

Razor Emoji Proposal

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4TH SEPTEMBER 2017

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1 Abstract

I am proposing the addition of a RAZOR emoji, representing the highly universal male and female grooming practice of shaving; as shown in Figure 1.

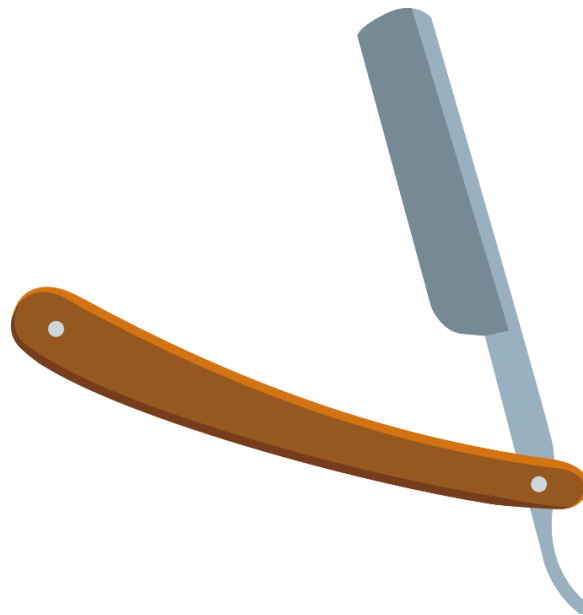


FIGURE 1. SUGGESTED DESIGN OF THE RAZOR EMOJI

The razor's form is that of the traditional straight edge razor (see Figure 1) that is universally recognised to all cultures in the world for thousands of years. This form is not culturally, gender, or geographically biased as would be the case for specialised cartridge razors (e.g. Gillette, Wilkinson Sword, etc.).

2 Introduction

Shaving is an ancient and globally ubiquitous practice of removing body hair for aesthetic, religious, cultural, or hygienic purposes. For this purpose, razors have been found dating back to the Bronze Age over 3,200 years ago [1]. The form of the razor is historic, with ancient artefacts such as that shown in Figure 2 bearing a striking universal visual identity to later items such as shown in Figure 8, Figure 9, and Figure 10. Shaving can be considered a universal grooming practice achieved through the use of razors, with every culture from Ancient Egypt [2] to South American Incas [3].



FIGURE 2. BRONZE AGE RAZOR [1]

Globally, an estimated 75% of men shave their face every day, with a staggering 1.3 Billion men worldwide shaving with a razor blade [4]. While shaving is often associated with men, 58% of women shave regularly to remove hair, more than use wax (21%) or creams (18%) [4].

Military forces as well as many emergency services (e.g. police) internationally require serving men to be either clean shaven or to have facial hair features (e.g. moustaches) maintained through shaving [5]. This is exemplified how in the Indian State of Madhya Pradesh, policemen are paid a monthly bonus to grow (and shave in) a moustache [6]. Since 2003, over 5.2 Million men have participated in the annual charity fundraising month Movember, where participants grow (and shave in) moustaches for charity [7]. The incredibly high significance of shaving and groomed facial hair in societies worldwide proves that the icon of the razor deserves representation in the Unicode emoji set.

While many personal grooming activities are presented in the current emoji set (e.g. SHOWER, BATH, HAIRCUT, and BARBERPOLE), none of these are suitable for shaving. The act of shaving is intrinsically tied to the razor as an object, being unique and distinct from showering, bathing, washing, or hairdressing. The best representation of shaving is a razor, with the traditional straight razor being an enduring image of barbers, masculinity recognised worldwide in every culture. The depiction of the traditional straight razor also overcomes issues of visual identity ties to specific brands (e.g. Gillette) when depicting patented designs (e.g. cartridge razors).

3 Design Considerations

3.1 Represented Design

The RAZOR is generic and not specified to a particular brand such as Gillette, Wilkinson Sword, etc. Vendors would be able to choose any style they see fit such as Double Edge or Cartridge, both of which are universally acknowledged.

The straight razor as depicted in the emoji should be in the open position with the handle in the lower portion and the blade sitting at 80 degrees; see Figure 3.

3.2 Identification

CLDR short name: Razor

CLDR keywords: Shaving | Shave | Razor

3.3 Images

Figure 3 and Figure 4 show the two required designs for the proposal, being in colour as well as black and white.

