

**Research Article**

## **Research on the visual design of Sichuan dialect emoticons**

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### **Abstract**

The regional features contained in dialects cannot be compared to those of official languages, although dialects are viewed as less elegant. The younger generation perceives dialect as more "native." Moreover, Putonghua, the official language of China, has gained popularity in recent years. How to preserve and advance regional dialects has become a study-worthy issue. This study examines the visual design of fusion emoticons in the Sichuan dialect. The initial objective is to examine how the Sichuan dialect implements emoticons in graphic design. The second objective is to investigate the cross-border incorporation and growth of the Sichuan dialect emoticon graphic design. The research methodology combines design-based action research and case analysis. The result is a summary of the emoticon design style that incorporates the Sichuan dialect, regional characteristics, and local drama and culture. In the design practice, the researchers blended the Sichuan dialect and the panda, a unique local animal, as the major body of the combined emoticon. In the design elements extracted from history and culture, the characters of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms, which has a long history in Sichuan, were chosen for exploration; in an attempt at local drama, dynamic emoticons were created by combining the image of a Sichuan opera stage performance with Sichuan dialect. This discussion will contribute to the propagation of Sichuan dialect-based regional culture. From the perspective of cultural development and economic benefits, this paper examines the opportunities presented by the cross-border and deep integration of Sichuan dialects and emoticons in order to promote people's understanding of Sichuan dialects from multiple perspectives, provide a model for the design of the integration of idioms and emoticons, and broaden people's options for daily use.

**Keywords:** Sichuan Dialect, Regional Culture, Emoticons, Visual Design, Cross-border Integration

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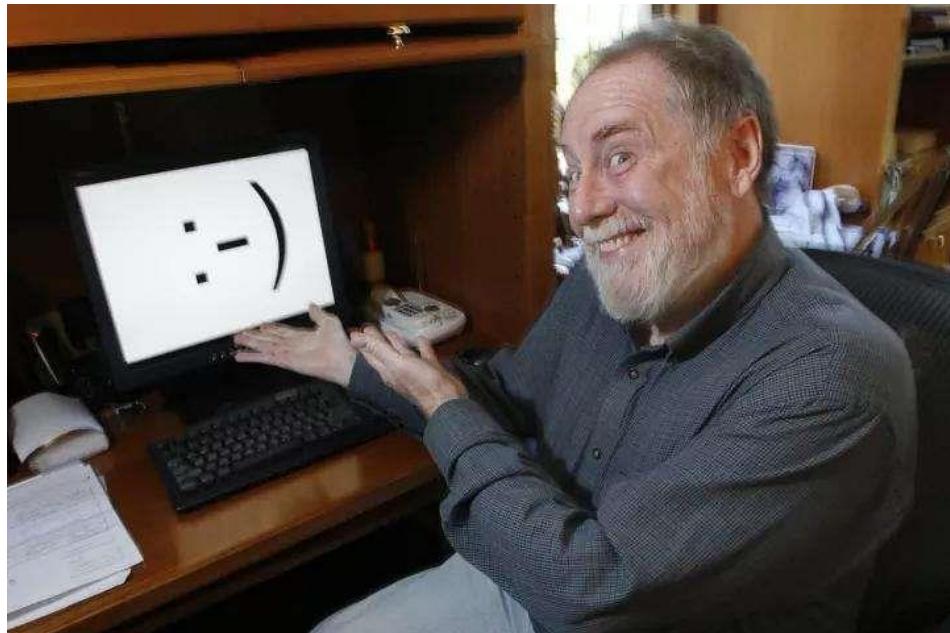
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## Introduction

