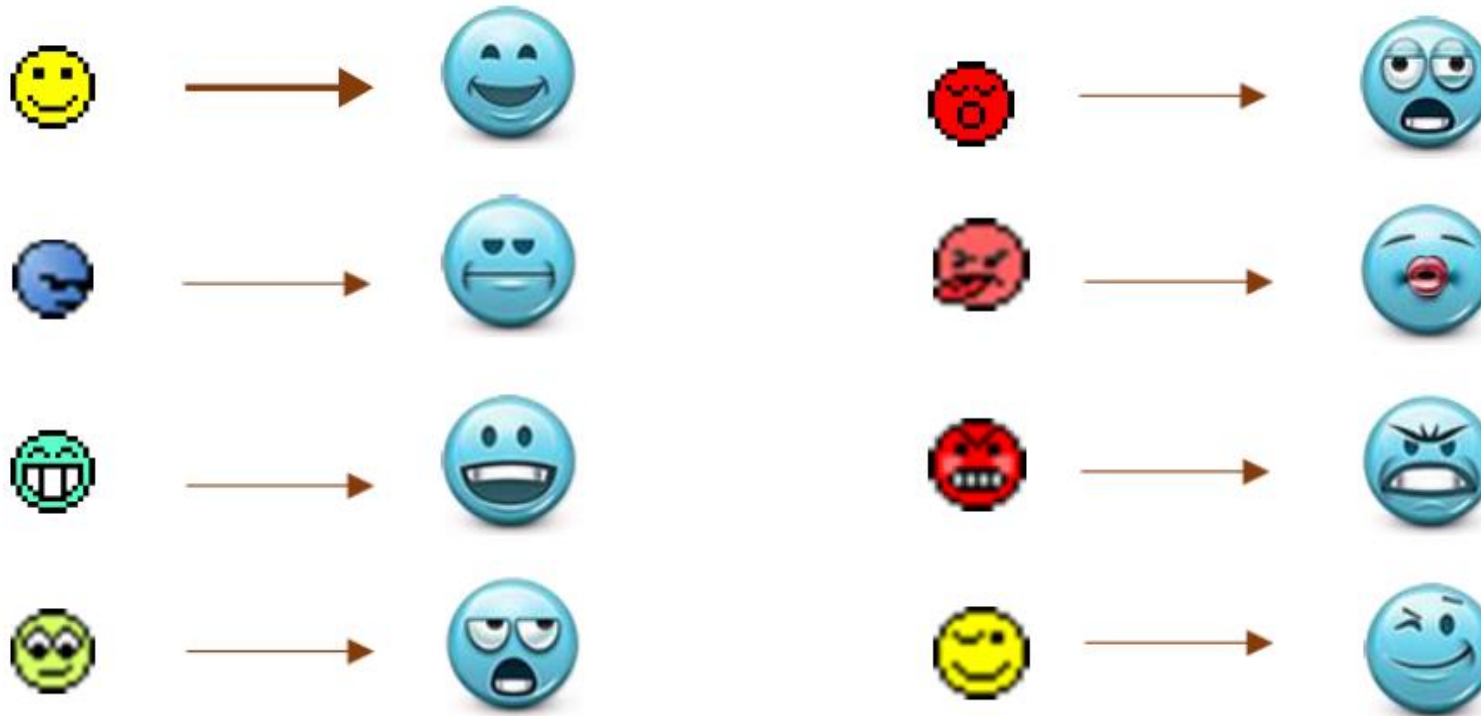


Implissimo

A semiological, sociolinguistic and pragmatic study
of Doctissimo's forum users
metadiscourse on emoticons

Context: An event

Doctissimo's Forum usual emoticons were replaced on November 15 2015. The next day, when users entered their usual code, they found **blue** smileys.



A corpus

From this emoticon replacement raised:

- 14 threads -> 176 pages -> 7 040 messages
- 1 survey, 1 petition and posters

Préférez-vous :

94,7 %

232 votes

5,3 % 13 votes

1. les anciens smileys

2. les nouveaux smileys bleus

Total : 245 votes (24 votes blancs)

Ce sondage est clos, vous ne pouvez plus voter



An analysis: A manual selection of 506 messages

- Representing a stand-alone metadiscourse
 - Presenting a:
 - ✓ Sociolinguistic
 - ✓ Semiotic
 - ✓ Pragmatic
- ... interest

A theoretical frame

Linguistic Representation Analysis (Canut 1998)

-> **Praxemic Linguistics**

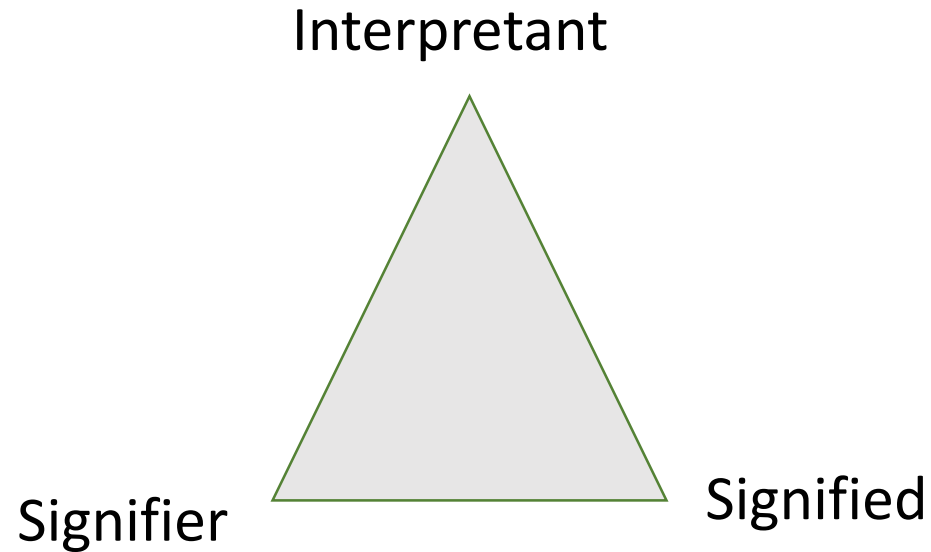
Semiologic Approach
(Peirce, in Halté 2016)
Semiotic Triangle of Peirce

Pragmatic Approach
(Maurice 1983)
Enunciative Pragmatics

Sociolinguistic Approach
(Calvet 2009)

Semiologic Approach

Pierce's Triangle



Sign Categories

Qualisign

- Iconic Relation
- Pictures

Sinsign

- Indexical Relation
- Interjection

Legisign

- Conventional Relation
- Common Names



Emoticons are Sinsigns or Legisigns

Pragmatic Approach

Enunciative Pragmatics aims to describe relations between utterance, users and specific aspects of the message linked to the enunciative context

Sociolinguistic Approach

Sociolinguistics approaches linguistics by taking into account its external aspects, locutors

3 research questions

1. Which information about their perception of emoticons is carried by Doctissimo's Forum users metadiscourse?
2. May we postulate that, in the particular context of CMC, specific expressive forms can raise in a particular community, dealing therefore with construction of norms and exchanges codification? (Baym 1998)
3. Is it possible to categorize emoticons functions from this spontaneous metadiscourse?

Question 1: Emoticon Perception

1. The blue color

- 74 occurrences
- Example:

« En communication/marketing il existe un code de couleurs qui a un sens pour permettre de nuancer ce qu'on veut faire passer . Et dans ce code le bleu couleur froide a un sens triste contrairement au rouge qui a un sens agressif ou au jaune qui a un sens joyeux. Visiblement les benets qui dirigent docti sont d'une totale incompetence dans ce domaine . » (133)

What the corpus reveals:

- Blue is a sad, sick and cold color
- Color uniqueness allows a less good Emoticon understanding and no nuance in messages

Plutchik (1980)

Plutchik defined 8 primary emotions as essential indications to help survival:

