The impact of rater personality on peer assessment in an EFL oral presentation classroom

Mitsuko Tanaka
Ritsumeikan University, Japan

As peer assessment has positive effects on learning, it is often implemented in EFL oral presentation classrooms. Although some studies have demonstrated that they are reliable raters (e.g., Patri, 2002), more research is needed to investigate the validity of peer assessment. This study examines the impact of personality on fairness of peer assessment in an EFL oral presentation classroom in order to identify a potential rater bias in the peer assessment.

The participants were first-year Japanese university students in an EFL oral presentation classroom. They made mid-term and final presentations and evaluated their classmates’ presentations both in the first and the second semesters. Rater severity estimates in both semesters were calculated using data of peer assessment for the mid-term presentations with the many-facet Rasch measurement model. Raters’ personality characteristics were estimated using their responses to a questionnaire including four variables of dogmatism, individuality, evaluation apprehension, and dependency on others (Takata, 2000).

The results of two multiple step-wise regression analyses showed that whereas rater severity was unrelated with personality variables in the first semester, rater severity was predicted by two personality variables (dependency on others and evaluation apprehension) in the second semester. As the participants spent more time with their classmates, those who place values on relatedness and harmony with others (i.e., those with higher dependency on others) became more lenient, and those who care about being evaluated by others (i.e., those with higher evaluation apprehension) became severer in their assessment toward their classmates’ presentations. These findings indicate a potential problem of validity in peer assessment in EFL oral presentations.

References


Keywords: rater effects, EFL oral presentation, peer assessment, rater characteristics, assessment bias.