

Emoji 'ruining people's grasp of English' because young rely on them to communicate

By [Camilla Turner](#), EDUCATION EDITOR

Emoji are ruining the English language because young people rely on them to communicate, research by Google has found.

Over a third of British adults believe that emoji are to blame for the deterioration of the English language, according to new research.

YouTube, the video sharing website owned by Google, commissioned a study where 2,000 adults aged between 16 and 65 were asked about their views on the current state of the English language.

The vast majority (94 per cent) of respondents said they believe there has been a decline in the correct use of English, with four in five identifying youngsters as the worst culprits.

The research found that more than half of British adults are not confident with their command of spelling and grammar.

Almost three quarters of adults are now dependent on emoji to communicate with each another, as well as spell checks and predictive text.

A spokesman for YouTube said that English language tutorial videos are seeing a huge surge in popularity. Since April 2017 there has been a 126 per cent increase in views of English language lesson videos on the site, they added.

Lucy Earl, whose YouTube channel English With Lucy has over a million subscribers, gives tips and advice to those looking to improve their language skills.



She said: "As we increasingly communicate through our phones and computers, it is only natural that our language will evolve.

"Digital communication should not be an excuse to take the easy road out. We all need to understand the foundations."

Emoji, a popular way to replicate non-verbal communication, are used six billion times a day and [have been described as the fastest growing language in history.](#)

Almost three quarters of adults are now dependent on emojis to communicate with each another, the study found

But one expert has warned that while there is a "superficial attraction" to using emoji, they are among the most damaging aspects of communication technology.

Chris McGovern, a former Government adviser and chairman of the Campaign for Real Education said: "There has unquestionably been quite a serious decline in young people's ability to use the English language and write properly punctuated English.

“We are moving in a direction of cartoon and picture language, which inevitably will affect literacy. Children will always follow the path of least resistance.



“Emoji convey a message, but this breeds laziness. If people think ‘all I need to do is send a picture’, this dilutes language and expression.”

[Academics have previously warned that peppering an email with emoji could harm your job prospects by making colleagues less likely to share information with you.](#)

Emojis are ruining the English language because young people

rely on them to communicate, research suggests.

A study, published in *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, advised that people should avoid emoji at work altogether, especially the first time you talk to someone.

Dr Ella Glikson, an expert in business and management at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, said that the research shows using emojis in the workplace does not increase perceptions of warmth, and actually decrease perceptions of competence.

However, other studies have focused on the positive aspects of emoji. [Researchers from Edinburgh University published a paper earlier this month which found emojis are helping people feel included on social media.](#)

When the inclusive emoji were first introduced in 2015 there were fears that the icons could be used inappropriately or abusively, and could even stoke racial tensions.

But when researchers analysed a sample of a billion tweets they found that most people who choose to personalize the colour of their emoji do it to make it more aligned with their own skin tone.

And even in tweets where the selected skin tone was different from that of the user, posts were found to be mostly positive. The researchers called for even more options to personalise characters to a greater degree.

[In 2016, a High Court judge took the unusual step of including a smiley face emoji in an official ruling.](#)

In an attempt to make a judgment in a family court case comprehensible for the children it affects, Mr Justice Peter Jackson used a smiley face symbol.

The ruling was thought to be the first in English legal history to incorporate an emoji, or web symbol, to explain a point of evidence.