

Abstract

In daily life, people may share with the other's emotions. Notably, two types of mechanisms responsible for such emotional sharing were classified, namely emotional contagion and empathic emotion. The former refers to a bottom-up synchronization process while the latter refers to a top-down regulatory process with a recognition of the relationship between the person and the self. Perspective-taking was considered as a key player in emotional sharing.

By simulating the emotions of the other person, people can take their own perspective and appraise the emotional experience provoked by the other. This idea is supported in a previous study showing that people who manifested swift switch from allocentric to egocentric perspective in a visuospatial task endorsed intensified emotional feelings while seeing photos of people in an emotion-eliciting context. However, in the previous experiment, the relationship of the felt emotions to those people or the self was not specified. It remains unknown whether swift perspective switch is related to emotional contagion or empathic emotion. To address this gap, 57 college students were recruited for a social sharing experiment. Participants listened to a recording about a sharing of personal stress and rated their emotional contagion and empathic emotion. Results showed that efficient perspective switch was associated with stronger empathic emotion but not emotional contagion. Results support that swift perspective switch underlies empathic emotion.

*Keywords:* emotional sharing, empathic emotion, perspective-taking