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Preposition Stranding in Spanish Heritage Language as a non-Local Language Variety.

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Preposition Stranding in Spanish Heritage Language as a non-Local Language Variety.

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Abstract

This study contributes to the ongoing debate on HS grammatical outcome due to cross-linguistic transfer by exploring preposition stranding (PS) between Spanish Heritage Speakers and immigrants in Texas. PS occurs when a preposition is stranded due to the extraction of its noun complement at the end of the sentence (Ross, 1986). Structurally, Spanish does not permit PS (Campos, 1991). However, Spanish Heritage speakers (HS) accept and produce ungrammatical cases of PS (Pascual y Cabo & Gómez, 2015; Phillips, 2018; Depiante & Thompson, 2013) due to cross-linguistic influence (Montrul & Polinsky, 2011; White, 2011). According to Pascual y Cabo (2015), PS is not due to incomplete acquisition or L1 attrition but crucially because of the timing of exposure to the societal language. Based on this assumption and Sorace's interface hypothesis (Sorace, 2000), I argue that the immigrants' length of exposure can also influence core syntactic structures. The following grammaticality judgment task and dehydrated sentence production task assessed PS among eight HSs and six immigrants of the same community. The data were analyzed in SPSS. The findings suggest that both immigrant groups reject PS regardless of exposure to the societal language. English Dominant HS do perceive PS as grammatical but do not produce it. These findings reiterate that PS is not a product of language attrition caused by cross-linguistic transfer by the length of exposure, nor an input that is passed down to HS.

Key Terms: P-Stranding, Spanish Heritage Language, Interface Hypothesis, Core Syntax, Bilingualism, Language Contact.

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