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

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Subject position in Dutch

Un chico llegó
A boy arrived

Subject position in Spanish

Spanish has flexible word order:

Un chico llegó
A boy arrived

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

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

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

Method

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability 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

Conclusions

1. Both monolingual and Dutch heritage speakers increase the preference of V3 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