

EMOJIS AS TOOLS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWITTER AND WEIBO DURING THE FIFA WORLD CUP

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Abstract: *The 2022 FIFA World Cup provided a unique opportunity to examine the use of emojis as tools for emotional expression and cross-cultural communication on two prominent social media platforms: Weibo and Twitter. This study explores the patterns of emoji usage during this global event, focusing on differences between the platforms and their cultural underpinnings. Using a dataset of 487,505 posts, the analysis reveals significant distinctions in emoji preferences and functions, highlighting the dynamic adaptability of emojis in diverse social and cultural contexts. The findings contribute to understanding the role of emojis as modern digital symbols, offering practical insights for social media platforms, brands, and advertisers to optimize user engagement and cross-cultural interactions.*

Keywords: *Cross-Cultural Emoji Usage, Twitter, Weibo, Digital Communication, Enregisterment Theory*

Introduction

In today's globalized world, social media has emerged as a vital medium for emotional expression, opinion sharing, and participation in international events. Emojis, as a form of digital language, help compensate for the absence of non-verbal cues in text-based communication through their intuitive visual appeal, enabling users from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to communicate more effectively. (Seargeant, 2019) Beyond their decorative function, emojis have become essential tools for conveying emotion and representing cultural identities, particularly during global phenomena such as the FIFA World Cup (Ljubešić & Fišer, 2016).

The 2022 FIFA World Cup was chosen as the ideal context for this study due to its unparalleled global visibility, diverse audience participation, and intense emotional engagement. It simultaneously activates users from different cultural backgrounds around the world in real time, offering a rich and emotionally charged environment for studying cross-cultural communication dynamics.

The 2022 FIFA World Cup, as a highly visible international event, provided a rich context for examining digital communication practices. This study investigates emoji usage patterns and their communicative functions on two culturally distinct platforms: Weibo and Twitter. By analyzing user-generated content during the tournament, the research highlights how emojis reflect cultural values and social dynamics, shaped by the interplay between globalization and localization (Guntuku, Li, Tay, & Ungar, 2019).

Prior studies have demonstrated that emojis enhance emotional engagement and facilitate interaction on social media platforms (Ge-Stadnyk, 2021), and that they can shape user responses within specific cultural or campaign contexts (Gomes & Casais, 2018). Moreover, their meanings and expressive nuances often differ across languages and cultures, necessitating cross-linguistic and platform-sensitive analysis (Barbieri, Kruszewski, Ronzano, & Saggion, 2016).

While some of these studies have explored the cultural variability of emojis, few have conducted systematic cross-platform comparisons during a unified global event. This study differs from prior work by directly comparing Weibo (a Chinese-dominant platform) and Twitter (a more global/Western platform) in the same communicative moment, allowing for a controlled cultural contrast. Additionally, by applying the sociolinguistic theory of enregisterment, we go beyond sentiment metrics to explore how emojis take on culturally specific meanings that reflect local discourse norms.

Despite growing scholarly interest in the emotional and semantic roles of emojis (Li & Zheng, 2024), few studies have systematically examined their cross-cultural and cross-platform functions during major global events (Miller, Kluver, Thebault-Spieker, Terveen, & Hecht, 2017). This research addresses that gap by comparing emoji use on Twitter and Weibo during the 2022 FIFA World Cup, shedding light on their role in enabling cross-cultural communication.

The study makes three primary contributions. First, it conducts a comparative cross-cultural analysis of emoji usage, moving beyond single-platform studies to examine culturally

embedded user behaviors across two global networks. Second, it applies sociolinguistic enregisterment theory and dynamic trend analysis to explore how emojis shift from universal digital symbols to culturally enregistered expressions during specific events. Third, the research utilizes a large-scale dataset covering the entire World Cup period, offering fresh empirical insights into digital communication during global spectacles.

