The effects of gesture inhibition on lexical retrieval during speech production

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The development of speaking skills in a target language has long been a central issue in the minds of learners, teachers, and researchers. However, developing oral proficiency in a second language is not an easy task when the learners are not in the target language environment, since such learners have minimum exposure to the language and culture. Therefore, for EFL learners, finding the hermetic factors affecting English speaking proficiency is indispensable.

For that reason, a number of researchers have had a strong interest in exploring the effective factors for second language (L2) speech performance and found that gesture use may enhance speaking fluency because of their effects on lexical retrieval during speech production.

Based on the points above, this study examined the effect of restricting hand gestures on lexical retrieval during the English narrative task. Participants were advanced Japanese English learners whose TOEIC scores were between 860 and 990. They were engaged in two types of English narrative tasks: (a) describing the content of several cartoons in English using gestures freely, and (b) performing the same task as in (a), but using no gestures.

All their descriptions were video-recorded with their permission and transcribed verbatim. The result will be checked from following three points:
(1) Which task will enhance their speech fluency and how different are they?
(2) How much difference of the difficulties on lexical retrieval during speech production?
(3) Are there any correlation between the difficulties on lexical retrieval and gesture frequency

The results and discussion of this research will be informed in the next submission.

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