

ON THE WAY TO AN INTERPRETER ADVANTAGE IN COORDINATION: EVIDENCE FROM INTERPRETING STUDENTS ACROSS DIFFERENT TRAINING STAGES

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Abstract: Despite extensive discussions on interpreter advantages in nonverbal abilities/skills, the advantage in coordination remains underexplored, with little evidence from interpreting students across different training stages. To fill the gap, the present study conducted two experiments with the Psychological Refractory Period dual-task consisting of two discrimination tasks presented either alone or together. Smaller dual-task costs in Task 1 and/or Task 2 are considered indices for better coordination (with smaller costs restricted to Task 2 further suggesting better bottleneck coordination). Experiment 1, focusing on the intermediate training stage, revealed a bottleneck coordination advantage for interpreting students over controls, which differs from the task instantiation and/or bottleneck access advantage found for professional interpreters in Strobach et al. (2015). Experiment 2, focusing on the beginning stage, revealed no group differences between controls and interpreting students with less/more training (Experiment 2a/2b respectively), suggesting no evidence for an interpreter advantage in coordination. Developmental changes are discussed.

Keywords: interpreter advantage; dual-task; coordination skill; bottleneck switching; developmental change