Theoretical Framework And Research Methods

The sociolinguistic enregisterment theory provides a significant framework for understanding how linguistic symbols acquire specific social meanings within particular contexts and gain widespread acceptance (Agha, 2007). This theory is particularly relevant to this study as it offers insights into how emojis, as digital linguistic symbols, develop specific emotional and cultural connotations through repeated use in specific social and cultural settings. For example, during the FIFA World Cup, the [soccer ball] emoji transcends its general meaning of sports to become a culturally adaptive symbol of support, interaction, and global discussion related to the event.

In the context of cross-cultural communication, enregisterment theory is instrumental in analyzing emojis as tools for overcoming language barriers and reflecting cultural adaptability. Emojis not only convey emotions but also encapsulate users' cultural backgrounds and social contexts. Luangrath, Peck, & Barger (2017) observed that Western users prefer facial emojis to express direct emotions, while Asian users often opt for symbolic emojis to convey nuanced cultural meanings, highlighting their culturally adaptive usage. Additionally, Ge and Gretzel (2018) demonstrated that emoji use in tourism-related social media content significantly enhances user engagement, further illustrating their role as culturally enregistered symbols in global communication. Recent studies have also highlighted the evolving role of emojis in digital communication. Chiang and Gomez-Zara (2024) conducted a systematic review of HCI literature, emphasizing how emojis have become integral tools for emotional expression and digital interaction, and how their meaning evolves over time. Similarly, Zhou, Lu, and Ai (2024) traced the diffusion and adaptation of new emojis on Twitter, revealing semantic shifts driven by cultural and community-based interaction. These findings affirm the theoretical relevance of enregisterment in understanding emoji usage across global platforms. Closely related to the cultural adaptability of emojis, Agha's (2007) enregisterment theory provides an essential explanatory framework. This theory emphasizes that the social meaning of language or symbols is not inherent but dynamically assigned through frequent use in specific social contexts. For example, during major international events such as the FIFA World Cup, certain emojis (e.g., [soccer ball] or [trophy]) are widely used due to their symbolic significance and gradually become enregistered symbols within specific contexts. This dynamic adaptability of symbols helps reveal the multifaceted functions of emojis in the interaction between globalization and localization.

The data for this study were derived from the platforms Weibo and Twitter, covering 487,505 posts related to the FIFA World Cup published between November 15 and December 25, 2022. Using keywords such as "World Cup," "soccer," "FIFA," "Neymar," and "Mbappé," posts were filtered for relevant content. All public posts containing at least one of these keywords were included in the dataset, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the event-related discourse without applying random sampling. The dataset includes the following components: post text, user interaction metrics, and basic user information. The post content consists of complete

textual content, including text, emojis, and multimedia information; interaction metrics record the number of likes, comments, and shares for each post, reflecting user interactions; and user information includes user IDs, gender, and IP locations to analyze the geographical and demographic characteristics of emoji usage. The emoji field extracts all emojis used in users' posts, which were standardized across platforms. All emoji characters in the dataset were extracted and standardized across platforms using their Unicode code points. Platform-specific variants—such as stylistic differences, device-dependent renderings, or skin tone modifiers—were grouped under their respective base emoji categories to enable consistent cross-platform comparison.

All user data in this study were anonymized, and only publicly available data were analyzed to ensure ethical compliance. The research adheres to relevant data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and respects user privacy by excluding any sensitive information.

In terms of data analysis, the study adopted the following methods: First, frequency statistics and distribution analysis were conducted to calculate the frequency and categorical distribution of emoji usage, and the high-frequency emojis on Weibo and Twitter were compared. Second, dynamic trend analysis was performed on a daily basis to examine the usage trends of high-frequency emojis and their association with key events, such as the opening ceremony and the final match. Third, quantitative methods, including frequency statistics and trend analysis, were combined to explore the differences in emoji usage on Weibo and Twitter, providing cultural interpretations of their adaptability and social significance.

Through these methods, this study analyzes the functions and meanings of emojis in different contexts from the perspectives of user behavior and culture, offering new evidence and theoretical support for cross-cultural digital communication research.

