

# Talking about Emotions Using Culturally Sensitive AAC

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# Outline

- **Background**
- **Body of Evidence: Literature Review**
- **Recommendations: Cultural Considerations for Communication about Emotions using AAC**
- **Recent Research**
  - Early Development of Emotional Competencies (EDEC) tool



# Outline

- **Background**
  - Why culture should be considered in communication about emotions using AAC?
- Body of Evidence: Literature Review
- Recommendations: Cultural Considerations
- Recent Research



# Why Culture Should Be Considered in Communication about Emotions Using AAC?

- **Based on the evidence in AAC**

AAC

- Culturally appropriate graphic **symbol selection**  
(e.g., Bornman & Bryen, 2013; Huer, 2000; Llyod et al., 1997)
- Consideration of the level of **acculturation** in AAC research  
(e.g., Nigam, 2003; Huer, 2003)

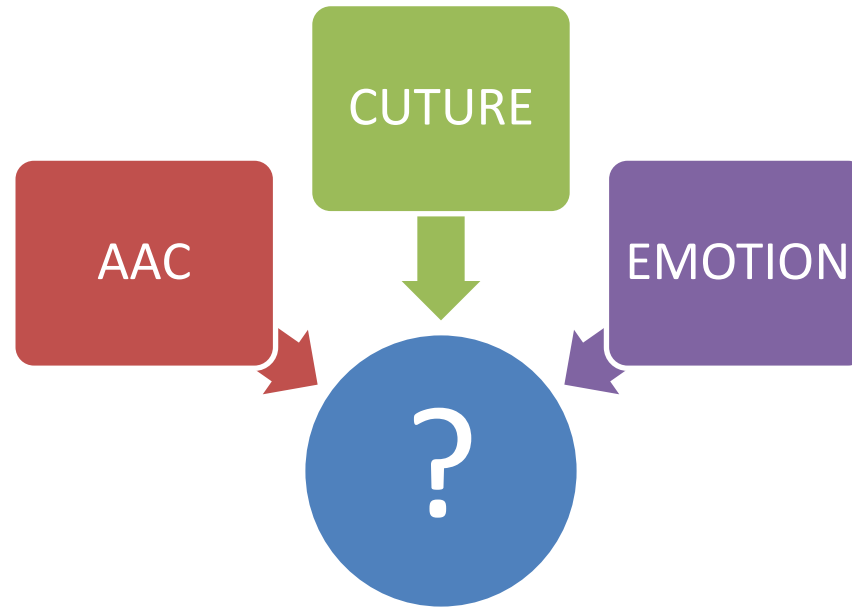
- **Based on the evidence in EMOTION**

EMOTION

- Emotion is **culturally grounded** for each individual  
(Ekman et al., 1987)
- Many **cross-cultural studies** on emotion recognition and expression  
(e.g., Beaupre & Hess, 2005; Koda et al., 2009; Yuki, et al., 2007)



# We need to know more...



- Very limited research on culture issue in communication about emotions using AAC



# Outline

- Background
- **Body of Evidence: Literature Review**
  - Cultural impacts on emotional competence
- Recommendations: Cultural Considerations for Communication about Emotions using AAC
- Recent Research

EMOTION

AAC



# Cultural Impacts on Emotional Competence

- **Adults**

(e.g., Efenbein & Ambadt, 2002; Imada & Ellsworth, 2011; Yuki, Maddux, & Masuda, 2007)

- **Many** studies on adults
- **Various** cultures
- Suggest cultural impacts on emotional **recognition** and **expression**



# Cultural Impacts on Emotional Competence (Cont.)

- **Specific to Children**

(Camras et al., 1998; Camras et al., 2007; Cole, Bruschi, & Tamang, 2002; Markham & Wang, 1996; Novin, Rieffe, & Mo, 2010; Raval et al., 2010)

- **Fewer** number of studies
- Suggested cultural impacts
  - **More** vs **less** expressive
  - **Direct** vs **Indirect** emotion expressions
  - Different **modes** of emotion expressions
    - Facial expressions, words, gestures, etc.
  - Different **appraisal**
    - Ways to interpret events & connect them to emotions





# Outline

- Background
- Body of Evidence: Literature Review
- **Recommendations: Cultural Considerations for Communication about Emotions Using AAC**
  - Emotion symbols
  - Communication about emotions using AAC
- Recent Research



