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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**Subject position in Spanish**

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

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is constrained by unaccusativity, focus, definiteness, animacy, verbal aspect, adverbal phrases, and subject heaviness: (Herrel, 2003; Lozano, 2006; Domínguez, 2013; Jousseau et al., 2010; de Prada-Pérez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012).

This makes subject position a highly complex phenomenon, prone to vulnerability in (bilingual) acquisition.

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**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 (Herrel, 2003; Lozano, 2006)
  - Many other factors, such as definiteness as well (Rogers, 2011)

- **Bilingual**
  - Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order (Cuestas et al., 2009; de Prada-Pérez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012)

- **Overgeneralize preverbal subjects** (Hinch-Nava, 2007; Herrel, 2005; Cuestas et al., 2009)

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**Method**

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. Y mi esposa y yo que somos unos primos. Cuando regresa, le pongo: "¿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 says that it's some cousins. When she gets back, I ask her: "Who arrived?" My wife tells me:

**Unsos primos: Requested**

Some cousins arrived.

**Unos primos: Observed**

Arrived some cousins.

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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

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

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**References**