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## ΣΥΝΤΟΜΗ ΕΜΠΕΙΡΙΚΗ ΑΝΑΦΟΡΑ | BRIEF EMPIRICAL REPORT

# Representations of refugees: Linguistic abstractness and social perceptions

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Language abstraction, Linguistic category model, Media representations, Refugees, Essentialist beliefs, Stereotypes	The paper examines the relationship among stereotype content, essentialism, and preferred language abstraction in refugee media representations. In two studies, participants were asked to choose captions of differential degree of language abstraction (according to the linguistic category model, from descriptive action verbs to adjectives) thought appropriate for an image of refugees, after they first completed a survey on stereotype content (perceived competence and warmth) and essentialist beliefs (Study 2 only) about refugees. In both studies, perceived competence predicted increased language abstraction. In Study 2, competence was also found to mediate the effects of essentialism on language abstraction. These results underline the importance of stereotype content to biased language preference.
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## Introduction

What linguistic choices do people believe are appropriate for refugee representations in the media? Are these choices related to people's social perceptions of refugees? The present research aims to examine how the stereotype content and essentialist beliefs about refugees are related to language abstraction and, especially, the language people choose to convey information about them. We ask whether the linguistic abstraction (i.e., spanning from descriptive verbs – that describe specific and observable behavior of group members with a beginning and end – to adjectives – that describe highly abstract dispositions of group members) of group representation is related to people's beliefs about the specific group. The focus of the present studies is on real-life journalistic language as it is often used in everyday media discourse, thus enhancing the ecological relevance of the present research.

Although the relationship between people's social thinking (e.g., stereotypes) and perception of social groups' media representations has been examined before (see Mastro, 2009 for a review), the relationship between preferred linguistic abstraction in a group's media representations and perceivers' stereotype content and essentialist beliefs has been not yet explored in the literature. In order to illuminate this relationship, the present studies bring together approaches from communication, language, and social psychology.

Refugees, the social group of focus for the present studies, often attract attention from the media (Atwell Seate & Mastro, 2016) and therefore a better understanding of the relation between people's perceptions of refugees and the preferred language in their media representations is socially important and relevant. In the last

few years increased numbers of refugees and immigrants fled their homelands to enter mainly European countries (Greece and Italy as the main intermediate stations of their journey) posing some serious challenges for the local societies with the public discourse heavily focusing on the issue. Media audiences' understanding of the immigration phenomenon is related to media representations of refugees and immigrants. The goal of the present studies is to examine what kind of language people think is appropriate when media report on refugees and whether these preferences are related to people's perceptions of refugees and especially stereotype content and essentialist beliefs.

### ***Language use and social perception***

Language use is thought to both reflect and affect social perception. The linguistic category model (LCM, Semin & Fiedler, 1991) suggests that different linguistic devices convey different information about social actors and their context. Such linguistic categories, developed from a more concrete to a more abstract continuum, are the descriptive action verbs (DAV, 'Jason gives money to Helen'), the interpretative action verbs (IAV, 'Jason helps Helen'), the state verbs (SV, 'Jason cares about Helen'), and adjectives (ADJ, 'Jason is helpful'). Language that is closer to the more abstract end conveys more generalizable information about the actor and less information about the context. Research has provided evidence that biased language use and stereotyping are closely related (Wigboldus & Douglas, 2007). Differential language abstraction is employed to communicate ingroup and outgroup stereotypical perceptions. For example, based on a positive view toward the ingroup and less positive view toward the outgroup, individuals use more abstract language to communicate desirable ingroup and undesirable outgroup behavior, and less abstract language to communicate undesirable ingroup and desirable outgroup behavior, what is known as the linguistic intergroup bias (see Maass, 1999; Maass et al., 1989). Similarly, the present study focuses on the dominant theoretical perspective in the field, that is, on how language reflects social perception and, especially, on how people's perceptions of refugees predict their preferred level of language abstraction of refugee media representations.

Although stereotyping has been shown to be related to language abstractness – for example, existing stereotypes produce biased language (e.g., negative stereotypes of an outgroup are connected with more abstract language describing an undesirable deed) – research on how stereotype content relates to language abstraction is limited. The stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2018) proposes that competence and warmth are two basic dimensions of social perception. The former refers to perceived ability, skill, and efficacy, and the latter to perceived intent, friendliness, and sincerity. The most positive reactions are formed when people are perceived as both warm and competent, whereas ambivalent reactions are produced when people are perceived as high on one dimension and low on the other. These two central dimensions of social perception affect how people respond emotionally and behaviorally to social groups (Fiske et al., 2018) and consequently may be important for the communication thought appropriate to represent these groups. Since there is no prior research examining the relationship between stereotype content and language abstraction, an exploratory research question is posed regarding the relationship between the two, hence, what is the relationship between stereotype content and language abstraction (Research Question 1)?