# Culturally Sensitive Emotion Symbols

- **Design**

- Culturally sensitive emotion symbol design is one of the most effective ways to enhance the quality of emotion language use by **CLD AAC users** (Huer, 2000)
- Example

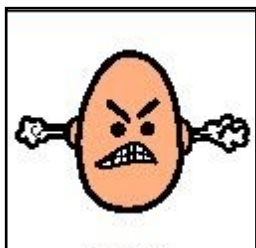


# Culturally Sensitive Emotion Symbols (Cont.)

- **Selection**

- More vs less expressive
- Aggressiveness & Assertiveness
- Example (Cole et al., 2002)

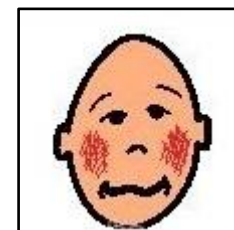
**Angry**



USA



“Your father spilt tea  
on your homework”



**Ashamed**

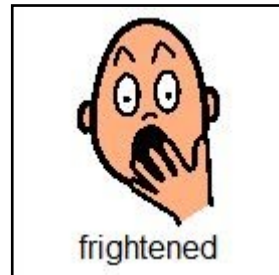
Nepal (Tamang)



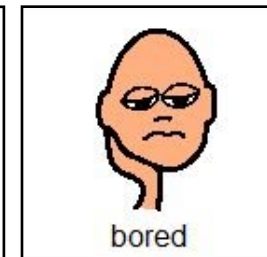
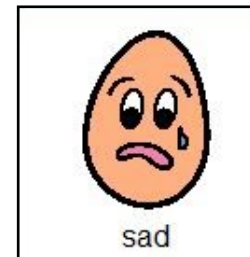
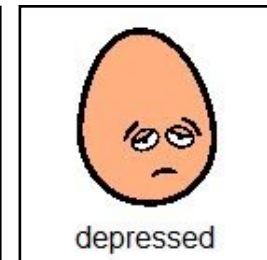
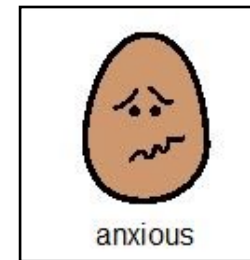
# Culturally Sensitive Emotion Symbols (Cont.)

- **Expectations**

- Emotions that are **acceptable** to talk about may differ depending on cultural backgrounds
- Emotions that are **preferred not to discuss** may differ depending on cultural backgrounds
- These expectations should be applied for not only emotion **expression**, but also **recognition**
- Examples



## Negative Emotions



# Culturally Sensitive Conversation about Emotions

- **3 Suggested Elements**

- Labeling

- Emotion **symbols**

- Validation

- Discussion about the **intensity** of the emotion
- Discussion about the **reason** for the emotion

