

Abstract

In this paper we present data from subject personal pronoun (SPP) use in Spanish and Catalan in Minorca and Spanish in Valladolid, which provides evidence in favor of a formal analysis of cross-linguistic influence, the Vulnerability Hypothesis (VH). The VH establishes a categorical-variable continuum of permeability. In particular, this paper applies a comparative variationist analysis to Spanish SPP across four different groups of speakers (the Spanish of eleven Spanish- and twelve Catalan- dominant bilinguals vs. the Catalan of twelve Catalan-dominant bilinguals and twelve monolingual Spanish speakers) who participated in sociolinguistic interviews. Results indicated a higher use of overt pronominal subjects only in third person subjects, and the localization of contact effects on lower ranking variables. These results are discussed in terms of simplification, specified as the reduction of variability in the data, and convergence, defined as an increase in variable and constraint ranking parallels across languages.

Keywords: subject personal pronoun, Spanish-Catalan bilinguals, Vulnerability Hypothesis

Theoretical implications of research on bilingual subject production:

The Vulnerability Hypothesis

1. Introduction

The present paper proposes a language contact outcome hypothesis, the Vulnerability Hypothesis (VH), illustrating its testability through the discussion of data from Spanish-Catalan bilingual subject personal pronoun (SPP) expression.

This paper is envisioned within the formal analysis of bilingual speech in order to determine what linguistic generalizations emerge from the examination of a variety of languages in contact in a number of different contact situations. In particular, I am concerned with the linguistic restrictions posed on language contact induced change. Thus, I offer here a hypothesis for what these restrictions might be. Crucially, the data presented benefits from the comparative approach commonly used in variationist linguistics (Lavob 1982), whereby varieties (monolingual and bilingual) are compared based not only on rates of use of a specific form over another but also on the variables that are involved, their magnitude of effect (the ranking of these variables) as well as the direction of effect (constraint ranking). In particular, in this paper I discuss subject expression data in light of the hypothesis proposed.

In the past decade an abundance of studies within the generative tradition have tested the Interface Hypothesis (IH, Sorace 2011, 2012), whereby structures that lie at the core syntax are said to be more impervious to cross-linguistic influence than those at the syntax interfaces with other modules, particularly those at the external interfaces, such as the well-researched syntax-discourse interface. It is noteworthy, however, that these

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1 studies tend to study phenomena that is not only at the syntax interface with other
2 modules but also variable.

3 The paramount Spanish phenomenon both in the IH and variationist approaches is the
4 distribution of null and overt pronominal subjects in Spanish. Spanish is a null subject
5 language in which licensing occurs through the Morphological Uniformity Principle
6 (Jaeggli & Safir 1989: 29) and identification through strong agreement. Within the
7 generativist acquisition studies, the alternation between null and overt pronominal
8 subjects has been attributed to the discourse context, where null subjects take place in
9 topic continuation and overt pronominal subjects in topic shift contexts. Although
10 assumed to be a categorical distribution in monolingual Spanish in most generativist
11 acquisition research (however, see Liceras 2014), variationist analyses converge on the
12 multitude of variables that affect this distribution (including discourse context). Among
13 these variables, the highest ranked across studies tend to be discourse context (also
14 dubbed co-referentiality) and person. Variationist studies, thus, tend to examine the
15 variable person, largely concluding a number effect (singular subjects favor overt
16 pronominal subjects) or a person effect (first person singular, in comparison with third
17 person singular, favors overt pronominal subjects). Alternatively, they control for this
18 variable by including only first person singular tokens in the analysis. Generative
19 acquisitionist either did not control for the variable (Rothman 2009) or only included
20 third person singular items (e.g. Montrul 2004).

21 The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces the hypothesis placing it in
22 the context of previous work dealing with the classic problem of cross-linguistic
23 influence selectivity. Section 3 reviews previous research regarding subject expression in

1 Spanish, both in monolingual and bilingual speakers. In section 4 the present project is
2 introduced. Lastly, section 5 offers the discussion and section 6 the conclusions.

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4 2. Linguistic constraints on language contact

5 Within the fields of bilingualism and language contact the problem of cross-linguistic
6 influence selectivity is considered a classic problem dating back to at least the 1950s
7 (e.g., Weinreich 1953). In the early tradition of language contact formalization,
8 restrictions on syntactic borrowing varied from typological factors to implicational
9 universal constraints and constraints on naturalness (Thomason & Kaufman 1988).

10 Within typological factors there were language pairings restrictions; only very similar
11 language pairings can borrow at the syntactic level (Meillet 1921), compatibility
12 restrictions; only compatible structures can be borrowed (Sapir 1921, Jakobson 1938),
13 paradigm restrictions; the entire paradigm cannot be borrowed, or general restrictions on
14 structural transfer (Haugen 1954, among many others). There were linguistic component
15 hierarchies; from easiest to borrow (lexicon) to hardest to borrow (syntax), through
16 morphology (Weinreich 1953) to subcomponent hierarchies. For instance, derivational
17 morphology is easier to borrow than inflectional morphology. Cultural vocabulary is
18 most often adopted than core vocabulary (body parts, numbers, pronouns, etc.). In this
19 way, current approaches, e.g. Sorace's IH (2011, 2012), could be incorporated here, as
20 they define what areas of the syntax are more permeable to inter-lingual influence (core
21 vs. periphery).

22 Thomason & Kaufman (1988) criticized this approach offering multiple
23 counterexamples to these restrictions. They argued that these restrictions only hold for

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1 specific situations: borrowing and not substratum interference (recipient vs. source
2 language agentivity in van Coetsem’s 1999 terms, or whether the influence is from the L1
3 onto the L2 or vice versa). They do not claim, however, that all these restrictions are
4 unfounded; they admit that some areas of the language are more permeable to cross-
5 linguistic influence than others. Crucially, they defend that an area may be harder to
6 borrow but not impossible to borrow, given the right contact circumstances. In this vein,
7 they describe different contact situations based on language agentivity: borrowing vs
8 substratum interference. The contact situation in combination with the intensity of the
9 contact is what limits what is transferred. Note, however, that borrowability continuum is
10 assumed under this approach. Nonetheless, those structures that are improbable to be
11 borrowed can be transferred in cases of substratum interference in a situation of intense
12 contact. We cannot ignore the advancement that this proposal constituted for the field of
13 contact linguistics. However, the all-inclusive nature of the proposal calls for detailed
14 analysis of specific situations to test the predictions.

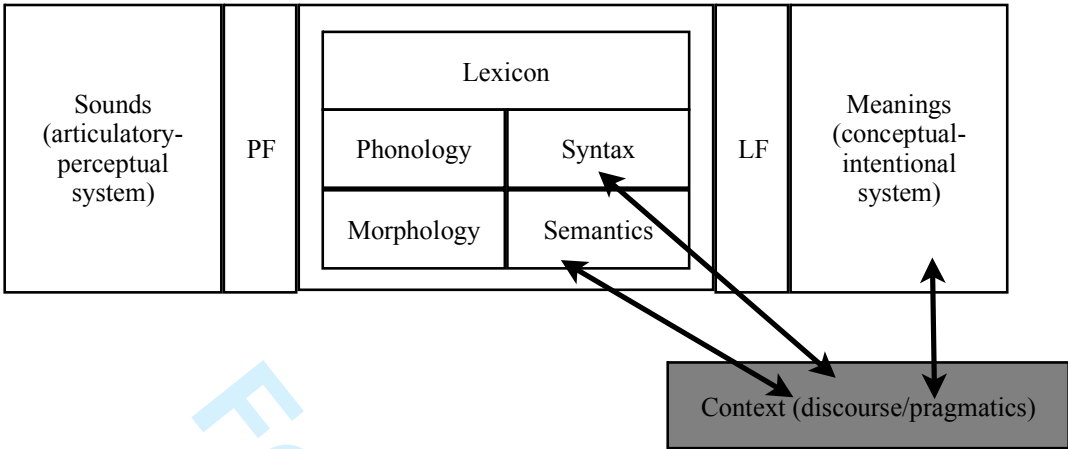
15 Silva-Corvalán (1993) evaluates this hypothesis in a context of intense and prolonged
16 language contact situation, Spanish in L.A. In this situation, structural transfer should
17 occur. Thus, she examines four structures where English influence is evident in Spanish
18 and which on the surface appear to be syntactic. For instance, Silva-Corvalán
19 convincingly argues that the overuse of overt pronominal subjects in a null subject
20 language like Spanish is a pragmatic change, as the pronoun loses its pragmatic
21 specifications, but the null pronominal subject continues to be grammatical. If this was
22 not the case, that would constitute a syntactic change from a null to a non-null subject
23 language. Likewise, the preponderance of preverbal subjects in her data does not imply

1 the loss of the structural specifications of Spanish that allow for postverbal subjects, as
2 these are also attested on her data. The expression of inalienable possession in Spanish
3 requires the use of a clitic and a definite article while Spanish speakers in L.A. had
4 generalized the use of the possessive to this context. Lastly, the omission of the
5 complementizer *que* is spread in this community from formal contexts to non-formal
6 contexts. In all these cases, then, there is an extension of use of a form to a wider amount
7 of contexts, losing its pragmatic restrictions, but no syntactic change is attested.

