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

**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
A boy arrived

Llegó un chico
Arrived a boy

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is more vulnerable (syntax-pragmatics/discourse)

2. Focus
Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is more vulnerable (syntax-semantics)

- Narrow
- Broad

- Unaccusative
- Unergative

- Definite
- Indefinite

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

**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
- Recently immigrated to the Netherlands.
- No knowledge of Dutch
- No Caribbean dialects

18 monolingual speakers of Spanish
- Derived from 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

**Results per condition**

**Results across conditions**

**Conclusions**

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

- Domínguez, L. (2013). Understanding interfaces: Second language acquisition and first language attrition of Spanish subject realization and word order variation (Univ. of Illinois at Chicago Ph.D. diss.).

**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**

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

**Data**

- Participants
  - Monolinguals
  - Heritage speakers

**Subject position in Dutch**
Main clauses:
- Een jongen floot
A boy whistled

- Outside/There shouted a boy

- Adv

- V

- S

**Subject position in English**

<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>

**References**

- Domínguez, L. (2013). Understanding interfaces: Second language acquisition and first language attrition of Spanish subject realization and word order variation (Univ. of Illinois at Chicago Ph.D. diss.).