Linguistic Remodelling and Socio-cultural Transformation with Emoji Discourse Practices in Social Media in Malawi

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Abstract: This paper explores the linguistic transformation of written format of language, a global transformation. Interest is in both the novel linguistic expressions and the diversity of the use of symbols replacing linguistic word expressions. The emergence of Emoji commonly used in social media system of communication has completely replaced the 'normal' way of communicating, the use of words. Thus, symbols have been recontextualised and 'repurposed' (Bolter and Grusin, 2000; Prior and Hengst, 2010) the word forms for communication. The study used 36 participants of which 20 were students: 8 boys, 12 and 16 community people to interpret the proverbs. The intension is to show how Emoji has been localized and adopted as a mode of communication. For instance, Emoji has been used to express proverbs in CiCewa as (i) Kandimverele anakanena za mmaluwa a proverb which means 'a gossiper does not say the truth', now 🏃 ℂ 🕊 🏌; (ii) nkhonya yobwezera kuwawa/mutu ukakula sulewa nkhonya 'a repeat bad act is painful/ when you are old you cannot run away from problems' = 👊😣👊. This innovative technique of transmitting messages has come because of technology. The implication of the usage of emoji is the commodification of language as semiotic resources and symbolic discourse practice in communication skills. This mode of communication has, concurrently, brought excitement and confusion (see ii) above. The paper thus concludes with a thesis on blurring boundary between different interpretations of emoji, which has become a culture on social media leading translocal mobility of quick messaging system resulting in hybridized discursive communicative practices. The paper recommends that every company that creates emojis should provide intended meaning so that interpretation is uniform.

1. Introduction

The article explores how technology has remodelled the linguistic and social cultural practices in Malawi as people attempt to align themselves to global advancement using emoji to pass on information through proverbs. Malawi is just like the rest of the world is multilingual country and with the advancement of technology. According to National Statistics Office-Malawi Population and Housing Census report (NSO-MPHC) (2018:36), 51.7% of Malawi's population hold a mobile phone and this is the highest percentage for household means of communication in Malawi. Such being the case, people use a mobile phone for passing information more than any other form of communication (NSO-MPHC, 2018). The specific focus of this paper is on how people pass on linguistics repertoires of proverbs in emoji format through mobile phones. Of particular interest is the interpretation of emoji by the consumers of the messages/information. We conceive *emojis* as a mode of communication not only to be a signal of social cultural transformation but also the commodification of language as semiotic resources and symbolic discourse practice in communication skills. This mode of communication has brought excitement and confusion concurrently. *Emojis* being used in proverbs in this paper is regarded as languaging (Lytra and Jørgensen, 2008), which is common amongst the youth, as well as semiotic remediation (Hengst and Prior, 2010).

Proverbs are regarded as a mirror that reflects a community's rich cultural aspects of life (Chakanza 2000:7). Every language has proverbs and other popular sayings. These express values, aspirations, pre-occupations, behaviour and realities of life specific to a particular community, tribe and language (Burger, 2010:107; Chakanza, 2000). A proverb develops a metaphor, a meaning that can be differentiated from literal meaning of the lexical entities used (Chakanza, 2000:10). Thus they function as speech acts such as warning, persuasion, reprimand, assessment,

characterisation, explanation, description, justification (Röhrich & Meider, 1977 in Jesenšek, 2014).

