

ESL Korean Learners' Decision-making Processes in Speech Act Performance

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This paper investigated the ESL Korean learners' decision-making processes involved in the realization of the speech act of requests with the use of immediate retrospection as a data-gathering method. In a study conducted with 30 upper-intermediate and advanced Korean learners of ESL, each learner was asked to participate in a discourse completion test (DCT), and immediately after the completion of each item of DCT, to retrospect about what he/she had been doing and thinking when performing requests in a given item (situation). Content analysis of the retrospective verbal data was done, and six different categories were developed: assessment of situation, monitoring for appropriate sociolinguistic expressions, use of requesting skills, connection to personal life, cross-cultural comparison, and monitoring for language forms. The findings of the study suggested that the Korean learners were engaged in a variety of mental activities and underwent various, complex cognitive processes occurring in request realizations.