

Impossible constructs? – Issues in operationalizing constructs and validating measurement instruments in multilingualism research



Public lecture

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University of Innsbruck

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📍 room K0.02

Multilingualism/SLA researchers and language testing researchers often seem to work in parallel universes, despite similar research interest at the core of their activities. While multilingualism researchers often downplay or even ignore the relevance of measurement in their studies, language testing researchers have been accused of paying little attention to the role of second and third language acquisition theory and findings. This is detrimental to our shared field as the two disciplines could benefit immensely from more collaboration and cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches. It seems even more important to join forces to tackle some of the constructs that have been relatively poorly defined and operationalized up to this point. While both disciplinary traditions, despite a lot of room for improvement, have a relatively good grasp on the traditional language skills and competences, the measurement of concepts like “psychotypology”, “language dominance”, “language mode”, or “metalinguistic awareness” seems considerably fuzzier.

This talk will try to open up an interdisciplinary debate about whether these might indeed be ‘impos-

sible constructs’ to operationalize or whether we simply need to do a better job at developing and validating measurements for them, and how we might be able to approach this through collaborative efforts.

Short bio

Dr. Benjamin Kremmel has been a lecturer and researcher at the Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Innsbruck, since 2011. He completed his M.A. degree in Teaching at Innsbruck University and another M.A. in Language Testing at Lancaster University. He holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Nottingham, UK. From 2011 to 2013, Dr. Kremmel was involved in the development of language tests for the standardized Austrian school leaving exam project (University of Innsbruck). His research interests include L2 lexical knowledge, vocabulary assessment, L2 reading assessment, diagnostic language testing, language assessment literacy, and SLA. For more information: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Benjamin-Kremmel>