Data Description And Analyzing

Data Description

The dataset for this study is based on blog posts about the 2022 FIFA World Cup on Weibo and Twitter platforms, covering the period from November 15, 2022 to December 25, 2022, with user-generated content. By searching the keywords "World Cup", "soccer", "FIFA", "Neymar", "Kylian Mbappe" and other terms related to World Cup events and related soccer stars, a large amount of World Cup-related blog post data was extracted. The fields included in the dataset reflect the content of users' blog posts and their interactions, such as the number of retweets, comments, and likes, as well as basic information about the users, such as user id, IP affiliation, and gender.

Table 1. Table of Field Descriptions

Serial Number	Field Name	Meaning of the Field
1	Search Keywords	Keywords related to soccer and the World Cup included in the user's blog post, such as "World Cup", "soccer", "Neymar", etc.

2	Blog Posting time	The specific date and time of the user's blog post on the Weibo or Twitter platform, ranging from November 15 to December 25, 2022
3	Blog Content	The complete textual content posted by users on the Weibo or Twitter platforms, which may contain emoji, links, images, etc.
4	Number of Retweets of Blog Posts	The number of times this blog post has been retweeted on the platform, with some of the data being empty, meaning it has not been retweeted.
5	Number of Comments on Blog Posts	The number of comments the blog post received on the platform, with some of the data being empty, representing no comments.
6	Number of Blog Post Likes	The number of likes this blog post has received, with some of the data being empty, representing no likes.
7	User id	A user's unique identifier on the platform, used to distinguish between different users.
8	User ip Address	The IP address affiliation information displayed when a user publishes a blog post is usually displayed as a geographic area (e.g., country or city).
9	User's Gender	The gender information chosen by the User when registering on the Platform is either "male" or "female".
10	Emoji	The emoji used by users in their blog posts have been processed to include emoticon extraction results from Weibo and Twitter platforms.

The "Post Time" field of the dataset shows the specific time information of each post, ensuring that the dynamics of social media activity during the World Cup can be accurately analyzed. The "content" field records the complete content posted by users on the platform, which provides the basis for subsequent emoji extraction and sentiment analysis. In addition, emoji usage was extracted and integrated through the "Emoji" field, covering emoji usage records from both Weibo and Twitter.

On the dimension of user interaction, the dataset contains three indicators: "number of retweets of blog posts," "number of comments on blog posts," and "number of likes on blog posts." These fields record the dissemination of the user's blog post on the platform and the frequency of interaction between the user and other users, which can reflect the popularity of the blog post and the relationship between the use of emoji and user interaction.

Each user is uniquely identified by the "user id" field, and the "user ip" field shows the geographic location of the user when posting, which is useful for studying the differences in emoji usage during the World Cup among users from different regions. The "user gender" field records the user's gender information, which is useful for analyzing whether there are gender differences in emoji usage.

The overall size of the dataset is large, containing a total of 487,505 records. The "emoji" field extracts the emoji used by users for each blog post, and these emoji are converted into

traditional and simplified Chinese and integrated across platforms to ensure the consistency and analyzability of the data. Although some blog posts did not contain emoji, the dataset still provides a sufficient sample size for subsequent frequency counts and trend analysis.

To ensure the robustness of the analysis, particular attention was paid to the diversity of the dataset. The dataset was curated to ensure diversity in geographic locations, genders, and user behaviors, offering a representative sample from both platforms. This minimizes potential platform-specific biases and ensures a robust foundation for analyzing emoji usage patterns during the FIFA World Cup.

Trends and Patterns of Emoji Usage: Analysis Results

The trend in emoji frequency shows the popular emojis that users tend to use in their social interactions, and there is a degree of variation between the two platforms, Weibo and Twitter.

On the Weibo platform, the most frequently used term is [Cheering], which was used 4,702 times, showing users' strong expression of support and praise. This is closely followed by [soccer], which was used 3,888 times, showing users' interest in soccer or sports-related topics. Other high-frequency emojis include [doge] (3,445 times), [tears] (3,409 times), and [sadness] (3,144 times), which demonstrate the diversity of users' emotional expressions.

In contrast, the most commonly used emoji on the Twitter platform was [soccer_ball], which was used a whopping 13,243 times, reflecting the high level of interest in the topic of soccer among users. This was followed by [face_with_tears_of_joy] (6,766 uses) and [loudly_crying_face] (4,515 uses), which demonstrated a wide range of expressions of humor and sadness.

In both platforms, while both platforms show the popularity of soccer-related emojis, there are differences in the specific emojis used and their frequency. For example, on Weibo, users are more likely to use [Cheering] and [allow sadness] to express emotions, whereas on Twitter, [soccer_ball] and [face_with_tears_of_joy] account for a higher frequency of use. In addition, [rolling_on_the_floor_laughing] (4,248 times) and [fire] (4,227 times) on Twitter similarly reflect expressions of humor and excitement.

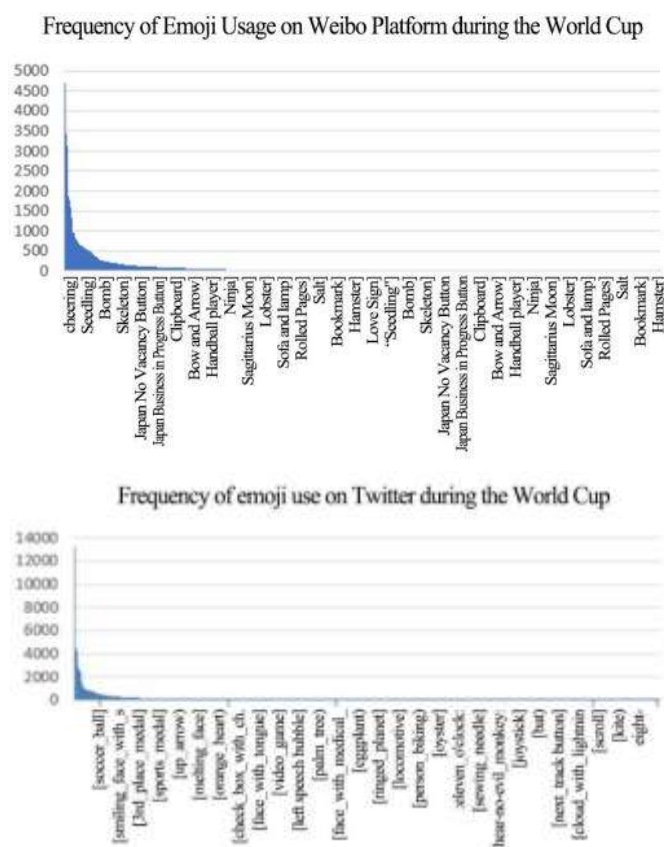


Fig.1 Frequency Statistics of Emoji Usage on Both Platforms During the World Cup Soccer Match

The overall trend shows that both on Weibo and Twitter, users prefer emoji related to everyday emotions (e.g. joy, sadness), while many symbols related to online culture and humor are also widely used. These emoji frequency data not only reflect the diversity of users in their communication, but also the common interest in popular trends and emotional expressions on social media.

While the general patterns of emoji usage provide a broad overview, analyzing the daily trends of high-frequency emojis offers deeper insights into the emotional and cultural dynamics associated with specific events during the World Cup.

Trends and Patterns of High-Frequency Emoji Usage: Analysis Results

In this section, the researcher analyze the statistics and trend analysis of the usage frequency of high-frequency emoji, focusing on the trend of the top 10 emoji per day during the World Cup. Through data analysis, it can be found that emoji not only reflects the expression of users' emotions, but also reflects the heat and emotional fluctuations of social activities during the tournament to a certain extent.

