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## EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE THE CHOICE OF A NON-NATIVE LANGUAGE WHILE EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

The present contribution is concerned with the expression of emotions in a foreign language. It seeks to investigate what factors among gender, educational level, exposure to a foreign language and culture, L2 use, length of stay in a foreign country, or self-perceived L2 proficiency might influence the choice of a foreign language for emotional expression. The statistical analysis of 102 Polish-English bilinguals and Polish L2 users of English responses to an online questionnaire measuring expression of emotions in a foreign language revealed that the L2 use, self-perceived L2 proficiency and frequent contact with the L2 were linked to the expression of emotions in a foreign language. The results of this study show the complexity of the relationship between language, culture and emotions, suggesting that the exposure to a foreign language and its culture might be the key factor facilitating the choice of a non-native language while talking about emotions.

### **1. Introduction**

Emotions are widely perceived as important in our life as they enable us to exist in a given culture (Wierzbicka 1992). We think, we feel, we perceive and at the same time we want to express our thoughts, feelings and perceptions, mainly because we want to share them with other people (Wierzbicka 1992). According to Rosaldo (1984: 304) emotions are “self-concerning, partly physical responses that are at the same time aspects of a moral and ideological attitude; emotions are feelings and cognitive constructions, linking person, action, and sociological milieu”. This approach to emotions shows that they are not isolated notions but an essential part of language and culture. Wierzbicka (1985: 145) argued that “different cultures encourage different attitudes toward emotions, and that these different attitudes are reflected in both the lexicon and the grammar of the

languages associated with these cultures". Such a view concerning emotions was adopted by number of researchers who sought to demonstrate that not only might emotion concepts and emotion scripts differ across cultures and languages, but also that some of these concepts are untranslatable (Anthanasiadou & Tabakowska 1998; Rosaldo 1980; Wierzbicka 1999). So, do bilinguals always choose their L1 for the emotional expression? Is it ever possible to express oneself fully in a foreign language? (Dewaele 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2008; Pavlenko 2002, 2004, 2008). There is no simple, yes or no answer to the above mentioned questions as the relationship between culture, language and emotions is very complex. Pavlenko (2006) showed that studies in psychoanalysis, psychology, and linguistic anthropology demonstrated that bicultural bilinguals may exhibit different verbal behaviours in their two languages and may be perceived differently by their interlocutors depending on the language they use in a particular context. For these bilinguals, and in particular for immigrants, the two languages may be linked to different linguistic repertoires, cultural scripts, frames of expectation, autobiographic memories, and levels of proficiency and emotionality (Pavlenko 2006: 27). Undoubtedly, bilinguals and L2 users do express their emotions in different languages and they are well able to express themselves in a foreign language. However, the question of when do we choose a non-native language for emotional expression is the main inquiry of this study. Namely, what factors might influence our choice of languages while talking about our feelings.

## **2. Expression of emotions in a foreign language**

Communicating emotions is a crucial social activity (Fussell 2002). There is an increasing interest in the perception and expression of emotions in a first and foreign language and more and more studies show that perception and expression of emotions in a foreign language is linked to various sociobiographical, cultural, and psychological factors (Dewaele 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011; Ożańska-Ponikwia 2011; Pavlenko 2004, 2005, 2006, 2011; Wierzbicka 1999, 2004, 2009; Wilson 2008). In one of the first studies on perception of emotions in a foreign language Rintell (1984) tried to answer a question whether L2 learners were able to perceive the intensity of emotions in speech differently than native speakers. She asked Arabic, Chinese and Spanish speakers to listen to a taped conversation in English and then to identify the emotion and rate its intensity on a Likert scale. The statistical analysis of the data showed no effects for either age or gender. However, a strong correlation was proved for language proficiency and a native language. Similar findings were reported by Graham, Hamblin, and Feldstein (2001). They asked their informants, Japanese and Spanish speakers, to identify emotion presented by means of a taped conversation. Once again, gender and age proved not to be correlated with recognition of emotions in English voices, but native language had a strong effect on it. What is important in these findings is that the perception of emotions in a foreign language might be linked to the

similarity of the native language to the non-native one. But what if our second language is typologically distant to our native one? Does it mean that we are not able to perceive and express our emotions successfully in that language? Or does it mean that we have to learn how to express our feelings in that language? Wierzbicka writes:

It is important to bear in mind that two languages of a bilingual person differ not only in their lexical and grammatical repertoires for expressing and describing emotions but also in the sets of 'emotional scripts' regulating emotion talk. (...) The testimony of many bilingual people who have reflected on their own experience shows that for bilingual people, living with two languages can indeed mean living in two different emotional worlds and travelling back and forth between those two worlds. It can also mean living suspended between two worlds. (2004: 101-102).

I never describe myself in English in a way similar to Polish (...) as the interpretation put on our experience shapes that experience, the experience itself is different. In a sense, then, I do not only project a different persona but am in fact a different person in my Anglophone and Polophone relationships. (2004: 99)

Similar perspective is often presented by translingual writers, that is, writers that write in more than one language. Such writers as Green (1993) or Todorov (1994) claim that while writing in two languages, the very same story takes a whole different shape. Green (1993: 62) writes that there was so little resemblance between the texts describing the same thing in English and French that it might be doubted that the same person was the author of these two pieces of work. Todorov (1994) mentions that some bicultural bilinguals face difficulties while translating from one language to another due to the untranslatability of some concepts. Similarly, Panayiotou (2001) writes that even some common emotion terms such as 'love' and 'agape' are not equivalent and may be untranslatable when one takes the cultural manifestation of the terms into account. There are more studies pointing to the untranslatability of certain concepts like English 'frustration' (Panayiotou, 2004), Russian 'perezhiyat' (Pavlenko 2002; Pavlenko & Driagina 2007), Polish 'tęsknota' (Wierzbicka 1992), Greek 'stenahoria' (Panayiotou 2004), Italian 'fare festa a qualcuno' (Parks 1996). However, the same researchers point to the fact that bilinguals or L2 users are able to learn new emotion concepts by means of immersion in a foreign language and culture.

Human emotional endowment is no doubt largely innate and universal; individuals' emotional lives are shaped to a considerable extent by their culture. Every culture offers not only a linguistically embodied grid for the conceptualization of emotions, but also a set of 'scripts' suggesting how people should feel, express their emotions, and think about their own and other people's feelings (Wierzbicka 1999: 240). In a very interesting study Ervin-Tripp (1964)

showed Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) cards showing pictures that have ambiguous content to French-English bilinguals who had lived in the USA for an average of twelve years and learned English primarily in naturalistic settings. They were tested separately for each language. Ervin-Tripp (1964) found significant effects of language on three variables: verbal aggression toward peers, withdrawal-autonomy, and achievement. She observed that in French, the picture elicited more verbal aggression and more withdrawal and autonomy than in English. The author explained these results through speakers' language socialization experiences and through the emphasis in the French culture and education on verbal argument and on withdrawal as a dominant mode of response after a disagreement (Pavlenko 2006:14). Similar differences in the emotional reaction elicited by the same story presented in two languages were found by Panayiotou (2004). Panayiotou (2004) elicited Greek-English and English-Greek bilinguals' reactions to the same story presented in English and Greek a few weeks apart. The story described a young man, Harvard graduate, who is working as a business analyst for a large multinational corporation in Boston. He is very ambitious, works late hours at the sacrifice of his friendships and family obligations, including his elderly divorced mother and his girlfriend. He claims that this is necessary if he wants to become successful and manage his own company one day. The participants were asked a question of what would they say to that man if he were a close friend of them, and how do they feel about him. The reactions were recorded and transcribed. The English version of the story elicited more understanding, presenting the man as the one who has to follow the rules to get ahead and as the one who is doing what is expected of the man his age. Greek version of the story elicited more concern and disapproval of his behavior. It was found that the two versions elicited not only different reactions, but also different cultural scripts, suggesting that the two languages were linked to distinct linguistic and cultural repertoires. These results point out that language might imply a certain cultural context. If that is the case, successful expression of emotions in a foreign language might be linked to the immersion in that language and its culture, resulting in a socialization process that undoubtedly facilitates emotional expression in a foreign language. Pavlenko and Driagina's (2007) study also shows that immersion in a foreign language and culture might influence emotional expression. They used a narrative elicitation of two short films in order to investigate the non-equivalent emotion words 'frustration' and 'perezhivat', which could be translated as to suffer, to worry, or to experience things keenly. They found that monolingual Russian speakers systematically used the term 'perezhivat' to describe the feelings of the main characters in the film, whereas American L2 learners of Russian and Russian-English bilinguals residing in the USA did not use the term at all. Nevertheless some of them borrowed the word 'frustration' into Russian to describe the main character (Pavlenko 2009: 139). This suggests that there is a possibility of acquiring new ways of expressing emotions by means of affective socialization and immersion in a L2 culture and language. Similarly, Dewaele (2008b: 249) suggested, with respect to

