

### **“Comprehension of rhetorical questions in early and late bilingual language acquisition”**

Rhetorical questions (RQs), signal the speaker’s attitude rather than requesting information. They can have the same syntactic surface structure as information-seeking questions (ISQs), from which they can be disambiguated by context, prosody, and lexical/syntactic cues (Biezma & Rawlins, 2017). Phenomena that integrate information across different domains, so called “interfaces”, are known to be especially challenging in (bilingual) language acquisition (Platzack, 2001; Sorace, 2011).

In two studies, we investigate the comprehension of RQs by two groups of adult bilinguals: German-dominant Heritage speakers of Italian and Italian late second language learners of German. We address the following questions: 1. Can early and late bilinguals correctly identify RQs and ISQs in their weaker language? 2. What is the role of prosodic and syntactic cues?

We will present preliminary data of a forced-choice experiment where RQ and ISQs were presented without context. Overall the performance of both groups was very high, suggesting that they can identify RQs and ISQs in their weaker language, based solely on their linguistic form (prosody & lexical/syntactic cues).