On the Weibo platform, the emoji [soccer] was used 320 times on the opening day of the World Cup on November 21, 2022, showing a level of user interest and enthusiasm for the tournament. The usage of this emoji also remained high on subsequent match days. For example, on the

final day (December 18, 2022), [Soccer] was used 204 times, which, although slightly lower than on the opening day, still reflects users' continued interest in the tournament.

The use of [Cheering] and [tear] likewise showed significant fluctuations. The frequency of using [Cheering] reached 356 times on the opening day, and soared to 215 times in the post-game summary on December 19, reflecting users' reaction to the results of the game. And the use of [tear] reached 128 times on November 20, showing the diversity of users' emotional expressions.

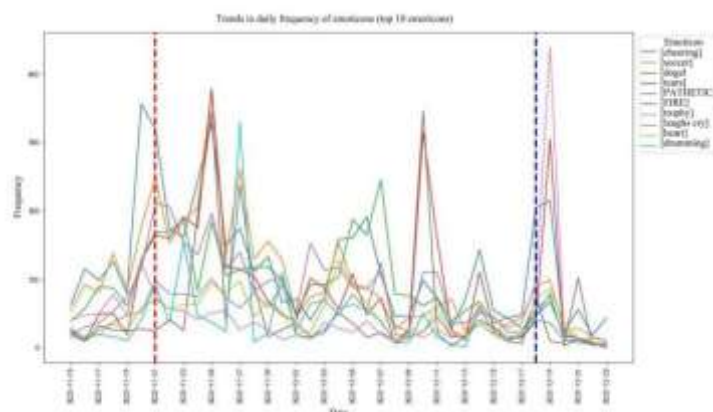


Fig. 2 Statistics on the Daily Frequency of High-Frequency Emoji on the Weibo Platform

On the Twitter platform, the emoji [soccer_ball] surged to 1,130 uses on the opening day (November 21, 2022), far outpacing other days. This trend was also mirrored on subsequent match days, particularly on the final day, December 18, when users used [soccer_ball] 40 times, indicating strong interest in the tournament.

In addition, the use of [face_with_tears_of_joy] showed fluctuations during the tournament, especially on November 28 and December 22, when it reached 123 and 405 times, respectively, which may be related to the dramatic scenes that occurred during the tournament. Users expressed the joy and loss experienced during the tournament through this emoji.

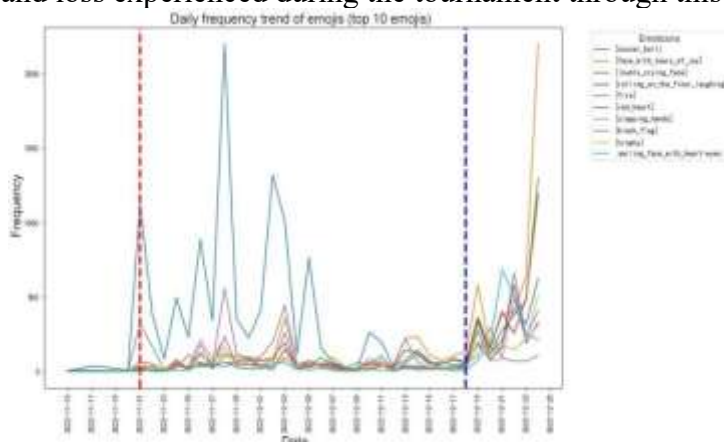


Fig. 3 Statistics on the Daily Frequency of High-Frequency Emoji on the Tweet Platform

A comparison of data from the two platforms shows that users tend to use symbolic emojis during the World Cup to express their passion, support, and fluctuating emotions about the outcome of the tournament. In Weibo, the emoji [Cheering] and [tears] show the diversity of users' emotions, while on Twitter, the more frequently used emoji [soccer_ball] and [face_with_tears_of_joy] further emphasize users' emotional involvement in the tournament.

This suggests that emojis, as an important tool for conveying emotions in modern social media, have exerted extensive use and influence in large-scale international events, and that the frequency of use and user preferences across different platforms demonstrate rich cultural and social dynamics.