Grant (2016) alleges that emojis started as emoticons i.e. facial expressions created out of punctuation marks and these made their first appearance in a magazine in 1881. However, by the 1990s, Shingetaka Kurita and DOCOMO Company from Japan created an emoji heart button on a computer (Grant, 2016). With its popularity, then 176 more emojis followed and later other computer companies followed suit and started created their own emojis. Thus emojis are regarded as a millennial messaging whim (Grant, 2016). Emojis are like primitive language with tiny emotive characters and viewed as the first language born out of the digital world, in opposition to flat text. When Shingetaka and DOCOMO Company developed the i-mode on the computer, their aim was to find new ways of expressing information. Thus, with its popularity, in 2007, Google Software Internationalization team petitioned to get emojis recognized by the Unicode Consortium in order to standardize them across computers. That proposal was accepted by Unicode in 2010. Hence forth emojis became too popular to be ignored and in turn, they got legitimized officially to become a language. However, with the cultural lexicon of emojis continuing to evolve with every update of IOS and Android, Unicode Considers new emojis every year. What happens next depends on what people willed sign and submit to Unicode for consideration. Thus, evolution of a new language has not yet closed its doors. It is the evolution of the way we communicate to others and that is regarded as a linguistic Armageddon (Cohn, 2015). Soon emojis will compete with English as a language in global usage. Cohn (2015) views the use of emojis which are visual as being similar to gestures. This is because emojis add important information that transcends and clarifies messages in a speech. However, though, Cohn (2015) can be correct in that way, but that can be true if the emojis are used in combination with words. The question is, what if the emojis are exclusively used in isolation without words? Then, that is when the same Cohn (2015) suggest that emojis need a key component which he called 'grammar' so that they (emojis) constitute their own language.

Lastly, Cohn (2015) concludes that sequence of presentation of emojis does not matter just like the way grammatical voices, that is, passive and active, are used. Passive and active voices pass on the same message and they both use the linear order. However, on this, these researchers still wish to differ as the order of representation of the emojis also affect their interpretations. What emoji comes first determines the way an interpreter would interpret them or that the first emoji sets out the departure for the interpreter to arrive at the correct interpretations. If the first emojis is wrongly interpreted the message being passed on is likely to be misinterpreted and misunderstood.

By 2012, emojis blew up and were included in the Oxford English Dictionary in 2013 and in Merriam-Webster in 2015 (Grant, 2016)

Cohn (2015) continues to observe that emojis enhance and enrich texts, inject humour, affection and/or even melancholy. However, the Malawian situation is more than this. Emojis are used to pass message through proverbs, hence this study.

The purpose of this paper was to answer the following research questions:
1. How has emojis transformed people?
2. When are emojis used?
3. How do different people interpret different or same emojis?

2. Literature review

The word *emoji* comprised three words coined within one. *E* means picture, *mo* means writing and *ji* means character attributing to mean 'picture-word' and this has Japanese origins (Cunha *et al*., 2018). With the 'discovery' of *emoji,* its use has increased with time. Cunha *et al* (2018) citing *Emojipedia* reported that by (2017), 60 million emojis were being used every day on Facebook and 5 billion on Messenger. With excelling usage proliferation, one wonders at the translation of these emojis (Moschini, 2016). Moschini (2016) regards translation as transduction which, Kress (1977) calls it 'the movement of meaning across sign system from language to language, from culture to culture' and now from niche discursive communities to global scenario. Thus, Barbieri *et al.* (2018) conclude that *emojis* help to advance imminent multimodal communication systems.

However, semantic usage of *emojis* are dependent on season, topic under discussion and the situational environment one is to use those (Barbieri *et al*., 2018; Barbieri, Ronzano and Sagon, 2016). The seasonal usages are nevertheless very temporal, that is, the moment that season goes emojis specific to that season also go into cocoon, oblivion and resurrect when that season reappears (Barbieri *et al.,* 2018; Barbieri and Camacho-Collados, 2018 and Cappallo, Mensink and Snoek, 2018). This temporality disambiguates emojis' meanings. So meaning can be predicted if *emojis* are time and season specific (Barbieri *et al.,* 2018; Barbieri, *et al.,* 2017). Despite this, Barbieri et al. (2018) conclude that emojis are the state-of-the-art, and if they are such, then meanings or interpretations cannot be static and can continue to generate more meanings.

