

Critical Appraisal Form

Date: 24-Oct-23

Members in Discussion: 5

Article:

Bragard, A., Schelstraete, M. (2022). Using Gestures to Help Children With Developmental Language Disorder in Word Learning. *Canadian Journal of Speech Language Pathology and Audiology*, 47, 79-93.

Summary: This study aimed to investigate the affect of gesture on the word learning of children diagnosed with DLD in comparison to typically developing children. Research goals: 1 – Will children with TD and children with DLD benefit from gesture in comparison to control condition (no gesture)? 2 - Will the children benefit more from iconic gestures than from arbitrary gestures? 3 - Will children with TD and children with DLD perform differently, suggesting a variable benefit of gestures?

Participants were 30 French-speaking children, aged 6-10, divided into 3 subgroups: Children with DLD; Age Matched TD Children; Language Matched Children (with DLD group).

Method: Participants were taught 15 two-syllable new phonological labels (non-words) for common concepts. 5 words were randomly selected per 3 conditions: Iconic gestures, arbitrary gestures and no gestures. Participants attended 4 x 30 min sessions. In each session, a child was taught 5 novel words, followed by a test phase. All children participated in each experimental condition.

Results: Performance was better for the two conditions using gestures in comparison to the no-gesture condition. There was no significant difference in test scores between iconic and arbitrary gestures. Children with DLD and those in the Language Matched group performed similarly. Children in the Age Matched TD group showed higher performance.

Strengths and Limitations of research article:

Members found the research method to be methodical and the article to be written with clarity; Only fast mapping, and short term outcomes included in data; A small number of items per condition and small sample size; Children performing the gestures themselves were not included in the study.

	Compelling	Suggestive	Equivocal/Uncertain
Validity		X	
Clinical importance		X	

Clinical Implications/Discussion:

- For members, this article served as a reminder of the benefits of gesture for word learning
- Members discussed interesting points the article raised about iconic vs. arbitrary gesture. Findings suggested that the benefit of gestures in general, and iconic vs. arbitrary gestures may show varying benefits for different age groups
- Members discussed that the iconicity of the gesture (vs. arbitrary) may not be as important as members might have expected
- Members expressed interest in additional research in this area, including, the addition of photo/drawing/pictogram in teaching, slow mapping and outcomes measured over the longer term, having the children perform the gesture also, presenting new concepts as target words, testing receptive language outcomes, and exploring outcomes RE whether the children are informed they will be tested or not.