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Was it Something That I Said?: Conveying Emotion In Texting

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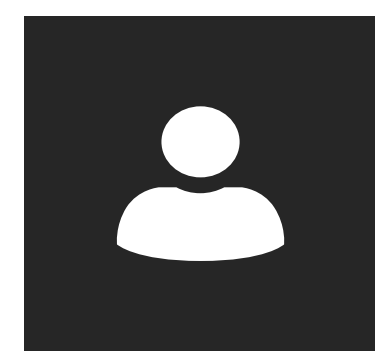
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Was it something that I said?

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INTRODUCTION

- **Without tone of voice** and **facial expressions,** it is more **difficult** to express and comprehend **emotion** through **texting** than through face-to-face communication.
- We explored whether dividing a complete sentence into separate words in **multiple** texts might convey a **stronger emotion.**

METHODS

- 60 Binghamton undergraduates read and **rated** 51 text messages.
- How angry/disgusted/frustrated does the [gray texter] in figure 1 or 2 seems (1 = Not at all; 7 = Extremely)?

RESULTS

EMOTION RATINGS

■ Itemmulti ■ Itemsingle
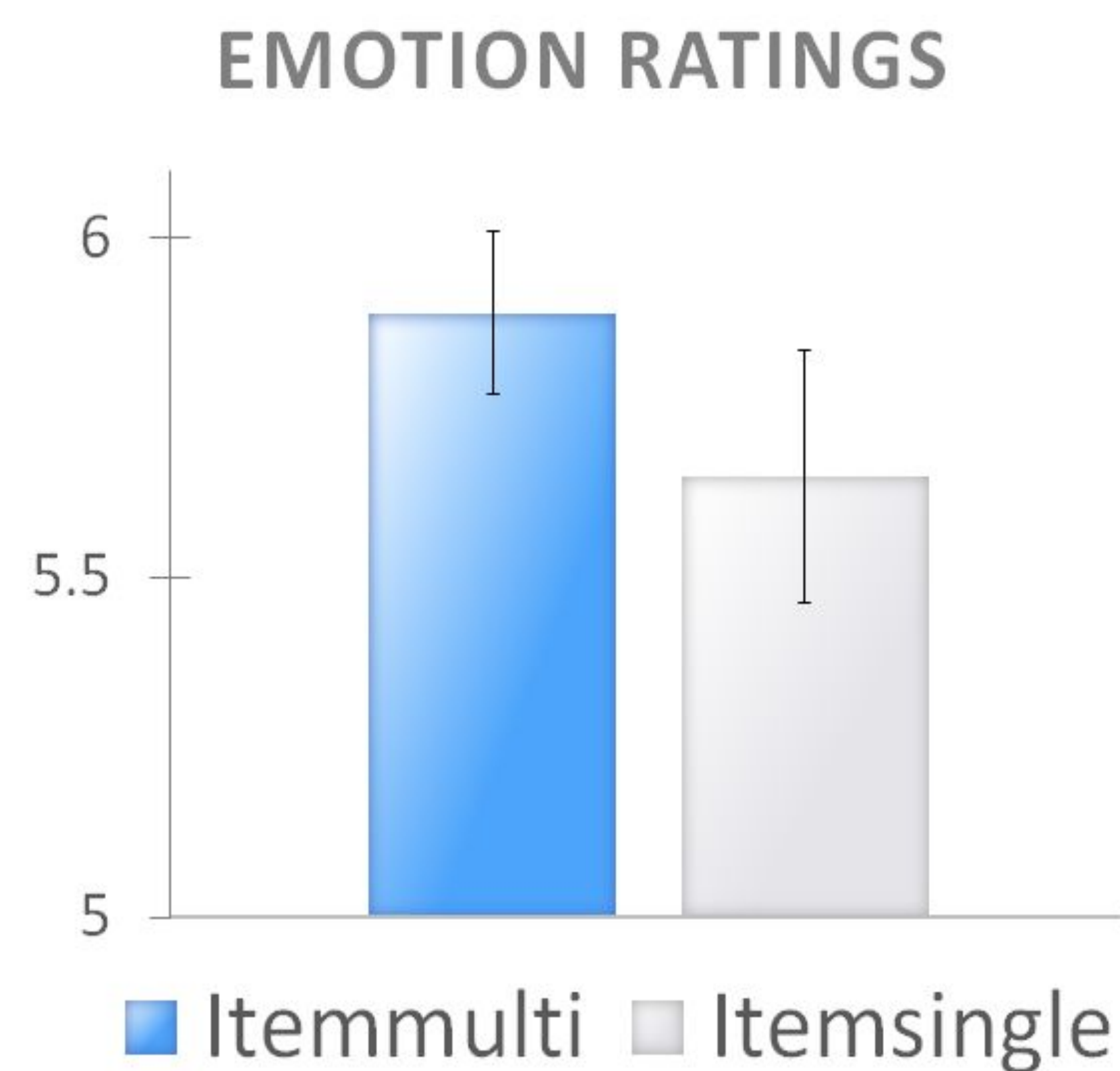
Multiple text bubbles convey stronger emotion than a single text bubble.

Figure 1: Single-text bubble

VS.

Figure 2: Multiple-text bubbles

How frustrated is Alti in this text exchange?

