Supporting Heritage Language Development

Silvina Montrul
Heritage Languages

Community Identity Socialization literacy

Bilingualism Biculturalism

Language acquisition Language processing Language loss

Linguistic and cultural diversity

Universal/core properties

Language Revitalization/transmission
## Heritage Language

*(Montrul 2016)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heritage languages</th>
<th>Sociopolitically minority languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immigrant languages</strong></td>
<td>Spanish, Hindi, Russian, Korean, Mandarin, Arabic, Tagalog in the United States and Canada, Turkish and Polish in The Netherlands and Germany, Finnish in Sweden, Dutch in Australia and South Africa, English in Israel and the Middle East, German in Brazil, Italian and Korean in Argentina, Amharic in Italy, Polish and Hindi/Urdu in the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National minority languages (may have official status)</strong></td>
<td>Basque in Spain and France, Catalan in Catalonia, Irish in Ireland, Welsh in Wales, Walloon in France, Greek and Aromanian in Albania, Frisian in the Netherlands and Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aboriginal languages</strong></td>
<td>Navajo in the United States, Inuktitut in Canada, Dyirbal in Australia, Quechua in Perú, Náhuatl in Mexico, Sámi in Scandinavia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


We all agree that

- Heritage Languages are precious linguistic, cultural and personal resources for individuals and for society

- But due to their minority status, many are vulnerable to loss, gradual or imminent

**Loss** = the result or process of losing something
            = the state of feeling of grief when deprived of something of value
We all agree that

- We must preserve heritage languages and transmit them
- This is not only important for the individuals, families, and communities that speak them, but also for scientific research.
Scientific Research shows that

Children with high proficiency in the two languages **who continue** to use the languages enjoy cognitive, cultural and economic benefits of bilingualism **if the home language is maintained.**
Heritage Languages

Have a lot to teach us about

• Languages, cognition, society and culture
• Language acquisition and bilingualism
• Linguistic theories
• Education
• Language policies
Critical Questions

• Why are heritage languages vulnerable to loss at the cognitive and societal level?
• How can we prevent language loss?
• How can we regain a language we lost?
• How can we support language maintenance and growth?
Language Loss/Maintenance

Community

Family

Individual

Language Acquisition
Heritage Language Acquisition (HLA)

HLA deals with the developmental stages and outcome of learning a minority language from childhood and into adulthood as well as the wax and wane of the heritage language in response to input factors.
Examples of Heritage Speakers
(Montrul 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heritage speaker profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Immigrant child or child of immigrant</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Young speaker of historical minority language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Young speaker of an indigenous language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bilingual children of professional families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Returnees (heritage language reversal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• International adoptees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HERITAGE SPEAKERS

Children of immigrant or immigrant children
2ND generation immigrants (sociolinguistics)

Exposed to the heritage/minority language since birth either as the only language or together with the majority language.

EARLY BILINGUALS
-- simultaneous
-- sequential
Heritage Speakers

• Identify themselves as bicultural
• Dominant in the majority language
• Different degrees of proficiency in the heritage language (from receptive ability to full fluency in production)
• Several gaps in the structural properties of the heritage language
• Many turn to the L2 classroom to learn, relearn or maintain their language.
Language

Young adult heritage speakers *care deeply* about the formal, structural properties *(grammar)* of language.

They have *self awareness* and many want to do something about it.
# Heritage Speakers and Heritage Language Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Linguistic Definition</th>
<th>Cultural definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linguistic profile</strong></td>
<td>Bilingual speaker/hearer</td>
<td>Monolingual speaker of the majority language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Some receptive or productive command of the heritage language</td>
<td>No knowledge of the heritage language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connection to the culture</strong></td>
<td>Deep and close</td>
<td>Remote and personal interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is this person a heritage speaker?</strong></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is this person learning the language in the classroom?</strong></td>
<td>If YES</td>
<td>If YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heritage Language Learner  
Second Language Learner
Language Acquisition

Scientific evidence clearly points to a universal, underlying human capacity to learn language soon after birth if not earlier.

- universal
- uniform
- Successful

Language Development

INPUT: spoken (and written) language

Initial state

Intermediate stages (development)

end state
Multilingual Acquisition

- L2 Acquisition
- L3 Acquisition
- Early Bilingual Acquisition
- Heritage Language Acquisition
Bilingual Children

• There are striking individual differences among bilingual children in their pathways to proficiency and ultimate levels of achievement in their two languages.

• Multiple social and cultural factors, including parents’ immigrant status and years in the US, SES, exposure to risks of poverty, perceived status of the home/heritage language, and community resources may help explain the variation.
The Complementarity Principle

Grosjean 2008
Variation in HL proficiency in Heritage speakers in the United States

ML = English
HL = Spanish/Japanese/Russian/Hindi . . .
## Intergenerational Bilingualism

Carreira & Kagan (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>English (%)</th>
<th>Heritage Language (%)</th>
<th>Both (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years old</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 years old</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18 years old</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18+ years old</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jhumpa Lahiri

- Indian-Bengali American author
- Born in London and raised in Rhode Island.
- Daughter of Indian Bengali parents
- Her family moved to the US when she was 2.
- Lahiri's mother wanted her children to grow up knowing their Bengali heritage, and her family often visited relatives in Calcutta.
• “My mother tongue, Bengali, is foreign in America. When you live in a country where your own language is considered foreign, you can feel a continuous sense of estrangement. (p. 30)”
“In my case there is another distance, another schism. I don’t know Bengali perfectly. I don’t know how to write it or even read it. I have an accent, I speak without authority, and so I’ve always perceived a disjunction between it and me. As a result I consider my mother tongue, paradoxically, a foreign language.”
Place and Language

Heritage speakers are “displaced” native speakers.

• In *Native Speaker*, author Chang-rae Lee introduces readers to Henry Park. Park has spent his entire life trying to become a true American—a native speaker. But even as the essence of his adopted country continues to elude him, his Korean heritage seems to drift further and further away.

• Park's harsh Korean upbringing has taught him to hide his emotions, to remember everything he learns, and most of all to feel an overwhelming sense of alienation. In other words, it has shaped him as a natural spy.
Hindi: Rajesh, 22 years old

Born in the United States
- Hindi speaking parents
- High SES (parents are doctors or engineers)
- Schooled in English
- Spoke Hindi at home with parents
- Parents spoke Hindi, Rajesh used some Hindi but often responded in English

Knowledge of English: native in all skills
Knowledge of Hindi: intermediate in spoken and aural comprehension, cannot read/write the language (illiterate)
Hindi Heritage Speakers: self-ratings by skill
(Montrul, Bhat & Girju, 2015)
L2 Learners of Hindi: self-ratings by skill
(Montrul, Bhatt, Bhatia & Puri, under review)
Hindi speakers in India: self-ratings by skill
(Montrul, Bhat & Girju, 2015)
Why do Heritage Speakers come to the classroom?

Data from project “Differential Object Marking in Spanish, Hindi and Romanian as Heritage Languages” (funded by NSF 2009-2013).

63 Spanish Heritage speakers

Would you like to improve your Spanish?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why do you want to improve your Spanish?

• *So that I don’t stumble on words and sound more like a native speaker.*
• To communicate with my *family*.
• So that I can get a *job* as a *bilingual* interpreter.
• Because I *love* my language.
• I want to embrace my *culture* as much as possible and I feel that I *lost a vital part* of speaking it while I was growing up.
• Because I want to go back to Puerto Rico to live and do not want to be seen as an *outsider*. 
Why do you want to improve your Spanish?

- *to be* **grammatically correct**
- I would like to expand my Spanish **vocabulary** so I can speak it **fluently without mistake** and so that I could later become a bilingual educator
- I want to **write and speak** fluently.
- I have **childhood memories** in Spanish.
- I **hate being corrected by my cousins and parents**
- I never formally learned any **grammer**
What do you want to improve?

• Speaking it clearly without having doubts.
• My overall ability to speak and to greatly improve my reading and writing skills.
• How fluently I speak it and how I write grammatically.
• Speaking and reading more
• I would hope to speak in Spanish without having difficulty and write it well since it is the first language I was taught.
• Proper speaking
• the way i talk
• my speaking
Examples from two Spanish Heritage speakers

(context: talking about her ideal job)

Amigo, yo sé que tienes una problema de alcohol. Te aconsejo que necesitas a ver alguien. Es necesario que vas, que vas a alguien. Hasta que vas a la hospital con su problema no quiero hablar contigo.

(context: retelling Little Red Riding Hood)

La niña está camina y ve una perro que quiere comer la niña pero lo hombre con la ax mata el perro.
One of my favorite heritage speakers: LEA

- 20 years old
- Majoring in psychology
- Spanish minor
- Spanish-speaking mother
- English-speaking father
- Dominant in English
- Level of Spanish high intermediate/low advanced
Esencialmente, gente viene a los Estados Unidos para varias razones.

Gente queja porque dicen que los inmigrantes vienen para robar trabajo.

El inmigración ilegal está subiendo en los Estados Unidos.

La gente que vienen a los Estados Unidos trabajan fuerte.
The Grammar of Heritage Speakers

• Global perspective
• Focus on similarities among different heritage languages spoken in different territories

- Lexicon
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Semantics
- Phonology
Findings on the Lexicon 1

• Smaller vocabularies than first generation speakers in both comprehension and production.

• Vocabulary size and productivity is related to level of proficiency (i.e., lower proficiency, smaller vocabulary)

• Knowledge and retention of early acquired concrete words.
Findings on the Lexicon 2

• In some studies, verbs seem to be retained and accessed better and faster than nouns and adjectives (cf. Polinsky 2006)
• The cognate status of words also facilitates knowledge and retention.
• There are “errors/patterns” of misanalysis derivational morphology and there are errors of overgeneralization of regular processes of word formation to irregular forms.
Inflectional Morphology

• Nominal Morphology
  – (gender, number, case, definiteness)

• Verbal Morphology
  – (agreement, tense, aspect, mood)
Nominal Morphology

- Inconsistent use of gender in nouns and gender agreement in noun phrases (Spanish, Russian, Swedish, Greek, Arabic)
- Regularization of irregular plural forms (Greek, Arabic)
- Omission of overt case marking (marked accusative, inherent dative, ergative)
- Simplification of case marking (from more to fewer forms)
Verbal Morphology

• Tense and agreement morphology tend to be better preserved than aspect and mood.
• Tense<Agreement<Aspect <Mood
• Within Tense, the morphological future is more affected than present and past
Core Syntax

1. Preference for canonical or strict word order SVO (when case marking is eroded)
2. Difficulty with variable word order
3. Difficulty establishing long distance dependencies (binding interpretation of pronouns and anaphors, keeping track of referents in passive sentences and in relative clauses)
Syntax-semantics-discourse Interface

1. In languages with articles, difficulty with the semantic interpretations of articles in discourse

2. Difficulty with word order and information structure

3. In null subject languages, overuse of overt subject pronouns in topic continuity contexts
Phonetics and Phonology

1. Phonology is the best preserved aspect of heritage language grammars
2. Evidence of more native-like perception and production
3. Heritage accent
   -vowel system
   -phonemic contrasts
Core/Universal Properties of Heritage Languages

- Strong phonology
- Smaller vocabularies
- Gaps in morphological paradigms
- Reduction and simplification of forms in the nominal and verbal domain
- Stricter word order
- Difficulty with complex structures
Advantages of Early Language Experience? Au et al. (2002)

Phonology

Morphosyntax

Different angle on age effects in L1/L2 acquisition
Pedagogical Implications

• Identifying how L2 learners and heritage speakers differ in their linguistic competence and processing abilities is a critical step towards developing efficient pedagogical strategies in language teaching.
Some differences between L2 learners and heritage speakers: **experience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Heritage Speakers</th>
<th>L2 Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>timing</td>
<td>early (childhood)</td>
<td>late (in/after puberty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>setting</td>
<td>naturalistic (home)</td>
<td>instructed (classroom)/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(naturalistic ,study abroad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mode</td>
<td>aural</td>
<td>written and aural (literacy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amount and frequency</td>
<td>variable</td>
<td>variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quality</td>
<td>restricted to environment</td>
<td>restricted to environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Heritage Leaners and L2 Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of linguistic knowledge</th>
<th>Affected in L2 learners?</th>
<th>Affected in Heritage speakers?</th>
<th>Advantage for HS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>phonology</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lexicon</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no (but differences by words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syntax</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-syntax</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semantics</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morphology</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no (but differences by task)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Findings

• The role of language experience as it relates to type of input and input modality seems to affect the processing of language and linguistic performance of heritage speakers and L2 learners as measured by different tasks (Montrul et al. 2013)

• Heritage speakers outperform L2 learners in tests that minimize metalinguistic knowledge and especially in oral production tasks. (Bowles 2011)
Heritage Language Development

The wide variation in proficiency levels that develops in these speakers as reflected in several structural aspects of their grammatical knowledge is largely due to **HOW (under what circumstances) the heritage language was acquired** and the many individual and contextual factors that played a role in its development.
Language Learning

During the pre-school years, children acquire their native language(s), and the basic structural foundation is assumed to be in place.

To achieve native language proficiency or mastery is a long process of development from birth to adulthood.

