**PhD Program in Psychology**

**Seminar “Language Acquisition in Multilingual Children”**

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6/11/2025, 9:00-11:00

Aula Grande, S. Giovanni in Monte, Bologna

**Abstract**

This talk focuses on bilingualism in childhood, in particular, the course of bilingual acquisition for simultaneous bilingual children, who are exposed to two languages from birth, and of second language acquisition for sequential bilingual children, who acquire a second language after age three. The presentation reviews the latest research on the issues of language differentiation in developing bilingual children, the effects of bilingualism on the course and rate of bilingual development, and the extent of cross-linguistic interaction between bilinguals’ language systems. Dr. Montanari then reviews topics in child second language acquisition research, including the stages children go through when learning a second language, the individual and external factors that affect the process of second language learning in childhood, and the reasons and functions of language mixing in children. Dr. Montanari concludes with implications for the diagnosis, assessment of and intervention with bilingual children.

The seminar will address the following questions:

* How do simultaneous and sequential bilingual children acquire and differentiate their languages?
* What factors influence the course, rate, and cross-linguistic interactions in bilingual language acquisition?
* What are the implications of current research for diagnosing, assessing, and supporting bilingual children?

The seminar combines expert input with interactive elements. The goal is to provide participants with a deeper understanding of the topic and practical approaches that can be drawn from recent empirical findings.

Suggested reading:

Byers-Heinlein, K., & Lew-Williams, C. (2013). Bilingualism in the early years: What the science says. *Learning Landscapes, 7*(1), 95-112.