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Citation for published version (APA):

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

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

Subject position in Spanish
Spanish has flexible word order:
- Un chico llegó a la playa.
- Llegó un chico a la playa.

Subject position in Dutch
Subject position in Dutch is less flexible:
- Een jongen floot aan
- But V2!

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

B) Child Participants
- 30 heritage speakers
- 9 and 13 years old
- Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5
- Mixed families
- No knowledge of Dutch
- No Caribbean dialects

Results

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

References

Method
Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

Children
Preference Judgment Task: Three dogs are playing at the beach and having a lot of fun.
While they play, their friend the cat comes and sees them and he gets very sad because they had not asked him to join them.

Adults
Preference Judgment Task: Es mi cumpleaños y hay mucha gente de visita en mi casa. De repente suena el timbre pero como justo estoy recibiendo un regalo de mi tío, no puedo abrir la puerta. Yo mi esposa y ve que son unos primos. Cuando regresa, le pregunto: ¿Quién llegó? Mi esposa me dice:

It’s my birthday and there are many guests in my house. Suddenly the doorbell rings, but since I’m just receiving a gift from my uncle, I cannot open the door. My wife sees and says that it’s some cousins. When she gets back. I ask her: “Who arrived?” My wife tells me:

Some cousins arrived.

Unaccusativity

Preferences

References
- Pascual, A., & Rothman, J. Applying the Interface Hypothesis to Heritage Speaker Acquisition: Evidence from Spanish. 2nd Intl.