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Attention Bottleneck in Dual Task Performance Related to Simultaneous Interpreting

Studies of simultaneous interpreting present two main approaches towards multitasking: an idea of shared mental capacity, reflected i.e. in Gile's effort model (1995, 1997), and fast-switching models, described mainly by Seeber (2011). Psychological studies reveal, that whenever two simultaneous actions require the same type of processing, the phenomenon of attention bottleneck occurs, leading to a delayed response to the second task, and to fast switching between the actions (Pashler 1994, Arnell 2002).
The aim of this study was to examine the occurrence of attention bottlenecks in a dual-task performance. A group of conference interpreting students performed a series of responses to a single stimulus, and to two cross-modal stimuli appearing at various intervals, in order to define whether a shorter interval would result in a longer reaction time to the second stimulus. The results contribute to the bottleneck research and studies related both to dual-task performance and simultaneous interpreting process.