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Developing Narrative and Discourse Competence

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Why Young American English-Speaking Children Confuse Anger and Sadness:

A Study of Grammar in Practice

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The findings in this chapter were not anticipated when I began this line of research a few years ago. Originally, I did not intend to investigate and compare children's accounts of emotion situations, in particular their accounts of anger and sadness situations. Rather, I began with the aim of investigating how children orient themselves toward—so to speak—"the same situation," but from different genre perspectives. More specifically, I was interested in children's accounts of situations in which they used the personal pronoun *I* (in order to refer to past events, or personal experiences) in contrast to accounts of events in which a third person (*she or he*) went through the same experience. In addition, I compared those two genres to one in which a generalized person (*one*, or the generalized *you*) acted or was acted upon. In short, my original investigation aimed at a genre comparison of (a) personal narrative, (b) third-person narrative, and (c) explanatory discourse. The idea to employ emotion situations such as "being angry" or "being sad" came up in the attempt to find a situation that was ecologically meaningful for both younger and older children, and was "of the same kind," so I could compare the linguistic devices used according to the age of the children and according to the genre that was targeted by the children.

This in mind we asked 8 0 (American English-speaking) children ranging from preschool to third grade (ages 4–10) to tell us about "*one time when you were angry/sad/scared/happy*"—prompting for the account of a personal experience; in addition, we asked them to imagine a little boy or girl and to give us an account for "*one time, when she or he was angry/sad/scared/happy*," and last, we simply asked them to explain, "*what it means to be angry/sad/scared/happy.*" This resulted in 12 interview questions, which were randomly assigned, all revolving around different perspectives on those particular emotional situations.

In the course of interviewing the children, we stumbled across something that would reverse the way we conceptualized children's abilities to use linguistic

constructions for discourse purposes. We repeatedly heard some of the children maintaining that one or the other question had already been answered, which initially did not surprise us, because the battery of questions could easily confuse interviewees, particulary if they did not fully concentrate. However, when scrutinizing the data more thoroughly, we realized that these kinds of confusions occurred solely when we had asked to give anger or sadness accounts, but never with any of the others. When we asked children in these situations to give us an answer anyway, their accounts were most often word-for-word repetitions. In addition, we noticed that these confusions were more typical for the younger than for the older children.

This preliminary evidence seemed to hold some water, although it is not in agreement with what one would expect based on research reports of children's emotion knowledge (cf. Stein & Trabasso, 1992; Stein, Trabasso, & Liwag, 1992). According to those reports, children as young as age 3 are able to perform at a high level of proficiency in figuring out the different components that lead to emotional states such as *angry* and *sad* and what typically follows from them. The only encouragement to probe deeper into this observation came from anthropological reports about a number of African languages, which, at least at the lexical level, do not seem to differentiate between what is divided according to the English lexicon into anger and sadness (cf. Davitz, 1969; Heelas, 1986; Leff, 1973; Matsumoto, 1994). Thus, this original accidental stumbling across some children's confusions of angry and sad launched us into a closer look at *how* the accounts of sadness and anger were linguistically constructed by younger (and older) American English-speaking children, and what these accounts were actually used for when it came to a comparison between the different genres.

To clarify how young children actually come to confuse two so-called basic emotion concepts—at least in the genre of narrative accounts (although this genre is highly relevant for self accounts and identity presentations)—I first discuss some general tenets of the relationship between language, thought and emotion, and their relationship for developmental studies. Then, I show in more detail how my study of emotion talk led to the differentiation of two different grammars, that of anger and that of sadness, and to how young children's confusion between these two grammars can be accounted for. In my concluding section, I take up the relationship between narrating and emotion talk with the somewhat "radical" argument that talk is more foundational than traditionally credited, not only for the way we make sense of emotions, but also—at least to a degree—for how we actually feel.

EMOTION CONCEPTS AND EMOTION WORDS VERSUS
EMOTION TALK AS LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Generally speaking, talk about emotions, that is, talk in which emotions are thematized, seems to imply that *emotions* are objects or entities that have an

existence outside of talk and apart from language in general. In this, they are very similar to our folk notions of *events* that seem to have their existence outside of talk, but can be referred to—just like emotions—in and through talk. Events and emotions could have taken place in the past or they can be imagined; they can be of a personal nature, that is, the teller could be centrally (or peripherally) involved, or they can be of a completely detached, impersonal nature, where the teller is not simultaneously thematizing himself or herself, as in accounts of emotions of others, past or imagined, or as in explanations, definitions, or other more detached situations such as in card sorting tasks (cf. Lutz, 1988).

The question that immediately comes to mind, however, is how we know what emotions are and what they mean, and more specifically, how children learn the meanings? In order to answer this question, we may be thrown back onto language and emotion talk as the sources and possibly even resources that tell us what we know about emotions and how they are dealt with in the social, communicative realm.

A way to avoid the issue of dealing with language and emotion talk as somewhat foundational to our understanding of emotion, would be by way of borrowing from a theory of "natural perception." In this theory, emotions are not really learned. They are bodily experiences that are directly sensed and differentiated into a limited number of emotion categories. What is learned are the language-appropriate labels for these categories. And although much of our everyday talk *about* emotions and feelings seems to rely on this theory, anyone who has struggled with a foreign language knows that the emotion categories we learned with our first language are not the same as in any other language: Natural perception cannot automatically read off from bodily sensations the categories that are considered meaningful for the speakers of particular languages. Thus, we seem to be thrown back onto language as one of the sense-giving foundations when it comes to emotion categories.

A second route to avoid taking talk in any way as a foundational factor for the constitution of emotions as meaningful entities, although by far more sophisticated than the theory of natural perception, relies on the intuition that all humans *have* emotions, and that the particular language that we learn as our first just carves up the "emotion spectrum" differently from any other language, leaving us with the impression that our (first) language does it somewhat more naturally, whereas other languages are somewhat derived. This theory is actually quite similar to the one developed for color categories, has been proposed in its most sophisticated version by Wierzbicka (1992, 1994, 1995) and, more recently, also Goddard (1997). The basic tenets on which this theory rests are cognitive universals. In short, resting on the assumption that human cognition (the mind) can differentiate between the different emotion categories and translate emotion terms from one language into another by use of a limited set of (cognitive-semantic) universals, the foundational capacity for making sense is attributed to cognition, not to language.

A similar theoretical advance on the relationship between emotion, language, and cognition, although not from a cognitive-semantically universalist point of view, has been made by Stein and her associates (Stein & Levine, 1990; Stein & Trabasso, 1992; Trabasso & Stein, 1993). In her approach, emotions are viewed as tied into relations between people, although they are approached as a representational system of the goal-plan-outcome knowledge that is held to regulate and coordinate the relations between people. Thus, knowledge of goals and plans is assumed to form the core prerequisite for making sense of others, and it figures foundationally in explaining and accounting for one's own actions, that is, in the process in making sense of one's own self. According to Stein and her associates, this type of knowledge is acquired relatively early, at around age 3. At this point, children are assumed to be apt to successfully differentiate between the components of actions and goal plans that lead to (English) anger, sadness, fear, or happiness (Stein, Liwag, & Wade, 1997).

In contrast to Wierzbicka and her colleagues, who view emotions as a semantic domain that governs the patterns of discourse, Stein uses narratives of real life emotion situations and subjects them to online questions for online reasoning. However, similar to Wierzbicka, Stein and her colleagues use discourse data to analyze language in its ideational, representative function, that is, as a more or less transparent window into the conceptual underpinnings of what their talk is *about*. The *aboutness* of talk (or what is *behind* the talk) is taken as basic, irrespective whether the speaker wants to be understood as blaming someone else or saving face. That is, the directive force of language (the interpersonal function) is not considered to be of immediate relevance to the meaning of the emotion account, nor to the meaning of the situatedness of the emotion, nor to an emotion in general. Thus, what the work of Wierzbicka and Stein share is a theoretical proceeding from the abstract to the concrete: The meaning of *emotion* is a foundational concern for its application in situated expressions or displays, and those are foundational for situated verbal accounts.

Although there has been an abundance of theorizing during the 1990s on the relationship between language, cognition, and emotion, most of it nevertheless has centered on the more narrow relationship between (emotion) concepts and (emotion) words. And although ethnomethodological approaches to emotion talk in other cultures/languages (Basso, 1992; Lutz, 1988; Ochs, 1988, 1996; Schieffelin, 1990; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) have repeatedly underscored the situatedness and cultural contextualization of emotion talk for the way emotions *make sense* and can enter as meaningful entities the interactions of participants, their contributions nevertheless have mostly gone unheard or they have been misconstrued as dealing predominantly with concepts and words. Developmental studies (with only few exceptions) have predominantly targeted emotion concepts and, in this sense, are very much in line with mainstream developmental attempts to contribute to a

debate regarding by what age children *have* emotion concepts (or at least the basic ones), *have* a "theory of mind," the basic narrative components, or other psychological "objects." It is also interesting to note that not much of this debate has been incorporated into standard language acquisition volumes, ranging from general psycholinguistic introductions to the acquisition of the lexicon (see, e.g., Clark, 1993; Fletcher & MacWhinney, 1995; Gleason & Ratner, 1993; Hoff-Ginsberg, 1997), which may be due to the fact that the grounds of what actually develops and what it is that facilitates development, are rather murky: Is it concepts that develop and at one point or another become mapped onto the appropriate linguistic forms, or is it linguistic forms that develop, channeling thoughts and cognitions toward socially appropriate ways of making sense? And further, is making sense primarily a more reflective, conceptual activity, or can it be also described in more practical, participatory terms?

