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**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 boy arrived
- A boy llegó arrived a boy

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

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

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

- 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:**

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 sees that it’s some cousins. When she gets back, I ask her: “Who arrived?” My wife tells me:

Unos primos parecían Some cousins arrived.

Vll v2!

Buiten/er/dat Outside/There/that Adv/OBJ

Verb type & focus influence word order.

**References**