Symposium title:
Linguistic outcomes and language dominance assessments in early bi-/trilingualism with special reference to Romance languages as (non-)mainstream languages

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Symposium format:
- **Symposium Multimodal**

Symposium mode:
- **Hybrid**

Sub-themes:
- □ LANGUAGE IN THE MIND/BRAIN: psycholinguistics, bilingualism, multilingualism, processing, cognitive advantage, individual factors or differences, cross-linguistic factors, disorders
- □ LANGUAGES IN SOCIETY: bilingualism, multilingualism, plurilingualism, multilingual classroom, translanguaging, literacy & literacies, heritage language, home language, migrants, deaf, sign/gesture

Short abstract in English:
When considering early multilingualism, several approaches try to describe the child's language(s) from different perspectives, especially when examining non-mainstream languages (Eisenchlas & Schalley 2020:28ff.), i.e., *minority*, *home* and *heritage languages* (HL). Recent studies focus on the promotion of non-mainstream languages since it is often observed that multilingual children are less competent in these languages than in their majority language and also when compared to their homeland peers. Questions on the HL baseline have brought many linguists to compare bilinguals with a bilingual baseline, such as adult HL-speakers and first-generation immigrants of the HL. Moreover, methodological questions on measuring HL-proficiency are of great importance. In this symposium, we aim at examining the early acquisition of non-mainstream languages considering input factors, language competence and dominance, cross-linguistic influence, language variation and code-mixing for the language combinations Romance-German/English/Romance. Besides, we want to discuss methodological procedures concerning language assessment, especially for heritage and minority languages, and to debate about empirical studies that have examined different approaches to HL-baseline.

Argument:

When considering early multilingualism, several approaches try to describe the child's language(s) from different perspectives. Different dimensions should be considered to best portray them, especially when examining non-mainstream languages (Eisenchlas & Schalley 2020:28ff.). The terms *minority*, *home* and *heritage languages* (HL) are often used interchangeably, yet they consider different traits of non-community languages. While the term *minority language* is related to a restricted social context, the home language describes not only the language spoken at home, but it also tells us about the family's communicative practices and the negotiation of language use in this setting. By contrast, the language that is not part of a larger society and it is available from birth is referred as HL (Rothman 2009: 156).

The acquisition of the Romance languages French, Spanish, Catalan and Italian together with English/German are the focus of intensive research on simultaneous bi-/trilingualism in longitudinal and cross-sectional studies centred on cross-linguistic influence, code-mixing and child-internal and child-external factors for language competence (e.g., Silva-Corvalán 1994, Nicoladis 1999, Kupisch 2006, 2008, Cantone 2007, Cantone et al 2008, Hauser-Grüdl et al 2010, Poeste et al. 2019, Arnaus Gil & Müller 2020, Sivakumar et al. 2020, among others). The growing literature investigating HLs in the US has brought this focus to Europe (Kupisch 2013, Aalberse et al. 2019, Stahnke et al 2020). Importantly, quantitative and qualitative factors in the bi-/trilingual's input, such as family language policies, family language and the role of siblings, have been observed to promote and enhance HL acquisition (Patuto et al 2014, Arnaus Gil et al 2020, Arnaus Gil 2022, Arnaus Gil & Jiménez-Gaspar 2022, Jiménez-Gaspar & Arnaus Gil, 2022).

Recent studies focus therefore on HL-promotion since it is often observed that bilingual children are less competent in their HL than in their majority language and also compared to their homeland peers. For trilingual children, the picture becomes more complex, since it has been assumed that they have one dominant and two weak languages (Hoffmann 2001, but cf. Arnaus Gil et al 2020 for different results). The questions on the HL baseline have brought many linguists to compare bilinguals with a bilingual baseline (Kupisch 2013), such as adult HL-speakers and first-generation immigrants of the HL who are input-givers of children acquiring an HL (Polinsky 2018, Serratrice 2019, Aalberse et al 2019, Polinsky & Scontras 2020). Moreover, methodological questions on measuring HL-proficiency are of great importance. In Silva-Corvalán & Treffers-Daller (2016) and Aalberse et al. (2019), it becomes clear that different tasks might tap into different aspects of language proficiency and might allow different group comparisons. For instance, fluency measures allow comparisons among different bilingual groups and (standardized) lexical proficiency tasks enable correlations with monolingual peer groups.

In this symposium, we aim at examining the early acquisition of non-mainstream languages considering the following aspects related to the dimensions of language exposed above for the language combinations Romance-German/English/Romance:

- Input quantity and quality factors
- Language competence, language fluency, language dominance
- Cross-linguistic influence
- Language variation
- Code-mixing

Besides, we want to discuss methodological procedures concerning language assessment, especially for heritage and minority languages, and to debate about empirical studies that have examined different approaches to HL-baseline.

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