**Effects of ethnolinguistic vitality, network of language contacts and language background on ethnolinguistic identity of Finland-Swedes**

In the social psychological research, language and identity may be seen as reciprocally related. As the abundance of sociolinguistic research has focused on how identity explains behaviour, the focus of this study was reversed, that is, how one’s identity is shaped by language. The goal of this study was two-fold, to find out about the relationship among objective ethnolinguistic vitality (EV), individual network of language contacts (INLC), and ethnolinguistic identity, as well as to find out about the importance of childhood language background to ethnolinguistic identity.

Ethnolinguistic vitality construct developed by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977), as well as the model by Allard and Landry (1986, 1992, 1994) were used as the theoretical framework for this study. According to the latter model, INLC acts as a link between the sociological level (EV) and the psychological level (identity).

The sample consisted of 563 Swedish-speaking Finns, out of which 51% came from South Finland province and 49% from West Finland province. About 44% of the participants were males and 56% were females. The study was conducted using data collected in the fall 2000 for a research project “Swedish and Finnish as minority and as majority: Stereotypes, group identification and self-images” led by professors Karmela Liebkind and Anders Lange. The data was analyzed using mainly hierarchical regressional analysis.

The results of this study supported earlier research according to which ethnolinguistic vitality has an effect on ethnolinguistic identity via individual network of language contacts. The objective vitality, in this case the language of community, allows these networks to expand, but it is these networks that have the effect on identity.

**Keywords**
- ethnolinguistics
- ethnolinguistic vitality
- ethnolinguistic identity
- network of language contacts
- mother tongue
- Finland-Swedes

**Additional information**

Muita tietoja-Övriga uppgifter-Additional information