Introduction

The body in description of emotion

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Anthropologists and linguists have long been aware that the body is explicitly referred to in conventional description of emotion in languages around the world. There is abundant linguistic data showing expression of emotions in terms of their imagined "locus" in the physical body. The most important methodological issue in the study of emotions is language, for the ways people talk give us access to "folk descriptions" of the emotions. "Technical terminology", whether based on English or otherwise, is not excluded from this "folk" status. It may appear to be safely "scientific" and thus culturally neutral, but in fact it is not: technical English is a variety of English and reflects, to some extent, culture-specific ways of thinking (and categorising) associated with the English language. People — as researchers studying other people, or as people in real-life social association — cannot directly access the emotional experience of others, and language is the usual mode of "packaging" one's experience so it may be accessible to others. Careful description of linguistic data from as broad as possible a cross-linguistic base is thus an important part of emotion research. All people experience biological events and processes associated with certain thoughts (or, as psychologists say, "appraisals"), but there is more to "emotion" than just these physiological phenomena. Speakers of some languages talk about their emotional experiences as if they are located in some internal organ such as "the liver", yet they cannot localise feeling in this physical organ. This phenomenon needs to be understood better, and one of the problems is finding a method of comparison that allows us to compare descriptions from different languages which show apparently great formal and semantic variation. Some simple concepts including FEEL and BODY are universal or near-universal, and as such are good candidates for terms of description which may help to eradicate confusion and exoticism from cross-linguistic comparison and semantic typology. Semantic analysis reveals great variation in concepts of emotion across languages and cultures — but such analysis requires a sound

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and well-founded methodology. While leaving room for different approaches to the task, we suggest that such a methodology can be based on empirically established linguistic universal (or near-universal) concepts, and on "cognitive scenarios" articulated in terms of these concepts. Also, we warn against the danger of exoticism involved in taking all body part references "literally". Above all, we argue that what is needed is a combination of empirical cross-linguistic investigations and a theoretical and methodological awareness, recognising the impossibility of exploring other people's emotions without keeping language in focus: both as an object and as a tool of study.

"Emotions" combine feelings, thoughts and bodily events/processes in complex ways. The role of the body in emotion has commonly been a subject of clinical research, but it has less often come into discussion of the semantics and pragmatics of how languages encode ideas about emotion. Apart from well known work on "metaphor", concentrating on English, there is relatively little data available on how the body enters into the linguistics of emotion.[1] The issues include polysemy relations among emotion-related concepts and body-related concepts, meaning extensions (by metaphor or metonymy) in the vocabulary of emotion, idiomatic phrases and common discourse about emotional experience, folk theory and description of exactly what goes on in the body when emotions occur.

The question we address in this volume is this: How do speakers of the world's languages refer to the body in talking about emotions?

1. On methodology in emotion research

One of the most fruitful and empirically sound ways to investigate "emotions" in social context is to investigate their codification in linguistic signs and other semiotic phenomena. While much work on emotions has assumed that (scientific?) English provides clear and non-ethnocentric terminology for the description of emotions in different ethnolinguistic spheres, some recent research has questioned this assumption. It has been shown that most linguistic categories (words, constructions) referring to emotions in natural languages embody complex and culture-specific configurations of ideas about how thoughts, feelings, and bodily processes may be normally (i.e., conventionally, in a given social realm) related. English-language "technical" terminology is no exception, and it must thus be recognised that English-language descriptions of

emotion are also "folk descriptions", not culture-independent. This makes data from all languages equally valid and valuable in informing our understanding of the complex relationships inherent in ideas of emotions. It is then necessary to understand, compare and contrast as wide a range as possible of the various "folk descriptions" of emotions which the rest of the world's languages allow us access to. In particular, data on how speakers refer to the body in their talk about emotions will be a valuable addition to the limited corpus of broad cross-linguistic data on the linguistics of emotion.

The idea that English words and expressions used for describing and discussing emotions are language-specific, and that the construals of human emotional life reflected in them are culture-dependent, has been around for many years (suffice it to recall the provocative title of Catherine Lutz's 1985 paper: "Ethnopsychology compared to what?"). In recent years, however, there has been some backlash against this idea. The unconstrained use of the English lexicon in the discussions of "human emotions" has been defended in the name of the tenet that nothing we ever say can be truly culture-independent, and that, consequently, the search for a universal, global perspective on human emotions is misconceived: yes, there is an Anglo bias in using ordinary English as our metalanguage for discussing emotions, but this is inevitable, so we had better simply accept it. For example, Winegar, who proposes that emotions should be studied "in categories of social coordination", writes:

> I agree that it is not easy to capture a 'social interactive context' in a universal, culture-independent way. It is impossible. Facial expressions reflect and communicate feelings, as do linguistic labels for emotions, as do cognitive structures formulated in terms of linguistic universals. None is culture-independent (Winegar 1995: 271–272).

Winegar acknowledges, and deplores, the ethnocentrism of much of the current research into emotions, but he sees this ethnocentrism only in the amount of attention given in cross-cultural studies to American culture, and in the common practice of taking American culture as a reference point in the study of other cultures (as in "cross-cultural studies that are of the general form 'X culture compared to US culture'"). Other than that, however, ethnocentrism is, in Winegar's view, inevitable: "ethnocentricity is not always the same as cultural bias. I feel about cultural bias much as I feel about metatheory: we all have it and we cannot avoid it" (p. 270).

