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):
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

Subject position in Spanish

Spanish has flexible word order:

- Un chico llegó a boy arrived
- Llegó un chico arrived a boy

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is constrained by:

1. Verb type
2. Focus
3. Definiteness

Subject position in Dutch

Main clauses:
- Een jongen floot a boy whistled
- Buiten er schreeuwde een jongen Outside/There shouted a boy

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

Method
Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:
- Verb type
  - Unaccusative
  - Unergative
- Focus
  - Broad
  - Narrow
- Subject
  - Definite
  - Indefinite

Results per condition

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:

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 preverbal 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

Subject position in English or Simplification?

Unaccusative

Unergative

Broad

Narrow

Definite

Indefinite

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:

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 preverbal 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