

An early phase advantage in dynamic emotion recognition for gifted children? Evidence from an Italian sample.

Saturday, September 13, 2025 11:50 AM (10 minutes)

Literature suggests that gifted children outperform non-gifted peers in information processing tasks (Duan et al., 2013). Also, research shows that facial emotion recognition accuracy is affected by expression intensity (Jenness et al., 2015; Montirosso et al., 2010), which can be depicted as different amounts of information available for the observer during emotion recognition. To test if an information processing advantage for gifted children also exists in the emotional domain, in this study we compared gifted children's and a control peer group's performance on dynamic facial emotion recognition as expressed at different intensity levels (40%-100%). Participants (7-11 years old, N = 80, 45% female) completed the emotional recognition task (Kessels et al., 2014) involving six basic emotions (anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise) presented as morphed videoclips, that have to be labelled using a six-alternative forced choice response with no time restriction. A strong positive correlation between age and general accuracy was found within the whole sample, confirming that the ability develops progressively as children mature. Independent sample t-test results indicated that the gifted group shows significantly higher accuracy on disgust and surprise recognition, compared to the control group. Interaction effect group by intensity level was found, with gifted children reporting significantly better performance at low intensity (40%-60%) compared to controls, indicating that their advantage in information processing may be more detectable in the early phase of emotion expression, despite emotion's type. Future studies are needed to clarify the nature of these results.

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No

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Session Classification: Emotions and Motivations 3

Track Classification: Emotions and motivation