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

Spanish has flexible word order:

- Un chico llegó arrived a boy
- Llegó un chico arrived a boy

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

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- A chico llegó arrived a boy

- Llegó un chico arrived a boy

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

Research Questions

1. Will Dutch HS of Spanish show less overgeneralization of prerulem 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
- Bialystok, 2001
- No previous research on other factors

Bilingual
- No previous research

Adults

Monolingual
- Verb type & focus influence word order
- Hinch et al., 2005
- Lozano, 2005
- Many other factors, such as definiteness as well
- Rogers, 2011

Bilingual
- Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order
- Cappa et al., 2005; De Prada-Pérez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012
- Overgeneralize prerulem subjects
- Hinch-Baek, 2007; Martínez, 2005; Cappa et al., 2005

Method

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

- 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:

  - Unos primos llegaron Some cousins arrived.
  - Llegaron unos primos. Arrived some cousins.

- 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'.

Results

Monolinguals

- Results for monolinguals

Bilinguals

- Results for 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