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Book review

***Multilinguals' verbalisation and perception of emotions*, Pia Resnik. Bristol: Multilingual Matters (2018). pp.xiv+284.**

In recent five years, emotion, as an important affect in language learning and teaching, has attracted attention in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) and applied linguistics (White, 2018). However, As Swain (2013) put it, “emotions are the elephants in the room—poorly studied, poorly understood” (p11); therefore, a call for in-depth research on emotion is articulated in terms of scientific research methods, updated theoretical guidance, and non-monolingual context. To pick up this call, the book *Multilinguals' verbalisation and perception of emotions* utilizes a mixed-methods approach to explore the multilinguals' emotions through the lens of complex dynamic systems theory (CDST).

I chose this book to review based on my interests in individual differences (IDs) in SLA and my work as a supervisor of PhD and MA students. I started my research more than a decade ago, and I have been keeping my eye on the development of IDs in and out of SLA. As the concept of positive psychology began to shed light on SLA, the burgeoning number of studies on emotion caught my eye. I read lots of literature on emotion, exchanged thoughts on the topic with other scholars in this field (for example Prof. Jean-Marc Dewaele), carried out my own research on the emotion of high school students in their English learning, and supervised students doing their own postgraduate studies on students' English learning enjoyment and pre-service teachers' emotional regulation. In doing this work, I read this book and found it worth reviewing in terms its theoretical perspective, multi-design and pioneering topic selection.

Following the structure of reporting an empirical study, the whole book can be re-categorized into the following parts, introduction (Chapter 1), literature review (Chapters 2 to 4), research design (Chapter 5), results and discussion (Chapters 6 to 7), conclusion and implication (Chapter 8), appendix and references. The first chapter shows us the reasons of selecting this topic, introduces the purposes of the research and the possible audience of the book. The second part reviews the related studies, namely, what “emotion” is, the relationship between language and emotion, and the linkage between bi-/Multilingualism and emotion. In each chapter, the author carefully points out the typical definitions of relevant terms, and presents previous studies with critical comments. The third part meticulously depicts the research methods and instruments of the whole research. In the following part, the author reports the answers to the questions of how demographic and language-related variables (e.g. age, gender, language proficiency) influence the perception and verbalisation of emotions in the L1 and L2, and how cross-cultural, crosslinguistic and gender differences influence the expression of emotions when writing a story in ESL.

When exploring the rather complicated and nebulous concept of emotion, it becomes essential to take a suitable theoretical perspective. The author of this book examines emotional expression through a CDST perspective, which has been increasingly favoured by SLA researcher in the past 20 years (Cameron & Larsen-Freeman, 2007). From this perspective, the emotional expression of different genders is socially and discursively constructed rather than biologically attributed. This “doing gender” (West & Zimmerman, 1987) mirrors the dynamic features of the complex emotional expression. CDST offers the possibilities to understand the contradictory results yielded by the two studies in this whole research because emotion itself is a contextualized complex concept. In the quantitative part of this research, the stereotype exists in emotional expression, such as women are more emotional than men, and they could express their emotions more openly in public with more emotion-laden words, for example, swear words. On the contrary, in the part of elicitation writing of this study, such stereotypes are shown to be mostly insignificant. Although the author doesn't offer adequate interpretations of this contradictory results, this study at least indicates the complexity of the multilinguals' emotional expressions and perceptions.

Guided by CDST, this study explores the influences of gender, age, and other variables on emotional expression through a mixed-methods approach. Three major instruments are employed: questionnaires, interviews, and stimulated elicitation writing task. The online and offline questionnaires are used to examine how 11 variables influence multilinguals' verbalisation and perceptions of emotional expression. Interviews aim to dig out the complex attitudes of monolinguals towards emotion-laden words. The simulated writing task requires the participants to write a text in English after looking at 24 pictures depicting the story “Frog, Where Are You”. Though these instruments provide the different services to answer various research questions, the focal point lies in unveiling the complicated mystery of emotions. LX users (the alternative term of multilingual) take diversified approaches to express their emotions due to different contexts. Culture, gender, age, language

proficiency and other variables play different roles in different stages and contexts to influence expression. For example, in Chapter 6, it is reported that the more proficient multilinguals are, the higher possibility that they could notice the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences in their L1 and L2, and this awareness can lead to either L1 or L2 preference to express emotions.

In addition to viewing emotion from CDST perspective, this study manages to adopt the concept of “Multi-competence” to make the LX users comparable, since more than one language stays in the mind of multilinguals and they mutually influence each other (Cook, 2012). In this study, two groups of participants were chosen for comparison. One is L1 Germany plus L2 English; and the other is L2 Chinese plus L2 English. No further discussion about their L3, or L4 is given in this study. However, English is their common L2, and other languages in their minds will interplay with English, which makes it possible to compare their output of emotion expressions. The results of this research showcase that multilinguals verbalize their emotions in either L1 or L2 due to their individual differences, the degree of their emotional feelings, and other factors. For instance, the multilinguals tend to express their deepest feelings in the L1 rather than the L2. In addition, both their residence and frequency of use of one language have significant effects on choosing L1 or L2 in expressing their emotions. For example, LX users who live in an English-speaking country and use English frequently in daily communication, they tend to express their feelings in English.

Although this book is a valuable reference in researching emotions in language learning, it has some limitations. In addition to the weaknesses mentioned by the author in Chapter 8, such as partially answered questions, less balanced number of participants and so on, we find the ways of reporting results may mislead the readers into losing themselves in reading the results and discussion part (Chapters 6 and 7). These two chapters are overloaded to include all the answers and the interpretations to 15 sub-research questions and 12 research hypothesis (12 hypothesis). These questions are not coherent although they serve the same goal, namely, examining the interplay of language use, culture, and other demographic factors. This incoherence possibly causes the less consistency in presenting the results. For readers, especially those who take interests in language emotion research but know less about this field, they may not be entirely clear to unravel the complexity and feel lost in such a long report.

Beyond these limited drawbacks, on the whole, this book offers an important reference in studying language learning emotions. This book is a recommended reading for those multilingual language teachers and learners, the researchers in the field of language learning and teaching emotions, and those interested in CDST and its wider application in applied linguistics.

Funding

This review is supported by two key projects. One is *Research on the Construction and Development of Excellent High School English Teachers' Professional Capacities in Rural Areas: A Bronfenbrenner Perspective* funded by the Academy for Research in Teacher Education, Northeast Normal University (JSJY20180105). The other is *Research on Classroom Academic Emotions of English learners in China (2017JYT01)* funded by Education Bureau of Liaoning Province.

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Available online 12 September 2019