In our view, such a blitheful acceptance of cultural bias is too easy a way out of the difficulty. Even if it were true that some degree of cultural bias in the study of human emotions is inevitable, it doesn't follow from this that we

should stop trying to avoid, or at least minimise, such a bias. On the contrary: being aware of the ever-present possibility of a cultural bias we should watch out for it, and always strive for approaching — as far as humanly possible — a global, culture-independent perspective. The fact that "it is not easy to capture a 'social interactive context' (or anything else, N.E. and A.W.) in a universal, culture-independent way" does not absolve us from making an effort in this direction. The attitude "let us sit back and relax in our comfortable, familiar thought patterns, because we couldn't go beyond them even if we tried" is, in our view, unnecessarily defeatist.

What applies to "emotion talk" in general, applies also to the more specific linguistic phenomena on which this special issue is focussed: the relation between emotions and the body.

Current research into emotions can be dramatically improved by the contribution of detailed descriptions of emotion talk from as wide a range as possible of the world's languages. One purpose of this special issue is to contribute to current research by providing empirically sound descriptions — focussing on reference to the body — from typologically diverse and geographically widespread languages, with representation of languages of Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia, Europe, and Oceania. We hope that this provides an original and much needed cross-linguistic perspective on the question of how the body is referred to by people talking about emotions around the world, and that hence it will contribute to informed discussion of the human conceptualisation of emotions and of the relationship between emotion and cognition, as well as the place of emotions in the "stream of life" (to use Wittgenstein's phrase, quoted in Malcolm 1966:93).

2. The body and the emotions

It is now widely recognised that emotions are not merely "perception[s] of visceral disturbance brought about by a traumatic perception" (Solomon 1984:238). Rather, emotion is conceived of as at once cognitive and physiological, involving someone *feeling* something in the context of their *thinking* something (Wierzbicka 1999). As personal events, real emotions are individually experienced, but as such they are neither communicated, nor accessible to examination. In order to be communicated or examined, these personal events must be described. Emotions everywhere are put into words and talked about, and we want to highlight the importance in research on emotion of acknowledging

just how much of this work is about people's individual *descriptions* of emotions. While much work on emotions imagines itself to be studying emotions themselves, it in fact looks at the *description* of emotions as conventionalised in particular languages. This usually goes unrecognised and/or unacknowledged. Paul Ekman, for example, says he is concerned with "emotions" not "words" (Ekman 1994: 282), and yet English happens to label just these emotions, while speakers of some languages "don't even have words for" the emotions he suggests are universal (Ekman 1975: 39). We will have more to say below about the importance of linguistic evidence in examining emotions.

In this special issue we consider the matter of language and emotion by focussing on the question of how *the body* is referred to in description of emotion. We do not assume that "emotions as biological events are the same the world over" (Lindzey 1954, quoted in Solomon 1984: 238). This is because we do not view emotion as a purely "biological event". But we do assume that biological events *associated* with emotion *are* more or less the same everywhere. (It is just that these are too often taken to equate with the "emotions" themselves.) As members of a single species, all people experience biologically determined responses (to threat, stimulation, and so on) which are basically alike (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1971; LeDoux 1998). These most saliently involve vaguely defined visceral sensations ("something I feel happening inside me"). But it is well established that the *interpretation* and *linguistic description* of such responses, and the cognitive and cultural routines associated with these, are not universal or species-determined at all (cf. e.g., Rosaldo 1980; Shweder and LeVine 1984; Lutz 1988; Russell 1991; Wierzbicka 1986, 1999). And it is these culture-specific interpretations and descriptions that are not only the usual (though often unrecognised) *object of study* in research on emotion, but also the usual *terms of analysis*.

All the same, people everywhere are aware that their bodies (especially their 'insides') are centrally involved in the experience of emotion, and people everywhere explicitly refer to this, in idiomatic and other descriptive reference to emotional experience, and also often in core emotion vocabulary. So while experience and description of "emotion" is complex, culture-situated, and culture-specific, it is universally true that when people talk about their emotions, they often talk about what is happening inside their bodies — in their "heart", "stomach", "insides", "liver", "chest", "throat", "pancreas" or what have you. We consider it an urgent task to contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding variation in conceptualisation of emotion by documenting and examining descriptions of this kind.

3. Conceptualisation and description of the bodily experience of emotion

All people have internal or "private" experience of bodily involvement in emotion. As Rosaldo puts it, "[e]motions are thoughts somehow 'felt' in flushes, pulses, 'movements' of our livers, minds, hearts, stomachs, skin" (Rosaldo 1984: 143). Inside one's personal realm, one may experience or create a world of concepts and/or cognitive activities which remain private and ever inaccessible. We argue that emotions as internal events, being necessarily personal and individualised, are never communicated *directly*. What may be communicated is a *description* of that directly experienced phenomenon, and this is achieved in terms of publicly conventionalised signs, most often linguistic.

A simple but very significant point here is that people are not literally mind-readers, and in order to attribute and examine internal states of others, we depend on *signs* of such states. The point was made clearly by George Miller, half a century ago:

> To enter the domain of science, personal experiences must be made accessible, observable, public. Unless the personal experience is reflected by the person's behaviour in some way, it cannot be studied. If a psychologist wished to study your dreams, for example, you would have to convert them into vocal behaviour. Then he could study your vocalisations. But he cannot study the dream itself. One of the psychologist's great methodological difficulties is how he can make the events he wishes to study publicly observable, countable, measurable (Miller 1951: 3).