Not at all		Moderately			Extremely
1	2	3	5	5.7 6	7

Not at all		Moderately			Extremely
1	2	3	4	5 5.9 6	7
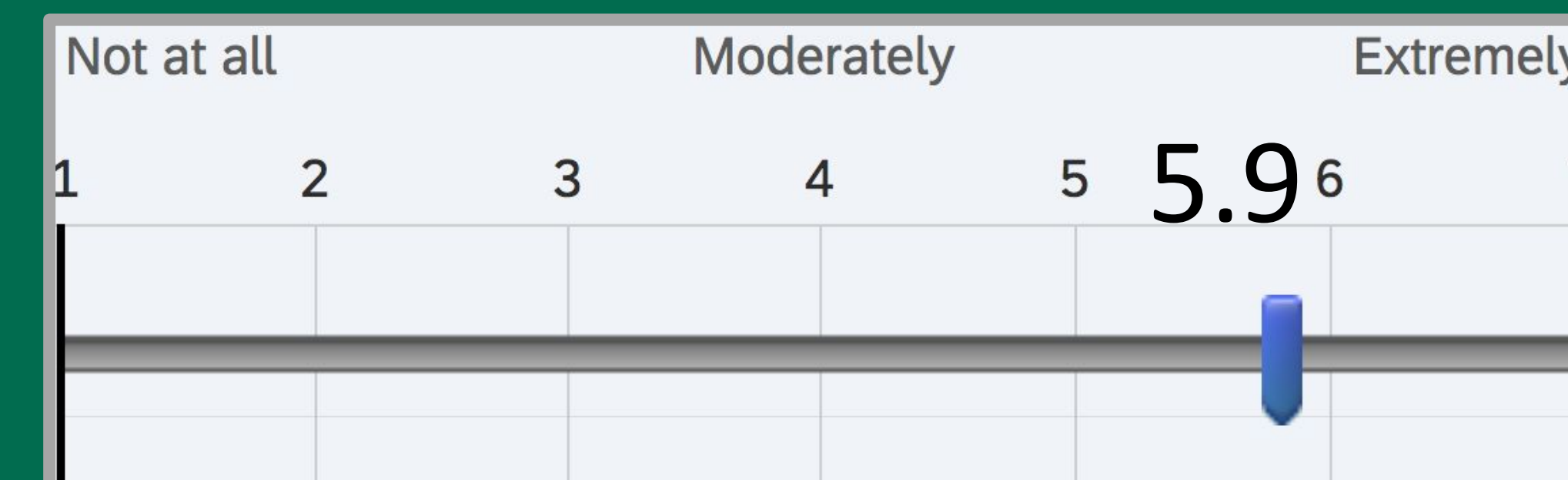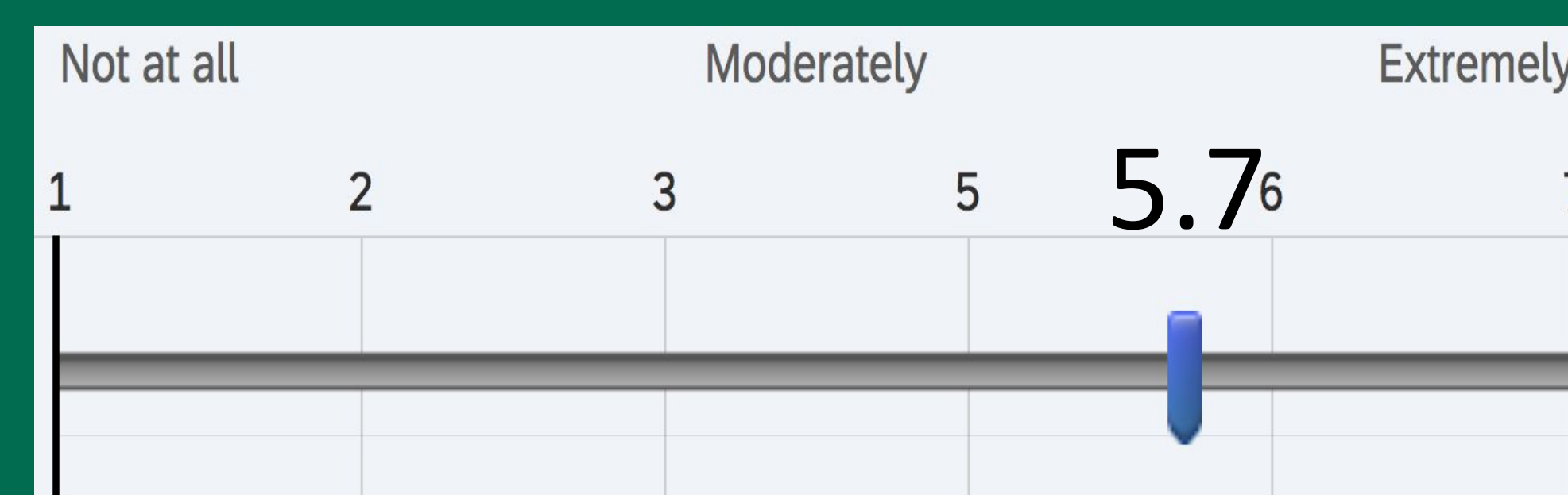
Stimuli

- Within subject paired t-test
- 18 critical texts were interspersed among 33 fillers.
- 9 critical texts were multi-texts; 9 critical texts were single-texts
- 6 critical texts per emotion
- Group A and B counterbalanced which critical texts they saw as single vs. multi.

	Mean	p	d
Multi texts	5.9	<.05	0.5
Single Texts	5.7		

Average Ratings of Multi vs Single Texts

	Multi	Single	d
Angry	6.3	6.2	0.3
Disgusted	5.5	5.2	0.4
Frustrated	5.8	5.5	1.0

Average Ratings of Each Emotion

CONCLUSIONS

- Even though there is lack of facial expressions in texting exchanges, multiple-text bubbles may help people expressing stronger emotion with mimic spoken prosody and show pause between words.

- **Limitations**:
  - Don't know if the findings are the same in an actual texting exchange.
  - Don't know if this would work for positive emotions.

REFERENCES

- Gunraj, Drumm-Hewitt, Dashow, Upadhyay & Klin (2016);
- Houghton, Upadhyay & Klin (2018)

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