**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   Silbó     Llegó    A boy
Silbó     un chico       Llegó     A boy
```

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**The Interface Hypothesis**

(Sorace & Serratrice, 2009)

```
S           V  V        S
S             V    V         S
S           V            V         S
```

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**Previous Research: Heritage Spanish in the US**

- Comparing verb type & focus → unclear findings:
  - Verb type is robust (Monteol, 2009)
  - Verb type and focus are vulnerable (Zapata et al., 2009)
  - Verb type is more vulnerable than focus (De Prada-Pérez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012)
- Heritage speakers overgeneralize preverbal subjects (Hinch Nava, 2007; Monteol, 2009; Zapata et al., 2009)

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**Method**

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

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

**EXAMPLE: Unaccusative – narrow – indefinite**

Es mi cumpleaños y hay mucha gente de visita en mi casa. De repente suena el timbre pero como justo estoy recibiendo un regalo de mi hija, no puedo abrir la puerta. Va mi esposa y ve que son unos primos. Cuando regresa, le pregunto: ‘¿Quién llegó?’ Mi esposa me dice:

“It’s my birthday and there are many guests in my house. Suddenly the doorbell rings, but since I’m just receiving a gift from my daughter, I can’t open the door. My wife goes and sees that it’s some cousins. When she gets back, I ask her: ‘Who arrived?’ My wife tells me:”

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**Subject position in Dutch**

Main clauses:

```
Een jongen   floot
```

But... V2:

```
Buiten/er schreeuwde een jongen
```

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

**Participants**

24 heritage speakers
- Born in the Netherlands, or arrived before 5
- 1 Dutch speaking parent, 1 Spanish speaking parent
- No Caribbean dialects

18 monolingual speakers of Spanish
- Recently immigrated to the Netherlands.
- No knowledge of Dutch
- No Caribbean dialects

**Hypotheses**

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

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**Results across conditions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monolinguals</th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>VS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heritage speakers</th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>VS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Experiment 2: Heritage Spanish in the US**

22 heritage speakers in New Jersey
- Born in the US, or arrived before 5
- 2 Spanish speaking parents
- No Caribbean dialects
- Proficiency-matched to the Dutch HS

**Results across conditions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment task</th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>VS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production task</th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>VS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

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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**

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**References**