

Gestures Change Minds

By Bodo Winter, Featured Speaker at the 2019
KOTESOL Intl. Conference

I can't wait to be back in Korea! I attended my first KOTESOL conference in 2017 and remember feeling inspired by the warm and welcoming community. Having taught English in Korea more than a decade ago, KOTESOL has a special place in my heart as it allows me to re-connect with Korean culture and as it allows me to observe the changes that have happened in English education over the years.

I am now coming back to give several talks, including a talk on my research that looks at the importance of gesture and body movements, and its relevance for language learning. There is a wealth of evidence showing that gestures are integral to successful communication. To give you just one example, see whether you can answer the following question:

"Next Wednesday's meeting has been moved forward two days; what day is the meeting on now?"

It turns out that both "Monday" and "Friday" are

and English-speaking friends!

The study of gesture brings linguistic research closer to how language learning actually happens in the classroom, where students and teachers naturally use their bodies to communicate with each other just as much as they use language. Some research suggests that the gestures that teachers use have a deep impact on student learning success, and there are also studies that suggest it is important for students to be able to gesture themselves, as doing so helps them to form richer memories of concepts. At KOTESOL, I am excited to be learning about new developments in teaching and education to see what role gesture could play there.

In addition, I will give two more career-focused talks. One will be on the MA Applied Linguistics and MA TESOL distance learning programs [University of Birmingham, UK] – come if you are interested in pursuing a degree with us to hear about the structure of our program! In addition, I will be giving a talk entitled "How to Publish Your Research in International Journals, Conference Proceedings, and Books." Having published research can be a major boost to your career. As a general editor of the journal *Language and Cognition*, and having published more than 50 research papers and book chapters, and two books, I want to share some of my experience about the pitfalls of the publication process and give you ideas for how to pick the publication outlet, prepare your manuscript, and so on.

I can't wait to have another intellectually engaging time and learn from everybody at this year's KOTESOL conference!



possible answers, with about 50 percent of all English speakers saying "Monday," and about 50 percent saying "Friday." The surprising thing is that when you ask the question while moving your hand away from your torso, a listener is much more likely to respond "Friday," and if your hand is moving toward your torso, "Monday" is a much more likely response. The research thus shows that gesture can push you into different directions along the timeline, which is a demonstration of how body movements can completely alter the meaning of a message. Try this out with your students

The Author

Bodo Winter is a featured speaker at the 2019 KOTESOL International Conference. He is a lecturer at the Department of English Language and Linguistics at the University of Birmingham, UK, and is excited to be joining us for this year's KOTESOL conference.

