

Major theme of the paper:

Generation, design and features of language (sense), literature and communication

Title: "Analysis on Empathy raised by Haiku-style Expression"

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Abstract:

In this paper, we discuss the issue of empathy induced by a short poem style of verbal expression. Typically in Haiku, world-shortest poem originated from Japan, the condensed form of word combination sometimes arouse deep impression and empathy (or sympathy). So far, Haiku is already spreading into the world and is appreciated in various languages. Moreover, such a globalization is enhanced also with multimedia, which allows us to understand each other without common traditional or cultural basis. Thus, we are investigating the potentials of Haiku that would give empathy to human subjects and would be an excellent communication media in the near future. Along this supposition, we launched into elucidating the essence of the empathy brought by Haiku itself, as well as in multimedia environments, with psycholinguistics and related methodologies like as "Kansei"- or "Kotoba"- Engineering", etc.

In our first experiment, we examined multimedia presentation effects on subjective visual impressions and the degree of empathy. Our experimental materials consist of 30 CG (Computer Graphics) works of landscapes originally authored by college students. For each picture, a brief English haiku, by the same author, was attached. We set two different presentation conditions; one is a CG picture only (A) and the other is a CG picture with a corresponding haiku text (B). For each condition, 45 subjects (23 males and 22 females) were requested to score the sensitiveness on a 5-graded scale for 20 impression words in reference to related studies on visual information retrieval using adjective words. Moreover, they also marked a personal empathy (affectiveness) degree on each CG work on a 5-pointed scale. In many cases (CG works), the sensitiveness for individual impressions was higher in the condition (B) than in (A). A remarkable result is that the empathy degrees of the given CG works were significantly raised (9 of 30 works) when a picture and its pertinent haiku text were simultaneously presented. The differences among individual persons were greater than those between the two sexes.

It suggests that various aspects of visual impression and empathy can be enhanced with certain verbal stimuli (haiku text composed of 10.6 words in average), when the content provides comprehensive clues for evaluation. For example, we observed, such effects were caused by expressions identifying the theme or the focus of the work, or by metaphorical emphases on major components of the work. Those analysis results will be shown.

In our next experiment, which is still on going, we are trying to find the difference of empathy-raising effects between Japanese Haiku and prose. The verbal stimuli in the former experiment were in English and are considered as neutral for the Japanese subjects. Therefore, we need comparison of affectiveness among various styles of expressions in their native language. For this purpose, we prepared the translation for each Haiku used in the previous experiment (from English into Japanese), both in 5-7-5 syllabic conventional Haiku style and in mostly three-lined prose style. The translation into Japanese haiku in conventional style was performed by a prominent scholar of comparative literature. We suppose there will be significant difference of impression between the two styles.

Finally, we will conclude this article with remarks on characteristics of empathy brought by Haiku and possibilities of its elaboration with an advanced communication media.