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Causal Modeling – Path Analysis
A New Trend in Research in Applied Linguistics

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ABSTRACT

This article aims at discussing a new statistical trend in research in applied linguistics. This rather new statistical procedure is causal modeling – path analysis. The article demonstrates that causal modeling – path analysis is the best statistical option to use when the effects of a multitude of L2 learners' variables on language achievement are investigated in one study. The proposed causal models, which are the property of causal modeling, provide a plausible explanation for the hypothesized relationships among the variables under inquiry. The causal modeling procedure and the statistical test of path analysis will reasonably manifest the causal relationship that naturally exists between the L2 learners' variables and are otherwise overlooked with simple correlational procedures. The paper presents a historical background on the statistical procedures involved in research about L2 learners' variables in the field of ELT. The traditional trend of linear correlation between the variables of concern can be reasonably reconsidered and replaced with the new causal modeling – Path analysis procedure. Paper also presents some rudimentary information about path analysis.

INTRODUCTION

In the past quarter of the century, research in the field of SLA has grown enormously, with the quantity of published research increasing annually. It is striking, however, that main thrust of research has been towards establishing how language learners are similar and how processes of language learning are universal. That is, traditionally, majority of the research in SLA and applied linguistics looked for phenomenon that would presumably affect all the individual language learners. In studies concerned with SLA, researchers have tried to identify universal sequences in development or common processes,