They are the lack of linguistic signs (Walther and D'Addario, 2001). As such, they can lead to misinterpretation because meanings of emojis vary between the users' interpretations and that can lead to misunderstandings or communication collapse and can consequently mutilate association and connectivity (Tigwell and Flata, 2016). Furthermore, Subashini and

Sobihatun (2017) note that emojis are open to elucidation but may be rendered inversely by its addresser and addressee because *emojis* are capricious and probable for miscomprehend though socially determined.

Additionally, Guntuku *et al.* (2019) observe that emojis have been accepted universally and that approval advocate a cross-cultural normative use. However, gradations on emojis' usages across cultures may also occur owing linguistic variances whether in expressing emotions or otherwise and that distributional semantics of emoji terminologies are huddled in analogous way across cultures (Guntuku *et al* (2019); Danesi, (2016). Guntuku, *et al*. (2019); Guntuku, *et al*. (2015b); Zhu, *et al*. (2018); Guntuku, *et al*. (2018) and Barbieri, *et al.* (2016) concur that culture plays a role in envisaging insights and intuitions of affect when it comes to the usage of emojis especially in social media.

Furthermore, Qiu, Feng and Yang (2017:83) opine that emojis have integrated into social world with dawn of internet proliferated online social chats and that integration displays no cross-cultural or cross-regional identification complications in the usages of emojis. These authors, however, observe that the roles emojis play as auxiliary communication is only evident in some special scenes or situations. They go on to explain that emojis are mainly used by young people…the questions are: why in special scenes or situations? And why young people only? It means emojis cannot fully replace words. Further, older people also use emojis especially the common ones like 😂 smileys (Moschini, 2016; Subashini and Sobihatun, 2017).

The use of emojis in proverbs, figurative language, and pragmatics come with an extraordinary gradation of inconsistency (Weissman, 2019; Tigwell and Flata, 2016) although they have over-flooded the communication style (Qiu, Feng and Yang, 2017). Nonetheless, the non-euphemistic interpretation ratings and sexuality decrease and variability increases. Thus, interpretations of emojis vary even in context (Miller, *et al.*, 2017). Weissman (2019) clinches that some *emojis* carry a hint of salacious interpretations.

The problem of emoji interpretations starts with different interpretations which are dependent on variables such as seasons, situations, scenes, age, context, geographical location or even education. Communication should not be specific to a certain situation or event etcetera. Though words can also be used differently dependent on variables mentioned above but emojis' interpretations need more effort in deciphering meanings. Malawi is not left out in the use of emojis in proverbs and their usages has brought confusion in the interpretations of these emojis, hence this study.

2.1 Theoretical framework

Kress (2010) talks about the need to develop a social semiotic theory of multimodality that keeps account of contemporary developments in the ever-changing world of media and communication characterised by instability and mobility just like the case emojis for proverbs. Thus, there is need for tools (theoretical/analytical extensions) to help account for the new media technologies and the new semiotic affordances that they occasion for the social theory of multimodality (Banda, 2016; Banda & Jimaima, 2015; Prior and Hengst, 2010; Kress 2010 and O'Halloran, 2011).

Prior and Hengst (2010) note that 'Reworking [of semiotic material] routinely involves multiple kinds of reworking of signs (talk, gesture, writing, re-design of spaces, re-making of objects and now emojis), yet researchers have been slow to take up semiotics (or multimodality) as a question of anything more than interesting objects'. This is the case with the use of emojis in place of words.

Similarly, O'Hollaran (2011:121) laments that the lack of 'theories and frameworks for semiotic resources other than language, [and] the [re-]modelling of social semiotic processes (in particular, 'intersemioticity' and resemiotization and semiotic remediation) and the interpretation of complex semantic space which unfolds within and across multimodal phenomena'; in this case, multilingual/multicultural contexts of Africa.

Studies on remediation, especially in media studies, have by and large, been limited to 'multimodality and transfers among media' (Irvine 2010: 236). However, semiotic remediation as conceptualised in this paper, enables analysis and understanding of how proverbs are *epitomised* across modes, media and chains of mediation for different meanings/purposes across time/spaces (Banda & Jimaima, 2015; Mafofo & Banda, 2014, 2016a; and Prior and Hengst 2010).

