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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:

- Verb type
- Focus
- Definiteness

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

Subject position in Dutch

Main clauses:

- Slovene: Unacc. Unerg. Subject
- Dutch: Broad Subject

Subject position in English

CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCE FROM ENGLISH OR SIMPLIFICATION?

Method

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

- Verb type
- Focus
- Subject

RESULTS ACROSS CONDITIONS:

Experiment 1: Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands

Participants

- 24 heritage speakers

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

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

5. Selected Proceedings of the Third Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics