Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands
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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 
- **Llegó un chico**

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.

Subject position in Dutch

- Een jongen 
- V

but V2!

- buiten/er/dat
- Outside/There/that
- Adv/OBJ
- V
- een jongen
- a boy

More evidence for postverbal subjects

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

**Monolinguals**

- Adults
  - SV
  - VS

- 9yo
  - 13yo

**Bilinguals**

- 9yo
  - 13yo

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


Adults

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability 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.

Method

Children

Preference Judgment Task:

- El gato llegó
- Llegó el gato

Simplification or cross-linguistic influence?

- Heritage speakers
  - Speakers of a animacy, verbal aspect, adverbial phrases, and subject heaviness.

- Heritage speakers
  - But V2!

- Outside/There/that
- Adv/OBJ
- VS

- More evidence for postverbal subjects

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 (Daza, et al., 2008; De Prada-Pérez & Prasquet y Cabo, 2012)
  - Overgeneralize preverbal subjects (Hinch & Yáñez, 2007; Merlet, 2005; Daza, et al., 2008)

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