8 Still active today under the prolific Interface Hypothesis (IH), researchers in
9 bilingualism and second language acquisition have examined a variety of structures¹,
10 largely within the context of Romance minority languages in contact with English in the
11 US or UK as well as the second language acquisition of such Romance languages in the
12 same context. Grounded in the notion of linguistic modules and interfaces between them
13 (e.g., Jackendoff 1997, 2002, 2007, Reinhart 2006), the IH (Sorace 2011) has evolved
14 since its initial version (Sorace 2005, 2006), where the narrow syntax was considered
15 impervious to cross-linguistic influence whereas the syntax interfaces with other modules
16 were the locus of interference, to a current account where the notion of interfaces is
17 downplayed (Sorace 2012, in response to commentaries to Sorace 2011), through a
18 version where internal (or linguistic) and external (i.e., with other modules) syntax
19 interfaces were differentially affected (Tsimplici & Sorace 2006, Sorace 2011).

¹ Subject expression (Belletti, Benneti & Sorace 2007, Müller & Hulk 2000, Roman 2009, Serratrice, Sorace & Paoli 2004, Sorace & Filiaci 2006, Tsimplici, Sorace, Heycock & Filiaci 2004), subject position (Belletti, Benneti & Sorace 2007, Dominguez & Arche 2008, Hertel 2003, Lozano 2006, Montrul 2006, Zapata et al. 2005, Author 2010a), left peripheral constructions (Slabakova, Kempchinsky, and Rothman, submitted, Slabakova, Rothman, & Kempchinsky 2011, Slabakova, Rothman, Leal Mendez, Campos & Kempchinsky 2011, Valenzuela 2006, 2008, Zapata et al. 2005), etc.

(1) Linguistic modularity, adapted from White (2009)²



Responses to Sorace (2011) raised a number of concerns with the IH. Crucially, several authors highlighted the role of **complexity** as being a better factor than interface (Hopp 2011, Pires & Rothman 2011). In fact, it has been pointed out that not all external interface phenomena are equally affected (e.g. Montrul 2011 questions what is so special about pronominals) and, within the internal interfaces, the syntax-semantics is largely unproblematic while the syntax-morphology is highly problematic (White 2011). In her response to these commentaries, Sorace (2012) argued “Again, the problem evaporates once we remove a rigid distinction between core syntax and interfaces and instead allow for a range of interface conditions, graded according to their computational complexity and their dependence on extra-linguistic factors.” The details, however, remain largely unexplained. Thus, this paper aims to offer a detailed proposal of what this complexity might be as well as contributing further evidence that being a linguistic phenomenon at the external interface is not what explains cross-linguistic influence selectivity. In fact, I argue here that complexity resides in variability, which is understood as the availability

² These modules interface with each other. The syntax module, for instance, interfaces with the internal modules, such as the lexicon (specially noteworthy is the role of the lexicon on the syntactic derivation in the Minimalist Program, Chomsky 1995) or the phonology (e.g. the interaction of intonation and syntactic structure, Zubizarreta 1998). Similarly, it interfaces with the external component: the pragmatics.

of more than one form for a specific paradigmatic gap such that the alternation between the two forms is not categorical. As will be further explained below, this alternation is not necessarily random either, as the probabilistic use of a form is determined by linguistic and extra-linguistic factors (Labov 1982). Cross-linguistic influence selectivity is, thus, due to variability of the distribution in the receiving language, which would be a specification of Weinreich's (1953) generalization on contact-induced change targeting structural weaknesses in the target language.

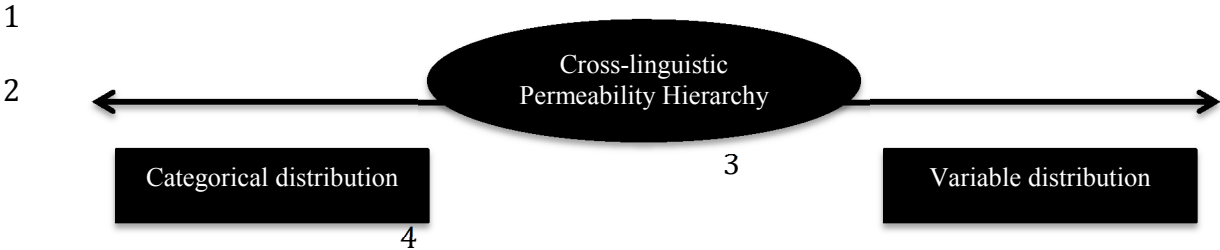
A proposal along these lines does not rely on the structure of grammars and our changing understanding of linguistic modules and their interfaces. Instead it is based on an understanding of the grammar based on the factors that affect a specific distribution in a specific language, thus, requiring a detailed description of the facts in the receiving language. Once the probability of producing one of the forms in the alternation in a specific language is known, predictions can be made about the effects of bilingualism on the distribution (relative frequencies) under study. The VH establishes a cross-linguistic permeability hierarchy along the variability continuum, which spans from categorical distributions, where a form occurs (near) 0% or 100% of the time in a specific context (e.g. overt pronominal subjects with impersonal predicates), to highly variable contexts, where the production of a specific form is (near) 50% of the time. Thus, this analysis is based on the relative frequencies of forms in a specific context. Under the VH, those distributions in the variable end of the continuum will be subject to cross-linguistic influence whereas those that are on the categorical end of the continuum will not (2).

(2) Cross-linguistic Permeability Hierarchy: Vulnerability Hypothesis

More invulnerable

More vulnerable

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5 How far to the categorical end a speaker will exhibit cross-linguistic influence
6 depends on individual and social factors, as a measure of language contact intensity.
7 Thus, highly proficient bilinguals are expected to only exhibit influence in highly
8 variable phenomena while low proficient bilinguals are expected to show evidence of
9 cross-linguist influence is less variable phenomena. However, this is an assumption that
10 is left for further research in this paper as it would require testing of several bilingual
11 groups.

12 This proposal, therefore, builds on the numerous and important contributions starting
13 in the 1950s, however, using a new concept in the cross-linguistic influence selectivity
14 literature: the notion of variability³. While this notion has been formalized in the
15 variationist literature, often times with a functionalist understanding of language,
16 adopting the variationist method (i.e., detailed linguistic description based on regression
17 analyses) I will argue here does not require adopting a specific view of the nature of
18 language or the characteristics of the language faculty. Variability in language is a fact
19 that is approached from different perspectives, including theoretical syntax (Richards
20 2008) and often hinted at in acquisition studies, sometimes under the concept of
21 optionality (e.g. Prevost 2011) or gradiency (Duffield et al. 2009). Unfortunately, the
22 same term has been used to refer to native speaker variability in production (Type II

³ In fact, the proposal put forth here would be more adequately named the Variability Hypothesis. However, a different hypothesis already exists under that name.

variation, Rehner 2002) as second language speaker variability (Type I variation, Rehner 2002), meaning differences with respect to monolingual forms.

3. Subject expression in Spanish and Catalan

The topic of subject expression in Spanish has received extant attention in both acquisitionist and variationist studies. This section reviews the most relevant research in both monolingual and bilingual varieties of Spanish.

Spanish and Catalan are both null subject languages (Perlmutter 1971), with similar null vs. overt subject distributions (Prada Pérez 2009, 2010, 2015). Variationist analyses of Spanish subject expression indicate that the distribution of null and overt pronominal subjects in Spanish is regulated by a combination of variables, except in those cases traditionally excluded from variable rule analyses: predicates that require an expletive subject (3a), predicates accompanying impersonal uses of the second person singular and third person plural (3b), reverse psychological predicates (3c), predicates in subject relative clauses (3d), subjects with inanimate referents (3e), and predicates in set phrases (3f). In most cases, the null pronominal subject fails to alternate with an overt counterpart.

(3) ‘Outside the envelope’ of variation

a. *Y **hay** una misa y luego un acto.*

‘And there is mass and then a ceremony.’ (Participant 49, monolingual, female, age 18)

b. ***Dicen** que cuando vas a buscar trabajo luego ponen en los currículums [anuncios] que absténgase privadas.*

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- 1 ‘It is said that when one goes and looks for a job, they say in the ads that
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- 3 1 private (colleges) should abstain.’ (Participant 49, monolingual, female,
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- 6 3 age 18)
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- 8 4 *c. Me **ha gustado** siempre escribir mucho y leer mucho*
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- 10 5 ‘I have always liked to read and to write a lot.’ (Participant 39,
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- 12 6 monolingual, male, age 89)
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- 14 7 *d. Sí, y Mariví, que **se casa**, por cierto.*
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- 16 8 ‘Yes, and Mariví, who is getting married, by the way.’ (Participant 55,
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- 18 9 monolingual, female, age 27)
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- 20 10 *e. Cada día caminaba de mi apartamento a la universidad por “El*
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- 22 11 *paseo de los ingleses”. **Era** un camino muy lindo con vistas de hoteles y*
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- 24 12 *también el mar azul y claro del Mediterráneo.*
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- 26 13 ‘Everyday I walked from my apartment to college through “El
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- 28 14 paseo de los ingleses”. It was a very nice walk with a view of hotels and
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- 30 15 also the blue and clear Mediterranean Sea.’[ARGL, upper-advanced,
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- 32 16 CEDEL2 corpus] (Lozano 2008)
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- 34 17 *f. Sí, sí, nadadora mítica pero de echarme a nadar siempre a medio*
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- 36 18 *día o no **sé** estoy vago este año no me apetece nadar.*
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- 38 19 ‘Yes, yes, legendary swimmer, I always went swimming at lunch time and
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- 40 20 I do not know if I am lazy this year or what, but I do not feel like
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- 42 21 swimming.’ (Participant 48, monolingual, male, age 27)
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- 46 22 In variable contexts, on the other hand, the distribution has been best accounted for by
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- 48 23 a combination of variables. In general terms, null subjects tend to indicate continuity.
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1 Thus, CO-REFERENTIALITY (also referred to as switch reference), or whether the subject in
 2 the preceding sentence is the same or not, favors the use of a null subject.

3 (4) Coding of language-internal variables: Continuity

4 CO-REFERENCE

5 *Y yo los bañaba, y los vestía, les daba de comer, los ponía a dormir.*

6 ‘And I would bathe them, dress them, feed them, put them to sleep.’

7 [NMCOS, 117–1A3: 248.-2512] (Travis 2007)

8 In (4) the pronominal subject is expressed in the first instance and omitted afterwards
 9 where it is co-referential. Similarly, TENSE, ASPECT, MOOD (TAM) CONTINUITY favors null
 10 subjects, as exemplified in (5).

11 (5) Coding of language-internal variables: Continuity

12 TAM CONTINUITY

13 *Mañana voy. Yo **dejé** diez paquetes allá.*

14 ‘I will go tomorrow. I left ten packets there.’ [Colombia, cooking: 100-

15 101] (Travis 2007)

16 The subject in (5) is null in the first clause and expressed in the second, where there is
 17 a change in TAM. In the literature, a combination of these two variables has been
 18 productively used, SPEECH CONNECTIVITY or Connect. Although more constraints have
 19 been proposed in earlier studies (Bailey and Pease-Álvarez 1997, Paredes Silva 1993),
 20 recently researchers use a three-way distinction from maximum level of connectedness
 21 (same referent and same TAM), as in (4), to lowest level of connectedness (different
 22 referents), as in (6a), through an intermediate level (same referent but different TAM), as

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1 in (6b).

2 (6) Coding of language-internal variables: Continuity

3 SPEECH CONNECTIVITY

4 a. *Entonces, había necesidad de trabajar porque se había muerto mi papá*
5 *y **teníamos** una familia de seis personas.* (Participant #19)

6 Then, there was the need to work because my father had died and (d) [we]
7 had a family of six people. (Holmquist 2012)

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9 b.... *y ha recibido hijos de las personas que ella **recibió**, o sea nietoh,*
10 *cómo quien dice.* [BF07116-117]
11 ‘... and [she] has delivered children of the people that she delivered, that
12 is grandchildren, we could say.’ (Orozco 2015)

13 In (6a) the referent of the subject of *teníamos* ‘we had’ is different from the referent
14 in the subject in the previous clause (*mi papá* ‘my father’), a context in which there is a
15 tendency to use overt pronominal subjects. In (6b) the referent is the same but the TAM
16 is different across clauses, a situation that neither favors nor disfavors the overt form.
17 Finally, null subjects are favored in *embedded* clauses (see Lozano 2008, Margaza & Bel
18 2006, Morales 1997, Otheguy et al. 2007, Silva-Corvalán 1994), as in (8).

19 (7) Coding of language-internal variables: Continuity

20 CLAUSE TYPE

21 *No, no. . . De verdad. Yo quiero que hablemos, negro.*
22 ‘No, no. Really. I want us to talk, sweetheart.’ [Colombia, restaurant:

1149-1157] (Travis 2007)

In (7) a null subject is employed, despite the topic shift. In addition to cases where continuity is reduced, the use of the overt pronominal subject has also been identified with “speaker egocentrism” and verb form ambiguity. It has been widely attested in the literature that overt pronominal subjects are more frequent in first person singular than in third person singular, or any of the plural verb forms (Enríquez 1984, Morales 1997, Otheguy et al. 2007, Silva-Corvalán 1982, 1994, Travis 2007). Thus, the variable PERSON affects subject expression in Spanish.

(8) Coding of language-internal variables: PERSON

Y luego ya no pude ir más, porque yo iba muy lejos pa' agarrar el bus,

‘And then (I) couldn’t go anymore, because I had to go really far to catch the bus,’ [NMCOS, 76–1A1: 228–229] (Travis 2007)

In (8) the subject is the first person in the two conjugated verb forms, with the second one being an overt pronominal subject. Previous research has observed a higher use of overt pronominal subjects in first person singular subjects, as compared to the other grammatical persons. Some of the verb forms in Spanish, namely the first and third person singular forms, are the same in several tenses (imperfect, conditional, present subjunctive and related compound forms). These ambiguous forms have sometimes been attested with more overt pronominal subjects, with disambiguating purposes. Consider the following example.

(9) Coding of language-internal variables: VERB FORM AMBIGUITY

En la noche ella iba a mi lado y yo estaba temblando

‘At night she used to go by my side and I wasn’t shaking.’ (Silva-Corvalán

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1 1997)

2 In (9), both verbs could refer to a first or a third person singular. In this case, to
3 disambiguate, both appear with an overt pronominal subject. While overt subjects are
4 favored with verbal forms that are *ambiguous* and not with *unambiguous* ones (Bayley &
5 Pease-Álvarez 1996, 1997, Silva-Corvalán 1994, Travis 2005) this result is not always
6 attested (Casanova 1999, Morales 1997, Ranson 1991). Unlike in example (9), often
7 times there is enough information in the context for the referent not to be ambiguous even
8 if the verb form is so, as in (4) above. Ranson, for instance, found that *ambiguous* forms
9 exhibited fewer overt pronominal subjects than *unambiguous* ones in the Andalusian
10 dialect she examined. She attributes this to the fact that the subject of *ambiguous* forms
11 were identifiable in the context. The distribution of overt subjects is also relevant to the
12 establishment of the speaker’s position on an idea. As a result, PERSON in combination
13 with SEMANTIC VERB TYPE affects the distribution. For instance, the *first person singular*
14 and verbs that express opinion or estimative verbs favor overt subjects (Enríquez 1984,
15 Morales 1997, Otheguy et al. 2007, Silva-Corvalán 1982, 1994, Travis 2007). For
16 example, Morales (1996) shows that the subjects of verbs like *pensar* ‘to think’ may be
17 produced even in topic continuation contexts, as in (7).

18 (10) Coding of language-internal variables: VERB TYPE

19 *Parece que ellos piensan que es signo de cultura.*

20 ‘It seems as if they think that is it a sign of culture.’ (Morales 1996)

21 More recently the classification of verb type has been reduced to external actions, mental
22 processes and stative verbs (see Orozco 2015 for a fuller description). In general, mental
23 and stative predicates favor null subjects while external actions favor overt pronominal

1 subjects. In recent work, however, lexical frequency seems to be a better predictor than
 2 semantic verb type (Orozco 2015), or even the formulaic nature of the verb (Posio 2015).
 3 For example, Orozco (2015) finds that stative verbs tend to appear with overt pronominal
 4 subjects. Importantly, however, *tener* ‘to have’ does not follow this trend. Lastly, a
 5 PRIMING or structural perseverance effect has been reported in the literature, where overt
 6 subjects lead to more overt subjects while null subjects lead to more null subjects
 7 (Cameron 1995, Cameron & Flores-Ferrán 2004, Flores-Ferrán 2007, Travis 2005, 2007).

8 (11) Coding of language-internal variables: FORM OF PREVIOUS MENTION/
 9 PRIMING

11 ... *Yo soy un títere de la calle. No me cruces la línea a mí. Y al tipo*
 12 *empujarme, yo le metí un puño en la misma oficina. Y el otro salió*
 13 *corriendo. Y entonces la secretaria estaba mirando pero se dio cuenta que*
 14 *fue que él me empujó. Yo me defendí. ¿Entiendes?....*

15 ‘... I am a street guy. (You) don’t cross my line. And the guy, when he
 16 pushed me, I punched him right in the office. And the other guy ran out.
 17 And then the secretary was looking but she realized that he had pushed
 18 me. I defended myself. Understand?’ (Cameron and Flores-Ferrán,
 19 2004:52)

20 As exemplified in (11), there is a priming effect where the initial use of an overt
 21 pronominal subject in the first person singular leads to further use of overt pronominal
 22 subjects in subsequent references to the same person.

23 These factors are mainly language internal. Some studies additionally address

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1 language-external factors, such as linguistic variety, age, gender, and language contact.
2 Numerous studies have examined the distribution of null and overt pronominal (and
3 rarely lexical) animate subjects in Spanish across different varieties. In general,
4 differences are reported for overt pronominal rates particularly between the Caribbean
5 (Alfaraz 2015, Cameron 1996, Lastra and Martín Butragueño 2015, Orozco 2015, Orozco
6 and Guy 2008, Otheguy and Zentella 2012, Posio 2015, among many others) and
7 Mainland varieties. Caribbean varieties report rates close to 40% (e.g. Alfaraz 2015,
8 Bentivoglio 1987, Cameron 1996, Morales 1982, Orozco 2015), Buenos Aires and
9 Santiago report slightly lower rates (36%-38%, Barrenechea & Alonso 1977, Cifuentes
10 1980) while Peninsular and Mexican varieties exhibit rates closer to 20% overt
11 pronominal subjects (Enríquez 1984, Lastra and Martín Butragueño 2015, Miró Vera and
12 Pineda 1982, Posio 2015). Although dialectal variation is largely attested in subject
13 pronoun rates and restricted to lower ranked variables (those with a smaller effect size),
14 these differences do not affect most linguistic variables. That is, this combination of
15 variables is rather stable across varieties of Spanish. Crucially, Spanish and Catalan
16 exhibit the same variables that are significant, with the same ranking of variables
17 (obtained through the range or effect size), and the same direction of effect (Prada Pérez
18 2009, 2010, 2015). In terms of ratings, the two languages are also very similar in that
19 respect: Spanish exhibits 19.8% overt pronominal subjects and Catalan 20.7% overt
20 pronominal subjects.

21 The role of age and gender, however, remains largely variable across varieties (cf.
22 Flores-Ferrán 2007 for a review). In monolingual communities, age and gender are
23 considered as variables indicating linguistic change (e.g., Bailey’s [2004] ‘apparent time’

for age). Age has variably been found to condition subject expression in Spanish. For instance, Cameron (1992) did not report an age effect while Ávila-Jiménez (1995) did, both examining the same variety and region. Recently, younger generations exhibit lower rates of overt pronominal expression for monolingual speakers from Barranquilla, Colombia (Orozco and Guy 2008), Colombian Costeño Spanish (Orozco 2015) and Mexico City Spanish (Lastra and Martín Butragueño 2015), while the opposite trend has been reported for Puerto Rico (e.g. Ávila-Jiménez 1995; Flores-Ferrán 2002; Lizardi 1993) and the Dominican Republic (Alfaraz 2015).

For gender, different results have been attested as well. Some studies report no gender effect (Holmquist 2012; Orozco and Guy 2008; Otheguy, Zentella and Livert 2007) while others find a *women effect*, in which female participants are leading the change towards expressed pronouns in monolingual and bilingual varieties (Bayley and Pease-Alvarez 1996; Carvalho and Child 2011; Otheguy and Zentella 2012; Shin 2013; Shin and Otheguy 2013). In monolingual varieties, there is evidence beyond subject expression of women leading linguistic change (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003; Labov 2001; each cited in Shin and Otheguy 2013). In bilingual varieties, on the other hand, a *women effect* has been reported for first generation Mainlanders (Otheguy and Zentella 2012), first generation speakers from several regions (Shin 2012), and for innovative speakers (Shin and Otheguy 2013), which has been attributed to female bilinguals' increased contact with second-generation bilingual speakers (Shin 2013, Shin and Otheguy 2013). Beyond New York City, the *women effect* has been attested in the US Southwest (Bayley and Pease-Alvarez 1996) and Uruguay (Carvalho and Child 2011).

A comparison in subject pronoun expression that has been rather productive in the

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1 literature has been between monolingual and bilingual varieties of Spanish. Spanish in
2 contact with English has reported conflicting results: while some do not report
3 differences (Bayley and Pease-Alvarez 1997, Flores and Toro 2000, Flores-Ferrán 2004,
4 Silva-Corvalán 1994, Torres-Cacoullos & Travis 2010a, and Travis 2007), others report
5 an increase in overt pronominal subjects and changes in the distribution reflected in
6 variables that are significant, their ranking, and/or their constraint ranking (Erker & Guy
7 2013, Erker & Otheguy 2016, Lipski 1994, 1996, Otheguy & Zentella 2012, Shin 2012,
8 Shin & Otheguy 2013, Orozco 2015, Toribio 2004, among others).

9 The extensive and expanding literature on subject expression in Spanish across
10 varieties converges on the patterned nature of the distribution, which is delimited by well-
11 studied linguistic factors. Across studies differences in rates are reported between
12 varieties where overt pronominal subject rates hover around 20% and those where they
13 are close to 40%. Nonetheless, the effect of variables and direction of effects remain
14 largely the same across varieties. The role of the external factors age and gender seem to
15 depend largely on the variety, as they seem to be community-specific. One of the external
16 factors that has received extant attention is the role of language contact. Thus, we now
17 turn to the effect of the presence of another language in the expression of subjects in
18 Spanish.

19
20 4. The Present Study

Bearing in mind the differences between the IH and the VH, the current project seeks to test the predictions of these hypotheses against bilingual Catalan-Spanish data, in particular, data pertaining to subject expression.

