Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands

the Development of Subject Position

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

elisabet.garciaiglez@gmail.com
b.a.vanosch@uva.nl

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

• Llegó un chico

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

Subject position in Dutch

• Een jongen

• float whistled

but V2!

Buiten/er/dat

Outside/There/that

Adv/OBJ

• flow whistled

• een jongen

A boy

S

V

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

Results

Monolinguals

Dutch

SV

VS

Bilinguals

Dutch

SV

VS

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 (Rogge, 2011)

Bilingual

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


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


Method

Children

Prefernece 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:

El gato llegó

Llegó el gato

Adults

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

Simplification or cross-linguistic influence?

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El gato llegó

Llegó el gato

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:

El gato llegó

Llegó el gato

Four dogs are playing at the beach and having a lot of fun. While they play, their friend the dog comes and sees them and he gets very sad because they had not asked him to join them:

El perro llegó

Llegó el perro

Two dogs are playing at the beach and having a lot of fun. While they play, their friend the dog comes and sees them and he gets very sad because they had not asked him to join them:

El perro llegó

Llegó el perro

One dog is playing at the beach and having a lot of fun. While he plays, his friend the dog comes and sees him and he gets very sad because he had not asked him to join him:

El perro llegó

Llegó el perro

Subject position in Dutch

Een jongen

A boy

S

V

subjects nulos and subjects explícitos in the grammars initial of Spanish and Catalan.