

La intercomprensión con el español y el portugués en el contexto de inmigración en los servicios públicos

Intercomprehension with Spanish and Portuguese in the context of immigration in the public services.

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1. Resumen

A la vez que el mundo en el que vivimos evoluciona y se conecta más, la necesidad de que nuestra comunicación intercultural evolucione también es evidente. Los ya numerosos idiomas que se hablan en el mundo han evolucionado en diferentes dialectos, acentos, y culturas, pero una cosa sigue siendo la misma: la necesidad de comunicarse a través de los idiomas, no solo socialmente, sino también para facilitar las conversaciones y la comunicación en los servicios públicos, como el ámbito sanitario, jurídico, o administrativo. Si bien estos problemas son cada vez más frecuentes en los ámbitos antes mencionados, el estudio se centrará más precisamente en el ámbito jurídico, y más concretamente, en la inmigración. Cuando los países reciben inmigrantes que no hablan el idioma nativo del país, especialmente en grupos grandes, la mera idea de tener suficientes traductores u intérpretes, o todos los documentos requeridos ya traducidos a la lengua necesaria es bastante intimidante. Sin embargo, una nueva teoría, la intercomprensión, podría proporcionar una solución a este problema. La intercomprensión es la creencia de que las personas que hablan dos idiomas diferentes, pero relacionados, pueden entenderse entre sí debido a una variedad de factores y a través de todos los factores que pueden afectarla, la intercomprensión funciona mejor entre los idiomas de la misma familia. Ya se sabe que los idiomas se agrupan en familias que definen sus raíces; de forma similar, la mayoría sabe que se conectan estos idiomas, ya sea en las palabras de sonido similar, la estructura similar, o la pronunciación. El grado de similitud de un idioma a otro idioma en la misma familia depende de muchos aspectos, pero cuando se tiene en cuenta que las lenguas tienen una conexión y en cierta medida existe una inteligibilidad mutua, puede haber una manera de aliviar la carga de los traductores e intérpretes.

En una familia de lenguas, las lenguas romances, son bastante similares, y es un ejemplo perfecto de dónde la intercomprensión podría tener lugar. Más concretamente, el español y el portugués son dos idiomas en los que la intercomprensión no solo es una perspectiva viable pero el futuro, sino que ya se consideran comprensibles entre sí en muchos campos. Dada su historia vinculada en Europa y la proximidad de los países en los que se hablan los idiomas, tales como los países latinoamericanos y Brasil y España y Portugal, estos dos se estudiarán en conexión entre sí para ver si hay suficiente inteligibilidad mutua para eliminar el uso de un traductor u intérprete en un entorno de inmigración. Para evaluar esto, el estudio utilizó hablantes nativos del español y el portugués, principalmente de España y el Brasil, respectivamente, para leer un texto y escuchar a una grabación, completamente en el otro idioma de estudio, y luego responder a preguntas de comprensión. Los textos y las grabaciones se sacaron directamente de la embajada de cada país y trataron sobre los requisitos de inmigración y residencia, un tema del que los inmigrantes se ocupaban con frecuencia. Antes de completar las tareas, se les pedía que rellenaran información sobre sus antecedentes que, además de recoger información básica de identificación, recogía datos sobre sus experiencias con el otro idioma estudiado y otros idiomas en general. De manera general, los hablantes del portugués desempeñaron mejor que los hablantes hispanohablantes, y en todas partes, los participantes desempeñaron mejor en la parte de comprensión oral. Entre otras conclusiones de la información de identificación, el grupo de participantes que, en general, tuvo un mejor desempeño fue el que no vive actualmente en España o en Brasil. Lo que queda de los resultados se desglosará en el texto, así como la conclusión de que el reemplazo de los traductores y intérpretes no se ve como una solución viable, pero en cambio, la formación de traductores e intérpretes en el campo de intercomprensión para llegar a más personas e idiomas puede ser el mejor camino hacia el éxito.

Palabras claves: intercomprensión, comunicación, lingüística, Interpretación jurídica/judicial, Lingüística y T&I/mediación

2. Abstract

As the world in which we live evolves and becomes more connected, the need for our intercultural communication to evolve as well is clear. The already numerous languages spoken in the world have evolved into different dialects, accents, and cultures, but one thing remains the same: people need to communicate despite these languages, not just socially, but also to facilitate conversations and communication in necessary services, such as medical, legal, or administrative services. While these problems are becoming increasingly prevalent in both medical and legal environments, this study will focus more precisely on the legal environment, and even more specifically, immigration. When countries receive immigrants, who do not speak the native language of that country, especially in big groups, the very thought of having enough interpreters or translators, or documents already translated into any language possible is quite daunting. However, a new theory, intercomprehension, could provide a solution to this growing problem. Intercomprehension is the belief that people who speak two different, but related languages can understand each other due to a variety of factors and across all the factors that can affect it, intercomprehension works best between languages of the same family. It is already known that languages are grouped into families that define how these languages came to be and their roots; similarly, most are aware that these languages are connected, be it in similar sounding words, grammatical structure, or pronunciation. How similar a language is to another in its family depends on many things, but when looking taking into consideration the languages that are connected in some way and seem mutually intelligible, there could be a way to alleviate the burden on the translators and interpreters.

In one language family, the Romance language family, the languages are quite similar, and it is a perfect example of where intercomprehension could come into effect. More specifically, Spanish and Portuguese are two languages where intercomprehension is not only a viable prospect for the future but are already seen to be comprehensible between each other in many fields. Given their linked history in Europe, and the close proximity of countries that speak the languages, such as Latin American countries and Brazil and Spain and Portugal, these two languages will be studied in connection with each other to see if there is enough mutual intelligibility to eliminate the use of a translator or an interpreter in an immigration setting. To measure this, this study used native Spanish and Portuguese speakers, primarily from Spain and Brazil, respectively, to read a text and listen to a recording, both completely in the other language, and then answer comprehension questions. The texts and the recordings were taken directly from the respective country's embassy and dealt with common immigration and residence requirements; in other words, a topic that immigrants arriving in Spain or Brazil would frequently deal with. Before completing either task, they were asked to fill out a background information section that, as well as collecting basic identifying information, collected data about their experience with the other language studied and other languages spoken. In general, the Portuguese speakers performed better than the Spanish speakers, and all-around the participants scored better on the oral comprehension section. Among other results that were taken from the identifying information provided, the group of participants that, across the board, performed the best, were those who currently do not live in Spain or Brazil. The rest of the results will be broken-down in the text, as well as the final conclusion that indicates that replacing translators and interpreters is not seen as a viable solution, but instead training translators and interpreters to work with intercomprehension may be the best avenue to success.

Key words: intercomprehension, communication, linguistics, legal interpretation, T&I mediation and linguistics

3. Personal Justification

There are various factors that influenced my decision to study intercomprehension and moreover, to choose Spanish and Portuguese, despite being raised monolingual speaking English, and not being introduced to a foreign language until age twelve. As a language learner of both Spanish and Portuguese, I have always been struck by the comparisons and similarities between the two; and those similarities are actually what allowed me to become trilingual. I had was years into my own Spanish education before I was introduced to Portuguese and I managed to pick up the Portuguese language, and specifically the Brazilian dialect, through purely spending time in Brazil and using the comparison I could make with the Spanish knowledge I already had. I spent summers in Brazil visiting a friend and when I first arrived, with no Portuguese knowledge, I would simply speak Spanish and was surprised at how well I was understood, and I could understand the other person speaking Portuguese. As my time there continued and I developed an interest in the language, one thing I commonly did was look for signs or written text and attempt to decipher the meaning based on the Spanish I knew; any words I did not know I would then translate to English and store them in my head. Through this, although I did not yet know what intercomprehension was, I was indirectly using it and for me, it truly worked. I have since expanded my knowledge through more fundamental education, but the link between the two languages in my head will always exist.

Moreover, growing up in a place with both a large Brazilian and Latin American community, I was constantly surrounded by people who communicated in different languages. I heard people around me talking in different languages but communicating all the same. As I began my own studies into linguistics and had my own experience, first through intercomprehension and then by using intercomprehension to teach myself Portuguese, the question of actually how mutually intelligible these two languages were constantly crossed my mind. When I worked as an interpreter in an urgent care center after receiving my undergraduate degree in the United States in my hometown, the need for both Spanish and Portuguese interpreters was extremely high and although there were interpreters who could interpret for both, such as myself, frequently the demand was too high and an interpreter for the other language was used. Although this worked and the patient was able to be helped, it made me wonder about not just the effectiveness of this, but also the degree to which this could be employed in other situations. Constantly staffing enough interpreters and providing translated documents in each language was not only hard but often unrealistic and led to many problems within the urgent care center.

While allowing translators and interpreters to cover languages that might not be their language of work may seem like an easy solution, the promise to provide quality work, especially in the public services, is extremely important. It might be easier to have Spanish interpreters work with Portuguese speakers, or vice versa, but can intercomprehension function to the point that there are no risks this? As professionals within the public service, it is our job to ensure that quality work is provided, and this study seeks to find out if intercomprehension give just that.

