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Use of Emotion Words by Korean English Learners*

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The purpose of the study is to examine the use of emotion vocabulary by Korean English learners. Three basic emotion fields, *pleasure*, *anger*, and *fear* were selected to elicit the participants' responses. L1 English speakers' data was also collected for comparison. The major results are as follows. First, English learners responded with various inappropriate verb forms like *I feel~, I am~* while the majority of English native speaking teachers responded with subjunctive forms like *I would feel~*. In addition, L2 English learners used mostly simple and coordination sentences. Second, the lexical richness, measured through type/token ratio, was higher in English L1 data than in English L2 data. The proportion of emotion lemmas reflects the lexical richness or the diversity of the emotion words. Lastly, L2 English learners' responses focused on a few typical adjectives like *happy*, *angry* and *scared*. This structural and semantic distinctiveness of Korean English learners' emotion words was discussed from pedagogical perspectives.

[emotion words/lexical richness]

I. INTRODUCTION

As Oatley and Johnson-Laird (1998) points out, emotions are at the center of human mental and social life. Everyday conversations include some form of emotional talk. We are always engaged in attempt to express our own feelings and to evaluate and describe the emotions of others. Ability to express one's emotions clearly is one of the major functions of language. Bűhler (1934) categorized speech functions into expressive, representational, and conative. Most schemes (Jakobson 1960; Robinson 1972; Searle 1969) recognize that a speech act serves to express the speaker's personal state of mind or attitude. However, it is difficult to express one's emotion whole-heartedly. At times, we come up short, failing to explain adequately how we feel, or to understand whether

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our interlocutor is upset, frustrated, or simply tired. The task of interpreting, communicating, and describing emotions in a second language (L2) is even harder because different languages have distinct emotion vocabularies and ways of expressing emotions. (Pavlenko & Driagina, 2007).

However, English teaching in Korea tends to be less aware of the importance of teaching affect lexis while functions of delivering messages are relatively emphasized. This imbalance of instructional focus is reflected in various aspects of the language classroom. Emotion vocabulary is limited to only 8.8% of the total number of adjectives used in textbooks. (Lee, 2009). Most of those adjectives are value-neutral or less emotional. Thus learners might not know how to express their anger adequately in English or would not feel confident when they use emotion words. Further, ways of expressing emotions are different according to languages and cultures. This is the aspect that needs to be dealt with explicit objectives derived from empirical research. The goal of this study therefore, is to examine Korean EFL learners' use of English emotion vocabulary. Data gathered from the elicitation questionnaire were analyzed, described and compared with those of English native speakers to explore the differences in usage of emotion words. Also, Korean native speakers' L1 data were partially used to see if there were L1 influences on the Korean English learners' use of emotion language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Emotion words

Traditionally the mental lexicon differentiate between two classes of words –-concrete and abstract –- on the grounds that concrete words are more easily recognized, better recalled, and easier to imagine than abstract words (Bleasdale, 1987; De Groot, 1993). Emotion words are commonly grouped together with abstract words. However, Altarriba, Bauer and Benvenuto (1999) demonstrated that emotion words were rated by monolingual English-speakers as less concrete and lower in context availability[1] than both abstract and concrete words. This limited context availability might have to do with the difficulty of lexical processing like recalling an appropriate word in a particular situation. Also emotion words generated the highest number of different word associations, followed by abstract and then concrete words.

From a narrow scope, emotion words are distinguished from emotion-laden words.

[1] Context availability refers here to the ease with which a context or circumstance can be recalled for a particular word (Altarriba et al, 1999).

Emotion words, such as anger, joy, or sadness, refer directly to particular feelings. On the other hand, emotion-laden words do not refer to emotions directly but instead express or elicit emotions from interlocutors such as endearments or taboo to swear words (Altarriba & Canary, 2004; Harris, 2004). At present, research on emotion-laden words is in its beginning stages because this category is more fluid and open-ended than that of emotion words, with words gaining different emotion connotations and affective functions depending on the context. This study will focus on emotion words.