Accordingly, we adopt a "no telepathy assumption" — i.e., we assume that "no individual can influence the internal processing of another except by putting mediating artifactual structure in the environment of the other" (Hutchins and Hazlehurst 1995: 64). This means that when we conduct research into emotion involving anything other than direct scientific measurement of empirically quantifiable phenomena, the "inner event" we are interested in must be *interpreted by some individual* (with all their subjectivity), and "converted" into a form accessible to that individual's social associates. The experience is "put into words" — as Miller adds to the quote given above, "the device most often used for conversion from private to public is verbal behaviour" (Miller 1951: 3). A great deal of current work on emotion deals exclusively with these "converted" descriptions of inner experiences, but the conversion is often not recognised — there is often no recognised distinction between subjects' actual emotional experiences on the one hand, and the interpretations and descrip-

tions of those experiences, on the other.

We are interested in the aspect of cognition involved in conceptualising experience of emotion through linguistic categories. And this conceptualisation of emotion can only be *accessed* by researchers via linguistic semantics. To the extent that linguistic descriptions correspond to ideational structures which can be activated in minds when people say things to each other, we argue that by examining the meaning of what people say about their emotions one can identify and analyse conceptual structures. In saying this, we have a specific notion of meaning in mind, namely what is *entailed* by a given linguistic sign — for example, we make no assumptions about conceptual structures associated with pragmatic inferences, such as those which may arise from non-conventional metonymic or metaphorical "extension". It also needs to be emphasised that in our view meaning can only be examined in a precise and systematic way in the context of an explicit semantic theory and semantic methodology. Given sound semantic analysis, it is possible to ask how speakers conceptualise what they experience.

Crucially, from our point of view, sound semantic analysis must be anchored in empirically attested conceptual and linguistic universals (cf. Wierzbicka 1996; Goddard and Wierzbicka (eds) 1994 and In press.) Without some such universals — that is, without a set of shared concepts which can be used as maximally culture-independent analytical tools — the conceptualisation of emotions across languages and cultures could never be precisely and effectively compared: there can be no effective comparison without a *tertium comparationis.* As Goddard (2001) puts it, "any typological framework, i.e., a framework which enables us to identify and order the variability across languages, necessarily presupposes descriptive parameters which are constant and language-neutral, in the sense of not depending on the vagaries of any individual language. More simply, to describe and compare any set of things, one must have some terms...which are stable and equally applicable across the entire set of things being compared". We thus attribute great significance to language in the quest to understand cognitive aspects of emotion and other social phenomena. We also attribute great significance to empirically supported conceptual and linguistic universals, which can serve as a reference point in the study of language-specific emotion talk.[2]

4. The universality of the concepts "body" and "feel"

It is important to emphasise that the two key concepts in terms of which we frame our inquiry — "body" and "feel" — are themselves conceptual universals. To begin with the former, it makes sense to ask how people in different societies talk about the body, and how this talk about the body is related to talk about thoughts and feelings, because cross-linguistic investigations show that "body" itself is a universal human concept. This is not to deny that in many languages, the word for "body" is polysemous (for example, it may also mean "skin"). But while these patterns of polysemy (which are established on the basis of language-internal evidence) are language-specific, cross-linguistic investigations (conducted most intensively by Anna Wierzbicka and Cliff Goddard) suggest that all languages have a word for "body" which can be used in sentences like, for example, "the head is a part of the body". As pointed out by Goddard (2001: 15), many claims to the contrary can be found in anthropological literature, but these usually don't stand up to closer scrutiny, and are often refuted by the data provided by the same authors who have made those claims. For example, the anthropologist Gilbert Lewis (1974) (quoted in Wilkins 1996) claimed that in the Papuan language Gnau "there is no single word corresponding to English body". Yet as Goddard points out, Lewis' data shows that Gnau does have a word for the body. For example, Lewis (1974: 52) writes: "If the Gnau wish to speak of the remains buried to rot when a man or woman dies — the material element, the body or corpse — they say it is the *matilden* that they must bury... *Matilden* then is the word they use where we might say 'body'..." (For further discussion, see Goddard 2001: 15) It is far less justifiable to talk (as many scholars do) about different ways that people in different societies think or speak about the "mind" — because cross-linguistic investigations show that "mind", in contrast to "body", is not a universal human concept, but rather a cultural artefact of (modern) Anglo culture, denoted readily by a single word in English (cf. Wierzbicka 1992: Chapter 1).

Similarly, it is crucial, from our point of view, that "feel" is a conceptual universal. Since the point is often misunderstood, it is important to clarify what exactly we mean by this. First of all, it must be emphasised that the English word *feel* is polysemous, and that there can't be any question of all languages having a word fully equivalent to English *feel*. For example, English *feel* can be used in a sense related to touching (e.g., *She felt the child's forehead to see if it was hot*), and this use is certainly not universal. It can also be used in a cognitive sense related to intuition (e.g., *I feel that this will never happen*), and this is not

universal either. What we believe *is* universal is a very narrow set of contexts, such as, inter alia, "I can't feel anything" or "I have never felt like this".

