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:

- **Unaccusative**
  - Narrow
  - Indefinite

- **Unergative**
  - Broad
  - Indefinite

Subject position in Dutch

Main clauses: 

- Narrow
- Indefinite

But... V2:

- Narrow
- Indefinite

Experiment 1: Heritage Spanish in the Netherlands

Participants

- 24 heritage speakers
  - 1 Dutch speaking parent, 1 Spanish speaking parent
  - No Caribbean dialects
  - Recently immigrated to the Netherlands.

Hypotheses

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

Method

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

- **Verb type**: Unaccusative, Unergative
- **Focus**: Broad, Narrow
- **Subject**: Definite, Indefinite

Results per condition

- Monolinguals
- 22 heritage speakers

Results across conditions:

- **Unacc. Unerg.**
- **Broad Narrow**
- **Def. Indef.**

Conclusions

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

References