POPULAR SCIENCE ABSTRACT

The structure of the personality in Polish: an unrestricted psycholexical study of personality descriptive verbs

Language is one of the basic elements of culture. It can be used to describe everything: material objects, physical phenomena, and abstract ideas. Including individual differences. It can be assumed, that the selection of words describing individual differences, focusing on personality, from the lexicon of the natural language will allow pointing the most important traits, which were observed and named in the chosen culture. This is called the lexical assumption, and based on it, a number of psycholexical research was performed.

Psycholexical research is based on two stages. First, qualitative, relies on analysis of the natural language through selection of personality-relevant words from the dictionary and construction of the list. Second, quantitative, is associated with gathering of the quantitative data and statistical analysis of results. While choosing words researchers usually limited the study to adjectives, and the selection was conducted on one of two following ways: restrictive and unrestrictive. In the first case the chosen words were assigned to the precisely specified and narrow categories, in the second – the list were systematically narrowed by exclusion of the particular groups of words. As a result of the second method usually the longer list and more dimensions, more personality traits are obtained. What is more the unrestrictive approach is also associated with adopting a different approach to choosing the analysed part of speech. It is being stressed out that adjectives do not exhaust the potential of the language and it is necessary to include also other parts of speech, because current approach carries the threat of reductionism (because the personality trait is only what can be described by adjective). Then, at the statistical analysis stage, mostly exploratory factor analysis is used. Its function is to group the words, which can be used to describe the same trait (e.g. extraversion) and pointing how many traits can be distinguish, and what are they describing. However currently it is postulated to use more advanced methods, which will allow to emerge less extensive but more precise factors, which will be less dependent on the researcher's subjective decisions, and which may have been omitted when examining adjectives.

The primary goal of the project is to conduct the classification of the polish verbs. It is the part of the speech including the biggest number of words that may be used to describe the individual differences (so-called person-descriptive). It also has less susceptibility to bias because it describes a certain objective process, specific behaviour, not an abstract characteristic, as is the case with adjectives. They will be analysed in an unrestrictive way, taking into account the largest possible number of words that will be transformed into sentences, to give them context (e.g. "support" will be transformed into "is a person who supports others"). The second goal of the project is to compare the obtained unrestrictive structure with the restrictive structure. This is possible because the author of the project has already carried out an analogous project, focusing on restrictive verb analysis. Therefore, during statistical analysis, it will be able to refer to its results. It will allow to compare the results of both methods and to analyse data in a classic way (exploratory factor analysis) and in accordance with the latest trends. As a result, it will be possible to achieve the third goal, which will indicate how much the results allow us to predict reality. Referring to a simple uncomplicated example, it will be possible to indicate to what extent the differences identified in the research will allow people to predict behaviour, e.g., preferences in spending free time (reading book vs. mountain climbing) or a chosen field of study (social sciences, exact or humanities).

Carrying out the project will lead to enriching knowledge in the field of psychology of individual differences, personality, and social, and will also develop the current of psycholexical research. It will be possible to obtain not only 5 and 6-factor models, but also wider, containing up to 15-20 factors, thanks to the innovative approach. This will lead to more comprehensive information on the participation of the Polish language in the description of personality traits specific to our culture and universal. It will also contribute to developing the input of Polish psychologists to the international discussion, through a profound analysis of results during prestigious international conferences and their publication in major international journals. At the same time, the research will lead to the finalization of the doctoral dissertation.