

Abstract

In its theoretical part, this paper examines the ability to recognize emotions and its ontogenetic development across modalities, including the influences affecting this ability. Attention is paid to the most used research designs and stimulus selection. It also presents findings on possible sensory dominance in children. The method and results of the quantitative research conducted are also described. Children aged 4-7 years ($N = 18$), 8-11 years ($N = 18$) and adults ($N = 24$) participated in the experiment. They were sequentially presented with four blocks of emotional stimuli depicting the emotions of joy and fear: separate video recordings of facial expressions; separate audio recordings of sentences in English; simultaneously video and audio recordings with instructions to ignore the video; and simultaneously video and audio recordings with instructions to ignore the audio. The groups did not differ in their ability to recognize emotions from facial expressions (in both the unimodal and multimodal conditions) and emotions from voice in the congruent multimodal condition. Younger children were less successful than older children and adults in recognizing emotions from voice in the unimodal condition, and younger children and older children were less successful than adults in recognizing emotions from voice in the incongruent multimodal condition. The role of own-age bias was not demonstrated.

Keywords

Emotion Recognition; Development of Emotional Recognition; Database of Emotional Expressions; Sensory Dominance; Own-age Bias; Multimodal Stimuli; Incongruent Emotional Expressions