Typing Task Interference and Situation Model Development

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Abstract: Situation model development is disrupted by text properties, such as the lack of a title (Daniel & Raney, 2007), by engaging in a competing task, such as proofreading (Singer & Halldorson, 1996), or by retaining a memory load (Fincher-Kiefer, 2001). Research suggests that for highly skilled typists, transcription typing does not interfere with concurrent tasks such as text comprehension (Gentner, 1988). However, when typists use an altered keyboard layout, it is likely that skill interference will hinder situation model development. 252 participants of varying levels of typing skill completed a transcription typing task of a passage with or without a title using either a regular or altered keyboard layout. Surface level and textbase comprehension showed no effect of title, keyboard, or skill. Situation model development was hindered in the no-title condition, but was not affected by keyboard or skill. Implications for theories of text comprehension and skill interference will be discussed.