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*Dr. Colantoni is a Professor at the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Toronto. She received her BA in Linguistics from the University of Buenos Aires and her PhD in Hispanic Linguistics from the University of Minnesota. Her research focuses on sound change and categorization and the second language acquisition of variable phonetic parameters.*

### **The relative contribution of vowel realization in the acquisition of gender in Spanish-English heritage speakers**

In our project we explore whether contact-induced reduction in the inventory of unstressed vowels impacts the development of gender morphology and concord in Spanish-English bilinguals. We compare recent findings from narratives elicited from bilingual adults (N=37) and children (N=49) born in the US. Final unstressed /a e o/ were acoustically analyzed, and noun phrases were grammatically analyzed. Adult early bilinguals displayed a large degree of vocalic overlap but were highly accurate in gender. Children showed variability in their patterns of vocalic overlap and in gender accuracy ranging between 66% to 100%. Although results do not offer a strong support for the the hypothesis of a phonetic contribution to heritage gender divergence and call for refined analysis of the interaction between phonetics and morphosyntax in gender acquisition, we believe that methodological limitations prevented us from understanding to which extent different components of the grammar are impacted in this population. To achieve this goal, perceptual and processing data are needed. We conclude by discussing our current experimental design and presenting preliminary eye-tracking data collected from adult Spanish-speaking participants. result of the digital revolution, teases out the increasingly important role private actors play in alleviating and aggravating linguistic inequalities, and contemplates implications for linguistic justice as the digital medium encroaches our daily life.

Cognitive Science of  
Language Lecture Series  
Tuesday @aWTVW#&  
2:30 - 4:20 pm

Dr. Laura Colantoni  
University of Toronto

Hosted by Department of Linguistics and Languages  
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