Another aspect of social perception related to language use is essentialist beliefs. Essentialism refers to the assumption that members of a social category have a fixed, underlying nature that determines their identity and behavioral manifestations (Leslie, 2017). Bastian and Haslam (2006) propose that essentialist beliefs are based on (a) a biological basis of the inner underlying reality (e.g., "this 'essence' of the social group is inherited"), (b) a discreteness basis (e.g., "people are members of this category or not") and (c) an informativeness basis (e.g., "few basic traits of this group can tell you a lot about many aspects of these group members"). Although the relationship between essentialism and language abstraction, as defined above, has not been examined<sup>1</sup>, essentialist beliefs are said to be related to generic language (Cimpian & Markman, 2011; Leslie, 2017), that is language that refers to generalizations (such as, "Members of the X social group are helpful", as compared to non-generic language, e.g., "This person gave some money to a charity"). This relationship is examined under the general theoretical perspective that social perception predicts language abstraction. Based on the connection between essentialism and generic (i.e. more abstract) language, a hypothesis is formulated, that essentialist

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<sup>1</sup> For a relevant examination of the relationship between language abstraction (however between nouns and adjectives) and implicit essentialism (i.e., strength, stability and resilience of individual's preferences) see Carnaghi, Maass, Gresta, Bianchi, Cadinu & Arcuri, 2008.

beliefs would be positively related to more abstract linguistic use (i.e., use of state verbs and adjectives) (Hypothesis 1). Lastly, the relationship between essentialism and stereotype content in predicting language abstractness will be examined. Previous research suggests that essentialist beliefs precede stereotypes by giving explanatory coherence to group stereotypes and guiding social information processing (see Estrada et al., 2004), and moreover, essentialism has been found to predict stereotype endorsement (Bastian & Haslam, 2006). Hence, we will explore whether the same relationship stands here so that essentialist beliefs predict stereotype content and whether this relationship between essentialism, competence, and warmth predicts the preferred level of language abstraction. Specifically, a mediational relationship is tested: does perceived competence and warmth mediate the effect of essentialism on language abstraction (Research Question 2)?

### **General method**

An important distinction in media research concerns whether the media content that is investigated is mainly characterized by precision or realism (see Shah et al., 2009). The former refers to research that examines variations of media representations characterized by differences in form but not in content (e.g., the distinction between gain and loss frames in health campaigning: “If you perform the X health behavior, you will have the following benefits” or “If you don’t perform the X health behavior, you will have the following problems”) and the latter to media representations that are close to real-life journalistic discourse which is dominant at a specific point in time (e.g., the framing of economic crisis of 2010 by various political actors either as a mainly political and social one, or by others as an economic one). Both precision and realism frames have been found to be relevant and potent in affecting beliefs and attitudes and thus worth examination (Vraga et al., 2010). This distinction has obvious consequences for a trade-off between internal (precision focus) and external (realism focus) validity. While in the former the goal is to employ a generic frame (that can be used in different contexts, messages, etc.) with as little as possible dependency on the content, enabling this way stronger causal inferences, in the latter the goal is to employ a specific frame that have been used in public discourse, expecting not to generalize to different contexts, but to understand the effects of public discourse as it appears in the everyday media flow. Considering the nature of the topic under investigation we endeavored to strike a balance between internal validity and measurement precision on the one hand and external validity and realism on the other. Achieving such balance is constrained by the actual events on the ground and their reporting in news media. In this case, we decided to weigh realism more heavily because of the uniqueness of the situation under investigation – the arrival of refugee boats on Greek islands. The present studies pursue the realism approach as the main focus is to understand how real-life media representations of refugees may reflect the audience’s social perception of them. Following this logic, and in order to examine language abstraction a procedure used in previous studies (e.g., Maass et al., 1989) was followed. Participants choose among four captions of differential abstraction (from concrete to abstract) that best suits an image of a social group. In the present studies, the goal was for participants to choose a caption that best suits an image of refugees. The development of captions was based on both theory and real-life examples.

