Cultural Universals: Measuring the Semantic Structure of Emotion Terms in English and Japanese

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Research is presented on the semantic structure of 15 emotion terms as measured by judged-similarity tasks for monolingual English-speaking and monolingual and bilingual Japanese subjects. A major question is the relative explanatory power of a single shared model for English and Japanese versus culture specific models for each language. The data support a shared model for the semantic structure of emotion terms even though some robust and significant differences are found between English and Japanese structures. The Japanese bilingual subjects use a model more like English when performing tasks in English than when performing the same task in Japanese.