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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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Subject position in Spanish

Spanish has flexible word order:

Un chico llegó un chico
A boy arrived a boy

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is constrained by:

1. Verb type
2. Focus (Hertel, 2003; Lozano, 2006; Domínguez, 2013; Zapata et al., 2005)
3. Definiteness (Roggia, 2011)

Subject position in Dutch

Main clauses:

Een jongen floot
A boy whistled

But... V2:

Buiten/er schreeuwe de een jongen
Outside/There shouted a boy

FUTURE RESEARCH:

Expanding on the subject position in Spanish and Dutch

Method

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

Verb type

Unaccusative
Unergative

Focus

Broad
Narrow

Subject

Definite
Indefinite

RESULTS ACROSS CONDITIONS:

Monolinguals

Heritage speakers

Heritage speakers

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 preverbal subjects, whereas American HS do not prefer either order.

Support for cross-linguistic influence

References


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