4. Introducción

El mundo en el que vivimos hoy es uno donde el uso de muchos idiomas es indiscutible. Lo que era un problema solo dentro del ámbito diplomático y durante viajes ahora está infiltrándose en la vida cotidiana: entender a quienes que no hablan nuestro idioma. Como el mundo está siendo más multicultural que antes, la necesidad de dar la bienvenida a culturas y tradiciones nuevas a nuestras vidas, pero también prepararnos para la comunicación intercultural, es clara. Sin embargo, esperar que la todas las personas del mundo se adquieran fluidez en o por lo menos una proficiencia en todos los idiomas del mundo es poco realista – el mero número de idiomas que existen haría que la tarea sea inalcanzable. Aún tratando de aprender los idiomas a su alrededor esto resulta en una tarea desalentadora, aunque en algunos casos, pueda existir un aspecto que apoyaría el aprendizaje. Muchos de los idiomas del mundo están relacionados y conectados de alguna manera, ya sea que vengan de una lengua antigua o que exista el intercambio de palabras o conceptos dentro de unos idiomas. Esta conexión es la clave a la comunicación intercultural hoy en día y se lleva a cabo a través de la intercomprensión. Intercomprensión, como se define por Thijs y Zeevaert “*is a form of plurilingual communication across languages of the same family, also known as polyglot dialogue or receptive multilingualism, to explain the phenomenon of how speakers of different, but related languages communicate through the percentage of shared vocabulary, structures, and cultural content that makes it possible to extract meaning.*” (Zeevaert, L., & Thijs, J. D. T., 2007) Con esta definición, podemos abrir la puerta a discutir un fenómeno cada vez más popular que puede explicar cómo los hablantes de diferentes, pero relacionados idiomas, pueden comunicarse y también explorar cómo el mundo puede beneficiarse del uso de la intercomprensión en nuestras vidas cotidianas.

El uso mismo de la intercomprensión admite que los idiomas están conectados y, por lo tanto, hay vínculos entre idiomas que ayudan en la conexión entre ellos y apoyan el proceso de aprendizaje. Usando el conocimiento previo de lenguas extranjeras y la capacidad de entender mensajes, ya sea el lenguaje corporal o las palabras de otro idioma, la intercomprensión es un instinto humano común y sigue más adelante a través de las conexiones que ya existen entre idiomas de la misma familia. El uso y el desarrollo de las habilidades de intercomprensión pueden introducir muchas oportunidades nuevas y mejorar el multilingüismo en todo el mundo. Además, la intercomprensión puede facilitar el aprendizaje de lenguas; de hecho, la investigación detrás del éxito es tan fuerte que muchas universidades y lingüistas están desarrollando o ya han desarrollado programas de idiomas para hablantes de un idioma parecido, tales como los cursos de italiano para hablantes de español que existen en California State University, Long Beach, que utilizan las similitudes entre el italiano y el español para crear un curso diseñado para que los estudiantes puedan avanzar a un ritmo mucho más rápido (Donato, C., & Pasquarelli-Gascon, V., 2015). De manera similar, Georgetown University en Washington, D.C. tiene un curso del portugués para hablantes de español que elimina la enseñanza de los aspectos que existen en ambos idiomas para centrarse en las diferencias, lo cual permite a los estudiantes acelerar su aprendizaje (Department of Spanish and Portuguese, 2020). Mientras ambos cursos, y todos los cursos parecidos que existen tienen el fin de que los estudiantes alcancen la fluidez en los dos idiomas, la utilización de intercomprensión es imprescindible para el éxito del aprendizaje de las lenguas. Las características fundamentales que definen intercomprensión se explorarán a continuación, pero la idea principal es que, en los últimos años, el estudio y la investigación de intercomprensión se han ampliado, no solo para entenderla, sino para ver

cómo se puede usar para mejorar la comunicación intercultural (Donato, C., & Pasquarelli-Gascon, V., 2015).

Mientras que tenemos una gran variedad de idiomas en el mundo y la intercomprensión sigue desarrollándose, todavía existe una ausencia de comunicación intercultural. La solución sencilla para este problema es la utilización de traductores e intérpretes, que son personas formadas que pueden facilitar la transmisión del texto escrito o la palabra oral a la otra parte. Sin duda, se utilizan los traductores e intérpretes, pero como aumentan la variedad y las combinaciones posibles de lenguas, así como la necesidad para emplear únicamente traductores e intérpretes debidamente formados también aumenta, muchos gobiernos y administraciones se encuentran con una tarea difícil. También existe el deseo común de tener la traducción hecha por un hablante nativo para asegurarse de un obtener un producto final más fiel y preciso, lo cual puede ser cada vez más difícil de proporcionar en el caso de que aumente el número de idiomas en uso, por no mencionar la idea poco realista de tener traductores e intérpretes listos para cualquier combinación de idiomas que pudiera surgir. En estos servicios públicos, la utilización de traductores e intérpretes es común, pero a medida que el mundo se vuelve más diverso y la variedad de idiomas requeridos crece, la dependencia de traductores e intérpretes presenciales parece casi imposible. El uso de la interpretación telefónica por teléfono, cuando se llama a un intérprete por teléfono desde una ubicación secundaria para facilitar la conversación, así como la traducción de retransmisión, cuando se traduce un documento de idioma A hacia idioma B, que por lo general es una lengua común, y después hacia el idioma C, es bastante exhaustiva y también plantea problemas graves a la eficacia de la comunicación. Al no estar en la sala, un intérprete puede perder mucha de la comunicación no verbal que es tan imprescindible a una conversación y un documento traducido doblemente también podría perder fácilmente algún significado.

Dadas las conexiones comunes de muchos idiomas que se remontan a sus raíces y que se pueden entender mutuamente, como crece el estudio de intercomprensión, también ha empezado a explorarse la posibilidad de que se podría usar la intercomprensión para aliviar la carga de los traductores e intérpretes y de que los gobiernos proporcionen un traductor o intérprete de cada combinación. Si se demuestra que tiene éxito, incluso si se trata de algunos pares de idiomas, el efecto que tendría tanto en la traducción como en la interpretación en los servicios públicos y más allá sería bienvenido. No obstante, el proceso de determinar el posible éxito de intercomprensión se complica debido al constante cambio y evolución de los idiomas, y a las variaciones que existen dentro de cada uno. Los idiomas están llenos de incoherencias, dialectos, acentos, jerga, y una variedad de otras cosas que hacen que su comprensión sea un desafío incluso para un hablante nativo o un bilingüe, y mucho menos para alguien que no ha estudiado el idioma extensamente. Sin embargo, incluso con estos desafíos, la posibilidad de que la intercomprensión sea ampliamente utilizada es prometedora, y este estudio trata de examinar su uso en la combinación en el español y el portugués.

Como ejemplo, la Unión Europea es una organización donde la gran variedad de idiomas y materiales producidos ha despertado un interés por la intercomprensión y su uso posible. Este interés recién descubierto trata de proporcionar un alivio a los servicios de intercomprensión que tienen la responsabilidad de los veintitrés idiomas de la Unión Europea y utilizan la intercomprensión para aligerar la carga que viene con una demanda tan alta para la traducción (Directorate-General for Translation, 2013). François Grin, el autor de *Intercompréhension, efficience et étiqueté*, proporcionó una solución al problema que

enfrenta la Unión Europea a través de la utilización para agrupar idiomas parecidos y en lugar de traducir documentos hacia todos los veintitrés idiomas, una traducción se realizaría en solo uno de los idiomas de cada grupo. Mientras intercomprensión es más conocida por su utilización oral, las ventajas en el mundo escrito podrían ser de gran apoyo a organizaciones e instituciones que tienen que llegar a audiencias amplias y globales (Grin, F., 2008).

Bajo la propuesta de Grin, los documentos que se producen para los ciudadanos de la Unión Europea para uso fuera de la organización seguirían estando traducidos a todos los veintitrés idiomas para asegurarse de que todos pueden recibir los materiales de la UE; sin embargo, el cambio vendría en la comunicación interna y por eso, Grin ofrece dos versiones de la propuesta para abordar la realidad de la inteligibilidad mutua, la versión fuerte y la versión débil. Con la versión fuerte, la cual es, sin duda, la más difícil de imaginar como una realidad, todos los idiomas de una misma familia se agrupan, incluso si no son mutuamente comprensibles, tales como el francés y el rumano o el sueco y el alemán. No obstante, en la versión débil, las familias de idiomas se descomponen para reflejar de forma más práctica la realidad de intercomprensión en los doce grupos siguientes: español, francés, italiano y portugués; rumano; alemán, inglés y holandés; danés y sueco; polaco, checo y eslovaco; búlgaro y esloveno; letón y lituano; irlandés; griego; estonio y finlandés; húngaro; maltés. Bajo la suposición de que todas las lenguas dentro de un grupo son mutuamente inteligibles, la responsabilidad de traducción disminuiría porque las traducciones se realizarían en solo uno de los idiomas de cada grupo (Grin, F., 2008). Si se realizan las traducciones de todas las combinaciones posibles de la Unión Europea, existen 503 posibilidades; cuando la versión débil de la propuesta entra en vigor, el número cae a 253, reduciéndolo en un 50% (Directorate-General for Translation, 2013).