In order to produce captions that are believable and familiar, an extensive content analysis was performed on various media outlets. A variety of captions conveying differential degrees of abstraction were identified. Based on the linguistic category model (Semin & Fiedler, 1991) that dictates specific differences on a concrete-abstract continuum, and the types of captions commonly found in the media, four captions were produced: the first read ‘Twenty refugees in a boat are approaching the coast of Kos’ (*Είκοσι πρόσφυγες σε μια βάρκα πλησιάζουν στην ακτή της Κω*), (employing a descriptive action verb according the LCM, while describing specific number of refugees and context), the second, ‘Refugees arrive at the island of Kos’ (*Πρόσφυγες φτάνουν στο νησί της Κω*) (employing an interpretative action verb according the LCM), the third, ‘Refugees hoping for a better life make the dangerous trip across the Aegean sea’ (*Πρόσφυγες ελπίζουν για μια καλύτερη ζωή και πραγματοποιούν το επικίνδυνο ταξίδι στο Αιγαίο*) (employing a state verb according to the LCM) and the fourth, ‘Brave refugees risk their lives to escape war’ (*Γενναίοι πρόσφυγες διακινδυνεύουν τη ζωή τους για να ξεφύγουν από τον πόλεμο*) (employing an adjective according to the LCM). This way the basic logic of the LCM was followed from the descriptive and concrete (first two captions) progressively to the more abstract (in the third and fourth captions). Although the titles may differ in other aspects than abstractness, they were deliberately selected because they reflected the realistic media representations of the time and therefore enhance the ecological validity of the material used in the studies (see Shah et al., 2009). Pilot testing (n=20) confirmed this logic and showed that these titles were perceived by independent participants as similarly believable and familiar.

Moreover, the third and the fourth captions were perceived as more general compared to the first two captions. Participants were asked to select which one of the four captions better fits an image showing a boat of refugees approaching the shore of a Greek island (the photo was taken from some distance and no faces were discernible). The specific photo was chosen by participants as the most common and representative among several similar photos that were often found in the press and the media at that time. We decided to use only one photo because otherwise potential differences in the results could have been attributed to the different content of the photographs and not necessarily to the different captions that was the main goal of this research.

## Study 1

The first study examined the relationship between stereotypes and language abstraction (RQ1).

## Method

### Participants

A total of 166 students in secondary education participated voluntarily in this study. Written consent was obtained from the guardians of the students to participate in the study. From this initial sample, five participants were excluded because they had a large amount of missing data, leaving thus 161 usable questionnaires. Age ranged from 11 to 12 years ( $M = 11.38$ ,  $S.D. = .88$ ) with 75 male and 86 female participants.

### Questionnaire

#### Stereotypes

Participants were asked to rate the degree to which several adjectives (tapping on competence and warmth, see Fiske et al., 2018) are characteristic of refugees, using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much so*). The adjectives were: smart (*έξυπνοι*), with abilities (*με ικανότητες*), industrious (*εργατικοί*), honest (*έντιμοι*), benevolent (*καλοσυνάτοι*), friendly (*φιλικοί*), disliked (*αντιπαθητικοί*), and dangerous (*επικίνδυνοι*). The first three adjectives reflect competence ( $\alpha = .83$ ) and the next three warmth ( $\alpha = .81$ ). Two more items were included to balance the positive framing of the previous adjectives and reflected negativity ( $\alpha = .62$ ).

#### Language abstraction

Participants were asked to state which of the four captions better fits the photo. Their responses were coded as follows: ‘Twenty refugees in a boat are approaching the coast of Kos’ = 1, ‘Refugees arrive at the island of Kos’ = 2, ‘Refugees hoping for a better life make the dangerous trip across the Aegean Sea’ =3, ‘Brave refugees risk their lives to escape war’ =4.

## Results

Participants chose captions closer to the abstract continuum ( $M = 2.88$ ,  $S.D. = 1.03$ ), more specifically, they chose the third caption more frequently (41%), then the fourth (31.7%), then the first (16.8%) and last the second one (10.6%). Hence, the more abstract captions that include state verbs (third caption) and adjectives (fourth caption) were selected three times out of four.

An inspection of Table 1 shows that participants perceived refugees as competent and warm to a moderate degree, and negatively to a lesser degree. As expected warmth was positively correlated with competence and negatively with negativity.

In order to examine the type of stereotypes that predict language abstraction a multiple regression<sup>2</sup> was performed (see Table 2). Only competence was related to language, so the more competent refugees were perceived, the more abstract the language of the caption.

