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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb type</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unaccusative</td>
<td>S V</td>
<td>V S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>S V</td>
<td>Un V S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is constrained by:

1. Verb type
2. Focus
   - Narrow
   - Broad
3. Definiteness
   - Definite
   - Indefinite

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

Hypothetical ranking: Unaccusative > Unaccusative Narrow > Unaccusative Broad > Accusative

Results per condition:

- **Monolinguals**
  - Unaccusative Narrow: Lower scores
  - Unaccusative Broad: Lower scores
  - Accusative: Lower scores

- **Heritage speakers**
  - Unaccusative Narrow: Lower scores
  - Unaccusative Broad: Lower scores
  - Accusative: Lower scores

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

Method
Contextualized Scalable Acceptability Judgment Task:

- **Verb type**
  - Unaccusative
  - Accusative

- **Focus**
  - Broad
  - Narrow

- **Subject**
  - Definite
  - Indefinite

Results across conditions:

- **Monolinguals**
  - Narrow: Lower scores
  - Broad: Lower scores

- **Heritage speakers**
  - Narrow: Lower scores
  - Broad: Lower scores

Results across conditions:

- **Monolinguals**
  - Narrow: Lower scores

- **Heritage speakers**
  - Narrow: Lower scores