

Title: Bilingualism and minority languages: integrating context of use with linguistic variables.

The language experience of children growing up with minority languages is subject to considerable variation, both in terms of input quantity and quality. Children acquiring a minority language are exposed to less variety of input, growing up in a smaller linguistic community and with fewer occasions to use the language in everyday life. Despite this poverty of input, most speakers are successfully learning the language and exhibit similar language acquisition in the dominant language as monolinguals.

In this talk I will discuss recent data coming from an investigation of language and cognitive skills in Sardinian/Italian children and adults. It will be discussed in detail how linguistic variables, such as syntactic structures with different complexity, could shape the investigation on cognitive functions in bilingualism, as in the case of an exclusive oral-language acquisition and the effect on verbal working memory and on syntactic processing. Finally a measure for tracking grammatical development based on structural priming will be proposed aiming at getting insights on mechanisms of language implicit learning in children with different contexts of acquisition.