Language aptitude, personality traits, and task performance

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Language aptitude has been identified as one of the most important individual factors influencing language learning (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003). However, its significance may depend on the context in which language is used (Robinson, 2007) and on the level of proficiency (Winke, 2013).

The present study attempted to explore the relationships among language aptitude, the individual personality traits, and the student social behaviour during the work on oral communicative tasks. The study was conducted with 20 university students, native speakers of a Slavic language majoring in English, who worked in groups of four on two communicative tasks. The participants completed the LLAMA test for language aptitude (Meara, 2005), the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1989), and the NEO Five-Factor Inventory personality profile assessment (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Using a mixed methods design, the study focused on the participants’ interaction during the task completion. The students’ active involvement measured by both the quality of individual input, and the number and the length of turns were explored in order to explain some of the possible associations between the aspects of aptitude, the personality characteristics, and the students’ socially oriented strategies. The identified links point to possible relationships between the aspects of aptitude relating to inductive language learning, and social behaviour; however, these associations do not seem to be linear, but rather mediated by personality characteristics.

References:


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