

## Abstract

The present study was to examine the relation of age, emotion categories to recognition of facial expression in Chinese children. One hundred and ninety-two Hong Kong Chinese children (96 females and 96 males) of all ages between four and twelve participated in the study. Thirty college students (15 females and 15 males who aged from 19-23 ( $M = 19.9$  years) were also recruited as an adult group for comparison. Test materials included some episodes and photos of the six basic emotions: happiness, anger, sadness, surprise, fear and disgust. Photos were posed facial expression and were selected from Picture of Facial Affect (Ekman, & Friesen, 1975). Participants were tested individually on the emotion recognition task. In the task, they identified the posed facial expression after listening to emotion-related episodes. Results showed that children's decoding ability of facial expression improved with age as well as varied with different emotion categories. Children of age 5 and 6 were at the most critical transition period for developing this recognition ability. At age of 7 upward, children gradually improved their ability of recognition of facial expression as they grow older. At the age of 12, children performed the decoding skills as well as adults. Among the six basic emotions, happiness occupied the top position, followed by sadness, surprise, fear. Anger as well as disgust occupied the bottom positions for recognition accuracy. Confusion between anger and disgust as well as surprise and fear were supported in the study.