

Language and Emotion: An Integrative Review of Psychological and Linguistic Perspectives

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Abstract

Integrative review of research on language-emotion connection This paper presents an integrative review of the complex link between language and emotion based on the data of psychology and linguistics to offer the overview of how language regulates the experience of emotions. The review starts with the focus on the aspect of the structure and differentiation of the list of emotions in different languages as well as the relation between the language used and the perception and representation of emotions. Another aspect discussed in the paper is nonverbal communication and paralinguistics including tone and gesture that reflects emotional states as the paper argues that they are essentially important features that make up for verbal communication. Further, the study examines the realization of metaphors as well as the employment of figures of speech in the observation of how painful and multifaceted emotions can be put into words. This paper also extends the idea of linguistic relativity from perception to behavior, especially as it has to do with emotion. Last, some recommendations regarding cross cultural

communication as well as future therapeutic interventions for people of different language and cultural background are provided.

Keywords: Language and emotion, emotional vocabulary, nonverbal communication, paralinguistics, metaphor, linguistic relativity, cross-cultural communication, emotional regulation, mental health.

I. Introduction

The two aspects being language and emotion are seen to overlap in a way such that they both affect and are affected by the other. This paper provides an integrative review on the aspects of language and emotions from both psychological and linguistic points of view and indicates that language is a process through which emotions are expressed and understood but also a structure within which these emotions are experienced. Using words, we have a psychological perception when it comes to feeling emotions, which implies that the emotion we utter will actually determine how it will be felt (Barrett 2006). For instance, Lindquist (2013) noted that the categorization of feeling through language twists and turns people's emotions and as a result, the language itself forms part of the emotional experience. From a linguistic point of view, the analysis of the emotion vocabulary, of the metaphors, and of the discursive patterns shows the ways that, in providing or receiving an emotional message, cultural and social factors interact (Kövecses, 2000). Inter-cultural studies have also established considerable differences in the emotional experience given English a broad term to describe emotions compared to other languages where the same emotions have limited definitions but are of very much importance in the culture of that language (Wierzbicka, 1999). This review integrates these viewpoints into a synthesis offering a global assessment of the two-way interaction between language and emotion and a conceptual discussion of the potential of integrating the linguistic and psychological study of the different modalities of emotional disclosure and regulation.

Language and emotion are definitely correlated in a rather deep and complex manner as far as language is not only a tool to describe or convey emotions but also a tool to create or organize the affective experience. It is also used as the main tool for expressing

emotions: For people, fluent language is a means to express feelings, thoughts and experiences to other people (Pavlenko, 2005). It is, therefore, evident that language is a key tool when dealing with aspects to do with emotion as people are able to express their feelings through the use of the linguistic features like vocabularies, syntax and the use of the metaphors as espoused by Barrett (2006). In addition, studies have pointed out that words used or available can impact on how emotions are defined or experienced and, this is because different languages provide more or different concepts of specific emotions to the speakers (Wierzbicka, 1999). This interaction of language and emotion also points to the relevance of the study of this relationship because common cognitive and cultural dimensions involved in the expression as well as experience of emotions can be established.

It is obvious that the subject matter of the present work is the relationship between language and emotion; thus, it is by definition marked as an interdisciplinary one that has incorporated suggestions from both psychology and linguistics. Language has also been a subject of focus to psychologists to determine how the terminology used and even the syntax of languages are related to emotional processes and even the amount of emotion that would be experienced (Lindquist, 2013). On the other hand, the linguist looks at how most languages express emotions, bearing in mind the way in which culture and society determines the way which emotions are described in the different communities (Kövecses, 2000). In this way, such approach enables to consider emotions as functionally intertwined with language, reflecting both the mechanisms of emotional communication and the social cultural praxeology. Thus, we consider these frameworks to conclude that combining them will help develop more nuanced views of individuals' emotive communicative actions and languages as mediating both of emotive realities.

Evidently, the goal of this review is to review the research done in psychology and linguistics on language and emotion from an integrationist perspective. The submission's objective is to discuss the ways, in which language is used to express emotions, how different features of languages affect emotional processing, and how culture-specific language use determines the emotional experiences of people (Pavlenko, 2005). Further,

this review endeavors to establish limitations in extant research and directions that have not been adequately explored for future research, especially in context where findings from psychological and linguistic paradigms can complement each other to provide a better account of the language-emotion interface (Barrett, 2006). The review includes both, theoretical and empirical contributions, and considers a numerous of languages and cultural contexts in order to offer a broad perspective on language and emotion in different environments.

II. Theoretical Perspectives

The relation between emotion and language from the perspective of psychological theories looks at how language plays a role on emotional experience and display. One of these is the constructionist theory that states that emotion is not intrinsic to an individual but it is socially built through language and socialization process as proposed by Barrett (2006). Sullivan's interpersonal theory posits that the language used to categorize emotions is important in the organization of the emotional response because it supplies a thinking for the individual to use in the appraisal of the feeling. For example, showing that being able to name an emotion like 'anxiety' can affect how people experience their emotions, and that in fact language is a direct determinant of the feel good/bad factor of emotions (Lindquist et al., 2015). Similarly, the theory of linguistic relativity arguing that the language we use also determines our thinking and feeling also has it that language influences feelings (Boroditsky, 2011). These psychological theories focus on the function of language in constructing of emotional worlds and stress the necessity of investigating how distinct linguistic practices produce different emotional experiences in multicultural populations.

Discourse employs two general methods of studying emotions: The first one concerns how speakers and languages encode emotions and the second explores how languages give form and order to the emotions that people experience. One can discuss such a primary approach as the analysis of the available emotion lexicon, which investigates the sets of terms referring to emotion in various languages. Studies has pointed out that some languages are endowed with a sample of terms that describe specific and discrete

emotions, this reflects the culture, as well as the metaphors which comprise one that is granted to the speaker as a way of expressing the often-sophisticated concerns (Wierzbicka, 1999). Another research area within linguistics focuses on metaphor especially how emotions are metonymically represented in language. For instance, emotions are referred to as states or motions for instance being 'heated' with anger or 'falling into' sadness and these expressions mask cognitive and/or cultural structure in the understanding of the emotions (Kövecses, 2000). Moreover, discourse analysis provides understanding of how emotions are demanded and dealt with looking at the conversation and language, as well as the ways in which language construes and governs people's feelings and their relation (Edwards, 1999). These two linguistic approaches therefore highlight the cultural and linguistic variation in the ways that emotion is expressed and deployed as evidence of how language mediates emotion.

For culture directly affects the ways in which people communicate their feelings and interpret others' feelings, given that the emotional lexicon and the proper use of referential expressions belong to culture. Previous theoretical argument on difference in cultures has advocated that people of different culture value and exhibit emotions differently and some emotions are more consistent with the core value of the culture and are more often used in casual language (Mesquita, 2001). For instance, in collectivist culture, emotions that support the culture's values, for instance empathy and respect, are described with more words compared to individualist cultures which have more elaborate words to describe emotions that support the culture's value such as achievement, decision making power among others (Matsumoto, 1990). In addition, the cultural practice molds the ways through which emotions are conveyed; either in an intensive societal unreserved manner or in an exclusive and assimilated form (Tsai, 2007). These cultural differences in emotional expression through language suggest that culture (and its implications concerning language and its relation to emotion) should always be taken into account by students of the language and emotion link because of just how closely connected these three aspects of human life are.

III. Language as a Medium for Emotional Expression

There are differences in type and range of words for different languages and these differences highlight the distinctions in cultural and logical models of emotions. Several languages provide their speakers with lots of words to express the shades of feelings that may be difficult to distinguish. For instance, English has a rather extensive emotional lexicon which lacks equivalent in Japanese and Russian; there are terms that can be translated but do not have a close equivalent in English, one of them is the Japanese term “amae,” which defines the experience of desired helplessness (Wierzbicka, 1999). These differences demonstrate how languages write emotions in manners that are acceptable to its speakers based on their culture and practice. However, it is also important to note that the way emotions are categorized can also be different in some languages which can be confusing to the speakers of other languages. The given differences in language point to the fact that the means of feeling and understanding or categorizing emotions is partly defined by the language used (Pavlenko, 2005). It is through this various aspect of emotional words that one is able to better comprehend the relations between language, culture and emotion.

Body language and paralinguistics are very significant in the display of emotions, and can in some cases, act instead of or along with words. Tone, facial expressions, movements, and postures give us a more or less cross-cultural and instantaneous report on someone’s emotions which are might be very subtle and difficult to put into words (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). Another aspect typical for developing paralinguistic codes is the use of intonation, pitch and rhythm that also plays an important role in the expression and perception of emotions. For instance, such speech component as intonation can cause fear depending on pitch; rising pitch may mean question while falling pitch may mean certainty (Crystal, 1969). These nonverbal or paralinguistic things are important in expressing emotion in all the cultures although the meanings or the appropriate use of some particular gesture or some particular tone might differ across the culture (Knapp et al., 2013). Therefore, it can be said that knowledge of nonverbal communication and

paralinguistics is imperative for a better understanding of how emotions are both expressed and perceived through the process of interaction in human relations.

It is particularly noteworthy that metaphor and other forms of figures of speech are effective means of infusing the speech event with emotion since emotions otherwise are very abstract notions. Metaphors especially allow for the conceptualization of emotions by appealing to other sensory based experiences of reality, for example describing anger as the boiling or sadness as the heaviness, to provide a frame of reference for the feeling (Kövecses, 2000). Other patterns that increase the intensity of emotional expression include the use of both literal and metaphor; the latter being a form of style that enlarges meaning beyond the everyday reference by appealing to the physical or cultural sense of the emotions, thus bringing the figure of speech to life (Gibbs, 1994). For example, the word 'broken heart' means not only the feelings of the breakup, but also the actual physical representation of the words, their embodiment. Metaphor and figurative language is researched as depending upon a culture, different languages and cultural contexts prefer different metaphors or expressions to describe the experience of emotion, which testifies to the fact that culture shapes the emotional experience (Wierzbicka, 1999). These linguistic devices therefore have vital functions in the process of description and interpretation of emotions and therefore belong to the core of language and emotion research.

IV. Influence of Language on samples Emotions

Linguistic relativity is the theory that explains how our language shapes how we think and experience the world and this fact holds true for the scope of the present study as well. According to this idea, the sets of words and grammatical features in a certain language may influence the way those who in it responsive to the language conceive their feeling (Boroditsky, 2011). For example, Russian language has *toska* and *pechal* to distinguish between sadness or sorrow and malaise or depression and such languages make people distinguish and acknowledge the difference between such related states as those can be encompassed in a single word if the language being used by the person is different (Wierzbicka, 1999). Research has also revealed that people who speak more

than one language might process feelings dissimilarly when speaking one language than the other; some of them have noted that, to them, specific feelings are keener, truer in one language than the other (Pavlenko, 2005). These results give essence to the evidence that language is indeed critical in the construction of people's affect as the framework through which affect becomes operationalized.

Verbal communication can be also pointed as an important component of emotional regulation and coping styles due to the fact that it enables an individual to define, describe and regulate his emotions. Expression entails speaking or writing or even thinking about the emotions in a form of language which can enable tremendous reduction of the amount of emotional experience and hence less stress (Pennebaker, 1997). This process can be called "emotional labeling" thus it consists in labeling the experienced emotions, which can make them less intense and easier to process cognitively (Lieberman et al., 2007). In addition, the specific language usage, with accentuation, for example, on converting negative stances into positive ones or using affirmative coping phrases, may boost employees' emotional strength and the practice of healthy coping styles (Gross, 2002). In another way, language is also involved in the regulation of emotion as shown in cases where therapies such as cognitive-behavioral therapy relies on language to help in altering the thinking patterns which would in turn have a positive impact on the emotions of a person (Beck, 2011). These examples, therefore, magnify the role of language in EMOTION-REGULATION and its use in broad PRACTICAL and CLINICAL spheres as well.

The same language that was used will affect the manner in which feelings are encoded and even the strength of the feelings that are brought out when a certain memory is replayed. Emotional experiences and the language used to express such experiences are important in the organization of these experiences into the LTM; the way that an event is described influences its recall (Christianson & Engelberg, 1999). Moreover, it has also been found that people who are bilingual are differently able to recall feelings – some memories can be more easily activated and more emotionally meaningful in one language than in another language, according to Schrauf and Rubin (2000). Furthermore, it has

been noted that the vividness of a memory might be due to the language used in recalling the memory as type of language used may enhance or decrease the emotional content of the memory (Pavlenko, 2005). These studies indicate the connotative significance of language not simply to the first onset of feeling but also for the recall and possible rekindling of such feeling that is pertinent to memory studies.

V. Cross-Cultural Variations

This is because; Culture plays a great role in the use of language to express and interpret emotions, which varies according to the standards of the society. In individualistic primitives like United States and Western Europe, the use of emotions is plain, overt and the language is used to make a point of a distinct self- sufficiency (Matsumoto, 1990). While, for instance, people from collectivistic cultures originating from East Asia value harmony and need social harmony, and therefore, use less of gesture, facial expressions or the voice that may cause conflict while they tend to use words to serve the physical function of maintaining relationships (Tsai, 2007, p. 250). These cultural differences can be seen in differences in language; some emotions are described in more detail, and some are even emphasized more in some cultures than in others. For instance, such a Japanese concept as ‘amae’, representing a kind of pleasant dependence, has no directly comparable English term, thus stressing how culture might shape the lexicon of emotions (cf. Wierzbicka, 1999). Being aware of these differences is significant while interpreting such expressions and for learning more about the heterogeneity of the human emotional expression.

Emotion also displays a special pattern in bilingual community because bilingual people always switch between the languages, which may give different expressions of emotion. Studies show that bilinguals may encode the emotional experiences with deeper intensity in L1 as compared to L2 because L1 is learned during childhood and it serves as a medium of encoding the emotional experiences particularly related to personal relationships (Dewaele, 2010). Nonetheless, some bilinguals feel singled out or, in other words, less emotionally engaged when it comes to expressing emotions in the second language (L2), however it is in line with the idea that L2 is experienced in more formal

settings, where negative emotions are not put much into use (Pavlenko 2005). Also, when expressing emotions a person can choose the language of expression depending much on cultural and social situations; bilingual people for example may use a given language to express emotions with much importance to them or a particular identity (Grosjean, 2010). These results reveal how the bilingual process goes beyond the simple choice of the language used, which interacts with feelings and the cultural affiliation of the person.

Examples of using emotion-related words and their translation in cross-cultural targets analyzed in this article can be considered as an important source of information about both the general patterns of how the processes of enculturation affect emotional experience and particularities of cultural differences manifested in the use of emotion-related words in various cultures. For example; In America personal expression is highly expressed and consequently, even the expression of emotions is direct and straight forward especially when with family or a therapist (Suh et al., 1998). On the other hand, as exhibited by the Chinese culture, which values assertiveness and honor, people are apt to use context and non-verbal to express their feelings instead of actually coming out to say it (Gao et al., 1996). Another culture in the context of the Finnish culture show that despite the fact that Finns are said to be people of low emoting, the Finnish language is equip with sophisticated nuances of emotions, especially emotional sadness demonstrating the Finnish culture of rational melancholy (Lehtonen 2014). These case studies show that a relationship between language and culture exists in the possible ways of expressing emotions, which requires cultural lens to evaluate.

VI. Language, Emotion, and Social Interaction

Touch has also been found to be highly significant in interpersonal communication because it is through such means that people main channel of expressing, managing and interpreting their emotions in their relationships. Emotional talk or use of emotional language helps in expressing feeling, seeking consolation, making needs known and breaking up of conflict thus it is imperative in communication (Edwards, 1999). Thus, in emotional communication there is a special vocabulary that includes emotion words, metaphors and intensifiers that allow the speaker to express his or her feelings and to

receive the necessary feedback from the partner in communication (Goddard, 2011). In addition, I learn about context and relationship factors, as it is pointed out that they matter for the successful use of emotional talk, since the/or power difference, company's culture, and the history of the relationship can affect how the emotions are sent and perceived (Burlison & Goldsmith, 1998). For example, love talk, in intimate relationships might be frequent and expressive as compared to business relationships might be rare and less expressive. There is a need for Fine psychologists to form understanding on the subject of fine, emotional discourse for the sake of better interpersonal interaction and healthier relations.

Language is an important medium through which people develop and demonstrate empathy and emotional literacy whereby one is able to identify, appreciate, or authenticate, and meet the emotional needs of others besides him or her. The capacity to experience what others are feeling, as well as proactively identify, feel, and respond to another person's emotional state, common through language, thus acknowledging the feelings of the other person and responding in a similar manner, is referred as empathy (Batson 2009). Emotional intelligence which involves the ability to regulate one's own feelings and to effectively handle interpersonal relationship also has significant linkages with language, especially in the adequate labeling and interpretation of affective signals (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The nonverbal interactions are the active listening that entails paraphrasing, and other forms of reflection, and labeling of emotions which makes the receiver feel that someone understands them (Goleman, 1995). Furthermore, language facilitates emotional self-regulation – one of the components of emotional intelligence – since it enables people to verbalize their feelings, find a different perspective on a problem and tell this to others. Generalizing the use of language in empathy and the aspect of emotional intelligence strengthens the significance of language in social relations and provision of proper emotional health.

In recent years technological advances in all fields of communication have affected the relation between language and emotion in terms of both pitfalls and opportunities. Since nonverbal cues are way less or sometimes completely non-existent in digital platforms,

language becomes the only medium through which emotions can be expressed, hence the choice of words, punctuation, and even use of emojis are very vital (Derks, Fischer, & Bos, 2008). Whereas, nonverbal cues involved when people interact face-to-face or over the phone can be unintentional due to the spontaneity of the conversation, asynchronous media provide deliberate construction of emotional messages, although absence of feedback and cues may sometimes become a reason for misinterpretation of tones (Walther 1996). Furthermore, digital communication also brought new forms of avatar and symbolical expressions including emoticons, GIF images and internet slang which made up for the lack of paralinguistic cues and even complimented or supplemented the feelings being conveyed over the new media (Baron, 2008). Yet, with the technologies of digital communication being new ways of expressing and regulating one's feelings, some theorists drew attention to the possibility to experience shallower or less intense emotions resulting from the constraints of written medium and online communication (Turkle, 2011). It can be seen that awareness of language and emotion in digital settings as critical issues for communication in the contemporary world.

VII. Implications for Mental Health

Language is one of the key aspects of therapy and counseling since it is a way through how the therapists and the clients communicate during the process. In therapeutic practices language enables individuals to describe feelings, to ruminate over ideas and to transform the cognition processes that underpin some mental disorders (Beck, 2011). CBT especially focuses on language in emphasizing negative thoughts and using words to counter them and replace them with better set of thoughts (Beck, 2011). Furthermore, the schooled practice of therapeutic meanings of narrative therapy for changes the ways in which clients compose and decompose their life stories and experiences; It has linguistic supports that assist clients to make sense of self-stories and emotions (White & Epston, 1990). This is because the language used in the therapy process determines the trust and empathy between the clients and the therapists that is very important in therapeutic processes as realized by Rogers (1957). Therefore, language is not a sign for

connection in therapy only, but it is also the vehicle for the process of regeneration and interpersonal change.

Communication disorders including aphasia, dysarthria, and pragmatic language impairment limit the elderly patient how to express emotions especially if they are frustrated, lonely or have a low quality of life. Aphasia which is a language disorder that arises from stroke or trauma to specific brain regions also presents significant barriers for the individual that frustrates efforts to express the patient's feelings or to discern the emotion within the speech of other people (Kagan et al ., 2001). Apraxia for example, is a motor speech disorder which may cause slow or non-progressive speech, and changes the pitch, tone and rate of vocal expressions and thus the feelings attached to the words being conveyed in spoken language (Duffy, 2013). There is pragmatic language impairment which may be linked to autism spectrum disorders which influence the way language is used in social situations and therefore the ability to reason when using emotional language is impaired (Tager-Flusberg, 1999). These disorders emphasize on the use of language in affect expression and furthermore suggest the importance of using language-based therapeutic approaches in treatment of clients with language disabilities.

Language is very important and is used as the main predictive factor of psychological disorders within any individual. Some signs and symptoms are manifest in the patient's verbal and nonverbal communication, speech, and narratives about their lives and experiences, and may include signs of depression, anxiety and psychosis (Andreasen, 1979). For example, language used in depression may be less diverse and more negative and the use of terms such as 'hopeless', 'worthless' or 'empty' in a conversation may be an indication of severity and focus of depressive thoughts (Rude, Gortner & Pennebaker 2004). Cognitive patterns in anxiety disorders can include over-concern and fear most often manifested through a high use of words associated with risk and ambiguity (Beck & Clark, 1997). Lack of fluent speech, syntactic and semantic confusion, and distractibility are also sources of psychotic disorders, where such thought disturbances are noticeable in the kind of psychotic language which shows looseness of association, neologisms, and irrelevant speech (Andreasen, 1979). Inclusion of language in the systematic analysis

within clinical sectors not only contributes towards the proper identification of mental conditions, but also facilitates the tracing of cognitive as well as emotional procedure of such, to foster the formulation of superior methods of treatment.

VIII. Conclusion

This chapter has given a detailed analysis of the complex interdependency between language and emotion as well as how language is used to facilitate emotion and at the same time is involved in the actual experience of emotion. Some important conclusions refer to differences in the ways that individuals of different cultures encode emotions due to linguistic relativity of emotion perception; it can be concluded that the available language resources may determine the ways how emotions are divided and interpreted (Boroditsky, 2011; Wierzbicka, 1999). Another area of focus was language in affect regulation and coping, demonstrated how one is able to speak or think through one's feelings in a way which reduces the occurrence of distress and enhances psychological health (Pennebaker, 1997; Gross, 2002). Also, it was seen how cultural differences and bilingualism affect emotional expressions, particularly how English and a second language are chosen depending on the cultural meaning and emotions that are involved (Pavlenko, 2005; Matsumoto; 1990). These findings reveal the interacting relations between language, culture and emotion, and highlight the importance of language as a factor in individual and social-emotional functioning.

Further studies ought to extend this line of research in demonstrating how language and emotions combine and operate in a complex manner, especially in today's interconnected world that is enriched by digital technology. One promising area of research is the examination of how technologies that make the human language accessible to machines, like the AI and machine learning, affect the emotion-use and perception in such communicative practices changing the L-E dynamics (Bender & Koller, 2020). Also the future studies of the Role of Multilingualism in Social Life, there is still limited focus on the emotional aspects of the multilingualism especially among the different social relations where code-switching may be attributed to emotional self-organization (Pavlenko, 2005). A second question for future research again relates to the interaction

between language and emotion as it regards the ways in which the interventions can fulfill the emotional needs of the individuals affected by the language impairment (Kagan et al., 2001). Furthering research regarding these domains will advance the knowledge of the linguistic function that is fundamental to emotional processing and enhance psychological and linguistic practice.

All the findings outlined in the current chapter have wide theoretical relevance within both psychology and linguistics, especially within the frameworks that focus on the role of language as the tool mediating emotional experiences. Common sense and the observation of how words trigger and calms people also supports theories of the cognitive nature of emotions and therefore Tilburg and Barrett's work support that basic and significant changes in language that is used has the potential to radically alter human emotions (Beck, 2011). Linguistic theory, however, has to say how it is that people in different cultures may use and experience emotion in quite different ways as the linguistic relativity hypothesis and cultural differences in the discourse of emotions propose (Wierzbicka, 1999). In addition, the hard and soft science of the fields involved indicate that there should be stronger linkages between cognition and culture in general, rather than a simple differentiation between the cognition of emotion and the culture of emotion; this may result in more comprehensive approaches towards processing emotions and thus towards the regulation of emotions and their expression (Lindquist et al., 2015). Such theoretical advances might be useful for any type of practical application starting from the improvement of intercultural interactions up to the creation of new therapeutic techniques.

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