Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands

*the Development of Subject Position*

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Subject position in Spanish

Spanish has flexible word order:

- Un chico llegó un gato
- A boy V un chico S
- V S

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


References

Bilinguals

- Double monolingual and Dutch heritage speakers increase the preference of VS across the lifetime.
- Both monolingual and Dutch heritage speakers increase the preference of VS across the lifetime.
- 3. This overgeneralization might be due to the influence of V2 in Dutch.

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.

Results

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?

Adults

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 recibiendo un regalo de mi tío, no puedo abrir la puerta. ¿Va mi esposa y ve que son unos primos. Cuando regresa, le pregunto: ¿Quién llegó? ¿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 goes and sees that it’s some cousins. When she gets back, I ask her: “Who arrived?” My wife tells me:

- Unos primos hijíos.
- Some cousins arrived.

- [2 - 1 0 1 2]
- [2 - 1 0 1 2]

The present study

- Many other factors, such as definiteness as well (Reggia, 2011).
- Overgeneralize preverbal subjects (Hertel, 2003; de Prada-Pérez & Pascual-Cabo, 2012).

Conclusions


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 natualistic setting in the home context.

Simplified or Cross-Linguistic Influence?

Subject position in Dutch

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

- But V2!
- Buiten er dat Outside/There/that
- Advo/OBJ
- V
- Een jongen a boy
- S

More evidence for postverbal subjects

Subject position in Dutch

Spanish has flexible word order:

- Een jongen A boy
- V
- float whistled

Subject position in Spanish

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