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JEAN-MARC DEWAELE, London

## Reflections on the Emotional and Psychological Aspects of Foreign Language Learning and Use

### 1. Introduction

While emotion has long been considered in functional and anthropological linguistics (Sapir 1921; Hymes 1972), affect and emotion has received relatively little attention in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) literature. As Garrett and Young (2009) point out: "affect and emotion are terms that have been in the shadows of discussions of classroom foreign language learning, where the primary focus has been on the development of knowledge and use of the new language" (209).

A consequence of this shadowy existence is that the role of affect and emotion in SLA is probably the least understood (Scovel 1978). Writers of handbooks of SLA devote only minimal attention to affect and motivation. Gass and Selinker (2008) discuss motivation in a portion of one chapter (out of a total of 14).

Interest in affect has been greater among applied linguists working on second language teaching. In the preface to her edited book on the topic, Arnold (1999) notes that her contributors do not claim that

attention to affect will provide the solution to all learning problems or that we can now be less concerned with the cognitive aspect of the learning process, but rather that it can be beneficial for language teachers to choose to focus at times on affective questions.  
(xii)

Arnold further argues that more attention to affective aspects could lead to more effective second language learning. Teachers need to be aware of how to overcome problems created by negative emotions and how they can create and use more positive, facilitative emotions (1999, 2).

I have also underlined the importance of studying the emotional dimensions of SLA and foreign language use in Dewaele (2005b; 2008a) and it does seem that the tide is changing, with growing numbers of special issues devoted to emotion in SLA and especially in multilingualism research (Eisenstein Ebsworth 2010; Havelka and Altarriba 2010; Pavlenko and Dewaele 2004a; 2004b) and books on the topic (Dewaele 2010a; Kramsch 2009a; Pavlenko 2005).

The "emotional" variable to have been most extensively researched in SLA is language learning motivation (among many others, Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009 and Ushioda and Chen 2011). As MacIntyre, MacKinnon and Clément (2009) have pointed out "emotions are fundamentally important motivators" (47). The crucial antecedent for motivation is generally considered to be attitudes and direct or indirect intercultural contact (Csizér and Kormos 2008). However, MacIntyre (2002) has argued that attitudes alone are not sufficient to support motivation and that in order to understand the differences between the engaged and the unengaged learner researchers need to delve into the emotions students experience during language learning. MacIntyre concludes that "a better understanding of emotion has the capacity to explain cases where students endorse orientations but might not be energized to take

action, and also cases where action is prevented by emotional arousal, either present or anticipated" (2002, 63).

In this article I propose to look across disciplines at research on affect and emotion in relation with foreign languages. I will briefly consider the literature on the neurobiological substrate of affect and emotion. I will then consider some studies that focused on the link between the emotional atmosphere of the classroom such as it is experienced by learners and shaped by teachers, before focusing on the work on the psychological effects of foreign language learning on the sense of self, and on the complex interplay of sociobiographical variables in the perception of foreign languages and their use to communicate emotions. Finally, I will present some tentative implications for foreign language teaching.

## **2. The neurobiological substrate of affect and emotion**

Schumann (1998) has investigated the possible neurobiological substrate of motivation and affect of foreign language learners. He points out that an individual's development of preferences and aversions constitutes a subform of experiential selection. Any individual is born with innate biases such as homeostatic value (i.e. maintaining stability in bodily systems, regulating hunger, thirst, warmth, ...) and sociostatic value (the tendency for all humans to seek out facial, vocal and tactile interaction with other human beings). These innate, survival-enhancing tendencies lead to the formation of preferences and aversions. He argues that this sociostatic bias prepares human infants to acquire language by making the voices and faces of caregivers targets of automatic attention. According to Schumann, these preferences and aversions are not innate, but are acquired during the life-time of the individual. This value system or stimulus appraisal system assesses internal and environmental stimuli on the basis of five criteria: novelty, pleasantness, goal significance, self and social image, and coping potential; this appraisal system is centred specifically in the amygdala and the orbitofrontal cortex (Schumann 1998). An individual remembers affective reactions to agents, events and objects, and can use that information to evaluate future stimuli. The unique experience of each person's experience leads to highly variable neural preference systems across individuals (Schumann 2004). The affective appraisal is thus at the core of cognition, and it drives the decision-making processes. Emotion is thus at the basis of any learning or absence of learning. When a stimulus is positively assessed in a learning situation, it will have a positive effect on the amount of attention and effort a learner will be prepared to devote to it. It will also encourage the learner to approach similar stimuli in the future. However, when a stimulus is negatively assessed in a learning situation, less attention and effort will be devoted to it, and the negative affective assessment may promote avoidance in the future. In other words, "patterns of appraisal may underlie what has been considered motivation in SLA" (Schumann 1998, 8). Schumann sees the foreign language classroom as a typical environment of sociostatic regulation. Relations between teacher and students but also between students, affect their sense of well-being. A good classroom atmosphere may enhance students' desire to create and preserve these particular social affiliations. On the other hand, a bad atmosphere may be interpreted by students as threatening and may push them towards ending their membership in that classroom community (Schumann 1998).

