

ABSTRACT

Content-specificity hypothesis suggests that people with mood disorders tend to attend to stimuli that are congruent with their emotional problems. In order to investigate such an emotion-congruent attentional bias, a variety of experimental paradigms has been applied to individuals with depression or anxiety. Nevertheless, despite researchers' endeavors, empirical results obtained are inconsistent and contradicting. In the present study, a modified negative priming paradigm was introduced to examine this content-specific attentional bias in individuals with depression and/or anxiety. According to Milliken and colleagues' (1998) temporal discrimination hypothesis, negative priming effect is produced from an intermediate match of the cognitive representation of the probe target with that of an unattended prime of related identity. Meanwhile, such an effect can be reduced or eliminated by attending to the prime stimulus. The aim of the present study was thus to demonstrate emotion-congruent attentional bias in individuals with different emotional problems via showing reduced negative priming effect of primes of the corresponding emotional valences. A total of 134 participants (52 males, 82 females) were recruited in the present study and separated into four groups (depression, anxiety, comorbid depression/anxiety, and normal control) according to their scores on two scales, Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II; Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996) and Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI; Beck, Epstein, Brown, & Steer, 1988). Participants completed the negative priming task on sad- and threat-related word stimuli. Results from repeated measures analyses revealed reduced negative priming effect of sad words in the depression and comorbid groups as expected, but not in the anxiety and normal control groups, indicating that attentional bias occurred specifically in participants

with depression. However, positive priming effect of threat-related words was generally found in all participants. Implication of the findings and the interaction between emotional valence of stimuli and psychopathologies are discussed.

摘要

內容獨有性假設 (Content-specificity Hypothesis) 指出，患有情緒問題之人士傾向注意與自身情緒問題有關之事物。然而，過去以患有抑鬱或焦慮情緒問題人士作為對象之研究，都未能一致得出這種情緒一致注意力傾向 (Emotion-congruent Attentional Bias) 的研究結果。而根據米利肯等學者 (Milliken, Joordens, Merikle, and Seiffert, 1998) 之時性區分假設 (Temporal Discrimination Hypothesis)，在負值啟動實驗 (Negative Priming Experiment) 中所得之正／負值啟動效應 (Priming Effect)，能某程度反映實驗參與者對獨特實驗刺激的注意情況。因此，為了證實患有抑鬱或焦慮情緒問題人士的注意力傾向現象，本研究引入了一項與過往研究不同的實驗方法——負值啟動範式 (Negative Priming Paradigm) ——以作測試。是次研究共邀請了 134 位實驗參與者 (52 男、82 女) 進行測試。根據貝克抑鬱量表 (二) (Beck Depression Inventory-II, BDI-II; Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996) 及貝克焦慮量表 (Beck Anxiety Inventory, BAI; Beck, Epstein, Brown, & Steer, 1988) 之分數，參與者被分為四組：抑鬱、焦慮、合併性抑鬱／焦慮，及正常對照組，並進行了負值啟動實驗。研究結果發現，患有抑鬱情緒問題之人士，不論是否同時患有焦慮情緒問題，都對有關悲傷的詞語表現出獨有的注意力傾向；然而，這種傾向並不出現在只有焦慮或並無任何情緒問題的人士身上。而研究結果亦顯示，所有實驗參與者皆傾向特別注意有關威脅的詞語。對於上述實驗結果，以及不同情緒刺激與情緒問題之關係，文中將有詳細的分析及討論。