

Mediated linguistic contact as a mediator between language learning orientations and second language confidence

This paper addresses the role of mass media (newspaper, radio and TV) in learning a minority language as a second language among majority language speakers in three bilingual regions. Specifically, based on the social context model of second language learning (Clément, 1980), the focus of the study is on how affective and instrumental language learning orientations (see Gardner, 2010) motivate the use of mass media in the second language (c.f. Harwood & Vincze, 2011), and how media use, in turn, contributes to an increase in second language confidence (e.g. Clément, Baker & MacIntyre, 2003).

Self-report questionnaire data was collected among Slovenian-speaking secondary school students, who learn Hungarian as a second language in Dolinsko/Lendvavidék, Slovenia (N=119); Italian-speaking secondary school students, who learn German as a second language in South-Tyrol/Alto Adige, Italy (N=315); and Finnish-speaking secondary school students who learn Swedish as a second language in Uusimaa/Nyland in Finland (N=562). The conceptual model was tested by the means of a parallel mediational analysis with multiple independent variables using the *MEDIATE* SPSS macro (Hayes & Preacher, 2013). The macro is based on bootstrapping and produces unstandardized regression coefficients. In the analyses, 5,000 bootstrap samples were produced by randomly sampling with replacements from the original data, resulting in 5,000 estimates of the indirect path coefficients. As Hayes and Preacher recommend, indirect effects were significant when the bias corrected and accelerated confidence intervals did not include zero. In the model language learning orientations were used as independent variables, media use (TV, radio and newspaper) as mediators and second language confidence as dependent variable.

The empirical results provided ample support for the theoretical model. Media use was related to language learning variables mostly in Finland, where all three media types were significant mediators, although less in Italy, where only TV and radio were meaningful mediators, and least in Slovenia, where only TV was a significant mediator between language learning orientations and second language confidence.

References

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