In this chapter, the attempt is made to break out of the cycle of describing language use as principally based on cognitive terms or conceptual entities. Starting from the assumption that emotion displays are deeply embedded in our human way of displaying ourselves as situated selves in situations with others, we do not deny that emotion displays have physiological (bodily caused reactions) correlations, or that situations can be conceptually structured and talked about. However, in order to determine how emotion displays gain their meaning as meaningful events, we cannot solely rely on physical reactions to stimuli or to conceptual structures in the mind of private individuals as foundations. Rather, body *and* mind occupy (jointly) a social space in unfolding episodes, communicating the (relational) position of a self vis-à-vis others. This is where joy, anger, shame, surprise, and the like "materialize" as meaningful positions — taken up by a person purposely. Thus, these positions are displayed as actions that are purposely taken up to signal and signify a self-other relationship.[1] In this way, we can study the kinds of judgments, aesthetics, morality, and prudence that are expressed in emotion displays. We can determine what interactionally has led up to an emotion display, and what the display has accomplished. In this sense then, emotions are like conversations (Harré & Gillett, 1994), and accounts of emotion situations typically work up the aesthetics, judgments, and morality involved in such situations.

In sum, the present chapter does not take narrative accounts of emotion situations as windows into some (underlying) conceptual (mind) or physical (body) foundations of human meaning making, but as windows to the positionings that are being performed in the form of narrative actions. In these positionings narrators provide the audience with an order so that they can convince, blame, or save face, that is, practically orient the audience to an order within which judgments, aesthetics, and morality are purposely arranged. And

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1   And although we also have emotions as private individuals, with no one else around, self and other remain the unit around which "selfhood" and "otherness" are constructed.

since these narratives are constructed for an audience, the window metaphor should have been replaced by the better image of a signpost or pointer: The actual performance of the narrating act orients the audience to attend to the order constructed. And because the researcher is participant in this construction process as interviewer, the construed order may also be considered as part of the research situation itself. It should be noted that this account of the relationship between language, emotion, self and other, and mind and body is centrally dialogical. Inasmuch as language is always an embodied act and always centrally dialogical, it orients selfhood and otherness to one another in a foundational way (see Bamberg, 1999, for further discussion on the centrality of language).

It should also be noted that the approach presented in this chapter bears heavily on the notion of development: In contrast to mapping out changes over time of children's uses of words (semantic structures) or children's linguistic applications of conceptual structures, and claiming that *this* is what develops, we see the issue of development much more closely tied to the issue of *participating in* (linguistic) *practices.* And because these practices are no longer conceived of as structures that have their existence apart from the person (or *within* the person as internalized or matured mental structures), but rather as embodied discourse activities, the trajectory of language development (here, emotion talk) is no longer constrained to a single domain, such as lexical development, but closely interwoven with the development of the person as a whole. We return to this issue in the concluding section.

THE GRAMMARS OF ANGER AND SADNESS
IN AMERICAN ENGLISH-SPEAKING CHILDREN

In what follows I will extrapolate the linguistic devices that are typically employed in the construction of two types of situations, being angry and being sad. I do not detail the findings for each single age group, but for contrasting purposes compare the older children (the third graders, mean age 9;1) with the younger age groups (preschoolers, mean age 5;2, collapsed with kindergartners, mean age 6;1). In addition, central to our discussion is the genre of lived experience (past-tense, first-person narratives), but we also briefly consider the explanatory genre for comparative purposes, neglecting here a more detailed discussion of the third-person genre (see Özçalişkan, 1997, for a report of the genre findings for all four emotions). The term grammar for the characterization of form:function relationships has intentionally been chosen, on the one hand to index an affinity to Wittgenstein's use of the term *grammar* in his theory of language games (Wittgenstein, 1953), and on the other to take a critical position vis-à-vis the use of the term *grammar* as a system outside and prior to the person and his or her use of forms for practical purposes (functions). The linguistic forms that are taken to constitute a "grammar" for a

particular population (here age group of children) are purely descriptive listings of formal devices, that is, they are not meant to be in any way exclusive nor exhaustive; rather, they are taken as (formal) indices of functional orientations to direct the hearer or audience to attend to a particular discursive position (see Bamberg, 1991, 1997; Talbot & Bamberg, 1996). I first list the devices constituting the grammars of "anger" and "sadness" for the *First-Person Genre* and then briefly compare them with the grammars for the same two emotions in the *Explanatory Genre.*

The Grammar of Anger in the First-Person Genre

The linguistic devices employed by older and younger children, that is, by *all* age groups, to construct angry situations in which they were (made) angry typically consist of:

(i)   a highly individuated agent (*my sister*—see Example 1), and a highly individuated undergoer (*me*);
(ii) a marking of the action as highly transitive;
(iii) a positioning of the *I* as the recipient and target of the action in the direct object slot; and
(iv) a positioning of *the other* (the agent) in subject slot.

These four features apply consistently to all of the verbal accounts, and Examples (1) and (2) may serve to illustrate how anger is constructed in terms of these four linguistic construction types:

(1)   *I was in the room*
      and my sister kicked me
      and it went right into the rib bone
(2)   *when my sister slapped me across the face*
      just because she didn't let me in her room
      and I wanted to play a game
      but she didn't let me
      and slapped me across the face

In terms of the discursive purposes for which these lexicosyntactic devices are employed, we can tentatively draw up two general orientations: On the one hand, the construction of a highly individuated target of others' actions may orient the audience toward empathy or sympathy, particularly if the action is not sufficiently motivated or justified. On the other hand, introducing *the other* as the topical focus in the position of the syntactic subject opens her or him to become subjected to blame, again, particularly when the action was unmotivated or unjust. In the anger accounts of children across all age ranges, this topical focus on the perpetrator (for the purpose of attributing blame) overshadows, so to speak, the discursive purpose of eliciting empathy for the

victim. Or, in other words, the construction of anger in American English consists (developmentally from very early on) of two discursive purposes: blaming and eliciting empathy, with the latter subordinated to the former.

The Grammar of Sadness in the First-Person Genre

Typical of the accounts of older American children (the third graders in our study, who are very much in agreement with the way adults construct sadness accounts) are two different construction types:

> (i) positioning *the other* in subject position, as in Example (3), or
> (ii) positioning the *I* in subject slot, as in Example (4):

> (3) *it was when I was about 5 or 4 years old*
>   *my biggest sister got into a car accident*
>   *so she died*
>   *because of a car accident*
>   *and I was really sad for a few weeks*
> (4) *I was in Charlton*
>   *and I moved to Worcester*
>   *and I couldn't see my neighbors and their dogs*

Whereas construction type (i) holds up the possibility to make *the other* (here *my sister*) the potential topical focus, and as such orients the discourse activity in its purpose toward blaming, this option is ruled out by two additional linguistic devices:

> (a) the avoidance and downplay of marking *the other* as agentive, and
> (b) the absence (by choice of predicate-type/Aktionsart) of a target of the activity referred to (*dying* is atelic).

These two devices are similarly employed in construction type (ii) (see Example 4), denying the *I* to achieve the status of a topical focus, which—in case the *I* really becomes the topic, with some potential for agentivity—would open the door to a possible interpretation that the narrator is signaling that it had been his fault and that he was intending to blame himself.

Thus, it can be maintained that the grammar typically employed for the construction of sadness differs from the grammar of anger in degree of complexity: Whereas anger consists of one (formal) construction type, but comprises the two discursive orientations empathy and blame (and as such requires a delicate balance between these two orientations), sadness is less complex in terms of discursive purposes, because it is geared toward only one discourse purpose, namely empathy, but more complex in terms of the existence of two constructive options. In addition, taking the prototypical English construction type of the transitive scene, the construction types employed to

orient toward eliciting empathy also can be characterized as more complex, as they are deviations from the prototype, because they require an additional downplay of the topical focus. In other words, after the subject (which typically is the topical focus) has been established, this focus has to be "defocused" in subsequent clauses. The clause "*because of a car accident*" (in Example 3) illustrates this function, removing "*my sister*" from potentially becoming the topical focus, implying that "she didn't really do anything; this is not really about her" as an agent in the depicted event. Thus, although the construction of anger—in English—is more complex when it comes to its discursive purposes, the construction of sadness is more complex in terms of its actual linguistic construction types.

Turning next to the description of how sadness was linguistically constructed in the first-person genre by the younger children (the preschoolers and kindergartners in our study), we find their accounts structurally equivalent with the anger accounts of the American English-speaking subjects of all age groups (including their own). Examples (5) and (6) illustrate this point:

> (5) *when Nikki hit me in the eye*
>   *I was really really sad*
>   *I cried for a whole half an hour*
> (6) *my Mommy hit me*
>   *she hit me in the eye*
>   *and I was sad*
>   *and cried*

These accounts typically consist of two components: The first part topicalizes the perpetrator by constructing a highly transitive event, which is likely to be taken to orient the audience toward an attribution of blame to the agent. However, in the second part, the topic shifts from *the other* to the *I*, orienting the audience toward empathy as the discursive purpose of the two components as a whole. However, the construction of the happening that can be held responsible for the emergence of sadness is very much like that of an anger scenario for the younger children.

The Grammar of Anger in the Explanatory Genre

The construction of anger in explanatory discourses is achieved by five different construction types that mostly run in concert:

> (i)   an unspecified agent in subject slot, most often plural *they*;
> (ii) the unspecified target of the activity described in direct object slot, most typically *you* (where it remains unclear whether *you* refers to an unspecified hypothetical person or to the interviewer);
> (iii) an active verb which nevertheless is much less specific (and therefore less transitive) when compared with verbs used in the first-person genre (e.g.,

doing something or *hurting* here in the explanatory genre, versus *hitting* and *kicking* in the first person genre);

(iv) the clause modus is most often marked by *if* or *when*, in conjunction with

(v) the present tense, taking the situation into the realm of the timeless and possible world.

Examples (7) and (8) illustrate these types:

(7) *if someone hurts you*
    and you get really really really mad
    then you are angry

(8) *you are angry at someone*
    because they did something to you
    and you didn't like it
    what they did

In more general terms, the construction types result in the overall construct of an anger scenario that is much less of a bounded event, less vivid, and presented from a much more detached perspective than anger was constructed in the first-person perspective. Seeking empathy from the audience or blaming *the other* for any transgression clearly do not matter. If there is a particular discursive orientation, it lies in "describing" or making "what usually occurs" explicit, though clearly from a detached vantage point. The audience is led out into a world of usual occurrences, distanced from the realm of the special occurrence of subjective experience that made Examples (1) through (6) tellable narratives.

As already mentioned, the five construction types (i)–(v) employed for the depiction or explanation of anger situations in general are used in concert by the older children, that is, all of them "materialize" together. Younger children have difficulties in using all five simultaneously, and they also often slip after having given an account employing the markers typical for the explanatory genre into the first-person genre, telling how this once happened to them (past tense, plus devices typical for the grammar of being angry). However, across the board, they all are able to employ at least a few of the earlier mentioned five construction types. In spite of these shortcomings in terms of particular formal devices typical for the explanatory genre, younger children's general competence to give anger explanations nevertheless is relatively well established.

The Grammar of Sadness in the Explanatory Genre

Similar to the accounts given in the first-person genre, a sad situation is constructed by our older subjects as well as by the younger children in terms of either "*something* [bad] *is happening to you*" (as in Example 9), or in terms of "*you want something, but you can't have it*" (Example 10). Agentive others, who

could be held responsible, very rarely figure in these accounts, and if they do, they are always defocused as potential targets of blame. Example (9) illustrates the *something bad is happening to you* scenario by transforming in line 4 the potential agents into an impotent *it* of a mere happening that leaves *you* helpless (most likely, because there is no target for revenge):

(9) *when like someone calls you four-eyed*
    if you have glasses
    and you get not mad at them
    but it hurts your feelings
    and you're sad

(10) *like your favorite blanket was up high*
     where you couldn't get it

The only difference between the younger and the older children in their construction of sad scenarios in the explanatory genre was that the younger children at times seemed to consider a description of the behavioral display of being sad a sufficient explanation of "what it means to be sad" as in *crying*, or *if somebody cried.*

Thus, in spite of some difficulties in sorting out the linguistic complexities of the explanatory genre at an early age, children of *all* age groups clearly demarcated what it means to be angry from what it means to be sad. They construed the anger scenario as a bounded unit (with a clear beginning and an end, where the action in the middle led to the end), which was generalized and presented from a detached discourse (purpose) orientation; and construing the latter as a nonagentive happening, entailing no telicity, and consequently no particular other as a target to be blamed. In both sadness and anger explanations, the discursive orientations of attributing blame or eliciting empathy were backgrounded, whereas the discursive orientation to describe general occurrences from a detached perspective became the essential interactive goal.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Why Do Young English-Speaking Children Confuse Anger and Sadness?

Summarizing the insights gained from the earlier data, we are now better equipped for discussing the origins for children's early confusions between angry and sad scenarios and for delineating some of the factors involved in the developmental process between preschool age and the time children reach third grade, that is, between the ages of 5 and 9 years. First, the evidence assembled clearly points toward the early constructions of sadness accounts in the first person genre as the issue for what we called "confusion." In the attempt to determine how these accounts differ from developmentally later sadness accounts, and also how they differ from accounts of anger experiences (across

all age groups), we realized that anger accounts typically consist of the construction of a highly agentive *other* who is introduced as the discourse topic. This construction is in direct service of the discursive act of attributing blame. Because in English this discursive strategy is achieved by use of the prototypical sentence format that endorses "the transitivity scene" (Budwig, 1995; Hopper & Thompson, 1980), the construction of first-person anger scenarios is grammatically relatively easy. Sadness scenarios, however, require a deviation from this more prototypical syntactic format: If another person has been introduced in subject slot, and therefore is likely to be taken to be the topic of the account, the narrator has to deemphasize this person's agency in order to avoid the invocation of blame. He or she needs to reorient the listener to an empathetic stance towards the person who gives the account. It is exactly this problem of reorientation which younger English-speaking children face in their accounts of their own sadness experiences.

Considering that the generalized person perspective is linguistically more complex than the first person perspective, and that the younger of the children struggled considerably in coming to grips with the timeless as-if modality of this genre, it should come as a surprise that anger and sadness accounts are relatively clearly differentiated in the explanatory discourse genre along the dimension of transitivity–agency. Thus, the confusion in the younger children between being angry and being sad cannot be traced to the general unreadiness of linguistically presenting what has conceptually already been mapped out. Rather, the early underdifferentiation between the two types of accounts lies clearly rooted in the pragmatics of emotion talk, more specifically, in the inability of not clearly differentiating between how to mark the respective discourse purposes of *attributing blame* versus *eliciting empathy*. And we would like to maintain that this early pragmatic inability is responsible for our younger subjects responding to the interview questions in a "confused" manner.

With regard to what it is that developmentally pulls the child out of this state of underdifferentiation toward a higher level of differentiation (and as such also to a higher level of integration), we have no hard evidence to say for sure. However, the way we were able to map out the developmental route from a clear state of underdifferentiation to a higher level of making sense of sadness. That is, as a process of appropriating the tools necessary to *talk meaningfully* about the social relationships in which emotions are embedded, points up some highly important underpinnings. First, it shows that modeling emotional development in terms of an internalization process of learning how to feel may not be sufficient. Further, we were able to draw out the limitations of modeling emotional development in strictly cognitive terms. As shown by this study, grammar, if understood correctly—that is, not as abstract principles of a universalist nature, but as social know-how relevant for the construction of social meaning to participate in conversational practices—plays an integral role in coming to grips with what emotions do and what they are used for in social

communicative practices.[2] As such, learning to use the linguistic construction procedures for socially appropriate purposes is part and parcel of our cultural practices. To view this process in terms of appropriation rather than internalization gives space for the dialectics involved in the developmental process in general: On the one hand, the grammatical means—so-to-speak—are preformed. They have their social existence before they are put to use in social practices. It is for exactly this reason that children (or others) can come to use these tools inappropriately such as in their early sadness constructions in the first person genre. However, these so-called tools are not predetermining and imposing their use apart and independent from their users. The child early on is practicing in a relatively autonomous way with these tools, assembling new construction parts with others that are already successfully in place. Thus, viewing this process of appropriating linguistic constructions in the determination of emotion meanings as an integral part of learning "the language" adds an extremely relevant component to emotional development, probably one that is much more central than we were able to imagine thus far.

In addition, and here we admittedly enter more speculative territory, having documented that the differentiation between anger and sadness accounts took place developmentally prior in the generalized-person, explanatory genre, before it could be appropriated in the first-person, past-experience narrative genre, one might expect some learning effects spilling over from practices in doing talk for "being descriptive" to doing talk for more involved, interpersonal purposes such as "blaming," "saving face," or "seeking empathy." This, however, should not be misunderstood as meaning to imply that those latter purposes are learned in more detached speech genres first. Not at all. But in cases where the linguistic procedures relevant for the construction processes of highly involved speech genres constitute a particular problem (such as in the case of constructing complex sad scenarios as earlier), practices in more detached speech genres might enable speakers to sort out form:function relationships and reintegrate them at a higher level of integration in more involved speech genres.

Taking up on the findings by Stein and her associates that were discussed in the opening of this chapter, namely that children younger than the 5- and 6-year-olds in our study were perfectly able to differentiate between the different components that distinguish (English) anger, sadness, fear, and happiness, we are now in a better position to reconsider this seeming contradiction to our own findings, and tie it closer to the concerns of methodology and language development. Although one of the important differences between the two

2   This is not meant to imply that emotions cannot occur outside of communicative settings, that is, so-to-speak privately. But the "private experience" of emotions is by no means their sole and primary aspect. As Wittgenstein (1953) was able to convincingly demonstrate, if that were the case, we could not only not "talk" about them, but we wouldn't "know" about them either.

studies under consideration is the age of the children, another consideration is the way the data were elicited. Apart from these two aspects, however, there is a third issue, which concerns the question of which aspects of performance we take to represent relevant developmental strides. Note that the online interview technique, used by Stein and her associates, is traditionally employed as a cognitive procedure to test comprehension. For this purpose it is legitimate to interrupt the natural conversational flow with questions that probe children's "real" understanding. The discourse mode that is created in this type of interview resembles the way caregivers and children interact in a topic-elaborative style that is quite common in our culture, where the caregivers "build bridges" to test and teach "knowledge." This type of knowledge, though not necessarily of an abstract nature, is nevertheless accessed in a much more detached, quasi-descriptive, explanatory mode. In contrast to this type of discourse mode, we found in our own investigation the early "confusion" of anger and sadness scenarios to be grounded in the involved discourse mode, where it was the primary goal to grammaticize the discursive force of the two different emotions. Thus, we do not see the findings of Stein and her associates contradicting ours. Rather, they complement our own findings in the sense that a more detached discourse mode in both investigations was found to facilitate a clear differentiation of what is underdifferentiated only in the involved first person genre. Thus, it seems important to note that while the marking of *attributing blame* and *eliciting empathy* does not seem to play a major role in the explanatory discourse, thereby facilitating an early mastery of differentiating between anger and sadness, it is the complexity of the linguistic construction types necessary for the differentiation between *attributing blame* and *eliciting empathy* that ultimately is in the way of an (equally) early mastery in the more involved, first-person discourse genre. Further, that this "linguistic" inability also shows up in the type of "confusion" between anger and sadness that led us originally to look deeper into the different types of accounts and how they were made up in terms of linguistic construction types.

However, I assume that the relevance of these findings is weighted quite differently in the two different frameworks. A more cognitively oriented approach is most likely to consider as relevant the point in time when the knowledge base for individual emotions (or other cognitive systems) first can successfully be tapped, because from then on, all confusions can be (and need to be) explained in terms of situational performance constraints. In order to tap this basic knowledge developmentally as early as possible, an elicitation technique must be chosen that imposes as little as possible situational and contextual constraints. Accordingly, within the cognitive framework of emotions, to ask children to construct emotion scenarios in the first person genre, might not count as the most efficient way, exactly for the reason that their personal involvement might interfere with their actual knowledge. In addition, these "distortions" all occur after the basic knowledge of particular

emotions has already been firmly established. Therefore, according to such a position, our findings and elaborate discussions do not contribute to how children establish their emotion knowledge. At best, they may contribute to how children *apply* their knowledge under difficult and adversarial circumstances.

In contrast to the cognitive framework of emotions and its approach to knowledge acquisition as the major developmental achievement, the discursive orientation views knowledge of the emotions rather as the result or the product of participation in cultural practices. The discursive approach to emotions is primarily interested in the processes through which cultural knowledge obtains its motivational force for individuals, and for this reason, a confusion between emotions in particular discursive settings is of utmost interest,[3] since it offers insight into the developmental process of how the cultural directives of emotions are sorted out. Consequently, comparisons between performances in different practices or discourse settings are of extreme interest for studies that focus on development as a form of cultural learning. And the findings and discussions present an important starting point within this orientation.

Emotions as Positions Taken in Practices by Use of Linguistic Construction Types

One possibly puzzling concern lies hidden behind much of what has been discussed thus far: Why do people, when asked to give emotion accounts (of how they or others once felt), construe elaborate circumstances around happenings and events, that is, seek refuge in the "world of actions"? And why, when asked to construe events or happenings (in which they themselves or others figure as actors), do they deviate from the sequencing of actions and resort to references to feelings and emotions? This concern actually becomes more urgent when it concerns accounts in which the narrator seems to be implicated or is implicating someone else, that is, accounts that have been classified in this chapter as "involved." Edwards and Potter (1992), in response to this seeming contradiction, argue that in natural discourse, talk about events and happenings is designed in particular ways "to allow inferences about mental life and cognition" (p. 142) and— I would like to add—particularly inferences about emotions. Edwards and Potter also hold that the converse is equally true. Assumptions about the world, what happened, and why it happened, are inferred from the way the speaker designed the emotions and motivations of the actors. Thus, event construal and

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3 The potential argument that there is no real confusion between the emotions, because "obviously" even younger children "know" what sad is (feels like) and what anger is (feels like), and that the above at best accounts for a confusion of emotion talk, "obviously" misses the point. To "know" what it means to be angry, and to "know" what it means to be sad are not derived out of bodily sensations, at least not solely and not directly (unmediated). The *meanings* of anger and sadness are imbedded in talk, talk that is situated and simultaneously situating the interactants—with regard to how they want to be understood and how they position themselves as moral agents.

the construal of characters' "inner psychologies" are closely orchestrated with regard to one another. Accounting for one, to a large degree, indexes the other.

