

口译学能测试中的坚韧性人格研究

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口译学能测试中的坚韧性人格研究

The Effects of Personality Hardiness on Interpreting Performance: Implications for Aptitude Testing for Interpreting

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Abstract

Interpreters are made not born (Mackintosh, 1999: 67). It is believed that everybody has the potential to become an interpreter after training. Nonetheless, time constraints and financial limitations make it advisable to select applicants who need the least training. Aptitude testing for interpreting, with a purpose to admit the most promising candidates, has thus become not only a practical necessity for institutions, but also a concerned issue among interpreting researchers. Literature review and empirical survey discover that aptitude testing for interpreting attaches great importance to cognitive aptitude, such as language transfer, comprehension, analysis and the like, which is characterized by being standardized, quantified, replicable. Most importantly, it determines success or failure of a specific task. Comparatively, non-cognitive attributes, personality in particular, albeit recognized as important, are seldom measured, due to their complex structure and shortage of scientific measurement tools. Bearing this void in mind, I intend to focus this dissertation on the research of personality traits in aptitude testing for interpreting, with an aim to expand objective ways of testing candidates for the requisite knowledge and skills.

Personality hardiness, underpinning in existential psychology, is such a vital and valuable personality trait for interpreters. With a constellation of three crucial characteristics, namely, Commitment, Control, and Challenge, personality hardiness is presented as facilitating perception, evaluation and coping that lead to successful resolution of the situation created by stressful events. It not only contributes to decreasing physical and psychological illness, but also conduces to improving performance under stress in a wide range of contexts from the military to medical schools, and to colleges.

Interpreting is a highly stress-provoking activity and interpreters normally work under great pressure. Accordingly, an ideal interpreter is expected to possess personality traits of “stress-resistance”, “resilience”, “psychological stamina” and

“nerves of steel”, to name but a few. Apparently, personality hardiness shares similarities with the aforementioned aptitudes. Indeed, available research reveals that it is a better predictor of effective coping with stressful circumstances. Hence, I attempt to borrow this useful psychological concept—personality hardiness to interpreting studies, exploring whether it facilitates the performance of interpreters as it does among lawyers, military cadets, nurses, teachers and so forth.

Since the current research is an exploratory study of the relations between personality hardiness and interpreting performance, it is worthwhile to investigate whether there lies a mediator or moderator to affect this relationship. Given the Hardiness Model that it is via alleviating stress that hardiness enhances performance, as well as the evidence that hardiness and self-efficacy are intimately associated, this dissertation is devoted to an empirical investigation into the effects of personality hardiness on interpreting performance, with interpreting anxiety and self-efficacy as two intermediates. Toward this end, a quantitative method of questionnaire survey and a qualitative in-depth interview are adopted amongst 149 Chinese student interpreters at postgraduate level.

In this dissertation, Chapter 1 presents a succinct introduction to the research motives, questions and methodology. In Chapter 2 and 3, relevant literature is thoroughly and critically reviewed, and a research framework is clearly unfolded. Chapter 4 introduces in details the research design, hypotheses, data collection procedures and analysis methods, followed by Chapter 5 in which findings pertaining to each hypothesis are presented. In Chapter 6, an elaborated discussion on the effects of personality hardiness on interpreting performance, self-efficacy as well as interpreting anxiety is provided. With the substantiated effectiveness, a framework for personality hardiness measurement in aptitude testing for interpreting is tentatively proposed in Chapter 7, aligned with a detailed illustration on measuring tools and procedures. Chapter 8 concludes the dissertation with a summary of major findings, significance and suggestions for follow-up endeavors in the future.

The major findings of the current research are: firstly, personality hardiness, interpreting anxiety, self-efficacy and interpreting performance are interrelated.

Specifically, personality hardiness is significantly negatively correlated with interpreting anxiety and positively related to self-efficacy and interpreting performance; secondly, personality hardiness is of significant predictability on interpreting performance, interpreting anxiety and self-efficacy respectively; thirdly, interpreting anxiety and self-efficacy play a mediating role in personality hardiness and interpreting performance linkages separately, which indicate, in addition to a direct correlation with interpreting performance, personality hardiness influences students' interpreting performance via relieving interpreting anxiety and enhancing sense of self-efficacy.

