

Editorial

With this volume, we propose to join the discussion on the role of affect in the process of second/foreign language learning. We hope to make a contribution to academic, and especially linguistic, research which has previously focused mostly on cognitive aspects of language acquisition but also, at its best, on the strategies (many of them affective ones) necessary for developing language competence. In our view, emotional factors do not deserve the role of “the Cinderella of mental functions” (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 1), because the complex processes taking place in the brain originate in the interplay of affect and cognition (e.g., Duncan & Barrett, 2007; Panksepp, 2003; Paradis, 2004). Consequently we cannot be fully understood without attending to our emotional profiles. Like Scovel (2000), we also believe that “the great irony is that they (i.e., emotions) could very well end up being the most influential force in language acquisition, but SLA researchers have not even come close to demonstrating such a claim” (p. 140).

For this reason, the present issue of *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* has brought together scholars in the field of second language acquisition for whom one of the major concerns is the affective dimension of the acquisition processes. It discusses affectivity and emotions from various and very diverse perspectives, from those of both the individual and the community.

The description of the affective characteristics of young FL learners from developmental and contextual perspectives is the purpose of Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović’s paper, “Dynamics of Learner Affective Development in Early FLL.” Analysis of the affective profiles of three young Croatian learners of English as a foreign language validates the role of affectivity in the dynamic complexity of early FLL. Attitudes and motivation, as well as learner self-concept, enter into complex interactions with one another, and with contextual factors. Their curvilinear interdependence suggests that learner self-concept is a good predictor of motivated behavior.

In her article "The Material Culture of Multilingualism and Affectivity," Larissa Aronin introduces the concept of material culture and its artifacts (objects), demonstrating its significance in studying language acquisition processes as well as the links between affectivity and material culture. The discussion is set in the multilingual context of Israel, in the Circassian community, which constitutes an important part of the linguistic landscape of this country. Studying material culture offers a fairly new research approach in the discussion of affectivity in language acquisition processes, and Aronin is one of the first scholars to investigate this dimension of multilinguality.

Peter MacIntyre and Tammi Gregersen, in their article on "Emotions that Facilitate Language Learning: The Positive-Broadening Power of the Imagination," define and characterize emotions. They argue that "positive emotion facilitates the building of resources because positive emotion tends to broaden a person's perspective, opening the individual to absorb the language," whereas "negative emotion produces the opposite tendency, a narrowing of focus and a restriction of the range of potential language input." They therefore emphasize the role of imagination in building the L2 self.

The remaining papers focus on selected affective dimensions. The role of integrative motivation in the prediction of L2 achievement is the focus of Robert Gardner's paper, entitled "Integrative Motivation and Global Language (English) Acquisition in Poland." The results of his empirical study demonstrate that for older samples (15-year-olds), integrative motivation is a consistent predictor of grades in English. In younger samples (13-year-olds), it also contributes to the prediction of L2 grades. The research proves that integrative motivation is a multi-dimensional construct incorporating various elements which, playing differently, affect each individual.

In Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel's text on "Gender Dependent Language Anxiety in Polish Communication Apprehensives," the reader will find a report on a very interesting quantitative study on the influence of gender on language anxiety in a group of apprehensives in the context of a Polish secondary grammar school. The paper proves that secondary grammar school communication apprehensives, both male and female, do not differ in their levels of language anxiety, while nonapprehensive males experience significantly lower language anxiety than their female peers. It is a study which aims to fill a gap in second language acquisition research, as the variable of gender has scarcely been dealt with in a scholarly fashion.

Miroslaw Pawlak, in his article on "The Dynamic Nature of Motivation in Language Learning: A Classroom Perspective," reports the findings of a classroom-based study which investigated changes in the motivation of 28 upper secondary school students as a function of the tasks performed, the aims and

stages of a lesson, and a sequence of lessons over the period of 4 weeks. Analysis of the data collected by means of questionnaires, observations and interviews showed that motivation is indeed subject to variation on a minute-to-minute basis and this fact has to be recognized even in large-scale, cross-sectional research in this area.

We hope that the question of affectivity in second language acquisition will be of interest to a wide range of readers, both language acquisition researchers, teachers and learners themselves, and that the issues discussed by individual authors will add to awareness of and knowledge about what affectivity is and what impact it has on both general and individual second language acquisition processes.

Danuta Gabryś-Barker
University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland
danuta.gabrys@gmail.com

Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel
Opole University, Poland
epiech@uni.opole.pl

References

- Arnold, J., & Brown, H. D. (1999). A map of the terrain. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp. 1-27). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duncan S., & Barrett, L. F. (2007). Affect is a form of cognition: A neurobiological analysis. *Cognition and Emotion*, 21, 1184-1211.
- Panksepp, J. (2003). At the interface of the affective, behavioral, and cognitive neurosciences: Decoding the emotional feelings of the brain. *Brain and Cognition*, 52, 4-14.
- Paradis, M. (2004). *A neurolinguistic theory of bilingualism*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Scovel, T. (2000). *Learning new languages: A guide to second language acquisition*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.