- Response

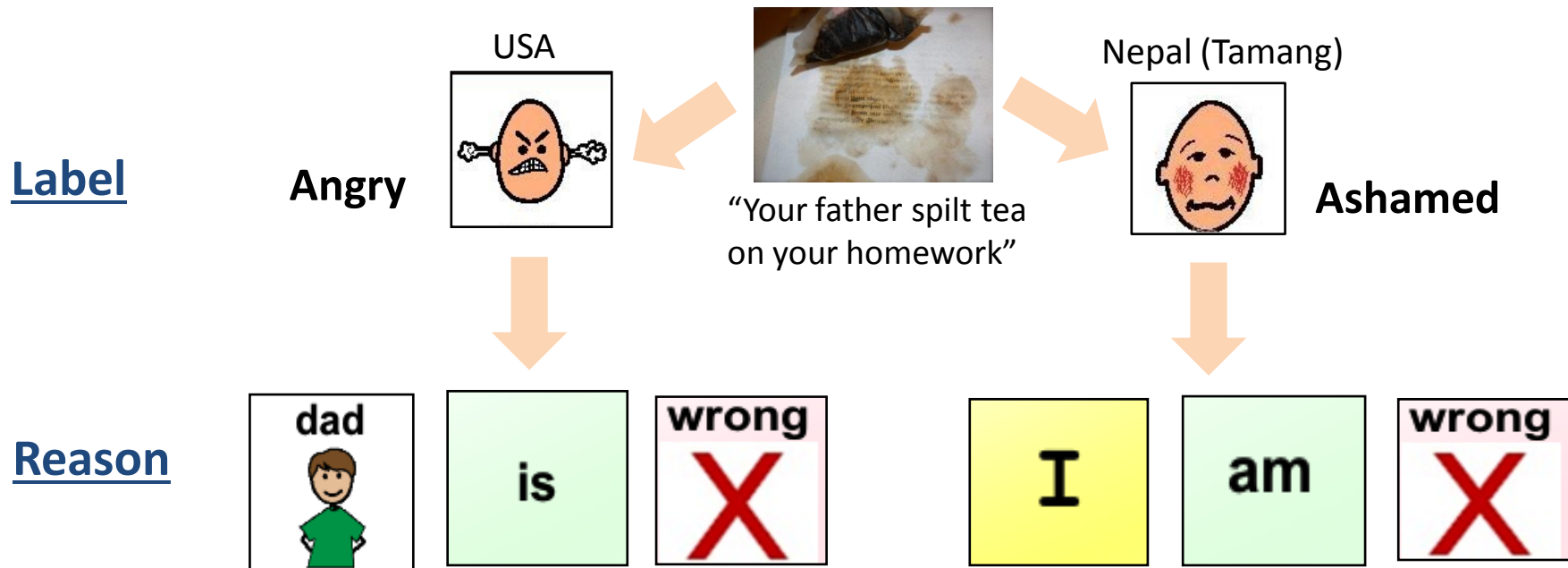
- Discussion about the **solution** for the emotion



# Culturally Sensitive Conversation about Emotions (Cont.)

- **Validation**

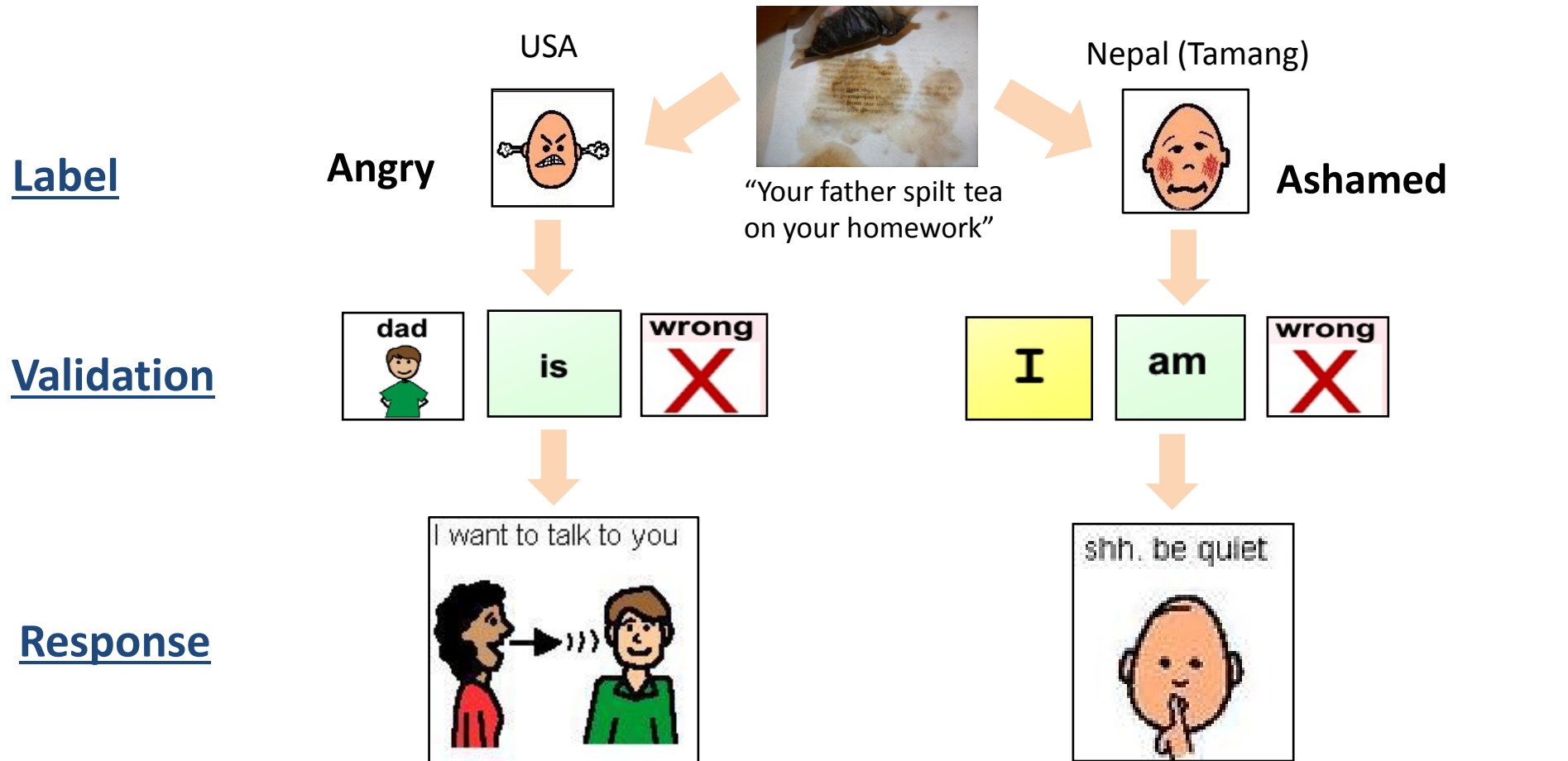
- The intensity of and the reason for the emotion may differ depending on the **audience** and the **situation** in diverse cultures
- Example (Cole et al., 2002)



