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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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**Heritage speakers**
Speakers of a minority language, acquired during childhood in a naturalistic setting in the home context.

**The Interface Hypothesis**

1. Narrow
2. Broad
3. Definite
4. Indefinite

External interface (syntax-pragmatics / discourse) more vulnerable

Internal interface (syntax-semantics) less vulnerable

**FOCUS & DEFINITENESS**
more vulnerable

**VERB TYPE**
less vulnerable

**Subject position in Spanish**

Spanish has flexible word order:

- **Unaccusative**
  - Definite
  - Indefinite

- **Unergative**
  - Definite
  - Indefinite

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is constrained by:

1. **Verb type**
2. **Focus**
3. **Definiteness**

**Subject position in Dutch**

Main clauses:

- **Unaccusative**
- **Unergative**

But... **V2**:

- **Definite**
- **Indefinite**

**Method**

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

- **Verb type**
  - Unaccusative
  - Unergative

- **Focus**
  - Broad
  - Narrow

- **Subject**
  - Definite
  - Indefinite

**Results across conditions:**

- **Monolinguals**
- **Heritage speakers**

**Results per condition**

- **SV**
- **VS**

**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

**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

**Conclusions**

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

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

**References**