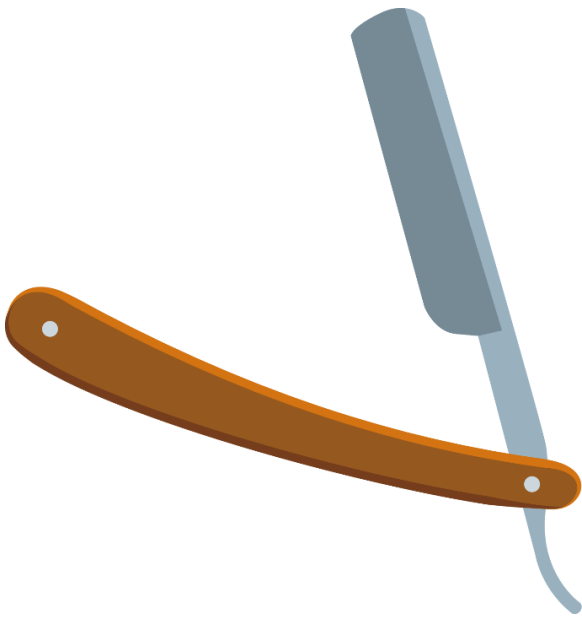


FIGURE 3. RAZOR EMOJI: COLOUR

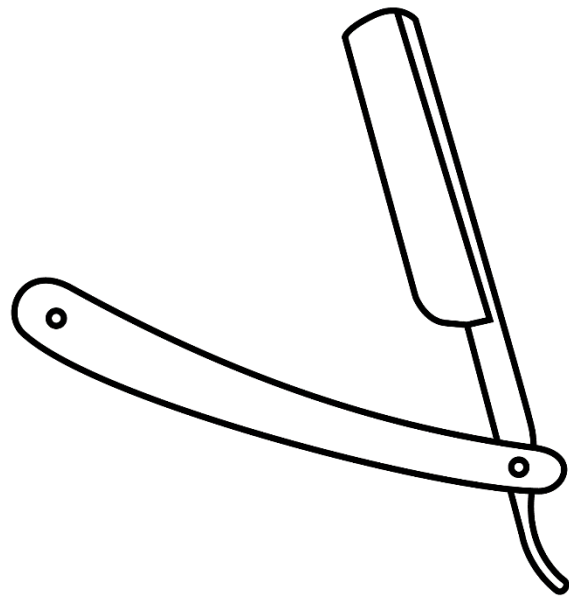


FIGURE 4. RAZOR EMOJI: B/W

4 Factors For Inclusion

4.1 Compatibility

I have not been able to find any evidence of a razor/ shaving image currently employed on any of the major platforms; i.e. Apple, Google, Microsoft, Twitter, etc.

Currently, there is no razor or shaving emoji in the emoji set outside of the BARBER POLE (🚰) which indicates a barbers or hairdressers. While this may suggest shaving due to the relation to barbers, shaving is not explicitly represented, unlike the hairdressing activity of a HAIRCUT, which is provided for (💇).

4.2 Expected usage level

4.2.1 Frequency

The expected usage of a razor emoji is high, as demonstrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1. ENGLISH LANGUAGE SEARCHES FOR RAZOR AND SHAVING; AVERAGE MONTHLY ACTIVITY

	Google Searches [8]	Google Searches (emoji) [9]
<i>Razor & Shaving</i>	57 Million	33 Million

YouTube hosts 7.9 Million videos about ‘Shaving’ [10] and ‘Razor’ [11], with over 1.1 Million Instagram posts using the explicit tag of #Razor¹.

A Google trends comparison of “Razor + Shaving” verses the benchmark of “Haircut” shows comparable demand, with Razor + Shaving achieving more search interest than haircuts on average; see Figure 5.

