Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands

*the Development of Subject Position*

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Spanish has flexible word order: subject heaviness, animacy, verbal aspect, adverbial phrases, and constrained by simplification or cross-linguistic influence.

Subject position in Spanish

Spanish has flexible word order:

- Un chico llegó a casa.
- Llegó un chico.
- A boy arrived.
- A boy

Subject position in Dutch

- Een jongen floot
- but V2!
- Outside/There/that
- Adv/OBJ
- V
- floot
- een jongen
- a boy

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 Caribbean dialects

44 monolingual speakers of Spanish

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

Previous Research:

Children

Monolingual
- Have knowledge of verb type by age 2
- Not asked to join them.

Bilingual
- No previous research on other factors

Adults

Monolingual
- Verb type & focus influence word order
- Many other factors, such as definiteness as well (Rogers, 2011)

Bilingual
- Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order (Ocampo et al., 2009; de Prado Pérez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012)

Overgeneralization of preverbal subjects

- More evidence for postverbal subjects

Method

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability 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. ¿Va mi esposa y ve que un 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 goes and sees that it’s some cousins. When she gets back, I ask her: ‘Who arrived?’ My wife tells me:

- Llegó el gato llegó
- Unas primas llegó
- Some cousins arrived.
- Unas primas.
- Arrived some cousins.


References