Ethnolinguistic identity management among young Swedish-speaking Finns

Ethnolinguistic identity theory proposes that in cases where language is a salient component of identification, individuals strive for a positive psychological distinctiveness along ethnolinguistic dimensions. When a positive ethnolinguistic identity is reached, people will adapt strategies to promote a linguistic differentiation (Giles & Viladot, 1994; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1990). However, when the comparison with the ethnolinguistic outgroup leads to a negative sense of ethnolinguistic identity, other strategies will be utilized to implement a more fitting self-concept (Abrams et al., 2003; Hogg & Abrams 1988; Reid et al., 2004). For instance, people can make efforts to pass into the ethnolinguistic outgroup, which is labelled as ethnolinguistic mobility, or seek to strengthen or even reverse the position of their ethnolinguistic ingroup which is called ethnolinguistic competition. According to ethnolinguistic identity theory, ethnolinguistic mobility is associated with low ethnolinguistic identity and the perception of low relative ethnolinguistic vitality of the ethnolinguistic ingroup. At the same time, ethnolinguistic competition arises when individuals identify strongly with their ethnolinguistic ingroup and perceive the relative vitality of their ethnolinguistic ingroup to be high (Reid et al., 2004).

Swedish in Finland provides an optimal context to test some of the hypotheses, which can be derived from ethnolinguistic identity theory. Also, as a considerable proportion of Swedish-speaking Finns have a bilingual background, it can also be examined how linguistic background affects the process described above.

More specifically, we can expect that Swedish-speaking Finns who have a bilingual family background will show a weaker relative identification with Swedish and perceive the vitality of Swedish to be lower than those coming from monolingual Swedish homes (Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 1b). Next, we can anticipate that Swedish-speaking Finns who identify relative strongly with Swedish and perceive the relative vitality of Swedish to be high,

will utilize ethnolinguistic competition (Hypothesis 2a and Hypothesis 2b). In parallel, Swedish-speaking Finns who identify relative weakly with Swedish and perceive the relative vitality of Swedish to be low, will utilize ethnolinguistic mobility (Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 3b).

Method

Participants

A paper-and-pencil questionnaire survey was conducted among students in Swedish secondary schools in Porvoo and in Helsinki (N = 363). About 65 % of the participants were girls and 35 % boys.

Measures

Linguistic background. Linguistic background was measured based n the mother tongue oof the parents. About 43 % of the respondents had two Swedish-speaking parents, whereas the other had one Swedish-speaking and one Finnish-speaking parent.

Ethnolinguistic identity. Identification with Swedish and Finnish was measured by three items each. Two of the items were based on Doosje, Ellemers and Spears (1995; e.g., "I feel strong ties with Swedish/Finnish speakers"), whereas the third item focused on linguistic identification ("I feel that Swedish/Finnish is my mother tongue"). The internal consistency of the two scales was acceptable (α = .76 and α = .84). Finnish-speaking identity was subtracted from Swedish-speaking identity to yield a measure of relative ethnolinguistic identity strength.

Ethnolinguistic vitality. Perceived vitality was measured by twelve items from the subjective vitality questionnaire (Bourhis et al., 1981) separately for the Swedish and the Finnish language group. The internal consistency of the two scales was acceptable (α = .76 and α = .74). Subtracting the Finnish vitality from Swedish vitality scale yielded a single measure of relative perceived vitality.

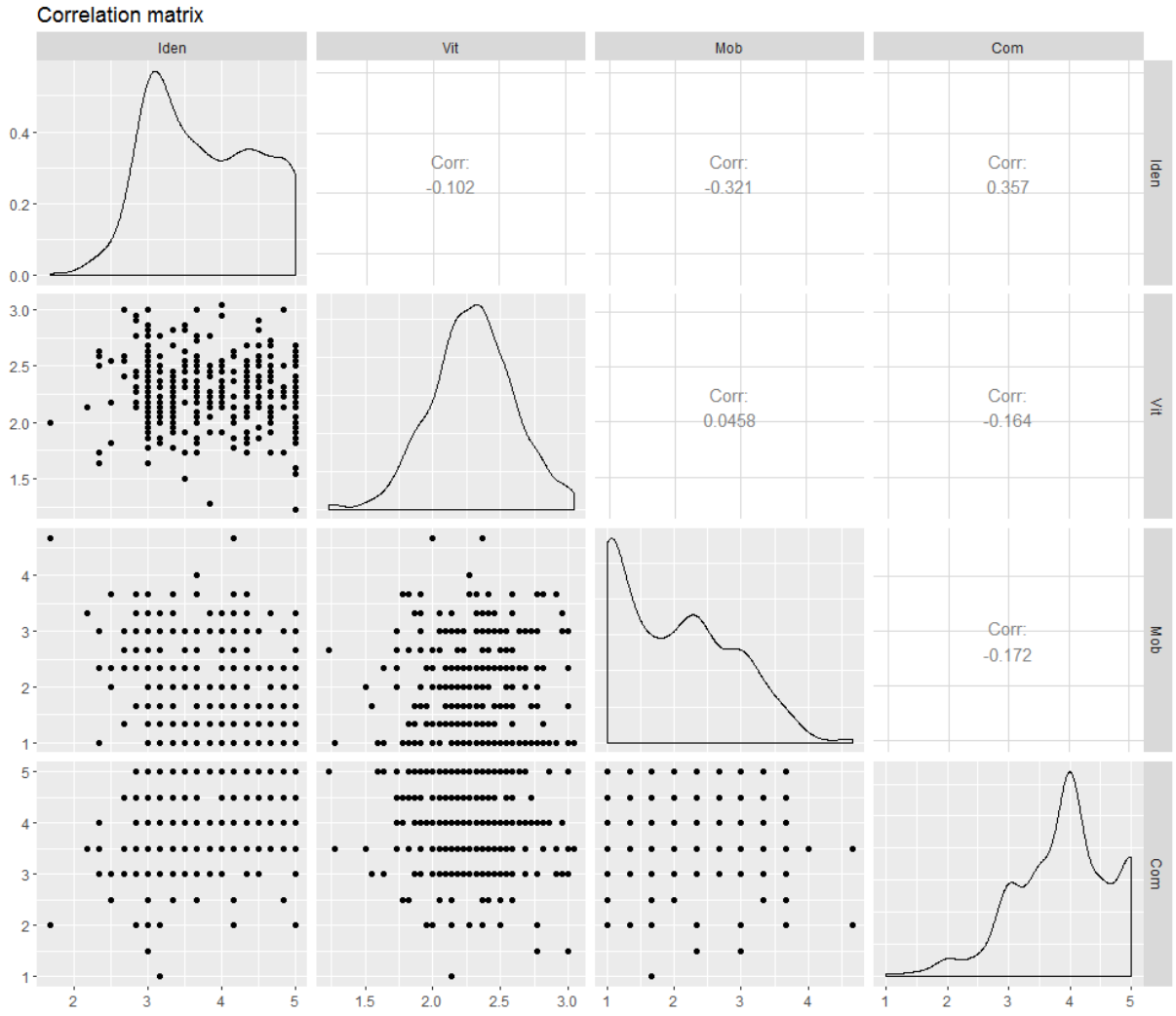
Ethnolinguistic identity management. Ethnolinguistic mobility was measured with three items based on the scales developed by Mummendey and her colleagues (e.g., "I make some effort to be considered Finnish speaker"). To assess ethnolinguistic competition, two items were developed (e.g. "Swedish speakers should do much more for their rights"). The reliability of both mobility and competition scales was acceptable ($\alpha = .75$ and $\alpha = .76$). Higher scores on both identity management scales indicated greater endorsement in the given identity management strategy.