Por supuesto, una propuesta así necesitaría organización y formación para poder llevarla a cabo y hay muchos factores que afectan el éxito de este tipo de formación. Por ejemplo, si un hablante búlgaro debe ser formado para entender el esloveno, solo se exigiría una lengua adicional para completar el grupo; un hablante italiano tendría ser formado en español, portugués, y francés. Además, la complejidad y la duración de la formación depende de la relación entre los idiomas; un hablante inglés recibiendo formación en el alemán requeriría mucho más tiempo que un hablante español formándose en el italiano. El uso de un sistema así facilitaría la responsabilidad de los traductores y ahorraría a la Unión Europea una suma considerable de dinero (Grin, F., 2008). Tal plan entre en vigor tomaría mucho en tener lugar en la UE, dada la alta cantidad de formación y organización requeridas pero la idea misma es fascinante y podría cambiar el mundo lingüístico. Aparte de contratando traductores autónomos o empresas de traducción, la forma en que funciona la Unión Europea actualmente tiene cuatro métodos: un traductor traduce hacia su idioma nativo desde su segundo idioma, un traductor traduce desde su idioma nativo hacia su segundo idioma; un traductor traduce un documento hacia una lengua de retransmisión, y otro traductor traduce el documento ya traducido hacia la lengua meta, la cual, por lo general, es un idioma poco común, y finalmente, un traductor traduce a/de idiomas que no son su idioma nativo. Aunque los veintitrés idiomas de la Unión Europea incluyen unos cuantos idiomas no comunes, la Unión Europea contrata suficiente traductores para trabajar con todos los idiomas que se necesitan (Directorate-General for Translation, 2013).

Dado que los traductores de la Unión Europea ya trabajan en una amplia variedad de idiomas cada día, e incluso no trabajan con sus combinaciones principales, parece que el cambio a un uso más aplicado de intercomprensión podría ser realmente útil. La mayoría de los traductores ya la usan; cuando se distribuyó una encuesta a los departamentos de

traducción de español, sueco, finlandés, y portugués en 2011, la mayoría de los traductores indicaron que utilizan la intercomprensión todos los días, por lo general cuando utilizan versiones de textos ya traducidos a otros idiomas como referencia. Con el hecho que los traductores ya emplean la intercomprensión a diario, la formación tanto en la intercomprensión como en otros idiomas podría aliviar la carga de los traductores y la enorme variedad combinaciones posibles requeridos (Directorate-General for Translation, 2013).

Aunque la Unión Europea es solo un ejemplo a gran escala en el que se podría utilizar la intercomprensión, su utilidad va más allá de lo que sucede en los entornos cotidianos de estar expuesto a diferentes idiomas (Directorate-General for Translation, 2013). Existen muchos lugares en los que conocer o ser capaz de entender otro idioma podría estar útil, y también existen casos en los que no solo es útil, sino necesario. A medida que la inmigración y el movimiento en todo el mundo siguen creciendo y expandiéndose, muchos servicios públicos dentro de los gobiernos se ven sometidos a una presión continua para que proporcionen servicios de traducción y/u interpretación en muchos idiomas para atender al gran número de inmigrantes que llegan de diversos lugares y que hablan una variedad aún mayor de idiomas. Y estas situaciones no se limitan a la llegada de los inmigrantes; una vez que se hayan convertido en miembros de la sociedad y empiezan a requerir los mismos servicios de los ciudadanos, existe una demanda de apoyo lingüístico y cultural tanto en las situaciones de inmigración como en los hospitales, servicios de administración, y otros lugares que ahora se ven presionados para cumplir con estas demandas cada vez mayores.

Mientras las ventajas de la intercomprensión parecen numerosas y podrían tener un gran impacto en los servicios públicos en general, hay muchas preocupaciones que deben tenerse en cuenta. Los numerosos factores que afectan a su utilización y viabilidad en una situación realista son varios, y suponer que funcionaría o poner demasiado confianza en ella podría ser engañoso. Los falsos cognados, diferentes acentos, y diferentes estructuras gramaticales son solo algunos de los numerosos factores que hacen que la intercomprensión sea menos eficaz, u incluso imposible, y deben recordarse también al evaluar su utilidad. Si, por ejemplo, funcionara la intercomprensión con personas que tienen experiencia en otros idiomas ¿cómo se mediría y trataría eso cuando se soliciten servicios de traducción y/o interpretación? Además, con idiomas que parecen tan similares, ¿habría una dependencia excesiva de la capacidad de entender al otro, lo que daría lugar a circunstancias no deseados, tales como malentendidos o significados mal interpretados? Las posibilidades de que produzcan errores y fallos en la intercomprensión son amplias, e ignorarlas sería un mal servicio a los que necesitan los servicios proporcionados. Este estudio, sin embargo, busca probar la comprensión de hablantes de español y portugués con el otro idioma y de determinar si, incluso cuando se consideren estos desafíos, tales como falsos cognados y el exceso de confianza, la intercomprensión se puede utilizar en los servicios públicos para aliviar la carga de traductores e intérpretes y encontrar una solución plausible a un problema cada vez mayor. (Berthele, R., 2012).

Como son dos idiomas que se comparan frecuentemente por sus similitudes, este estudio se centrará en el dialecto castellano de español (de España) y el dialecto brasileño de portugués para ver si, en una situación en la que llega un inmigrante de España o Brasil al país opuesto, se podría utilizar la intercomprensión para eliminar la necesidad de un traductor u intérprete. Como ya se ha mencionado, esta es solo una de las varias situaciones en que se podría utilizar la intercomprensión, pero se eligió debido a la frecuente necesidad de los traductores e intérpretes en la frontera. El uso más común de la intercomprensión se refiere a la comunicación oral entre dos hablantes de idiomas diferentes, pero la comunicación

escrita también se incluirá en este estudio para replicar la necesidad de que los extranjeros entiendan los documentos, folletos, o formularios a su llegada. En este estudio, se pedirá a los participantes que lean un texto de 460 palabras sobre el proceso de residencia en el otro país y respondan a cinco preguntas sobre el tema, a lo que seguirá una grabación de un hablante nativo del otro idioma de trabajo en la que se leerá información sobre la residencia, sus requisitos y otras cinco preguntas para que sean respondidas. El estudio empieza con una parte en la que se recogerán los datos personales, lo cual ayudará proporcionar información al analizar los resultados.

A pesar de que la investigación relacionada con la intercomprensión aún no ha sido desarrollada completamente, la relación entre el español y el portugués se ha estudiado ampliamente. Basados en la información que se ha investigado, la principal creencia es que, a un nivel muy general, los hablantes de portugués tienen más facilidad para entender el español que los hispanohablantes tienen con el portugués. Por lo tanto, se cree en este estudio que los hablantes de portugués tendrán un mejor desempeño en general, y que ambos grupos de participantes tendrán más éxito en la comprensión lectora que en la comprensión oral. Además, se espera que los participantes que obtengan mejores resultados de los dos grupos sean los que tengan más experiencia con el otro idioma, en cualquier forma, y quienes hablen más idiomas también obtendrán mejores resultados en la encuesta. En cuanto al éxito en toda la encuesta, sin embargo, se cree que los participantes entenderán en general por lo menos el 75% del material de ambas secciones, lo que demostraría que la intercomprensión se podría utilizar para limitar el número de traductores o intérpretes requeridos.

5. Theoretical Framework

According to the European Union, it is important to note that intercomprehension is only used without intentional study or extraordinary force. In other words, intercomprehension is used when those who will use it have no training or experience with the other language, and only use what they already have in their minds (Donato, C., & Pasquarelli-Gascon, V., 2015). Intercomprehension was first used in 1913 when Jules Ronjat tried to provide a scientific explanation for the high levels of multilingualism in Europe before World War I. He defined it as, like the definitions of 1 and the European Union, the ability of a person to understand another person speaking in a dialect or related language (Directorate-General for Translation, 2013).

If the two languages were Swedish and Italian, the people conversing would have to be bilingual. These languages are quite different and effective communication would be impossible without prior knowledge of the other language. However, if they were speaking Swedish and Danish, mutual intelligibility is clear. When language A is understood by language B, but B is not intelligible to A, these are classified as distinct languages. Even though they are two different languages, they are sufficiently related so that intercomprehension is possible. In this case, the speaker of language A would be passively bilingual because he can adequately understand B (Sankoff, G., 1980).

To come to these conclusions and decide the outside factors that affect intercomprehension and its success, we will be using some previously completed case studies as reference points. A seminal study was conducted in New Guinea between 1966 and 1968. During this time, the researcher in question collected quantitative data on the passive bilingualism of the residents of three villages. Despite being located in the same country and next door to one another, these three villages speak different dialects of the Buang language. The researcher recorded members of each community telling a story which was then shown to members of the other two villages. Once the recording was finished, there were two questions to be answered. In addition to the questions that sought to evaluate the comprehension of the story, the researcher stopped the testing process to ask for definitions of certain vocabulary words. By stopping them in the middle of the sentence, this allowed the participants to use the context and not try to recall them later while answering the questions (Sankoff, G., 1980).

In the end, one village had a much higher rate of intercomprehension, despite being the dialect that was linguistically more separated from the other two. This conclusion brings to light an important point surrounding intercomprehension – the efficiency of information transfer is not solely related to the degree of linguistic similarity. The village that had the higher rate was located in a place that forced frequent travel through the other two villages on a regular basis, therefore increasing the rate of exposure with the other two languages. Therefore, we learn that intercomprehension's success is highly correlated with exposure, not just linguistic similarity (Sankoff, G., 1980).

Before continuing with examples of intercomprehension and its usefulness, it is important to indicate some characteristics and rules that come with the use of it. The aim of intercomprehension is not to fully understand the other person, but to understand the essence of the other person and it is common for those who use intercomprehension to already have one or two foreign languages. There are studies that link the rapid success of learning a new language when the learner already is fluent in another language in the same family. Intercomprehension can also be asymmetrical, as in this study, meaning that the speaker of

language A can understand language B better than the speaker of language B can understand language A. In addition, to use intercomprehension, three factors have to be taken into account (Directorate-General for Translation, 2013).

First, the person who will benefit from intercomprehension must be aware of it. This means that they must keep their minds open to the fact that they will be communicating using two distinct languages, meaning the awareness plays a key role in the ability of the person to understand. For example, if an Italian speaking their native tongue to a Spaniard has it in their head that they will not be able to understand the other, this mental block will inhibit intercomprehension from working. However, if they are aware of the concept and the possibility, to whatever extent, there is a higher possibility of success. Second, ideological attitudes can have a large effect on the effectiveness of intercomprehension. If there are negative attitudes or ideologies toward a certain language, this can block comprehension. Additionally, the more equal two languages are in both number of speakers and attitudes, the greater intercomprehension will be. Lastly, as previously referenced, the experience and exposure that a person has had to the other language can have a very large effect on the effectiveness of intercomprehension. If someone is frequently exposed to another language at work or at school, for example, they will have a better chance of being passively able to understand that language later on.

Intercomprehension formerly referred solely to effective communication between dialects, but now different languages are included in that definition. What different dialects or languages mean depends very much on a variety of factors, such as the cultural or political situation, but we shall refer here to the established rules of the European Union. The following language combinations are examples of where intercomprehension can be used effectively: in the Turkish-speaking countries of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, with Arabic in Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, with the indigenous languages of the American Indians, in the Nordic countries with Danish, Norwegian or Swedish, and the African countries that have different dialects/languages within their own countries. While intercomprehension may extend beyond languages of the same family in some cases, it is common within the same family. Of course, Romance languages are also included in this group - French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Romanian (Directorate-General for Translation, 2013).

The romance languages are defined as those that have evolved from Latin over the course of history to become what they are today. Although these five languages are typically considered to be similar and related and, to some extent, they are, some of them are certainly more similar and comparable than others. Spanish and Italian are generally considered to be the most closely related to Latin, but in a world like today, where there are so many different dialects and accents, this is nearly impossible to measure. However, when talking about intercomprehension between the romance languages, Spanish and Portuguese seem to always be at the top of everyone's list. These two related and similar languages create a number of interesting points from which to pull to discuss intercomprehension (Malkiel, Y., 1978).

Of course, when comparing the similarities between Spanish and Portuguese, it is important to keep in the mind the roots of both languages. The languages that are known today have not always been like this; the Portuguese of today is much more closely related to old Spanish instead of the Modern Spanish that is more familiar today (Beardsley, W., 1953). The previous connections between the languages contribute to the similarities that are seen today, and these similarities allow intercomprehension to work between the two languages. Before the 17th century, the two languages were much more similar in

morphology, syntax, the lexicon, and phonetics, among other things. They shared more cultural aspects as well, with many Portuguese writers and playwrights publishing their work in Spanish and Pedro Álvares Cabral, the Portuguese explorer who discovered Brazil, wrote his letter back to Europe about his discoveries in Spanish. Leading up to the 17th century, the two countries, although distinct, did not have political conflicts, and this contributed to a large amount of collaboration between the two nations (De Dios, Á., 2017).

Many Portuguese scholars were trained at the Universidad de Salamanca in Spain and in general, texts from religious leaders and plays in Portugal were composed in Spanish, although poetry was fairly distributed between the two. The two kingdoms shared both royal and noble marriages, so not only the language and culture were shared between the countries, in both the royal families and the lower class, but hobbies and activities as well. These close contacts in family across classes facilitated the similarities between the countries. So many things were written in Spanish originally and then translated into Portuguese later on that there were even cases where a text that was first written in Portuguese and then translated into Spanish was translated back into Portuguese because it was assumed that the important texts were written first in Spanish (Woolard, K., 2004)..

Spanish was much more known and renowned elsewhere in Europe and therefore was used more frequently in Europe. Translations from Spanish into Portuguese were uncommon despite the regular transfer of materials and information despite the two countries; *Don Quijote* was not translated into Portuguese for the first time until 200 years after it was written in 1794. The one area that was commonly translated into Portuguese from Spanish was spiritual literature, however.

However, as political turmoil increased and conflicts such as the Seven Years War, the Spanish-Portuguese War, and the War of Spanish Succession increased the divide between the two nations. As previously discussed, linguistic ideologies are at the root not only about words and grammatical structures. Instead, linguistic ideologies are about community, a sense of a nation, and humanity. A longstanding argument dating the ancient times has been whether Spanish came from the Latin or God at the Tower of Babel – this argument triggered some important findings relating to the development of languages. Bernardo Aldrete was one scholar that argued how Spanish evolved from Latin and viewed languages as changeable, meaning that they could change over time to reflect new social norms and customs and, of course, loyalties. An opponent to this argument disagreed, saying that the languages that exist were those given by God and anything that comes or changes from those said languages are simply derivatives and not legitimate languages. Aldrete, however, recognized the importance of social influence and changes on a language, and used the example of the Moors and their descendants as an example of assimilation to a language. The Moors were able to completely adapt and assimilate to not only the Castilian culture of the time, but also the language and seamlessly pick up the language, becoming linguistically engrained in the culture, proving that culture and language are in fact permeable and subject to change (Woolard, K., 2004).

All languages change, including Spanish and Portuguese. Subject to the pressures of the evolving sociocultural and geopolitical spheres around them, the languages have separated further since the days of sharing so much. However, there are still a number of comparisons that will be expanded upon in the next section. Portuguese is spoken by around 170 million people worldwide and the official language of seven countries: Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Mozambique and the co-official language of East Timor, Equatorial Guinea. Portuguese, the sixth most natively spoken

language in the world, is uniquely spread across the globe, holding the role of official languages in South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Spanish, in contrast, boasts over 483 million native speakers (mainly in Europe and South/Central America) which makes it the second most spoken language in the world and the official language in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela (Abreu, M., 1982).

Despite having various differences in the number of speakers and countries where it is present, these two languages are unarguably similar, and, because of their geographic proximity in both Europe and the Americas, frequently in contact with the other. The 1986 World Cup, hosted in Mexico, was held in Spanish and therefore players and coaches were interviewed in Spanish with the games broadcast as well in Spanish. TV Globo, one of the biggest networks in Brazil, provided subtitles and consecutive interpreting for all interviews that were shown into Portuguese; in contrast, Rede Manchete, another network, left everything in Spanish did not provide interpretation for anything. The São Paulo airport provides loudspeakers in Spanish in addition to other languages but its counterpart in Rio de Janeiro does not provide such a service in Spanish. On the other hand, Colombian networks regularly show interviews or news in Brazil without any translation from Portuguese into Spanish. Although these examples present evidence that intercomprehension is possible both ways, there are quite a few opinions that state that the intercomprehension of these two languages is asymmetrical (Jensen, J., 1989). The following quote is taken from a tourist guidebook about the intelligibility of the two:

“Most Portuguese have a fairly good, natural comprehension of spoken Spanish. But be forewarned that the reverse is not the case. Knowing Spanish will put oneself into a unique position for one-way communication – able to ask directions or make reservations but unable to understand the response.” (Jepsen, H., & Biels, S. H., 1986)

The Associated Press printed a similar opinion in 1989:

“The languages [Spanish and Portuguese] are closely related but quite different in pronunciation. The Portuguese can generally understand spoken Spanish, but most Spaniards can’t understand Portuguese.” (Timberlake, C., 1989)

In order to measure this and actually see firsthand the level of mutual intelligibility between Spanish and Portuguese, John. B Jensen from Florida International University ran a test to evaluate the oral comprehension of the languages. He showed his participants two recordings, that included items such as readings on traditions, the history of Ecuador, and an excerpt of a news recording in both Spanish and Portuguese and had questions prepared in the participants’ mother tongue to test the comprehension. These questions required an actual understanding of the language, not just some words here and there and necessitated a certain level of mental effort to draw conclusions from different areas of the recording.

In Jensen’s test, the Portuguese speakers (all Brazilian) scored significantly higher on all the questions, except for the ones dealing with the news broadcasts and this may indicate an important point concerning intercomprehension and exposure. As the Spanish speakers (all from Latin America) were able to understand the news broadcast better than the other topics, this may indicate that news broadcasts are something that they have been exposed to before and therefore have experience that helps them passively understand what is going on. In contrast to the other topics, which featured random themes, it is very likely that the Latin American participants had been exposed to Brazilian media or news in some capacity, which therefore could contribute to their better performance on those questions.

Contributing to another important point with intercomprehension, Jensen included a survey as well for the participants to rate their opinion of the other language on a scale of 1-5, with five being a high opinion. The Brazilians had a slightly better opinion of Spanish than the Spanish speakers had of Brazilian Portuguese, which could advance the theory mentioned above that an open-mind and positive attitude about the other language is essential for intercomprehension (Jensen, J., 1989).

While there are differences in the languages in each country, for the purpose of brevity, the differences in Spanish will be discussed while comparing peninsular Spanish (i.e., the country of Spain) to Latin American Spanish and the differences between Portuguese will be between Brazilian Portuguese and Portugal Portuguese. There are obvious words, slang, and expressions that vary not just within countries, but regions, so this section will focus more directly on a major variance that exists in both languages – the second person.