Summary of the frequency of use of emoji

This chapter provides comprehensive statistics and analysis on the trend of emoji usage during the World Cup, and reveals the changes in users' emotional expression behind emoji usage based on the data. In the context of the World Cup, a globally recognized sporting event, emojis became an important communication tool on social platforms, with users using them to express their emotions, support their favorite teams, and respond to dramatic moments of the event. By analyzing the frequency and trend of different emoji, we can gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics of users' social behaviors during this period.

Looking first at the use of the top 10 high-frequency emojis, the data clearly demonstrates a strong correlation between the peaks in emoji use during the World Cup and match days. In particular, the use of [soccer] emoji reached significant peaks on the opening day (November 21st) and the final day (December 18th). This suggests that users' heightened interest in the tournament is mainly expressed through symbolic emoji, especially at key points where the number of emoji usage significantly increases. Similarly, the use of other emojis such as [trophy] and [applause] reflects users' emotional outpouring at the outcome of specific tournaments, especially during victory and celebration occasions.

Secondly the trend of emoji usage also reveals the emotional fluctuations of the viewers. The changes in the frequency of different emoji on different match days reflect the emotional ups and downs experienced by viewers during the event. For example, the peak usage of [smiley crying face] and [red heart] tends to occur at moments when the results of the matches are unexpected or when emotional involvement is high. The use of these emoji not only reflects users' immediate reaction to the outcome of the match, but also demonstrates the complexity of viewers' emotions, as they express emotional resonance both in terms of humor and surprise at certain match scenes, as well as in terms of supporting a team's victory or defeat.

In addition, the use of emoji is significantly cyclical. The data shows that users' emoji usage on match days is significantly higher than on non-match days. This suggests that tournament days become a peak period of social activity, especially in the hours after the match ends, when users' emotional responses are still active. This cyclical emoji usage reflects the importance of tournaments and their broader impact on the emotional and social interactions of global audiences. Emojis not only serve a social function in daily interactions, but are also endowed with the symbolic meaning of immediate engagement and emotional expression in specific social contexts. As noted by Pavalanathan and Eisenstein (2016), emojis often serve as paralinguistic tools that enhance emotional expression and communication in digital platforms,

complementing traditional textual cues and amplifying emotional resonance during significant events.

Several useful conclusions can be drawn from the above analysis. First, the use of emoji in major sports events is not only a tool for emotional expression but also a symbol of social interaction, which reflects the audience's attention to the game and their emotional reactions. Second, the data on emoji usage can help gain insights into spectators' emotional fluctuations during events and provide a strong basis for studying user behavior patterns. Finally, the emoji usage trend shows a strong connection between the discussion heat of global events such as the World Cup on social platforms and users' emotional expression, which provides a valuable reference for further research on the relationship between large-scale events and users' social behavior.

Through analysis, the frequency of emoji use by Weibo and Twitter users reflects the cultural qualities and user preferences of different platforms in social interaction. Weibo users tend to use emoji such as [Cheering], [soccer], and [tears], which not only represent attention to World Cup events but also carry rich emotional expressions such as support, humor, or sadness. For example, [Cheering] became a registered symbol for users to express their support for their favorite teams or players, and it was especially used more frequently on match days or in post-match summaries, highlighting Chinese social media users' sense of participation in the tournament and fan culture. On the other hand, [Let me be sad] and [doge] reflect the unique online culture of Weibo users, as they were used to express humorous or flirtatious sentiments during the tournament. These emoji were dynamically registered as signs of specific emotions and social identities during the World Cup, constructing a collective social interaction pattern of Weibo users.

In contrast, the use of emoji on the Twitter platform is more globalized and universal. The high frequency use of symbols such as [soccer_ball] and [face_with_tears_of_joy] suggests that Twitter users are more inclined to express their emotions and engagement through intuitive and universal emoji. [soccer_ball] became a symbolic symbol during the World Cup and was widely used to discuss the tournament content, while [face_with_tears_of_joy] reflected users' expressions of humorous emotions during the dramatic scenes of the tournament. These symbols are registered in the global context of Twitter as universal emotional and thematic expression tools, demonstrating their cross-cultural adaptability. In addition, using symbols such as [fire] and [rolling_on_the_floor_laughing] by Twitter users suggests that these emoji are assigned meanings related to excitement and humor in specific social contexts.