Semiotic remediation as repurposing thus points to ways "an activity, a tool, a term, a person etcetera is (re)mediated – not mediated anew in each act – through taking up the materials at hand, putting them to present use, and thereby producing altered conditions for future action." (Prior and Hengst 2010: 1). Following on this, Banda (2014, 2016b) and Banda and Jimaima (2015) argue that prospects of studying shifts in meaning and purpose as semiotic material is re-used in different socio-cultural co(n)texts is even more productive in multilingual/multicultural contexts. Here the notion of language/multilingualism as social practice becomes relevant. Languages are not seen as 'rigid' systems as people such as 'languagers' draw linguistic features from what are traditionally seen as autonomous systems for novel meanings in social interactions (Heller, 2007; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Pennycook, 2010; Banda, 2016b).

3. Methodology

This study was done at Malawi Adventist University, Lakeview campus and Ntcheu *boma* in Malawi and 36 participants took part in the study. These participants comprised of 20 students 8 boys and 12 girls because the campus has more girls than boys, thus, the researchers would not have used equal numbers of students. These students were taken from different years, first years to fourth year as well as students that came for bridging program. Their consent for participating in this study was sought and signed. The other participants were friends and relatives from the *boma*. The research approach used was qualitative approaches. The tools were interviews and focus group discussion.

4. Results and Discussion

The discussions are in two categories. First are interpretations done when the participants were not told that the list of emojis were proverbs. This was done to envisage if people (proverb users) recognize proverbs in emojis without premonitions. Proverbs are supposed to be known culturally and contextually and not to be told that they are proverbs. The second are interpretations after notifying the participants that the emojis are proverbs.

Interpretations and changing emojis to word proverbs before telling participants that the emojis are proverbs

1. *Kandimverele anakanena za mmaluwa* a proverb which mean 'a gossiper does say the truth' people now use 🏃 👂 🗣 🌹

The emoji used here, if they are separated, mean different things. For instance, 🏃 indicates someone running either away from something or to something. 👂 could mean, of course listening or someone has an ear problem. 🗣 could mean someone is calling someone or is coughing. 🌹 apart from just being a flower, it is a symbol of love as it is regarded as a rose flower. Thus, to combine different emojis which actually mean different things to tell one story is where the challenge is when it comes to interpretation of the emojis. The interpretations of this proverb were,

> *Went to call someone in order to give him/her a rose flower* (student-participant 07)

This interpretation comes about because the participants interpreted each of the emojis as a separate entity not that they are regarded as a sentence.
> *Running to get a rose flower* (student-participant 10)

2. *Atambala awili salila khola limodzi* meaning 'there cannot be two leaders' is written like 🦃🦃🤚😧🏠

Nkhuku ziwiri zikusungidwa ndi munthu mmodzi mnyumba imodzi 'two chickens are kept by a single person in a house' (Boma-participant 27)

This interpretation is based on the two chickens, the human face and the house. This interpretation cannot be incorrect if it was not a proverb.

> *Mwina munthuyu wapha nkhuku ziwiri* (maybe this person has killed to chickens (Boma- participant 21)

Just like Boma-participant 27, this person's interpretation is also based on what is seen, which Chomsky's generative grammar (Chomsky, 1962) would call them the 'surface structure' or 'surface visual structure' (Cohn, 2016) in this case.

3. *kavula kayitana ukachedwa upeza katavala* meaning 'a person who has invited has something to offer, do not delay' is written like 👵👂👧👗

> Someone is calling a girl coz I can see a dress and bra (Student-participant 04)

> A girl cannot go out without putting on a dress so she is told to put on a dress. (Student-participant 11).

> *Pali mtsikana akuyenda ndiye mmm ayi wina kaya akuyitana kaya kusanza mmm* 'there is a girl walking but mmm no it seems someone is calling or vomiting mmm' (Boma-participant 23).

