Subject position in Spanish

Spanish has flexible word order:

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is constrained by unaccusativity, focus, definitiveness, animacy, verbal aspect, adverbial phrases, and subject heaviness.

Subject position in Dutch

Spanish has flexible word order:

Subject position with intransitives in Dutch is constrained by unaccusativity, focus, definitiveness, animacy, verbal aspect, adverbial phrases, and subject heaviness.

Method

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

El gato llegó

Subject position in Dutch

Een jongen

30 heritage speakers

• Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5
• Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5
• Born and raised in Spain
• No knowledge of other languages

Results

Monolinguals

Bilinguals

Conclusions

1. Both monolingual and Dutch heritage speakers increase the preference of VS across the lifetime
2. In Dutch bilinguals, this VS preference is more pronounced in all age groups
3. This overgeneralization might be due to the influence of V2 in Dutch

References


Research Questions

1. Will Dutch HS of Spanish show less overgeneralization of preverbal subjects (but deviate from monolinguals)?
2. (When) do bilingual children deviate from monolinguals?

The present study

A) Adult Participants

24 heritage speakers

• Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5
• Mixed families
• No Caribbean dialects

18 monolingual speakers of Spanish

• Recently immigrated to the Netherlands.
• No knowledge of Dutch.
• No Caribbean dialects

B) Child Participants

30 heritage speakers

• 9 and 13 years old
• Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5
• Mixed families
• No Caribbean dialects

44 monolingual speakers of Spanish

• 9 and 13 years old
• Born and raised in Spain
• No knowledge of other languages

More evidence for postverbal subjects

Pragmatic factors: group membership and number of familiar words

Previous Research:

Children

- Monolinguals

• Have knowledge of verb type by age 2

- No previous research on other factors

- Bilinguals

- No previous research

Adults

- Monolinguals

• Verb type & focus influence word order

• Many other factors, such as definiteness as well

- Bilinguals

• Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order

- Overgeneralization preverbal subjects

SIMPLIFICATION OR CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCE?