

Socialising learners into emotion communication in a L2: Establishing a link between research data and classroom-based activities

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In this paper, we explore ways in which the results of our studies on emotion communication across cultures can be used as a starting point for material and activity design, within a language socialization approach. Starting from theoretical and pedagogical considerations, we will illustrate our rationale for material design, demonstrate some sample activities and suggest implementation strategies, as well as methods for evaluation.

Within the language socialization paradigm, learning a second language and culture is viewed as a process of socialisation into a community of speakers of the target language. The target language is thus a medium, a tool to access socioculturally situated meaning, as well as an end, in that “becoming a competent member of society” (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986:168) involves being able to use linguistic means appropriately in every context.

One of the fundamental skills that novices should acquire through language socialization is an ability to recognise cues to emotion communication in their interlocutors' behavior, as well as to express their own feelings in ways that are considered appropriate by members of the target group (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986). Given our research interests in the communication of emotions across cultures, we are especially concerned with these issues, and with the integration of research data obtained in this field into the language and culture curriculum.

While, in recent years, researchers and practitioners (e.g. Lo Bianco & Crozet, 2003; Moran, 2001, Kramsch, 1993) have advocated the necessity to integrate language and culture in the process of second language acquisition, relatively little attention has been given to emotion communication, especially through non-verbal means. Furthermore, much literature on this subject has focused on providing suggestions on how culture can be taught in the language classroom, while effectiveness research in this area has been rather limited. Through this study, we aim to contribute to filling this void.

References

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