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Child and Adult Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands: The Development of Subject Position
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displays/SlimLeaves/111821/child_adult_heritage_spanish_12_nov_2021.pdf

**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
- Llegó un chico
- A boy arrived

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

*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 (Rogge, 2011)

- **Bilingual**
  - Do not have monolingual-like knowledge of all the factors determining word order (Cajal et al., 2008; De Prada-Pérez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012)

**Overgeneralize preverbal subjects** (Hinch-Baker, 2007; Merlet, 2005; Cajal et al., 2005)

**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. Ya mi esposa y yo 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 joins and says that it is some cousins. When she gets back, I ask her: “Who arrived?” My wife tells me:

Unas primas? Parece
- Some cousins arrived.

Unos primos. Arrived some cousins.

**References**


**Children Preference 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.

**Subject position in Dutch**

- Een jongen A boy
- flow whistled V
- but V2!
- Buitten/or/dat Outside/There/that
- Adv/OBJ
- Een jongen A boy

**Results**

**Bilingual**

- SV
- VS

**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.