

Foreword

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Emotion in Dialogic Interaction: Advances in the complex

Edited by Edda Weigand

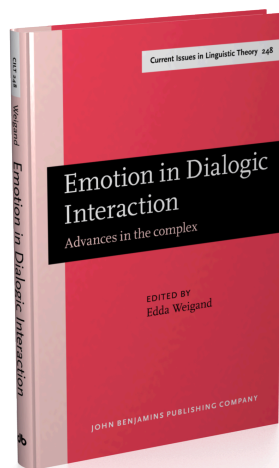
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Foreword

This volume contains a selection of papers given at the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop on “Emotion in Dialogic Interaction: Advances in the complex” held at the University of Münster in October 2002. Well-known experts in the field were invited from different European countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, Sweden) and from abroad (Canada, Israel). An interdisciplinary approach which goes beyond academic boundaries was guaranteed by combining different linguistic disciplines such as descriptive and historical comparative linguistics, general linguistics, linguistics of different languages and related disciplines such as psychology and philosophy.

In the literature, the complex network of ‘emotion in dialogic interaction’ is mostly addressed by reducing the complex and isolating individual aspects which are analysed from a specific, for instance, psychological perspective. The innovative claim of the workshop was to analyse *emotion as an integrative component* of human behaviour in dialogic interaction as demonstrated by recent findings in neurology. Human beings are purposeful beings, and they try to negotiate their positions in dialogic interaction. They cannot separate their abilities such as speaking, thinking, and perceiving, and they are inevitably influenced by emotions. The challenge of the workshop therefore was to address the complex on the basis of a model which is able to deal with the complex, such as the model of the Dialogic Action Game. Approaches which separate emotions or those which define emotions by means of simple artificial units were, as a result, not taken into account.

Human behaviour is in part culturally dependent. In this respect, the focus was on identifying a specifically European way of expressing emotions and dealing with them in dialogue. The issue of identifying ‘Europeanness’ necessitates comparing different languages and cultures insofar as it is the diversity of cultures and languages which makes up the general concept of Western culture.

The workshop was structured according to three thematic parts which form the structure of the present volume. Part I deals with the theoretical

issue of “Addressing the Complex”. My own paper on “Emotions: The simple and the complex” highlights the modern view of addressing the complex object of dialogic interaction by starting from the natural object-of-study and deriving an appropriate model from it. The model of the Dialogic Action Game sets up a new paradigm which is not restricted to rules but based on principles of probability. The focus is on human beings acting and reacting in complex ever-changing surroundings on the basis of their abilities. The minimal communicatively autonomous unit is considered to be the cultural unit of the Dialogic Action Game which integratively comprehends the essential components of interaction such as language, perception, cognition, and emotion, and includes variables of different kinds which influence human behaviour, among them cultural conditions. The key concept for opening up the complex of human behaviour is considered to be specific interests, in the end survival needs, and communicative, i.e. interactive or dialogic purposes.

The papers by František Daneš on “Universality versus Culture-Specificity of Emotions” and Světlá Čmejrková on “Emotions in Language and Communication” share this view of emotions as complex integrated phenomena and focus on specific cultural dependencies. Carla Bazzanella in her paper on “Emotions, Language, and Context” addresses the complex dependency of emotions on contextual, especially cultural variables. John E. Joseph in his paper on “Body, Passions and Race in Classical Theories of Language and Emotion” outlines the historical background from a comparative point of view and emphasizes the interrelationship between language, body and culture.

Part II focuses on “Communicative Means for Expressing Emotions”. True to the integrating point of view the verbal means were not isolated, for instance, as single words but analysed as means-in-use, words or grammatical categories within the utterance, or the whole utterance as means for a speech act. Karin Aijmer, in her paper on “Interjections in a Contrastive Perspective”, analyses minimal verbal units such as interjections as expressions for complex functions in different languages. Wolfgang Teubert poses the question “When Did We Start Feeling Guilty?” and deals with the specific emotion of ‘guilt’ from a corpus-linguistic and discourse-analytic point of view. A corpus-based comparative analysis of the vocabulary of “Joy, Astonishment and Fear in English, German and Russian” is given by Valerij Dem’jankov and his group. Maxim Stamenov, in his paper on “Ambivalence as a Dialogic Frame of Emotions in Conflict”, deals with ambivalent emotions in intercultural communication with reference to Turkish loanwords in Bulgarian.

Part III is devoted to “Emotional Principles in Dialogue”, i.e. cognitive means and the issue of how emotions influence the sequence of dialogue without being explicitly expressed. Michael Walrod emphasizes cultural differences in expressing emotions and, in particular, deals with “the role of emotions in normative discourse” among the Ga’dang people of the Philippine. In this way, the difference between European and non-European cultures is highlighted. The paper by Jörn Bollow on “Anticipation of Public Emotions in TV Debates” aims at emotional strategies in political media dialogues. Elda Weizman and Tamar Sovran interpret “Emotions in Literary Dialogue”, and Christian Plantin addresses the “strategic use of emotion in argumentation” by focusing on “The Inseparability of Emotion and Reason”.

Even if the workshop had a clear theoretical conception and was structured according to thematic guidelines, it goes without saying that not all papers completely follow the same lines. In a vivid exchange of opinions, many proposals and evaluations are brought forward. In general, however, the position of addressing the complex and of describing it by means of an open model such as the model of the Dialogic Action Game has been approved and accepted.

Concerning the issue of ‘Europeanness’ the starting assumption has been confirmed, namely that Europeanness is characterized by internal cultural diversity and that some sort of unity becomes evident only from outside. The general view of European identity as emerging from diversity gains more concrete profile. European identity however is only partly grasped by a view which looks at existing attitudes and features. As a great step forward it has to be created, not only politically but also by decisions in other areas, for instance, in the area of European law or management. As a result of the discussions it can be considered necessary to create and develop a joint European interest. The importance of interests which underlie all human behaviour is a crucial feature of the model of the Dialogic Action Game. They should be highlighted as a point of orientation for future research on human behaviour.

Finally, there remains the pleasant duty to thank all those who helped to make the workshop and the publication of the papers possible: first of all, the European Science Foundation which accepted and supported the project as an Exploratory Workshop. Additional financial support was generously provided by the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster and the “Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität zu Münster e.V.”. Moreover, I would like to extend cordial thanks to Jörn Bollow, the assistant coordinator, and to a group of students, among them Stefanie Schnöring, Andreas

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Edda Weigand