the Italian concept 'fare festa' that this could be learned only through a process of socialization and that second language learners of Italian might be able to learn to recognize such concepts only through exposure to Italian culture. In the same line Lantolf (1999) notes that immersion in the second culture seems to play an important role in the learners' ability to construct conceptual organizations and lexical paradigms that are similar to those of native speakers. Martinsen *et al.* (2011) researched the foreign language housing (FLH) as a means of exposing students to a second language. FLH as portrayed in their study consisted of students grouped by language and one native speaker per apartment which was to provide an environment in which students can improve L2 oral proficiency. FLH learners of French, German, Russian, and Japanese were matched with classroom-only learners based on age, gender, and proficiency. Both groups took a pre program and post program oral proficiency interview (OPI) and reported their L2 use. Results revealed that FLH students used the L2 more and made greater language gains than classroom-only learners, although differences across the 2 groups were related to the L2 they were studying. Martinsen *et al.* (2011: 284) found that the FLH students used the L2 more than classroom-only students and used it in a wider variety of tasks. Of particular note was the fact that they used the L2 not only in social situations and situations where it was required (eating meals, preparing meals, etc.) but also in personal time when it was not required (reading email, surfing the Internet, listening to music, etc.). Such findings suggest that the FLH provided an environment in which the students were able to explore and feel comfortable using the L2 in a variety of situations. So, is the immersion in a foreign language the only factor linked to the L2 use and the expression of emotions in a foreign language?

The notion of expressing emotions in a foreign language has been addressed by a number of researchers and writers (Hoffman 1989; Dewaele 2006, 2009, 2010; Dewaele & Pavlenko 2002; Pavlenko 2004; Wierzbicka 1999, 2004, 2009; Wilson 2008). Some of the variables, like language proficiency, gender, age, or sociocultural competence, which we focused on in our research, had been previously examined by Dewaele & Pavlenko (2002). Their first study considered the impact of language proficiency, gender, and Extraversion on the use of emotion words in the advanced French interlanguage (IL) of 29 Dutch L1 speakers. The second examined the influence of sociocultural competence, gender, and type of linguistic material on the use of emotion vocabulary in the advanced English IL of 34 Russian L1 speakers. In the first study students were taped while having an informal conversation, then the linguistic material was analysed as far as number of emotion lemmas (word types) and word tokens is concerned. Results suggested that gender, level of proficiency and Extraversion predict the amount of emotion lemmas and word tokens in participants' speech. In the second study the informants were asked to retell a short film showing violation of a private space (reading someone else's letter without permission). Statistic analysis was performed in order to find out whether first language background, gender, and type of testing material affected the usage of emotion vocabulary.