4.1 Research questions and Hypotheses

In particular, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- (i) SUBJECT EXPRESSION IN MONOLINGUAL SPANISH: What variables from those examined (Speech connectivity, ambiguity and verb type) predict the distribution of Spanish null and overt pronominal first and third person subjects? From the variables included, the distribution of Spanish null and overt pronominal subjects can be interpreted as lying at the syntax-pragmatics interface (speech connectivity), at the syntax-morphology interface (verb form ambiguity) and at the syntax interface with the lexico-semantics (verb type). In previous studies, all these variables have been found to be significant. Thus, we predict they will also play a role in the Spanish of the monolingual participants included in this study. The analysis will also examine if any of these variables is more predictive than other (that is, if the magnitude of effect is larger, as per the range in constraints). If, as previously claimed, distributions at the syntax interface with the pragmatics are more variable, it is expected that speech connectivity will be ranked lower than verb type and verb form ambiguity, a result not reported in the

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1 previous literature and not expected in the present data either. Lastly,
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3 comparisons will be made between first and third person singular subjects,
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8 as some of the contradictions found in the previous literature on bilingual
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11 subject expression may be largely due to studies examining first vs. third
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13 person singular.
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15 (ii) SUBJECT EXPRESSION IN BILINGUAL SPANISH: What variables from those
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17 examined (Speech connectivity, ambiguity and verb type) predict the
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19 distribution of Spanish null and overt pronominal first and third person
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21 subjects in the Spanish spoken by bilinguals as compared to monolinguals?
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23 Previous studies in general show sensitivity to these variables in bilingual
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25 speakers, although the differences may be expected in the magnitude of
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27 effect of certain variables, as sometimes results are interpreted as a laxity in
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29 the variables. In line with the VH, we anticipate changes to target mostly
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31 lower ranked variables. Given the differences in cross-linguistic effects
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33 reported in the previous literature between first and third person singular, it
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35 is expected that more evidence of cross-linguistic influence is found with
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37 subjects in the third person singular than with first person singular subjects.
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39 (iii) CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCE THEORIES: If cross-linguistic influence is
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41 attested, can it be attributed to variability or to interface between linguistic
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43 and extra-linguistic modules? The IH predicts bilingual speakers will exhibit
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45 more cross-linguistic influence (or larger differences from the monolingual
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47 group) in the distribution of null and overt pronominal subjects that is
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49 restricted by syntax-pragmatics interface variables (speech connectivity) and
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less so by syntax-semantics (in our study, verb type) or syntax-morphology (in this case, verb form ambiguity) interface variables. The VH, in contrast, predicts that those variables that are lower ranked (i.e. where the distribution is more variable) in the monolingual grammar will be the target of cross-linguistic influence. In order to determine which variables are lower ranked, the monolingual data will be examined first.

In order to respond to these questions, data from Spanish monolinguals and Catalan-Spanish bilinguals was collected and analyzed. The following section describes the participants included in the study.

4.2 Participants

Data from bilingual and monolingual speakers were collected and divided into four groups: two control groups and two bilingual Spanish groups. The Spanish control group consisted on data from 12 Spanish monolingual speakers from Valladolid while the Catalan control group consisted on data from 12 Catalan-dominant speakers from villages in the center of Minorca, where Spanish is rarely spoken. The bilingual data comprised Spanish speech samples from 12 Catalan L1 bilinguals and 11 Spanish L1 bilinguals residing in Minorca. Each group comprised (roughly) the same number of male and female participants who were equally distributed into three age groups, as per their access to education in Catalan: Age group 1 (ages 13 to 35), age group 2 (ages 36 to 64), age group 3 (65 and over).

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1 Participants self-reported their proficiency using a 7-point Liker scale, where 1
2 referred to minimal abilities and 7 to native-like abilities. This measure was used for lack
3 of a sensitive enough measure of proficiency for these Catalan-dominant bilinguals who
4 are highly proficient bilinguals, who have been exposed to both languages from birth and
5 who all score within the native range in the DELE. Clear differences exist, as expected,
6 between the Catalan-dominant speakers' proficiency in Spanish and Spanish-dominant
7 speakers' proficiency in Catalan. Catalan Bilingual speakers' self-reported proficiency in
8 Spanish ranged from 4 to 7 (mean: 5.3) regarding speaking ability and from 6 to 7 with
9 respect to listening proficiency (mean: 6.8). The majority of the Spanish-dominant
10 bilinguals were born and raised in a Spanish monolingual area. Thus, it is not surprising
11 that larger differences exist in their self-rated proficiency in Catalan. Their self-reported
12 speaking proficiency in Catalan ranges from 1 to 7 (mean: 4) and their listening
13 proficiency from 5 to 7 (mean: 6.7).

14 Differences between the groups in language use are also reported. Although all
15 participants are exposed to both languages every day, they vary in their production in
16 each of the languages. Catalan-dominant bilinguals produce in Catalan every day and
17 Spanish-dominant bilinguals produce Spanish everyday. The differences emerge with
18 respect to the use of their second language. While the majority of speakers in each of the
19 groups produce in their second language everyday (n=7 for the Catalan-dominant and
20 n=6 for the Spanish-dominant), the frequency of use of their second language is higher in
21 the Catalan-dominant group than in the Spanish-dominant group (Catalan-dominant: one
22 participant as little as once or twice a month (n=1), with the rest of participants producing
23 in it a few times a week (n=2) or once a week (n=2); Spanish-dominant: three participants

1 never produce in Catalan, one produces it once or twice a month, one once a week, and
2 the rest every day).

3

4 4.3 Materials and coding

5

6 The relevant data for this study was extracted from two sections of an oral interview
7 conducted in Spanish by a native speaker from Valladolid and in Catalan by a native of
8 Alaior, Minorca: the language background questionnaire, for participant profiling, and a
9 sociolinguistic interview.

10 The sociolinguistic interview was transcribed and every subject form was coded for a
11 number of linguistic and extralinguistic variables. For the purpose of the analysis, the
12 only tokens included were those with null or overt pronominal subjects in the first or
13 third person, in topic continuation contexts (i.e. exclusion of newly introduced referents),
14 in broad focus (i.e. exclusion of tokens in narrow focus) and in main clauses.

15 The final set of tokens were coded for subject form (null vs overt pronominal
16 subjects), person and number (1st vs. 3rd person singular subjects), speech connectivity or
17 connect (same referent, same TAM; same referent, different TAM; different referent, cf.
18 Otheguy et al. 2007), verb form ambiguity (ambiguous vs non ambiguous verb forms)
19 and semantic verb type (stative, mental or external actions, cf. Enríquez 1984). The
20 predictions were largely guided by antecedent research, where (i) first person singular,
21 (ii) more connected speech (iii) ambiguous verb forms, and (iii) stative and mental verbs
22 favored overt pronominal subjects more than third person singular subjects, less

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1 connected speech, unambiguous forms and external action verbs. Thus, the same
2 distribution was expected in this study.

3 The data was also coded by individual characteristics of the speaker. The external
4 variables included in the final analysis were language group (Spanish controls, Catalan
5 controls, Spanish-dominant bilinguals, Catalan-dominant bilinguals), gender (male and
6 female) and age group (In Minorca: (1) with access to education in Catalan, ages 13 to
7 35; and (2) without access to education in Catalan, over 35; In Valladolid ((1) 13 to 35;
8 (2) 36 to 64; and (3) 65 and over).

9
10 4.4 Results

11
12 Several analyses were run to gain a better understanding of the data. All the data (first
13 and third person singular) was included in an initial analysis in order to determine if there
14 was an effect for person.

15 As Table 1 shows person was returned as significant. In particular, first person
16 singular subjects favor overt pronominal subjects more than third person singular
17 subjects.

18
19 INSERT TABLE 1 AROUND HERE

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21 Since this result has been widely attested in the literature and the variable person
22 incurs in collinearity with several other variables, the remainder of the paper presents first
23 person data separately from third person data. The separate analysis can be particularly

telling as it pertains to language group differences. As noted above, previous research is inconsistent with respect to the effects that language contact has: some reported a contact effect and other did not. We hypothesized that it could be due to different studies examining subject expression across linguistic persons, in the first person or the third person. The following table presents the results for the first person data, where differences did not emerge across language groups.

INSERT TABLE 2 AROUND HERE

The data above indicates that the use of first person singular overt pronominal subjects hovers around 20% across speaker groups (range: 19.8% to 21.3%). As will be discussed below, when the data analysis is performed separately on each of the language groups some minor differences emerge between the bilingual and the control groups. In contrast, in Table 3, the data for third person singular subjects reveals a language group effect.

INSERT TABLE 3 AROUND HERE

The rate of overt third person singular pronominal subjects varies from 4.8% in the Spanish control to 14.5% in the Spanish-dominant bilingual group. The data further indicates that all groups in Minorca favor the use of overt pronominal subjects (Spanish-dominant bilinguals [.65], Catalan-dominant bilinguals [.51] and Catalan controls [.59]) while the Spanish controls disfavor them [.37].

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1 These data so far reveal an interesting interaction between language group and
2 person. While no statistical difference emerges in the overall rates of overt first person
3 pronominal subjects across groups, differences emerge with respect to third person
4 singular. In the remainder of this section, thus, we examine the variables involved in
5 subject expression in first and third person singular subjects in each of the language
6 groups.

8 *Spanish controls*

10 The data presented above revealed great differences in rates of overt pronominal
11 expression in first vs third person singular subjects in the Spanish controls: 19.8% overt
12 pronominal subjects in first person singular vs. 4.8% overt pronominal subjects in third
13 person singular. First and third person subjects differ in significant ways, e.g. first person
14 is deictic while third person is referential. As can be seen in tables 4 and 5, they do not
15 differ in the linguistic variables that are significant in the distribution of overt vs. null
16 pronominal subjects in Spanish.

18 INSERT TABLE 4 AROUND HERE

20 In first person singular, two variables were selected as significant, namely connect
21 and ambiguity. As expected, the more connected the speech is the lower the odds of
22 producing an overt pronominal subject and the more ambiguous a verb form is the higher

1 the odds of producing an overt pronominal subject. As can be seen in Table 5, similar
2 results are returned for the third person.

4 INSERT TABLE 5 AROUND HERE

6 The variables connect and ambiguity continue to be significant and exhibit the same
7 patterns, where the more connected the speech the lower the use of overt pronominal
8 subjects and the more ambiguous the verb form is the higher the use of overt pronominal
9 subjects.

10 Overall, Spanish controls indicate differences across persons in terms of rates of overt
11 pronominal subjects. Nonetheless, two linguistic variables affect the distribution of null
12 and overt pronominal subjects irrespective of person: connect and verb form ambiguity.
13 Thus, although differences in rates are significant across persons, the distribution is
14 subject to the same variables.

16 *Catalan controls*

18 In the Catalan control group differences between first and third person emerged with
19 respect to overt pronominal subject rates, which were 20.7% in the first person vs. 10.6%
20 in the third person. As can be seen in tables 6 and 7, the difference between first and third
21 person is also noticeable in their distribution of null vs. overt pronominal subjects, which
22 differ in the linguistic variables that are significant.

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1 INSERT TABLE 6 AROUND HERE

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3 As was the case in the Spanish controls, the linguistic variables that are significant in
4 Catalan are connect and ambiguity, with connect presenting the largest effect size (range:
5 33). Also similarly, the direction of effect is the same: more connected speech favors null
6 subjects and ambiguous verb forms favor overt subjects. Although the trends are the
7 same, as can be seen in Table 7, only connect is significant in the third person.

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9 INSERT TABLE 7 AROUND HERE

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11 As can be seen above, in the third person singular data only one variable is returned
12 as significant, connect, again with the same direction of effect and a large effect size
13 (range: 40).

14 Unlike in Spanish, in Catalan the difference in rate of use of overt pronominal
15 subjects between first and third persons is accompanied by a difference in significant
16 variables. Only the highest ranked variable, connect, remains significant across persons.

17

18 *Spanish-dominant bilinguals*

19 As seen above in tables 2 and 3, the Spanish-dominant bilingual group does not differ
20 noticeably in the percentage of overt pronominal subjects in first (19.9%) vs. third person
21 singular (14.5%), exhibiting the highest rate of overt pronominal subjects in the third
22 person of all groups while using similar rates of overt pronominal subjects as the other

1 groups. In the first person (Table 8), some differences from both control groups are
2 attested.

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4 INSERT TABLE 8 AROUND HERE
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6 In particular, unlike in both control groups, ambiguity is not returned as a significant
7 variable while verb type is. The highest ranked constraint, connect, however, remains
8 significant. Also relevant is the fact that the trends are similar across groups, even if they
9 do not reach significance in all groups: ambiguous forms favor overt pronominal subjects
10 more than unambiguous forms; mental and stative verbs favor overt subjects more than
11 external actions; and less connected speech favors more overt subjects than more
12 connected speech. As was the case with the Catalan control group, the data from the
13 Spanish-dominant bilinguals shows some differences between first and third person, not
14 so much in terms of percentage of use of overt pronominal subjects as in terms of
15 significant variables.

16
17 INSERT TABLE 9 AROUND HERE
18

19 Although the difference in rate between first and third person was not as noticeable in
20 this speaker group, only the variable connect is significant in the third person.

21 In conclusion, Spanish-dominant bilinguals exhibit similar overt pronominal subject
22 rates in first and third person singular. Nonetheless, differences exist in the variables that
23 are returned as significant, where fewer variables are significant in the third person.

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Catalan-dominant bilinguals

As in the Spanish control group, Catalan-dominant bilinguals use a significantly higher rate of overt pronominal subjects in the first (13.1%) than the third person singular (8.2%). Examining significant variables and their rankings, Catalan-dominant bilinguals exhibit a contrast between first and third person singular similar to that of the Spanish-dominant bilingual group.

INSERT TABLE 10 AROUND HERE

Table 10 indicates that in the first person singular, Catalan-dominant bilinguals, like Spanish-dominant bilinguals and unlike both control groups, return two linguistic variables as significant: connect and verb type, while ambiguity is not significant. The patterns across all groups are the same for all these variables, even if they do not reach significance across the groups. These trends are also present in the third person but the only variable that reaches significance is connect.

INSERT TABLE 11 AROUND HERE

In the third person, both bilingual groups and the Catalan control group only return connect as a significant variable.

1.1.1. Language group comparisons

1 In terms of rates of overt pronominal subjects, there is a larger difference between
2 first and third person in the Spanish controls than in the Catalan controls, where the
3 percentage of use of overt pronominal subjects is higher in the third person than in the
4 Spanish controls. The difference is also smaller in the two bilingual groups, particularly
5 in the Spanish-dominant bilingual group. Within persons, no difference was found across
6 groups in the first person while differences were attested across groups in the third person
7 singular. This result may explain some of the discrepancies previously found in the
8 literature, an issue that we expand on in the next sections.

9 With respect to the patterns of use observed, the two control groups are identical in
10 the significant variables in the first person but not in the third person, where Catalan is
11 not sensitive to verb form ambiguity. For Spanish-dominant bilinguals, differences in
12 variables that are significant are found in the first person between this bilingual speaker
13 group and the two control groups. Regarding third person, however, this bilingual control
14 group patterns similarly to the Catalan control group. Recall, however, that this is the
15 person where differences are attested between Spanish and Catalan.

16 17 5. Discussion

18 The results indicate interesting contrasts across speaker groups both in terms of rates
19 of use of overt pronominal subjects and patterns of use, as attested in the variables
20 returned as significant, the effect size of the variables, and the direction of effects.