In Spanish, there are four different ways to say ‘you’. There two singular forms are *tú*, which is the informal ‘you’ form that is conjugated in the second person singular and *usted* which is the formal ‘you’, conjugated in the third person singular (the same conjugation as he/she/it). The plural ‘you’ comes in two forms as well, *vosotros*, which is the second person plural and *ustedes*, the third person plural. The general understanding is two-fold: first, *vosotros* is solely used in Spain. Although the technical definition of *vosotros* is that it is the informal conjugation of you plural, in Latin America it is rarely used, much less taught in schools. No matter the setting, *ustedes* is used for the plural of the second person in Latin America. Second, *usted* is used more commonly in Latin America in everyday speech, instead of just appearing in formal occasions in Spain and therefore, *tú* is much more common in Spain (Cuza, A., Czerwionka, L., & Olson, D., 2016).

In Portuguese, there are also four versions of the English ‘you’. The two singular forms are *tu* (second person singular, informal) and *você* (third person singular, formal) and the two plural forms are *vós* (second person singular, informal) and *vocês* (third person plural, formal). The first important distinction to note is that the use of *vós* is almost entirely obsolete in all Portuguese-speaking countries and is rarely taught. Almost all Portuguese dialects (except for some in Portugal) have completely adapted to using *vocês* for the second person plural. That said, the use of *tu* is very common in Portugal, but rarely used in Brazil, except for in Rio de Janeiro and some southern states. However, it is important to note that the Brazilian states of Parana, Rio Grande do Sul, and Santa Catarina use the word *tu* with the third person conjugation, which can generate comprehension problems. For example, someone in Portugal would say the sentence ‘You go to school’ as ‘*tu vais à escola*’, most of Brazil would say ‘*você vai à escola*’, and the three Brazilian states mentioned above would say ‘*tu vai à escola*’ (Cuza, A., Czerwionka, L., & Olson, D., 2016).

As previously discussed, the uses of ‘you’, both singular and plural, vary greatly depending where one is. Within Portuguese, however, there is another distinction that is important. In Brazil, the term ‘*a gente*’, which translates to English as ‘the people’ and to Spanish as *la gente*, also can mean the people, but is more frequently used now as ‘we’ and uses the third person singular conjugation instead of the typical first person plural conjugations. Therefore, the sentences ‘*a gente está comendo*’ (directly translated to English as ‘the people are eating’ and to Spanish as ‘*la gente está comiendo*’) and ‘*nós estamos comendo*’ (directly translated to English as ‘we are eating’ and to Spanish as ‘*nosotros estamos comiendo*’) mean exactly the same thing, despite using completely different verb tenses. As this is unique to Brazil, this could most certainly bring challenges when it comes

to understanding Portuguese, even to someone who has had exposure to European or African Portuguese (Ryan, J., 1951).

Before exploring the lexical grammatical similarities and differences in the two languages, a focus needs to be placed on the pronunciation differences. Although in many cases the words seem identical or just a letter or two of a difference, pronunciation can vary significantly depending on the accent of the speaker. In general, Portuguese employs more vocal shading (especially in Portugal) and nasally sounds which can make two identically written words sound completely different, which could inhibit reading comprehension. In contrast, different letter combinations in the two languages may make the same sound despite the orthographic difference, such as ‘*ch*’ in Spanish and ‘*it*’ in Portuguese leading to a better oral comprehension. This is important to keep in mind as the following sections discuss some of the differences between the languages (Beardsley, W., 1953).

The following sections will dive into the similarities and differences between Spanish and Portuguese in lexical contexts, as well as grammar and other differences that could cause trouble in the process of intercomprehension. First, these various lexical differences discussed above can be sorted into four categories:

1. Spelled differently, but with the same meanings.
2. Spelled exactly the same, but with different meanings
3. The range of identically written words is wider in Spanish than in Portuguese
4. The range of identically written words is wider in Portuguese than in Spanish (Malkiel, Y., 1941)

The next few pages will be full of various examples of the changes that occur in Spanish or Portuguese that fall into category 1 “spelled differently, but with the same meanings.” As is clear from the title, these words, although having small lexical differences, have the same meaning, which is clearly the best for facilitating intercomprehension. For the purpose of clarity, each Spanish word will always be listed first and the Portuguese second, except in the case when the word is written in the same way in each language, when it will be listed just once. Each single word or pair of words will then be followed by the English translation. To begin, there are a number of shared words that trigger the original belief that the two languages are similar enough that they are mutually intelligible:

casa (house),
mesa (table),
armario (closet),
país (country),
trigo (wheat),
mes (month),
hora (hour),
tío (uncle),
amigo (friend),
azul (blue),
verde (green),
querer (to want),
comer (to eat),
pedir (to ask),
dormir (to sleep)
saber (to know)

alegre (happy) (Garrison, D., 1979)

Upon first glance, this list, which is in no way exhaustive, appears to show a number of correspondences between the two languages. A Spanish speaker reading a Portuguese text that included the majority of these words, or other words that are written the same in the two languages, would not have much difficulty deciphering the meaning. The next category includes words with slight spelling variations that do not change the meaning of the word:

ciudad – *cidade* (city)

contento/a – *contente* (happy)

cual – *qual* (which)

espíritu – *espírito* (spirit)

vario – *vário* (various)

kilómetro – *quilómetro* (kilometer)

ruína – *ruína* (ruin)

venus – *vênus* (Venus)

innato – *inato* (innate)

Enrique – *Henrique* (Henry) (Malkiel, Y., 1941)

These words, although beginning to show a difference between the two languages, still show such a small difference that it is hard to imagine any native speaker would have trouble figuring out the meaning of the corresponding word. However, this trend is just the beginning – the farther one delves into the other language, the more inconsistencies will be found and with this, the hope of understanding the language simply by relying on the first language disappears (Ryan, J., 1951). However, there are a number of correspondence patterns to look out for with the two languages.

There are some general rules that guide the spelling changes. First, the stressed ‘e’ in Spanish is eliminated in Portuguese. Spanish’s *bien* becomes *bem* in Portuguese (to arrive), *sierra* (ES) becomes *serra* (PT) (sierra), *escuela* (ES) becomes *escola* (PT) (school), *puede* (ES) becomes *pode* (PT) (he/she/it can). Next, dropping an intervalllic ‘l’ or ‘n’ can bring one from many Spanish words to the Portuguese equivalent. The second vowel and the ‘l’ or ‘n’ are dropped in words such as *color*, the Spanish word for color that yields *cor* in Portuguese, *tener* (ES) becomes *ter* (PT) (to have), and *solo* (ES) becomes *só* (PT) (only). In Spanish’s *salir*, just the ‘l’ is dropped to become *sair* (PT) (to leave), and both the ‘n’ and the ‘e’ in *general* (ES) becomes *geral* (PT) (general).

Generally, the ‘ue’ and ‘ie’ combinations in Spanish result in a single ‘e’ or ‘i’ in Portuguese, such as *fuera* (ES)/*fora* (PT) (outside/out), *fiesta* (ES)/ *festa* (PT) (party), and *pie* (ES)/*pi* (PT) (foot). Reversely, a single ‘e’ in Spanish usually appears as ‘ei’ in Portuguese: *hecho* (ES)/*feito* (PT) (done), *sujeto* (ES)/*sujeito* (PT) (subject), *dejar* (ES)/*deixar* (PT) (to leave).

The ‘j’ in Spanish, although it typically corresponds with ‘lh’ in Portuguese, is not pronounced the same as its written counterpart. For example, *mujer* (ES) becomes *mulher* (PT) (woman), *ojo* (ES) becomes *olho* (PT) (eye), and *viejo* (ES) becomes *velho* (PT) (old). Similarly, ‘ll’ in Spanish is frequently matched by ‘ch’ in Portuguese, such as in *llamar* (ES)/*chamar* (PT) (to call) and *lleno* (ES)/*cheio* (PT) (full).

Until now, these words fall into three groups. They can look the same and be pronounced the same, they can look the same and be pronounced differently, or they can feature small spelling changes and be pronounced differently as well. However, in contrast, the ‘ch’ to ‘it’ tradeoff between Spanish and Portuguese, respectively, yields a spelling change but a remarkably similar pronunciation. While the pronunciation varies between

dialects and regions, this combination in particular tends to produce an almost identical pronunciation: *noche* (ES) becomes *noite* (PT) (night), *leche* (ES) becomes *leite* (PT) (milk), and *ocho* (ES) becomes *oito* (PT) (eight).

Similarly, the familiar ‘ñ’ letter from Spanish is reflected with ‘nh’ in Portuguese and these also produce a corresponding sound, such as in *español* (ES)/*espanhol* (PT) (Spanish), *baño* (ES)/*banho* (PT), *montaña* (ES)/*montanha* (PT) (mountain), and *soñar* (ES)/*sonhar* (PT) (to dream). A ‘z’ in Spanish is frequently seen in the same word as ‘ç’ in Portuguese like in the word for arm in English: *brazo* (ES) and *braço* (PT) and ‘z’ in Portuguese in turn seen quite frequently as ‘c’ in Spanish, such as *hacer* (ES)/*fazer* (PT) (to do/make) and *placer* (ES)/*prazer* (PT).

There are a number of endings as well that correspond when the languages are compared. The usual -ble ending found in Spanish becomes -vle in Portuguese, such as *posible* (ES)/*possível* (PT) (possible) and *agradable* (ES)/*agradável* (PT) (nice), Spanish’s -ción becomes -ção in Portuguese in words like *terminación* (ES)/*terminação* (PT) (end), -ad (ES) becomes -ade (PT) with *capacidad* (ES)/*capacidade* (PT) (capacity) and *realidad* (ES)/*realidade* (PT) (reality) (Garrison, 1979).