The present investigation reveals that personality hardiness is a valuable trait to student interpreters. By presenting systematically the effects of personality hardiness on interpreting performance, this dissertation is believed to contribute theoretical as well as empirical stepping stones to understanding the position of personality hardiness in aptitude testing for interpreting, providing the stake-holders with insights or blueprints in selecting the most teachable candidates for interpreting training programs. In addition, findings of this dissertation will shed light on personality dispositions research on interpreter performance, injecting fresh impetus to embark on a new research agenda designed to further understanding of hardiness-performance linkages in interpreters. Finally, this study, taking an interdisciplinary viewpoint of and drawing a heavy load of scholarship from research on psychology and second language acquisition, will in return lend itself to these flourishing domains in one way or another.

Key words: interpreting; aptitude testing; personality hardiness; interpreting anxiety; self-efficacy

摘要

口译员并非天生，通过专业训练，人人皆有可能成为译员。但时间和教育资源有限，越来越多的学校采用学能测试甄选申请者。文献回顾及实证调查发现，在口译学能测试中，人们普遍更加重视诸如双语转换能力、理解、分析等认知技能的考查，而忽视了针对申请者的非认知能力，尤其是人格特征的科学测量。

坚韧性人格是一种极具价值的人格特征。它具有三个维度——承诺、控制与挑战。承诺指个体全身心投入生活和工作，享受乐趣、探究意义；控制指在不利条件下，个体具备通过自身行动改变事态发展的信念，对不利事件施加正面影响；挑战则是个体在积极或消极经验中学习，将变化视为自我成长的机遇。坚韧性人格使个体在高压情境下仍能保持身心健康，促进其行为表现，是从事高压职业人员应具备的人格。

口译是一项特殊的语言交际活动，其现场性、时限性和不可预测性决定了它的高压力性。因此，口译员应具有“抗压”、“有毅力”“有心理弹性”等特征。研究表明，坚韧性人格不仅与上述特征紧密相关，而且是应对压力的有效预测指标。本文试图将这一心理学概念引入口译研究领域，探究其对译员表现的作用和影响机制，阐释其在口译学能测试中的独特功能和重要意义。

鉴于坚韧性人格与焦虑缓解和自我效能感之间存在密切联系，本文将口译焦虑与自我效能感作为中间变量纳入研究范畴。因此，本文的实证部分主要考察坚韧性人格对口译表现的影响及口译焦虑与自我效能感在此影响中的中介作用。我们对 149 名中国口译学习者进行问卷调查和深度访谈。研究发现如下：

首先，坚韧性人格、口译焦虑、自我效能感和口译表现具有相关性。坚韧性人格与口译焦虑呈显著负相关，与自我效能感和口译表现呈显著正相关。这表明坚韧性越高的学生受口译焦虑影响越小，具有更强的自我效能感，口译表现则更突出。

其次，坚韧性人格对口译表现、口译焦虑和自我效能感均具有预测效度。多元回归分析显示，坚韧性人格中的承诺和挑战两个维度对口译表现产生显著的正向预测作用，解释口译表现总变异的 14.3%。挑战和控制维度对口译焦虑产生显著的反向预测作用，共同解释口译焦虑总变异的 12%。此外，挑战、控制和韧性

维度对自我效能感产生显著的正向预测作用，解释自我效能感总变异的 42%。

再次，口译焦虑在坚韧性人格对口译表现的影响中起部分中介作用，中介效应占总效应的 21.46%。这说明坚韧性人格除了直接影响口译表现，还会在一定程度上通过降低个体的口译焦虑水平，达到提升口译表现的效果。

最后，在坚韧性人格中的承诺维度与口译表现的关系中，自我效能感发挥部分中介作用，中介效应占总效应比值为 21.39%。这表明坚韧性人格通过承诺维度提高学习者的自我效能感，从而促进口译表现。

本文的主体研究验证了坚韧性人格对于口译学习者的价值，证实其不仅能有效预测和影响口译表现，还有助于缓解口译焦虑、提高学习者自我效能感。因此我们建议在口译学能测试中增设对申请者的坚韧性人格的考查，使其作为认知潜能测试的有效辅助手段，以甄选具有学习潜能的申请者，从而提高口译培训质量与成功率。本文在结尾部分通过界定坚韧性人格的测量框架、工具和步骤，试图为口译学能测试以及口译学习者和口译员的筛选提供参照。

通过全面考察坚韧性人格对口译表现的影响，本文将为人们更好理解非认知因素在口译活动中的作用提供新的理论视角和实证支持。此外，本文的研究发现亦可对口译教学和实践提供启示与借鉴。最后，本研究采用跨学科研究视角与分析方法，借鉴心理学和二语习得学科理论，其发现也必将反哺以上学科领域的研究。

