Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands
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Subject position in Spanish

Spanish has flexible word order:

- **Un chico** llegó 
  **A boy** arrived 
  **S** 
  **V**

- **Llegó** un chico 
  **Arrived a boy** 
  **V** 
  **S**

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 

A boy 

float 

whistled 

but V2!

Buiten/er/dat Outside/There/that 

Adv/OBJ 

float 

whistled 

een jongen 

a boy 

S

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

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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