Subject Position in Spanish as a heritage language in the Netherlands
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: http://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  un chico llegó
A boy arrived  A boy arrived

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 (Montrul, 2005)
  • 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 (Hinch Nava, 2007; Montrul, 2005; 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>Unaccusative</td>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>Definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unergative</td>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More evidence for postverbal subjects

Un chico llegó
A boy arrived

Subject position in Dutch

Main clauses:

Een jongen floot
A boy whistled

But... V2:

Buiten/er schreeuwde een jongen
Outside/There shouted a boy

MORE EVIDENCE FOR POSTVERBAL SUBJECTS

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

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:

Results per condition

Monolinguals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>VS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unacc. Unerg.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Narrow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Def. Indef.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heritage speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>VS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unacc. Unerg.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Narrow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Def. Indef.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

1. Dutch heritage speakers show knowledge of the factors verb type, focus, and 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


The Interface Hypothesis (Geeslin & Domínguez, 2013)

External interface (syntax-pragmatics/discourse)  more vulnerable
Internal interface (syntax-semantics)    less vulnerable

FOCUS & DEFINITENESS  more vulnerable
VERB TYPE  less vulnerable

Selected Proceedings of the 14th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium