

## REVIEWS

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ANETA PAVLENKO, *Emotions and multilingualism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xiv, 304.

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As applied linguists turn their attention to the relationship among language, culture, and identity in second language acquisition (SLA) (e.g., Norton 2000; Kramsch 2003a, 2003c), the area of research called “affective factors in SLA” has gained in prominence, particularly with regard to bilingual individuals – according to Pavlenko’s definition in *Emotions and multilingualism*, “speakers who use two or more languages or dialects in their everyday lives” (p. 6). In the past 10 years, Aneta Pavlenko has singlehandedly put emotions at the center of the language learning enterprise and has given a heart to SLA processes that are usually studied exclusively from the cognitive or the social perspective. This book pulls much of her recent work together and embeds it in a large programmatic, state-of-the-art discussion of the emotional dimensions of bilingualism. It also makes an eloquent case for relinquishing the current monolingual bias in linguistics and for studying language from the perspective of the multicompetent individual who speaks more than one language across multiple cultural contexts in everyday life. As such, it is passionate, ambitious, at times personal and autobiographical, but thoroughly researched and rigorously argued, a book that attempts to redirect the attention of linguists, anthropologists, and psychologists to the subjective dimensions of language, language learning, and language use. Even though the book explicitly focuses on non-instructional uses of language, it makes reference throughout to language teachers in the classroom and to their need to teach non-native speakers the culturally appropriate ways of expressing and interpreting emotions in the L2.

The first two chapters define the problem space: What is multilingualism? How have emotions been treated up to now in SLA? Chap. 1 gives a cogent and extremely useful review of the terms, concepts, and findings in the field of bilingualism; chap. 2 surveys research on attitudinal, affective, and psychopathological factors in second language acquisition and use. The author deplores the fragmentary nature of traditional research on emotions and its reduction to a laundry list of “decontextualized and oftentimes poorly defined sociopsychological constructs such as attitudes, motivation, anxiety, self-esteem, empathy, risk taking and tolerance of ambiguity” (34). She calls for an interdisciplinary, inte-

grated perspective that would put the “multilingual performance of affect” (35) at the center of the study of multilingualism. She presents the Web questionnaire study that she conducted with Jean Marc Dewaele to elicit bi- and multilinguals’ own views and their perceptions of the connections between their languages and emotions. The results of this questionnaire are used throughout the book to challenge easy generalizations, such as the view that the L1 is the language of emotions or the view that anxiety is the main emotion involved in second language learning and use.

The next five chapters explore the various aspects of the relations among language, concepts, and emotions, with emotions appearing in some chapters as inner states (e.g., somatic conditions of anger, love, grief), in others as representations (language and culture-specific concepts encoded in words, and their corresponding social values), in yet others as relational processes (e.g., socialization of children into expressing and identifying culturally appropriate emotions).

Chaps. 3, 4, and 5 deal with the language of emotion on three levels: the vocal level of suprasegmental, prosodic, and paralinguistic features of speech that encode, express, and communicate emotions; the semantic level of emotion words and phrases that characterize emotion talk differently across cultures; and, on the discourse level, the performance of affect – cross-linguistic differences in affective repertoires and the affective repertoires of multilingual individuals in conversation. Chap. 5 introduces the notion of “affective style,” a notion that is at once idiosyncratic/individual and conventional/cultural and that varies among bilinguals with language dominance, language proficiency, context of acquisition, and conversational context. These three chapters are informative but fairly dense, as they report on existing research without recourse to actual conversational data.

Chaps. 6 and 7, by contrast, are highly readable and illuminating in their subjective detail. They deal with the relation of language and emotion – the embodied relationship that speakers have to their various languages as evidenced through the Web questionnaire and through published autobiographies and testimonies of translangual writers. The topics covered in these two chapters (e.g., language choice and code-switching in psychoanalysis, the emotionality of taboo words in different languages, the autobiographical memory of multilinguals having experienced traumatic events like war, incarceration or immigration) form the most interesting and original part of the book. The fascinatingly rich tapestry of experience against which bilinguals learn and use their various languages makes one wonder how linguists could have ignored these crucial aspects of SLA for so long. Chap. 6 proposes the sociocognitive notion of “emotional investment” as a way of understanding language-related affections, desires, and hatreds. Picking up on Kellman’s notion of “emancipatory detachment” (183), the author suggests that writing in one’s second language might release unexpected creative energies that have become dulled in one’s native language. Chap. 7 brings back the discussion to issues of identity and the role that positive or negative experi-

ences, such as that of German Jews during the Holocaust, can have on bilinguals' ability and willingness to speak or write various languages.

The last chapter offers an integrated perspective on the research reviewed throughout the book and returns to the two main questions raised at the beginning: What does the study of multilingualism contribute to the study of emotions? What does the study of emotions contribute to the study of multilingualism? The chapter opens up a host of avenues for further research. For example, does the spread of English as a global language lead to a globalization of semantic space, that is, to a universalization of basic emotions or an increasing domination of Anglo discourses of emotions? What are the consequences of linguistic relativity for the emotional development of L2 learners: Do speakers of languages that encode emotions as interpersonal processes (e.g., Russian) begin seeing them as inner states (as English speakers do)? Do L2 learners now refer to emotions not encoded in their native languages? How do emotions affect language choice, learning, and use? What memories and associations are elicited by bilinguals' use of their various languages? The book ends with very useful guidelines for future researchers on data collection, reporting and analysis when studying multilingual participants: the need for diachronic studies, more conversational data, explicit reporting of researchers' linguistic proficiencies, explicit discussion of their analytic choices and of the language proficiency of their informants, and a plea for collaborative analysis and interpretation of the data among participants, informants and native speakers.

Despite its attempt to end the "militant monolingualism" prevalent in much of linguistic research (xiii), and despite the wide variety of languages adduced throughout, this book has an undeniably Western, Anglo-Saxon flavor. This is not a criticism, only a reminder of the conundrum we face. The research this book draws upon has been almost exclusively written and published in English within a Western perspective. It has a few references to French and German scholarship (mostly from the 1930s) but no Russian scholarship at all, even though the expression of emotions in Russian occupies an important place in the argument. Given the author's insightful discussions of the linguistic, semantic, and discursive relativity of emotions, one has to ask how English, the very language of this book (and of the autobiographical testimonies and Web questionnaire), together with its attendant concepts, emotions, and ideologies, have affected the argument we are offered here.

One of these ideologies is the belief that only languages learned and used in real, natural environments are emotionally meaningful, and that languages learned in classroom contexts are by definition devoid of "personal memories, sensory representations and affective associations" (238). Recent research has shown that this is not necessarily the case, especially not for adolescents and young adults who learn foreign languages in school and who find in the experience and in the reading of a foreign literature deep emotional satisfaction and an escape from the constraints of their mother tongue (Belz 2002; Kramsch 2003b, 2005).

The challenge posed by the book is how to pass from the structuralist kind of research reviewed in chaps. 3–5 to the fluid, ever-changing, conflictual, and often self-contradictory multicompetence of the multilingual speaker as documented in the autobiographical memoirs cited in chaps. 6–7. The very genre of the research review offered in the first half of the book, with the reported speech of its research findings, presents problems of voice that the author acknowledges but cannot avoid. For example, the following reports seem to essentialize cultures and stereotype speakers in quite a problematic manner: “Japanese . . . are rarely saddened by the world news in the same way Europeans are, nor do they fear strangers with the intensity Americans and Europeans do (Scherer et al., 1988)” (91), or “In Russian culture litanies and complaints constitute a very salient act and aim to impress the interlocutors and elicit their compassion and empathy. Problem-solving-oriented Americans tend to respond with constructive advice . . . (Ries, 1997)” (121). The problems raised by such statements and by equating one language with one culture have often plagued cross-cultural psychologists and psycholinguists engaged in cross-cultural research.

If we want to explore what it means to be a multilingual multicompetent speaker rather than a multiply monolingual one, we have to ask: What is the subject position of bilinguals whose privilege it is to speak one language but feel or think in another? Of multilinguals who utter words in one language with memories of events lived in another and with emotions experienced by proxy through reading literature written in yet another language? How much context is needed to interpret a multicompetent speaker’s utterances? This book opens up a Pandora’s box of research challenges regarding the validity and reliability of statements made by multilingual speakers and researchers, and the concomitant dilemma involving both the necessity and the impossibility of translation. It is a tribute to Aneta Pavlenko that she has had the courage to lay out these problems so clearly before us; she has thrown down a formidable gauntlet to the profession, and it is well worth picking up.

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