Theme 12: Introductions, Conclusions, Abstracts

Features of an Introduction

**Task 1: What is the best way to order the following elements in your introduction?**

value/significance of research background/academic context to the study

research questions outline of report structure research gap definitions of key terms research aim brief mention of methodology

**Task 2:** **Identify the function of each of the paragraphs below, and put them in the right order.**

A The purpose of this study is to investigate the representation of men's and women's shame in a corpus of late twentieth-century British English. The specific aim is to show in what situations women and men express shame or are associated with the emotion, to explore whether shame is interpreted as a positive or negative emotion in these contexts, whether it is understood as internal or disembodied, and to examine whether the prototypical shame experience, as understood in Western society, aligns with both male and female examples of shame in the corpus, or whether there exist different, gendered models of shame. Thus, on a general level, the study provides information about the representation of intra-cultural variation of emotional expressions. On a more specific level it supplies information about the way shame is represented in relation to women and men.

B There has been an increased interest in the study of emotions over the last few decades. An issue that attracted attention in the 1970s was whether emotions are universal or culturally constructed (see, for instance, Birdwhistell, 1971; Ekman, 1972; Izard, 1977; and Leach, 1972). Although the debate is still ongoing and universal aspects of emotions are frequently highlighted (Fridja et al., 1995: 121 ff.; Kövecses, 2000; and Lakoff and Kövecses, 1987: 380 ff.), there are today numerous studies that report on cultural variation in emotions (see, for instance, contributions in Athanasiadou and Tabakowska, 1998; Harkins and Wierzbicka, 2001; and Russell et al., 1995). Not only has it been demonstrated that people talk about emotions differently in different parts of the world, but it has also been shown that different languages make use of different sets of emotion terms (Fischer, 1995: 457; and Russell, 1991).

C The remainder of this article is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a presentation of previous studies of shame. The methods and the corpus are outlined under Section 3. The fourth section presents the data, analyses it and compares the examples of women's expressions of shame with men's expressions in the data. The last section sums up the results, discusses them and gives suggestions for further studies.

D As yet, most studies of variations in the vocabulary of emotion have focussed on differences between cultures (Fischer, 1995: 457). Few have attended to differences within cultures, although intra-cultural variation has been observed and the absence of studies on such variations has been noticed (Fischer, 1995: 457; and Kövecses, 2000: 172). Fischer (1995: 459) emphasises that different social positions between groups of people within the same country are likely to lead to differences in how emotions are expressed and evaluated. Two groups expressing their emotions differently as a result of early training to conform to stereotypical gender ideals are men and women (Ferguson et al., 2000: 134; and Fischer, 1995: 459). A study of emotion terms in relation to women and men is, thus, likely to yield valuable results regarding variation in emotional expressions.

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