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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The Interface Hypothesis (Sorace & Serratrice, 2009)

Subject position in Spanish

Spanish has flexible word order:

- Un chico llegó
- Silbó un chico

Heritage speakers overgeneralize preverbal subjects

(Hinch Nava, 2007; Montmoli, 2005; Zapata et al., 2005)

Subject position in Dutch

Main clauses:

- Een jongen floot
- Buiten/er schreeuwe een jongen

But... V2:

- Adv
- #

Results per condition

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

Results across conditions:

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 verb 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