THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF NEGATIVE REFLEXIVE SOCIAL EMOTIONS

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In recent years, child development has been placed into a social context, in the sense that the construction of knowledge in the child is viewed as a social process (e.g., Bruner, 1978, 1986; Bruner & Sherwood, 1981; Cole, 1985; Doise & Mackie, 1981; Duveen & Lloyd, 1990; Rogoff & Wertsch, 1984; Wertsch, 1985; inter alia). One major source of the dialectical relationship between the individual and the social, comes from the work of Vygotsky (e.g., Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1981a,b). Vygotsky saw development as a cultural product and stressed that the child's development is the outcome of her/his participation in social interaction with more mature members of the culture. They define and regulate the young child's activity by using means which are products of sociocultural evolution (e.g., language). The child, by internalising the means by which others used to regulate its activity in earlier stages, masters higher forms of mental functioning.

One particular notion in Vygotsky's theory has stimulated a considerable amount of recent research. This is described as the "zone of proximal development", which represents the lag between what the child can actually achieve on its own and what it can achieve when aided by more mature members of its culture (e.g., Bruner & Haste, 1987; Cole, 1985; Newman & Holzman, 1993; Rattner & Stettner, 1991; Rogoff & Wertsch, 1984). Most of the research in this area has mainly concentrated on problem solving tasks and the implications of the "zone of proximal development" for psychological testing and for education. Recently, this concept has been utilised in efforts to apply Vygotskian theory to the study of emotional development (e.g., Papadopoulou, 1990; Ratner & Stettner, 1991; Semin & Papadopoulou, 1990).

The present chapter addresses emotional development as the child's mastering of social representations (e.g., Moscovici, 1973) pertaining to emotions. In so doing, it draws on two theoretical frameworks, namely social constructivist approaches to emotions and Vygotsky's theory of the development of higher mental functions. Critical features of the theoretical model advanced are illustrated with empirical work deriving from children's (4 to 12 years-old) acquisition and development of social representations of embarrassment, which is treated as one...
instance of "negative reflexive social emotions" (guilt, shame and embarrassment) (Shott, 1979).

NRSE ensue upon socio-moral transgressions. They entail self reactions to internalised and accepted social standards and involve two special features which make them important mechanisms of "self control" and, therefore, significant aids in socialisation. First, a central process in their elicitation consists in how one perceives oneself to appear to actual or imagined significant others as a consequence of particular actions which, in this case, are real or imagined socio-moral transgressions (e.g., Semin, 1982; Semin & Manstead, 1981, 1982; Shott, 1979). Second, these emotions are self-directed, "punitive" and "check deviant behaviour". They therefore constitute efficient means by which each individual keeps her/his behaviour compatible with the rules, social conventions and moral values of the society within which s/he lives. This self-monitoring function of NRSE makes them important mechanisms through which the individual becomes socialised into her/his culture. Furthermore, due to their self-monitoring qualities, NRSE foster social control by means of their potential to ensure self-control. In contrast to other emotions that foster social control (e.g. fear), the evocation of reflexive social emotions is more a result of the individual's internalisation of the moral and social rules of the culture and the group of which s/he is part (Shott, 1979).

THE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Recently, studies of human emotion have considered the role that social rules, conventions and language play in the shaping of emotional experience (e.g., Averill, 1980, 1982; Harré, 1986, Lutz, 1986), thus viewing emotions as being mediated by socio-cultural factors. Such approaches assume that the way in which one interprets one's emotions and, to an extent, what one feels are guided by one's culture, its social rules and conventions about emotions. Although the importance of biological factors is not denied in such approaches, the focal concern is the role socio-cultural factors play in the acquisition, shaping, experience and expression of emotions. Emotions are viewed as social constructions, the meaning and the function of which are to be found in the social system of which they are part. The physiological responses, action tendencies, cognitions associated with emotions, in other words all the components of an emotion syndrome, actually do not take on the characteristics of an emotion until their meaning is constituted by the cultural context (Averill, 1980; Harré, 1986). In this way, emotional experience is influenced by socio-cultural factors.

The importance of social factors in emotional development has been appreciated by many divergent approaches. One's social milieu contributes heavily to how one comes to know when to substitute, inhibit or modify expressive behaviours for certain emotions. Even primary emotions are subject to cultural influences such as "display rules" (Ekman, 1972) which govern their expression. How and when to express emotions are important feeling rules that all members of a culture learn (Hochschild, 1979; Lewis & Michalson, 1983). It is clear that adults have a good knowledge of emotions and the situations linked with them, even in