



UNIVERSITÀ  
di VERONA

Scuola di dottorato  
in SCIENZE UMANISTICHE



# Epistemology in the Linguistic Study of Heritage Language Bilingualism

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Room Olimpia (*Lingue Building*)

**STUDENTI E DOCENTI SONO CORDIALMENTE INVITATI**

**Abstract:** In this talk, I will first introduce the audience to and problematize both the concept of what a heritage language bilingual is and the literature that has studied their competence outcomes in adulthood over the past two decades. Heritage speakers are native—often child L1 or 2L1—speakers of a minority “home” language who (usually) become dominant speakers starting at school-age in the external societal majority language of the national community in which they grow up and are educated. Typically, heritage speakers show interesting differences in their knowledge and performance in the heritage language as compared to age-matched monolinguals. Often, such differences have been labelled as instances of incomplete acquisition (e.g. Montrul 2016) or attrition (Polinsky 2011). Under both accounts, although for different reasons, heritage language bilingual differences are viewed as some type of deficiency. I will propose that many differences, alternatively, could have only developed the way we see them in heritage grammars for reasons related to qualitative differences in the input heritage speakers receive and other experience factors related to their baseline (e.g. Rothman 2007; Pires and Rothman 2009; Pascual y Cabo and Rothman 2012, Putnam and Sánchez, 2013, Kupisch and Rothman 2018). I will walk you through various studies that lead to such a conclusion.

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