

## Bilinguals' strategies under indeterminacy in the input

Maria Polinsky (joint work with Oksana Laleko)

With the advent of a better understanding of grammatical architecture as well as the development of articulated models of language structure, it has become apparent that the same surface phenomenon may have different underlying representations. This realization undergirds the conception of multiple grammars within a given linguistic population. Researchers have noted instances of multiple grammars before, and in this talk I will review several such cases (Turkish relativization, Korean verb raising, and some others). However, the question has not been raised whether multiple grammars in the baseline also correspond to multiple grammars in bilinguals, heritage speakers in particular. This question constitutes the central theme of this presentation.

As a representative case, I will consider externally-headed relative clauses. Relative clauses can in principle be derived via movement where an operator/DP and a gap form an A-bar chain, or via co-indexation between the head noun and a (silent) element inside the relative clause. Using data from reconstruction, weak crossover, clause-external scrambling, and parasitic gaps, I show that both analyses are available to English and Russian monolinguals. However, English-dominant heritage speakers of Russian do not rely on two grammars for their relativization; instead, they seem to limit the formation of relative clauses to only one analytical option (Polinsky, to appear). The results point to a preference of Merge operations over Move in the grammatical representations of heritage language. I discuss the Merge > Move preference in some detail, identifying attested examples and gaps in our empirical knowledge of the relevant phenomena.

These results have several broader implications. They add to the growing body of work on multiple grammars in linguistic populations and lead to new questions concerning the relationship between multiple grammars in the baseline vs heritage systems. Heritage speakers seem to narrow down the options available in the input, which suggests that they rely on internally-driven learning principles. We should be able to predict which, if any, of the options available under multiple grammars would be chosen by heritage speakers. How learners could come by the knowledge that permits them to consider the multiple grammars in the input and reject some of the grammars is a question that pertains to mono- and bilingual acquisition as well. Finally, these considerations raise further questions that have to do with

parallels and differences between (i) adult heritage language and L1 child language, and (ii) adult heritage language and diachronic trends.

### **Reference**

Polinsky, M. (to appear). Heritage language gaps. In R. D'Alessandro et al. (eds.) *Heritage languages and syntactic theory*. OUP.