CONTRIBUTIONS OF INTERPRETING TRAINING TO

BILINGUALS' ATTENTIONAL NETWORKS AND THEIR DYNAMICS

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Interpreting, a complicated and demanding bilingual task, depends heavily on attentional control. Interpreters' limited attention is severely saturated and taxed at the listening, reformulation, and production phases to successfully fulfill this task. However, few studies have focused on the interpreters' advantages in attention, and the findings so far have been inconsistent. Meanwhile, the connection between attentional networks and other cognitive abilities, such as working memory (WM), has rarely been explored in interpreters.

The present study investigated whether interpreting experience (IE) contributed to the attentional networks of bilinguals and explored the link between interpreters' attention and WM. To this end, we recruited three groups of late Chinese-English bilinguals with different amounts of interpreting training experience: the More-IE group, the Less-IE group, and the No-IE group. The More-IE group and the Less-IE group were second-year postgraduate students majoring in English interpreting and translation, with the former having completed a greater number of interpreting courses and after-class practice during their first year of postgraduate study. The No-IE group was a control group comprising second-year postgraduate students majoring in English literature. The three groups were matched in their L2 experiences, as measured by the Language History Questionnaire (LHQ 3.0) and the Oxford Quick Placement Test, except for their interpreting training experiences.

We performed the Attention Network Test (ANT) and the Automated Operation Span Task to probe into participants' three attentional networks (the alerting, orienting and executive networks) and working memory capacity (WMC). Results showed that only the alerting network was more efficient in the More-IE group than in the Less-IE and No-IE groups. Moreover, the dynamics between the alerting and executive networks were was significant only in the More-IE group. Specifically, the More-IE group exhibited a larger executive effect in the presence of an alerting cue. Furthermore, we found a negative correlation between the executive effect and WMC in the More-IE group. Our study provided empirical support for the Attentional Control Model (Dong and Li 2020), stimulating further research into the role of attentional control in interpreting.