By further analyzing the temporal dynamics of emoji use, the process of their registering is closely related to tournament nodes. At key time nodes such as the opening day and the final day, the use frequency of emoji related to the soccer theme (e.g., [soccer] and [soccer_ball]) rises significantly, reflecting the high level of attention and emotional commitment to the tournament expressed by users through these symbols. Meanwhile, the usage of emotional symbols (e.g., [tears] and [face_with_tears_of_joy]) increased significantly at moments when the results of the tournament were unexpected or dramatic, suggesting that emoji have become an important tool for users to express complex emotions instantly. This cyclical usage pattern suggests that overall, the patterns and types of emoji usage on Weibo and Twitter platforms not only reflect users' emotional expression and interaction needs in specific social contexts

but also reveal cultural differences between emoji in globalized and localized contexts. In Weibo, users tend to use symbols with local cultural overtones (e.g., [Let me be sad] and [doge]), which were further registered as a specific social language in Chinese online culture through high-frequency use during the World Cup. In Twitter, users rely more on universal symbols (e.g., [soccer_ball]), which become a common language for cross-cultural communication among global users. The theory of enregisterment helps us understand how emoji are endowed with unique social meanings in different social contexts, and also reveals the profound influence of platform ecology and cultural context on emoji usage patterns.

This study finds that there are significant differences in emoji usage patterns across cultural contexts, which aligns with the findings of Li and Yang (2021) on cross-cultural differences between Chinese and American users. Furthermore, these differences highlight the localized adaptations of digital language within a globalized context. Weibo users tend to favor emojis such as [允悲] (allowing sadness) and [doge], which carry local internet cultural characteristics. This indicates that Chinese users often express emotions through humor and irony, reflecting a unique form of internet subculture in China. In contrast, Twitter users frequently use emojis like [soccer_ball] and [face_with_tears_of_joy], which showcase a more universal mode of emotional expression, aligning with the platform's global user base. These differences suggest that although emojis are widely used as tools of digital language across the world, their specific usage patterns and emotional functions are deeply influenced by cultural and social contexts.

The observed differences in emoji usage between Weibo and Twitter users provide a vivid illustration of Sociolinguistic Enregisterment Theory, which posits that linguistic symbols acquire specific social meanings through repeated, contextually driven use. On Weibo, emojis such as [doge] and [允悲] (allowing sadness) have undergone a process of enregisterment that reflects the platform's unique cultural dynamics. These symbols are deeply embedded in Chinese online humor, characterized by a blend of irony, self-deprecation, and collective emotional expression. The frequent use of [允悲] during moments of unexpected match outcomes.

In contrast, the universal nature of emojis like [soccer_ball] and [face_with_tears_of_joy] on Twitter highlights their enregisterment as globally recognized symbols of emotional resonance and cross-cultural engagement. The widespread use of [soccer_ball] during key moments of the World Cup reflects its role as an emblem of global participation, transcending linguistic and cultural boundaries. Meanwhile, [face_with_tears_of_joy] illustrates the platform's emphasis on humor-driven reactions, particularly during dramatic or unexpected events. These universal emojis act as digital bridges, enabling users from diverse backgrounds to communicate shared emotions without relying on language, thereby fostering a sense of global community.

