

## **Heritage language sentence processing: The interaction of morphosyntax with lexical factors in real time**

For much of its relatively short history, the study of morphosyntax in heritage languages has focused on global comparisons between heritage speakers and other populations, but more recent research has emphasized variability among heritage speakers (e.g., [4]), both within the group and within individual speakers. One approach to variability within speakers is to examine the role of lexical access in the comprehension and production of morphosyntax, with experimental manipulations of word-level factors such as frequency and form regularity. For instance, high word frequency could help facilitate lexical access because these items are typically encountered more often and therefore represent greater exposure [6]. Thus far, only a handful of studies have taken this approach with different measures of the production and comprehension of heritage language morphosyntax [2,3,5,6] and, to my knowledge, none has employed a real-time measure of sentence processing, despite the well-documented sensitivity of such measures to lexical frequency and the frequent proposal that such methods may be particularly well suited to research on heritage speakers (e.g., [1]). In this talk, I will report the results of two recent eyetracking studies that have taken this approach. The findings show that sensitivity to grammatical detail during processing can vary within individuals and that apparent difficulty is not necessarily due to deficient morphosyntax, as it can also be due to the demands of accessing lexical items in real time. This outcome is in line with previous research in this vein [2,3,5,6] and is broadly consistent with claims that lexical access can play an important role in heritage language morphosyntax [6,7].

### **References**

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