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Operationalizing HL use in adult-aged HSs of Italian and Turkish

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Background

What we know

- Heritage language (HL) outcomes reflect speakers’ differential opportunities to engage with the HL [1, 2].
- Different types of input seem to interact differently across language domains (e.g., morphosyntactic vs. phonology) [3, 4].
- No existing questionnaires tailored specifically for use with adult HSs, though many excellent tools exist (e.g., BILEC [5], LSEQ [6]).

Project aims

- Developing the AHSQ – a tool that is intended to identify which variables/factors are most predictive of HL outcomes in adults.
- Examining the relative role and weight of these factors across areas of language.
- Making the AHSQ available for researchers to use with various HSs populations.

Our questionnaire

- The AHSQ is a 5-page interviewer-led questionnaire (see QR code).
- It contains 95 scored questions with answers on a 5-point scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Question type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) HL use in childhood</td>
<td>AoC in all languages (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Current HL use</td>
<td>Number of people HL spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Quality of HL use</td>
<td>Types of contact (R, W, L, S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) Time in HL country</td>
<td>Visits to HL country (frequency, duration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E) Self-assessed proficiency</td>
<td>General proficiency (R, W, L, S)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preliminary work

In our preliminary studies on HL Turkish and Italian, the HL use score obtained from the AHSQ correlated with measures of phonological, lexical & morphosyntactic proficiency [3, 4].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Phonological proficiency (accent)</th>
<th>Lexical proficiency</th>
<th>Morphosyntactic proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HL Turkish</td>
<td>Total Use Score</td>
<td>✓***</td>
<td>✓*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A) Use in childhood</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Current HL use</td>
<td>✓***</td>
<td>✓***</td>
<td>✓*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Quality</td>
<td>✓***</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL Italian</td>
<td>Total Use Score</td>
<td>✓***</td>
<td>✓**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A) Use in childhood</td>
<td>✓**</td>
<td>✓**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Current HL use</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Quality</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standardization

In order to standardize and validate the AHSQ, we will implement the following procedure:

Participants

N = 60 Italian HSs in Germany
N = 30 German HSs in Italy

Target measures

- Lexical proficiency (Y/N task)
- Gender agreement & assignment
- Perceived foreign accent
- EEG/ERP correlations

Scoring and weights

Calculation of a total continuous HL score as well as subscores for central categories will be based on outcomes from an exploratory factor analysis, and on theoretical considerations.

Validation

- Exploratory factor analysis will be carried out to determine which underlying constructs the items in the HL questionnaire map on to.
- An item analysis (item-total correlations) and computation of reliability coefficients will be used to determine whether certain items need revision.
- Content validity of the AHSQ will be vetted by consulting an outside expert to assess its quality and scope.

Expectations

- We expect the strength of the relationships between reported HL use and performance on tests to differ across areas of language.
- We hope to be able to explain which types of HL experience are predictive of performance in the targeted domains.
- Be able to formulate meaningful recommendations for stakeholders.

References