

Imagining activities: The role of perspective and grammatical aspect

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Abstract: The ability to imagine events is important to regular thought processes such as remembering and understanding the world in general. Two EEG experiments were conducted to investigate the difficulty associated with imagining activities from different visual perspectives. Experiment 1 involved participants imagining ongoing activities (e.g., I was skating) from a first and third person perspective. Experiment 2 involved completed activities (I skated) and also included a condition in which participants imagined other people from a third person perspective (Karen skated). Slow cortical brain potentials revealed that the third-person perspective was generally the most difficult to imagine and that the third-person-self perspective was more difficult than the third-person-other perspective. Imagining activities as ongoing or completed did not influence the pattern of results. This research provides novel neurocognitive and behavioural insight into how event representation is influenced by temporal information associated with verbs and the perspective from which an event is represented.