Anger

Surprise

Fear

Anticipation

Sadness

Trust

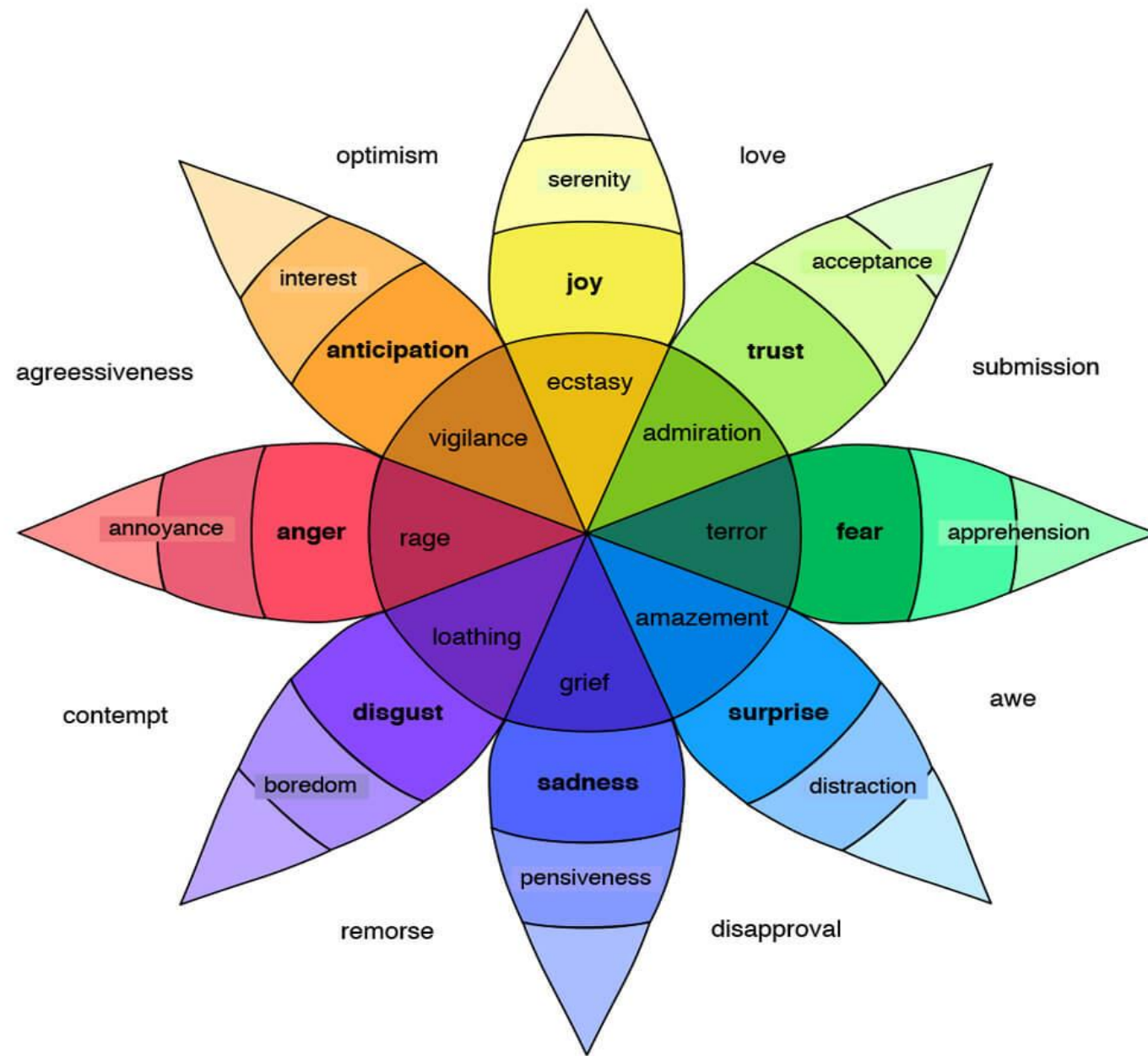
Disgust

Joy

Attributes:

- Different intensities
- Combinable to create secondary emotions
- Describable in universal features (Mikolajczak et al. 2009)

Plutchik Flower



Emotions expressed and induced by blue color are not the same

2. Expression

- 49 occurrences
- Example:

« (19) Les autres étaient bien plus expressifs tout en étant plus petits et plus simples. »

What the corpus reveals:

- New emoticons are less expressive than the old ones
- New emoticons and old ones don't express the same emotions

Comparison

Anger

- Description Grumpy face, teeth gritted
- Code :mad:



Equality

Disgust

- Description Grumpy face, brows in V shape, narrowed eyes, upper lip raised, snub nose, cheekbones raised
- Code :pouah:



Old one +

Sadness

- Description Drooping face, drooping corners of the mouth, brows in oblique position, tears
- Code :(



Egality

Joy

- Description Smile or laughter, raised corners of the mouth, raised cheekbones, wrinkled eyes
- Code :)



New one +

Surprise

- Description Eyebrows raised, wide-eyes, open mouth
- Code :o



New one +

Question 2: Specific expressive form

Case Study: RedFace

- Script Random search of 1000 RedFace occurrences in Doctissimo's Forums export
- **What the corpus reveals:**

Indignation:

🤨 [RETOUR] Je ne trouve aucune rubrique sur le cancer du cerveau et le glioblastome en particulier. Je suppose que c'est en préparation?