Language background had no effect on the production of emotion lemmas both by American and Russian monolinguals. However, there was a difference in richness of the emotion vocabulary produced by both of these groups, as Russian monolinguals employed 1.5 as many different emotion lemmas as the American group. Gender had an important influence on production of emotion lemmas as female monolinguals used more emotion words than male monolinguals. Type of linguistic material had a marginal significant effect on production of emotion lemmas. As far as sociocultural competence is concerned, one very important qualitative difference was found, namely many of L2 users when speaking both English and Russian behave like monolingual Americans, favouring the adjectival (typical for English), rather than the verbal (typical for Russian and other Slavonic languages) pattern of expressing emotions. It proves that the use of emotion vocabulary in L2 is a result of complex interaction of such variables as languages/cultures, language proficiency, gender, and context interaction (Dewaele & Pavlenko 2002, Dewaele 2004). In other study by Dewaele (2004a, 2006) suggested that the L1 was bi- and multilinguals' language of emotions whereas the L2 was considered the language of distance and detachment. At the same time, research carried out by Pavlenko concerning parental language choice in bi- and multilingual families shows that L2 socialization in the private space of the family may cause other languages to seem equal in emotional intensity to the L1 (2004: 200). It was also suggested that difficulties in expressing emotions in the L2 may lie in differences in emotional scripts and vocabulary of the given languages (Panayiotou 2004; Pavlenko 2008; Wierzbicka 2004, 2009). On the other hand, Panayiotou (2004) claims that what seems to be universal is the ability to learn emotions, acknowledge their importance in a specific cultural context and to adapt their use or even manifestation. In agreement with Panayiotou (2004), Pavlenko suggests that factors such as age and context of language acquisition, together with language dominance, mediate language emotionality, so that L2 users who undergo secondary affective socialization may perceive an increase in the emotionality of the L2 (2008: 157).

### **3. Research questions and hypotheses**

Previous studies suggested that emotions are dependent on the sociocultural context, are learned and determined by patterns of experience and expression, and bilinguals adopt (learn) certain emotions as they learn the sociocultural significance that they carry in a specific system (Panayiotou 2001, 2004; Wierzbicka 1999, 1997). It was also proved that some multilinguals might perceive the world differently and change perspectives, ways of thinking, their verbal and non-verbal behaviours when switching languages (Pavlenko 2006). On the basis of the presented findings the rationale for this study was developed. We will try to investigate which factors determine usage of emotion words in a foreign language. The following research question will be addressed:

What factors determine the language choice for expressing emotions? Is the perception and expression of emotions linked to such variables as self-perceived L2 proficiency, frequency of L2 use, context of acquisition, degree of socialization, age, gender or education? It is speculated that L2 use and the length of stay in a foreign language will be the key factors in expression of emotions in a foreign language, with participants who had lived in a foreign country for longer period of time choosing a non-native language for emotional expression more often than those residing in an L2 country for a shorter amount of time.

## **4. Method**

The aim of the present paper is to examine the possible links between the length of stay in a foreign country, L2 use, contact with L2, self-perceived L2 proficiency, context of a foreign language acquisition, age, gender, or education and expression of emotions in a foreign language. This paper describes only a part of a larger study on perception and expression of emotions by bilinguals and L2 users. In order to provide an overview of this complex phenomenon of understanding and expressing emotions while operating in a foreign language, an online questionnaire comprising of several sub-questionnaires was developed. The detailed description of the questionnaire items analysed in this paper is presented in the following section.

### **4.1. Questionnaires analysed in the present study**

1) Personal background questionnaire, measuring such variables as age, gender, self perceived L2 proficiency, age, length of stay in an L2 country, educational level, and length and type of L2 instruction.

2) The L2 use questionnaire, which scale was devised in order to measure the frequency of L2 use by bilinguals and L2 users in different, everyday situations. It consisted of nine statements requiring participants to choose between the following responses: 1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree. The items were: "I use English at work"; "I use English at home"; "I use English at school"; "I use English when I talk to my friends"; "I use English in everyday situations"; "I use English for praising"; "I use English to maintain discipline"; "I use English when I talk to my partner"; "I use English when I talk to my children". The scale was incorporated into the current research in order to determine the degree of socialization into L2 language and culture, as Pavlenko (2004) stated that together with affective socialization, the emotional intensity of L2 might increase. From the point of view of the present contribution, it is interesting to investigate how socialization into the L2 culture and language influences the expression and perception of emotions in various contexts in a language that is distant from L1 in terms of the cultural scripts necessary for expressing emotions (Wierzbicka 1999).



