Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands

*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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**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 casa
- A boy arrived home

Subject position in Dutch

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

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**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?

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**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

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**Method**

**Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:**

Es mi cumpleaños y hay mucha gente de visita en mi casa. De repente suena el timbre pero como justo estoy recibiendo un regalo de mi tío, no puedo abrir la puerta. Va mi esposa y ve que son unos primos. Cuando regresa, le pregunto: ‘¿Quién llegó?’. Mi esposa me dice:

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, she asks me: ‘Who arrived?’ My wife tells me:

Unos primos llegaron. Some cousins arrived.

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**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.

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**References**


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**Participants**

- **24 heritage speakers**
  - Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5 years old
  - Mixed families
  - No Caribbean dialects
- **18 monolingual speakers of Spanish**
  - Recently immigrated to the Netherlands.
  - No knowledge of Dutch
  - No Caribbean dialects
- **44 monolingual speakers of Spanish**
  - 9 and 13 years old
  - Born and raised in Spain
  - No knowledge of other languages

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**Children**

- No knowledge of other languages
- No Caribbean dialects
- Mixed families
- Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5 years old
- 9 and 13 years old
- 250 heritage speakers
- 30 heritage speakers
- 450 heritage speakers

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**Figures**

- Graphs showing results for monolinguals and bilinguals in different age groups.

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