The motivational background of learning Swedish in Finland in high Swedish vitality and low Swedish vitality contexts

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This paper combines the L2 motivational self-system (Dörnyei, 2009) with ideas from the socio-contextual model of L2 learning (see Noels & Clément, 1996) and the socio-educational model of L2 learning (Gardner, 2010) to address the background of L2 learning efforts among young learners of Swedish in Finland.

Questionnaire data were collected among two samples of Finnish-speaking high school students: in a low Swedish vitality and a high Swedish vitality context. Mediational analyses were conducted in SPSS using the PROCESS macro. Instrumentality – promotion was used as independent variable, L2 ideal-self as mediator, and L2 learning efforts as dependent variable, while integrativeness was specified as a control variable of L2 learning efforts.

L2 ideal-self predicted L2 learning efforts in both low Swedish vitality and high Swedish vitality contexts, the two samples differed considerably regarding the effects of instrumentality – promotion and integrativeness on L2 learning efforts. Particularly, in the low Swedish vitality context, where L2 learners have limited contact with Swedish in their social milieu, L2 learning efforts were predicted by instrumentality – promotion but not by integrativeness. Whereas, in the high Swedish vitality context, where L2 learners have frequent contact with Swedish in their social milieu, L2 learning efforts was predicted by integrativeness but not by instrumentality – promotion.

The findings will be discussed in the light of the differences in L2 learning in monolingual and bilingual learning milieus.


Keywords: L2 self, instrumentality, integrativeness.