3) Expression of emotions in the L2 questionnaire. The scale items were: "I use English for showing emotions"; "If I happened to hit myself with a hammer my first words would be in English"; "How much do you express emotions in English?"; "How much do you argue in English?", and "How much do you swear in English?". For the first two items, respondents were to choose between 1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree and 5- Strongly Agree. For the remaining three questions, informants were to choose from the following five options: 1- Not at all, 2- Seldom, 3- Sometimes, 4- Often, 5-Very often. The presence of the two similar items "I use English for showing emotions" and "How much do you express emotions in English?" is justified as the first considers the use of L2 for expressing emotions while the second addresses the frequency of such use. The item "If I happened to hit myself with a hammer my first words would be in English" was adapted from Dewaele's (2004b) article on the 'Emotional Force of Swearwords and Taboo Words in the Speech of Multilinguals' where he notes that the perception of emotional force of swearwords in multilinguals' different languages is determined by several independent variables, largely related to the individual's linguistic history of how and when the language was learned, the general level of activation of the language and its frequency of past or present use (Dewaele 2004b: 219).

4) Exposure to the L2 questionnaire. It was adapted from Eilola, Havelka, & Sharma's paper on "Emotional Activation in the First and Second language" (2007) and comprised questions on the following L2 activities: read books in English, read newspapers in English, read magazines in English, read comics in English, browse English websites, listen to English music, watch films in English, watch English TV programs, discuss in English, give presentations/speeches in English, write letters/e-mails in English, and write essays/articles in English. Informants were required to choose an answer from a 5-point Likert scale of 1- never, 2- yearly, 3- monthly, 4- weekly, and 5- daily. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the 12 statements in the exposure to English scale equaled .872. Incorporating a previously tested measure of L2 contact was particularly important as it limited the problems inherent in creating an instrument that has not been validated and used before, and at the same time allowed for detailed scanning of the amount of exposure to a foreign language and its possible influence on the perception and expression of emotions in the L2. This is particularly important in the case of Polish immigrants as the length of stay in an ESC itself cannot be the only variable to determine the amount of exposure to L2 language and culture, as many Polish immigrants tend to socialize mainly with fellow immigrants, avoiding contact with English native speakers.

All questionnaires were used in a Polish version (informants' L1), to avoid comprehension difficulties in the L2.



## 4.2. Selection and recruitment

The sample chosen for the present study drew on a cross-section of the general population. Wilson (2008: 115) states that in a study of foreign language use, participants clearly need to be drawn from groups who are known to use the foreign language rather than a random sample of the population. However, the aim of the present study was to find heterogeneous groups of informants that would fulfill the following requirements. In the case of the control group, the requirement was not having travelled to or stayed in an English-speaking country (ESC). In the case of the experimental group the requirements was having stayed in the ESC for longer than six months and have used L2 on an everyday basis. The command of the L2 is very important but it was impossible to find monolinguals as a majority of informants had contact with the L2, as it is a compulsory subject in the Polish educational system. Nevertheless, the main focus was on the exposure to foreign language and culture rather than on command of the L2, even if they might be closely related. The informants of the study were recruited in different ways. Bilingual and immigrant groups were approached through Polish societies in Ireland and England. During the period of the survey, the researcher was living and working in Ireland, having access to the immigrant society both there and in England. Additionally the questionnaire was advertised among students taking part in exchange programs both at Polish and English universities. It was also advertised at various conferences and on the Linguist List.