Both languages, like all the Romance languages, gender nouns, and for the most part nouns in Spanish and Portuguese are gendered the same way, even including the irregular gendering of words such as day (*el día/o dia*, *el problema/o problema*) However, there are some exceptions. The typical -aje masculine ending in Spanish is feminine in its Portuguese counterpart of -agem: *el viage* (ES)/*a viagem* (PT) (trip), *el mensaje* (ES)/*a mensagem* (PT) (message), *el paisaje* (ES)/*a paisagem* (PT) (landscape). There are also some words that are gendered differently in the two languages without any pattern or rhythm, such as *el dolor* (ES)/*a dor* (PT) (pain) or *la leche* (ES)/*o leite* (PT) (milk) (Garrison, 1979).

The second category consists of words that are spelling alike or very similarly but hold different meanings. These words are frequently referred to as false friends, which means that although the words look alike, they do not have the same meaning (Schmitz, J., 1970). This is a non-exhaustive list of some examples of false friends in Spanish (right column) and Portuguese (left column) with their English translation in parentheses:

<i>apellido</i> (last name)	<i>apelido</i> (nickname)
<i>aula</i> (classroom)	<i>aula</i> (class)
<i>rato</i> (brief period of time)	<i>rato</i> (rat)
<i>acordarse</i> (to remember)	<i>acordar</i> (to wake up)
<i>rubio</i> (blonde)	<i>ruivo</i> (redhead) (Garrison, 1979).

The third and fourth categories are sure to cause many problems for Spanish speakers attempting to understand Portuguese or vice versa. The words in Spanish and Portuguese are not simply limited to one definition; as in any languages, there are words in both languages that can mean many different things. However, the problem arises in Spanish and Portuguese intercomprehension when the word is spelled the same in the other language but has a smaller range of meaning. This appears in both languages. Both languages have the word *ala*, which translates to English as wing. In Spanish, *ala* can mean the wing of the army, a building, a plane, an insect, a bird, a hat, a table, or the nose. In Portuguese, however, *ala* can only be used in the context of the army or a building. To further the confusion, both languages have the word *asa* which translates to English as handle or wing. As is predictable, Portuguese’s *asa* can mean the wing of a plane, an insect, a bird, or the nose and the handle of a cup or a pot and in Spanish, it refers to the handle of a cup or a pot. Although just two examples, both

languages have cases where the definition of one word is more extensive than its counterpart, which can easily lead to confusion (Schmitz, J., 1970).

An area that could be problematic for Spanish speakers is the way that Portuguese articles, both definite and indefinite, appear. In Portuguese, articles are combined with the preposition *em* and *de* (*en* and *de* in Spanish) which could prove to be challenging for Spanish readers. The four definite articles in Portuguese (*o, a, os, as*) with *em* make *no, na, nos, and nas*, (*en el, en la, en los, en las* in Spanish) and with *de* to make *do, da, dos, and das* (*del, de la, de los, de las* in Spanish). The indefinite articles in Portuguese (*um, uma, uns, umas* in Spanish) with *em* come together to make *num, numa, nuns, and numa* (*en un, en una, en unos, en unas* in Spanish) and with *de* they form *dum, duma, duns, and dumas* (*de un, de una, de unos, de unas* in Spanish). Although this has a clear explanation, the usage of this combination at first glance in a text, or in the middle of a spoken sentence could cause confusion for a Spanish speaking individual who is attempting to utilize intercomprehension.

Verbs in the two languages tend to follow similar conjugation patterns. For example, the verb ‘*mandar*’ which, in both languages, means ‘to send’, is conjugated in the present indicative tense as the following:

Spanish		Portuguese	
<i>mando</i>	<i>mandamos</i>	<i>mando</i>	<i>mandamos</i>
<i>mandas</i>	<i>mandáis</i>	<i>mandas</i>	<i>mandais</i>
<i>manda</i>	<i>mandan</i>	<i>manda</i>	<i>mandam</i>

In the past imperfect indicative tense, the verb *mandar* is conjugated as:

Spanish		Portuguese	
<i>mando</i>	<i>mandábamos</i>	<i>mando</i>	<i>mandávamos</i>
<i>mandaba</i>	<i>mandabais</i>	<i>mandavas</i>	<i>mandáveis</i>
<i>mandabas</i>	<i>mandaban</i>	<i>mandava</i>	<i>mandavam</i>

The present subjunctive is conjugated as:

Spanish		Portuguese	
<i>mande</i>	<i>mandemos</i>	<i>mande</i>	<i>mandemos</i>
<i>mandes</i>	<i>mandéis</i>	<i>mandes</i>	<i>mandeis</i>
<i>mande</i>	<i>manden</i>	<i>mande</i>	<i>mandem</i>

As is seen here, with the exception of the third person plural in the present indicative and the ‘b’ for ‘v’ tradeoff in the past imperfect indicative and some added accent marks, the verb conjugations are largely the same. Although there are slight changes across the board, most of the verb tenses tend to keep the same style of conjugations, which theoretically should help the speaker of the other language decipher more of the meaning. However, as with everything, there are some notable exceptions.

A discernable difference in the conjugations of the two languages occurs in the present tenses. In Spanish, the formula for the present perfect (in English “I have been happy”) is conjugated using the *haber* + past participle combination which would result in *he estado feliz*. In contrast, Portuguese uses the verb *ter* + past participle to form the same sentence as *tenho estado feliz*. Although both verbs (*haber, ter*) translate to English as ‘to have’, the verb *haber* has a different function in Spanish, meaning it would not be used apart from the use in the perfect tenses as ‘have’. Curiously enough, Portuguese does have an equivalent of *haber*, but it uses the Spanish equivalent of *tener* for the perfect tenses. This difference, although seeming small, could serve to be quite large for those attempting to understand the other language with limited training.

Another important difference to point out is the constructions of sentences using the verb “to like”: *gustar* (ES)/*gostar* (PT). In Spanish, this verb is conjugated to match the subject noun (the thing being liked). For example, “I like the book” would be “*me gusta el libro*”; *gusta* is conjugated in the third person singular to reflect the book, instead of the subject, as it would be in English. Portuguese, however, follows the English model and conjugates the verb *gostar* to reflect the subject of the sentence. The same sentence in English would be “*eu gosto do livro*” with the verb conjugated in the first person singular.

The location of the pronoun object varies considerably between the two languages as well. In Spanish, there are just three cases when the pronoun object follows the verb: with the infinitive (*dármelo*), with the present participle (*dándomelo*), and with positive commands (*démelo*). In all other cases, the pronoun comes before the verb. In contrast, in Portuguese, it is more common for the pronoun objects to precede the infinitive verb rather than follow it, which was more common in Old Spanish but is obsolete in Modern Spanish, except in stylistic cases in novels or other forms of writing. For example, ‘I get up’ is ‘*me levanto*’ in Spanish and ‘*levanto-me*’ in Portuguese and it is very uncommon for a sentence in Portuguese to begin with a pronoun object (Beardsley, W., 1953).

The future subjunctive is more familiar to speakers of Portuguese, and once again, this connection is closer to Old Spanish than Modern Spanish. The future subjunctive is rarely used in Modern Spanish and mainly reserved for legal terms and proverbs that stay the same while, on the other hand, the future subjunctive is widely used in Portuguese. Instead, in Spanish, the present subjunctive is used in almost all cases where the future subjunctive would have been used in the past. The sentence ‘when the time comes, I will be happy’ is ‘*Cuando llegue el momento, seré feliz*’ in Spanish, and ‘*Quando chegar o momento, ficarei feliz*’ in Portuguese. The two underlined verbs are the verbs in question and are conjugated in completely different tenses (Beardsley, W., 1953).

As previously explained above, although the two languages differ in spelling, pronunciation, and sentence structure, it is safe to say that they largely follow the same basic rules and utilize the same tenses. However, there is one major exception to that assumption - the personal infinitive in Portuguese. Because there is nothing of the sort in English, this could truly cause some problems for Spanish speakers while attempting to understand Portuguese. The personal infinitive (*infinitivo pessoal*) exists solely in Portuguese and serves as an alternative to the present subjunctive. This is the conjugation of the personal infinitive in Portuguese of the verb *mandar*:

mandar	mandarmos
mandares	mandardes
mandar	mandarem

As seen here, the conjugation takes the infinitive form of the verb and adds on an ending to the infinitive. While this is not always the case, the personal infinitive can be used in a majority of cases instead of the present subjunctive and, as it has no irregular forms, it is largely used because the conjugations are much simpler. Therefore, in the sentence “Ana asks us to help in the hospital” could take the present subjunctive conjugation and be “*Ana pede que ajudemos no hospital*” or use the personal infinitive and be “*Ana pede que ajudarmos no hospital*.” There are rules that dictate when the present subjunctive can be used versus the personal infinitive, but in the majority of cases, the personal infinitive is used in Portuguese.

