Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands

*the Development of Subject Position*

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_Citation for published version (APA):_
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 naturalistic setting in the home context.

Subject position in Spanish
Spanish has flexible word order:

- Un chico llegó a mi casa.
- Llegó un chico.

Subject position in Dutch

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

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

Adult Participants
24 heritage speakers
- Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5 years old
- Mixed families
- No Caribbean dialects
- Recently immigrated to the Netherlands
- No knowledge of Dutch
- No Caribbean dialects

Bilingual Participants
18 monolingual speakers of Spanish
- Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5 years old
- Mixed families
- No Caribbean dialects
- Recently immigrated to the Netherlands
- No knowledge of Dutch
- No Caribbean dialects

Method
Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

- El gato llegó.
- El gato llegó.
- El gato llegó.
- El gato llegó.

Results

Children

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