2. Use of emotion words in L1 and L2

Many studies on emotion words were aimed at bilinguals (Besemeres, 2004; Malt & Sloman, 2003; Pavlenko, 2003). Second language acquisition research on the acquisition and use of emotion words has been conducted recently and we do not have many studies to draw on. It has been explored largely from two perspectives. The first one focused on morphosyntactic aspects of L2 learners' emotion words. The second issue inquired was conceptual change or transfer of emotionality from L1.

Dewaele and Pavlenko's (2002) study is noteworthy for its scope. They examined five factors that may impact the use of L2 emotion vocabulary. They integrated the results of two combined studies and suggested that the use of emotion words in interlanguage is linked to proficiency level, type of linguistic material, extraversion, sociocultural competence and in some cases, gender of interlanguage speakers.

Pavlenko & Driagina's (2007) study focused more narrowly on morphosyntactic aspects of emotion words rather than general factors, as in the case of Dewaele and Pavlenko's (2002). They compared the use of emotion vocabulary by speakers of Russian and English and advanced American learners of Russian. In this study, monolingual speakers differed significantly in the distribution of emotion terms across morphosyntactic categories: English speakers favored an adjectival pattern of emotion description, and Russian speakers a verbal one. Advanced American learners of Russian shifted from the adjectival to the verbal pattern in Russian and thus began approximating the usage of native speakers of Russian. Besides, the data showed 6 areas where learner usage differed from the monolingual Russian corpus: morphosyntactic transfer from the first language (L1), semantic transfer from the L1, greater use of adverbial constructions, absence of a language-specific verb frequently used by native Russian speakers, violations of appropriateness of sociolinguistic register, and a significantly lower proportion of emotion word tokens.

Pavlenko (2008a) examined the importance of structural and conceptual equivalence in the acquisition and use of emotion words in a second language. Pavlenko collected data from the first language speakers of Russian and English, and L2 learners of Russian

and English. The results reveal that L2 learners of English pattern with L1 English speakers in favoring adjectival constructions in the same context where L1 and L2 Russian speakers favor verbs. On the other hand, conceptual non-equivalence was shown to complicate acquisition of emotion words and lead to negative transfer, lexical borrowing, and avoidance. The study suggests conceptual equivalence needs to be added to the list of factors that affect L2 vocabulary learning.

From the physiological and psycholinguistic perspectives, L2 users might be more direct and detached when they use the second language to express their emotions because they might feel less confident about their lexical competence. Further, they might avoid the emotional topic altogether. Speakers may have different vantage points from which to evaluate and interpret their own and others' emotional experiences (Pavlenko, 2008b). For instance, a Greek emotion *stenahoria* (discomfort/sadness/ suffocation) is typically accompanied by a feeling of suffocation, not being able to breathe, and not having enough space; this feeling is not commonly experienced by those who feel 'frustrated', 'sad' or 'uncomfortable' (Panayiotou, 2004, quoted from Pavlenko, 2008).

Dewaele & Pavlenko (2002) summarized several studies on different use of L1 and L2 in emotional context, and stated that L1 is used in the context in which the personal involvement is expressed while L2 is the language of distance and detachment. This distinctive uses of language according to the context suggest that emotion words should be treated as a category separate from other word categories.

On the other hand, emotion words are represented, processed, and recalled differently from abstract or concrete words. Emotion words are more memorable than neutral words by English native speakers and L2 emotion words take more time in retrieval than L1 words (Altarriba & Bauer, 2004).

To sum up, emotion words are different from other words in terms of physiological and psycholinguistic perspectives. In addition, emotion words show cross-linguistic differences in word meanings and in patterns of structural selection. Thus, L2 instruction needs to address emotion words from contrastive viewpoint to offer learners opportunities to examine how emotion words differ in conceptual meaning and how they are used in linguistic context.

Contrastive analysis has been gaining ground in second language acquisition studies as a method that helps ascertain the source of L2 learner errors, assess the importance of L1 transfer, and detect covert divergences in language use by L2 learners and native speakers beyond error analysis. Cross-linguistic studies show that emotion lexicons may differ in structural and conceptual organization. This study aims to examine the emotion words of Korean English Language Learners with focus on the structural and conceptual organization of L2 mental lexicon. Further through this comparison of list between

native English speakers, and the distinctiveness of L2 English learners' emotion words will be discussed.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Participants

This study involved comparisons between English of Korean EFL learners and that of monolingual English speakers. Thus, 10 native-speaking English teachers and 40 Korean learners of English participated in the research. To examine the uniqueness of L2 English or influence of Korean on the use of English emotion words by Korean learners, the same numbers of Korean college students were recruited to provide Korean native data. Thus, a total of 90 participants took part in the study. These learners were second year students majoring English Education. Native English teachers were teaching at the same university.