Language is the expression of human communication. There are more than 5000 recognized languages worldwide and more than 1400 independent languages that have not yet been identified. In China, more than 80 languages or dialects cannot communicate with each other because of the vast territory and ethnic minorities. In some underdeveloped areas, people are not highly educated and cannot master the official language. In these places, people who cannot speak the local dialect may only communicate by using body language and graphic pictures to express their ideas. Of course, because China has a large population, the regions and people who speak the Sichuan dialect do not need to communicate in these relatively primitive ways. However, one phenomenon worth considering is that about 120 million people use the Sichuan dialect broadly. More people use the Sichuan dialect, but fewer people study the Sichuan dialect. Some people think idioms are not official and are often classified as folk or popular literature. However, the study of dialects belongs to the category of linguistics, which is highly worthy of study. China's methods of protecting, inheriting, and promoting dialects are relatively simple. The existing research forms include (1) written records, dialect vocabulary and text files, current situation investigation and analysis reports, etc. (2) On-the-spot visits and interviews with local dialect speakers, recording the dialect's pronunciation through a recording pen and saving it. (3) Research from a cultural perspective, such as dialect TV dramas, using dialects in literary books, exploring dialects in broadcasting and hosting, etc. Graphical expression of dialects from the visual design perspective can increase public interest and be combined with social media for practical use to achieve the role of protecting and promoting dialects. There are relatively few explorations in this aspect, which is also the value of this study. After investigating the dialect symbol in the network vocabulary, it is found that the current rate of the dialect symbol in the network vocabulary is about 17%. It can be seen that the dialect symbol has a communicative function in the network language symbol system and a cognitive function (Cong & Cheng, 2020). Many years ago, two software designers in Shanghai developed the "Shanghai mobile phone input method," which has been popular on the Internet. The use of dialects has become a hot topic again. In the poll of 1045 people launched by the China Youth Social Survey Center, 95.9% of the respondents confirmed that there were young people around who were afraid of speaking dialects, and 37.1% said that there were few young people around who spoke pure dialects. The survey also found that most young people do not talk about dialect because they feel that dialect is native, that dialect is not confident enough, and that vanity is causing trouble. In language, there are solid codes and invalid codes. Generally speaking, people are more likely to identify with reliable codes. People often need to use Putonghua for specific formal work and study, so its strong position is constantly strengthened. As a result, Putonghua has become the authoritative language code, and dialects have naturally become the weak language code. In daily life, the speaker is influenced by social factors during communication, such as conversation topic, conversation object, communication occasion, role relationship, etc. The code is sometimes changed by the speaker based on what they say (Wang & Xu, 2005). For example, people from other provinces who have just arrived in Sichuan often use Mandarin when talking with strangers on formal occasions; you can use a dialect when talking with people you know well. Code-switching in different situations is also related to social identity, cultural level, and personal experience. The scope and occasion of the use of such dialects coincided with the easy transmission of emoticons. In the network world, communication between people often needs the help of media but cannot be done face-to-face. Using emotions in dialogue can make up for the blandness of written language, draw the distance between interlocutors and increase humor and interaction (Qiao, 2021). In September 1982, Scott Farman, a computer professor at Carnegie Mellon University in the United States, accidentally input a string of ASCII characters into his computer, and then a symbol appeared on the computer. This symbol is called "a smiling face that changes history." The appearance of this smiling face also marks the birth of the first network symbol in the world (Figure 1). Farman put this symbol on the electronic message board and left, "I suggest that people who tell jokes can use the following character sequence to mark jokes." This combination of colon, connector and bracket has generated a great response in universities. According to the appearance mode of this emoticon, other emoticons have been developed successively (Zhen, 2020). In today's society, using emoticons has become a common way for people to communicate. People are increasingly rallying to use a common language through symbols, as before the emergence of distinctive expressions (Emmanuel, 2021). In the era of picture reading, emoticons are more widely spread and accepted by the public. The everyday use of words and emoticons can also improve people's cognition. Therefore, this

study combines the Sichuan dialect with emoticons in visual design, which play a role in promoting the Sichuan dialect and spreading regional culture. The use of emoticons in communication also provides a paradigm for integrating dialect words into emoticons.



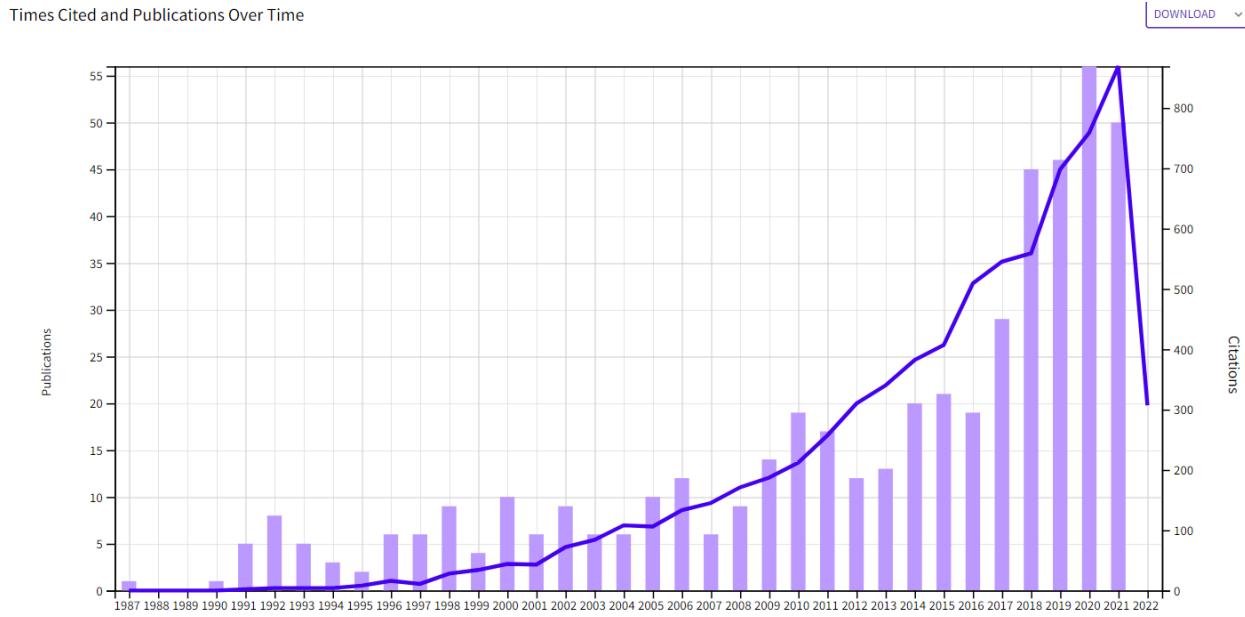
**Figure 1** Professor Farman and "Smile Face Changing History"  
source: [https://www.douban.com/note/645570307/?\\_i=0434242leglhD5](https://www.douban.com/note/645570307/?_i=0434242leglhD5)

The English-language literature data used in this paper comes from the WOS (Web of Science) core collection database. The search type is "topic," the keyword is "dialect," and the file type is limited to "article" and "comment." The language of the document is restricted to "English." The researchers set the search between January 1, 1900, to December 31, 2021. The search was conducted on June 12, 2022. After searching, 485 valid documents were obtained. The retrieved documents are exported as plain text files, and the record content is complete records and references. This document type includes title, abstract, keywords, author, institution, country (region), year of publication, contacts, etc.. The comprehensive information can support the later generation of visual scientific knowledge maps . (Figure 2).