Analysis

The analysis was performed with the Lavaan package in R. Linguistic background was specified as independent variable, perceived ethnolinguistic vitality and ethnolinguistic identity as (parallel) mediators, whereas ethnolinguistic mobility and ethnolinguistic competition as dependent variables. The indirect effects were assessed with creating new parameters, which were defined multiplying the path coefficients between the independent variable and the mediator with the path coefficient between the mediator and the dependent variable. As indirect effects are not normally distributed, bias-corrected confidence intervals are reported to assess their significance. In cases, when the interval does not include zero, the indirect effect can be considered as to be true. The analysis was based on 2000 bootstrap samples.

Results and discussion

Correlation analysis indicated significant and theoretically important relationships between the study variables. Therefore the main analysis could be performed.



The mediational model fit the data well, $\chi(1) = .24$, $p = .62$, RMSEA = .00, CFI = 1.00, SRMR = .01, and it explained 14 % of the variance in ethnolinguistic mobility and 13 % of the variance in ethnolinguistic competition. The coefficients are summarized in Figure 1.

Supporting the expectations summarized in Hypothesis 1a and 1b, the results demonstrated that bilingual participants identify less with Swedish and perceive the relative vitality of Swedish to be lower than Swedish-speaking participants.

In consistency Hypothesis 2a, ethnolinguistic identity had a positive impact on ethnolinguistic competition. However, in contrast to Hypothesis 2b, perceived ethnolinguistic vitality had a negative impact on ethnolinguistic competition. In other words, those who perceive the relative vitality of Swedish to be low are more motivated to enhance the rights of

Swedish speakers and support Swedish in Finland. The indirect effect of linguistic background on competition via ethnolinguistic vitality was statistically significant, *B* = -.03, 95% CI [-.07, -.002], and so was the indirect effect of linguistic background on competition via ethnolinguistic identity, *B* = -.38, 95% CI [-.51, -.25].

Next, ethnolinguistic identity had a significant negative effect on mobility but ethnolinguistic vitality was not significantly related to mobility. Therefore there was support for Hypothesis 3a but not for Hypothesis 3b. In line with these observations, the indirect effect of linguistic background on mobility via ethnolinguistic vitality was not statistically significant, *B* = .01, 95% CI [-.02, .03], but the indirect effect of linguistic background on mobility via ethnolinguistic identity was significant, *B* = .48, 95% CI [.34, .65].

To elaborate more on the effect of ethnolinguistic identity and ethnolinguistic vitality on identity management strategies, two post-hoc regressions were performed with interaction effects. Specifically, it was examined whether identity and vitality has a combined, i.e. interactive effect on identity management strategies. The first regression predicting ethnolinguistic competition was significant, and explained 14% in the variance of the dependent variable, $F(3, 331) = 18.87$, $p < .01$. Of main interest, the interaction between identity and vitality was significant, *B* = -.01, $p = .98$. The second regression predicting ethnolinguistic mobility was significant, and explained 11% in the variance of the dependent variable, $F(3, 328) = 14.05$, $p < .01$. Of main interest, the interaction between identity and vitality was significant, *B* = .37, $p < .05$. The significant interaction is visualized in Figure 2. As can be seen, the higher the vitality, the smaller the negative effect of identity on mobility.