Adequate input is critical at every step of the way.
Idealized Route of Native Language Development

- Basic vocabulary
- Inflectional morphology
- Simple and complex syntax/semantics
- Implicit learning

middle childhood-adolescence

- Reading/metalinguistic awareness
- Abstract vocabulary
- Complex syntax, semantics
- Pragmatics
- Registers

adulthood

Knowledge of language:

- early childhood
- middle childhood-adolescence
- adulthood

Age:

- birth
- 12 months
- 18 months
- 24 months
- 30 months
- 36 months
- 4 yrs
- 5 yrs
- 6 yrs
- 7 yrs
- 8 yrs
- 9 yrs
- 10 yrs
- 11 yrs
- 12 yrs
- 13 yrs
- 14 yrs
- 15 yrs
- 16 yrs
- 17 yrs
- 18 yrs
- 25 yrs
- 30 yrs
- 50 yrs
- 60 yrs
- 70 yrs
Idealized Simultaneous Bilingual Development

Language A

Language B
Unbalanced development in simultaneous bilinguals
Silva-Corvalán (2014)

- Study of two simultaneous Spanish-English bilingual siblings from age 1-6. (her grandchildren)
- Only one parent spoke Spanish (father) and always addressed the children in Spanish.
- TAM system
- Copulas
- Subject expression
Amount of Input in the Two Languages

Nico

Bren

- Spanish
- English

![Nico's barring chart]

- Spanish
- English

![Bren's barring chart]

- Spanish
- English

![Graph showing the percentage of time spent in English or Spanish over months and years]

- English
- Spanish

![Legend]

- English
- Spanish
Language shift in sequential bilinguals

- First language (L1)
- Second language (L2)
Theoretical Issues

• What is the role of input vs. innate linguistic knowledge in language development?
• Is one more important than the other?

Usage-based vs. Generative approaches to Language acquisition (and bilingualism)
Universal Grammar (UG)
Universal Grammar (UG)
Universal Grammar (UG)
Universal Grammar (UG)

No seed, no language
Optimal Input Conditions = Complete Acquisition

- discourse
- Pragmatics
- Stylistic variation
- words
- Inflectional morphology
- Syntax phonology
What happens when the seed grows under sub-optimal input conditions (not enough sunlight and water)?
Degrees of acquisition under variable and non-optimal input conditions
Incomplete/Partial Acquisition

• Early exposure to the language is necessary but not SUFFICIENT condition to fully develop and master several properties of linguistic knowledge, especially morphosyntax.

• Once a native language is acquired in childhood it must be stimulated by rich and sufficient input and must be used in order to be kept intact, unless up until about a certain age.

• Different linguistic properties may require different amounts and variety of input (e.g., gender agreement, case marking, scope marking)
Language Acquisition in early Childhood
## Stages of Language Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cooing</td>
<td>2-5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Babbling</td>
<td>6-8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>First words</td>
<td>12-18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Two-word stage</td>
<td>18-24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Telegraphic speech</td>
<td>24-30 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Early multiword speech</td>
<td>24-30 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Later multiword speech</td>
<td>30+ months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Palestinian Arabic Plurals: Albirini (2014)
Later Language Development

• Onset of Literacy and schooling
• Expansion of vocabulary (literate lexicon)
• From concrete to abstract vocabulary
• Figurative language
• Ability to use language to define complex concepts
• Symbolic and multidimensional meanings of words and expressions
Later Syntactic Development

- Negatives
- Questions
- Passives
- Complex sentences (relative clauses, adverbial clauses, nonfinite subordination)
- Modals and conditionals
- Awareness of registers: when to use formal and informal language
- Spelling

More common in written than in spoken discourse.

• Tested passives in spoken and written registers by 9-10, 12-13, 15-16 year olds and adults.
• 9 year olds use some passive constructions in written discourse, but almost never in spoken discourse.
• Starting from 12 years of age, the participants used the passive in spoken, and in written expository texts.

These results suggest that experiences with the use of passive constructions in writing increases their accessibility in speech.
Berman (2004)

• The road to linguistic proficiency and native speaker command of the language is long.
• Difference between language acquisition and language mastery.
• My proposal: Heritage speakers exhibit acquisition of many forms without mastery
  (Incomplete acquisition in Montrul 2008)
Age effects in L1 loss
(Bylund 2009, Montrul 2008)
L2 studies show that immigrant children are able to reach native-like proficiency in the L2 because they were exposed to the L2 early in life.

DOWNSIDE
• As they gain proficiency in the L2 they lose proficiency in the L1
• The L1 ceases to develop at age-appropriate levels.
• They are likely to exhibit attrition or incomplete acquisition
Korean Heritage Speakers

Figure 1. English pronunciation scores as a function of AOA for 240 Korean–English bilinguals and pronunciation scores for 24 English monolinguals (filled circles, top left). The fitted curve is the third order polynomial function between AOA and pronunciation.

