

Micro-Paper 54: *Rashomon Effect*



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Defining the Term

Rashomon Effect is a concept that describes a situation where different views of the same phenomenon are equally valid. Akira Kurosawa's film *Rashomon*, inspired on two short tales by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, provides the basis for this concept. In *Rashomon*, the plot tries to solve a crime as reported from the perspectives of a bandit, a samurai, his wife, and a woodcutter who was passing by. The movie shows how the judge needs to find what happened, from the premise that each version may introduce a plausible truth.

In the case of qualitative research, the Rashomon Effect surfaces when two or more researchers look at data sets from a specific study. In this event, all researchers may share different conclusions while keeping in mind what makes studies trustworthy. During the interpretive process, the Rashomon Effect may be present on the grounds of the researchers' cultural and academic backgrounds, personalities, rapport, time in the field, and empathy or approach to the object of study.

The presence of multiple researchers, as illustrated by the Rashomon Effect, lays out the nuanced nature of qualitative research interpretation, both as problem and potential, as well as the need to avoid rushing into conclusions, especially when working in research teams.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP, we have relied on the idea of [polyangulation](#) as one of our methodological and analytical foundations. Therefore, awareness of the Rashomon Effect is vital to ensure a thorough analysis of our data sets. As the Rashomon Effect indicates, overlooking a researchers' input or interpretations would be detrimental for the overall analysis procedures.

LSLP brings together three very diverse teams tackling literacies and English language, combining

diverse perspectives with a mix of academic and personal backgrounds. Therefore, we conceive Rashomon Effect as an approach to recognize everyone's' perspective, including the spaces of coincidence and divergence, as part of an integrative view.

In that sense, Rashomon Effect contributes to our understanding of how our researchers approach a topic. It enables our team to promote a more thorough and systemic view of the social phenomena under study.

Expanding Second Language Research

Recognizing that people have different ways to understand reality, learn and teach is something that teachers and researchers must do. Identifying these perspectives could be beneficial for tackling and understanding the different layers of the language practices and other phenomena grasped while doing data analysis or data collection.

For instance, recognizing Rashomon Effect may help second language researchers to manage multimodal information and the different layers that could overlap between different inputs. Finally, Rashomon effects facilitates the use of disconfirming evidence, researcher flexibility, and critical collaboration along the researchers rather, as opposed to grounding one's work in fault-finding procedures.

References

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