What is particularly significant is the interplay between globalization and localization in emoji usage. While Weibo's emojis reflect culturally specific practices, such as indirect expressions of disappointment or humor as a coping mechanism, Twitter's emojis demonstrate a tendency toward universal emotional expressions, shaped by its global user base. This dual dynamic reveals that emojis are not static symbols but adaptive tools that acquire meaning through their contextual use in specific social and cultural ecosystems. As Robertson, Ross, and Hall (2018)

highlight, cultural differences often lead to varying interpretations of emojis, which can either enhance communication or result in misinterpretations in cross-cultural interactions. During the FIFA World Cup, the enregisterment of emojis on these platforms underscores their capacity to serve both as markers of cultural identity and as instruments of global digital participation, bridging the gap between localized and universal modes of communication.

Conclusion and Future Directions

This study highlights the dynamic social functions and cultural adaptability of emojis as modern digital symbols. Far beyond mere tools for emotional expression, emojis act as markers of user identity, cultural participation, and social interaction within specific contexts. During the FIFA World Cup, emojis like “cheering” and “doge” on Weibo reflected the humor, irony, and collective participation characteristic of Chinese digital culture. Conversely, universal symbols such as “soccer ball” and “face with tears of joy” on Twitter facilitated cross-cultural engagement, emphasizing the platform’s global user base and the universality of certain emotional expressions.

Guided by Sociolinguistic Enregisterment Theory, the findings illustrate how emojis acquire social meanings through repeated and contextualized use. On Weibo, emojis dynamically adapted to local cultural norms, becoming symbols of humor and indirect emotional communication. On Twitter, emojis served as universal tools for bridging cultural and linguistic divides, fostering a shared global discourse around the FIFA World Cup. This dual role of emojis underscores their significance in mediating between globalization and localization in contemporary digital communication.

Future Research Directions. While this study focused on quantitative methods to analyze emoji usage patterns and cultural differences, future research could explore qualitative approaches to further uncover the cultural and emotional connotations of emojis. For instance, thematic modeling or user-centered interviews could provide deeper insights into how emojis function as tools for cultural expression and emotional resonance. Expanding the scope to include other significant global events, such as political movements, natural disasters, or cultural festivals, would allow researchers to understand how emojis adapt across different emotional and social contexts. Integrating sentiment analysis or machine learning techniques could enable researchers to systematically identify patterns and cultural differences in emoji usage. These technologies would also facilitate large-scale analysis of complex datasets, providing new insights into cross-platform and cross-cultural digital communication. Extending the scope of research to other global or regional events, such as political movements, natural disasters, or cultural festivals, could determine whether observed patterns are specific to the FIFA World Cup or consistent across diverse contexts. Such comparative studies would offer broader insights into the adaptability and universality of emojis in digital communication. Moreover, platform-specific affordances may influence how emojis are used in public discourse, suggesting the importance of investigating technological design alongside cultural factors (Eisner, Rocklage, Fazio, & Rucker, 2020).

Additionally, integrating multimodal data such as images, videos, and hashtags could enrich the analysis by exploring how emojis complement other forms of communication in digital interactions. Another promising direction lies in examining how platform algorithms influence emoji dissemination and popularity, shedding light on the interplay between technological

design and cultural communication. Longitudinal studies that track emoji usage across recurring global events, such as the Olympics or international crises, could also reveal how emojis evolve in response to changing cultural and emotional landscapes.

Academic and Practical Contributions. This study contributes to the academic understanding of cross-cultural emoji usage by revealing nuanced cultural differences and global trends in digital communication. It also expands the application of Sociolinguistic Enregisterment Theory by demonstrating how emojis acquire culturally specific meanings through contextualized use across platforms. Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for social media platforms, brands, and advertisers. By leveraging the cultural adaptability and emotional resonance of emojis, platforms can enhance user engagement through personalized emoji recommendations that align with users' cultural and emotional preferences. For advertisers, understanding the cultural significance of emojis can aid in designing campaigns that resonate deeply with diverse audiences, fostering stronger emotional connections and more effective cross-cultural communication strategies.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of emojis as essential tools for emotional expression and cultural mediation in an increasingly interconnected digital world. By bridging cultural and linguistic divides, emojis hold the potential to foster cross-cultural understanding and participation, making them invaluable symbols in the evolving landscape of global communication.

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