# Culturally Sensitive Conversation about Emotions (Cont.)

- **Response (Solution for the emotion)**

- Example (Cole et al., 2002)



# Summary of Recommendations

## Cultural Considerations for Communication about Emotions Using AAC

### 1. Emotion Symbols

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>(1) Design</b>       | Design emotion symbols with cultural sensitivity                          |
| <b>(2) Selection</b>    | Select emotion symbols with cultural sensitivity                          |
| <b>(3) Expectations</b> | Have culturally appropriate expectations for a child's emotion symbol use |

### 2. Conversation about Emotions Using AAC

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>(1) Validation</b> | The intensity of and the reason for the emotion may differ depending on the audience and the situation in diverse cultures |
| <b>(2) Response</b>   | Consider that a child may want/need a different solution for the emotion depending on the cultural background              |





# “Small c” culture

- Diverse countries in one **culture**
- Diverse communities in one **country**
- Diverse **individuals** in one **community**
  
- Keep in mind that one child from a certain culture would have a **same/different** preference of emotion symbols and phrases with the other child with the identical cultural background



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- **Recent Research**



# Recent Research - EDEC tool

For parents and professionals

## Early Development of Emotional Competencies: A Tool for Children with Complex Communication Needs (CCN)

Na, Wilkinson, Epstein, Rangel, Townsend, Thistle, Feldman, Blackstone (2014)

Original version (2012)

Revised version (2013)

Current version (2014)



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# Recent Research - EDEC tool (Cont.)

- Interview with family and service professionals (24 Qs)
- **Descriptive Instrument**
  - NOT prescriptive purpose
  - NOT norm-referenced
- **Purposes**
  - Raise **Awareness** about the relation of language (including AAC) and emotional competence
  - Ensure a child's communication **intervention** includes language to discuss emotions
- **2 Field Tests**
  - Original version (2012) – Field test #1
  - Revised version (2013) – Field test #2
  - Current version (2014)



# Recent Research - EDEC tool (Cont.)

- **7 Languages**

- To provide culturally appropriate tool
- To increase awareness about culturally sensitive emotion language in AAC

학부모 및 전문가용

**아동 정서 능력 초기 발달:  
의사소통 장애 아동 대상 검사 도구**

Na, Wilkinon, Epstein, Rangel, Townsend, Thistle, Feldman, Blackstone 공저 (2014)

나지영 역  
초본 (2012)  
개정본 (2013)  
최종본 (2014)

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## Current

- Danish
- English
- German
- Korean
- Spanish

## Future

- Dutch
- French



- **Cross-cultural Study Using the EDEC tool**

- Study Objectives

- How does the tool **work** in general?
- Does the tool reveal systematic and expected variability (**cross-cultural** difference)?