2. Questionnaire

Out of six basic emotion concepts (Ekman, Friesen, & Ellsorth 1972), three were selected to be examined; pleasure, anger, and fear. These three emotions were selected because they were thought to be primary compared to the other three emotions like surprise, sadness, and disgust. A questionnaire consisted of 3 descriptions about emotionally charged situations to which the participants were asked to respond. Written responses to the written stimulus made it possible to include more participants than the case of spoken responses to audio-visual stimulus. One of the difficulties to eliciting a written response was to provide the situation in which one could express their emotions not their future actions or plans. Responses like 'I'd complain about it' or "I'd lock the door.' were excluded in the analysis.

3. Data collection and analysis

The participants' responses were categorized by structural types, types and numbers of adjectives. Emotion words were singled out manually. Throughout the analysis, a distinction was made between word types (lemmas) and word tokens (lexemes).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Verb forms of responses

Question prompts were presented in the subjunctive mood. The majority of native English speaking teachers (L1 English) responded with subjunctive forms while Korean English learners (L2 English) responded with various verb forms as shown in Table 1. English learners showed various structural selections in L2 but Korean native speakers (L1 Korean) used Korean subjunctive mood ~halgutsida(I would feel~)'in the majority of responses.

TABLE 1

Verb Forms of Responses

L1 English (N=10)	L2 English (N=35)	L1 Korean (N=35)
I would feel~ 37(82%)	I feel~91(50%)	(subject omitted)~ Halgutsida, 112(88%)
	I'm~40(22%)	(subject omitted)~ Hada, 15(12%)
I would be~ 5(11%)		
	I would feel~12(7%)	
I feel ~3(7%)	I might~12(7%)	
	I feel like~10(5%)	
	I'll~6(3%)	
	It's~6(3%)	
	I'm going to~6(3%)	
45(100%)	183(100%)	127(100%)

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of a certain verb forms out of the total number of T-units. Although the number of participants is not equal and incomparable in terms of language proficiency, Table 1 uncovers the differences between the groups. English (L1) speakers mostly used *would feel~* and no varied form except *feel~*. Half of L2 English learners chose *feel~* and the rest of the speakers used several verb forms. Notably, L2 English responses included semantically inappropriate verb forms like *feel like~*, *I'm going to~*, or *It's~*. In terms of T-unit, L1 Korean data seem to be composed of most complex structures (Mean per a participant is 3.6) and L1 English (Mean=4.5) data show less number of T-unit than L2 English (Mean=5.2). In the L2 English data, run-on sentences and coordinated sentences were frequently noticed.

It is not clear what causes these differences in verb forms between English L1 and L2 but it is clear that it is not L1 influence because most Korean L1 speakers used *would feel* ~pattern as seen in Table 1.

2. Types of emotion words

In this section, the uses of emotional words are compared by groups. L1 Korean data is not included in the analysis because providing exact equivalences for Korean emotional words raised another complex issue. L1 Korean data referred to when distinctiveness of L2 English data were described.

TABLE 2

Size and Lexical Richness of L1 English and L2 English data

	Number of words	Number of emotion word type	Number of emotion word tokens	Lexical richness of the emotion lexicon(TTR)
L1 English	619	19	38	0.5
N=10	M=61.9	M=1.9	M=3.8	
L2 English	1281	32	155	0.2
N=35	M=36.6	M=0.9	M=4.4	

Table 2 summarizes the comparison of the responses in terms of size and lexical richness. L1 English speakers produced longer sentences than L2 English learners. In terms of emotion words, the mean of emotion word types was higher in L1 English data than L2 English data, but the frequency of emotion word tokens was higher in L2 English data. This means lexical richness, measured through type/token ratio, was higher in L1 English data than in L2 English data. The proportion of emotion lemmas reflects the lexical richness or the diversity of the emotion words.

