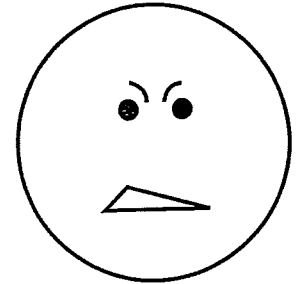
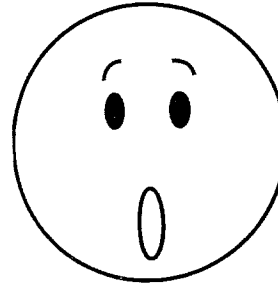
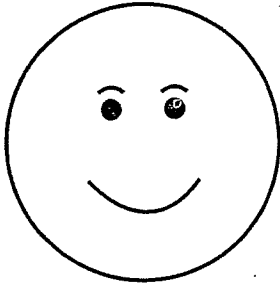


CASE STUDY

12

Facial Expressions

Directions: Read the following case study, then answer the questions that follow.



Emotions are expressed in a variety of ways. People from one culture may misunderstand the emotional expressions of people from other cultures. Studies of facial expressions have noted similarities and differences among cultures. For example, many similarities exist between the facial expressions of Americans and Japanese. Along with those similarities, researchers have noted some striking differences.

Research has identified seven universal facial expressions of emotion. People across cultures make the same basic facial expressions in reaction to anger, contempt, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. These facial expressions are theorized to be biologically innate in all people regardless of race, culture, or gender.

Hypothesis

Although the same basic facial expressions are used for the seven emotions, display rules within the culture affect how and when these expressions are made. These display rules vary widely among cultures. Specifically, there are marked differences between Japanese and American display rules.

Differences Between Cultures

When an emotion is sent to the brain to be processed, the signal is filtered through both the innate signal for the facial expression and the culturally accepted display rules learned during early childhood. The actual expression is a result of the innate signal and the learned display

rules. Cultures may affect the innate signal in five ways:

1. Deamplify the expression, which results in showing less emotion than is felt.
2. Neutralize the expression, which results in no facial expression even when one is felt.
3. Amplify the expression, which results in showing more emotion than what is felt.
4. Mask the expression, which results in showing something different than what you feel.
5. Blend expressions, which mixes two or more of the expressions at the same time.

Method

A study conducted by Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen used American and Japanese participants. In the study, the participants were asked to view extreme stress-inducing films including an amputation and a childbirth with forceps. The participants' facial expressions were videotaped without their knowledge. In the first series, participants viewed the videotapes alone. In the second series, participants viewed the stressful films again, but this time a higher-status experimenter was in the room with each participant.

Results

During the first series, both American and Japanese participants exhibited the same facial expressions, which included fear, disgust, sadness, and anger. This finding continues to

(continued)

support the findings that there are universal expressions.

During the second series, the presence of the experimenter had no effect on the facial expressions of the American participants. The Japanese participants, however, either displayed no emotion or smiled. These responses not only differed from their American counterparts, they were totally different from their initial responses to the same films.

Conclusions

The Americans had no culturally based display rule that was affected by the presence of the experimenter. The Japanese participants were reacting to the culturally based display rule that negative emotions are not shown in the presence of someone of higher status. This display rule caused them to mask their facial expressions.

Source: Matsumoto, D. (1996). *Unmasking Japan: Myths and Realities About the Emotions of the Japanese*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Understanding the Case Study

Directions: Answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. What has research indicated are the seven universal facial expressions?

2. How do researchers believe we acquire these seven universal facial expressions?

3. If there are universal facial expressions, what causes differences in the way emotions are expressed?

4. Name two of the five display rules.

5. According to this experiment what difference exists between the way in which Americans and Japanese express emotions?

Thinking Critically

Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

6. What display rules do Americans have?
7. How are display rules, like the Japanese rule in the study, formed?