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**Challenges and Opportunities: Probing Language Learning within Multilingual Milieus
with a Focus on Affect**

**Zorluklar ve Fırsatlar: Çok Dilli Ortamlarda Dil Öğrenimini Duygulanım Odaklı Olarak
İncelemek**

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ÖZET

“Duyguların insan yaşamının merkezinde yer aldığı ve iki dilliliğin duygulara farklı bir bakış açısı kazandırarak yeni anlayışlara yol açmayı vaat ettiği ve aynı zamanda eski tartışmalara önemli kanıtlar sunduğu” (Wierzbicka, 2004, s. 94) gerçeği göz önüne alındığında, yakın zamana kadar Yabancı Dil Öğrenme sürecinde yeterince araştırılmamış bir araştırma alanı olarak duyguların ve duygulanımın gizli doğasını incelemek giderek daha fazla önem kazanmaktadır. Çoklu dillerden ziyade ana dilde (L1) duyguların araştırılmasına yönelik uzun vadeli bir eğilim veya yaklaşım olması nedeniyle, yakın zamana kadar çok dilli bağlamlarda duygular veya duygulanım çalışmalarına nispeten az ilgi gösterilmiştir. Ancak küresel ölçekte devam eden çok uluslu göçlerin yanı sıra Bilgi ve İletişim Teknolojilerindeki (BİT) benzeri görülmemiş gelişmeler ve Pozitif Psikolojinin ortaya çıkışı, araştırmacıları ve uygulayıcıları çok dilli öğrenme bağlamlarında daha geniş bir yelpazedeki farklı duyguları araştırmaya teşvik etmiştir. Çok dilliliğin duygusal boyutlarının incelenmesine yönelik bu hızlı ilginin ve artışın son yirmi yılda uygulamalı dilbilimde neredeyse olgunluğa ulaşması şaşırtıcı değildir. Bu bağlamda, son yıllarda artan teorik ve metodolojik çeşitlilikle öne çıkan çok sayıda hakemli makale, dergi, kitap ve konferans bildirisi, ikinci dil öğrenme alanında meyvelerini vermeye başlayan çok dillilikteki duyguların ve duygulanımın temel rolüne odaklanmıştır. Duygulanım ve duyguların dil öğrenimi ve edinimindeki belirleyici rolü göz önüne alındığında, duyuşsal faktörlerin ikinci dil öğrenimi üzerindeki etkisi, çok dillilerin dil ediniminin duygusal yönü ve çok dillilik ile duygular arasındaki karşılıklı ilişki üzerine daha fazla araştırma yapmak son derece önemlidir. Bu makalenin amacı, yabancı dil öğrenim sürecinde çok dillilik ve duygular üzerine yapılan mevcut çalışmaları detaylı bir şekilde inceleyerek, dil öğrenenleri veya öğreticilerindeki duygulanımın karmaşık doğasını daha iyi anlamak ve çok dillilik konusunda gelecekteki araştırmalara yönlendirme sağlamaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İkinci Dil Edinimi, Çok Dillilik, Duygulanım, Duygular, İkinci Dil Öğrenenleri

ABSTRACT

Considering the fact that "emotions are central to human life, and bilingualism provides a new perspective on emotions which promises to lead to new insights, as well as to offer crucial evidence for the old debates" (Wierzbicka, 2004, p. 94), it becomes increasingly important to explore the latent nature of emotions and affect as an area of research that has remained under-researched in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) until recently. Due to a longstanding trend favoring the study of emotions in L1 rather than L2 and L3, which are languages included in the scope of multilingualism, the study of emotions or affect in multilingual contexts has received relatively scant attention. However, not only the ongoing multinational migrations on a global scale but also unprecedented developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the advent of Positive Psychology have prompted researchers and practitioners to investigate a broader range of diverse emotions in multilingual learning contexts. Unsurprisingly, this exponential increase and interest in studying the emotional dimensions of multilingualism have almost reached maturity in applied linguistics in the past two decades. In line with this, numerous refereed journals, books, and conference proceedings characterized by increased theoretical and methodological diversity have focused on the fundamental role of emotions and affect in multilingualism, yielding results in the field of

second or foreign language learning in recent years. Considering the determining role of affect and emotions in language learning and acquisition, it is crucial to maintain further inquiry into the influence of affective factors on L2 learning, emotionality of multilinguals, and the inter-relationship between multilingualism and emotions in the entire language learning or acquisition process. In this sense, the purpose of this article is to review current research on multilingualism and emotions, better understand the complex nature of affect in language learners or teachers, and provide more insights or directions for future research in multilingualism.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition, Multilingualism, Affect, Emotions, L2 learners

1. Introduction

In the field of research, 'emotion' has long captivated the attention of a significant majority of functional and anthropological linguists. However, the interest in 'affect and emotion in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)' among applied linguists has been relatively limited until recent years. Garrett and Young (2009) highlight that affect and emotion have predominantly remained on the sidelines, with the primary emphasis placed on the acquisition of knowledge and usage of the target language (p. 209). Consequently, the role of affect and emotion in SLA has not received sufficient understanding. Dewaele (2011) contends that only minimal attention has been directed toward the study of affect and emotion compared to other research areas in SLA. To support this claim, he references the work of Gass and Selinker (2008), where researchers reportedly allocated only a brief section to motivation out of a total of 14 chapters.

In the last two decades, there has been a relatively greater interest in affect and emotions among applied linguists researching L2 teaching. Arnold (1999) argues that increased attention to affective aspects can lead to more effective second language learning. Teachers, according to Arnold, must be aware of how to address issues stemming from negative emotions and how to foster and leverage more positive or facilitating emotions. Dewaele (2011) notes that the most extensively studied 'emotional' variable in SLA is language learning motivation. As emphasized by MacIntyre, MacKinnon, and Clément (2009), "emotions are fundamentally important motivators" (p. 47). Although attitudes and direct or indirect intercultural contact or communication are generally considered crucial to motivation (Csizér & Kormos 2008), MacIntyre (2002) suggests that attitudes alone may not be sufficient to sustain motivation. Researchers, he argues, should explore the emotions students experience during language learning to comprehend the distinctions between engaged and non-engaged learners.

MacIntyre (2002) emphatically suggests that a better understanding of emotions has the potential to elucidate situations where students endorse diverse orientations but lack the energy to act in various EFL contexts, either inside or outside the classroom. Against this backdrop, the primary objective of this article is to survey research across various disciplines concerning the interplay between affect and motivation in foreign/second language learning. Additionally, the study aims to enhance comprehension of the link or correlation between the emotional

climate of the EFL classroom and learners' achievement in L2, along with the latent interplay of sociobiographical variables influencing learners' emotions.

2. The Role of Learners in Shaping the Emotional Climate of the Classroom

In the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, educators recognize that boredom and anxiety significantly impede progress in foreign language learning. Consequently, researchers in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and language teaching have directed their attention to strategies that foster a positive and stimulating learning environment. The goal is to actively engage students and boost their motivation for language acquisition (Dewaele, 2011). Students are encouraged to tackle new linguistic challenges that align with their evolving communicative skills in a foreign language. Achieving this necessitates establishing an appropriate emotional climate in the foreign language classroom (Dörnyei & Murphy, 2003).

Initially, students' emotions are more closely tied to their peers than to the target language or the instructor. Dewaele (2011) contends that individuals are cautious in a new environment, experiencing uncertainty about what to expect. During the initial phases, they observe each other silently, aiming to avoid embarrassment and pondering their social standing in the new group. Concerns often revolve around language proficiency, with learners fearing potential disparities in competence. The initial classroom experience is marked by general anxiety, social anxiety, and foreign language anxiety, compounded by a lack of confidence, a constrained identity, and perceived incompetence (Dörnyei & Murphy, 2003).