¹ As of 4th September 2017

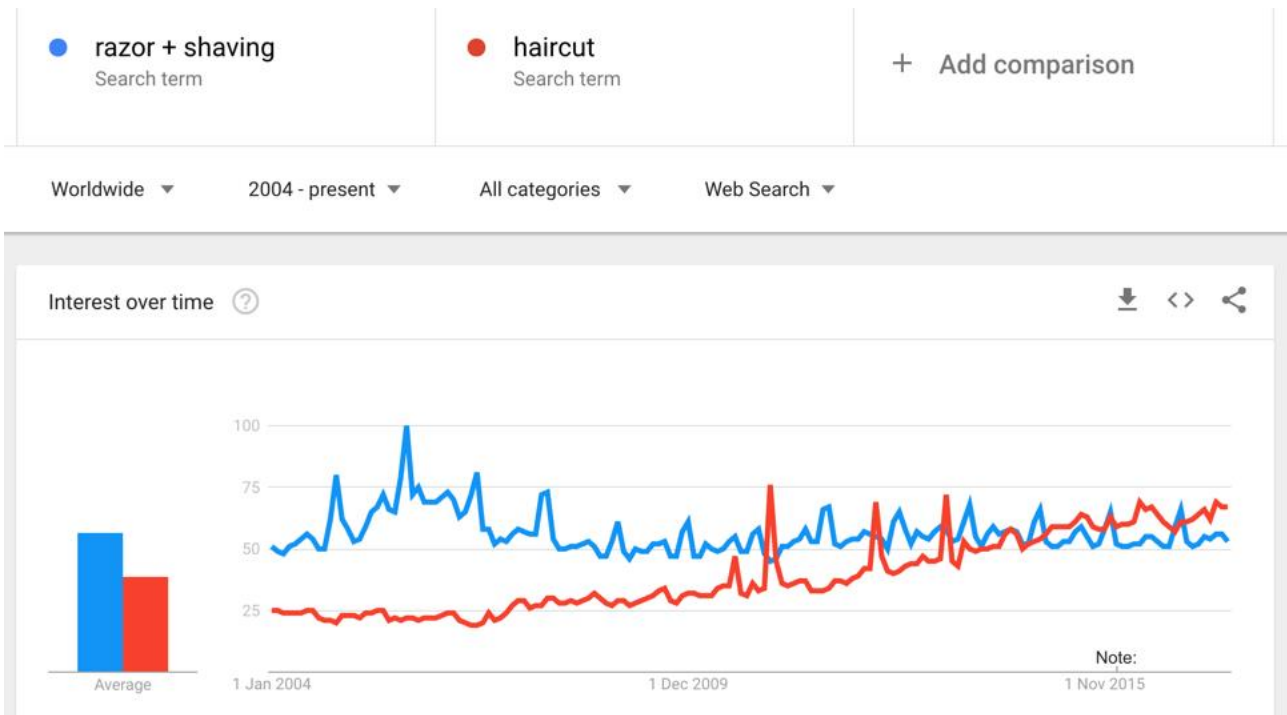


FIGURE 5. RAZOR + SHAVING (BLUE) VS HAIRCUT INTEREST OVER TIME [12].

Additionally, a Google Trends comparison of “Razor Emoji” verses its closest comparison of “barber Pole Emoji” shows greater demand for the new razor emoji over the barber pole [13]. It is important to note that Barber Pole was approved by Unicode 6.0 in 2010 [14]; see Figure 6.

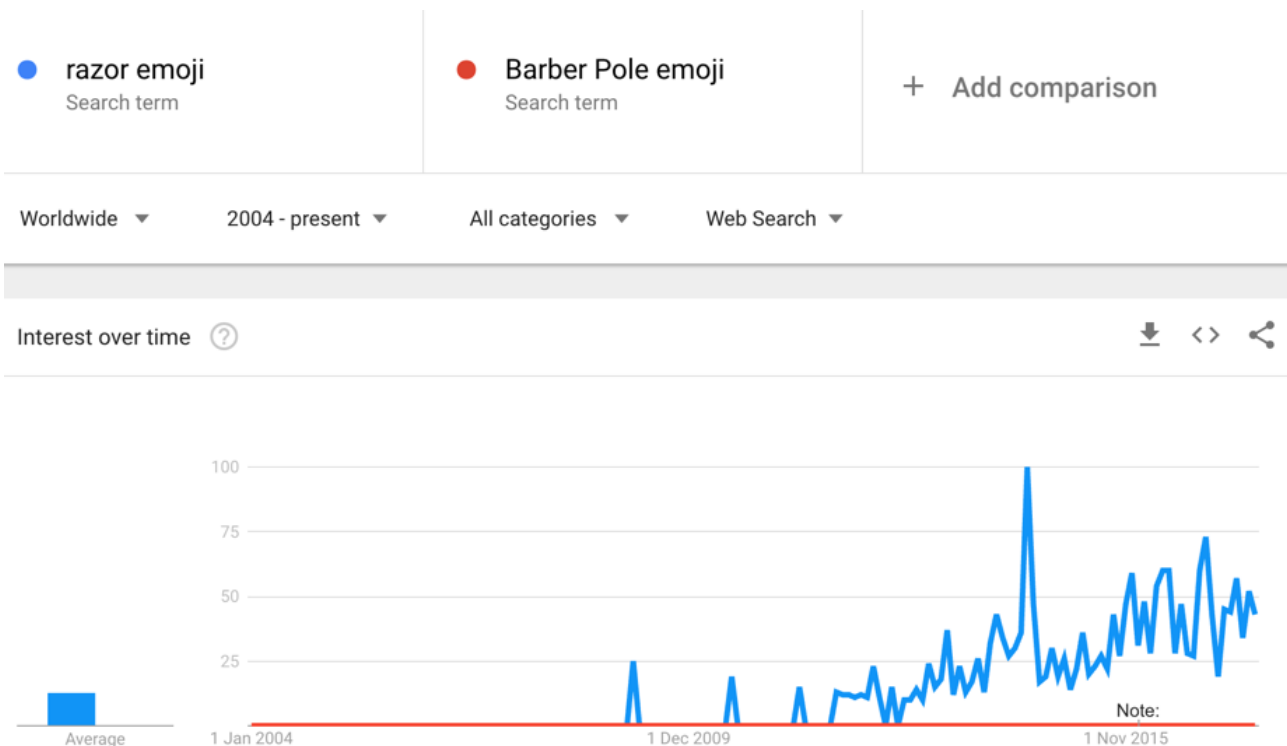


FIGURE 6. RAZOR EMOJI (BLUE) VS BARBER POLE EMOJI (RED) INTEREST OVER TIME [13]

Searching only in the English language, the search term Razor shows very strong international interest, as shown in Figure 7.



FIGURE 7. RAZOR SEARCHES BY REGION [15]

4.2.2 Multiple usages

A razor emoji can stand for shaving as a literal activity, as well as more broad concepts of masculinity, routine, cleanliness, or self-preparation. Industry reports show [16], [17] shaving is a universal activity used by men and women on multiple body parts (e.g. armpits, eyebrows, legs, public, etc.) and not confined to men shaving their face. Shaving is also associated with many religious practices worldwide. Some Muslims (e.g. Sunnah) remove body hair as part of a desire towards general purity and cleanliness as prescribed by the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) [18]. In many world cultures including India and China a child's first haircut is a point of cultural significance, with the child's head being shaved to ensure good luck later in life [19], [20].

According to Mintel [16], Men and Women in the UK spend over £363.5 Million on razors and blades, with 64% of women removing body hair. While hair removal creams and electric razors account of 26% of the market, 61% of all hair removal products are razors, with Wet Shaving (as represented by the razor emoji) being the most popular form of hair removal in 77% of people [16].




4.2.3 Use in sequences

There are multiple possibilities for use of the razor emoji in a sequence of characters to communicate a non-verbal narrative of activities; some of which are highlighted below in Table 2.

TABLE 2. A SUMMARY OF RAZOR EMOJI USE IN SEQUENCE²

Communication	Emoji Sequence
<i>Man, morning routine</i>	
<i>Shaving a beard off</i>	
<i>Woman, getting ready to go out</i>	
<i>Masculinity</i>	
<i>Horror film</i>	

² Based on the Google emoji set for consistency as an example, images from <https://emojipedia.org>

<i>Edgyness (e.g. alternative/ punk scene)</i>	
<i>Barbers/ Tradition</i>	
<i>Shaving [a few seconds off]</i>	

4.2.4 Breaking New Ground

There is no way to express shaving or the symbolism of a razor adequately in the current emoji set. Therefore introducing a razor emoji breaks new ground in linguistic symbology related to the almost universal act of shaving.

4.3 Image Distinctiveness

The image of a straight razor effortlessly represents tradition, barbering, and grooming activities, dating back hundreds of years in both European and Asian societies; as demonstrated in Figure 8 and Figure 9.



