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

Brechje van Osch, Elisabet Garcia González, Suzanne Aalberse, Aafke Hulk & Petra Sleeman
University of Amsterdam

Heritage speakers
Speakers of a minority language, acquired during childhood in a naturalistic setting in the home context.

Subject position in Dutch
Subjects precede verbs, which can be followed by an object or a complement.

Subject position in Spanish
Spanish has flexible word order.

- A boy
- Un chico

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

Results

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

Method

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

- El gato llegó
- Llegó el gato

References