In emphasising the universality of the concept "feel" and its role as a possible anchor for discussions of human emotions, we do not mean to deny that both the "amount" and the character of emotion talk varies greatly across cultures and societies, quite the contrary. It is by now well known that in some societies (e.g., in the "therapeutic" culture of modern America, cf. Bellah et al. 1985), people talk a great deal about feelings, whereas in others (e.g., among the Chewong, an indigenous people in Malaysia, studied by Signe Howell 1981), there is very little talk on that topic. Furthermore, in some cultures people tend not to talk about feelings as such but rather about people's feelings in their relation to people's behaviour and to social situations. Complex terms comparable to "rage", "rejoicing", or "grief", which link feelings with behaviour in pre-packaged ways, are often used more widely than any phrases focussing on the purely subjective aspects of experience (cf. Lutz 1988; White 1993). In fact, even in English, the sentence type "I felt happy" is a relatively recent phenomenon, as compared with "I was happy" (cf. Miller 1993; Ellsworth 1994).[3]

Occasionally scholars intimately familiar with some indigenous language and impressed by the limited scope of any "feel-talk" in these languages (as compared with English) have maintained that in these languages "there is no word for 'feel'" at all. If such statements seek to emphasise the difference in the amount and nature of "feel-talk" between languages they are of course entirely credible. If they are taken, however, to mean that in this or that language people can't express the idea of "feeling" (a person feeling something) at all, then in our view they are not credible. (For fuller discussion see Wierzbicka 1994:461–465; 1999:276–279.) In many, perhaps most, languages, people tend to talk about their feelings using words embodying semantically complex concepts, comparable to *sad* or *afraid*, rather than the semantically simple concept FEEL. In some canonical contexts, however, (for example "I don't feel anything") a word for FEEL is indispensable if the thought in question is to be expressed at all, and so far, nobody has produced evidence from any language that in that language the thought "I don't feel anything" cannot be expressed. On the contrary, when presented with canonical sentences of this kind, researchers (and their native-speaker consultants) produce semantically equivalent sentences quite readily. Indeed, if the speakers of Ifaluk, Chewong or Oneida were really unable to express such thoughts, there would be an unbridgeable gulf between their cognitive world and that of speakers of other languages who do have a concept of "feel". In our view, no evidence of such an

unbridgeable gulf has ever been offered.[4]

Ultimately, what is at issue here is the question of our common humanity. Consider, for example, the following sentence from a blues song: "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child". It is easy to believe the Chewong, the Ifaluk, or the Oneida do not normally talk about their own, or other people's emotions in this particular mode. But would the scholars who question the universality of FEEL really want to affirm that the Chewong, the Ifaluk, or the Oneida could neither conceive nor comprehend the thought expressed in the words "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child"? Presumably not. And yet the speakers of a hypothetical language devoid of some exponent of the concept FEEL could indeed neither conceive nor comprehend such a thought — they just wouldn't have the necessary cognitive and linguistic resources. The understanding of this thought depends not only on one's ability to imagine how a "motherless child" might feel, but also on the availability of some linguistic exponents for the concepts "I", "feel", and "like", and of the combination "I feel like this". (For fuller discussion of the distinction between the availability of certain cognitive and linguistic resources in a given culture and their use, see Wierzbicka 1996: 209–210; see also Harkins and Wierzbicka 2001)

When, for example, Catherine Lutz (1985) says that Ifaluk doesn't have a word for "feel" (distinct from the word for "think") this doesn't stop her from discussing the "Ifaluk emotions" and the "Ifaluk conceptualisation of emotions". She is right: although Ifaluk doesn't have a word for "emotion" her data show quite clearly that it does have a word for "feel" (*niferash*, a polysemous word, which also means "insides"), as it also does have a word for "think" (*nunuwan*), and also a word for "body" (*galong*; cf. Sohn and Tawerilmang 1976: 40, 194).

Thus, it makes sense to raise questions about "emotions and the body across languages and cultures" because evidence suggests that the concepts "feel" and "body" (in contrast to, for example, "mind", "consciousness", "perception" or "heart") do recur across languages and cultures. The variability of "emotion talk" in the world can only be studied on the basis of some shared, stable reference points. The universal concepts of "feel" and "body" (as well as "think", "know", "want" and "say") are among such reference points. They provide us, therefore, with reliable conceptual currency, which can be used most effectively in the universal market of experiences and conceptualisations.

Talking darkly of the "Dangers of universality in the study of psychological phenomena" and arguing in this connection against one of the present authors, Winegar writes:

> Not only each language but also personal experience imposes an interpretative grid, both lexical and grammatical. The cognitive scenarios (if they be cognitive) encoded (if they be encoded) into our words about emotions are evaluative and interpretive processes. [...] As Wierzbicka acknowledges [...], these interpretive schemes become part of the experience itself. Where, then, might we expect to find universality within these interpretive schemes? (1995:272).

Numerous in-depth studies of the semantics of emotion words (and other linguistic devices for describing emotions) have now shown that cognitive scenarios do get linguistically encoded (see e.g., Hasada, Priestley, and Ye, this volume; Goddard 1996b, 1997; Travis 1998; Wierzbicka 1999). The scenarios encoded in this way are not individual, but shared within a speech community; and they are often language- and culture-specific. At the same time, if these scenarios are formulated in universal human concepts, they can be compared across languages and cultures. If certain conceptual components (e.g., "I feel good", "feel bad", "I don't want this to happen") recur, in a demonstrable way, in the language of emotions in many cultures, this, too, can be shown in a precise and revealing way by means of universal human concepts.

