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):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
**Subject Position in Spanish as a Heritage Language in the Netherlands:** Interface Vulnerability and Cross-linguistic Influence

Brechje van Osch, Suzanne Aalberse, Aafke Hulk & Petra Sleeman

University of Amsterdam

---

**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
- 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 (Montiel, 2008)
  - 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 (Hertel, 2003; Lozano, 2006; Domínguez, 2013; Zapata et al., 2005)

**Method**
Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb type</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unacc. Unerg.</td>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>Definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unacc. Unerg.</td>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples**
- Unacc. Unerg. → indefinite

- EXAMPLE: Unaccusative – narrow– indefinite

- Verb type is more vulnerable than focus (De Prada-Perez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012)

- Verb type is robust (Montrul, 2005)

**Experiment 1: Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands**

**Participants**
24 heritage speakers
- Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5
- Both focus and definiteness are more vulnerable than verb type

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

**Results per condition**

- Monolinguals
- Heritage speakers

**Results across conditions**

- SV, VS
- Other, Missing

**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**