

# Untangling the factors towards language proficiency in Catalan as a heritage language in Germany: A cross-sectional study on language exposure, language proficiency, parental linguistic attitudes and parents' wellbeing

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Research on early bi- and trilingualism has observed that a variety of internal and external factors can determine language proficiency in the heritage language (HL) early on (cf. De Houwer 2009; Chevalier 2015; Arnaus Gil, Müller, Sette & Hüppop 2019). Only in the recent literature, the effect of (a) HL language maintenance or loss and (b) the different proficiency levels attained by the children on their subjective wellbeing has looked at (Lanz, Daussà & Pera-Ros 2019).

Our study contributes to a better understanding of the factors that foster proficiency in the HL. We conducted a pilot study with 17 Catalan-German simultaneous bi- and trilinguals from 2;6 to 13;0 (mean age 5;7) living in the German city of Hamburg. All families had a middle/high SES and used the OPOL strategy, with all children hearing Catalan from a native parent. 13 children were also exposed to German at home, and four received German input only at school. We also administered two questionnaires to the parents. The first one dealt with children's current and cumulative exposure to their L1s (Torregrossa & Bongartz 2018). The second aimed at (a) examining parental linguistic attitudes, values and desires (Casesnoves-Ferrer & Juarros-Daussà 2015) and (b) analyzing the effects of parental choices and of children's proficiency on the family's quality of life and wellbeing (OECD 2013).

Results are preliminary and based on a limited pilot, while the study is progressing. In a nutshell, we expect to observe: (a) different proficiency patterns in the L1s related to family language policy and language constellation; (b) language proficiency in the HL tightly related to cumulative language exposure; (c) wellbeing effects correlated with HL maintenance, in the form of life satisfaction and feelings of community acceptance and integration.

**References:** Arnaus Gil, L., N. Müller, N. Sette & M. Hüppop (2019). Active bi- and trilingualism and its influencing factors. *International Multilingual Research Journal*. Casesnoves-Ferrer, R. & E. Juarros-Daussà (2015). El catalán entre las dos lenguas más habladas del mundo. In R. Terborg, A. Alarcón & L. Neri (eds.) *Lengua española, contacto lingüístico y globalización*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 463–492. De Houwer, A. (2009). *Bilingual First Language Acquisition*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. Lanz, T., E. J. Daussà & R. Pera-Ros (2019). Two-way Integration of Heritage and Minoritized Speakers: Voices from Catalonia. In U. Hoinkes & M. Meyer (eds.), *The Impact of Migration on Language and Culture Areas*. Hamburg: Peter Lang. OECD (2013). *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being*. Torregrossa, J. & C. Bongartz (2018). Teasing apart the effects of dominance, transfer and processing in reference production by German-Italian bilingual adolescents. *Languages* 3(36).