On this proverb, participants got confused with the presence of a set of underwear except student-participant 11 whose focus also went to the voice-like arrows coming out of the mouth.

4. *nkhonya yobwezera kuwawa/mutu ukakula sulewa nkhonya* 'a repeat bad act is painful/ when you are old you cannot run away from problems' is written as 🥊😵🥊.

> I think two people are fighting one person (student participant 02)

> Mmm not sure (student-participant 16).

> *Munthu akumenyedwa zikuoneka ngati ndi anthu awiri.* 'A person is being beaten it seems by two people' (Boma-participant 30)

Further, the interpretation is based on the two boxing hands and since each is on either side of the head, hence the interpretation of two fighters.

5. *Mutu umodzi susenza denga* 'one head doesn't carry a roof. Two heads are better than one'.

☹️🏃✋🏠

Munthu mmodzi sangakhale yekha mnyumba.
'One person cannot stay in the house alone'
(Boma-participant 25)

Munthu mmodzi sangamange nyumba yekha
'one person cannot build a house alone.
(Boma-participant 33)

One person is stopped from going into a house
(student participant 15)

The interpretations here focused on the house and the person, hence using verbs such as 'build', 'stay' and could not think of lifting the house roof as the proverb suggested.

6. *Okaona nyanja anakaona mvuu*

👀⛵👀🐃

Two pairs of eyes cannot see a cow i.e. even though there are two people but cannot see a cow coming (Student-participant 01)

One person used a ship and another person ox-cart (student participant 11)

Wina waona mmm kaya koma wina waona ng'ombe 'one person has seen mmm I don't know and another has seen a cow' (Boma-participant 21)

The participants focused on the two pairs of eyes and the bull but one participant mentioned the ship. When being probed, the participant revealed that he comes from the lakeshore district. This illustrated that some interpretations are dependent on what the participant knows, is familiar with and where he/she comes from. This is theory of reference (Unger, 1983). The theory of reference also popularly known as 'descriptivism' is of the view that meaning of a name or an object is expressed and the reference of that name/object is determined by the description or a cluster of descriptions, a language user analytically associates with it. The idea is that such an associated description expresses more explicitly the meaning of the name/object for the speaker which object is denoted by its name/object. That is, to know its meaning is to know denote the meaning as expressed by appropriate description or cluster of discerptions of the speaker/interpreter. Thus, similarly, the emojis being used for proverbs, their interpretations are determined by the speaker describing them and that can be very subjective, hence different interpretation for the same object/emoji depending on its location, purpose, previous knowledge and intention.

7. *Kuona maso ankhono nkudekha*

👁️👀🐌☹️

Anthu aona nkhono nkungokhala (Boma-participant 27).

Someone is seeing a snail and stayed cool.
Aaaa mwinatu uwu ndi mwabi kuona maso

ankhono nkudekha 'aaa maybe this is a proverb seeing a snail is to be patient'. To excel one needs to be patient and work hard in life, nothing comes for free or good things come with patients and hardworking (Student participant 04).

This is the only proverb where one participant out 36, representing 3% 'discovered' that the emojis presented to them are actually proverbs. And later, the participants gave the correct proverb and interpretation. After this proverb, the participant was able to turn the emojis into words, word proverbs and interpreted their meanings.

8. *Omva m'mimba ndamene amatsekula chitseko*

🤰🏃🔒

A woman is running to open a book. (Student-participant 01).

A man is running towards a woman to open a door (student participant 06).

Anthu akuthangira kukatenga loko ndi bukhu 'people are running to get a lock and a book' (Boma-participant 23).

Womva mmimba amatsekula chitseko one who has stomachache opens the door' (student participant 04).

9. *Kuongola mtengo ndi mpoyamba*

🌳🌄

Mtengo umafunika dzuwa 'a Tree need sunshine' (Boma participant 30).

Mtengo umamela mmawa 'a tree grows in the morning' (Boma-participant 21).

A tree is always happy in the morning (student-participant 14).

