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What is the visual referent of an emoji? Beyond default referents and into context-dependent "ad hoc" referents

One of the most interesting proposals of cognitive pragmatics and specifically relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995) is the label of ad hoc concepts. In short, on many occasions (if not all), the concept literally coded by a word in a context is not sufficiently relevant and has to be adjusted pragmatically, as a result of which the communicated (and inferred) concept in that context (called ad hoc concept) differs, to a greater or lesser extent, from the original literally coded concept. This communicated concept may be narrower than the coded one (in other words, the coded concept is too general and needs to be inferentially narrowed), as in (1); or broader (that is, the coded concept seems so specific that an inferential broadening becomes necessary), as in (2). In all these cases, the ad hoc concept eventually communicated (and inferred) only "resembles" in meaning the concept coded in the utterance (see Wilson 2004, Carston 2019, Hall 2017).

(1) I am worried about Jim... He drinks too much.
[narrowing: specifically, Jim drinks too much alcohol].
(2) We entered the pub but we left since it was empty.
[broadening: not literally empty; rather, with few people, including the waiter].

`One of the aims of my theory of cyberpragmatics (Yus 2011, 2021, in press) has been to extend relevance-th`

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