

Codeswitching as a window to explore how simultaneous bilingual children's two grammars interact

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In this presentation we discuss some of the work that we have conducted at the UVALAL on child heritage speakers in Spain (L1 Spanish–HL English). The focus is placed on the implicit grammatical knowledge these bilinguals have and on whether it differs, and, if so, in which way, from the knowledge other bilinguals have. More specifically, we examine whether these heritage speakers are equally sensitive to the nominal formal features that appear in the codeswitching happening **(i)** between a determiner and a noun (determiner switches, e.g., *the ventana*^{Spanish} ('window-feminine') and *el*^{Spanish} ('the'-masculine)/*la*^{Spanish} ('the'-feminine) *window*) and **(ii)** between a DP subject and an adjective in copulative constructions (adjective switches, e.g., *la ventana*^{Spanish} ('the window-feminine') *is small* and *the window es pequeña/pequeño*^{Spanish} ('is small-feminine/small-masculine')). Two issues are addressed: **(i)** the directionality of the switch (e.g., English–Spanish or Spanish–English) and **(ii)**, in the case of the Spanish determiner and Spanish adjective switches, the type of gender agreement mechanisms that are at play (e.g., analogical criterion or masculine default). We investigate how the mental representation of the formal features involved is responsible for the sensitivity to grammatical gender, which in turn affects how bilinguals' language activation and inhibition processes are at play and shape both language development as well as processing.