

Testing the Impact of Formal Interpreting Training on Working Memory Capacity: Evidence from Turkish-English Student-Interpreters

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Abstract : The research presents two studies examining the impact of formal interpreting training (FIT) on Working Memory Capacity (WMC) of student-interpreters. In Study 1, the storage and processing capacities of the working memory (WM) of last-year student-interpreters were compared with those of last-year Foreign Language Education (FLE) students. In Study 2, the impact of FIT on the WMC of student-interpreters was examined via comparing their results on WM tasks at the beginning and the end of their FIT. In both studies, Digit Span Task (DST) and Reading Span Task (RST) were utilized for testing storage and processing capacities of WM. The results of Study 1 revealed that the last-year student-interpreters outperformed the control groups on the RST but not on the DST. The findings of Study 2 were consistent with Study 1 showing that after FIT, the student-interpreters performed better on the RST but not on the DST. Our findings can be considered as evidence supporting the view that FIT has a beneficial effect not only on the interpreting skills of student-interpreters but also on the central executive and processing capacity of their WM.

Keywords : working memory capacity, formal interpreting training, student-interpreters, cross-sectional and longitudinal data

Conference Title : ICLLA 2018 : International Conference on Linguistics and Language Acquisition

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : June 03-04, 2018