### 3. The emotional atmosphere of the classroom: the role of the learner

Teachers know that boredom and anxiety are the main culprits for lack of progress in foreign language learning. It is therefore not surprising that researchers in SLA and in language teaching research have focused on ways to create a positive and stimulating learning environment in order to engage learners and enhance their language learning motivation. Learners are encouraged to meet new linguistic challenges that match their increasing and developing communicative skills in the foreign language. This is only possible with the right kind of emotional climate in the foreign language classroom (Dörnyei and Murphy 2003). Initially, learners' emotions are not so much linked with the target language or the teacher, but rather with the other learners: "it is comparable to walking into a party when you hardly know anyone there" (14). People are careful as they do not yet know what to expect. They observe each other silently, try to avoid embarrassment, and wonder what their place will be in the social pecking-order of the new group. They are typically worried about their linguistic abilities fearing that others may be more competent and proficient than themselves. In this stressful first class learners experience general anxiety, social anxiety and foreign language anxiety. All this can be coupled to a lack of confidence, a restricted identity and a certain awkwardness (Dörnyei and Murphy 2003, 15).

Garrett and Young (2009) present an interesting longitudinal case study on the development of affect. The study is based on the first author's experience in a Portuguese course for beginners in Brazil. It focuses on the "affective responses to the language learning process, the events from which her affect sprang, and her affective trajectory over the 8 weeks" (2009, 209). The authors point out that their study is original in the sense that previous longitudinal research on individual language learners typically focused on the development of linguistic ability or communicative competence in the target language rather than on emotion (2009, 220). Garrett's affective responses to events were categorized into four groups: (a) her awareness of her own knowledge of Portuguese, (b) her own professional teacher's voice, (c) her responses to the Brazilian culture to which she was exposed, and (d) social relations with other students and teacher (2009, 212-213). Quantitative analysis revealed that Garrett's remarks centred on social relations, followed by her teacher's voice, linguistic aspects of Portuguese and cultural information. Only the comments on cultural aspects were overwhelmingly positive, the comments in the other categories were more evenly divided (2009, 213).

One striking finding is how dynamic and multi-faceted emotion is (cf. Scherer 2000). Garrett's interest in linguistic aspects of the Portuguese language declined after the start of the course but her interest in aspects of Brazilian culture increased: it "helped keep her motivated to get through the intensive course" (2009, 222) because it allowed her to communicate with more advanced speakers: "She felt she could better cope with her linguistic limitations with the help of culture learning" (2009, 222). She also discovered how sociostatic value (cf. Schumann 1998) developed in class. She felt drawn to a group of "cool women" (2009, 222) and felt generally better. Not feeling as proficient as the other students made her quite anxious when having to speak Portuguese, and it affected her self-image. She also experienced frustration at the Portuguese-only policy in class and her inability to ask for help using Portuguese. As soon as she had sufficient linguistic resources her frustration ebbed away

but she remained fearful of falling behind towards the end of the course and of being "overstuffed with grammatical information" (216) which, she felt, hindered her ability to communicate. Her comments about her communication anxiety remained constant throughout the course (216). Interestingly, the emotional responses to the course were not the presumed focus of the study before the course. After transcription and analysis, Garrett and Young found that the "emotional responses to the language learning experience (mostly in the classroom but occasionally outside of it) were the most salient features of her learning endeavour" (221). The study shows that emotion should not just be seen as an antecedent of motivated action tendencies or as an outcome but rather as an on-going dynamic interaction between appraisal, emotion and motivation (cf. Dörnyei 2009). Garrett's emotions and motivation were driving her learning but were also influenced by the rate of progress, and by social and cultural factors in the learning environment.

Bown (2009) published a study in the same vein, using a qualitative approach (semi-structured interviews and narrative journals) to investigate the regulation of emotion by 22 beginning learners of Russian. The study draws on social cognitive theory, research on the intelligent processing of emotions, and affective control in distance foreign language learning (White 1999). Bown argues for the importance of understanding the individual and social antecedents of emotions and the relationship between emotion and cognition in SLA. From the material gathered, it became clear that beliefs and emotions played a crucial role in students' social relationships, thoughts, actions and decision-making. Learners' beliefs about their responsibilities in their own language learning process had a strong effect on learning outcomes. Emotions also affected their cognitive appraisals of tasks, teachers, the learning environment and themselves. Students' relationships with teachers and the power relations that emerged were particularly salient features of the learning environment and acted as significant emotional antecedents in the individualised instruction setting. Bown (2009) found that students' cognitive appraisals of situations mediated their experiences of emotions and that they applied their cognitive abilities to self-regulate emotions during the language learning. She concludes that intelligent processing of emotions can have a positive impact on the experience of language learning.

Another study of the emotional experience of learners in the foreign language classroom was carried out by Mercer (2006). She considered advanced tertiary level learners over the course of one semester. The learners kept a journal focusing on their emotional experience of the language classroom. Mercer then constructed a questionnaire on the basis of an initial analysis of the journals. This questionnaire provided meta-feedback on the use of journals from the learner perspective and allowed a detailed study of learner beliefs and emotions. Some students appreciated the fact of having to write down their emotions in the foreign language and one commented: "I really enjoyed keeping the diary because it was a new experience for me to express my thoughts and feelings in a foreign language" (2006, 75). In more recent work Mercer has looked at the development of tertiary learners' foreign language self-concepts and self-beliefs, i.e. beliefs learners have about themselves, which are thought to affect their behaviour and attitudes (Mercer 2009).

One negative emotion mentioned earlier is foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA). It has been defined as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of

the language learning process" (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986, 128). FLCA is linked to any activity in the foreign language, but is typically highest for speaking. It affects learners at all levels and even non-native foreign language teachers (Horwitz 1986). Foreign language teachers need to be able to recognize explicit anxiety-indicating cues, so as to identify learners who struggle with high levels of FLCA (Gregersen 2007; Horwitz 1986). This is not an easy task, as some learners are silent because they are frozen with FLCA while others might be shy, introvert, tired, sad, sulking, or simply bored with the topic (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986; Oxford 1999). Tackling FLCA is very important because it can interfere with learning and performance (Horwitz 2001). Dewaele and Thirtle (2009) investigated the link between FLCA and the decision to pursue foreign language learning in a group of 79 London teenagers. Three sub-groups were distinguished: those wishing to pursue foreign language classes, those having decided to abandon foreign language classes, and those still undecided about further FL study at the moment of filling out the questionnaire. A comparison of the three sub-groups on a range of learner-internal variables revealed that those who had decided to abandon further foreign language instruction suffered from significantly higher levels of FLCA. The design did not allow us to establish a causal link between FLCA and the abandoning of foreign language learning, but it did show that FLCA can become a real obstacle. As mentioned earlier, Garrett, an adult and a teacher herself, could not get rid of her anxiety about expressing herself in Portuguese (Garrett and Young 2009). Dewaele and Thirtle (2009) speculate that young teenagers are probably more afraid than younger children or adults to appear ridiculous or to stumble in the foreign language. It is therefore absolutely crucial to give these adolescent learners not just linguistic but also pedagogical support to help them cope with their FLCA.

Other studies have revealed that Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) among foreign language learners and foreign language users are linked, to varying degrees, to a variety of higher- and lower-order personality traits, affective factors (attitudes toward the target language, attitudes towards the language teacher), as well as a range of sociobiographical factors (the knowledge of multiple languages, gender and age) (Dewaele 2010a). Adult foreign language users who felt more proficient in the foreign language felt significantly less anxious using it (Dewaele 2007a). However, the picture appears to be different among foreign language *learners*. Marcos-Llinas and Juan Garau (2009) found that their American advanced learners of Spanish showed higher levels of FLCA than beginning and intermediate learners. The authors found that advanced learners reported higher levels of FLCA but did not necessarily obtain lower course marks. They thus argue that some level of FLCA may not be as negative and debilitating as traditionally believed and may contribute to keeping learners' motivation high.

Kramsch (2009a) affirms that "desire" is at the heart of language learning; she defines desire as "the perceptual disturbance and realignment experienced by the language user, whose identity is constitutive of and constituted by the symbolic system itself" (16). She sees desire as being close to affect, "but in a more concrete sense than just emotional reactions or metaphysical illuminations of the soul" (16). For some learners the desire to learn a new language reflects an urge, "the urge to escape from a state of tedious conformity with one's present environment to a state of plenitude and enhanced power" (14). Others, however, have "a deep desire not to challenge the

language of their environment but to find in the foreign words a confirmation of the meaning they express in their mother tongue" (15).

#### **4. The emotional atmosphere of the classroom: the role of the teacher**

The establishment of a good emotional atmosphere in the classroom does not just depend on the learners. Arnold and Fonseca (2007) point out that teachers play a central role in establishing a positive learning environment. On the one hand, they need to be aware of the need to structure their discourse so that it is comprehensible and, on the other hand, they have to create – through verbal and non-verbal means – "a true learning environment where students believe in the value of learning a language, where they feel they can face that challenge and where they understand the benefit they can get from attaining it" (119).

The progress of an L2 learner can be linked to the chemistry that develops between the learner, the group of learners and their teacher. Pedagogical practices and classroom environment have also been linked to students' motivation levels. Pertinent and appealing subject matters combined with non-threatening techniques create a positive language learning experience, support and promote group solidarity and lower levels of foreign language anxiety in the classroom (Arnold 1999; Arnold and Fonseca 2007; Dörnyei 2001; Ewald 2007; Williams, Burden, Poulet and Maun 2004).

The teacher's verbal and non-verbal behaviour affects learners' perception of them from the first few minutes of class. Ambady and Rosenthal (1993) found that students' first impressions of teachers' nonverbal behaviour (10 seconds from the first 10 minutes of class, 10 seconds from the middle of class and 10 seconds from the last 10 minutes of class) correlated significantly with their end-of-year evaluations of the teacher. Teachers who were fidgeting with their hands or with an object and teachers who were frowning typically obtained lower ratings during the first meeting. Teachers who scored higher "were judged to be significantly more optimistic, confident, dominant, active, enthusiastic, likable, warm, competent, and supportive on the basis of nonverbal behavior" (434).

Borg (2006) found that one crucial trait of effective language teachers was "an ability to communicate freely and to radiate positive feeling" (23) and to develop close relationships with the students. This finding reflects the conclusion of an earlier study on effective teachers of all subjects, namely their ability to create a supportive and caring emotional environment and express empathy with the learners (Ehrman and Dörnyei 1998; Walls, Nardi, von Minden and Hoffman 2002).

Teachers can also help combat students' FLCA. Arnold (2000) showed that visualization-relaxation training exercises can lower FLCA and improve listening performance of advanced foreign language learners. Ross (2005) demonstrated the effect of formative assessment procedures on the development of learners' listening confidence and the transformation of their beliefs about listening.

Kramsch (2009a) argues that foreign language teachers should abandon the traditional monolingual perspective and embrace a multilingual perspective (188). The traditional emphasis on the instrumental or referential uses of language as determined by monolingual speakers needs to shift towards the expansion of learners' symbolic selves (189). Teachers should help their learners "express and interpret subject posi-

tions that are sometimes non-negotiable. For what gets expressed, interpreted and negotiated, especially in multilingual encounters, is not so much information as emotions and memories, values and subject positions – the realm of the symbolic" (190).

### 5. Multiple languages, multiple personalities?

The acquisition of a new language can potentially be a mind-changing experience. Kramsch explains:

For young people who are seeking to define their linguistic identity and their position in the world, the language class is often the first time they are consciously and explicitly confronted with the relationship between their language, their thoughts, and their bodies. Engaging with a different language sensitizes them to the significance of their own first language and of language in general. Those who just sit out the language class as a boring but necessary step to graduation find themselves vindicated in their monolingual selves. Later, they will say with pride, 'I have had six years of French and I can't even order a cup of coffee in French'. Others will start having thoughts they never had in their mother tongue. (Kramsch 2009a, 5)

Ramírez-Esparza, Gosling, Benet-Martínez, Potter and Pennebaker (2006) used the Cultural Frame Switching model to investigate whether Spanish–English bilinguals located in the US ( $n = 25$ ) and Mexico ( $n = 54$ ) showed different personality profiles when using different languages, consistent with differences between English and Spanish-speaking cultures. The findings suggested that language activates Cultural Frame Switching for Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Neuroticism and Openness remained unaffected. The bilinguals were found to be more extraverted, agreeable, and conscientious in English than in Spanish (115). The correlations between the Spanish and English versions of the questionnaire were very strong which suggested that the bilinguals retained their rank ordering within the group but that the group as a whole shifted: "Thus, an extrovert does not suddenly become an introvert as she switches languages; instead a bilingual becomes more extraverted when she speaks English rather than Spanish but retains her rank ordering within each of the groups" (115).

Panayiotou (2004a, 2004b) came to similar conclusions in her investigation of differences in the story retellings of Greek-English and English-Greek bilinguals' listening to the same story read to them in both languages. The scenario concerned a young university graduate – Andy or Andreas as appropriate – who was dedicating himself to his career, to the detriment of his relationship with his girlfriend and his care for his elderly mother. Participants were asked what they would say to Andy/Andreas and how they felt about him. The participants were found to have different reactions, depending on the language used. The Greek version of the story elicited sympathy and concern for the protagonist, whereas in English it elicited indifference and disapproval. Different imagery and cultural scripts were used in the retelling, which suggests that participants were drawing on distinct linguistic repertoires and cultural frames. There was also some code-switching, which was interpreted as evidence that bicultural bilinguals interacting with other bicultural bilinguals can use the full range of their cultural and linguistic repertoires.

Using the data gathered with the Bilingualism and Emotion Questionnaire (hence BEQ) (Dewaele and Pavlenko 2001-2003), Pavlenko (2006) investigated whether



multilinguals feel that they become different people when they change languages. She also investigated how they make sense of these perceptions, and what prompts some – but not all – multilinguals to see their language selves as different (6). Using a Bakhtinian approach, namely a dialogic view of language, "where texts and utterances invariably bear traces and echoes of other texts and utterances" (Pavlenko 2006, 8), Pavlenko analysed the feedback of 1,039 multilinguals on the open question in the BEQ about "feeling different in a foreign language" (Dewaele and Pavlenko 2001-2003). A majority of participants (65%) reported feeling different when using another language compared to only a quarter of participants who reported not feeling different, the remaining 10 percent giving ambiguous responses (10). Pavlenko noticed four main sources of perceptions of different selves: "(1) linguistic and cultural differences; (2) distinct learning contexts; (3) different levels of language emotionality; (4) different levels of language proficiency" (10). She concludes that the perception of different selves is not restricted to late or immigrant multilinguals, but is a more general part of multilingual experience (27) and observes that "similar experiences (e.g. change in verbal and non-verbal behaviours accompanying the change in language) may be interpreted differently by people who draw on different discourses of bi/multilingualism and self" (27). She argues that the most interesting finding of the study is the presence of several alternative discourses of bilingualism and self: "The discourse of bilingualism as linguistic schizophrenia is still present in the corpus but mostly in the form of a voice from 'elsewhere' that is being mocked and resisted. The respondents engage in a number of counter-discourses, including the discourse of integrated identities and that of personae" (28).

Wilson (2008) investigated the issue of "feeling different in a foreign language" by categorising and quantifying the feedback of 1,414 respondents to question 33 of the BEQ – a corpus of 27,938 words. A majority of participants reported feeling more confident and being more outgoing in a foreign language. Participants noted changes in body language, mannerisms and voice but also reported deeper levels of disguise through references to putting on a mask or taking on another role. One typical comment was: "It is kind of liberating. You can reinvent yourself and be what you want to be or who you really are" (Wilson 2008, 103). Comments also highlighted differences of self-expression in different languages and a feeling of having different identities in each language. Wilson (2008) developed a 29-item questionnaire on feelings about foreign language use with 5-point Likert scales based on the themes that had emerged in the BEQ comments. The items covered different aspects of "feeling different" when using a foreign language, such as, "I sometimes feel as though it's someone else speaking this language and not me" and, "I am more confident when I speak a foreign language because I don't mind making mistakes." Wilson then correlated the scores of 108 adult foreign language users on her questionnaire with the scores of the same participants on the Big Five personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism). She found that introverts who rated their proficiency at intermediate level or above reported feeling different when operating in a foreign language. Gender and age had no effect on feeling different but a lower educational level was linked to a higher likelihood of feeling different. Participants with higher levels of perceived L2 proficiency and who had started learning their L2 at a younger age were more likely to say they felt different. The type of instruction in the L2 was also linked to significant differences on the "feeling different" question-

naire, with mixed and naturalistic learners scoring higher than instructed learners (Wilson 2008).

Drawing on the BEQ and Wilson (2008), Ożańska-Ponikwia's (2010) study on 137 Polish-English bilinguals showed that both higher-order (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness) and lower-order personality traits (Emotion expression, Emotion management, Optimism, Well-being, Emotionality, and Sociability) were positively linked to "feeling different" in an L2. She speculates that people that are highly socially and emotionally skilled can not only notice subtle changes in personality and behavior while using L2, but are also more aware of any changes occurring in their linguistic repertoire.

The different "selves" of multilinguals have been linked to differences in socialization resulting in distinct linguistic repertoires in the different languages. Koven (1998) found evidence of Cultural Frame Switching in her comparison of stories of the same personal experience told by two female Portuguese–French bilinguals, children of Portuguese immigrants in France, in their first and second language. She found that the two participants used different lexical and morphosyntactic resources and registers in their two languages; they also perceived themselves differently and were differently described by the listeners. Participants said they felt different in French and Portuguese, related to people differently, and had a different perspective on the world. They felt less sophisticated in their Portuguese, which came from their rural parents and relatives, than in their French, which was the language of peer socialization in their urban setting. The two participants

perform(ed), enact(ed), or inhabit(ed) the role of their characters in the stories quite differently. The image of the kind of woman who would say 'I'm not that kind of girl' in the sociocultural landscape of rural village northwestern Portugal is not comparable in the urban youth culture of Paris [...] Similarly, Isabel sounds like an angry, hip suburbanite in French, whereas in Portuguese, she seems a frustrated, but patient, well-mannered bank customer who does not want to draw attention to the fact that she is an émigré. (Koven 1998, 435)

Koven (2006) focused on the affective displays of Linda, the bilingual daughter of Portuguese migrants, in French and Portuguese. She was found to perform the voices of quoted characters in more forceful, marked styles in French than in Portuguese (84). Both Linda and listeners perceived her as enacting a different kind of emotion in both languages: "She is perceived in French not just as angrier in the here and now, but as an angrier person. On the other hand, in Portuguese she comes across as someone who uses less profanity, restrains herself, and is thus a more calm, reserved person" (84). Koven concluded that the different sociolinguistic and biographical contexts in which Linda had learned and spoken her two languages are critical to understanding the role of bilingualism in her affective experience (86).

## 6. Communicating emotions in an LX

The "LX" refers non-specifically to one of the languages of the multilinguals learnt after an L1 had been established. I will talk about multicompetent "LX users," extrapolating from Vivian Cook's definition of L2 users, namely people "exploiting whatever linguistic resources they have for real-life purposes" (Cook 2002, 10). Communicating emotions is a crucial social activity, and the ability to do so helps us maintain physical and mental health (Fussell 2002).

Research on how LX users communicate emotions would logically be situated in the field of interlanguage pragmatics. Indeed, pragmatics is defined as "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (Crystal 1997, 301). SLA researchers have used Crystal's definition of pragmatics as the basis of their study on pragmatics and second language teaching (Kasper and Rose 2001, 2002), arguing that Crystal's view of pragmatics as the study of communicative action in its sociocultural context is perfectly suited to an SLA context. The term "communicative action" is broad enough to cover a wide range of variables, it also includes "engaging in different types of discourse and participating in speech events of varying length and complexity" (Kasper and Rose 2001, 2). Despite the fact that communication of emotion thus seems to fit perfectly in these definitions of pragmatics, it is largely absent in pragmatic research designs on LX acquisition and use.

The preferred unit of analysis in pragmatic research is the speech act: "the minimal unit of communication is not a sentence or other expression, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts, such as making statements, asking questions, giving orders, describing" (Searle, Kiefer and Bierwisch 1980, vii). Researchers in interlanguage pragmatics have mainly focused on apologies, requests and compliments in the LX (Warga 2007). A few SLA researchers have crossed disciplinary boundaries and engaged in interdisciplinary research on the communication of emotion by LX users. One such pioneer is Ellen Rintell who happened to share an office with a psychologist (personal communication). Rintell (1984) examined the perception and expression of emotion as an illocutionary act in the speech of LX learners and users. The researcher asked 127 foreign students, enrolled in the Intensive English Program at the University of Houston, to identify which emotion – pleasure, anger, depression, anxiety, guilt, or disgust – best characterised each of eleven tape-recorded conversations played to them. They were also asked to rate the intensity of each emotion on a Likert scale. Their responses were compared to those of 19 native English speakers, among whom there was a high level of agreement. The statistical analysis of the data demonstrated that there were no effects for either age or gender. In contrast, linguistic and cultural background and language proficiency played an important role in the students' results. The strongest effect was that of language proficiency, whereby the scores of the beginner group were significantly lower than the scores of the intermediate and advanced students. However, even the most advanced subjects in the sample, who identified the emotions conveyed in the conversations only about two thirds of the time, did poorly. In addition, when learners of three major language groups were compared to each other, it was found that Chinese students had more difficulty with the task; their scores were consistently different from those of the Arabic- and Spanish-speaking students. Additional analysis of correct identifications demonstrated that, for both native speakers of English and ESL learners, disgust and pleasure were easier to identify than depression, anxiety, guilt, and anger.

Graham, Hamblin and Feldstein (2001) reported similar findings concerning the effect of cultural competence on the recognition of emotion in English voices by 54 native Japanese speakers and 38 native Spanish speakers learning English as a second language. The participants were asked to identify the emotion portrayed in eight audio recordings (anger, fear, joy, sadness, depression, hate, nervousness and no emotion).

A control group of 85 native English speakers obtained an average rate of correct identification of 59% across all eight conditions. This was significantly higher than the judgments of the native Spanish speakers (Mean = 42%) and the native Japanese speakers (M = 38%). An analysis of the misjudgments revealed a mostly systematic pattern across related pairs of emotions (anger confused with hate and vice versa) for the English and Spanish native speakers. The Japanese L2 users of English manifested more non-systematic confusions than the Spanish L2 users. However, the level of proficiency of the L2 users did not significantly affect the percentages of correct judgments of intended emotions.

Using a different design, Grabois (1999) compared word associations to a number of emotion concepts including love, fear, and happiness, provided by (1) monolingual speakers of Spanish, (2) monolingual speakers of English, (3) acculturated L2 users of Spanish, or late English-Spanish bilinguals who had lived in Spain for 3 or more years, (4) American L2 learners of Spanish enrolled in a study abroad program, and (5) FL learners of Spanish enrolled in Spanish courses in an American university. Grabois found that associations supplied by the two groups of native speakers differed both in terms of the type of preferred associations (i.e. symbolic, metaphoric, related to sensory cues, etc.) and in terms of which specific words were elicited. For instance, in response to love, native speakers of English exhibited a greater preference for indirect (metaphoric and symbolic) associations, while native speakers of Spanish showed a preference for sensory and referential associations. Among the non-native speakers of Spanish, acculturated L2 users consistently achieved higher correlations with the associations provided by native speakers of Spanish than any other group.

My own research on the BEQ and on a corpus of interviews with 20 multilinguals living in London has shown that events at the beginning of the language learning history (age of onset of acquisition – AoA) and during the language learning process (context of acquisition) reverberate for years in multilinguals' linguistic behaviour and the perception they have of their LX, their self-perceived competence and their foreign language anxiety (Dewaele 2004a, b, 2005a, 2006, 2007a, b, 2008b, c, 2009, 2010a, b, forthcoming a, b; Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham 2008).

Dewaele (2010a) presented a systematic analysis of the effect of three clusters of independent variables (linguistic history, present language use, sociobiographical and psychological variables) on language perception and choice for the communication of emotion, as well as self-perceived proficiency and FLA. AoA was linked significantly in all 5 languages to self-perceived competence in oral and written skills, with later starters reporting lower levels of competence in the four skills. The effect of AoA was significant in more than half of the cases for the communication of emotions, language perception and FLA. Late starters tended to use the LX less frequently to communicate emotions; they rated the positive characteristics of the LX lower and reported higher levels of FLA. The second variable linked to the participants' linguistic history was the context in which a language had been acquired. Statistical analyses revealed that languages that had been learnt only through formal classroom instruction were less frequently used to communicate emotions than languages that had been learnt naturalistically or which had also been used to communicate outside the classroom. The same pattern emerged for self-perceived competence and FLA in different situations: instructed learners felt less competent and more anxious than mixed and naturalistic learners. The fact that contexts of acquisition seem to resonate for years

after the end of the active "learning phase" has been linked to type and intensity of exposure to an LX and the opportunity to use that LX in authentic interactions. I argued that when contact with an LX had been limited to the classroom, stylistic range and emotion scripts would inevitably be more limited compared to those LX users who have experienced and used the language in a wider variety of situations.

One of the independent variables with the strongest effect on self-perceived competence, language choice to express emotions, perception and FLA was "frequency of use of the LX." Participants who used an LX frequently were equally likely to use that LX frequently for emotional speech. Data from the interviews suggested that frequent users of an LX stopped worrying about foreign accent or possible grammatical errors.

A similar pattern emerged for the effect of LX socialisation, which was calculated by subtracting the score for the frequency of use of the LX from the score for the frequency of use of the L1. More frequent use of the LX compared to the L1 was interpreted as an indication of LX socialisation. The statistical analyses and the feedback from participants showed that language preferences for emotional expression, perception of the languages and FLA change as LX users became more socialised in the LX. LX socialisation was linked to increased use of the LX to express emotions. Its effect was less consistent on perception of the characteristics of the LX. I speculated that usage precedes feelings in the LX. High levels of LX socialisation allow the user to communicate emotions in the LX competently and confidently, but it takes years before the positive language characteristics and emotional strength of swearwords in the LX equal those of the L1. Some participants reported that it took them many years living in a LX environment before they dared to use some of the swearwords in that LX, and typically only mild swearwords. There was also considerable variation between individuals, with cultural background playing an important role in perception and use of emotional language.

The variable "networks of interlocutors" also had significant effect in most cases of language choice and was linked to perception and FLA. Participants with larger networks of interlocutors in an LX were more likely to use that LX for the communication of emotions, and their perceptions and FLA evolved towards that of their LX interlocutors.

One of the sociobiographical and psychological variables with the strongest effect was the number of languages spoken by participants. Those knowing more languages scored lower on FLA and felt more proficient in oral and written production in their different languages. Language knowledge also had an effect on the communication of emotion and the perception of characteristics of the LX, with a tendency for the pentalinguals to use the LX more often to express emotion and to judge the LX more positively, especially the strength of swearwords.

The lower-order personality trait, Trait Emotional Intelligence, was found to have only a very limited effect on self-perceived competence, language choice and perception but it was more consistently significant in relation to FLA. Participants who scored high on Trait Emotional Intelligence reported lower levels of FLA across situations. I speculated that these individuals possess a strong belief in their ability to communicate in different languages while controlling their FLA levels. These individuals remain optimistic and confident in their ability to communicate. They are better able to judge the emotional state of their interlocutor and to adapt their linguistic behaviour if necessary (Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham 2008).

An analysis of participants' comments suggested that the communication of emotion covers a wide range of speech acts which are often culture-specific (Dewaele 2010a). Raising the voice in anger may be considered acceptable in Southern Europe, but it is taboo in Asia. Acculturated multilinguals have a unique capacity to navigate between the taboos and sociopragmatic norms. They reported strategic use of code-switching with other multilinguals especially when talking about more emotional topics with familiar interlocutors. However, multilinguals also reported uncontrolled code-switching in cases of strong emotional arousal. I concluded that multilinguals can exploit their multicompetence to develop multilingual speech acts and emotion scripts that are quite unique to them, or shared by their partner, family, or ethnic group. They do so with relative confidence because of experience in emotional intercultural communication. A striking finding was also the dynamic aspect of language choice to express emotion (Dewaele 2010a). A growing awareness of sociocultural and sociopragmatic norms in the LX contributes to an evolution in the LX user's repertoire for expressing emotions in the LX (Pavlenko 2005).

### **7. Implications for teaching**

While it is too early to draw direct implications for foreign language teaching from the existing research, a number of tentative, indirect implications can be formulated. Firstly, LX users learning a language only through formal instruction have a clear and long-lasting disadvantage compared to those who combine classroom learning and authentic interaction, or learn the language naturalistically. Foreign language teachers might be able to counter the effects of a lack of authentic interactions by introducing various types of emotional discourse in the classroom. Moreover, as the vocabulary of emotions and emotion scripts vary between languages and cultures (Pavlenko 2008), it seems doubly important for teachers to focus on the differences and similarities between the L1(s) and the LX. Emotion-free LX classes do not prepare LX learners to become proficient LX users.

