Subject Position in Spanish as a heritage language in the Netherlands

*Interface Vulnerability and Cross-linguistic Influence*

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Subject Position in Spanish as a Heritage Language in the Netherlands: Interface Vulnerability and Cross-linguistic Influence

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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 un chico
- **Llegó** un chico

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is constrained by:
1. **Verb type**
2. **Focus**
3. **Definiteness**

Previous Research: Heritage Spanish in the US
- Comparing verb type & focus → unclear findings:
  - Verb type is robust (Monteil, 2005)
  - Verb type and focus are vulnerable (Zapata et al., 2005)
  - Verb type is more vulnerable than focus (De Prada-Pérez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012)
- Heritage speakers overgeneralize preverbal subjects (Hinch Nava, 2007; Montiel, 2005; Zapata et al., 2005)

Method
Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:
- **Verb type**
  - Unaccusative
  - Unergative
- **Focus**
  - Broad
  - Narrow
- **Subject**
  - Definite
  - Indefinite

RESULTS ACROSS CONDITIONS: Monolinguals

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<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
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Conclusions
1. Dutch heritage speakers show knowledge of the factors verb type, and focus, but not definiteness

> Partial support for the Interface Hypothesis

2. In judgment, Dutch heritage speakers of Spanish overgeneralize postverbal subjects, whereas American HS do not prefer either order.

> Support for cross-linguistic influence

References

Subject Position in Dutch
Main clauses:
- A boy floated
- But... V2:
  - Buiten/eer schreeuwde een jongen: Outside/There shouted a boy

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