- Participants

- Interviewed **American** (n=10) and **Korean** (n=10) parents
  - With young children (birth-10 years) who are typically developing

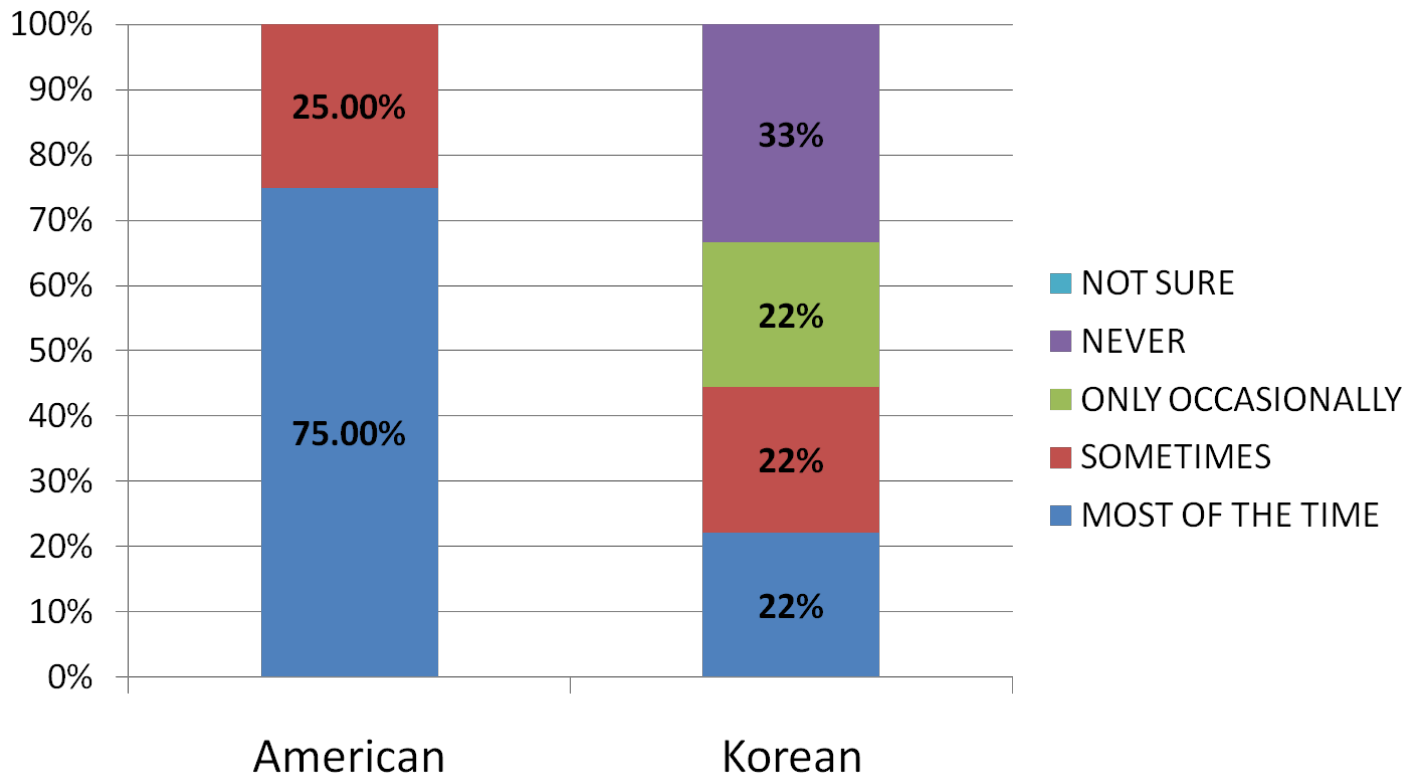
- Initial Results (Ongoing Study)

- **Two** of the interview questions
- But they illustrate potential **cultural differences**