FIGURE 8. DEPICTION OF A STRAIGHT RAZOR PRE- 1670 CE (NETHERLANDS) [21]



FIGURE 9. DEPICTION OF A WOMAN USING A KAMISORI RAZOR, 1802 CE [22]

Despite most adults using safety razors in modern society (Double Edge or Cartridge), the Strait Razor remains an iconic representation of shaving, heritage, and tradition in grooming; as demonstrated in

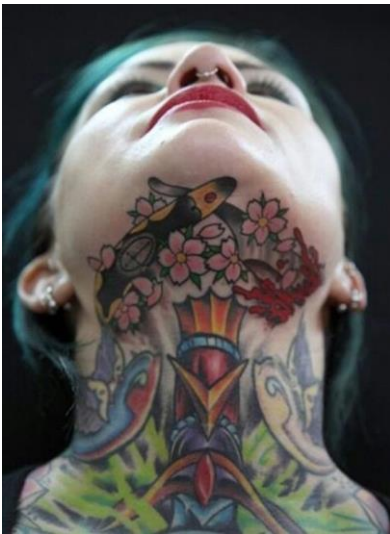


FIGURE 10. WOMAN WITH A STRAIGHT RAZOR TATTOO [23]



FIGURE 11. SCENE FROM THE 2012 JAMES BOND FILM SKYFALL, FOCUSING ON THE STRAIGHT RAZOR AS A METAPHOR DEVICE [24]

The image of the straight razor is also commonly used to graphically communicate Wet Shaving [17], the most popular form of hair removal as shown in Figure 12.

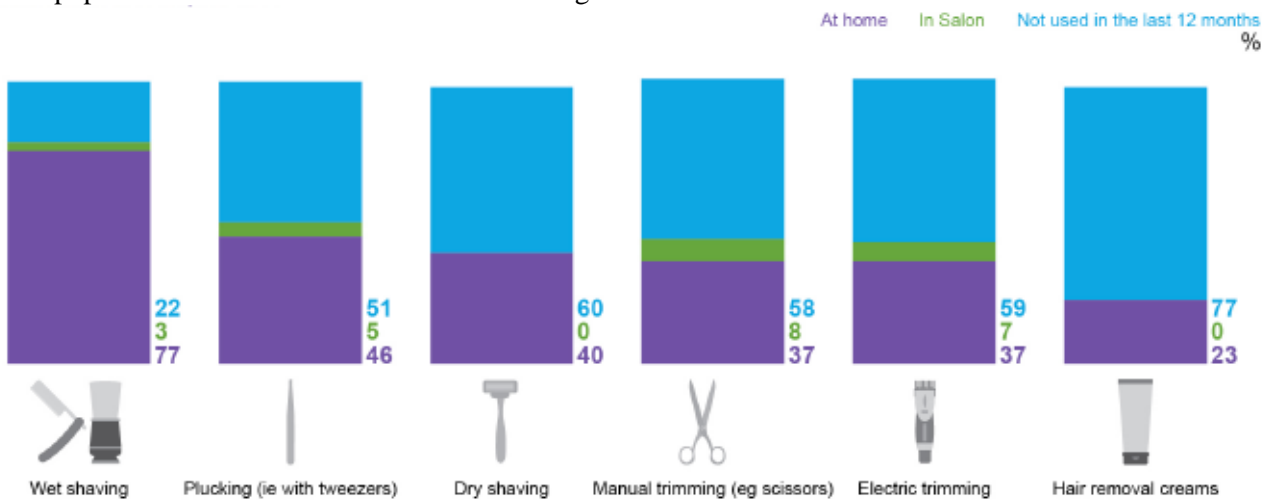


FIGURE 12. THE STRAIGHT RAZOR SHOWN AS A SYMBOL OF WET SHAVING IN MARKETING MATERIAL [17]

4.4 Completeness

The act of shaving relative to the object of a razor is currently not represented by existing emoji’s. As such the almost universal practice of shaving presents a gap in society and communication that needs to be filled. It will join objects such as BARBER POLE, SHOWER, and BATH, as well as activities including HAIRCUT.

