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van Osch, B.A.; García González, Elisabet ; Hulk, A.C.J.; Aalberse, S.P.; Sleeman, A.P.

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

Brechje van Osch, Elisabet García González, Suzanne Aalberse, Aafke Hulk & Petra Sleeman
University of Amsterdam

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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
- Een jongen

Subject position in Dutch

![Diagram showing word order in Dutch](image)

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
  - Mix families
  - No Caribbean dialects

B) Child Participants
- 30 heritage speakers
  - 9 and 13 years old
  - Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5
  - Mix 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 (Bel, 2003)
  - No previous research on other factors

Bilingual
- No previous research

Adults
- Monolingual
  - Verb type & focus influence word order (Hertel, 2005; Lozano, 2006)
  - Many other factors, such as definiteness as well (Rogge, 2011)

Bilingual
- Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order (Cayuela et al., 2000; De Prada-Pérez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012)
- Overgeneralize preverbal subjects (Montrul, 2007; Hertel, 2005; Cayuela et al., 2000)

Simplification or Cross-linguistic Influence?

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:
  - 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 esposo 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:

Results

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