

Abstract

The high sensitivity and need to adjust to others' expectations may make Japanese, compared to Americans, more anxious in interpersonal contexts and especially more vigilant to a sign of disapproval, such as the disappearance of happiness from another's face. By using a morph movie paradigm we investigated the cultural differences in sensitivity to the disappearance of smiles. Participants watched both happy-to-neutral and sad-to-neutral movies and judged the point at which emotional expression had disappeared. As predicted, Japanese judged the offset of happiness faster than did Americans, whereas there was no cultural difference in response to the disappearance of sadness. Moreover, Japanese were higher in attachment-related anxiety than were Americans. Importantly, attachment-related anxiety mediated cultural differences in sensitivity to the disappearance of happiness (122 words).

Key words: culture, disappearance of smile, adjustment, attachment-related anxiety