Winegar (1995) attempts to cast doubt on the universality of linguistic and conceptual elements like GOOD, BAD, FEEL or WANT, or compounds like "I feel good" and "I feel bad", in the name of an a priori assumption that nothing we say (and therefore nothing we discover) can be truly culture-independent. Winegar's sceptical comments (referring, in particular, to one of the present authors) are repeated and seemingly endorsed by Kupperbush et al. (1999:31): "Winegar (1995) ...is somewhat critical of Wierzbicka's conceptual primitives, as they are also constrained by culture". But the assertion that the conceptual primitives "are also constrained by culture" is no more than just that: an assertion. No evidence has been offered in its support. Rather, it is assumed a priori that "one cannot ever avoid cultural specificity in studying psychological phenomena and that even if we could agree upon, for example, the universality of evaluation [i.e., of the concepts GOOD and BAD, N.E. and A.W.], we would not be able to avoid the effect of culture in our theory building" (Kupperbush 1999:31). This is a way of absolving oneself from the obligation to study emotion talk across languages and cultures and to strive to overcome, as far as possible, one's initial preconceptions and biases.

5. Meaning, conceptualisation, and intertranslatability

Returning to the main theme of this volume, it follows from the discussion thus far that if people of different linguistic groups differently describe the involvement of their bodies in emotional experience, then they also differently *conceptualise* it. This may seem like a strong claim, and we suppose that it is, but how far this claim goes is crucially dependent on the proper analysis of those linguistic descriptions. We insist that in every case, great care must be taken in settling on a proper (methodologically informed rather than impressionistic and ad hoc) semantic description.

We are interested in this context less in what actually happens in the body or "mind" when one experiences an emotion, than in the ways in which people describe and conceptualise their body's involvement in emotion experiences. While behaviourist psychologists long ago pointed out that people do rely on outward signs to infer and/or communicate inner events and processes (see the Miller quote above), they failed to observe that in interpreting the verbal behaviour which "converts from private to public" the events the scientist wishes to study, the scientist must have a way to attribute *meaning* to such reports, and therefore must have a theory of meaning in the first place. We would add that those who do link "emotion" with "meaning" need to bear in mind that meaning is not something that can be observed, reported, recorded, and measured, but rather something that can only be established by systematic semantic analysis.

For example, Moore et al. (1999: 530) set out to "collect empirical data on the meanings of a sample of emotion terms in Chinese, English and Japanese", and they do this by "eliciting free lists [...] of emotion terms from monolingual speakers of each language" and then "subjecting the terms to translation procedures". The authors conclude that "reasonable translations were available for all frequently mentioned terms and no term was eliminated because of translation difficulties". As a result of such eliciting, translating, and matching procedures the authors convince themselves that, by and large, emotion terms in different languages match and so must stand for some "natural kinds", like names of biological species: "These findings clearly refute the opinion stated by Shweder [...] to the effect that emotions are not 'really natural objects at all' (1994: 35) and therefore not subject to the same objective treatment as real natural kinds'" (Moore et al. 1999: 542).

Moore et al. (1999) deny that their findings are the outcome of their procedures: given the way they go about "collecting meanings" (as if meanings

were objects in external reality, like mushrooms) it is hardly surprising that they find some "natural kinds" of meanings, independent of the language and culture (just as they could find different species of mushrooms, independent of the language and culture of those who collect them). Their "victory" over Shweder is, we believe, an entirely spurious one, due to the superficiality of their methodology. When Shweder (1994) writes (with reference to one of the present authors) that "there are *no* emotion terms which can be matched neatly across language and culture boundaries, there are *no* universal emotion concepts, lexicalised in all the languages of the world (Wierzbicka 1992: 787)", he is not expressing an "extreme relativity view", as Moore et al. claim. He simply acknowledges the results of numerous in-depth cross-linguistic studies. Furthermore, Shweder's view that emotion terms in different languages do not match and do not represent "natural kinds" is in fact quite compatible with a belief in emotional, and conceptual, universals (cf. Wierzbicka 1992, 1999).

It is not the purpose of this volume to vindicate Shweder's view that — as in-depth semantic analysis reveals — the meanings of emotion terms do not match across languages and cultures. The validity of this view has been established in numerous semantic studies over the last two decades. We are interested in throwing further light on the different conceptualisations of emotions reflected in different languages. These different conceptualisations can be revealed not by getting native speakers to perform some behavioural tasks (as, e.g., Moore et al. do), but by systematic semantic analysis of emotion talk, across languages and cultures.

Russell (1994: 137–138) writes:

> We speakers of English find it plausible that our concepts *of anger, fear, contempt,* and the like are universal categories, exposing nature at the joints. One way to overcome the influence of such implicit assumptions is to emphasise alternative conceptualizations. And, I believe, the most interesting means to this end is to take seriously the conceptualizations (ethnotheories, cultural models) found in other cultures. Rather than ask whether a given culture agrees with one preformulated hypothesis, we might more usefully ask how members of that culture conceptualise emotions [...] There may be no short cut to obtaining the needed information. Although the task is great, what we know about the peoples of different cultures suggests that carrying it out will be fascinating.

The present special issue, building on cross-linguistic studies of the last decade or so, represents a further step towards the realisation of this task.