1) PLEASURE

To the first question, L2 English learners used 12 types and 54 tokens of words to express PLEASURE. Compared to L1 English speakers, L2 English speakers produced somewhat short sentences and a less varied type of emotion words as seen in Table 3. The lexical richness of the emotion words is higher in L1 English data. That is, native

TABLE 3

Size and Lexical Richness in Expressing PLEASURE

	Number of words	Number of emotion word type	Number of emotion word tokens	Lexical richness of the emotion lexicon(TTR)
L1 English	186	7	17	0.41
N=10	M=18.6	M=0.7	M=1.7	
L2 English	443	12	54	0.22
N=35	M=12.7	M=0.3	M=1.5	

English speakers used a wider variety of emotion words than Korean English learners. The selected words were mostly adjectives and sometimes nouns were used as in *I feel great joy*.

However, in terms of the prominent emotion type, L2 English learners show considerable differences. Most of all, *happy* was used in half of L2 English responses and the other emotion words were used a few times or just once. On the other hand, one third of the responses converged on *relieved (relief*) and *happy* and *elated* followed as shown in Table 4. It is likely that L2 learners and L1 speakers respond with different emotions to the same situation.

TABLE 4

Types of Emotion Words (PLEASURE)

L1 English	L2 English
Relieved/relief(5)	happy(24)
happy(4)	proud of(7)
elated(3)	satisfied(4)
satisfied(2)	excited(3),good(3)
Pride(1)	relieved(2)
Nervous(1)	Empty(1), comfortable(1), pleased(1)
Delightful(1)	Surprised(1), joy(1), accomplished(1)

Besides differences in choosing emotion lemma, L2 learners of English produced distinctive expressions which were not found in L1 English data. They used similes to express PLEASURE as seen in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Similes for PLEASURE

L2 English
(a) feel as if I fly in the sky (2)
(b) feel like whole the things in the world are mine(1)
(c) feel like I'm the best person in the world(1)
(d) feeling top of the world(1)
(e) feel like floating over cloud(1)

Expressions like (a) or (d) are variations of target-like forms. Expressions (b) and (c) displayed L1 influence. Instance (e) has a different meaning from PLEASURE. Although the frequency of these instances was not high, they might cause intercultural miscommunication. The above instances have problems in structure of verb forms and at the same time in semantic meanings. According to Pavlenko (2008), semantic or

conceptual non-equivalence rather than structural non-equivalence complicates the target-like acquisition.

2) ANGER

Table 6 summarizes the results in terms of frequency and lexical richness of emotion words expressing ANGER. In terms of the sentence length, both groups produced longer sentences than the other two cases. The table shows that L1 English speakers used one emotion token per a participant but they responded at length. That means L1 English speakers provided the explanations about their emotional state or feelings as follows; *I'd be very upset in that situation however if they thought that I was keeping something from them or seeing their girlfriend, I could and would understand but if it was for no reason I would ask them to move out or I would*. L1 English speakers tended to elaborate their feelings by adding explanations while L2 English learners emphasize their feelings through coordinating emotion words as in *I'll angry and I'll be disappointed at my roommate*. It appears that, for a number of reasons, less proficient L2 users may use fewer emotion words in their L2 and, as a result, sound less elaborate and more detached (Bond & Lai, 1986; Rintell, 1984, 1990)

TABLE 6

Size and Lexical Richness in Expressing ANGER

	Number of words	Number of emotion word types	Number of emotion word tokens	Lexical richness of the emotion lexicon(TTR)
L1 English	252	7	10	0.7
N=10	M=25.2	M=0.7	M=1.0	
L2 English	462	11	52	0.21
N=35	M=13.2	M=0.3	M=1.5	

In terms of the type of emotion words, English L2 data focused on *angry* while English L1 data displayed one token of *angry*. Probably, from a cognitive perspective, words that are most frequently used or that have most recently been used will be more likely to be retrieved. L2 learners of English combined *angry* with other verbs or adjectives as in the sentences like *I feel angry and I'll dislike her*, or *I feel angry and uncomfortable*. This prominent use of the same emotion word lowered the lexical richness. In this way, the proportion of emotion word tokens reflects the level of syntactic complexity in responses. English L1 data show no dominant adjective as seen in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Types of Emotion Words (ANGER)