关键词：口译；学能测试；坚韧性人格；口译焦虑；自我效能感

Table of Contents

Abstract	I
摘要	IV
Table of Contents	VI
目录	XI
List of abbreviations	XVI
List of figures	XVII
List of tables	XVIII
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Motivations for the study	1
1.1.1 Rationale for the research on aptitude testing for interpreting.....	1
1.1.2 Rationale for the research on personality hardiness	2
1.1.3 Rationale for the research on interpreting anxiety and self-efficacy as intermediates.....	4
1.2 Significance of the study	6
1.3 Research questions	8
1.4 Research methodology	9
1.5 Layout of the dissertation	10
Chapter 2 Literature Review	12
2.1 Definitions	12
2.1.1 Defining aptitude.....	12
2.1.2 Aptitude, ability, intelligence and personality.....	13
2.2 Aptitude for foreign language learning	14
2.2.1 Foreign language aptitude.....	15
2.2.2 Foreign language aptitude and SLA process.....	16
2.2.3 Affective variables in SLA.....	18

2.3 Aptitude for interpreting	28
2.3.1 Research at an earlier stage.....	29
2.3.2 Research in more recent time.....	33
2.4 Research on personality hardiness.....	40
2.4.1 Construct of personality hardiness.....	40
2.4.2 Measurement of personality hardiness.....	41
2.4.3 Empirical research on personality hardiness.....	43
Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework.....	48
3.1 Aptitude testing for interpreting	48
3.1.1 The need for interpreting aptitude testing.....	48
3.1.2 Aptitude testing models for interpreting.....	50
3.1.3 Personality hardiness and interpreting aptitude testing.....	54
3.2 Conceptualization of personality hardiness.....	56
3.2.1 Underpinning in existential courage.....	57
3.2.2 Dimensionality.....	57
3.2.3 Personality hardiness model.....	59
3.3 Personality hardiness, anxiety and interpreting performance.....	61
3.4 Personality hardiness, self-efficacy and interpreting performance.....	63
Chapter 4 Methods	66
4.1 Research questions and hypotheses	66
4.2 Research design	68
4.3 Quantitative research.....	69
4.3.1 Participants.....	69
4.3.2 Instruments.....	71
4.4 Qualitative research	74
4.4.1 Participants.....	74
4.4.2 Semi-structured interview guide.....	74
4.4.3 Procedures.....	75
4.5 Data Collection	75
4.5.1 Pilot study.....	75

4.5.2 Formal study.....	76
4.5.3 Ethical considerations.....	77
4.6 Data analysis	77
Chapter 5 Results	79
5.1 Demographic characteristics	79
5.2 Reliability of measures	80
5.2.1 Personality hardiness.....	80
5.2.2 Interpreting anxiety.....	82
5.2.3 Self- efficacy.....	82
5.2.4 Interpreting performance.....	83
5.3 Results of sub-question 1	85
5.3.1 Hypothesis 1	86
5.3.2 Hypothesis 2.....	87
5.4 Results of sub-question 2	89
5.4.1Hypothesis 1.....	90
5.4.2 Hypothesis 2.....	91
5.4.3 Hypothesis 3.....	93
5.5 Results of sub-question 3	95
5.5.1 Hypothesis 1.....	96
5.5.2 Hypothesis 2.....	102
5.6 Results of sub-question 4	104
5.6.1 Hypothesis 1.....	104
5.6.2 Hypothesis 2.....	107
5.7 Results of sub-question 5	109
5.7.1 Information triangulation.....	111
5.7.2 Roles of personality hardiness.....	115
Chapter 6 Discussions.....	122
6.1 Summary of findings	122
6.2 Implications.....	125
6.2.1Correlations between personality hardiness and interpreting performance.....	125

6.2.2	Predicative validity of personality hardiness on interpreting performance.....	129
6.2.3	Mediating effect of interpreting anxiety.....	131
6.2.4	Mediating effect of self-efficacy.....	138
6.2.5	Personality hardiness in aptitude testing	143
6.3	Summary	145
Chapter 7 A Tentative Framework for Personality Hardiness		
Measurement in Interpreting Aptitude Testing		
147		
7.1	Personality hardiness and related personality traits in interpreting aptitude.....	147
7.1.1	Personality hardiness and stress resistance.....	148
7.1.2	Personality hardiness and resilience.....	149
7.1.3	Personality hardiness and other stress-resistance qualities.....	150
7.2	Incorporating personality hardiness in interpreting aptitude testing	152
7.2.1	Significance of incorporating personality hardiness into interpreting aptitude testing.....	153
7.2.2	A tentative framework for personality hardiness measurement in aptitude testing for interpreting.....	156
7.3	Measurement of personality hardiness in interpreting aptitude testing ...	159
7.3.1	Measurement procedures.....	160
7.3.2	Subcomponents of personality hardiness.....	162
7.4	Summary	163
Chapter 8 Conclusion		
165		
8.1	Overview of the current study	165
8.2	Main findings of the current study	166
8.2.1	Personality hardiness and interpreting anxiety.....	167
8.2.2	Personality hardiness and self-efficacy.....	168
8.2.3	Personality hardiness and interpreting performance.....	168
8.2.4	Personality hardiness in interpreting aptitude.....	170
8.2.5	Personality hardiness measurement in aptitude testing for interpreting...	171
8.3	Contributions of the current study	171

