Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands
van Osch, B.A.; García González, Elisabet; Hulk, A.C.J.; Aalberse, S.P.; Sleeman, A.P.

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**Subject position in Spanish**

Spanish has flexible word order:

**Un chico** llegó 
A boy arrived

**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

Through heritage language studies, researchers have found evidence suggesting that children learning Spanish as a heritage language maintain a certain flexibility in word order that is not as rigid as in monolingual Spanish.

**Subject position in Dutch**

A boy floated/whistled

**but V2!**

Buiten/en/dat Outside/There/that

flown/whistled

een jongen

a boy

**More Evidence for Postverbal Subjects**

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

**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?

**Method**

**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**

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.

Otras veces llegaron unos primos. Arrived some cousins.

**Results**

![Graph showing results for monolingual and bilingual participants.]

**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

**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
  - Hertel, 2003; Lozano, 2009
- Many other factors, such as definiteness as well
  - Riggott, 2011

Bilingual
- Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order
  - May et al., 2008; de Prada Pérez & Pascual y Cubo, 2012
- Overgeneralize preverbal subjects
  - Hertel, 2003; Hertel, 2004

**References**