10. *Ichi chakoma ichi chakoma pusi anagwa nchagada*

👉🍗😊👉🍗😊🐒🤸

This chicken is nice nice and a dog also wants some (Student-participant 08).

Ichi chiboda ichichi galu asatole (this drumstick a dog should not take it. (Boma participant 23)
Ichi chakoma ichi chakoma pusi anagwa nchagada. One cannot have two masters. A person needs to do one thing at time or you end up losing both. (Student participant 04).

11. *Chalaka bakha nkhuku singatole*

🦆👋🐔👋

Bakha ndi nkhuku sizigwirirzana 'a duck and a chicken do not tolerate each other' (Boma-participant 27)

Chalaka bakha nkhuku singatole. What a mature person has failed to do a young one cannot manage. We always need old people for advice (student participant 04).

Although the interpretation is partially correct for student-participant 04 but she managed to turn the emojis into correct word proverb.

Interpretations/changing emojis to word proverbs after telling the participants that the emojis are proverbs.

All participants were given the same emoji proverbs which were 16 in total only one participant got 9 representing 56%. 4 participants got more than 50 % correct and the rest got less. The common proverbs that most participants got correct in turning the emojis into word proverbs are the following:

1. *Ichi chakoma ichi chakoma pusi anagwa nchagada* ☞🐌😊☞🐌😊🐒🛬

2. *Kandimverele anakanena za mmaluwa* a proverb which mean 'a gossiper does say the truth' people now use 🏃🕮🔊🌻

3. *Kuona maso ankhono nkudekha* 👁👀🐌😑

4. *Chalaka bakha nkhuku singatole* 🦆👋🐔👋

5. *kavula kayitana ukachedwa upeza katavala* meaning 'a person who has invited has something to offer, do not delay' is written like 👤🔊💬👗

Although these were commonly interpreted and converted into word proverbs, this only happened after the participants were told that they were proverbs.

Confusion in the interpretations and changing the emojis to word proverbs after telling the participants that the emojis are proverbs.

There were different interpretations and changing the emojis into word proverbs of the same emoji proverbs which looked like they are talking about the same proverb. Some of them include the following:

1. 🏃🕮🔊🌻 which was interpreted and converted as
   a) *kandimverere anakanena za m'maluwa* 'one who listens on hearsay…a gossiper does not say the truth' (Student-participant 04)
   b) *ndakusokosera nkulinga utamva* 'though it is like a

noise to your ears but you have heard what I wanted to tell you' (student-participant 14).

Though, they look like the proverbs are saying the same thing, according to the focus group discussion with student-participants, the interpretations are actually different. The first one a) is the correct one as a flower is involved. If the flower was not available, then b) would have been correct.

2. 🗯😕🗯
   a) *nkhonya yobwezera kuwawa* 'a repeat of a bad act is painful' (student-participant 04)
   b) *mutu ukakula sulewa nkhonya* 'when you are old you cannot run away from problems' (Boma-participant 24).

On these, only the first a) can be regarded as the correct one. If b) was correct then the head would have been bigger in size than the other related emojis. This was another contention as student-participants during the focus group though both a) and b) are correct word interpretations of the emoji proverb.

Incomplete interpretations

Some participants partially interpreted the emoji proverbs. These include the following:
   a) 👤🔊💬👗🕴
   b) 😶😶🏃🐐🐐

On a) some participants only said, *kavula kayitana* 'what has undressed is calling someone' when other participants completed it to say *kavula kayitana ukachedwa ukapeza katavala* 'what has undressed is calling but if you delay, you will find it dressed'. On b) some participants said, *chete sautsa nyama* 'silence does not uncover hidden animals in the bush' when others completed it to say *chete chete sautsa nyama koma suyo suyo* 'silence does not uncover hidden animals in the bush but noise'. However, in Malawian CiCewa proverbs whether one completes a proverb or not, the addressee or consumer of the proverb still gets the meaning and the message. Nevertheless, it is required that a proverb should always be complete.

