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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>Subject position in transitive Spanish is constrained by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unaccusative</td>
<td>1. Verb type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unergative</td>
<td>2. Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Narrow</td>
<td>3. Definiteness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**The Interface Hypothesis**
Selected Proceedings of the Third Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics (pp. 129-139). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

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

**Results across conditions**: Monolinguals

**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.
3. In production, American heritage speakers of Spanish overgeneralize preverbal subjects → Support for cross-linguistic influence

**References**