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Some reasons for studying gesture and second language acquisition  (Hommage a Adam Kendon)*/ MARIANNE GULLBERG

This paper outlines some reasons for why gestures are relevant to the study of SIA. First, given cross-cultural and cross-linguistic gestural repertoires, gestures can be treated as part of what learners can acquire in a target language. Gestures can therefore be studied as a developing system in their own right both in L2 production and comprehension. Second, because of the close link between gestures, language, and speech, learners’ gestures as deployed in L2 usage and interaction can offer valuable insights into the processes of acquisition, such as the handling of expressive difficulties, the influence of the first language, interlanguage phenomena, and possibly even into planning and processing difficulties. As a form of input to learners and to their interlocutors alike, finally, gestures also play a potential role for comprehension and learning.
The purpose of this study is to investigate how learners of Japanese as a second language (n=16) and Japanese native speakers (n=17) interpret a Japanese refusal gesture, the so-called Hand Fan, to observe how these interpretations are accompanied by similar manual gestures, and to see how participants perceive its comprehensibility. Results indicate that learners are significantly poorer than native speakers at interpreting this uniquely Japanese refusal gesture, although there was no significant difference between the two groups in their judgments of the difficulty to interpret the Hand Fan gesture. This suggests that the acquisition of allegedly simple conventional gestures may not be so easy for language learners either for reception or production.
Thinking for speaking about motion: L1 and L2 speech and gesture*/ Gale Stam

It has been claimed that speakers of Spanish and English have different patterns of thinking for speaking about motion both linguistically and gesturally (Stam 1998, McNeill and Duncan 2000, McNeill 2000; Kellerman and van Hoof 2003, Neguerela et al. 2004). For example, Spanish speakers’ path gestures tend to occur with path verbs, while English speakers tend to occur with satellites (adverbs or prepositions) and verbs + satellites. What happens when Spanish speakers learn English, where do their gestures occur? Also, what do their gestures tell us that their speech alone does not? To investigate these questions, this study examines the use of 'path' gestures in motion event narrations of a group of native Spanish speakers, a group of native English speakers, and two groups of Spanish learners of English (intermediate and advanced). L2 learners' gestures revealed L1 thinking for speaking patterns with grammatically correct and fluent L2 speech.
In the field of second language acquisition (SIA) and use, learners' gestures have mainly been regarded as a type of communication strategy produced to replace missing words. However, the results of the analyses conducted here on the way in which Dutch learners of Japanese introduce Ground reference in speech and gesture in narrative show that the two modes of expression are closely related in L1 as well as in L2. First, cross-linguistic variation is observed in both modes of expression, with a tendency for native speakers of Japanese to allocate on-line attention to Ground in both speech and gesture. Second, Dutch learners of Japanese prefer to adopt rhetorical styles more similar to their L1 than the L2 target, and the accompanying gestures are more L1-like. Transfer of L1 to L2 in narrative and the relationship between speech and gesture will be discussed.
This study investigated the use of beat gestures (typically the sharp up-and-down movement of the hand) in conjunction with L2 speech production. The L2 participant, although in conversation with another person, synchronized his beats with the parsing of his words into syllables. Based on Gal'perin's formulation for the process of internalization, that the ideal or mental plane is built upon activity in the physical world (material plane), it is argued that the L2 participant deployed this metaphoric form of gesture as a multimodal, actional representation of syllabification to both externalize the phenomena to gain control over it (self-regulation) and to help solidify a conceptual foundation for this aspect of the underlying rhythmic pulse of English. Moreover, it is speculated that movement itself might prove to be part of SIA, that it establishes a physicalized (kinesic) sense of prosodic features of the L2, promoting automaticity and fluency.
This study explores the meanings that learners of English as a foreign language give to teachers' gestures. It is a qualitative, descriptive study of the perceived functions that gestures perform in the EFL classroom, viewed mainly from the language learners' perspective. The data for the study was collected through interviews with twenty-two adult learners based on a stimulated recall methodology (Gass and Mackay, 2000). Findings indicate that learners generally believed that gestures and other non-verbal behaviours play a key role in the language learning process. Learners identified three types of functions that gestures play in EFL classroom interaction: (i) cognitive, i.e., gestures which work as enhancers of the learning processes, (ii) emotional, i.e., gestures that function as reliable communicative devices of teachers' emotions and attitudes and (iii) organisational, i.e., gestures which serve as tools of classroom management. These findings suggest that learners interpret teachers' gestures in a functional manner and use these and other non-verbal messages and cues in their learning and social interaction with the teacher: