

## The Effect of Iconic and Beat Gestures on Memory Recall in Greek's First and Second Language

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**Abstract :** Gestures play a major role in comprehension and memory recall due to the fact that aid the efficient channel of the meaning and support listeners' comprehension and memory. In the present study, the assistance of two kinds of gestures (iconic and beat gestures) is tested in regards to memory and recall. The hypothesis investigated here is whether or not iconic and beat gestures provide assistance in memory and recall in Greek and in Greek speakers' second language. Two groups of participants were formed, one comprising Greeks that reside in Athens and one with Greeks that reside in Copenhagen. Three kinds of stimuli were used: A video with words accompanied with iconic gestures, a video with words accompanied with beat gestures and a video with words alone. The languages used are Greek and English. The words in the English videos were spoken by a native English speaker and by a Greek speaker talking English. The reason for this is that when it comes to beat gestures that serve a meta-cognitive function and are generated according to the intonation of a language, prosody plays a major role. Thus, participants that have different influences in prosody may generate different results from rhythmic gestures. Memory recall was assessed by asking the participants to try to remember as many words as they could after viewing each video. Results show that iconic gestures provide significant assistance in memory and recall in Greek and in English whether they are produced by a native or a second language speaker. In the case of beat gestures though, the findings indicate that beat gestures may not play such a significant role in Greek language. As far as intonation is concerned, a significant difference was not found in the case of beat gestures produced by a native English speaker and by a Greek speaker talking English.

**Keywords :** first language, gestures, memory, second language acquisition

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