## 4.3. Participants

The present study was based on data collected from 102 informants. Two thirds were females ( $n = 72$ ) and one third were males ( $n = 30$ ). The imbalance between males and females might be a result of the preponderance of women in education- and language- related professions (Pavlenko 2006: 7), as the same dominance of female respondents was noted in the control group that consisted of 70% females and 30% males. It could also be the result of the type and method of the data collection (using a web-based questionnaire whose distribution one cannot control). It needs to be kept in mind when interpreting the patterns, as results might be different for the sample of more balanced representation of males and females. The age of the informants of this study varied from 17 to 58 years with two thirds of the sample being in their twenties, 23% being in their thirties, and the remaining 10% being in their forties or fifties. More than half of the informants held a BA, 8% had an MA, 8% had a Secondary education degree, and more than one quarter reported receiving a vocational education. Concerning L2 proficiency, 1% rated themselves as beginners, 3% as pre-intermediate, 15% as intermediate, one third as upper-intermediate, and nearly half as fluent. Half of the participants had lived in an English Speaking Country (ESC) for up to 12 months, one quarter reported living in an ESC from 12 to 24 months, and the remaining 23% had lived in an ESC between 24 and 324 months.

### 5. Results

#### 5.1. Stepwise regression results

In the present study, a stepwise regression was performed to ensure that only significant factors are included in the model. This procedure intrinsically rejects any factors that are correlated with the already present independent variables, so the assumption of mutual independence of factors is not needed. The results are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. Regression results for the expression of emotions in the L2

	r 2	F -Statistic	p-Value
<b>L2 use</b>	.489	40.627	.000
<b>Exposure to L2</b>			

The results show that L2 use and exposure to L2 were the strongest predictors of the expression of emotions in the L2. Adjusted R square = .489;  $F(2, 84) = 40.627, p < .000$  (using the stepwise method). Self-perceived L2 proficiency, length of stay in a foreign country, education and age were not significant predictors in this model. The final model consisting of L2 use factor and exposure to L2 factor accounted for almost 49% of the variance (Adjusted  $R^2 = .489$ ).

#### 5.2. Correlation analysis

Since the stepwise regression pointed to L2 use and the exposure to L2 we have decided to perform further analysis in order to see whether there is any link between these factors and such factors as age, education, self-perceived L2 proficiency, length of stay in a foreign country and expression of emotions in the L2. The results are presented in the Table 2 and discussed below.

Table 2. Correlation analysis results for the L2 use (Pearson’s r)

	L2 use
<b>Expression of emotions in the L2</b>	<b>.676** p &lt; .000</b>
<b>Contact with the L2</b>	<b>.619** p &lt; .000</b>
<b>Self-measured L2 proficiency</b>	<b>.354** p &lt; .001</b>
<b>Length of stay in an L2 country</b>	<b>.222* p &lt; .035</b>

The statistical analysis showed that L2 use scores were linked to expression of emotions in the L2 ( $r = .676, p < .000$ ) but also to the contact with the L2 ( $r = .619, p < .000$ ), self-measured L2 proficiency ( $r = .354, p < .001$ ) and length

of stay in an L2 country ( $r = .222, p < .035$ ). Participants who reported frequent L2 use were the ones that also reported contact with the L2 on everyday basis, had high self-perceived proficiency in the L2 and had spent long time in the L2 country. Bearing in mind that the L2 use factor measured using a foreign language in everyday situations (at school, home, work, with children, friends or partners) its correlation with the expression of emotions in the L2, as well as contact with the L2, or the length of stay in an L2 country is understandable. It shows that only being immersed in a foreign language and its culture and having a constant contact with that language might result with the frequent L2 use on everyday basis as well as the ability of emotional expression in that language. Below we are to discuss the results of the correlation analysis for the exposure to the L2 and expression of emotions in the L2, as we wanted to see whether there were any more factors, apart from the L2 use, that might influence our conscious or unconscious choice of that language while expressing our feelings.

Presented below correlation analysis results for the exposure to L2 show that exposure to the foreign language was correlated with the expression of emotions in the L2 ( $r = .562, p < .000$ ), L2 use ( $r = .619, p < .000$ ), length of stay in a foreign country ( $r = .213, p < .033$ ).