4.5 Frequently requested

A cursory search for ‘Razor Emoji’ and ‘Shaving Emoji’ on Twitter revealed a high level of demand for the character. A small sample of recent tweets are highlighted below:

- “No RAZOR EMOJI?! How not” [25]
- “Well, I just tried to demonstrate to S how Skype was broken, and it worked. So uh... (Where’s the yak and RAZOR EMOJI?)” [26]

- “Hard work pays off, dreams come true. Bad times dont last, but bad guys do.....my motto in life @SCOTTHALLNWO Why is there no RAZOR EMOJI 🙄” [27]
- @Replying to @emoright - where's the RAZOR EMOJI when you need it” [28]
- “i would love a RAZOR EMOJI” [29]
- “I spent a good 5 minutes looking for a RAZOR EMOJI” [30]
- “I dig the tashe but only through July.. After that... ✂✂✂✂. (There's no RAZOR EMOJI?!). But he looks super hot either way 😊😍” [31]
- “Excuse me @ emoji god I need a razor emoji to express myself thank you” [32]
- “🏠🍷👤 can't find RAZOR EMOJI!” [33]
- “Happy birthday @amandaajacobb !! 🎉🎈❤️*RAZOR EMOJI*” [34]
- “Yes shave time *insert RAZOR EMOJI*” [35]
- “@unicode SHAVING EMOJI.... get on it now.” [36]
- “There should be a SHAVING EMOJI. So that I can complain how tiring and annoying that shit is. #shavingproblems pic.twitter.com/LRYgUqBSE7” [37]
- “Who else thinks we need a SHAVING EMOJI” [38]
- “It has begun. *why is there no SHAVING EMOJI*” [39]

5 Factors For Exclusion

5.1 Overly specific

As highlighted above, shaving is practiced by almost all adults worldwide. Having multiple characters to stand for the different types of razor (e.g. Double Edge, Cartridge, Electric, etc.) would be over specific. But by choosing the most universal and icon design of the Strait Razor then the entirety of the practice (including historical and contemporary applications) is achieved without being overly specific.

5.2 Open-ended

Shaving is a specific grooming activity that united humanity globally and historically what deserves a place as an emoji alongside other grooming and hygiene related objects and activities.

5.3 Already representable

There is no easy way to convey the practice of shaving using existing emoji. While the barber’s pole currently represents the barber shop that the razor could also stand for, it does not specifically stand for shaving or personal grooming related to hair removal.

5.4 Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

While some modern cartridge razors as protected through copyright and patents (e.g. by Gillette), the Strait razor design cannot infringe on copyright, trademark, or patents. This is due to its historic and universal existence in the public domain. In the same way, a generic cartridge razor emoji could be designed by the platform (e.g. Apple, Google, Twitter, etc.) if they desired. This is due to the original concept of a cartridge razor being out of patent [40].

5.5 Transient

Shaving has been practiced for thousands of years [41]. Strait razor shaving has existed since the 17th century [21] and modern shaving through cartridge razors being practiced alongside traditional methods since the 1970’s [40]. This demonstrates a ubiquity to the practice that transcends culture and time. More staying power can be given to the razor than than other objects represented in the current emoji set, such as BELLHOP BELL or ALARM CLOCK. With a rich and historic heritage, shaving cannot be considered a transient practice.

5.6 Faulty comparison

While the razor can be considered as compatible with the barber pole emoji, shaving as an activity linked to the razor is uniquely different in historic and modern cultures. This is particularly true with relation to shaving at home as opposed to traditional wet shaving at a barbers.

6 Sort location

6.1 Category

The addition of the razor/ shaving emoji would be an important addition to the Objects category, joining BARBER POLE, SHOWER, PERSON TAKING BATH, KNIFE, and SCISSORS amongst others.

6.2 Emoji it should come after

The Razor/ Shaving emoji should come after the Barber Pole emoji, as this is the pan-cultural symbol of barbers (i.e. shaving).

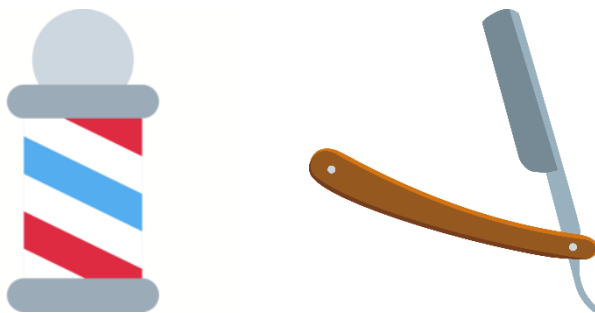


FIGURE 13. BARBER POLE EMOJI [14] AND PROPOSED RAZOR EMOJI IN SEQUENCE

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