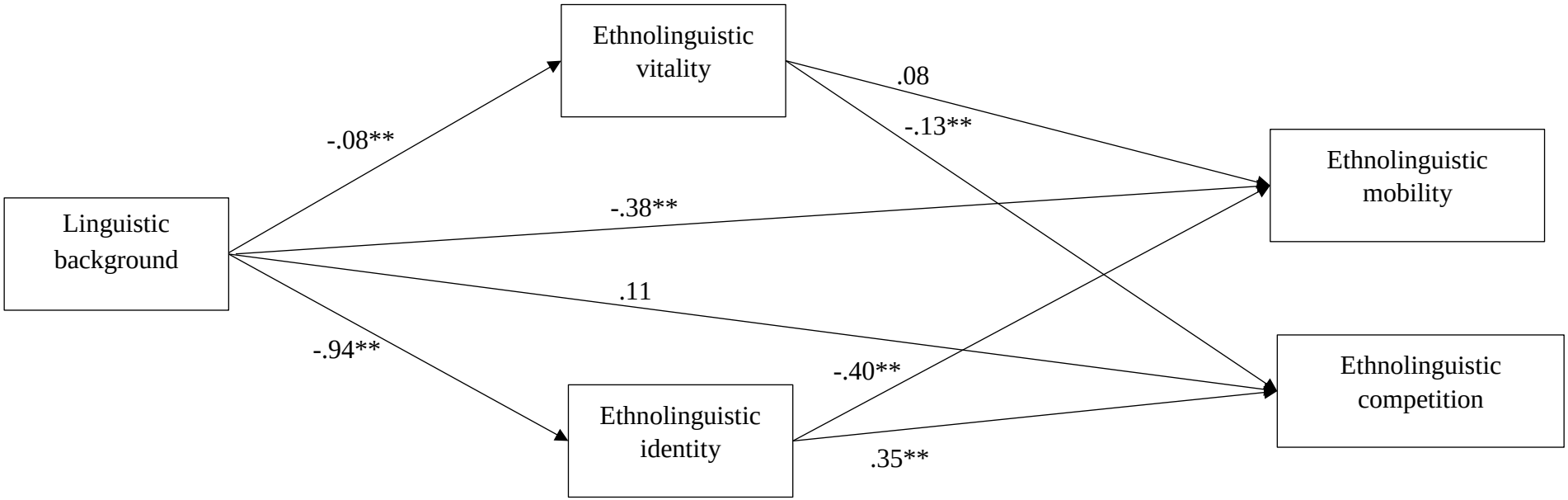


Figure 1. Results of the path analysis. The figure shows unstandardized coefficients. The model explained 14 % of the variance in ethnolinguistic mobility and 13 % of the variance in ethnolinguistic competition.

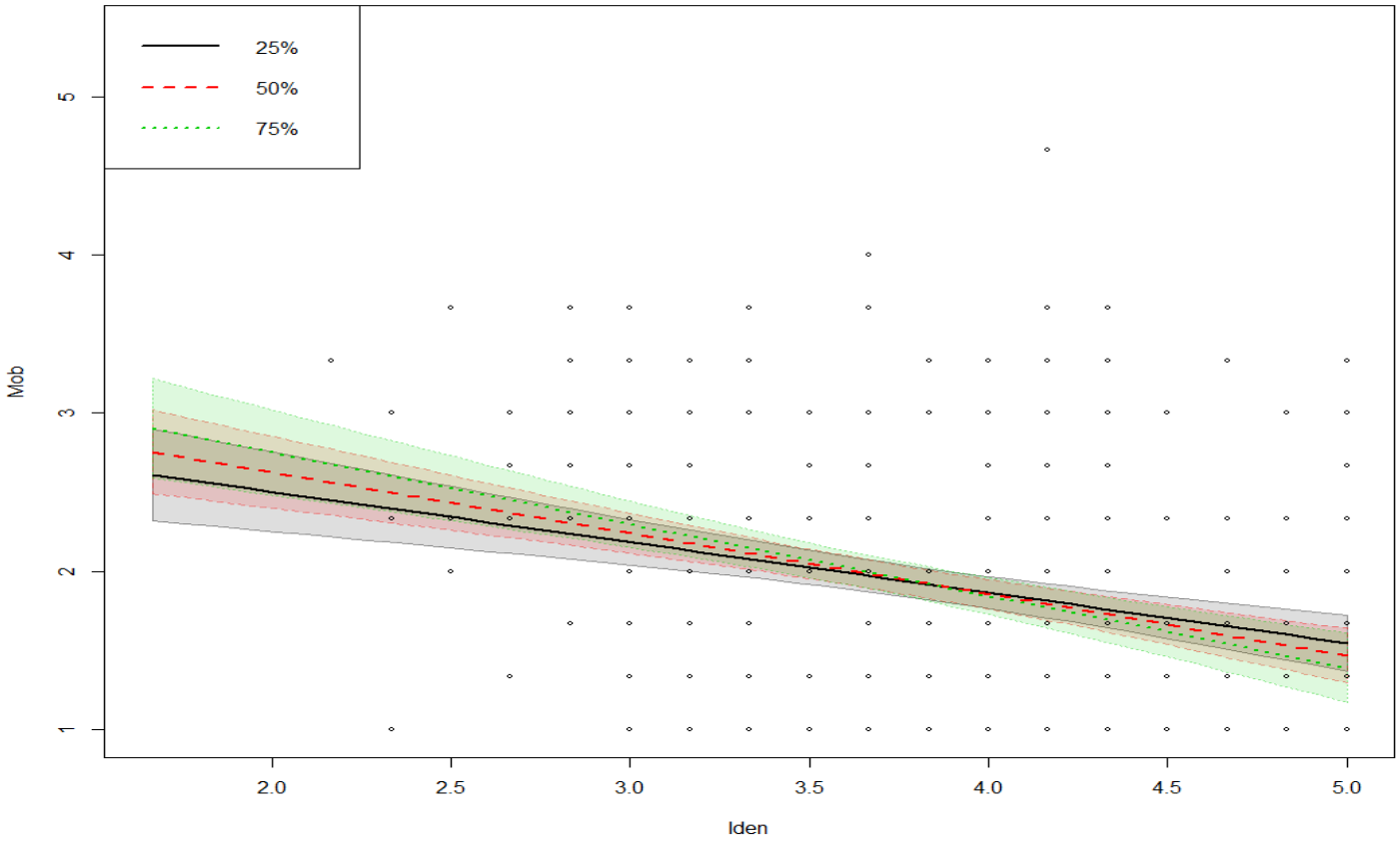


Figure 2. The figure shows the effect of ethnolinguistic identity on ethnolinguistic mobility moderated by ethnolinguistic vitality.

APPENDIX
Lavaan input file

```
library(lavaan)

colnames(ELIT2) <- c("Par", "Iden", "Vit", "Mob", "Com")

model <- "
Mob ~ c1*Par
Com ~ c2*Par

Mob ~ b1*Vit
Mob ~ b2*Iden
Com ~ b3*Vit
Com ~ b4*Iden

Iden ~ a1*Par
Vit ~ a2*Par

VitMob := a2*b1
IdenMob := a1*b2
VitCom := a2*b3
IdenCom := a1*b4
"

fit <- sem(model, data = ELIT2, bootstrap = 2000)
summary(fit, ci = TRUE, fit.measures=TRUE, rsquare = TRUE)
boot.fit <- parameterEstimates(fit, boot.ci.type="bca.simple",level=0.95,
ci=TRUE,standardized = FALSE)
boot.fit

out <- as.data.frame(bootstrapLavaan(fit, R = 2000L, type = "ordinary"))
out$VitCom <- out$a2 * out$b3
out$IdenCom <- out$a1 * out$b4
out$VitMob <- out$a2 * out$b1
out$IdenMob <- out$a1 * out$b2

quantile(out$VitCom,  probs = c(.025, .975))
quantile(out$IdenCom, probs = c(.025, .975))
quantile(out$VitMob,  probs = c(.025, .975))
quantile(out$IdenMob, probs = c(.025, .975))
```

Rockchalk input file

```
library(rockchalk)
mod <- lm ( Mob ~ Iden*Vit, data=ELIT2)
summary(mod)
ps1 <- plotSlopes(mod, plotx = "Iden", modx = "Vit",  , interval = "confidence")
```