<sup>2</sup> Maass et al. (1989, p. 985) treat the four levels of language abstraction as an interval variable. However, there are different approaches

**Table 1**

*Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations among all Variables (Study 1)*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. Competence	3.33	.97			
2. Warmth	3.21	1.07	.59**		
3. Negativity	2.33	.96	-.37**	-.44**	
4. Language <sup>a</sup>	2.88	1.04	.26**	.18*	-.14#

\*Note. #  $p < .07$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; a Language was measured on a scale from 1 to 4.

**Table 2**

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Language (Study 1,  $N = 161$ )*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>
Competence	.25	2.39**
Warmth	.02	-.22
Negativity	-.05	-.54

\*Note. \*\* $p < .01$ ;  $R^2 = .06$  ( $p < .01$ ).

## Study 2

Findings from Study 1 showed that competence was the most important predictor of language abstraction. Study 2 aimed to replicate these findings (RQ1) and also to examine the relationship among essentialist beliefs, stereotypes, and language abstraction (H1, RQ2).

## Method

### Participants

Four hundred and ninety-three participants voluntarily took part in the study. They were students of a Greek higher education institution. Four participants were excluded because they had a large amount of missing data, leaving 489 usable questionnaires. Age ranged from 18 to 25 years ( $M = 20.15$ ,  $S.D. = 2.48$ ) with 180 male and 311 female participants.

that can be employed: One such approach to the analysis could be to treat the levels of language abstraction as levels of a (quasi-experimental) independent variable in order to examine the different perceptions of the participants who choose the one or the other caption. Following this logic, we ran three one-way ANOVAs with language abstraction as the independent variable and competence, warmth and negativity as dependent variables. All analyses were significant (competence,  $F(3, 157) = 3.98$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .3$ , warmth,  $F(3, 157) = 2.85$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .2$ , and negativity,  $F(3, 157) = 2.56$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .2$ ). Regarding competence, adjective (ADJ) and state verb (SV) levels had increased perceptions ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = .85$ ,  $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = .92$ , accordingly) compared to descriptive action verb (DAV) and interpretive action verb (IAV) ( $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ,  $M = 3.01$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ , accordingly). Regarding warmth results were similar (ADJ,  $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ , SV,  $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ , IAV,  $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ , DAV,  $M = 2.70$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) and the same was evident for negativity (ADJ,  $M = 2.34$ ,  $SD = .81$ , SV,  $M = 2.13$ ,  $SD = .84$ , IAV,  $M = 2.52$ ,  $SD = .97$ , DAV,  $M = 2.70$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ). Moreover, and similarly to the multiple regression model, a multinomial logistic regression provided a significant model,  $R^2 = .11$  (Cox & Snell),  $.12$  (Nagelkerke), model  $\chi^2(9) = 19.54$ ,  $p < .02$ . Competence predicted selection of adjectives vs. DAV ( $b = -.66$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 4.01$ ,  $p < .05$ ), vs. IAV ( $b = -.84$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 4.77$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and vs. SV ( $b = -.52$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 4.03$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Hence, results are similar, irrespective of method of analysis.

## Questionnaire

### Stereotypes

The same scales as in Study 1 were used. All scales had satisfactory reliabilities (competence,  $\alpha = .84$ , warmth,  $\alpha = .89$ , negativity,  $\alpha = .78$ ).

### Essentialism

Following Bastian and Haslam (2006), a scale was constructed (using a 6-point Likert response continuum, ranging from 1 = *disagree absolutely* to 6 = *absolutely agree*) with five items tapping on the biological basis of essentialism (one item, “the kind of person a refugee is, mainly depends on biological and genetic factors”), on discreteness (two items, “refugees easily stand out from other people”, “refugees don’t look like other people”), and on informativeness (two items, “you can easily tell whether someone is a refugee or not”, “refugees cannot change what they really are”). All items were subjected to a principal component analysis revealing one factor with an eigenvalue of 2.26 (explaining 46% of the variance, all loadings  $> .5$ ,  $\alpha = .70$ ).

## Results

As in Study 1, participants chose the more abstract captions more frequently ( $M = 2.78$ ,  $S.D. = .89$ ), in particular, they chose the third caption more frequently (51.6%), then the fourth (19.4%), then the second (16.9%) and last the first one (12%). Hence, the more abstract captions (i.e., the ones that included state verb and adjective) were again selected three times out of four.

An inspection of Table 3 shows that participants perceived refugees as competent and warm to a moderate degree, and negatively to a lesser degree. Warmth was positively related to competence and language abstraction, and negatively with negative stereotypes. Essentialism was positively related to negative stereotypes and negatively to competence, warmth, and language abstraction. Language abstraction was positively related to competence and warmth, and negatively to negative stereotypes and essentialism.