Why the difference

The differences came about because of the combination of emojis that made the proverb. What differentiate the two interpretation is the flower (see proverb 1 in section 1.5.1) and others interpreted that flower as a rose. Thus, a combination of what constitutes an emoji proverb matters. If not, then wrong interpretation follows. That should not be the case with proverbs in any cultural situation and/or context.

The second difference is in the incomplete interpretations of the proverbs. Although the meaning or message is still consumed, however, a proverb needs to be understood in its completeness and/or entirety. If

have written proverbs are accepted as such then mediocre writing of proverbs will be propagated.

Theoretical approach to the interpretations of the emoji proverbs

The emoji proverbs are multimodal presentations. The emojis are word pictures (Cunha *et al*., 2018) and so to use them for proverbs, the case of Malawian social media, entails people moving from word usages to pictorial visual mode of communication. Thus, emojis have been remediated to represent and present proverbs (Banda & Jimaima, 2015; Banda 2014, 2016a; and Prior and Hengst, 2010) just like emojis have been remediated and repurposed (Heller 2007; Makoni & Pennycook, 2006; Pennycook, 2010 and Banda, 2016b). The emojis have been repurposed, remediated as they are now used even for adverts (Moschini, 2016). Thus, the emojis are the semiotic resources to pass on culturally constructed message through proverbs. So, language has been rebranded because of technology. Emojis cannot exist without computers, mobile phones etcetera. Although, people/social media interlocutors now convey messages through emojis, though, only for mobile phones and computers, the emojis cannot be used for verbal communication. Despite this, as is the case in this study, the languagers (Banda, 2017), whether old or young, ((Lytra and Jørgensen, 2008, Banda and Jimaima, 2017; Qiu, Feng and Yang, 2017:83) cannot run away from using the emojis.

As said earlier on, when participants were not told that the emojis were proverbs, the interpretations were based on association, previous knowledge and the combination of the emojis (Unger, 1983).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The paper has illustrated that CiCewa proverbs have acquired new novel innovative and 'technical' mode of transmitting the message and cultural meanings. Thus, the proverbs have been 'high-teched' and turned into hybridized discursive communicative practices with the emergence of emojis through mobile phone, computers etcetera.

Furthermore, the study has revealed that emojis whether for proverbs or otherwise have a source of commodification as they are regarded as semiotic resources for adverts, rebranding the new way of selling commodities for commercial purposes. However, their wide-usages have led to new creations.

Additionally, the paper concludes with a thesis on the blurring of boundaries between different interpretations of emojis for both the cultural commodification and translocal mobility (Banda, 2017) of message, proverbs in this case.

On the other hand, the semiotically remediated proverbs serve the purpose of avoiding offending people through the use of emojis, revealing the notion of repurposing (Prior and Hengst, 2010; Irvine, 2010) in the process.

Moreover, the study has brought both young and old generations to the same level. The young who use more of social media and yet they are not conversant with proverbs are now on the same level with the older generation who have knowledge on how to present/ interpret proverbs but they are not 'fully' knowledgeable in the use of mobile phones, talk less of emojis interpretations.

Therefore, this mode of communication has brought excitement and confusion concurrently. Excitement in sense that the people are eager to use the emojis. Reason being that emojis save space and are quick for messaging when communicating on social media. Confusion in the sense that different receivers interpret emojis differently and same emoji proverbs can have two or more different interpretations creating ambiguity in the process.

5.2 Recommendations

With the popularity that emojis have come with both in social and 'normal' and/or formal media, there is need to have a universal glossary, which (Cohn, 2015) called it a 'key'. This glossary would provide the interpretations of the emojis. This means every company, software etc. that create the emojis should consequently provide the intended meanings of the emojis so that as people make use of them, the interpretations should be the same. If it is not the companies or individuals that create the emojis then at least the Google Software Internationalization team through the Unicode Consortium should create the glossary or grammar for emojis. That way, despite differently cultural background of emojis users, there would not be a confusion on the interpretations of the emojis.

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