Language teachers also need to be aware that cultural/typological distance between the learners' native language(s) and the LX is a potentially important obstacle in the communication of emotions. The research by Rintell (1984) and Graham, Hamblin and Feldstein (2001) shows that learners from cultures that are relatively more distant from the target culture experience significantly greater difficulties in identifying emotion in the LX and in judging the intensity of that emotion compared to fellow learners with typologically closer languages with similar levels of proficiency. Being able to judge the interlocutor's emotional state is crucial for successful communication (Rintell 1984). It will also add to the sense of competence in the LX and to lower levels of FLA. Foreign language teaching thus needs to broaden the emotional range of the linguistic input. It seems crucial to go beyond literal decoding of text and speech in the LX. Learners need to be prepared in the reading of the LX speaker's face, in the identification of vocal cues and body language that betrays a particular emotion. Moreover, this needs to be linked to patterns of variation according to situation, social position, age and gender of interlocutors. There seems to be a growing awareness among applied linguists and foreign language teachers that foreign language learning is more than the acquisition of a tool for communication with LX speakers. Learners need to develop a critical understanding of sociocultural

norms, culturally-derived attitudes, beliefs, ways of thinking and ways of communicating emotions, i.e. emotional "intercultural competence" (Byram 1997; Byram and Zarate 1994; Scarino 2009; Sercu 2005). Byram (2009) points out that foreign language teachers should be encouraged to stimulate "tertiary socialisation" among the learners, namely

help learners to understand new concepts (beliefs, values and behaviors) through the acquisition of a new language, new concepts which, being juxtaposed with those of the learners' other language(s), challenge the taken-for-granted nature of their existing concepts. (203)

As a result learners would develop social identities unconstrained by their dominant language(s), which would be more internationally-oriented: "a sense of belonging to one or more transnational social groups" (203). The description fits the participants of the BEQ quite well. Although some lamented the fact that they belonged everywhere and nowhere, most were proud of their multilingualism, multi-competence, intercultural experience, and the sense of liberty that this entailed. Their comments generally showed this felt membership of the "Third Culture":

[A] symbolic place that is by no means unitary, stable, permanent and homogeneous. Rather it is, like subject positions in post-structuralist theory, multiple, always subject to change and the tensions and even conflicts that come from being "in-between". (Kramsch 2009b, 238)

Another fact that emerges from the literature is that practice matters in developing the ability to communicate emotions. Role-plays and experiences of authentic communication might enhance the learners' understanding of communication of emotion. Evans and Fisher (2005) showed that British schoolchildren who spent up to 11 days in France on short exchange visits used significantly more expressive and colloquial language on their return. Longer stays abroad have the potential to have even greater effects on the LX user's ability to communicate emotions appropriately. A certain amount of LX socialisation seems to be the prerequisite for the communication of emotion (Kinginger 2008; 2009).

LX learners/users who have managed authentic communication in the LX have sharpened their judgments on sociopragmatic norms and on appropriateness. They may also have become better aware of the multiplicity of norms linked to contextual factors and have become better at making subjective appraisals in the course of an interaction, revising them if necessary. Their understanding of the norms also makes them better able to violate the norms if they wish to do so (Dewaele 2008c). Study abroad might thus help LX learners become emotionally competent LX users.

## 8. Conclusion

What I hope to have demonstrated in the present article is, firstly, that emotions are the driving force behind SLA and later use of an LX, and that these emotions can to some extent be shaped by the teacher; secondly, that the ability to understand and communicate emotions in an LX is the key to successful social interactions in the LX, which are in turn vital for the LX user's mental balance. SLA research on affect of second language learners has mainly focused on motivation and FLA. I add my voice to that of MacIntyre (2002) to argue that the range of variables is much larger and

merits further multi-method investigation from an interdisciplinary perspective. Also, I feel that it is worth looking at adult LX users as much as LX learners. LX users have rich experience in using the LX in a variety of (non-emotional and emotional) situations and they possess a unique metapragmatic awareness allowing them to reflect on their sense of self, their subjectivities and their habitual linguistic practices in non-emotional and emotional situations in different languages. Language teachers could use their own emotions and feelings, their own multilingual subjectivity by presenting the target language not just as a tool for communication, but as an opportunity for learners to expand their symbolic selves, get emotionally and cognitively involved in the foreign language process and develop tertiary socialisation:

Even if we teach a syllabus that is not of our choice and texts we have not selected, we need to find something about them that we either love or hate, but that we are not indifferent to. If we are, our indifference will become our students' boredom. (Kramsch 2009a, 208)

I would like to point out that language teachers should not throw out linguistic information about the target language in the false belief that it is not fun, and of little interest to the learner. Having fun does not mean making it too easy for learners. I will never forget my professor of French linguistics at the Free University of Brussels, Marc Wilmet, who managed to bewitch even those students with a clear preference for literature. His lectures on the complex reasons that led to the disappearance of the "démonstratif absolu" in old French became a "whodunit" that had everybody on the edge of their seat. Other lessons on the complexities of tense and aspect in French showed not just his love for the language but also his capacity to make learners understand why and how the rules came into existence. It convinced me that while mindless memorisation of grammar rules is boring, the demonstration of the linguistic architecture of a language, especially in contrast with other languages known to learners, can reveal harmony and beauty.

Was my professor a naturally gifted teacher or did he learn good pedagogical practices? I personally think his exceptional skills were a combination of both nature and nurture. Just as great actors and dancers can make their performance look spontaneous and easy, great teachers who can create a positive classroom atmosphere can transmit insights in language and culture in such a way that learners will perceive it less as a "transfer of knowledge" and more as a "self-discovery of knowledge," as if they only needed their teacher to help them bring to light what had been concealed in the shadows.

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