Talking about Emotions Using Culturally Sensitive AAC

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Outline

- Background

- Body of Evidence: Literature Review

- Recommendations: Cultural Considerations for Communication about Emotions using AAC

- Recent Research
  - Early Development of Emotional Competencies (EDEC) tool
Outline

• **Background**
  – Why culture should be considered in communication about emotions using AAC?

• **Body of Evidence: Literature Review**

• **Recommendations: Cultural Considerations**

• **Recent Research**
Why Culture Should Be Considered in Communication about Emotions Using AAC?

• Based on the evidence in **AAC**
  – Culturally appropriate graphic *symbol selection*  
    (e.g., Bornman & Bryen, 2013; Huer, 2000; Llyod et al., 1997)
  – Consideration of the level of *acculturation* in AAC research  
    (e.g., Nigam, 2003; Huer, 2003)

• Based on the evidence in **EMOTION**
  – Emotion is *culturally grounded* for each individual  
    (Ekman et al., 1987)
  – Many *cross-cultural studies* on emotion recognition and expression  
    (e.g., Beaupre & Hess, 2005; Koda et al., 2009; Yuki, et al., 2007)
We need to know more...

- Very limited research on culture issue in communication about emotions using AAC
Outline

• Background

• **Body of Evidence: Literature Review**
  – Cultural impacts on emotional competence

• Recommendations: Cultural Considerations for Communication about Emotions using AAC

• Recent Research
Cultural Impacts on Emotional Competence

• Adults
  (e.g., Elfenbein & Ambadt, 2002; Imada & Ellsworth, 2011; Yuki, Maddux, & Masuda, 2007)
  – Many studies on adults
  – Various cultures
  – Suggest cultural impacts on emotional recognition and expression
Cultural Impacts on Emotional Competence (Cont.)

• Specific to Children

(Camras et al., 1998; Camras et al., 2007; Cole, Bruschi, & Tamang, 2002; Markham & Wang, 1996; Novin, Rieffe, & Mo, 2010; Raval et al., 2010)

– Fewer number of studies

– Suggested cultural impacts

  • More vs less expressive
  
  • Direct vs Indirect emotion expressions
  
  • Different modes of emotion expressions
    – Facial expressions, words, gestures, etc.
  
  • Different appraisal
    – Ways to interpret events & connect them to emotions
Outline

• Background

• Body of Evidence: Literature Review

• Recommendations: Cultural Considerations for Communication about Emotions Using AAC
  – Emotion symbols
  – Communication about emotions using AAC

• Recent Research
Culturally Sensitive Emotion Symbols

- **Design**
  - Culturally sensitive emotion symbol design is one of the most effective ways to enhance the quality of emotion language use by CLD AAC users (Huer, 2000)
  - Example
Culturally Sensitive Emotion Symbols (Cont.)

• **Selection**
  - More vs less expressive
  - Aggressiveness & Assertiveness
  - Example (Cole et al., 2002)

“Your father spilt tea on your homework”

- **Angry**
  - USA

- **Ashamed**
  - Nepal (Tamang)
• **Expectations**
  – Emotions that are *acceptable* to talk about may differ depending on cultural backgrounds
  – Emotions that are *preferred not to discuss* may differ depending on cultural backgrounds
  – These expectations should be applied for not only emotion *expression*, but also *recognition*
  – Examples

![Proud](image1)

![Frightened](image2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Culturally Sensitive Conversation about Emotions

• 3 Suggested Elements
  – Labeling
    • Emotion symbols
  – Validation
    • Discussion about the intensity of the emotion
    • Discussion about the reason for the emotion
  – Response
    • Discussion about the solution for the emotion
• **Validation**
  – The intensity of and the reason for the emotion may differ depending on the **audience** and the **situation** in diverse cultures
  – Example (Cole et al., 2002)
Culturally Sensitive Conversation about Emotions (Cont.)

- **Response (Solution for the emotion)**
  - **Example** (Cole et al., 2002)

*USA*

- Angry

  - Dad is wrong
  - "I want to talk to you"

*Nepal (Tamang)*

- Ashamed

  - I am wrong
  - "shh. be quiet"

  - Example: "Your father spilt tea on your homework"
## Summary of Recommendations

### Cultural Considerations for Communication about Emotions Using AAC

#### 1. Emotion Symbols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Design</th>
<th>Design emotion symbols with cultural sensitivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Selection</td>
<td>Select emotion symbols with cultural sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Expectations</td>
<td>Have culturally appropriate expectations for a child’s emotion symbol use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2. Conversation about Emotions Using AAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Validation</th>
<th>The intensity of and the reason for the emotion may differ depending on the audience and the situation in diverse cultures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Response</td>
<td>Consider that a child may want/need a different solution for the emotion depending on the cultural background</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Small c” culture

- Diverse countries in one culture
- Diverse communities in one country
- Diverse individuals in one community

Keep in mind that one child from a certain culture would have a same/different preference of emotion symbols and phrases with the other child with the identical cultural background.
Outline

• Background

• Body of Evidence: Literature Review

• Recommendations: Cultural Considerations for Communication about Emotions Using AAC

• Recent Research
Early Development of Emotional Competencies: A Tool for Children with Complex Communication Needs (CCN)


Original version (2012)
Revised version (2013)
Current version (2014)
Recent Research - EDEC tool (Cont.)

• **Interview with family and service professionals (24 Qs)**

• **Descriptive Instrument**
  – NOT prescriptive purpose
  – NOT norm-referenced

• **Purposes**
  – Raise **Awareness** about the relation of language (including AAC) and emotional competence
  – Ensure a child’s communication **intervention** includes language to discuss emotions

• **2 Field Tests**
  – Original version (2012) – Field test #1
  – Revised version (2013) – Field test #2
  – Current version (2014)
• **7 Languages**
  – To provide culturally appropriate tool
  – To increase awareness about culturally sensitive emotion language in AAC

**Current**
- Danish
- English
- German
- Korean
- Spanish

**Future**
- Dutch
- French
• Cross-cultural Study Using the EDEC tool
  – Study Objectives
    • How does the tool work in general?
    • Does the tool reveal systematic and expected variability (cross-cultural difference)?

  – Participants
    • Interviewed American (n=10) and Korean (n=10) parents
      – With young children (birth-10 years) who are typically developing

  – Initial Results (Ongoing Study)
    • Two of the interview questions
    • But they illustrate potential cultural differences
6. Prompting by parent/caregiver for verbal labeling

“Different families/caregivers may vary in how they prompt their children’s verbal labeling of emotion. How often do you try to get {name} to label his/her own emotions using words, signs, or symbols?”

If the caregiver responds “sometimes” or “most of the time”, ask for an example.

If the caregiver responds “occasionally” or “never”, ask: “Ok, thanks. What do you do instead?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOST OF THE TIME</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>ONLY OCCASIONALLY</th>
<th>NEVER</th>
<th>NOT SURE</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.00%</td>
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American: 75.00% MOST OF THE TIME, 22% SOMETIMES, 22% ONLY OCCASIONALLY

Korean: 33% NEVER, 22% MOST OF THE TIME, 22% SOMETIMES, 33% NOT SURE

NOT SURE
NEVER
ONLY OCCASIONALLY
SOMETIMES
MOST OF THE TIME
Parents’ Prompting of Emotion Labeling (Cont.)

Reasons from American mothers
(Majority = most of the time)

• “I am trying to let her know that it is okay to talk about feelings.”
• “I am doing this because this is the strategy I use for myself.”

Reasons from Korean mothers
(Majority = sometimes or less)

• “She is good at labeling her emotions already”
• “Because he is the oldest one, I often tell him not to express his feelings”
### Parents’ Input about Emotions in Book

**14. Interacting with media (books, videos, etc.) - input**

“When you are reading books or watching TV/movies, do you talk about the emotions that the characters are experiencing?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
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![Bar chart showing percentages for American and Korean responses](chart.png)

- **American**
  - Yes: 80%
  - No: 20%

- **Korean**
  - Yes: 80%
  - No: 20%
Parents’ Input about Emotions in Book (Cont.)

Reasons why not:
American mothers (20%)
- “He is old enough to understand the character’s emotion”

Reasons why not:
Korean mothers (80%)
- “He is old enough to understand the emotions by himself”
- “He can read a book by himself”
Conclusions / Future Directions

• Importance
  – It is critical that individuals who use AAC have ways to communicate their own and others’ feelings using culturally appropriate emotion language (AAC)
  – They need culturally sensitive means to communicate about their feelings and emotions, opinions, interests, and beliefs

• Current Efforts
  – We are trying to support families and professionals to have a better awareness about the need

• Future Systematic Research: Needed
  – Directly evaluate the appropriateness of various types of symbols & AAC practices
  – Determine whether these speculations are correct
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References


Discussion