Table 3. Correlation analysis results for the exposure to the L2 (Pearson's  $r$ )

	Exposure to the L2
<b>L2 use</b>	<b>.619** <math>p &lt; .000</math></b>
<b>Expression of the emotions in the L2</b>	<b>.562** <math>p &lt; .000</math></b>
<b>Length of stay in a foreign country</b>	<b>.213* <math>p &lt; .033</math></b>

Informants who scored high on the exposure to L2 factor also reported frequent L2 use for various purposes including emotional expression as well as longer period of time spent in the foreign country. The length of stay in a L2 country was speculated to be an important variable related to the socialization processes and therefore to the expression of emotions in a foreign language. Nevertheless, the statistical analysis results presented in the table 4 showed no correlation between the expression of emotions in a foreign language and the length of stay in a foreign country.

Table 4. Correlation analysis results for the expression of emotions in the L2 (Pearson's  $r$ )

	Expression of emotions in the L2
<b>L2 use</b>	<b>.676** <math>p &lt; .000</math></b>
<b>Exposure to L2</b>	<b>.562** <math>p &lt; .000</math></b>
<b>Self-measured L2 proficiency</b>	<b>.290** <math>p &lt; .004</math></b>

The data analysis showed that expression of the emotions in the L2 was linked not only to the L2 use factor ( $r = 676$ ,  $p < .000$ ) and to the exposure to L2 factor ( $r = 562$ ,  $p < .000$ ), which were the factors pointed by the regression analysis as predictors of the expression of emotion in the L2 in our model, but also to the self-measured L2 proficiency ( $r = 290$ ,  $p < .004$ ). These results show that the ability to express ourselves in a foreign language as well as the choice of doing so in a foreign language is related to the use of a given language on daily basis, self-measured proficiency in that language, as we need to have high proficiency in a given language in order to argue, swear, or express positive feelings like love declarations, as well as with the frequent contact with that language, by the means of which we can acquire linguistic and sociolinguistic competence necessary for the emotional expression in a foreign language. No correlation between the length of stay in a foreign country and the expression of emotion in the L2 might be related to the fact that the amount of time spent in an L2 country cannot always be treated as equivalent of the length of socialisation into a given culture. On the other hand, the amount of time spent in a foreign country was significantly related to both predictors of the expression of emotions in the L2, namely exposure to the L2 and L2 use, showing that indeed it is an important factor in the emotional expression in a non-native language.

### 5.3. T-test analysis results

It was speculated that gender might be related to the emotional expression in a foreign language, therefore a t-test analysis was performed. Detailed results and discussion are presented below.

Table 5. T-test results for gender and expression of emotions in the L2

	Gender	N	Mean SD	t	p-Value
Emotional expression In the L2	Females	71	15.3622	1.439	.153
	Males	29	13.6450		

The results of the t-test show that there are no significant differences in emotional expression in a foreign language between males and females ( $t = 1.439$ ,  $p = .153$ ). At the same time it is important to mention that both groups are not equal in size as there is 70% of women and only 30% of men among the informants of our study. It needs to be kept in mind when interpreting the patterns, as results might be different for the sample of more balanced representation of males and females.