In order to examine the variables that predict language abstraction a multiple regression was performed (see Table 4). As in Study 1, only competence was related to language, so the more competent refugees were perceived, the more abstract the language of the captions chosen by the participants.

**Table 3**

*Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations among all Variables (Study 2)*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
1. Competence	3.46	.75				
2. Warmth	3.26	.83	.65**			
3. Negativity	2.35	.95	-.32**	-.45**		
4. Essentialism	2.96	.94	-.25**	-.28**	.30**	
5. Language <sup>a</sup>	2.78	.89	.23**	.17**	-.15**	-.14**

\*Note. \*\* $p < .01$ ; a Language was measured on a scale from 1 to 4.

**Table 4**

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Language (Study 2,  $N = 489$ )*

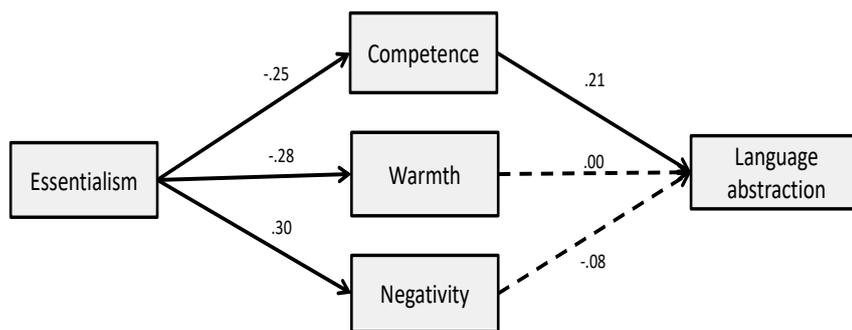
Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>
Competence	.24	3.43**
Warmth	-.01	-0.13
Negativity	-.07	-1.39
Essentialism	-.07	-1.47

\*Note. \*\* $p < .01$ ;  $R^2 = .06$  ( $p < .01$ ).

## Structural equation model of language abstraction

To more stringently examine the relationships of all variables of interest as a structure, a model was tested (using AMOS 21 software) where stereotypes mediate the effects of essentialism on language abstraction (see Figure 1). The goodness of fit of the model to the raw data was evaluated with several fit indices (a non-significant chi-square, the Comparative Fit Index, CFI, and the Nonnormed Fit Index, NNFI) and a badness of fit index (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, RMSEA) (Holbert & Stephenson, 2002).

The analysis showed that the hypothesized model fit the data very well  $\chi^2 (df=1, N=489) = 2.17, p = .140$ . The goodness of fit indices provided good fit CFI = .998 and NNFI = .995. The RMSEA index = .049 (90% CI: .000–.020) also provided a good fit<sup>3</sup>. Inspection of the model shows that increased essentialism was related to decreased competence ( $\beta = -.25, p < .001$ ), decreased warmth ( $\beta = -.28, p < .001$ ), and increased negativity ( $\beta = .29, p < .001$ ). However, only competence positively predicted language abstraction ( $\beta = .21, p < .001$ ). Therefore, the effect of essentialism on language abstraction is fully mediated by competence.



**Figure 1.** SEM Model of Essentialism, Stereotypes and Language Abstraction ( $N = 489$ )

\*Note: Standardized coefficients are presented. Solid lines show significant relationships ( $p < .01$ ).

## Discussion

The present studies examined the level of language abstraction individuals choose to describe an image of refugees and the predictors of such linguistic choices, namely, stereotype content and essentialist beliefs. In both studies, participants chose titles of greater abstraction (i.e., containing state verbs, e.g., hoping, and adjectives, e.g., brave) to complement a photograph of refugees arriving on a Greek island's shore in a boat. Both stereotype content dimensions (competence and warmth) and negative stereotypes were related (the former two positively and the latter negatively) to language abstractness. However, only competence predicted language abstractness when all stereotype measures were included in the regression analyses (RQ1).

