MEDIATION EFFECT OF MULTILINGUAL AWARENESS ON FAMILY LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Family language management as a micro domain has appeared some new problems. To identify the factors and its mechanism in the language management of family and prove the mediating effect of multilingual awareness (including cross-linguistic, psycholinguistic awareness and socialinguistic awareness) of college English teacher in Family Language Management, the study has applied quantitative method by questionnaires analysis of 400 college foreign language teachers' multilingual awareness level in Shanxi Province, China based on the theory of "Three Elements of Language Policy" (Spolsky, 2004). According to SPSS and SEM (Structural Equation Model) analysis, it identified the factors that affect the language management of family from the aspect of internal and external environment and proved that multilingual awareness had the mediating effect on family language management.

Introduction

Language Awareness (LA) came into prominence in the "Language Awareness Movement" of Britain in 1980s as a solution to the severe local learner underachievement in both native and foreign language learning by compensating for the shortage of prevailing communicative teaching, which ignored or even completely abandoned the teaching of language knowledge. The notion of LA, which was first put forward to draw the attention of language learners to the language forms to boost their language learning, has evolved into the concern of teacher's language awareness and their ability of raising students' LA. (Peng Shuyuan,2020：7)

College foreign language teacher is quite unique object of the study of family language management because they own higher multilingual ability in language learning and teaching as we've supposed but according to the previous in-depth interview with 20 college foreign language teacher, it shows that even though they know the goal of family language management clearly, they don't have long-term plan and apply it in family language systematically. So, as one of the most micro levels in the field of family language policy research, the mediating effect of college foreign language teachers' multilingual awareness in family language management, has also produced new problems in the tide of globalization.

As the theoretical basis of the research on family language management, Bernard Spolsky (2004) proposed that language policy has three interrelated but independently components- practice, belief, and management. These three components help account for language choice. Language practice is the observable behaviors and choices that people do, which also provides the linguistic context for anyone learning a language. Belief is significant to the named language because of the values and status it assigned. Language management is the explicit and observable effort that someone or group has authority in the domain to modify other's practices or beliefs. Language management ranges from the micro to the macro level.

Otwinowska (2014,2017) provides the theoretical basis for this study from the perspective of teachers' language awareness. Based on the traditional component model of teachers' language awareness (Andrews, 2007), Otwinowska (2017) proposed the model of teachers' multilingual awareness to evaluate teachers' multilingual awareness.

Research Questions

So, the study is going to solve the following questions:

1. What are factors of family language management?
2. What is the relationship between factors of family language management?
3. How does multilingual awareness of college English teacher play a great?

Research Objectives

1. To identify the factors that affect the language management of family from the aspect of internal and external environment.

2. To prove the mechanism of factors on Social Language Environment, Family Language Management and Language Practice and build the Family Language Management Model.

3.To prove the mediating effect of multilingual awareness (including cross–linguistic, psycholinguistic awareness and socialinguistic awareness) of college English teacher in Family Language Management.

Conceptual Framework

Here is the framework of the study. As shown in the figure, it hypothesized that language management has positive effect on multilingual awareness. Multilingual awareness plays mediating role in language management and language practice. Language management has positive effect on language practice.
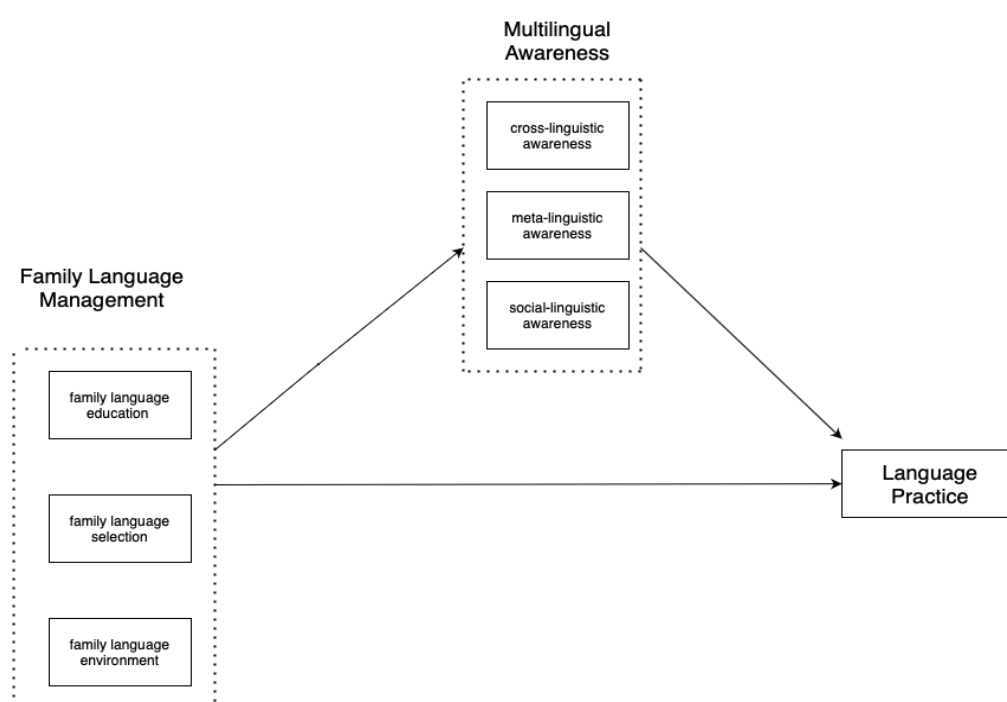

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework from Original research

Research Status of Teachers' Multilingual Awareness

Despite the concept of teachers' multilingual awareness is a new and developing research topic in the domain of TLA and LA and the research related to this topic is quite limited, there is a great deal of research to explore certain aspect of teachers' multilingual awareness and take multilingualism into consideration. Recently, there are ever–growing number of empirical studies on this topic, which could be divided into the following four major types.

Firstly, some researchers have focused on the components of teachers' multilingual awareness (Garcia, 2008; Otwinowska, 2014; 2017). Secondly, some studies have explored teachers' multilingual awareness through investigating teachers' beliefs on and attitudes towards multilingual education and pedagogy (Egaña, Cenoz & Gorter 2015; Gorter& Arocena, 2020; Tannenbaum,2020;

Otwinowska, 2017). Thirdly, some studies have examined teachers' multilingual awareness itself, either investigating a certain aspect of it (Haim, 2020; Otwinowska, 2020) or measuring the multilingual awareness of English teachers under certain context (Otwinowska, 2012; Otwinowska, 2014; Otwinowska, 2017). Lastly, some studies have explored the factors that may influence teachers' multilingual awareness (Otwinowska, 2014; Gabrys–Barker and Otwinowska, 2012; Otwinowska, 2017).

Among those articles mentioned above, Otwinowska (2014;2017) are the most important ones, which is the theoretical basis of the study from the aspect of teachers' language awareness. Otwinowska (2014) has introduced three new components to the traditional model of TLA as supplement. That is, crosslinguistic and metalinguistic knowledge, knowledge about adopting a plurilingual approach in the classroom, psycholinguistic knowledge of individual learner differences that facilitate learning (Otwinowska, 2014:101). Then, Otwinowska (2017) put forward the model of the teachers' plurilingual awareness, which has constructed a questionnaire, which consists of five dimensions in connection with the four components of the model, that is, crosslinguistic awareness, culture, identity, motivation, and individual multilingualism, for assessing teachers' multilingual awareness.

To summarize, the studies related to teachers' multilingual awareness have already gained some research achievements both at home and abroad. With regards to the foreign research, while two articles of Otwinowska (2014; 2017) devoted to theoretical building, having constructed a model of teachers' plurilingual awareness by extending new components into the traditional ones, a few empirical research have also been conducted. Compared to the foreign literature, the study on this topic in China seems to just start, but at the same time, there is a large body of domestic research based on the traditional TLA model.

However, despite those research contributions, existing literature on teachers' multilingual awareness still has limitations. Firstly, the empirical studies have been carried out in Poland, lacking investigation on teachers from other regions of the world. Secondly, although several questionnaires have been developed to measure teachers' multilingual awareness, they still need to be validated by more research. In addition, the factors that have been found to influence Polish teachers' plurilingual awareness should also be verified with data in other contexts. Lastly, the empirical research on this topic in China is yet to be conducted, especially examine the multilingual awareness of English teacher in China.

Research Methodology

The study applied quantitative method by sending 400 questionnaires_to foreign language teachers in colleges and universities in Shanxi Province, China and conducted research on the current situation of the multilingual awareness level of family language management. Based on the theory of Spolsky (2004), it analyzed the composition mechanism of family language management and the mediating effect of multilingual awareness by SPSS and SEM (Structural Equation Model) analysis, which helps to provide reference for the formulation of relevant national language policies and promote the harmonious development of family and social language environment.

Discussion

Model Analysis

As the following table shows that $\chi2=1362.477$, df =1215, RMSEA=0.018, TLI=0.985, CFI=0.986, SRMR=0.040, the model fits well.

Model Fit Analysis

Indicators	χ^2	f	p	χ^2/df	FI	MSEA	RMR	FI	FI	NFI
criteria	–	–	0.05	<3	0.9	0.10	<0.05	0.9	0.9	0.9
value	362.477	215	.002	1.121	.882	.018	0.047	.986	.882	.985

Other indicators	LI	GFI	FI	PGFI	NFI	RMR	RMSEA 90% CI			
criteria	0.9	0.9	0.9	>0.9	0.9	0.1	–			
value	.985	.871	.986	0.808	.841	.040	0.011 ~ 0.023			

Default Model: $\chi^2(1275)=11565.107$, *p*=1.000

Based on the analysis of Regression Coefficient of Model, when family language education influences language practice, the standardized path coefficient value is 0.214> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=5.603, P =0.000< 0.01), indicating that family language education has a significant positive influence on language practice.

When family language selection affected language practice, the normalized path coefficient was 0.230> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=6.027, P =0.000< 0.01), indicating that family Language selection has a significant positive influence on language practice.

When family language environment influences language practice, the normalized path coefficient is 0.248> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=6.415, P =0.000< 0.01), indicating that family language environment has a significant positive influence on language practice.

When language practice was affected by SLA social-linguistic awareness, the standardized path coefficient was 0.156> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=4.123, P =0.000< 0.01), indicating that social-linguistic awareness has a significant positive impact on language practice.

When meta-linguistic awareness was affected by language practice, the standardized path coefficient was 0.188> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=5.077, P =0.000< 0.01), so MLA meta-linguistic awareness has a significant positive influence on language practice.

When the cross-linguistic awareness was affected by CLA, the standardized path coefficient was 0.164> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=4.429, P =0.000< 0.01), indicating that (CLA)cross-linguistic awareness had a significant positive impact on language practice.

When family language education affected SLA social-linguistic awareness, the standardized path coefficient was 0.195> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=3.983, P =0.000< 0.01), indicating that family language education has a significant positive influence on SLA social-linguistic awareness.

When family language selection affected SLA social-linguistic awareness, the standardized path coefficient was 0.162> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=3.269, P =0.001< 0.01), indicating that family language selection had a significant positive influence on SLA social-linguistic awareness.

When the family language environment affected SLA social-linguistic awareness, the standardized path coefficient was 0.198> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=3.984, P =0.000< 0.01), indicating that family language environment has a significant positive influence on SLA social-linguistic awareness.

When family language education affected meta-linguistic awareness, the standardized path coefficient was 0.183> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=3.657, P =0.000< 0.01), indicating that family language education had a significant positive impact on meta-linguistic awareness.

When family language selection affected meta-linguistic awareness, the standardized path coefficient was 0.154> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=3.058, P =0.002< 0.01), indicating that family language selection had a significant positive effect on meta-linguistic awareness.

When family language environment affected meta-linguistic awareness, the standardized path coefficient was 0.163> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=3.229, P =0.001<

0.01), indicating that family language environment has a significant positive influence on meta-linguistic awareness.

When family language education affected CLA cross-linguistic awareness, the standardized path coefficient was 0.145> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=2.886, P =0.004< 0.01), indicating that family language education had a significant positive influence on CLA cross-linguistic awareness.

When family language selection affected CLA cross-linguistic awareness, the standardized path coefficient was 0.163> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=3.224, P =0.001< 0.01), indicating that family language selection had a significant positive influence on CLA cross-linguistic awareness.

When family language environment affected cross-linguistic awareness (CLA), the standardized path coefficient was 0.178> 0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=3.504, P =0.000< 0.01), indicating that family language environment had a significant positive influence on CLA cross-linguistic awareness. In summary, the single path hypothesis of this study is significant.

Mediating Effect Analysis

The mediating effect refers to the influence of independent variable on dependent variable in a remote way, which needs to be tested jointly by multiple coefficients. Therefore, Bootstrap method was used in AMOS to test the significance of direct, indirect, and total effects of each variable on language practice.

According to the results, all independent variables have significant overall and direct effects on language practice. CLA, MLA and SLA have significant indirect effects on language practice, that is, they can have significant indirect effects on language practice through other variables.

Table 2 *Mediating Effect Size*

Item	Result	c (total effect)	a*b (Mediation effect)	, (indirect effect)	formula	Effect percentage
family language environment=>(CLA)cross-	Part mediation	0.329	0.028	.241	* b / c	8.589%

Table 2 *Mediating Effect Size*

Item	Result	c (total effect)	a*b (Mediation effect)	' (indirect effect)	formula	Effect percentage
linguistic awareness=>language practice(LP) family language environment=>(MLA)meta-linguistic awareness=>language practice(LP)	Part mediation	0.329	0.030	.241	* b / c	9.071%
family language environment=>(SLA)social-linguistic awareness=>language practice (LP)	Part mediation	0.329	0.030	.241	* b / c	9.091%
family language selection=>(CLA)cross-linguistic awareness=>language practice(LP)	Part mediation	0.335	0.029	.248	* b / c	8.577%
family language selection=>(MLA)meta-linguistic awareness=>language practice(LP)	Part mediation	0.335	0.031	.248	* b / c	9.325%
family language selection=>(SLA)social-linguistic awareness=>language practice(LP)	Part mediation	0.335	0.027	.248	* b / c	8.096%
family language education=>(CLA)cross-linguistic awareness=>language practice(LP)	Part mediation	0.326	0.026	0.231	a * b / c	7.829%

Table 2 *Mediating Effect Size*

Item	Result	c (total effect)	a*b (Mediation effect)	, (indirect effect)	formula	Effect percentage
family language education=>(MLA)meta–linguistic awareness=>language practice(LP)	Part mediation	0.326	0.037	.231	* b / c	11.368%
family language education=>(SLA)social–linguistic awareness=>language practice(LP)	Part mediation	0.326	0.033	.231	* b / c	10.058%

As can be seen from the following table, the mediation effect analysis involves 5 models as follows:

LP =0.630+0.329*family language environment+0.335*family language Selection +0.326*family language education

CLA =1.725+0.204*family language environment+0.208*family language Selection +0.184*family language education

MLA =1.626+0.194*family language environment+0.202*family language Selection +0.240*family language education

SLA =1.735+0.215*family language environment+0.195*family language Selection +0.235*family language education

LP =−0.101+0.241*family language environment+0.248*family language Selection +0.231*family language Education + 0.138 * CLA + 0.154 * MLA + 0.139 * SLA

Table 3 *Mediation Effect Model Test*

	language practice	(CLA)cross–linguistic awareness	(MLA)meta–linguistic awareness	(SLA)social–linguistic awareness	language practice
Constant	0.630** (3.938)	1.725** (7.211)	1.626** (6.614)	1.735** (7.846)	–0.101 (–0.587)
family language environment	0.329** (8.394)	0.204** (3.486)	0.194** (3.212)	0.215** (3.961)	0.241** (6.385)
family language selection	0.335** (7.735)	0.208** (3.207)	0.202** (3.042)	0.195** (3.251)	0.248** (5.998)
family language education	0.326** (7.586)	0.184** (2.871)	0.240** (3.637)	0.235** (3.961)	0.231** (5.576)
(CLA) cross–linguistic awareness					0.138** (4.315)
(MLA) meta–linguistic awareness					0.154** (4.952)
(SLA) social–linguistic awareness					0.139** (4.078)
Sample Size	387	387	387	387	387
R^2	0.455	0.120	0.127	0.157	0.540

Table 3 *Mediation Effect Model Test*

	language practice	(CLA)cross–linguistic awareness	(MLA)meta–linguistic awareness	(SLA)social–linguistic awareness	language practice
Adjust R^2	0.451	0.113	0.120	0.150	0.533
F	$F(3,383)=106.718,p=0.000$	$F(3,383)=17.422,p=0.000$	$F(3,383)=18.523,p=0.000$	$F(3,383)=23.695,p=0.000$	$F(6,380)=74.312,p=0.000$

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$; The t values are in parentheses

In conclusion, all the hypotheses about mediation in this study have been verified. All independent variables have significant overall and direct effects on language practice. CLA, MLA and SLA have significant indirect effects on language practice, that is, they can have significant indirect effects on language practice through other variables.

Conclusion and Recommends

Conclusions

In conclusion, all the hypotheses about mediation in this study have been verified. All independent variables have significant overall and direct effects on language practice. CLA, MLA and SLA have significant indirect effects on language practice, that is, they can have significant indirect effects on language practice through other variables.

As what have showed in Figure based on the analysis of pilot test and formal questionnaire, here are two new knowledge to point out:

First, multilingual awareness (including cross–linguistic awareness, meta–linguistic awareness, and social–linguistic awareness), has mediating effect on family language management in College English teacher's family in Shan Xi Province, China, which plays a great role on children's language education because it will decide the guideline of family language environment, language selection and education.

Second, in Family Language Management Model, multilingual awareness (including cross–linguistic awareness, meta–linguistic awareness, and social–linguistic awareness) is different from the model of teachers' plurilingual awareness proposed by Otwinowska (2017), which shows that the model

consists of four components, namely Crosslinguistic Awareness of a Multilingual Language User, Metalinguistic Awareness, Psycholinguistic Awareness and Sociolinguistic Awareness.

Implications and Recommendations

Theoretically, the study has established the model of family language management to show the importance of multilingual awareness in family language management. Practically, the study helps to know the basic condition of language awareness of College English teachers' family in China and provides suggestions to the government in their family policy making, especially on the aspect of the language management.

As language consciousness/belief plays an important role on family language management, it should define what is language consciousness/belief for further study and how does it work firstly. Second, it should do research on those who doesn't have strong language consciousness/belief on family language management to make a comparison study. Practically, each family should have a long-term plan on family language management under the related guidelines of family language management.

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