## 6. Discussion

The research question in our study considered the link between expression of emotions in a foreign language and such variables as self-perceived L2 proficiency, frequency of L2 use, context of acquisition, contact with the L2, length of stay in an L2 country, age, gender or education. It was speculated that L2 use and the length of stay in a foreign language would be the key factors in expression of emotions in a foreign language, with participants who had spent longer time in a foreign country choosing a non-native language for emotional expression more often than those who had lived in the L2 country for the shorter period of time. The results of the present study show that using a foreign language on a daily basis as well as an exposure to a given language might be strong predictors of the emotional expression in the L2. The ability to express feelings in a foreign language was directly linked to the self-perceived L2 proficiency and exposure to an L2 via media, reading books, magazines, exchanging e-mails, surfing online etc but not to the length of stay in the L2 country. We could speculate that frequent exposure to a foreign language and its use on everyday basis boosts self-perceived L2 proficiency and emotional expression in that language. These results are in line with the current results reported by Martinsen *et al.* (2011) for the foreign language housing (FLH) as a means of exposing students to a second language. They found that the FLH students used the L2 more than classroom-only students and used it in a wider variety of tasks. Such findings suggest that the FLH provided an environment in which the students were able to explore and feel comfortable using the L2 in a variety of situations. It could also suggest that the length of stay in a foreign country might not be the key predictor of L2 use and in turn, of the expression of emotions in a foreign language. The present study results point to the fact that the length of stay in an L2 country cannot be always treated as the equivalent of the immersion in that language and culture. This is particularly important in the case of Polish immigrants as the length of stay in an L2 country itself cannot be the only variable to determine the amount of exposure to L2 language and culture, as many Polish immigrants tend to socialize mainly with fellow immigrants, avoiding contact with English native speakers. As some researchers have pointed out, there is a growing range of ethnic and religious institutions that serve the Polish community in their native language (Singleton, Skrzypek, Kopeckova, Bidzinska 2007: 2) In the light of these results we could speculate that it is considered particularly important to incorporate other measures of exposure to L2 apart from the length of stay in an L2 country. The fact that the key predictors of the expression of emotions in a foreign language in our study, which were the L2 use and exposure to L2 were linked to the length of stay in an L2 country only strengthens our claim that the lack of correlation between expression of emotions in a foreign language and the length of stay in a foreign country might be due to the fact that the measure considering the time spend abroad is not a reflection of the immersion in that language and

culture. It shows how complex the relationship between language, culture and emotional expression is. Nevertheless, immersion in a foreign language and culture could be best described by such variables measured in this study as the L2 use and contact with the L2, as to some degree, these are the conditions that could favor the use of a foreign language at work, school, home with children or a partner as well as with friends. Frequent L2 use results not only in the conscious or subconscious choice of that language for the emotional expression but also in high self-perceived L2 proficiency and more frequent contact with the language in question. L2 use was also linked with the time spent in the L2 country, with the informants who had lived in a L2 country for a longer period of time reporting more frequent L2 use than those who had spent a limited time abroad.

All of the mentioned factors point out in the direction of the immersion in an L2 culture and language as the predictors of the L2 use while expressing our feelings. These findings are in line with the studies presented in the literature overview (Dewaele 2010; Panayiotou 2004; Pavlenko 2005, 2008; Wierzbicka 2004, 2009), as they show that immersion in a given culture and language might facilitate both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence necessary for the successful emotional expression in a mentioned language. Pavlenko (2008) suggested that L2 users who undergo secondary affective socialization may perceive an increase in the emotionality of the L2 (2008: 157). Similarly, Panayiotou (2004) claimed that we have the ability to learn new emotion concepts in a foreign language, acknowledge their importance in a specific cultural context and to adapt their use or even manifestation. The literature overview also suggested that difficulties in expressing emotions in the L2 may lie in differences in emotional scripts and vocabulary of the given languages (Panayiotou 2004; Pavlenko 2008; Wierzbicka 2004, 2009). The present study was conducted with Polish second language users of English. In both of these languages, conceptualisation of emotions, as well as rules governing perception and expression of emotions, are different. As widely documented by Wierzbicka (1992, 1999), in Polish culture the dominant attitude towards emotions is different as the one presented in the English culture. Categorisation of emotions in Polish is different from that reflected in the English lexicon. The way people interpret their own emotions depends, in some extent, on lexical grid provided by their native language (Harkins & Wierzbicka 2001). In the case of bilinguals or second language users living in a foreign country, especially where emotional scripts and social rules governing expression and perception of emotions differ greatly in comparison to their mother tongue, this interpretation and expression of emotions might be linked the such variables as L2 use, contact with the L2 or self-perceived L2 proficiency investigated in our study. These findings are consistent with Pavlenko's (2002), where she claims that with regard to sociocultural competence, it is possible that familiarity with culture-specific emotion scripts affects the choice of emotion vocabulary. Nonetheless, some more research is needed in that field measuring not only expression of emotions in L2 but also perception of culture- specific emotions.

It is important to examine how differences between emotion scripts in various cultures and languages influence not only the process of language socialization but also the process of acculturation.

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