

# **The effects of the theme of conversation and the place of expedition on the mental time of participants of coimagination method with expedition**

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Dementia is not a normal part of ageing, but it mainly affects older adults. Hence, along with the rapid growth of ageing population, the number of people with dementia is also anticipated to increase. In the early stage of dementia, episodic memory, divided attention and planning functions start declining. Among episodic memory functions, recent episodic memory function declines first. In order to prevent the decline caused by disuse and to train the recent episodic memory function, the coimagination method with expedition is developed. In this method, there are two sessions, an expedition and a conversation session supported by coimagination method. Firstly, the expedition helps participants to face new experiences and to find topics of conversation. Secondly, coimagination method is a method of group conversation based on photos, with designated time limit and theme. The expected effects of this method are that participants utilize the functions of memorizing, retention and recall of recent episodes about expedition during conversation. When participants talk about recent experiences, they make use of their recent episodic memory functions so as to reduce the risk of decline. Based on the previous study, instead of the experiences of expedition, there are some participants of coimagination method with expedition who talk about past experiences. We need to determine what reminds participants of recent or past episodes.

The purpose of this study is to determine the suitable criteria of coimagination method with expedition to help participant utilize recent episodic memory functions during conversation by talking about recent episodes. We analyzed conversation data supported by coimagination method with expedition, by classifying the mental time of participants based on their utterances. Mental time is a time consciousness of human over past, present and future. The mental time travelling allows human to mentally travel into

“nonpresent” time. Human mentally travels backward when thinking about past experiences. In this study, with the purpose of training recent episodic memory function, mental time travelling to the “past” for a long time is undesirable. We investigated the effects of the theme of conversation and the place of expedition on the mental time of participants of coimagination method with expedition. Based on the results of analysis, the recommended theme of conversation and place of expedition as follows in order to prompt older adult to talk about the recent episodes:

(1) The designated theme of conversation supported by coimagination method should be specific and detailed. If the theme is vague, it prompts the participants to connect their imagination to the past experiences.

(2) The place of expedition should be the place which is the first time visit for the participants. If the place had been visited by participants before, it helps participants to recall past experiences, and prompts them to talk about past experiences.