A screenshot of the Web of Science search results page. The search query is "dialect (Topic) and design (Topic) and Article OR Review (Document Type)". The results are for 485 documents. The page includes standard search interface elements like a search bar, "Analyze Results", "Citation Report", and "Create Alert" buttons.

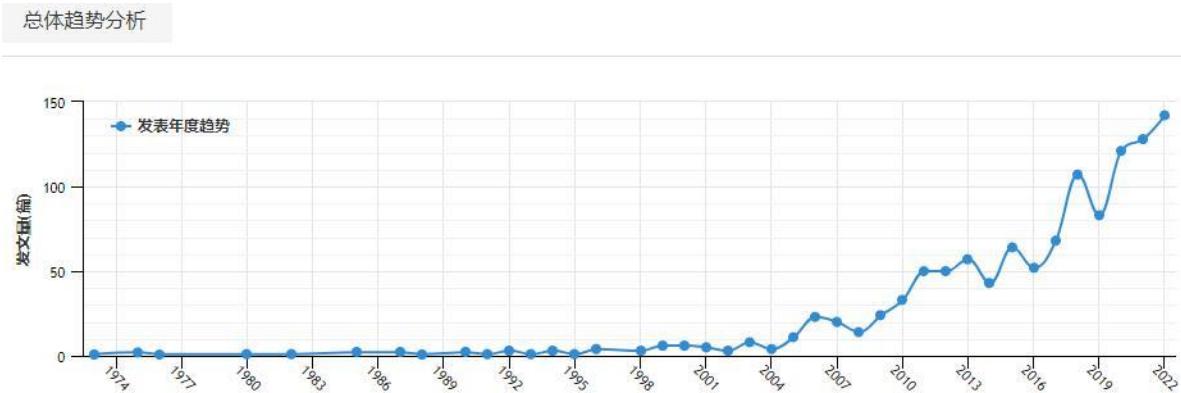
**Figure 2** Web of Science Search Results  
source: Web of Science

The quantitative research method is used to analyze the literature generated by the core database and the citation distribution and changes. This paper intends to divide the analysis into three stages. The first stage is from 1987 to 2009. The number of papers issued at this stage is relatively small and unstable. In most years, the number of papers is about 5-10, and the year with the most significant number of papers was nearly 15 in 2009. The second stage is from 2010 to 2017. Compared with the previous 20 years, the number of documents issued has increased, and the annual number of documents issued has remained above 10. The number of papers issued in 2017 was the largest, reaching more than 25. The third stage is from 2018 to 2021. In this stage, the annual number of papers and citations has increased, with the annual number remaining at more than 40, and the highest number of papers will be issued in 2020, reaching more than 55. There are few design searches related to the Sichuan dialect. (Figure 3).



**Figure 3** Web of Science Search Results  
source: Web of Science

The Chinese full-text search was conducted on CNKI with the keywords "dialect" and "design," and there were 1007 pieces of relevant literature in total. Since 2009, research on dialect design has increased. In 2020, 2021, and 2022 (estimated), the number of articles will reach more than 120 per year and increase year by year. (Figure 4).



**Figure 4** Web of Science Search Results  
source: CNKI

Search "dialect" and "emoji" as keywords in CNKI to conduct a Chinese full-text search, and there are 27 related documents. Regarding subject distribution, art, calligraphy, sculpture, and photography it has accounted for 23.53%. According to the paper's content, the research is carried out from the following aspects: 1. Discussion from the development process of emoticons, schema language combined with Cantonese dialects (Qiao, 2021). 2. Embedding network emoticons from folk culture, folk tourism, and festival activities, publicizing and promoting Shanxi folk customs, and expanding communication channels (Zhang, 2018). 3. From the status quo of cultural gene research and Nanjing's cultural gene evaluation system (Fang, 2020). 4. It promotes the development of the era of dialects by analyzing emoji content and visual design (Wu, 2022).

## Objective

The purpose of this study was to investigate the visual design of Sichuan dialect fusion emoticons. Data was gathered through workshops and the analysis of relevant design instances, and design works were submitted to the design competition for feedback. The first examines how the Sichuan dialect implements the visual design of emoticons, while the second examines the cross-border integration and development of the Sichuan dialect and the visual design of emoticons. This conversation will assist to disseminating the regional culture based on the Sichuan dialect and create a model for the integration of dialect and emoticons in daily life.

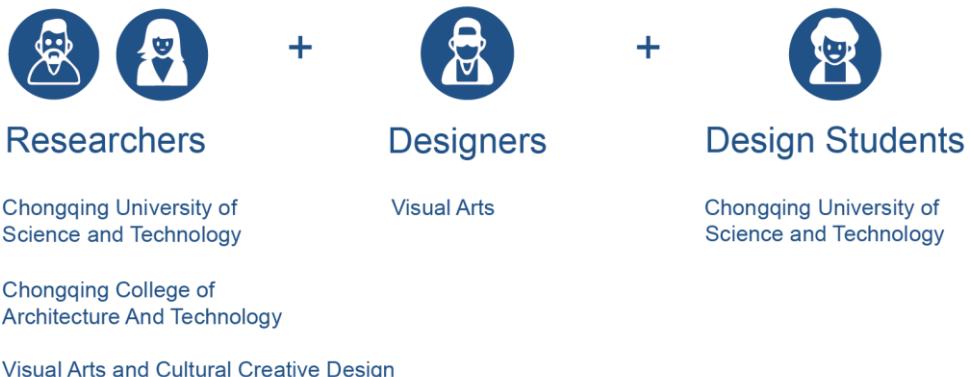
## Method

This study was completed using a hybrid approach, primarily through design case analysis and the formation of workshops, among other methods. It aims to implant the unique regional cultural attribute of the Sichuan dialect into the emoticon's design. The individual regional artistic genes of the Sichuan dialect rely on emoticons in their transmission and use, playing a more accurate role in emotional expression, information transmission, and cultural transmission. Then discuss the cross-border integration and development of the Sichuan dialect and visual emoticon design.

A preliminary literature analysis, case studies, and in-depth interviews were conducted in the first stage of this research to reinforce the evidence. Researchers travelled to Chengdu International Intangible Cultural Heritage Expo Park, Chongqing Sichuan Opera Museum, and Chongqing Bayu Folk Custom Museum. During site visits, text and photographic records were compiled.

In the second stage, a five-day workshop was established from November 6 to 10, 2021, to carry out the visual design of Sichuan dialect emoticons. The workshop members were researchers, designers, and undergraduate students majoring in design. The research direction was graphic design and intangible cultural heritage design. On the first day of the workshop, the researcher gave a lecture explaining the research's background, purpose, and content. On the second day, we collected basic information, such as words and pictures. On the third day, we organized an in-depth investigation in the Traditional Text and Symbol Activation Laboratory of the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts to collect data. At the same time as data collection, design practice was carried out, and design works were submitted to participate in the "Third Taiwan International College Students' Annual Art Award" and the "National University Digital Art Design Competition" as feedback on design. The Third Taiwan International College Students' Annual Art Award was hosted by the Education Bureau of the Taipei Municipal Government and the Taipei Art Exchange Association. National Taiwan University of Arts, Tamkang University, National Changhua Normal University, National Central University, and National Taipei University of Science and Technology. The design theme of this year's topic category is language dialect. The design copy and requirements are as follows: each place has its own language, English and Chinese, and each region has its own language, Minnan, Cantonese, etc. Do you still remember the language of your hometown? The design is based on the theme of "language and dialect," with unlimited forms of expression. The delivery category of the National University Digital Art Design Competition is expression package design. The requirements are to design a single or theme-based series of expression images, which can be two-dimensional, three-dimensional, realistic, comic, picture, text, static, or animated. The workshop uses the action research method through planning, action, observation, and reflection. (Figure 5).

## Member Information



## Schedule

2021.11.06-10



**Figure 5** Workshop Information  
source: Self-drawn by the author

This study's last phase focuses on implementing the research findings, which include the icon identification survey, expert questionnaire, sampling satisfaction questionnaire, etc., to the visual design of Sichuan dialect emoticons.

## Results and Discussion

The first step in this research was to identify the Sichuan dialect words and phrases that can be combined with emoticons. The second step was to investigate the design paradigm resulting from the combination of Sichuan dialect words and phrases, geographical peculiarities, and local drama and historical culture. In conclusion, it demonstrates the profound connection between the Sichuan dialect and emoticons.

### Vocabulary and sentence selection of Sichuan dialect

After establishing research objectives and methods, some Sichuan dialect words and phrases that combine emoticons were selected for visual transformation design research through workshop design practice (Jiang, 2014; Yang, 2006).