# Parents' Prompting of Emotion Labeling

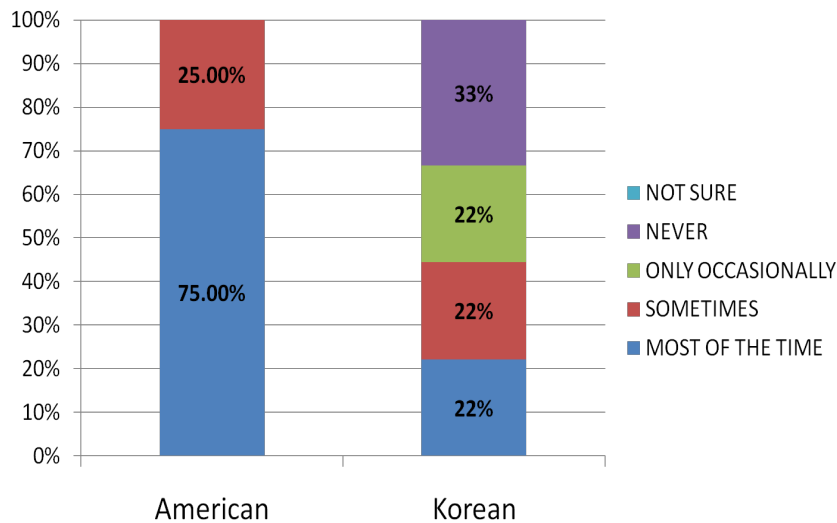
	MOST OF THE TIME	SOMETIMES	ONLY OCCASIONALLY	NEVER	NOT SURE	EXAMPLE
<p><b>6. Prompting by parent/caregiver for verbal labeling</b></p> <p><b>“Different families/caregivers may vary in how they prompt their children’s verbal labeling of emotion. How often do you try to get {name} to label his/her own emotions using words, signs, or symbols?”</b></p> <p><i>If the caregiver responds “sometimes” or “most of the time”, ask for an example.</i></p> <p><i>If the caregiver responds “occasionally” or “never”, ask: “Ok, thanks. What do you do instead?”</i></p>						



# Parents' Prompting of Emotion Labeling (Cont.)

## Reasons from American mothers (Majority = **most of the time**)

- “I am trying to let her know that it is **okay** to talk about feelings.”
- “I am doing this because this is the strategy I use for **myself**.”



## Reasons from Korean mothers (Majority = **sometimes or less**)

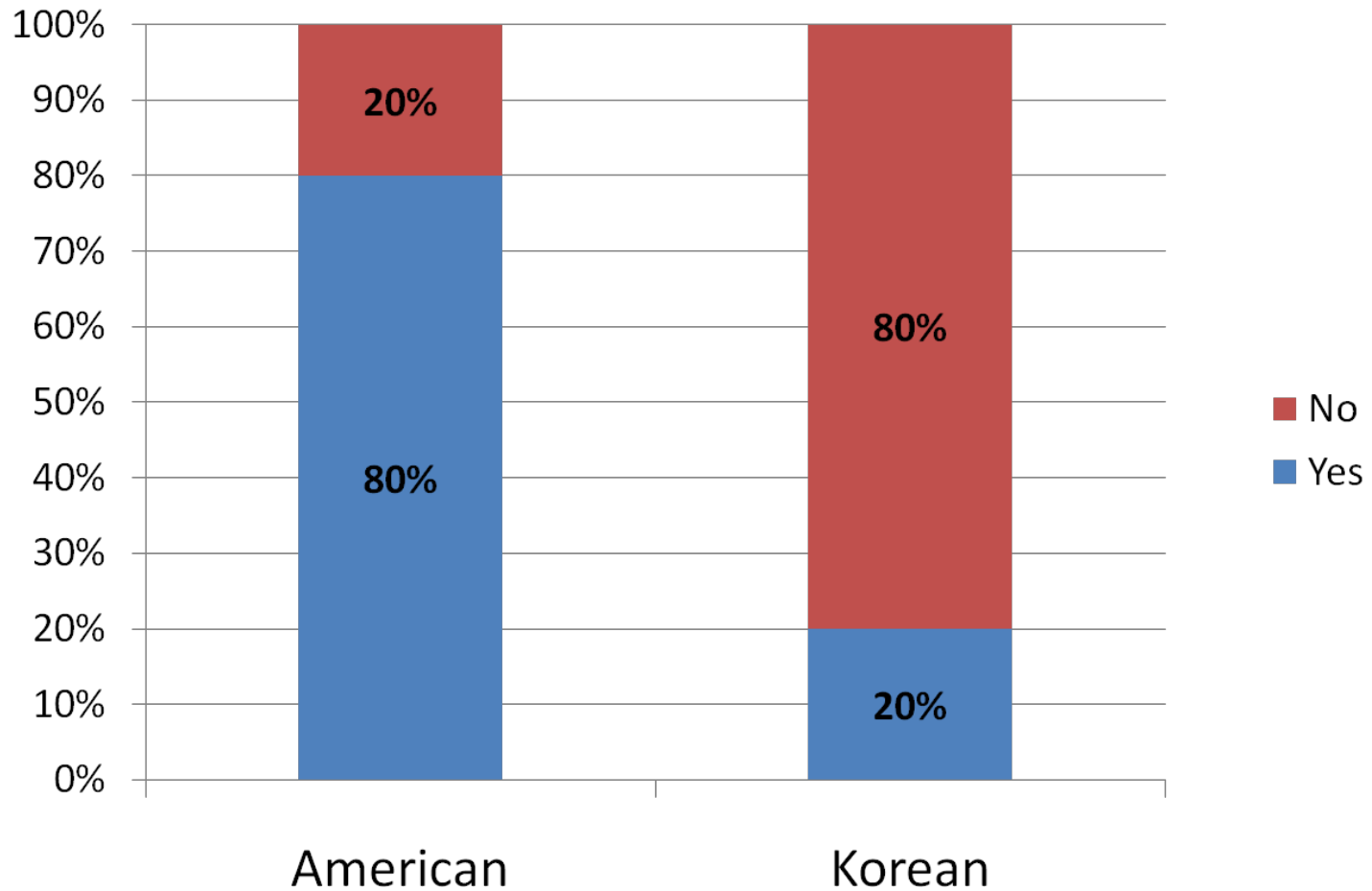
- “She is good at labeling her emotions **already**”
- “Because he is the **oldest** one, I often tell him not to express his feelings”





