Subject Position in Spanish as a heritage language in the Netherlands

Interface Vulnerability and Cross-linguistic Influence

van Osch, B.A.; Aalberse, S.P.; Hulk, A.C.J.; Sleeman, A.P.

Citation for published version (APA):
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Un chico llegó</th>
<th>Llegó un chico</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>A boy arrived</td>
<td>A boy arrived</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is constrained by:

1. **Verb type**
2. **Focus**
3. **Definiteness**

Subject position in Dutch

Main clauses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Een jongen floot</th>
<th>A boy whistled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But...V2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Buiten er schreeuwde een jongen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adv</td>
<td>Outside/There shouted a boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs type</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unaccusative</td>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>Definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unergative</td>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results per condition

Experiment 1: Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands

**Participants**

24 heritage speakers

- Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5
- 1 Dutch speaking parent, 1 Spanish speaking parent
- No Caribbean dialects

18 monolingual speakers of Spanish

- Recently immigrated to the Netherlands.
- No knowledge of Dutch
- No Caribbean dialects

Hypotheses

1. Dutch HS of Spanish will show less overgeneralization of preverbal subjects
2. Both focus and definiteness are more vulnerable than verb type

Experiment 2: Heritage Spanish in the US

22 heritage speakers in New Jersey

- Born in the US, or arrived before 5
- 2 Spanish speaking parents
- No Caribbean dialects
- Proficiency-matched to the Dutch HS

Conclusions

1. Dutch heritage speakers show knowledge of the factors verb type, focus, and definiteness
   → Partial support for the Interface Hypothesis
2. In judgment, Dutch heritage speakers of Spanish overgeneralize preverbal subjects, whereas American HS do not prefer either order.
3. In production, American heritage speakers of Spanish overgeneralize preverbal subjects
   → Support for cross-linguistic influence

References


The Interface Hypothesis (Sorace & Serratrice, 2009)

External interface

(syntax-pragmatics/ discourse)
mORE VULNERABLE

Focus & Definiteness

VERB TYPE

Focus & Definiteness

more vulnerable