

## Emotions and Multilingualism

How do bilinguals experience emotions? Do they perceive and express emotions similarly or differently in their respective languages? Does the first language remain forever the language of the heart? What role do emotions play in second language learning and in language attrition? Why do some writers prefer to write in their second language?

In this provocative and ground-breaking book, Pavlenko challenges the monolingual bias of modern linguistics and psychology and uses the lens of bi- and multilingualism to offer a fresh perspective on the relationship between language and emotions. Bringing together insights from the fields of linguistics, neurolinguistics, psychology, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and literary theory, Pavlenko offers a unique and comprehensive introduction to this cross-disciplinary movement. This is a highly readable and thought-provoking book that draws on empirical data and first-hand accounts and offers invaluable advice for novice researchers. It will appeal to scholars and researchers across many disciplines.

Dr. Aneta Pavlenko is Associate Professor of TESOL at the College of Education, Temple University, Philadelphia. She is the author of many articles and co-editor of *Multilingualism, Second Language Learning and Gender* (2001), *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Context* (2004), and *Gender and English Language Learners* (2004).

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*Temple University, Philadelphia*



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## Preface

This book is written for many readers and also for just one. The one reader who was always on my mind as I was writing is a graduate student sitting silently and dejectedly in the library carrel, feeling – as I did many a time – that the academic world is not letting her or him on its major secrets. What areas of research are hotter than others? Which ones have been overexplored and which ones are underresearched? Which approaches are ‘in’ and which are considered outdated? Is it permissible to link one’s own personal circumstances, such as one’s bilingualism or childrearing experiences, with one’s research topic? And how in the world does one come up with that research topic – or, for that matter, with an adequate research design?

If you have asked yourself any of these questions and have any interest in either bilingualism or emotion research, or, even better, both, this book is for you. Throughout, I have tried to be comprehensive in covering what has been done to date and to be detailed in discussing research designs and methods of analysis that ‘go with’ particular research directions and theoretical perspectives. I have also tried to be straightforward in explaining which approaches are outdated and why, outlining weaknesses of the currently accepted approaches and sketching out directions for new research. I have also sought to convey my own passion for using the multilingual lens for language research and the perspective of emotion in research on bilingualism. Most of all, I wanted this book to be seductive, so that the student reader in the library carrel would be intrigued enough to consider making a personal contribution to this field. I was also guided by my belief that writing about human beings should weave together the personal and the scholarly, the subjective and the objective. It is in the spirit of such a tapestry that I offer the story of where this book came from.

It was a beautiful sunny day in otherwise perennially foggy and rainy Ithaca. I was sitting in a graduate seminar room, basking in the sun and actively participating in the discussion, like the good girl that I was. It



so happened that I asked our professor what a particular phenomenon we were discussing meant for second language acquisition. The professor lost it and blew up at me: “Aneta, not everything in life relates to second language acquisition!” Hmm. Really? I guess I must have pushed a little too hard this time.

As a doctoral student in linguistics, I spent several of my Cornell years taking core classes in syntax, semantics, phonology, and phonetics. At best, these classes highlighted several languages, as spoken by monolingual speakers. At worst, they focused predominantly on English. Alternately bored and puzzled, I tried to relate these classes to the world outside the classroom windows and to my own experiences as an immigrant woman trying to adjust to a new language, culture, and way of life, as a single mother trying to raise a child in two languages, as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, and as a case worker trying to help incoming Russian, Ukrainian, and Bosnian refugees. Some of my professors may still remember my brazen questioning and insolent nagging, asking them to, please, relate the issues under consideration to second language acquisition and bilingualism. My advisor, Jim Lantolf, encouraged my questions. A few other professors patiently tried to answer them. Others dismissed them. One blew up. And when he did, I realized that perhaps it was not his job to use the ‘multilingual lens’ at every juncture – rather, it was mine, if I so choose. There and then I decided to spend the rest of my scholarly life proving him wrong, and showing that multilingualism, and yes, second language acquisition, have implications for every aspect of – if not life – then at least linguistics and for every phenomenon ever studied from an idealized monolingual point of view.

The present book is a part of this life-long project of rewriting ‘monolingual’ linguistics to fit the real world – messy, heteroglossic, and multilingual. Its main goal is to show what happens when a multilingual lens is applied to one specific field of study: language and emotions. One may ask what is the purpose of such an enterprise, especially as we already have healthy and productive fields of bi- and multilingualism and second language acquisition? My answer is, yes, these are indeed thriving fields – yet they are also marginal fields, at least in North American academia. Never core courses, always electives, they are always the recipients of theoretical knowledge from other fields, never the source. This situation will remain unchanged as long as the academic establishment believes that the focus of language-related inquiry should be on the minority of the world’s population – monolingual or predominantly monolingual speakers – and that only when we find out how ‘things work’ in monolingual speakers-listeners will we be able to extend the findings to speakers of more than one language. I do not see this approach as valid, nor the status quo as either desirable or acceptable.

Importantly, this book is written not to blame scholars for being monolingual or insufficiently proficient in another language, nor to make them feel deficient. Rather, I blame the trend I perceive as militant monolingualism and argue that, considering that the majority of the world population is bi- or multilingual, the perspective that takes into consideration bilingualism, heteroglossia, and linguistic diversity is a much more productive orientation toward linguistic theory or, for that matter, any theory of the human mind, including language and emotions research. The reason for that is very simple. Rather than obstructing the view, the multilingual lens functions as a magnifying glass that highlights what happens when individuals have two or more affective repertoires or sets of emotion concepts: Do they still map onto a single set of unitary emotions?

As with any scholarly enterprise, this one was not a solitary journey, and thanks are due to many people and institutions. First thanks go to the editor of the series, Keith Oatley of the University of Toronto, and to Sarah Caro of Cambridge University Press for taking a chance on this book. Keith had been outstandingly prompt with feedback and unfailingly supportive – his wonderful insights have significantly improved the quality of the manuscript. I also consider myself lucky to have worked with an editor who shares not only my passion for research on language of emotions but also one for literature – he knew that all the discussions of bilingual writers are (hopefully) more than just gratuitous digressions. The writing of the book itself was enabled by a semester-long sabbatical granted to me by Temple University in the Spring of 2004 and by the unconditional support of my department chair, Dr. Thomas Walker. Much of the academic research was conducted in the Olin library of my alma mater, Cornell University. Working in the calm solitude of that library, listening to the Bell Tower chimes, eating lunch on the slopes, still remains my idea of the best vacation in the world.

Throughout the years of thinking and writing, I enjoyed the friendship and support of wonderful colleagues, many of whom became personal friends. Jean-Marc Dewaele has been an outstanding co-author, co-editor, and partner in our joint research on bilingualism and emotions, in numerous colloquia we organized together, and in special journal issues we co-edited. I am truly blessed by the gift of your friendship. I have also greatly benefited from the insights, support, and advice of many extraordinary colleagues from all over the world who contributed to this book both through their own research, through intense discussions we had in our colloquia and conferences, and through reading and commenting on various chapters. For the gift of their expertise, time, patience, and collegiality, I would like to thank Jeanette Altarriba, Colin Baker, Brian Goldstein, Cathy Harris, Celeste Kinginger, Michèle Koven, Michael McCarthy, Bonny Norton, Yumiko Ohara, Alexia Panayiotou, Ingrid Piller, Sanna Reynolds, Monika

Schmid, Elena Schmitt, Bob Schrauf, and Olga Stepanova. For sharing their experiences with us freely and generously, I would like to thank all contributors to the webquestionnaire. I would also like to thank my doctoral students and assistants at Temple, Eunhee Seo, Lydia Perez-Velez, Bei Zhou, and Youngkyoung Jong, for making endless trips to the library, tracking obscure sources, copying references, and being invariably cheerful and enthusiastic about the book. I am equally grateful to my doctoral advisee from the University of Toronto, Yasuhiro Imai, for his top-notch comments on the manuscript and for keeping me on my toes. Special thanks go to my wonderful friends, Betsy Hillman and Brenda Wickes, for holding my hand when I most needed it.

Real friends and colleagues were not the only people who helped me in the writing process – so did my imaginary friends. It so happened that December 15, 2003, the day I began to write this book, was also the day of the world premiere of the first Spanish-language telenovela produced and filmed in the United States, *Te amaré en silencio*. From then on, every weekday at nine the incomparable Eduardo Yañez and Ana Carolina da Fonseca accompanied me on my journey to the world of emotions in a language not my own. Watching the show through the lenses of the emerging book was a fascinating experience. It made me wonder time and again about emotions that might cross linguistic and cultural boundaries, about trials and tribulations of bilingual couples, about similarities and differences between emotional expression in natural communication and conventionalized expressions of emotions that make shows like this so easy to watch and so comprehensible to speakers of other languages.

Last but not least, behind many a scholarly book stand sacrifices on the part of the writer's family. My family is not an exception here – they lost me to the book for weeks at a time. For their extraordinary patience and unconditional love and support, I thank two very special men in my life: my son, Nik, and my partner, Doug. As I was finishing the book, I suffered the biggest loss any child could imagine – within the span of four months, I lost both of my parents. My dad was with me through every stage of this book – he was the only one in the family who always knew what chapter I was working on. Every one of our transatlantic conversations began with his questions about the progress I made. It will always hurt that he could not see the final result. The book is dedicated to his memory – with all my love and longing.