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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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 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 preverbal subjects (but deviate from monolinguals?)
2. (When) do bilingual children deviate from monolinguals?

Subject position in Dutch

- Een jongen S floated whistled V
- but V2!
- Buiten/en/dat Outside/There/that Adv/OBJ
- floated whistled V
- een jongen a boy S

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
- Less (Bel, 2001)

- No previous research on other factors

Bilingual
- No previous research

Adults
Monolingual
- Verb type & focus influence word order (Hertel, 2003; Lizano, 2005)
- Many other factors, such as definiteness as well (Rogge, 2011)

Bilingual
- Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order
(Caspadella, 2005; Lizano, 2005; Juzúa et al., 2009)

Overgeneralization preverbal subjects
(Hertel, 2001; Bel and 2005)

Method

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

- Es mi cumpleaños y hay mucha gente de visita en mi casa. De repente suena el timbre pero como justo estoy recogiendo un regalo de mi tío, no puedo abrir la puerta. ¿A quién es esa tarjeta? Mi esposa me dice:
- 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 asks and says it’s some cousines. When she gets back, I ask her: “Who asked?” My wife tells me:

Unos primos llegaron.
Some cousins arrived.

Fue mi cumpleaños y... The birthday was mine...

MORE EVIDENCE FOR POSTVERBAL SUBJECTS

Conclusion
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