However, these worlds of actors and events within which references to emotions are embedded do not stand on their own. They are versions produced in discourse situations for discursive purposes. The particular purposes can be manifold, such as to attribute blame to others (in order to save face or restore one's dignity), or to elicit empathy (in order to pursue joint retaliation or revenge). How the speaker positions him- or herself vis-à-vis the audience results in the particular construction design that is given to the world of actors and events. Thus, the world of the interactants (speaker-audience) regulates the way the psychological "reality" of the actors are construed as well as what is happening in the events in which the actors have a role.

As such, the approach I have proposed in the foregoing attempts to turn around the traditional, realist picture of the relationship between emotions, cognitions, and language. The realist picture starts from events and happenings as taking place in the world, to be re-presented in people's thoughts and feelings, so that we can subsequently speak *about* these events as well as the thoughts, evaluative appraisals, and feelings. I am suggesting an inversion of this relationship: In communication, which is the performative domain of social action, both events as well as stances toward them (evaluative or cognitive) are organized, not because they are stored and available previous to and outside of any discursive purpose, to be executed subsequently in communication. Rather, events and the way they are thought about and valued by the speaker are constructs that are borne out of the purpose of talk. Consequently, the way in which the purpose of talk manifests itself in the world of interactants is not a by-product, but rather the starting point for a (discursive) analysis of what is manifested in the talk in terms of the characters, their activities, and the evaluative position with regard to them.

As a concluding remark, let me briefly touch on an additional dimension regarding the notion of positioning that I alluded to earlier. In addition to the orchestration of characters with regard to one another at the level of what is being talked about (positioning level 1), and in addition to the orchestration of the speaker-audience relationship (positioning level 2), the same linguistic construction types index how the speaker positions him- or herself with regard to the *self* (positioning level 3). Coordinating the content of talk with the discursive purposes for which it is constructed forms the presupposition in what is commonly considered the construction of self-identity. Whether the talk is actually about the self (the *I*), or others (*he or she*), or about people in general (*one* or the generalized *you*, as in the explanatory genre), it always reveals aspects of a moral order in the way characters and audience are orchestrated. The moral identity question "What am I in relation to the Good?" (Sarbin, 1995, p. 219) turns into a position with regard to one's own identity: "Who am I?" Thus, the construction of characters in events at the level of

content formation, the construction of the speaker-audience relationship, and the construction of one's self-identity are closely interwoven. And although traditionally psychologists start from the assumption of the unity of the *self*, and see narrative accounts and interactive relationships as orchestrated from and toward the purpose of maintaining this position, the approach that is schematically outlined in this chapter views this unity of a self (at least to a degree) as consisting of local achievements that are based on grammatical constructions for discursive purposes (Bamberg, 1997).

In sum, what has been offered in this contribution to this volume is an attempt to more clearly delineate between cognitive approaches to emotions (and emotion development) and their discursive counterparts. What has come to the forefront in this attempt is the role of language, in particular of grammatical constructs (construction types for discourse purposes) which form important building blocks in the formation of the social constructs that are achieved in development and interaction (e.g., emotions, intentions, memory, self, and identity). The close look at some of these building blocks, as illustrated in the study presented here, has led to an illumination of what is involved in the interplay of language practices, emotions, concepts of emotions, and in their respective developments.

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4 A Crosscultural Investigation of Australian and Israeli Parents' Narrative Interactions With Their Children

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We tell children stories, relate the day's events, and recapitulate missed television episodes. These are examples of narrative, the overt discourse manifestation of the recounting of events that occur in daily life. We expect that people will be able to understand our narratives and, in turn, produce appropriate narratives when required. We assume these narratives will be relevant to the situation, coherent, and linguistically cohesive, building on common contextual knowledge shared by narrator and listener. How do children learn to be competent narrators? Most research on narrative discourse has centered around either adults' or children's productions of narrative structures of different types, from more structured narratives such as story-book reading to more "open-ended" narratives such as personal experience narratives. In recent years, numerous studies have focused on the development of children's narrative ability, both in specific languages and crosslinguistically (e.g., Bamberg, 1987; Bamberg & Marchman, 1990; Berman & Slobin, 1994; Hickmann 1995; Karmiloff-Smith, 1979, 1981; McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Peterson & McCabe, 1983; Wigglesworth, 1997). Fewer studies have focused on the "environment" in which children are exposed to narrative discourse, reporting (a) cultural aspects of narrative development (Brice Heath, 1983; Ochs, 1988; Polanyi, 1989; Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Schieffelin, 1984); (b) the educational contribution of the narrative discourse environment to literacy development (Snow 1977); and most recently, (c) crosslinguistic and crosscultural features of narrative discourse (Blum-Kulka, 1997; Minami & McCabe, 1995).