Figure 2. Korean pronunciation scores as a function of AOA for 240 Korean–English bilinguals and pronunciation scores for 24 Korean monolinguals (filled circles, top right). The fitted curve is the second order polynomial function between AOA and pronunciation.

Yeni-Komshian, Flege & Liu (2000)
The results from this study effectively showed a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.47$) between L1 and L2 pronunciation scores among those bilinguals who had started L2 acquisition before puberty (i.e., before age 12), but not for those who started beyond this point.

Figure 3. Average pronunciation scores (z-scores) in English and Korean for the 10 KB groups.
Reasons

• Quantity of input (reduced exposure and use during the critical period)
  attrition, incomplete acquisition

• Quality of input (the input that feeds the developing system is different)
  – Heritage speakers acquire a grammar that is already different from the input they are exposed to (Pascual y Cabo 2013, Sorace 2004, Rothman 2007)

Dominant language transfer
Null and Overt Subjects in Spanish

• Subject expression remains a vulnerable area in child bilingual grammars during the school-age period.

• Do child bilinguals produce higher rates of overt subjects and of pragmatically infelicitous null subjects than age-matched monolinguals?

• If so, the bilinguals may not have had a chance to develop the pragmatic features of Spanish subjects fully (Silva-Corvalán 2014).
Null and Overt Subjects

School-age children
Mean age 11

Young Adults
Mean age 22

Children > Adults
Illicit Null subjects

Pragmatically illicit null subjects disappear in adulthood
Redundant Overt Pronouns

Children do it more than adults
Findings

• As predicted, the simultaneous bilingual children displayed the highest rates of redundant lexical and pronominal subjects.

• Some of these patterns continue into young adulthood.
Null and Overt subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mexican Monolinguals</th>
<th>Adult Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Null Subjects</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overt Subjects</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Same Reference Contexts

- Mexican monolinguals:
  - #lexical: 1.1
  - #pronominal: 1.5
  - null: 100

- Adult immigrants:
  - #lexical: 4.6
  - #pronominal: 5.2
  - null: 95
L1 Attrition?

- In a handful of individuals
- Very minor effect.
- This suggests that the patterns found in young adult heritage speakers can largely be traced back to their language learning history and less to the quality of the adult input.
- Consistent with Silva-Corvalán’s (2014) study.
How can we best support heritage language development?
Invest in Children

The **school age period** is *critical* for language development and loss.
How do we support Heritage Language Development?

• Continue advocating for heritage speakers and heritage languages
• Continue learning about heritage speakers and heritage languages
• Continue to engage in scientific research on heritage languages
• Continue to develop educational programs to promote heritage language development when it matters most.
Families and Communities

• Work with the communities of speakers and learners to impress upon them the *devastating consequences* of losing one’s language.

• Communicate that the potential for success is there from the start and that we must create conditions for success.

• Empower them to realize that they can do much to help the process.
Societal Views

• There is significant misinformation about bilinguals and bilingualism.
• And depending on the bilingual group, prejudice as well.
• The language of heritage speakers looks the way it does, not because of deficiencies within the individual.
• **But there are deficiencies in the educational practices, social attitudes and policies that deprive these speakers of their native language.**
• And this has consequences for their academic achievement in elementary schools and high schools, among other things.
Competing Views

- Learning two languages is burdensome for young children; it confuses them.
- Children are biologically prepared to learn one or more languages easily and nothing needs to be done to promote their language development.
- Nurturing the home language takes away from learning the majority language.
In their extremes

These views are detrimental to the development of effective policies and educational practices concerning the education of bilingual children.
Scientific Domain

Continue learning about bilingualism, heritage speakers and heritage languages from a diversity of perspectives that expand our reach

- Linguistic
- Socio-Psychological
- Socio-Emotional
- Educational
- Economic

Communicate our findings to the heritage communities and the general public.
How do we support Heritage Language Development?

• Continue to innovate with teaching methods and practices to promote language development during childhood and adolescence that provide rich linguistic environments and academically appropriate materials.

• Enrichment programs and opportunities: after school, summer camps, Saturday schools.

• Educate teachers about the importance of L1 maintenance for L2 development.

• Support parents who want to promote the transmission of their language to their children.
Success Stories

The Basque language in Spain.

Welsh in Patagonia, Argentina (since 1850)

_Y Wladfa_ ( [ə 'wladva], The Colony)

Strong sense of community and pride in their language lead to strong language policies and the creation of bilingual schools.
Thank you very much

Muchas Gracias!