8.4 Limitations and future directions	173
Appendix 1 Questionnaire for student interpreters	176
Appendix 2a Passage (E-C) for consecutive interpreting test	181
Appendix 2b Passage (C-E) for consecutive interpreting test	184
Appendix 3 In-depth interview guide	186
Appendix 4 Mark sheet for raters	187
References	189
Acknowledgements	210
攻读博士学位期间发表的学术论文及编著	212

厦门大学博硕

目 录

英文摘要.....	I
中文摘要.....	IV
英文目录.....	VI
中文目录.....	XI
缩写说明.....	XVI
图表.....	XVII
表格.....	XVIII
第一章 绪论.....	1
1.1 研究动机.....	1
1.1.1 为何研究口译学能测试.....	1
1.1.2 为何研究坚韧性人格.....	2
1.1.3 为何将口译焦虑和自我效能感作为中介变量.....	4
1.2 研究意义.....	6
1.3 研究问题.....	8
1.4 研究方法.....	9
1.5 论文结构.....	10
第二章 文献综述.....	12
2.1 相关定义.....	12
2.1.1 学能.....	12
2.1.2 学能、能力、智力与人格.....	13
2.2 外语学能.....	14
2.2.1 语言学能.....	15
2.2.2 语言学能与二语习得过程.....	16
2.2.3 二语习得中的情感因素.....	18
2.3 口译学能.....	28

2.3.1 早期研究.....	29
2.3.2 近期研究.....	33
2.4 坚韧性人格研究.....	40
2.4.1 坚韧性人格的构念.....	40
2.4.2 坚韧性人格的测量.....	41
2.4.3 坚韧性人格的实证研究.....	43
第三章 理论框架	48
3.1 口译学能测试.....	48
3.1.1 口译学能测试的必要性.....	48
3.1.2 口译学能测试的模式.....	50
3.1.3 口译学能测试与坚韧性人格测量.....	54
3.2 坚韧性人格的概念模型.....	56
3.2.1 坚韧性人格的理论根源.....	57
3.2.2 坚韧性人格的维度.....	57
3.2.3 坚韧性人格模型.....	59
3.3 坚韧性人格、口译焦虑与口译表现.....	61
3.4 坚韧性人格、自我效能感与口译表现.....	63
第四章 研究方法.....	66
4.1 研究问题与假设.....	66
4.2 研究设计.....	68
4.3 定量研究.....	69
4.3.1 被试.....	69
4.3.2 测量工具.....	71
4.4 定性研究.....	73
4.4.1 被试.....	74
4.4.2 半结构式访谈.....	74
4.4.3 步骤.....	75
4.5 数据收集	75
4.5.1 前测.....	75
4.5.2 正式研究.....	76
4.5.3 伦理思考.....	77

4.6 数据分析.....	77
第五章 结果.....	79
5.1 人口统计学特征.....	79
5.2 测量工具的信度.....	80
5.2.1 坚韧性人格.....	80
5.2.2 口译焦虑.....	82
5.2.3 自我效能感.....	82
5.2.4 口译表现.....	83
5.3 问题 1 结论.....	85
5.3.1 假设 1.....	86
5.3.2 假设 2.....	87
5.4 问题 2 结论.....	89
5.4.1 假设 1.....	90
5.4.2 假设 2.....	91
5.4.3 假设 2.....	93
5.5 问题 3 结论.....	95
5.5.1 假设 1.....	96
5.5.2 假设 2.....	101
5.6 问题 4 结论.....	104
5.6.1 假设 1.....	104
5.6.2 假设 2.....	107
5.7 问题 5 结论.....	109
5.7.1 假设 1.....	111
5.7.2 假设 2.....	115
第六章 讨论.....	122
6.1 研究小结.....	122
6.2 启示.....	125
6.2.1 坚韧性人格与口译表现的相关性.....	125
6.2.2 坚韧性人格对口译表现的预测效率.....	129
6.2.3 口译焦虑的中介效应.....	131
6.2.4 自我效能感的中介效应.....	138

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