Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands

*the Development of Subject Position*

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Citation for published version (APA):

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Subject position in Spanish

Spanish has flexible word order:

- Un chico llegó a casa
- A boy arrived at home

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

Subject position in Dutch

- Een jongen bleef thuis
- A boy floated whistled

The present study

1. Will Dutch HS of Spanish show less overgeneralization of preverbal subjects (but deviate from monolinguals)?

2. (When) do bilingual children deviate from monolinguals?

Research Questions

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

Results

1. Monolinguals

2. 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


The Development of Subject Position

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

This makes subject position a highly complex phenomenon, prone to vulnerability in bilingual acquisition.

Previous Research:

Children

Monolingual
- Have knowledge of verb type by age 2
- No previous research on other factors

Bilingual
- No previous research

Adults

Monolingual
- Verb type & focus influence word order (Hertel, 2005; Lozano, 2005)
- Many other factors, such as definiteness as well (Roggia, 2011)

Bilingual
- Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order (Zapiola et al., 2005; de Prada-Pérez & Pascual y Calvo, 2012)

Overgeneralization preverbal subjects (Montrul, 2007; Hertel, 2005; Zapiola et al., 2005)

SIMPLIFICATION OR CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCE?

Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands: The Development of Subject Position

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