

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

Access to inner language enhances memory for events

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7zv3w7n2>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 46(0)

Authors

Connell, Louise

Banks, Briony

Publication Date

2024

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

Access to inner language enhances memory for events

Louise Connell

Maynooth University, Maynooth, Ireland

Briony Banks

Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom

Abstract

We investigated whether inner language enhances memory for events in a naturalistic, non-verbal task where participants constructed simple models from memory after watching an instructional video. Across three experiments, we used linguistic suppression to manipulate access to language and tested its effect on overall memory performance. Results showed that access to inner language consistently affected event memory: when inner language was disrupted at encoding, participants were poorer at recalling the models and remembered fewer events. Critically, the effect of linguistic suppression on memory performance was greater than a control secondary task that did not affect access to language (i.e., poorer performance was not solely due to dual-task effects). These findings support the proposal that inner language enhances event memory via a mechanism of linguistic bootstrapping, which in turn extends theories of event memory and adds to a growing body of evidence that inner language is a highly valuable cognitive tool.