Subject Position in Spanish as a heritage language in the Netherlands

*Interface Vulnerability and Cross-linguistic Influence*

van Osch, B.A.; Aalberse, S.P.; Hulk, A.C.J.; Sleeman, A.P.

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Subject Position in Spanish as a Heritage Language in the Netherlands: Interface Vulnerability and Cross-linguistic Influence

Breche 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
  - A boy arrived a boy

- **Llegó un chico**
  - Arrived a boy

**FOCUS & DEFINITENESS**
- more vulnerable → less vulnerable

**HERITAGE SPEAKERS**
- Speakers of a minority language in a home context.

**PREVIOUS RESEARCH: HERITAGE SPANISH IN THE US**
- Comparing verb type & focus → unclear findings:
  - Verb type is robust (Montiel, 2000)
  - Verb type and focus are vulnerable (Zapata et al., 2005)
  - Verb type is more vulnerable than focus (De Prazza-Perez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012)
  - Heritage speakers overgeneralize preverbal subjects

**METHOD**
- Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:
  - **VERB TYPE**
    - Unaccusative
    - Unergative
  - **FOCUS**
    - Broad
    - Narrow
  - **SUBJECT**
    - Definite
    - Indefinite

**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 tío, 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 uncle, I cannot 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:

**RESULTS**

**RESULTS ACROSS CONDITIONS:**
- Judgment task
  - VS
  - SV
  - Other
  - Missing

**CONCLUSIONS**
- Dutch heritage speakers show knowledge of the factors verb type and focus, but not definiteness
  - Partial support for the Interface Hypothesis
- In judgment, Dutch heritage speakers of Spanish overgeneralize preverbal subjects, whereas American HS do not prefer either order.
- In production, American heritage speakers of Spanish overgeneralize preverbal subjects
  - Support for cross-linguistic influence

**REFERENCES**
- Díaz-Campos (Eds.), Selected Proceedings of the Third Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics (pp. 129-139). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.