L1 English	L2 English
disappointed(2)	angry(25)
upset(2)	disappointed(7)
mad(2)	embarrassed(5), upset(5)
pissed(2)	uncomfortable(3),dislike(2)
Violated(1)	Irritated(1), confused(1)
Angry(1), curious(1)	Furious(1), stressed(1), unhappy(1)

3) FEAR

Table 8 summarizes the size and lexical richness of responses to fearful situation. Overall, the lengths of sentences were shorter and the number of emotion word types and tokens were smaller than the other cases in both groups. In addition, employed emotion adjectives show a significant difference between groups as shown in Table 9. The adjective *scared* occupying over half of English L2 tokens was not shown even once in English L1 data. L1 English speakers perceived the same situation as uneasy or curious rather than scary. It is not clear what causes this disagreement about the feeling and the intensity of it. Considering the fact that most of L1 English speakers were male and most L2 English learners were female, different responses might have to do with gender. Probably language proficiency and linguistic or cultural background could affect the results. Since very little research has been done in this area (Kellerman, 2001), we cannot say which one plays a major role.

TABLE 8

Size and Lexical Richness in Expressing FEAR

	Number of words	Number of emotion word types	Number of emotion word tokens	Lexical richness of the emotion lexicon(TTR)
L1 English	181	5	11	0.45
N=10	M=18.1	M=0.5	M=1.1	
L2 English	376	9	49	0.18
N=35	M=10.7	M=0.3	M=1.4	

TABLE 9

Types of Emotion Words (FEAR)

L1 English	L2 English
uneasy/uneasiness(3)	scared(27)
curious(3)	afraid(5)
nervous(2)	nervous(4)
horrified(2)	horrible(3), curious(3)
Lonely(1)	surprised(2), frightened(2)
	terrible(2), sad(1)

As we have seen in the size and lexical richness tables, English learners' level of language proficiency might play a role in use of emotion words. It would be too simplistic, however, to explain these differences simply through language proficiency. In other words, the frequency and the range of emotion words in L2 learners' writing were affected by their socio-cultural competence. Socio-cultural competence is the ability to identify, categorize, perceive and engage in verbal and nonverbal behaviors similarly to other members of a particular speech community (Dewaele & Pavlenko, 2002). It is possible that familiarity with culture-specific emotion scripts affects the choice of emotion vocabulary. L2 learners' responses tilted toward core emotion adjectives as *happy*, *angry* or *scared* because of lack of familiarity with English-specific emotion scripts not to mention general English proficiency including vocabulary.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that Korean English learners' use of emotion words are somewhat limited to stereotypical adjectives like *happy, angry,* and *scared*. Although they displayed various adjectives and verbs, these untypical ones were used just a couple of times. L2 English learners responded with inappropriate forms of verbs to the prompt written in subjunctive mood. Compared to L1 English speakers, English learners responded with shorter and simpler sentences. In terms of lexical richness, English learners' data showed lower proportion of emotion word types. In short, Korean English learners' use of emotion words differed from the case of L1 English speakers in their monotonous and less elaborate descriptions.

The findings of this study will have implications for foreign language instruction. It is difficult to say that language proficiency is the only factor affecting use of emotion words but probably language proficiency is the major determinant of use of emotion words. L2 learners would refrain from participating in discussion on an emotional topic because their perceived lack of lexical competence in communicating subtle emotional communicative intentions. The close examination of EFL instruction will reveal the factors involved in the vocabulary acquisition process. Probably a number of factors can be addressed; instructional methods, the amount of emotion words in input, explicitness of explanation on the word meanings etc. Overuse of over generalized emotion words will result in underrepresentation of the user's emotion. The present study is a preliminary one but it could provide the first step in investigating the above factors in future research.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

***Read the following and express how you would feel in the situation described.

1. You've studied very hard for two years to pass a certain examination. Now you've just found out that you passed the test.

2. You live in a dormitory. You share a room with one of your classmates. One day when you stepped into the room from the bathroom you saw your roommate read your text messages without your permission.

3. On a Saturday night, you're having a fun time with your friends at a remote village. You are alone while your friends go out for groceries and you hear some horrible sound from outside.

Examples in : English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable levels: Secondary, College

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