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

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Subject position in Spanish

Spansih has flexible word order:

Subject position in Dutch

Een jongen S
A boy
float whistled V
but V2!

Buiten/er/dat Outside/There/that
Adv/OBJ

float whistled V

een jongen S
A boy

Speakers of a Spanish has flexible word order:

Subject heaviness

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is SIMPLIFICATION OR CROSS-LINGUISTIC

Adults (Zapata et al. 2005; De Prada-Pérez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012)

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 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

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 (Rogges, 2011)

Bilingual
• Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order

Overgeneralization of preverbal subjects
(Hinch & Grinstead, 1998; Hertel, 2005; Zapata et al., 2003)

References

• Pascual y Cabo, D., Lingwea, A., & Rothman, J. Applying the Interface Hypothesis to Heritage Speaker Acquisition: Evidence from Sombrero Blvd.