Understanding verbal behaviour *requires* the 'mentalistic concepts' that

behaviourists considered "a lapse from scientific standards and little more than plausible fiction at best" (Miller 1951:8–9). The relation of these concepts to the signs of language — words, for example — must be made explicit; and we believe that this can only be done in the context of an explicit semantic theory.

Let us now consider the relationship between language and conceptualisation. Two stances on the link between linguistic semantics and conceptualisation have recently been summarised by Levinson (1997), who says that some "see no reason for a distinction between semantics and underlying conceptual representations" (i.e., equate the two), while some "insist on a distinction" (Levinson 1997:14). We recognise that there are non-linguistic aspects of conceptualisation, and we acknowledge that care must be taken in attributing conceptual structures behind apparent communicative effects of language use, but we argue that a/the most fruitful "window" into the cultural mind is language, and that in fact other windows are always tainted, or reflected through the language window. Attempts to "represent linguistic meanings in non-linguistic terms" is an "escape fallacy" (Wilks 1988:235ff, Goddard 1995:350). As Goddard puts it, "[f]or the purposes of modelling linguistic meanings, there is no escape from language, and the problem of translation must be faced fairly and squarely" (Goddard 1995:351). Indeed, most research and analysis of "emotion" is just that — modelling of linguistic meaning. This is seldom recognised, and the very significant issue of language remains drastically underrated.

In most of the literature on emotions, the issue of translatability is either ignored completely — often because the research is conducted entirely in (and usually also *on*) the language of publication, and thus the matter of translation never arises — or problems of translation are simply considered negligible or non-existent. For example, Moore et al. (1999:541–542) claim that just as the meaning of the English word *happy* is, apart from "esthetics", the same as that of *glad*, so the meaning of the Japanese word *itoshii* ('darling, beloved') is the same as that of the English word *love*. Any differences between, e.g., *itoshii* and *love* can be ignored, according to the authors, as "connotative", because "the two terms are sufficiently close in terms of the kind of denotative meanings derived from the triads task [set by the investigators] that they are reasonable translations" (Moore et al. 1999:542).

Similarly, Fischer et al. (1999) compare "shame", "pride" and "anger" in Spanish and Dutch, and they assert that the terms chosen from those languages "have similar meanings" (Fischer et al. 1999:160). These researchers relied on a questionnaire, which, having been prepared in English, was "then translated

into Dutch and Spanish by native speakers of these languages, and finally back-translated into English". The results of this process were "judged to be satisfactory" (Fischer et al. 1999:161). (Not only is it problematic to assume that English words for particular emotions will have "satisfactory" equivalents in other languages, but also that "emotion" itself is a concept universally expressed — cf. Mandler 1975, 1997; Wierzbicka 1999, Chapter 1.) Goddard (1995) refers to identical methodology used by Aebischer and Wallbott (1986), for whom such translation and back-translation "guarantee[s] equivalence across languages". However, as Goddard remarks, this does not guarantee equivalence at all, but simply closest approximation: "Blunt tools cannot produce fine results" (Goddard 1995:326). But not only are these tools *blunt*, they are *ethnocentric*. As White has put it:

> ...the use of English-language terms to interpret non-Western emotions readily confounds ordinary and scientific language — a practice common, and to some degree unavoidable, in ethnographic writing. Many anthropological works that deal explicitly with the cultural patterning of emotion make use of English terms as if their meanings were transparent or unproblematic (White 1992:27).

The problem is even worse among works in psychology. For this reason, despite its scientific sheen, a significant degree of modern work on meaning and emotion is in fact not very "scientific" at all. The challenge is to be able to talk about emotion in terms which are as "non-monolinguocentric" as possible (i.e., which are least dependent on the interpretative system of a single language to the exclusion of others; Wierzbicka 1999; Enfield 2000a).

Some scholars realise the ethnocentricity of using *English* emotion labels for describing *human* emotions and can see the bluntness of such labels as analytical tools, but hope to solve the problem by retreating into *technical* English. For example, Van Geert (1995:260) writes (with reference to one of the present authors): "Anna Wierzbicka (1995) argues (correctly, I think) that a theory of emotion universals cannot be stated in terms such as 'sadness is a universal emotion' because the word 'sadness' has a culture- and language-specific meaning, and can therefore not be used to refer to universal meanings". But the solution that Van Geert proposes does not include the study of emotion talk in other languages. Rather, he suggests,

> It is very possible that the number of [emotion-related] physiological patterns is limited and universal, but that there is no universality in the corresponding subjective experience. That is, the universals are of an entirely technical nature,

> they require particular technical instruments and theories and do not correspond with intuitive experiential categories accessible to the layperson. [...] The emotions are experiential universals, that is, all people are in principle able to entertain a set of similar subjective experiences called the universal emotions. But the only way to refer to such shared emotions is by means of a technical language (Van Geert 1995:261–262).

The claim that ordinary people's subjective experience can only be validly discussed in a technical language (which means, in practice, technical English), is, as noted earlier, another form of ethnocentrism, as well as an expression of misguided scientism. Van Geert affirms that "it is highly likely that actual emotions are mixtures of 'basic' emotions, and that cultures differ in the way their recognised or conscious emotions are composed out of such constituent emotions" (p. 261). But why speculate about "what is highly likely" to be the case in different cultures rather than study these cultures empirically, through their own emotion talk? Because, Van Geert suggests, only an expert, armed with technical language, can know what an ordinary person (non-expert) "really" experiences: "what a person experiences is not a separable set of such emotion components, but an inseparable subjective unity. It requires technical expertise and a technical language in order to successfully entangle [sic] and identify the components" (p. 262).

There is no reason to doubt that a scholar who wants to describe other people's subjective experience in his/her own technical language (inaccessible to the layperson and untranslatable into the language that those other people actually speak) will be able to do so. But the goal of devising such a technical language and of formulating it in some "technical universals" is very different from the goal of getting insight into other people's subjective experience and their own way of thinking about it. Here, technical English will help us even less than ordinary English. In ordinary English, we can at least single out some words (and grammatical constructions) which can be rendered in the language of the speakers whose experience we are trying to understand — words like "good" and "bad", "feel", "want" and "think", "people", "body", part", "inside" and so on. Technical English, on the other hand, is totally unrelated to the experience of people in other cultures — or, for that matter, that of most people in English-speaking cultures. "Technical universals" of emotion (whatever they might be) cannot throw light on ordinary human experience and conceptualisation of experience. To understand this ordinary experience, and the way "ordinary" people think about it, we must pay attention to the way "ordinary" people talk; and to try to understand their talk we must rely on concepts "they"

(the "laypeople") and "we" (the "experts", the self-appointed interpreters of other people's "minds") share. In this task, simple and universal words such as "good" and "bad", "feel", "want" and "think", "people", "body", "part" and "inside" will be our most reliable, and arguably, indispensable tools.

In this special issue we are concerned not only with the problem of inter-translatability and the unfounded but still widely held assumption that terms describing "emotion" are equivalent across languages, but more specifically with the intra-linguistic matter of how expressions referring to the physical body are used in the description and discussion of emotion and emotion experience. For example, what does it mean to say, on the basis of linguistic evidence from White Hmong, that "the liver is the primary seat of the emotions, intellectual or mental processes, and physical sensations in the Hmong world-view" (Jaisser 1990: 160)? To consider such a claim, we now turn to the problem of metaphor, and other forms of polysemy, a problem which demands greater attention from scholars of emotions than is currently the case.

6. What can multiple meaning tell us about conceptualisation?

Words can normally be used in more than one meaning — they may be used "literally" (*She's my **mother***), they may be given novel extensions from their usual meanings (*John's such a **turtle***), conventional "extensions" from their "central" meaning (*He sold me an ounce of great **grass***), they may have two meanings with no perceived relationship at all (*John's down at the **bank***). While conventionalised "extensions" are in fact fully separated from their "source" meanings (i.e., they are separate entries in the lexicon), such "extensions" are commonly exoticised in the description of foreign languages, by being made out to be "active". A good example is Brugman's (1983) oft-referred to description of Mixtec "body-part term locatives" — a set of polysemous words with distinct meanings (a) referring to body parts, and (b) expressing spatial relations — whose meanings are described as being derived by active metaphor (cf. also Brugman and Macauley 1986). Among the authors approving of this analysis is Lakoff, who says that for Mixtec speakers, "To say *My son is lying on the mat*, you say the equivalent of *My son is lying the mat's face*" (1987: 314). Strauss and Quinn (1997) say that in Mixtec "spatial relations are described with bodily metaphors, and the shape of the landmark is important. So *He is on top of the hill* is expressed in terms of being at the hill's head, while *I was on the roof of the house* is expressed in terms of being at the house's back" (Strauss and Quinn

1997: 81). Bowerman (1996) says that "Mixtec has no prepositions or other morphemes dedicated to spatial relations. Instead, it expresses locations by metaphorically viewing the ground as an animal or a person and assigning a body part to the region in which the figure is located" (Bowerman 1996: 158).

Such polysemies are found in all languages, and we consider analyses such as those just discussed to be in danger of perpetuating a view of these expressions as exotic and unusual (see the Enfield contribution to this special issue). (Keesing (1994: 8) has rightly warned against "spurious exoticism", which he suggests is partly due to "an ideologically guided search for the radical alterity demanded by the relativising philosophies of our time".) There is nothing unusual among languages of the world about the lack or scarcity of "prepositions or other morphemes dedicated to spatial relations", and nothing unusual about terms for body parts being polysemous, with spatial or other (including emotional) reference. What of English *bottom* in *John's at the bottom of the class?* Is it that by saying *bottom*, English speakers must first metaphorically view the class as an animal or person and then assign a body part to the "region" (the "bottom") in which the "figure" ("John") is located? We are certain that fewer authors would be ready to make such a claim about English, a non-exotic language we all know well. As Keysar and Bly (1999) argue, "related meanings" of a single word (i.e., in its "idiomatic" and "literal" uses) are more likely to be first established as *separate* meanings. It is *after* two or more separate meanings have been established for a single word that a semantic connection (by "extension" or whatever) is attributed (by both speakers and linguists alike). In any case, it cannot be simply *assumed* that a plausible relationship between two meanings of a single word is cognitively or conceptually *responsible* for that single word having those two meanings in the mind of the speaker.

It is easier to assume exotic ways of thinking with regard to linguistic systems which are less familiar, or more "exotic". Keesing's view is worth noting: "More careful study of these supposedly exotic worlds of thought and experience, language and culture, and indeed, more careful study of our own will I think increasingly reveal that much of what is being taken as uniquely Western and modern is in fact human" (Keesing 1994: 18).

Goddard goes even further than Keesing in the direction of "de-exoticisation" of the emotion talk in various indigenous languages. Discussing the word *tjuni* "stomach/feel" in the Australian language Yankunytjatjara he writes:

> While I agree with Keesing (1985: 201) that anthropologists are wont to exoticise their subjects, I would not go all the way with him and assert that there is no real difference between English conventional metaphors about

> being "sick at heart", "heavy-hearted", "broken-hearted", and so on, and Yankunytjatjara talk of having a good or bad *tjuni* (stomach). I have argued elsewhere (Goddard, 1994:239–240) that, odd as it may sound, Yankunytjatjara sentences like *Ngayulu tjuni palya* (I feel good) and *Ngayulu tjuni kura* (I feel bad) in fact refer literally, not to stomachs, but to feelings. My claim is that the word *tjuni* is polysemous, and that in sentences like those just cited it expresses exactly the same meaning as the English verb *feel* does in sentences like *I feel good* and *I feel bad.*
>
> Identifying *tjuni* (in the appropriate construction) as the exact semantic equivalent of FEEL challenges preconceptions about the dividing line between literal and metaphorical language, and, I submit, highlights the fact that such decisions cannot be made in the absence of a coherent methodology for semantic description (Goddard 1996a: 149–150).

But of course it is one thing to "de-exoticise" emotion talk in diverse languages, and another, to see all emotion talk, in all languages, through the prism of English emotion terms like "happy" or "sad". (For fuller discussion of this point, see Goddard 1996b, 1997.)

The cautions we have tried to raise here regarding methods of semantic description apply directly to the main topic of this special issue, "The body in description of emotion". We hope that a range of empirically-based explorations of reference to the body in description of these private experiences will be an important addition to the literature on the ethnography of emotion, and also, to interdisciplinary research into human emotions in general.

Notes

1. Note must be taken, however, of the pioneering work of the Russian semanticists in this area. See, for example, Iordanskaja 1986; Iordanskaja and Paperno 1996; V. Apresjan and J. Apresjan 1993; J. Apresjan 2000.

2. A set of universal human concepts which has emerged from extensive empirical investigations of a wide range of languages, undertaken within the so-called NSM (from "Natural Semantic Metalanguage") framework, includes the following elements (for detailed discussion, see Goddard and Wierzbicka (eds) 1994 and In press; Wierzbicka 1996; Goddard 1998):

Substantives:	**I, you, someone(person), something(thing), people, body**
Determiners:	**this, the same, other**
Quantifiers:	**one, two, some, many/much, all,**

Attributes:	**good, bad, big, small**
Mental predicates:	**think, know, want, feel, see, hear**
Speech:	**say, word, true**
Actions, events, movements:	**do, happen, move**
Existence, and possession:	**there is, have**
Life and death:	**live, die**
Logical concepts:	**not, maybe, can, because, if**
Time:	**when(time), now, after, before, a long time, a short time, for some time**
Space:	**where(place), here, above, below, far, near, on (this) side, inside**
Intensifier, augmentor:	**very, more**
Taxonomy, partonomy:	**kind of, part of**
Similarity:	**like**

These elements have their own, language-independent combinatoric constraints. For example, the verb-like elements "think", "know", "say", "feel" and "want" combine with "nominal" personal elements "I", "you" and "someone", and take complex proposition-like complements (such as "I think you did something bad").

3. Ellsworth (1994: 43) states, with reference to Miller (1993), that "the term *feel* was not generally used to refer to emotional states ('feel sad', 'feel ashamed') until the nineteenth century. Before that, one simply *was* sad or ashamed and 'feel something' typically meant to touch it". From this, Ellsworth draws the conclusion that "the phrase that Wierzbicka commonly uses in her prototypical scenarios — 'X feels something' — was not emotionally meaningful in English until recently". In fact, however, Ellsworth is mistaken on this point, as the following quotes from Shakespeare (Spevack 1968, vol. iv: 999) testify:

> I feel such sharp dissension in my heart...
> I feel remorse in myself with his words.
> And I feel within me a peace above all earthly...
> Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel.
> But I must also feel it as a man.
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel.
> Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

The variability of "emotion talk" across epochs, languages and cultures is very great indeed, but it is not true that there are no constants at all; and if there were no constant, we would have no tools for comparison.

4. In this special issue, the paper by Karin Michelson raises some doubts about the existence of a word for "feel" in Oneida. On our reading of her data, however, the verb *-attok-* is a perfectly satisfactory exponent of the universal concept FEEL. It is used in sentences such as "I don't feel anything", and it is not restricted to sensations (bodily feelings); as Michelson notes, it can also refer to "mental awareness". Oneida is an excellent example of a language where the character of the "feel-talk" is really very different from English. But it is not incommensurable: despite their language-specific patterns of polysemy, words like *-attok-*

and *feel* provide a common measure. Despite the long tradition, and wide practice, of relying on technical English as a metalanguage for talking about human cognition and emotion (cf. e.g. Van Geert 1995), it is not technical English words and expressions like "mental awareness", "sensation" or "perception" which provide us with a "common measure", but simple words like "feel", "think", and "body" (in the sense specified, in each case, not through definitions but through some canonical sentences).

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