Complicity: 🤨 je comprend votre desarois!! ces garagistes pinaise..

Discomfort: 🤨 désolée cati, je suis vraiment à l'ouest ce matin, tu me pardonnes dis?!

Teasing:

Bah alors les filles, toujours grognons? 🤨 [RETOUR] C'est le changement de temps, chui sur, tout est à cause du changement de temps

Authority: 🤨 pas d'polémiques...



Varied uses

Question 3 : Emoticon Functions

1. Emoticon Functions (Marcoccia 2000)

- Expressive Function: Tone and state of mind
- Relational Function: Emoticon = Message
- Softening Function: Prevention from ill-understanding
- Interpretative Function: Modifying Interpretation

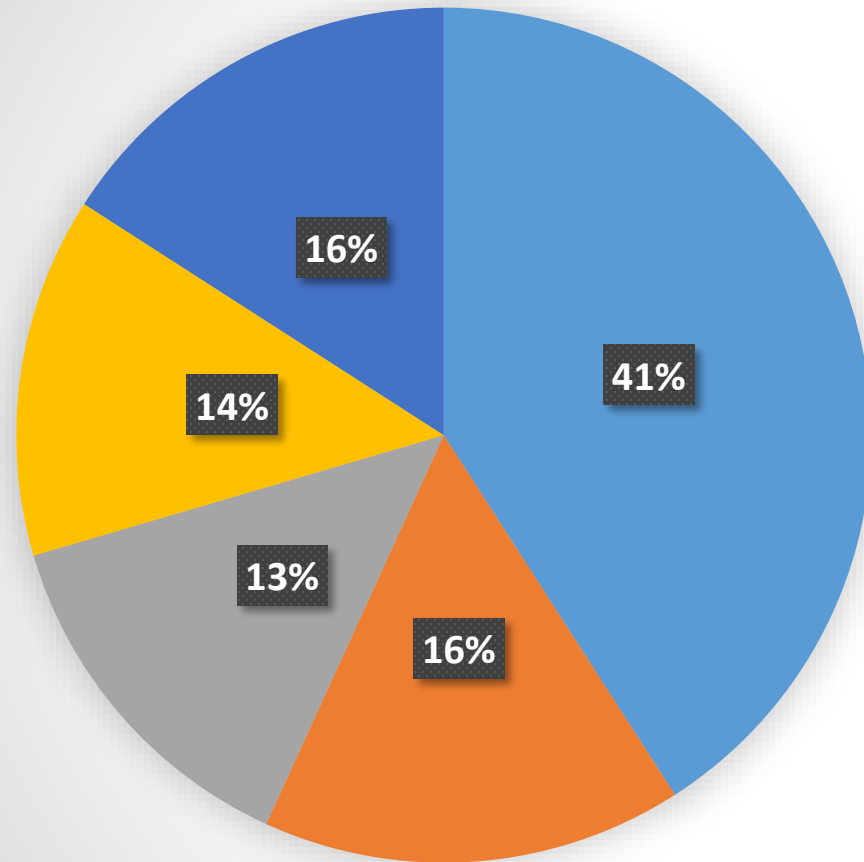
2. Analysis Question

Which functions are highlighted in a selection of 87 relevant messages about functions in the corpus?

Examples:

- *(4) expriment beaucoup moins bien les émotions, les nuances, du coup je n'ai même pas pu en utiliser dans ce post, complètement désemparé ...*
- *(402) c'est pas représentatif du tout de ce que l'on veut dire!!!*
- *(495) c vraiment frustrant ces nouveaux smileys j'ai pas l'impression d'avoir communiqué mon rire...*
- *(22) C'est clair ... impossible de faire passer le non verbal avec ces horreurs sans âme ...*

The Graph



- Convey an emotion
- Stand for Non-verbal
- Set the tone
- Avoid disputes
- Change the meaning

Conclusion

Question 1: Emoticon Perception

- Subject to Plutchick Color Code
- Conventionalisation of conveyed emotions

Question 2: Specific forms -> RedFace

- Legisign
- Polysemy
- Community Identity

Question 3: Functions

- Emoticons = Emotions
- Absence of Softening Function
- Importance of Non-Verbal substitution

Limits and Perspectives

- Quantitatively Limited
- + Authentic & Spontaneous

Other interesting lines of enquiry raised from the corpus

- Legal Aspect
- Ergonomic Aspect

Thank you for your attention

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- Thesis Subject: Implissimo, the implicitness strategies in Doctissimo's Forums