Before diving into the methodology used in this study, a third language needs to be introduced, and it is a language that has an effect on this study. Although this language is not directly included in this study, its importance in both the study of Spanish and Portuguese

and the analysis of the data from this study is clear. In Spain, while Castilian Spanish is the official language, there are also co-official languages that are spoken within certain autonomous communities; in Catalonia, Catalan; in Valencia, Valencian; in Galicia, Galician; in the Basque Country, Basque; and Aranese in the Aran Valley. While all of these co-official languages are interesting and deserve mention, Galician will be the focus due to its close proximity to Portuguese. During the Middle Ages, the two were the same and have since developed in different directions. However, the similarities between Galician and Portuguese are clear and those living in Galicia or who know Galician would understandably be predisposed to understanding Portuguese.

In the region of Galicia, where around three million people reside, 80% of the population use the language at least daily, and 30% solely use the Galician language on a day-to-day basis. As with any language, its use is not limited uniquely to this region; it can be heard as well on the borders of the regions that surround Galicia. To provide a bit of background, however, the single language that was Galician-Portuguese started to change in the thirteenth century and reflected the cultural and political changes that were occurring in the Iberian peninsula, and due to the ruralness and slow economic development of the region, the language continued to be used within the Galician residents and today is very much its own language, with heavy Portuguese and Castilian influences (O'Rourke, B., 2014).

6. Metodología

Para desarrollar un estudio nuevo sobre la intercomprensión entre el español y el portugués, se utilizó una encuesta para recoger los datos. Se diseñó el estudio para hablantes del español y el portugués y a pesar de que la intercomprensión suele referirse a la comunicación oral, la comprensión lectora se incluirá también. En los servicios públicos y situaciones donde llega un inmigrante a un país nuevo, la capacidad de entender tanto lo escrito como lo oral es imprescindible para rellenar formularios o entender información importante sobre las visas. Por lo tanto, la encuesta tiene tres partes: información introductoria, comprensión lectora, y comprensión oral. Aunque la misma encuesta se envió a todos los participantes, independientemente de su lengua materna, las partes españolas y portuguesas se separan para evitar confusión.

Debido al deseo de tener el estudio tan preciso como sea posible, solo fueron seleccionados hablantes nativos al hacer el estudio. A pesar de ser verdad que los hablantes heredados o los bilingües podrían haber servido para el examen, también, en la pequeña gama de este estudio, se decidió que es mejor que los participantes sean nativos. Los participantes provienen principalmente de España y Brasil, con unas excepciones, gracias al hecho de que la investigadora tiene contacto con ellos. El estudio tiene lugar en la Universidad de Alcalá en Madrid y la mayoría de los participantes son colegas de la investigadora o conocidos de España, con una excepción conformada por la participante de América Latina. La investigadora también ha pasado mucho tiempo en Brasil, y, por lo tanto, casi todos los participantes provienen de Brasil, y específicamente São Paulo y Santa Catarina, dos estados del sur. El tercer grupo que solo tiene pocos participantes, pero merece ser mencionado, es el de los hablantes portugueses en los Estados Unidos. Son hablantes nativos de portugués que viven actualmente en los EE. UU. y, mientras que son brasileños, caen fuera del demográfico antes mencionado.

Después de responder a la primera pregunta cuya función es clasificar a los hablantes de españoles y portugueses, se les dirigió a su estudio específico. Aunque hayan estado escritas en idiomas diferentes, las secciones introductorias son iguales y se preguntó sobre las áreas siguientes: el país de origen, el dialecto de español o portugués, los idiomas hablados y a qué nivel, los idiomas utilizados en casa, los idiomas entendidos (aunque no hablados), la experiencia con el otro idioma (español o portugués), los idiomas utilizados en el trabajo (o en los estudios), la familiaridad con el concepto de intercomprensión, el nivel de confianza con las tareas a continuación, y si tienen más confianza con la grabación o el texto. Estas preguntas se usaron para generar antecedentes y proporcionar información cuando los resultados han sido recogidos y analizados.

Para evaluar correctamente el porcentaje en la que funciona la intercomprensión en la situación de un hispanohablante llegando a Brasil o un brasileño llegando a España, dado el grupo de participantes que se utilizó, la información sobre la inmigración de España y Brasil se usó para mantener el material consistente. Como los ciudadanos españoles suelen tener más exposición al portugués europeo y los brasileños tienden a tener más familiaridad con el español latinoamericano, debido solamente a la proximidad, ninguno de los dos lados estaba en desventaja. Ambos textos para la parte de comprensión lectora y guiones para la grabación se tomaron de las páginas web de cada país y hacían referencia a la llegada de inmigrantes al país. Mientras los documentos no son iguales porque se refieren a países diferentes con leyes diversas, tienen el mismo nivel de dificultad y tratan sobre el mismo tema. Aunque los documentos podrían haber sido idénticos y traducidos para que tuviesen el

mismo contenido, con el fin de mantener la investigación lo más realista posible, se decidió utilizar la información legítima escrita por cada gobierno en lugar de usar traducciones del mismo texto.

La parte de comprensión lectora para los hablantes nativos de portugués consistió en un texto de 431 palabras, lo cual se puede encontrar en el anexo del documento, que resume los requisitos para la residencia en España, extraído de la página web de la embajada de España en São Paulo. El texto fue seguido de preguntas que requerían tanto un conocimiento profundo del texto como de la idea central. La primera pregunta pedía una traducción de las siguientes palabras: “aun”, “asimismo”, “hospedaje”, “ningún”, “sometidos”, “viaje”, “sostenimiento”, “cualquier”, “se trate”, “demás”. Como ya ha sido mencionado, existen muchas palabras que parecen similares ortográficamente en los dos idiomas y tienen el mismo sentido; palabras que se escriben parecido, pero no tienen el mismo sentido; y palabras que son únicas y no tienen comparación en el otro idioma. En las palabras elegidas, todas estas opciones se incluyeron. “Hospedaje”, “ningún”, “viaje”, “sometidos”, y “cualquier” son palabras que tienen casi un equivalente ortográfico en el portugués, “aun”, “asimismo” y “sostenimiento” no tienen ningún equivalente en portugués, y “demás” tiene un ‘falso amigo’ en portugués, lo cual significa que tiene una palabra que parece igual, pero con otro significado. Las preguntas siguientes se centraron más en el contenido del texto y preguntaban sobre los documentos requeridos por los menores, los países que exigían un pasaporte, otros documentos de apoyo y, al final, un apartado para que los participantes escribieran los problemas que tenían con la sección (Consulado General de España en São Paulo).

El texto para los hablantes de español trataba sobre los procedimientos de control de la frontera y fue sacado de la página web de la embajada de Brasil en Madrid. Las preguntas para los hablantes nativos de español siguieron la misma metodología de la versión para los hablantes de portugués y primero preguntaban sobre las traducciones de las palabras a continuación: *prazo, pela, no, além, cartão, até, estrangeiro, viagem, artigo, y elencados*. Como en el caso de las palabras sacadas del texto español, había una mezcla en los tipos de palabras elegidas; unas palabras eran casi iguales a su contraparte española y otras se seleccionaron para que pudieran causar confusión. En esta versión, sin embargo, dos palabras específicas se sacaron del texto para evaluar el conocimiento verdadero de la lengua por parte de los hablantes españoles (Embaixada do Brasil em Madri, 2020).

Como ha sido mencionado antes, la combinación de los artículos y las preposiciones en portugués podría causar problemas para los hablantes de español. Por lo tanto, *pela* (*por* + *a*, “por la” en español), se eligió para ver si los hablantes de español podrían reconocer este pequeño pero importante cambio en el idioma. Además, la palabra *no* en portugués, a pesar de ser escrita igual que el “no” en español, no significa “no”, como el sentido sabido en español. En cambio, es de nuevo otra combinación de un artículo y una preposición (*em* + *no*, “en el” en español). Este detalle, sin embargo, podría producir resultados significativamente diferentes de la comparación de las respuestas de *pela*, antes mencionada. Si el *no* en portugués se entendió como “no” en español, una frase entera podría ser negativa cambiando así su significado a lo opuesto.

Las preguntas después del documento hacían referencia a los requisitos para menores durante los viajes internacionales, los requisitos para que los extranjeros pudiesen obtener una visa, los requisitos para los residentes extranjeros de Brasil para entrar y salir del país, cuándo se necesita un documento específico, y, al igual como con las opciones para los

hablantes de español, un sitio vacío para indicar cualquier problema o confusión que hayan tenido con la sección.

La tercera parte de la encuesta consistía en una grabación de audio, grabado por un hablante nativo de portugués de Brasil y un hablante nativo de español de España, para que cada grupo lo escuchara y respondiera a las preguntas. Aunque la encuesta se administró de manera virtual y, por lo tanto, los participantes la realizaron en su propio tiempo, se les pidió escuchar la grabación un máximo de tres veces, si fuera necesario. Ambas grabaciones duran más o menos dos minutos; la grabación en español para los hablantes de portugués describe el proceso para aquellos que quieren vivir en España, pero a diferencia del texto escrito, sigue una cronología específica, y por eso la comprensión continua es necesaria y no solo un entendimiento general de algunas cosas. La transcripción se encuentra el anexo del documento (Consulado General de España en São Paulo) (Embaixada do Brasil em Madri).

