Reliability of Self-Reported Language Proficiency Measures in l1 Attrition Research: A Closer Look at the Can-Do-Scales.

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Abstract : Self-reported language proficiency measures have been widely used by researchers and have been proven to be an accurate tool to assess actual language proficiency. L1 attrition researchers also rely on self-reported measures. More specifically, can-do-scales has gained popularity in the discipline of L1 attrition research. The can-do-scales usually contain statements about language (e.g., "I can write e-mails"); participants are asked to rate each statement on a scale from 1 (I cannot do it at all) to 5 (I can do it without any difficulties). Despite its popularity, no studies have examined can-do-scales' reliability at measuring the actual level of L1 attrition. Do can-do-scales positively correlate with lexical diversity, syntactic complexity, and fluency? The present study analyzed speech samples of 35 Russian-English attriters to examine whether their self-reported proficiency correlates with their actual L1 proficiency. The results of Pearson correlation demonstrated that can-do-scales correlated with lexical diversity, syntactic complexity, and fluency. These findings provide a valuable contribution to the L1 attrition research by demonstrating that can-do-scales can be used as a reliable tool to measure L1 attrition.

Keywords : L1 attrition, can-do-scales, lexical diversity, syntactic complexity
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