# Parents' Input about Emotions in Book

	YES	NO	EXAMPLE
<b>14. Interacting with media (books, videos, etc.) - input</b> <b>“When you are reading books or watching TV/movies, do you talk about the emotions that the characters are experiencing?”</b>			



# Parents' Input about Emotions in Book (Cont.)

## Reasons why not:

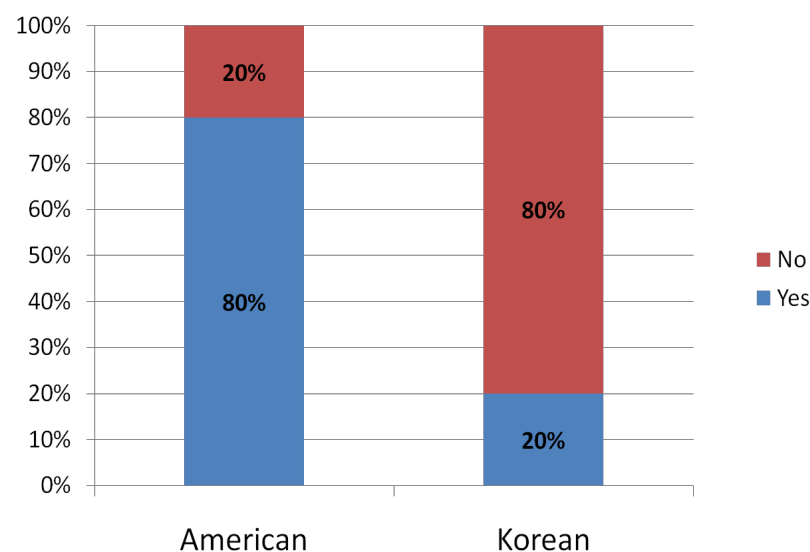
### American mothers (20%)

- “He is **old enough** to understand the character’s emotion”

## Reasons why not:

### Korean mothers (80%)

- “He is **old enough** to understand the emotions by himself”
- “He can read a book **by himself**”



# Conclusions / Future Directions

- **Importance**

- It is critical that individuals who use AAC have ways to communicate their own and others' feelings using **culturally appropriate** emotion language (AAC)
- They need culturally sensitive means to communicate about their **feelings** and **emotions, opinions, interests, and beliefs**

- **Current Efforts**

- We are trying to support **families** and **professionals** to have a better **awareness** about the need

- **Future Systematic Research: Needed**

- Directly evaluate the appropriateness of various types of **symbols & AAC practices**
- Determine whether these **speculations** are correct



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# Discussion

