

## **Native language adaptation to novel verb argument structures by Spanish-English bilinguals: An electrophysiological investigation**

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Linguists often use native speaker judgments as a basis for linguistic theories. One assumption underlying this process is that native-like competence, once acquired, does not change very much in adulthood. However, research in bilingualism has shown that the native language of bilinguals is subject to influence from learning a second language, thereby changing the way the native language is processed, including for judgments of grammaticality. These findings come mostly from behavioral research and have focused on syntactic structures that are shared by both languages. Two key questions remain unanswered: 1) do *language-specific* syntactic structures in the L2 also influence processing in the L1, and 2) does the influence extend to neural processes underlying language processing? I will describe a study that investigates whether verb argument structure information associated with L2 verbs can be accessed during L1 sentence comprehension. Spanish-English bilinguals heard Spanish sentences that were constructed like the English induced motion causative construction (e.g., *John ran the mouse around the maze*). Without access to their knowledge of English structures, these sentences are ungrammatical to Spanish speakers (e.g., *Juan corrió al ratón por el laberinto*). Applying their knowledge of how these verbs behave in English, however, would allow listeners to assign an interpretation to the construction. Findings from electrophysiology and acceptability judgments will be discussed.

**Bio:** Eve Higby is a doctoral candidate in the Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences program at the City University of New York Graduate Center with a background in Applied Linguistics. Her research focuses on neuroplasticity and cross-linguistic influence in bilingualism, as well as language in aging. She is a recipient of a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant.

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