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 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.

Subject position in Spanish
Spanish has flexible word order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Un chico llegó</th>
<th>Llegó un chico</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A boy arrived</td>
<td>Arrived a boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subject position with intransitives in Spanish is constrained by:
1. Verb type
2. Focus
3. Definiteness

Previous Research: Heritage Spanish in the US
• Comparing verb type & focus → unclear findings:
  - Verb type is robust (Montibeller, 2009)
  - Verb type and focus are vulnerable (Zapata et al., 2005)

• Heritage speakers overgeneralize preverbal subjects (de Prada-Perez & Pascual y Cabo, 2012)

Contextualized Scalar Acceptability Judgment Task:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb type</th>
<th>Broad</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unaccusative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unergative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method

Results per condition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Broad Narrow</th>
<th>Definite</th>
<th>Indefinite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monolinguals</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Speakers</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References

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