**Table 1** Sichuan Dialect Vocabulary and Sentences.

Sichuan Dialect Vocabulary and Sentences		
Vocabulary in the Sichuan dialect	Interpretation	Source
xiong <sup>2</sup> qi <sup>3</sup>	"Xiong qi" is an encouraging cry for "winners". For example, watching a game and shouting "Xiong qi" at the players means giving them confidence and encouraging others. Xiong qi also means to be angry and harsh with others.	The life experience of the Shang shu Emperor, a book compiled from the ancient WeChat Book of the Han Dynasty, said: "Someone stands up and wears a red spear." The word "Xiong qi" came into being in the Han Dynasty at the latest.
ba <sup>1</sup> shi <sup>4</sup> de <sup>1</sup> ban <sup>4</sup>	It means very good, comfortable and suitable; It also refers to authentic.	
da <sup>3</sup> ko <sup>1</sup> shui <sup>4</sup>	It means taking a nap.	The first act of Cao Yu's Peking Man: "[The hosts] sometimes divine, divine lessons here and doze off when they are bored."
shua <sup>3</sup> yi <sup>1</sup> ha <sup>1</sup> ha <sup>1</sup>	It means a short time of rest and play.	In the Tang and Song dynasties, there was a "Fang Tou" saying, Song dynasties Zhao Ling Shi "Hou zhu lu" Volume 8: "The dull people are square heads."
sao <sup>4</sup> pi <sup>2</sup>	It means to tease, joke, lose face and make others laugh.	Twenty-five chapters of A Dream of Red Mansions: "Only Xue Pan is busier than others. He is afraid that Aunt Xue will be crowded down, Xue Baochai will be seen, and Xiang Ling will be shamed." "Sao pi" here refers to being teased.
wo <sup>3</sup> kan <sup>4</sup> ni <sup>3</sup> shi <sup>4</sup> xiang <sup>3</sup> wo <sup>3</sup> gei <sup>3</sup> ni <sup>3</sup> yi <sup>4</sup> ding <sup>4</sup> zi <sup>4</sup>	Generally, it means that you want to hit the other party. It is similar to what I think you want me to punch you. A spindle is a hard object.	
da <sup>3</sup> jia <sup>3</sup> cha <sup>1</sup>	Skill is a stunt in Sichuan opera. It means to throw people with a fake steel fork, a metaphor for false words to do counterfeit things.	
da <sup>3</sup> wang <sup>4</sup>	Men looked at women. It may be derived from drama action.	
gao <sup>3</sup> de <sup>1</sup> ying <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>① Win</li> <li>② Catch up</li> <li>③ Can cope</li> </ul>	

Sichuan Dialect Vocabulary and Sentences		
Vocabulary in the Sichuan dialect	Interpretation	Source
da <sup>3</sup> ran <sup>2</sup> huo <sup>3</sup>	<p>① Fierce conflict</p> <p>② Burning in anger: The face must be perfunctory with the other party, and his heart is anxious.</p>	
za <sup>4</sup> zi <sup>3</sup> ma <sup>2</sup>	What to do ?	
gan <sup>1</sup> deng <sup>4</sup> yan <sup>3</sup>	Empty and helpless. Generally, the metaphor can only look at others, but they can't do it themselves.	"The Biography of Awakening Marriage" is the sixth 7th: "Ai Qian Chuan is helpless, and he only stared."

From the literary works of modern writers in Sichuan and the oral language of people in Sichuan and Chongqing, more than 7,000 everyday standard dialect words differ from Mandarin. Some of these words are also available in other dialect areas. Most of these entries are taken from the written form, and some spoken words are not included (Wang et al., 2014). The selection of vocabulary and sentences in the Sichuan dialect can also be screened according to specific design requirements. However, because each language is unique, the Sichuan dialect vocabulary was selected for this study: First, the Sichuan dialect has extended meanings in addition to vocabulary meanings. The combination of such language and emoticons will be exciting. In use, it will play the role of a double entendre. Could you try to choose representative ones in the selection process? The second is based on different media, communication objects, and design combinations. Sichuan dialect vocabulary may also be extended to regional dialect stories, words, jokes, etc. . The third is that the Internet public has a certain sociological tendency when making code-switching choices, showing their language identity and ability. Dialects introduced to the selection of online emojis usually have solid social influence and broad awareness. Due to the characteristics of multiple information among young people, "mismatch of symbols" is often used. In communication, the indirection, euphemism, and even rebellion of symbols are used to reflect this cognition in language. Due to factors such as environment, age, and language distance, the public in the same region can also understand this mismatch. Excellent dialect vocabulary will also spread, forming famous speech (Cong & Cheng, 2020). The selection of Sichuan dialect vocabulary in this study is generally based on the above three points.

### Sichuan dialect emoticon visual design strategy

Construct the emoticon design strategy with the Sichuan dialect as the clue, guide the design practice through the workshop, and form a set of visual design strategies for Sichuan dialect emoticons with design cases. Such a discussion will contribute to the spread of regional culture based on the Sichuan dialect. The deep integration of the Sichuan dialect and emoticons promotes people's understanding of the Sichuan dialect from multiple dimensions and provides a paradigm for integrating dialect and emoticons to enrich people's daily choices. The combined use of emoji and dialects conveys dialect vocabulary through media output while paying attention to the emotional content of symbols used in different social situations (positive, negative, and neutral) (Novak et al., 2015). With increased computer-mediated communication, people are turning to new communication methods beyond text. Emojis are designed to convey multiple meanings: happy, sad, comforting, and even ironic, etc. (Daniel & Camp, 2020). The design practice expresses emotional content through dialect vocabulary and graphic symbols.

#### *The emoticon design of the Sichuan dialect with regional characteristics*

Regional culture is an objective existence and a "common imagination" formed by the subjective identification of regional groups with culture. It is the combination of spiritual and material wealth created by this regional group over its long history (Yan, 2006). The regional culture research process summarizes the regional characteristics. Cultural features include specific things and some "images" that people have agreed upon. This kind of "image" can give people space to imagine and associate with regional objects in their minds

(Sun et al., 2022). During the design practice in the workshop, the Sichuan dialect and emoticons of the work "Panda Story" were combined with static design, and the emoticons were anthropomorphic designs using the animal pandas unique to Sichuan. From the character modelling, we can see that the traditional Chinese costume of ancient China is used as the starting point of the design. Roughly screen the words of happiness, anger, and sadness from the broad sense of the Sichuan dialect and classify them with the images of happiness, anger, and sadness. The design presents a set of 16 Sichuan dialect emoticons. Anthropomorphic characters enabled the identification of the entire set of emoticons. For example, where does the whole panda image come from-its name, age, character, constellation, and hobbies? The whole design is completed using the Procreate software. This design combines the anthropomorphic panda with regional characteristics, a distinctive personality, and exciting clothing combinations. The above combination uses dialect to help understand and enrich dialect expression. This concept allows users to gain a better understanding of Sichuan's regional cultural characteristics while also expanding commonly used chat expressions. Users who do not know the Sichuan dialect can use these emoticons to achieve code-switching. In the workshop design feedback link, we delivered the work to the expression package design category of the National University Digital Art Design Competition and won the national first prize out of thousands of works. (Figure 6).



**Figure 6** Visual Design of Sichuan Dialect Expression -- The Story of Panda  
source: workshop: Liu Xin Design, Zhang Zhen, Feng Zhizhi Design Guidance

*Design of Sichuan dialect emoticons of historical culture*

China has witnessed multiple dynasty changes since 1800 BCE. Sichuan and even Chinese academia have always focused on the history and culture of the Three Kingdoms, as well as the Three Kingdoms' personalities, throughout these historical shifts. The culture of the Three Kingdoms has been inherited and evolved continually. Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, is essential to the growth process. Chengdu's Three Kingdoms attractions include Wuhou Temple, Wudan Mountain, and Zilong Family Temple, and the city is regarded as the "Holy Land of the Three Kingdoms." There are also Three Kingdoms, culture-rich Jinli, Ancient Street, and Three Kingdoms Cultural City. These are the only venues in Chengdu where history and culture can be learned (Shen, 2016). Because of this, it is necessary to construct Sichuan dialect emoticons that incorporate features of the Three Kingdoms in Sichuan. Because dialects are continually integrating and evolving, the language of Shu during the Three Kingdoms Period is not necessarily the Sichuan dialect spoken now. A thousand years ago, the realm of Shu encompassed not only the administrative region of Sichuan but also a piece of the present-day province of Hubei. Immigrants (mostly from Hubei and Hunan) migrated to Sichuan during the Qing Dynasty and assimilated with locals, which has particular relevance for the formation of the majority of present Sichuan dialects. Emoticons and dialects, as the means of communication utilized by modern people, should also be incorporated into the extraction and use of historical culture in order to reflect the thoughts and habits of common people. Liu Bei, GuanYu, and Zhang Fei, the most prominent figures of the Kingdom of Shu in The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, served as the primary emoticon images in the workshop's design. The appearance of the dress image is faithful to the original, and contemporary features have been added to the posture and behavior. In the design process for the combination of the Sichuan dialect and emoticons, the homophone of voice is applied. Guan Yu, for instance, is a Han Shouting Marquis. "Han Shouting Marquis" is a title, not an official post. The titles of nobility, also known as titles of nobility and nobility, are exclusive to old royal families and nobles. "gas seals the throat" refers to the inability to speak about "gas," which can be described as anger in the Sichuan dialect. The similarity between the pronunciations of "throat" and "Marquis" causes people to identify it with "pictures." The Sichuan dialect and visual graphics are incorporated into historical and cultural elements to create a vivid and fascinating setting. (Figure 7).



**Figure 7** Visual Design of Sichuan Dialect Expression -- Romance of the Three Kingdoms  
source: workshop: Zhang Linlin Design, Zhang Zhen, , Feng Zizhi Design Guidance

Mukdahan Province continuously improves the tourist industry sector in tangible and intangible ways through cultural approaches (Nambutr, 2005) including The Cultural Tourism Village Ban Pao, located at Mukdahan listed as the OTOP as the local community in the production of locality in all sectors such as food, basketry, and other traditional influence in the small enterprise industry. The Phu Tai culture creates a high-value tradition that the community maintains to continue in all aspects to show their culture that relates to tourist attractions in local features. The Phu Tai people of Mukdahan that reside in the rural section that is visible in the cultural area with less damage have unique living styles, traditions, cultures, and customs connected to nature and spirit (Boonpila, 2015). The collaborative efforts of the local community and the provincial government in branding and accessibility for the village, as well as its well-maintained infrastructure, serve as a guide for international interest.

