Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands

the Development of Subject Position

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

B) Child Participants
30 heritage speakers
• 9 and 13 years old
• Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5
• Mixed families
• No Caribbean dialects

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


Heritage speakers
Speakers of a minority language, acquired during childhood in a naturalistic setting in the home context.

Subject position in Spanish
Spanish has flexible word order:

Un chico llegó
que un chico

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

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
• Many other factors, such as definiteness as well
• Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order

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

Method
Adults
Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

Children
Preference Judgment Task:

Results

Bilinguals

Monolinguals

• Buitemer/dat
• Adv/OBJ

• buiten/er/dat
• outside/there/that

• Een jongen
• a boy

• but V2!

• fluit/whistled

• V

• Een jongen
• a boy

• SV

• Un chico
• a boy

• llegó
• arrived

• Llegó
• Arrived

• un chico
• a boy

• V

• SV

• ES

• Buiten/er/dat
• outside/there/that

• Adv/OBJ

• SV

• Llegó
• Arrived

• un chico
• a boy

• VS

• SV

• BS

• SV

• ES

• VS

• SV

Simplification or Cross-linguistic influence?

El gato llegó

Llegó el gato

Simplification or Cross-linguistic influence?

References