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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

Spanish has flexible word order:

Un chico llegó a casa
A boy arrived at home

Llegó un chico
He arrived a boy

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

Achting et al., 2003; De Prada-Pérez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012

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

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

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