Bown (2009) conducted a longitudinal study, employing a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews and narrative diaries, to explore emotion regulation in 22 students beginning to learn Russian as a foreign language. The study draws on social cognitive theory, research on intelligent processing of emotions, and emotional control in distance foreign language learning (White, 1999). Bown underscores the importance of understanding individual and social antecedents of emotions and the intricate relationship between emotion and cognition in SLA. The gathered data highlighted the pivotal role of beliefs and emotions in shaping students' social interactions, thoughts, actions, and decision-making processes. Learners' beliefs regarding their roles in language learning significantly influenced outcomes, while emotions impacted cognitive assessments of tasks, teachers, the learning environment, and self-perception. Relationships with teachers and emerging power dynamics emerged as crucial emotional antecedents in the personalized teaching environment.

Bown (2009) found that students' cognitive assessments mediate their emotional experiences, allowing them to apply cognitive abilities to self-regulate emotions during second language (L2) learning. She posits that intelligent processing of emotions can positively influence the language learning experience. Other studies have indicated that Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) among language learners and users are linked, to varying degrees, with higher- and lower-order personality traits, affective factors (attitudes toward the target language and language teacher), and sociobiographical factors (knowledge of multiple languages, gender, and age) (Dewaele, 2010). Adult foreign language users who perceived themselves as more proficient in the foreign language reported significantly lower anxiety levels (Dewaele, 2007a). However, among foreign language

learners, the scenario appears different. Marcos-Llinas and Juan Garau (2009) found that advanced American learners of Spanish exhibited higher levels of FLCA than their beginning and intermediate counterparts. They concluded that some level of FLCA may not be as negative as traditionally believed and may, in fact, contribute to maintaining learners' motivation at high levels.

3. The Role of Teachers in Shaping the Emotional Atmosphere of the Classroom

The cultivation of a positive emotional atmosphere in the classroom extends beyond the responsibility of learners alone. Arnold and Fonseca (2007) emphasize that teachers play a central role in fostering a conducive learning environment. On one hand, instructors must recognize the importance of structuring their discourse for comprehensibility, and on the other hand, they must actively create a genuine learning environment. This environment should instill a belief in the value of language learning, empower students to face linguistic challenges, and help them recognize the benefits of language acquisition (p. 119). The progress of a second language (L2) learner is intricately linked to the dynamic chemistry that evolves between the learner, the peer group, and the teacher. Pedagogical approaches and the classroom environment have been correlated with students' motivation levels. Relevant and engaging subject matter, coupled with non-threatening instructional techniques, contribute to a positive language learning experience, fostering group cohesion and reducing levels of foreign language anxiety in the classroom (Arnold, 1999; Arnold & Fonseca, 2007).

Teachers' verbal and non-verbal behavior significantly influences learners' perceptions from the outset of class. Ambady and Rosenthal (1993) discovered that students' initial impressions of teachers' nonverbal behavior within the first and last 10 minutes of class correlated significantly with end-of-year evaluations. Teachers displaying nervous habits or frowning during the initial meeting tended to receive lower ratings. Conversely, those teachers who scored higher were perceived as more optimistic, confident, dominant, active, enthusiastic, likable, warm, competent, and supportive based on their nonverbal behavior. Borg (2006) identified the ability to communicate freely and radiate positive feelings as a crucial trait of effective language teachers. This finding aligns with earlier research on effective teachers across disciplines, emphasizing their skill in creating a supportive and empathetic emotional environment (Ehrman & Dörnyei, 1998; Walls, et al., 2002).

Teachers can also play a vital role in alleviating students' Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA). Arnold (2000) demonstrated that visualization-relaxation training exercises can reduce FLCA and enhance the listening performance of advanced foreign language learners. Ross (2005) showcased the impact of formative assessment procedures on developing learners' listening confidence and transforming their beliefs about listening. Kramsch (2009) advocates for a shift from the traditional monolingual perspective to a multilingual one. Teachers should move away from the emphasis on instrumental or referential language uses dictated by monolingual speakers and focus on expanding learners' symbolic selves (Akdemir, 2016). Teachers should assist learners in expressing and interpreting subject positions that are

sometimes non-negotiable, recognizing that, particularly in multilingual encounters, the realm of the symbolic encompasses emotions, memories, values, and subject positions (p. 190).

4. Implications for Language Teaching and Learning

While it may be premature to draw direct implications for foreign language teaching from existing research, a range of tentative and indirect suggestions can be considered. Individuals relying solely on formal instruction to learn a second language (L2) face a clear and enduring disadvantage compared to those who integrate classroom learning with authentic interactions or acquire the language through naturalistic means. To address the limitations of a lack of authentic interactions, foreign language teachers can play a pivotal role by infusing various forms of emotional discourse into the classroom environment. This not only fosters a positive and engaging learning atmosphere but also contributes to the development of nuanced language skills (Takkaç & Akdemir, 2015)

Moreover, the recognition that the vocabulary of emotions and emotion scripts varies across languages and cultures (Pavlenko, 2008) underscores the importance for teachers to highlight distinctions and similarities between the learners' native language(s) and the L2. L2 classes that lack emotional content risk falling short in equipping learners with the comprehensive skills needed to become proficient users of the target language. Therefore, educators should strive to integrate emotional dimensions into language instruction, acknowledging their influence on language acquisition and overall competence.

In addition, language instructors need to be cognizant of the potential challenges posed by cultural and typological differences between the learners' native language(s) and the L2, particularly in the realm of communicating emotions. Research by Rintell (1984) and Graham, Hamblin, and Feldstein (2001) suggests that learners from cultures more distant from the target culture may encounter greater difficulties in identifying and gauging emotions in the L2 compared to their counterparts with typologically closer languages. The ability to discern an interlocutor's emotional state is paramount for effective communication, contributing to a heightened sense of competence in the L2 and mitigating Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) levels (Rintell, 1984).

Foreign language teaching, therefore, should strive to broaden the emotional spectrum of linguistic input. Beyond the literal decoding of text and speech in the L2, learners should be actively trained to interpret facial expressions, identify vocal cues, and understand body language indicative of specific emotions. This skill development should be contextually linked to variations based on the situation, social position, age, and gender of interlocutors. This holistic approach acknowledges the dynamic nature of language acquisition and aligns with the evolving recognition among applied linguists and foreign language teachers that language learning extends beyond a mere acquisition of a communication tool; it encompasses a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and emotional dimensions in interactions with L2 speakers.

5. Conclusion

It is obvious that the intricate interplay between emotions and language acquisition, particularly in the context of second or third language acquisition (L2 or L3), underscores the multifaceted

nature of the learning process. It is evident that the teacher's role is pivotal in shaping these emotions, influencing the trajectory of language learning and fostering an environment conducive to cognitive and emotional engagement. Proficiency in understanding and expressing emotions in the target language emerges as a cornerstone for meaningful social interactions within the linguistic community, ultimately contributing to the psychological well-being of the L2 user.

While extant research has predominantly delved into motivational aspects and Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), MacIntyre's (2002) call for a more expansive exploration of variables urges scholars to adopt interdisciplinary approaches and employ diverse research methods. This imperative extends beyond the realm of L2 learners, necessitating a nuanced understanding of adult L2 users who navigate linguistic landscapes with a rich tapestry of emotional and non-emotional experiences. Their metapragmatic awareness becomes a valuable lens through which educators can glean insights into the complexities of language use, self-perception, and linguistic practices across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts.

In harnessing the emotional and multilingual subjectivity of adult L2 users, language educators are presented with an opportunity to transcend the conventional notion of the target language as a mere communication tool. Rather, it becomes a dynamic platform for learners to cultivate and diversify their linguistic identities, fostering emotional and cognitive engagement throughout the foreign language learning journey. This paradigm shift underscores the need for language teaching approaches that extend beyond linguistic proficiency, emphasizing the holistic development of learners as they navigate the intricate interplay of various linguistic and emotional dimensions (Dewaele, 2011; Akdemir & İlhan, 2019).

As we move forward, future research endeavors should delve deeper into the nuanced dynamics of emotions in language learning, exploring the intricate connections between affective variables, cognitive processes, and sociocultural influences. By adopting a comprehensive and interdisciplinary lens, scholars can contribute to a more profound understanding of the emotional dimensions inherent in language acquisition, thereby paving the way for innovative pedagogical practices that cater to the diverse needs of language learners across different proficiency levels and age groups.

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