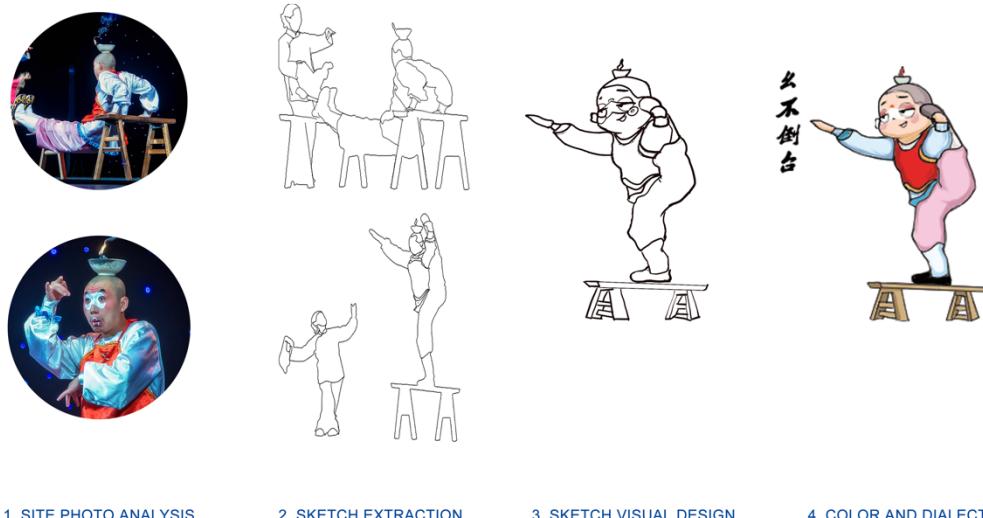
#### *Expression Symbol Design of Sichuan Dialect in Local Drama*

The Sichuan dialect is both the cultural icon and foundation of Sichuan opera. The performing language of Sichuan opera is based on the Sichuan dialect, which is one of the reasons why local operas exist (Lan & Zhou, 2010). Language is still a "symbol system recording culture in order to expose the culture

collected in it through language study, particularly the culture not documented by spoken works" (Xin, 2000). In 2006, Sichuan Opera was included in the list of intangible cultural heritage. Through the verbal representation of the characters, it portrays all aspects of Sichuan, including people's eating, clothing, living, entertainment, weddings, and funerals, market life, production and labor, and even the life philosophy of Sichuan people. In modern society, it is not typical for individuals to watch local operas. Decades have passed since Sichuan opera was prevalent in the lives of local youth. Currently, the majority of Sichuan opera enthusiasts are tourists that travel to Sichuan to experience the local culture. Consequently, the preservation and transmission of Sichuan opera have long been pressing concerns. It faces a predicament even direr than the Sichuan dialect. Emoticons exhibit features of extensive and frequent use. It is a brilliant concept to combine the Sichuan dialect, Sichuan opera image, and emoticon. We designed the Sichuan dialect with Sichuan opera emoticons throughout the workshop. Initially, we utilized the software Procreate to create static emoticons. Before beginning the drawing process, we visited the Chongqing Sichuan Opera Museum to research and photograph Sichuan Opera characters, costumes, and other items. Sichuan opera's expressive modes are wide and lively. In the process of designing Sichuan Opera, the synthesis setting of the animated GIF is utilized to enhance the fire-spitting, face-changing, and ceiling lamp posture-changing. The benefit of dynamic emoticons is that they can convey information and things quickly through images. To make the GIF more fluid during the design phase, the duration of critical frames can be shortened, and the actions of Sichuan Opera symbols can be made more consistent. After the emoticon form has been formed, the Sichuan dialect will be combined with words that reflect the active form of Sichuan opera. Modern communication methods and contemporary lifestyles will be considered when choosing words.

Take the visual extraction of the classic clown image in the Sichuan opera "Pi jin Rolling Lantern" and the design process of emoticons combined with the Sichuan dialect. Let him get rid of gambling, and through continuous efforts to train Pi jin to have the skill of "rolling the lamp"—bench etc.. During the design practice of the workshop, researchers, designers, and students repeatedly watched the video performance of the Sichuan Opera "Pi jin Rolling Lantern"—connotative actions and props. The second step was to capture the design movements. Through preliminary research and analysis, this play is a clown Kung Fu show that focuses on the dynamic skills of the performers. The performers must have solid waists and legs and skilled crafts. Make two sketches that reflect the basics but have different poses. This sketching process used monochromatic lines, considering the play's action and pose. In the third step of visual transformation, choose a fuller posture in the two sketches drawn, which can reflect the solid waist and leg skills of the clown Kung Fu drama and make the emoji more integrated into the later stage. Raise one foot on the stool. The posture of the performance is designed. The props are chosen to appear as a bench and an oil lamp above Pi Jin's head. Makeup and costume choices respect the look and dress of the play itself. The overall image is designed in a more cartoon style that facilitates the use and promotion of emojis. During the design transformation process, the characteristics of the complete emoji set were also considered, and the design considered the overall design. The fourth step was to add color and the Sichuan dialect. The color respects the plot of the drama itself and the color and type of clothing. The color was designed and summarized to create an image of a pink and white nose with cherry red lips wearing a woman's big red bellyband and lotus root starch satin pants full of ugly twists. Precisely because the original meaning of "Yao Bu Liao Tai" in the Sichuan dialect is related to the curtain call in the drama, it has derived other purposes interpreted in multiple dialects. Such a choice of dialect vocabulary not only integrates with the image of Sichuan opera but also can form code-switching of polysemy in daily communication and use after creating emoticons. The final step was to use design software to convert the static emoji into dynamic emoji. Enhance the visual experience, communicate humorously, and convey information to promote the development of dialects (Figure 8).

