Developing an Instrument that Tests for English-Language Personality

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Abstract

Studying a second-language involves several cultural and environmental pressures that can shift behaviour and alter personality. A person may act one way in their native surroundings, but act completely differently when travelling, studying a foreign language, or talking with people from a different culture. Existing personality instruments do no capture this shift in personality, and thus a specialized personality instrument is required. This study surveyed 287 Japanese university students with 263 specialized second-language personality items. Items focused on situations involving travel, being in English class, meeting native English-speakers, watching English movies, and other activities that involve the study of English. A factor analysis, a correlational analysis and a Rasch principal components analysis was conducted on this new instrument, as well as an established personality instrument to determine their effectiveness at capturing the participants’ personality. The ultimate result was a 50 item personality instrument intended for second-language contexts, which performed better than the established personality instrument. The correlation analysis also revealed that the underlying constructs of personality were not highly correlated across instruments, indicating the presence of a native language personality and a second-language personality for participants.

Keywords Personality, TESOL, Rasch, correlations