21 Crucially, contrasts between first and third person were rather revealing.

22 In the first person, the rate of overt pronominal subjects was similar across groups
23 (around 20%) while in the third person, differences were attested (the rate varied from

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1 4.8% in the Spanish control to 14.5% in the Spanish-dominant bilingual group). These
2 differences were further supported by the variable language group (i.e. speaker group),
3 which was returned as significant only in the third person. This result confirms our
4 intuition that differences across studies could be due to differences in the persons
5 included across studies. Overall, these results are consistent, thus, with the previous
6 literature that finds no contact effects in the first person singular (Bayley and Pease-
7 Alvarez 1997, Flores and Toro 2000, Flores-Ferrán 2004, Silva-Corvalán 1994, Torres-
8 Cacoullos & Travis 2010a, and Travis 2007) but also with the previous literature that
9 finds contact effects in the third person singular or in the inclusion of several persons in
10 the analysis (Erker & Guy 2013, Erker & Otheguy 2016, Lipski 1994, 1996, Otheguy &
11 Zentella 2012, Shin 2012, Shin & Otheguy 2013, Orozco 2015, Toribio 2004). This effect
12 is particularly noticeable in the Spanish-dominant bilinguals, whose rate of overt
13 pronouns in the third person (14.5%) is close to that of the first person (19.9%). Sorace
14 (2011) anticipates the overuse of overt pronominal subjects in bilinguals as an economic
15 processing strategy to avoid holding the referent in memory. Since the third person is
16 referential, while the first is deictic, it follows that the processing burden is different in
17 the third than in the first person. Thus, Sorace’s assumption can be applied to the person
18 difference attested here. If the processing burden lies in holding the referent in memory, it
19 is expected that the contact effect be more prevalent in the third person, as reported in
20 this analysis. These data, however, are not consistent with the inclusion of interfaces as
21 the defining factor in cross-linguistic influence. Although subject expression has been
22 considered to lie at the syntax interface with discourse-pragmatics, it is also dependent on
23 other internal interfaces, such as the lexico-semantic interface (semantic verb type) or the

morphology-syntax interface (verb form ambiguity). In fact, bilinguals in this study did not differ from monolingual speakers in their rates of use of overt pronominal subjects in contexts with a referent different from the previous referent or in contexts with same referent both in first and third person singular. Thus, no loss of pragmatic content of overt pronominal subjects was attested in this study. In contrast, there were some differences between bilingual and monolingual speakers with respect to the variables verb type (at the lexico-semantic interface) and verb form ambiguity (at the interface with morphology). Thus, the data from both first and first person singular subject expression in these groups of Spanish-Catalan bilinguals is more consistent with the predictions of the VH. For these data, the IH predicted a loss of pragmatic content in the use of overt pronominal subjects while the VH predicted differences between monolingual and bilingual speakers in the lower ranking constraints (verb form ambiguity and verb type in our data). Both in first and in third person singular, bilinguals were comparable to monolinguals in their use of overt and null pronominal subjects with same referent and different referents. Thus, there was no evidence of loss of pragmatic content in the use of overt pronominal subjects. In contrast, differences between monolingual and bilingual speakers were reported with respect to the variables verb form ambiguity and verb type.

No differences in rates were attested across groups in the first person. In fact, the direction of effect was the same in all the groups. Nonetheless, some differences emerged in the variables that were significant for each of the groups, and as predicted by the VH, only in the lower ranked variables. Connect was returned as the highest ranked variable, with ranges from 30 to 39. Being such a highly ranked variable in Spanish, the VH anticipated this variable not to be so permeable to cross-linguistic influence, a result

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1 attested in the data. The other significant variable both in Catalan and Spanish, was
2 ambiguity. The two bilingual groups, however, returned this variable as non significant
3 and verb type as significant. These differences can also be explained as simplification, as
4 the lower ranked variables exhibit more variability and are, thus, predicted by the VH to
5 be affected by cross-linguistic influence, an effect attested in our data. The similarities
6 and differences between monolingual and bilingual speakers in this study, thus, were not
7 predicted by the IH.

8 In the third person, on the other hand, contact effects are stronger. In fact, significant
9 differences are reported in rates of overt pronominal subjects, the variable language
10 group is returned as significant in the regression, and differences in significant variables
11 and their rankings are attested across groups. In this case too, though, all the groups were
12 sensitive to the pragmatic condition of the distribution, as connect was significant and the
13 highest ranked constraint in all speaker groups. In third person, unlike in first person,
14 differences existed between Catalan and Spanish, Spanish had lower rates of overt
15 pronominal subjects than Catalan and was subject to more constraints (connect and verb
16 form ambiguity) while for Catalan only connect was significant. The bilingual groups
17 exhibited higher rates of overt pronominal subjects, even higher than the Catalan control
18 group, and, as was the case with the Catalan control group, subject expression was only
19 constrained by the variable connect. In this case, since differences existed between
20 Catalan and Spanish, the differences attested between monolingual and bilingual Spanish
21 could be due to convergence, simplification or a combination of both.

22 The VH, thus, is one more approach to examining and understanding differences
23 between bilingual and monolingual speech. In line with Thomason & Kaufman (1988) it

1 assumes differences in the outcomes depending on the intensity of language contact, an
2 idea that requires further testing and that was not evaluated in the present paper. It,
3 however, expands on previous attempts at explaining the limits on the effects of language
4 contact. It proposes that changes are not affecting specific structures because they lie at
5 specific interfaces. Such a proposal poses problems with identifying what interface a
6 structure belongs to. In addition, often times structures lie at more than one interface.
7 Instead, the current proposal is grounded in the notion of variation, which is measurable.
8 The VH predicts that categorical distributions are not affected by language contact, while
9 variable distributions may be affected by language contact. In this paper, the focus has
10 been on subject expression, with a comparison of contexts where the uses are more
11 predictable (as in same vs. different referent contexts) and those less predictable, as with
12 ambiguous vs. with unambiguous verb forms.

13 There is data from other studies that seem consistent with this proposal. For instance,
14 examining subject position in Spanish, several authors report more difficulty in the use of
15 postverbal subjects in Spanish in narrow focus, which is regulated by the syntax-
16 pragmatics interface but with a not near categorical distribution, than with unaccusative
17 subjects, which is regulated by the syntax-semantics interface and with a near categorical
18 distribution, in bilingual speakers of different language pairings (English-Spanish HSs:
19 Gómez Soler 2013, Prada Pérez & Pascual y Cabo 2012; English L1 Spanish L2ers:
20 Domínguez & Arche 2008, Hertel 2003; and Spanish-Catalan bilinguals: Prada Pérez
21 2010b). Future research should examine other structures and language pairings in order to
22 test this hypothesis further.

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1 Lastly, this proposal is compatible with several theoretical approaches to linguistics.
2 Although variation may pose some difficulty to generative syntactic analyses, it is
3 acknowledged as part of the grammar (Richards 2008: 114). Variation is an integrative
4 part of the grammar in functional approaches. From an acquisition point of view, it is
5 reasonable to posit that variable distributions are inconsistent in the input and, thus, may
6 pose more difficulty in acquisition (Papp 2000, Sorace 2000). Lastly, this approach is
7 also compatible with sociolinguistic studies on language contact, as external
8 sociolinguistic factors also play a role in the outcomes of contact between two or more
9 languages.

11 6. Conclusion

13 This paper introduces the Vulnerability Hypothesis (VH) as a proposal for examining
14 and understanding language contact. In particular it proposes a continuum of language
15 contact effects depending on the categoricity of the linguistic distribution, such that
16 variable distributions are more susceptible to cross-linguistic influence than categorical
17 distributions. Using subject expression in Spanish-Catalan bilinguals, the predictions of
18 the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace 2011) and those of the VH are contrasted. In particular,
19 this paper examines the use of null and overt pronominal subjects as constrained by the
20 variables connect, which lies at the syntax-pragmatics interface but is highly ranked in
21 Spanish, verb form ambiguity, which lies at the morphology-syntax interface and is low
22 ranked in Spanish, and verb type, which lies at the lexico-semantic interface with syntax
23 and is not significant in Spanish. The IH would predict that bilinguals differ from

1 monolinguals in their distribution of null and overt subjects more when it is constrained
2 by pragmatic factors (connect) than when it is constrained by morphology (ambiguity) or
3 lexico-semantics (verb type). The VH, on the contrary, would predict that bilinguals
4 differ from monolinguals in their distribution of null and overt pronominal subjects more
5 when it is constrained by lower ranked variables (verb type and ambiguity) than by
6 higher ranked variables (connect). The data from first and third person singular subjects
7 in Spanish is consistent with the predictions of the VH, as no difference was attested in
8 bilingual and monolingual speakers' use of overt and null subjects in contexts of same or
9 different referents. In contrasts, differences between monolingual and bilingual speakers
10 were attested with respect to their distribution across verb types and in the presence or
11 absence of morphological ambiguity.

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Table 1

Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a first or third person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

	Factor weight	%	N
CONNECT			
Different referent	0.66	27.4	2562
Same referent, different TAM	0.41	12.7	1275
Same referent, same TAM	0.34	8.5	1920
<i>Range</i>	32		
PERSON			
First singular	0.56	20.5	4466
Third singular	0.31	8.6	1291
<i>Range</i>	25		
AMBIGUITY			
Ambiguous	0.59	20.7	1365
Unambiguous	0.47	16.9	4392
<i>Range</i>	12		
VERB TYPE			
Mental	0.54	23.5	899
Stative	0.53	19.7	1069
External	0.48	15.9	3789
<i>Range</i>	6		
LANGUAGE GROUP			
Catalan L1 bilinguals	0.52	18.9	1580
Catalan control	0.52	18.6	1422

Spanish L1 bilinguals	0.52	19.1	1499
Spanish control	0.43	14.1	1256
Range	2		
Total N			5757
Corrected Mean			.152
Log likelihood			-2477.539
Significance			.027

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Table 2

Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a first person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

	Factor weight	%	N
CONNECT			
Different referent	0.65	20.6	616
Same referent, different TAM	0.42	14.6	152
Same referent, same TAM	0.34	10.4	147
<i>Range</i>	31		
AMBIGUITY			
Ambiguous	0.59	25.6	237
Unambiguous	0.48	19.1	678
<i>Range</i>	11		
VERB TYPE			
Mental	0.55	24.5	208
Stative	0.53	24.7	178
External	0.48	18.3	529
<i>Range</i>	7		
LANGUAGE GROUP			
Catalan L1 bilinguals	0.51	21.3	274
Catalan control	0.50	20.7	234
Spanish L1 bilinguals	0.49	19.9	253
Spanish control	0.49	19.8	154
<i>Range</i>	2		
Total N			4466

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Corrected Mean	.186
Log likelihood	-2127.748
Significance	.012

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Table 3

Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a third person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

	Factor weight	%	N
CONNECT			
Different referent	0.71	15.4	504
Same referent, different TAM	0.38	4.2	236
Same referent, same TAM	0.32	3.2	504
<i>Range</i>	39		
LANGUAGE GROUP			
Spanish L1 bilinguals	0.65	14.5	227
Catalan control	0.59	10.6	292
Catalan L1 bilinguals	0.51	8.2	294
Spanish control	0.37	4.8	478
<i>Range</i>	28		
VERB TYPE			
Stative	0.53	9.5	348
External	0.50	8.4	894
Mental	0.41	6.1	49
<i>Range</i>	12		
AMBIGUITY			
Ambiguous	0.56	10.4	441
Unambiguous	0.47	7.6	850
<i>Range</i>	9		
Total N			1291
Corrected Mean			.062

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Log likelihood	-340.105
Significance	.000

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Table 4

Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a first person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

Spanish control			
	Factor weight	%	N
CONNECT			
Different referent	0.65	29.3	389
Same referent, different TAM	0.40	12.6	175
Same referent, same TAM	0.30	8.4	214
Range	35		
AMBIGUITY			
Ambiguous	0.63	28.4	637
Unambiguous	0.47	17.9	141
Range	16		
VERB TYPE			
Mental	0.59	25.9	135
Stative	0.55	23.1	130
External	0.46	17.3	513
Range	13		
Total N			778

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Corrected Mean	.175
Log likelihood	-359.123
Significance	.007

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Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a third person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject for Spanish controls; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

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Log likelihood	-76.899
Significance	.019

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Table 6

Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a first person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

Catalan controls			
	Factor weight	%	N
CONNECT			
Different referent	0.62	27.9	545
Same referent, different TAM	0.46	18.3	289
Same referent, same TAM	0.31	9.8	296
<i>Range</i>	33		
AMBIGUITY			
Ambiguous	0.63	29.4	255
Unambiguous	0.46	18.2	875
<i>Range</i>	17		
VERB TYPE			
Stative	0.56	24.9	185
External	0.51	21.3	658
Mental	0.44	16.7	287
<i>Range</i>	12		
Total N			1130

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Corrected Mean	.191
Log likelihood	-547.111
Significance	.021

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Table 7

Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a third person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject for Catalan controls; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

Third person singular		Catalan controls	
	Factor weight	%	N
CONNECT			
Different referent	0.70	18.2	121
Same referent, different TAM	0.46	7.5	67
Same referent, same TAM	0.30	3.8	104
<i>Range</i>	40		
VERB TYPE			
Mental	0.72	23.1	13
Stative	0.50	10.6	94
External	0.48	9.7	185
<i>Range</i>	24		
AMBIGUITY			
Ambiguous	0.54	12.2	115
Unambiguous	0.47	9.6	177
<i>Range</i>	7		
Total N		292	
Corrected Mean		.087	
Log likelihood		-92.110	
Significance		.002	

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Table 8¹

Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a first person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

Spanish L1 bilinguals			
	Factor weight	%	N
CONNECT			
Different referent	0.68	32.2	513
Same referent, different TAM	0.42	13.5	462
Same referent, same TAM	0.35	10.4	462
<i>Range</i>	33		
VERB TYPE			
Mental	0.58	28.2	211
Stative	0.55	24.6	188
External	0.47	17.0	873
<i>Range</i>	11		
AMBIGUITY			
Ambiguous	0.54	22.9	280
Unambiguous	0.49	19.1	992
<i>Range</i>	5		

¹ The variable age shows evidence of collinearity as the factor weights and percentages do not correspond. We leave them as three groups in this analysis for comparisons across ages. In Author (2015) the two youngest groups, who seem to behave similarly and have had access to education in Catalan, were merged into a single group.

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Total N	1272
Corrected Mean	.178
Log likelihood	-590.402
Significance	.040

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Table 9

Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a third person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject for Spanish L1 bilinguals; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

	Factor weight	%	N
CONNECT			
Different referent	0.66	22.5	111
Same referent, different TAM	0.32	6.5	31
Same referent, same TAM	0.35	7.1	85
<i>Range</i>	61		
VERB TYPE			
Stative	0.53	16.9	77
External	0.48	14.1	142
Mental	N/A	0	8
<i>Range</i>	5		
AMBIGUITY			
Ambiguous	0.51	15.4	78
Unambiguous	0.50	14.1	149
<i>Range</i>	1		
Total N			227
Corrected Mean			.132
Log likelihood			-87.171
Significance			.006

Table 10: First person singular subject expression in Catalan-dominant bilinguals

Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a first person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

	Factor weight	%	N
CONNECT			
Different referent	0.66	32.8	564
Same referent, different TAM	0.39	13.3	278
Same referent, same TAM	0.36	11.7	444
Range	30		
VERB TYPE			
Mental	0.58	30.0	240
Stative	0.57	25.6	195
External	0.46	17.9	851
Range	12		
AMBIGUITY			
Ambiguous	0.54	23.4	248
Unambiguous	0.49	20.8	1038
Range	5		
Total N			1286
Corrected Mean			.193
Log likelihood			-621.557
Significance			.010

Table 11: Third person singular subject expression in Catalan-dominant bilinguals

Multivariate regression analysis of the contribution of internal and external factors to the probability of producing a third person singular overt pronominal subject vs. a null subject for Spanish L1 bilinguals; factor groups selected as significant in gray background

	Factor weight	%	N
CONNECT			
Different referent	0.72	15.0	120
Same referent, different TAM	0.46	5.5	55
Same referent, same TAM	0.28	2.5	119
Range	46		
AMBIGUITY			
Ambiguous	0.51	8.8	107
Unambiguous	0.49	8.2	187
Range	2		
VERB TYPE			
Stative	0.51	8.6	70
External	0.50	8.3	216
Mental	N/A	0	8
Range	1		
Total N			294
Corrected Mean			.064
Log likelihood			-75.856
Significance			.002