Essentialist beliefs were also related (negatively) to language abstraction (H1, Study 2). This finding can be interpreted in the context of the connotations that the captions carried. The third and fourth captions convey more positive connotations (i.e., refugees hope and are brave) developing a positive overall image of refugees. Hence, while generally essentialism, as a perception of a social group that has a fixed nature that determines its identity and behavior, has been found to be related to negative stereotypes (Bastian & Haslam, 2006), it seems reasonable to be negatively related to the positive attributes of competence and warmth, and the (positively connoted) abstract language. Interestingly, perceived competence mediated the effect of essentialism on language abstraction (RQ2). In other words, the basic perception of refugees' fixed nature predicts preferred language abstraction by the perception of whether refugees are competent and agentic. The less strongly participants hold essentialist beliefs about refugees, the more competent they view them and the more they prefer to describe them with abstract language.

<sup>3</sup> The proposed relationship between essentialism and stereotype content had a theoretical base (see Bastian & Haslam, 2006) and the mediational analysis was based on this logic. However, the alternative direction was also examined (i.e., essentialism as a mediator between stereotype content and language abstraction) but the model did not fit the data well,  $\chi^2 (df=1, N=489) = 21.73, p < .001$ , CFI = .654, NNFI = .665, RMSEA index = .206.

These findings confirm that stereotypes are related to biased language use as is found in previous research (see Wigboldus & Douglas, 2007). The present study shows that stereotype content is also related to biased language use. Significantly, competence proved the most important predictor of language abstraction. It can be assumed that greater abstraction (e.g., use of state verbs and adjectives) conveys greater agency for the social actor (the group is perceived to have the willingness to perform certain goal-directed actions), something that is conceptually close to perceptions of competence. This can be interpreted with research that has shown that, on the one hand, verbs convey the notion of agency (see Formanowicz et al., 2017) and, on the other, the adjective brave, used in the present study, is one among the few that convey the notion of competence across seven languages (Saucier, 2009). Moreover, it was also the first time that essentialism was found to be related to language abstraction, but this relationship was mediated by perceptions of competence.

It should be noted that the convenience sample limits the generalizability of our findings. Also, abstract language choices (i.e., state verbs, adjectives) used in the study have positive connotations (i.e., “refugees hope for a better life...”, “brave refugees...”), so generalization to negatively connoted language is not appropriate. Such positive connoted captions are, however, close to what participants were commonly exposed to, and thus more externally valid. Future research could examine a precision approach, or different intermediate levels between the precision and realism ends (see Vraga et al., 2010) to media content and examine the linguistic preferences of both positive and negative language connotations. Finally, samples of both studies (secondary and university students) may have been exposed to education content regarding stereotyping, prejudice, cultural diversity, etc., something that may have affected their responses in the relevant scales, making social desirability effects possible.

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# Αναπαραστάσεις των προσφύγων: Γλωσσική αφαιρετικότητα και κοινωνικές αντιλήψεις

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ΛΕΞΕΙΣ ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ	ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ
Γλωσσική αφαιρετικότητα, Μοντέλο γλωσσικών κατηγοριών, Μιντιακές αναπαραστάσεις, Πρόσφυγες, Ουσιοκρατικές πεποιθήσεις, Στερεότυπα	Η μελέτη εξετάζει τη σχέση μεταξύ του περιεχομένου των στερεοτύπων, των ουσιοκρατικών πεποιθήσεων και της προτιμώμενης γλωσσικής αφαιρετικότητας στις μιντιακές αναπαραστάσεις των προσφύγων. Σε δύο έρευνες, οι συμμετέχοντες κλήθηκαν να επιλέξουν τίτλους διαφορετικών επιπέδων γλωσσικής αφαιρετικότητας (σύμφωνα με το μοντέλο των γλωσσικών κατηγοριών, από ρήματα περιγραφής δράσης έως επιθετικούς προσδιορισμούς), τίτλους τους οποίους έκριναν κατάλληλους να περιγράψουν μια φωτογραφία με πρόσφυγες, αφού πρώτα συμπλήρωσαν ερωτηματολόγιο για το περιεχόμενο των στερεοτύπων (προσλαμβανόμενη ικανότητα και θερμότητα), και ουσιοκρατικών πεποιθήσεων (Έρευνα 2) για τους πρόσφυγες. Και στις δύο έρευνες, η προσλαμβανόμενη ικανότητα προέβλεπε μεγαλύτερη γλωσσική αφαιρετικότητα στην επιλογή των τίτλων. Στην Έρευνα 2, η προσλαμβανόμενη ικανότητα βρέθηκε επίσης, να διαμεσολαβεί την επίδραση των ουσιοκρατικών πεποιθήσεων στη γλωσσική αφαιρετικότητα. Τα αποτελέσματα αυτά καταδεικνύουν τη σημασία του περιεχομένου των στερεοτύπων για τη μεροληπτική χρήση της γλώσσας.
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