## DESIGN PROCESS



**Figure 8** "Pi jin Rolling Lantern" design process  
source: Self-drawn by the author

A set of dynamic Sichuan opera emoticons with unique local characteristics is designed using the Sichuan opera "Pi jin Rolling Lantern" design practice. Among them are "breathing fire", "hat wings", "kicking wisdom eyes", "painting faces", "changing faces", "playing with water sleeves", "playing with tongues", "hidden knives", "water hair", etc. (Figure 9).



**Figure 9** Visual Design of Sichuan Dialect Expression -- Sichuan Opera  
source: workshop: Zeng Yongpeng, Liu Chang Design, Feng Zhizhi Design Guidance

Generate a complete set of Sichuan dialect emoticons through the APP software. Users can scan the QR code below in the "WeChat" social software to obtain dynamic Sichuan dialect emoticons. This is the application of design results (Figure 10).



**Figure 10** Design of emoticons in Sichuan dialect-Design and application of the "Sichuan Opera" series  
source: workshop: Zeng Yongpeng, Liu Chang Design, Feng Zhizhi Design Guidance

### Cross-border integration development of Sichuan dialect and visual emoticon design

By exploring Sichuan dialect vocabulary to shape a new emoticon design language, the dual attributes of Sichuan dialect culture and intangible cultural heritage can be brought into play to achieve cross-border integration and the development of emoticons. The connotation of Sichuan dialect vocabulary is rich, and the history is thick. In the development process, the basic pattern has been formed after several instances of integration and development of immigrant and local languages. As mentioned above, the Sichuan dialect is also faced with the situation that young people are unwilling to master and use it. There are subjective and objective factors in this situation, such as the use of robust Mandarin code. In order to expand the use range of the Sichuan dialect and inherit and develop the dialect, it is particularly critical to use the emoticons commonly used by modern people to carry out creative development, stimulate the creativity and imagination of designers, and deeply explore the rich connotation between the two. This kind of integrated development involves, first of all, the collection of creative materials. These materials are not only concrete but also imagery. They form visual representations and spiritual connotations through long-term regional life and design practice. We can only achieve emotional identity and touch people's hearts when they are fully integrated (Yao & Song, 2021).

The use of the Sichuan dialect must accommodate the demands and sentiments of modern people, necessitating creativity in the selection and use of words and taking into account the fact that young people consider the dialect "local." For the creative design of emoticons, it is vital to choose dialect terms that are easy to propagate and hilarious. Obviously, knowing that the majority of emoticon users are adolescents, we

should also examine other user categories. In daily contact, individuals may experience humiliation and not know how to respond. Currently, the popularity of dialect emoticons can almost eliminate the feeling of separation between communicators and contribute to the dismantling of integration barriers.

At the same time, in addition to playing a positive role in culture, dialect design is generally challenging to transform into a cost-effective product. However, through the combination of the Sichuan dialect and emoticons, we can build the popularity of the Sichuan dialect, improve the user group's support and love for emoticons with the dialect as the theme, and combine attractive designs to obtain higher traffic and exposure, thus creating commercial value and economic benefits. As the English abbreviation of "intellectual property," "IP" has the characteristics of influence and high concentration. It is the creation and operation of cross-media cultural content with long-term viability and high commercial value, as well as the product of economic capital invested in cultural production in the context of cultural industrialization (Xiang & Bai, 2017). The emoticon has the theme of story extension, such as the superhero character of Marvel. Others are implanted with images, such as Hello Kitty and Mickey, which are set in cute images to draw the user's distance quickly and easily and generate emotional resonance in use. Internet emoticons themselves are the initial exploration of IP images. Many emoticons in foreign social chat software like LINE and Kakao Talk rely on image authorization and paid downloads. Through such operations, economic benefits can be generated worth more than one billion dollars annually. Based on such cases and models, emoticons combined with the Sichuan dialect can also create an independent IP (intellectual property) image, combined with the blind box extraction and mass sales model, and spread dialect culture to promote exchanges and create economic benefits.

### **Suggestion**

In this study, 18 Sichuan dialect emoji design works were completed through the design practice research method of the participatory action research workshop, including static and dynamic forms. In the design feedback link of the workshop, the works were submitted to the expression package design category of the National College Student Digital Art Design Competition. Among thousands of works, they won one national first prize, one first prize in the Chongqing competition area, three-second prizes, and three third prizes. In social applications, some emoticons have been made due to limited conditions. Many applications on social platforms require procedures, such as signing an agreement. Therefore, this research can be further improved for social media use.

### **Conclusion**

The connotation of the linguistic culture and intangible cultural legacy of the Sichuan dialect is comparable to a pool of valuable resources, and there is still a great deal of worth to be thoroughly investigated and explored. Through the design of emoticons in the Sichuan dialect, the Sichuan language will radiate and be more widely disseminated. Therefore, research on the visual design of emoticons in the Sichuan dialect is beneficial. The design research is conducted via workshops and the examination of pertinent design instances. The article begins with a discussion of the visual design technique of the Sichuan dialect, which mixes emoticons with regional features, history, and culture. The second objective is to pursue cross-border integration and the development of the Sichuan dialect, as well as the design of visual emoticons, from the perspectives of cultural growth and commercial gain. Such dialogue is beneficial for Sichuan dialect-based regional culture communication. Through the design of dialect and emoticon, it offers an option for everyday use and a practical foundation for the cross-border integration and development of the two.

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