Después de escuchar la grabación un máximo de tres veces se pedía a los participantes completar algunas preguntas. De forma similar a la sección de comprensión lectora, se dieron palabras para traducir hacia su idioma nativo: ‘concesión’, ‘cuenta ajena’, ‘reglamentariamente’, ‘vacaciones’, ‘vinculación’. Estas palabras están dentro de las categorías anteriormente mencionadas de ser similares o diferentes a las traducciones portuguesas, pero también exigen un conocimiento de tanto el contexto y el material como el acento del ponente para poder entenderlo. Distinto de la parte de comprensión lectora, los participantes no tenían el texto frente a ellos; su única forma de entender la grabación fue descifrar los acentos. La hablante nativa que lee el texto proviene de Murcia, España y por lo tanto tiene un acento que puede ser diferente de lo que los hablantes portugueses han escuchado o con lo que tienen familiaridad (Consulado General de España en São Paulo).

Como la mayoría de los participantes son de Brasil o de familia brasilera y viven en los Estados Unidos, tienen mucha más familiaridad con el español latinoamericano, y el acento español fuerte podría haber causado un poco de confusión. Después de las primeras preguntas de traducción, en lugar de seguir el mismo estilo de las preguntas de comprensión lectora, con una o dos respuestas correctas, se preguntaba sobre las ideas más generales, lo cual dio a los participantes más libertad en sus respuestas. La primera era muy general, con la pregunta, “¿De qué trata la grabación?”, con otras preguntas que se centraron en cosas más exactas, como las opciones para la residencia en España, el próximo paso después de recibir la autorización de residencia, y el significado de la residencia de larga duración. La sección también dejaba un sitio para que los participantes rellenaran sus dificultades con la sección y sus pensamientos sobre ella.

La grabación para los hablantes de español, de manera parecida, trataba sobre la autorización de residencia, y también explicaba los pasos ordenados para que una persona pueda lograr la residencia, junto con toda la documentación exigida. Como la sección para los hablantes nativos de portugués, se les pidió completar cinco preguntas después de escuchar a la grabación un máximo de tres veces y aportar una traducción para las palabras siguientes: *endereço*, *meios de contato*, *residente fronteiriço*, *taxas*, and *branco*. A pesar de que estas palabras, a diferencia de la sección de comprensión lectora, son eminentemente parecidas a su equivalente español, el cambio de leer a escuchar, especialmente con un acento extranjero, podría ser exigente. La hablante nativa de portugués, proviene de Brasil, tiene el acento fuerte de São Paulo – lo que no es lo habitual en Portugal, el lugar donde el español medio habría escuchado antes el idioma. El portugués de Brasil y el portugués de Portugal difieren incluso más que el español latinoamericano y el castellano, y aunque existen muchas

palabras que son similares ortográficamente, el acento cambia la pronunciación de manera considerable (Embaixada do Brasil em Madri).

Las preguntas a continuación siguieron la misma trayectoria de la otra mitad de la encuesta; la pregunta inicial es más general e inquirió sobre el contenido de la grabación, buscando un resumen aproximado, mientras que las otras buscaban obtener información sobre para quién era el servicio, los tres tipos de documentación requeridos, detalles sobre las fotos solicitadas, y, al final, había un apartado para indicar cualquier desafío que hayan tenido con la sección.

A pesar de que los textos y las grabaciones no son exactamente los mismos en español y el portugués, se eligieron debido a su relevancia en los servicios públicos y la posible necesidad para su utilización en la vida cotidiana por traductores e intérpretes. Sin embargo, se procuraba tratar los mismos temas lo más fielmente posible mientras se seguían usando materiales reales de las embajadas de Brasil y España. Para mantener las preguntas alrededor del mismo nivel de dificultad, se redactaron en una forma similar e intentaron mantener la misma forma, dados los textos diferentes. Por ejemplo, si la grabación en portugués mencionaba dos tipos de documentos, la pregunta se referiría a los dos, y si la grabación en español mencionaba en cambio tres documentos requeridos, se referiría a estos tres documentos. Las palabras elegidas para la sección de traducción pretendían estar al mismo nivel de dificultad y hacer referencia a los desafíos que ya son sabidos entre los dos idiomas, tales como cognados falsos o las combinaciones en portugués de artículos y preposiciones.

7. Collected Data

7.1 Background Information Collected – Spanish Participants

Before analyzing the results of the studies, the data of the participants needs to be displayed. The first question for Spanish speakers was “In what country do you live?”. Of the 22 participants, 18 live in Spain currently, which is 82% of the participants, with residents in Colombia, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, and Poland as well.

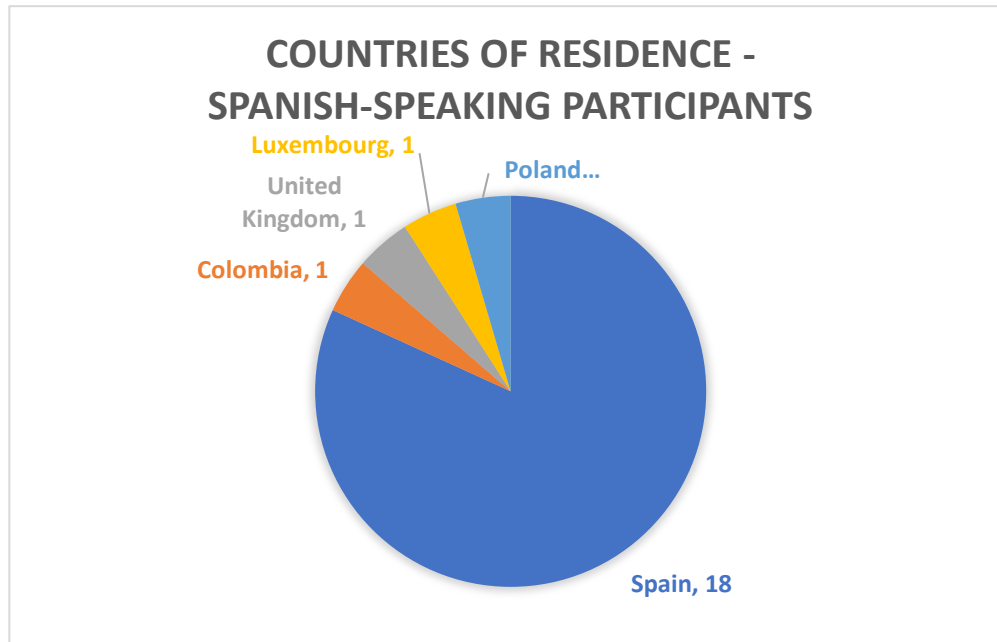


Figure 1 Countries of Residence of the Spanish-speaking participants

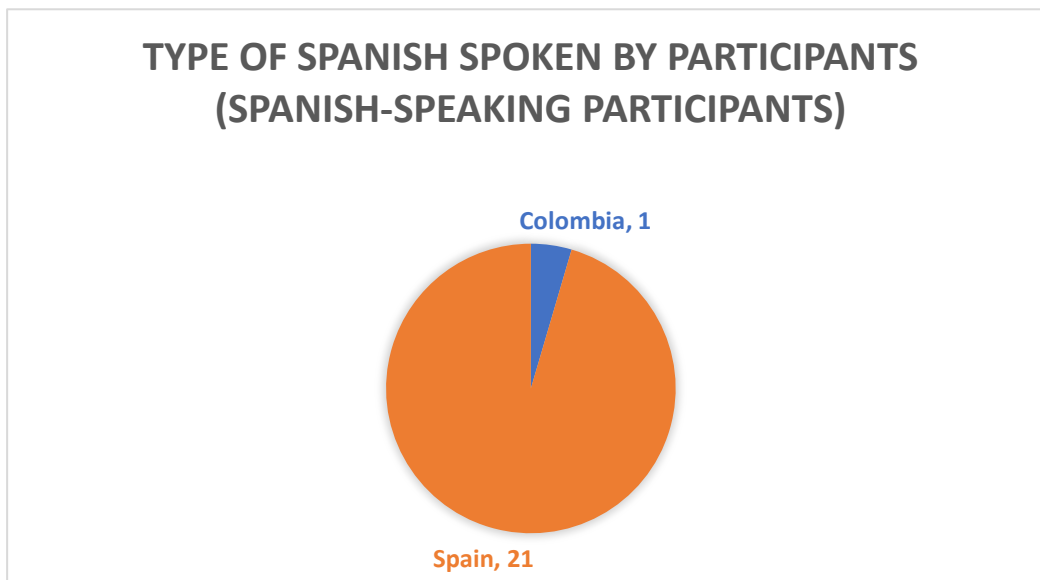


Figure 2 Type of Spanish spoken by the Spanish-speaking participants

The second question “Do you speak Spanish from Spain? If not, indicate from which country:” showed similarly weighted results, with all but one participant speaking Castilian Spanish. The one participant who speaks Colombian Spanish could have an advantage in understanding Brazilian Portuguese if he/she has had exposure to that language in the past.

The following question will be divided into a number of charts in order to properly portray the information. As previously explained, knowledge of other languages can have an effect on intercomprehension, and that information can be relevant in analyzing the data here. The data will be separated into two graphs: first, the number of languages spoken by participants, and then the other languages spoken (and at what level). Unfortunately, some participants did not specify the other languages spoken and simply indicated that they speak other languages, and therefore that information cannot be included on the second graph. While most of the participants answered the question using the CEFL’s classification of languages (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), some did not and instead used words like “intermediate”, “advanced”, and “basic”. To portray the data efficiently, native, C2, and C1 will be categorized as advanced, B2 and B1 as intermediate, and A1 and A2 as basic. Interestingly enough, all Spanish-speaking participants answered that they speak at least one other language, with the majority speaking two to three foreign languages and even some participants reaching as high as six foreign languages at varying levels.

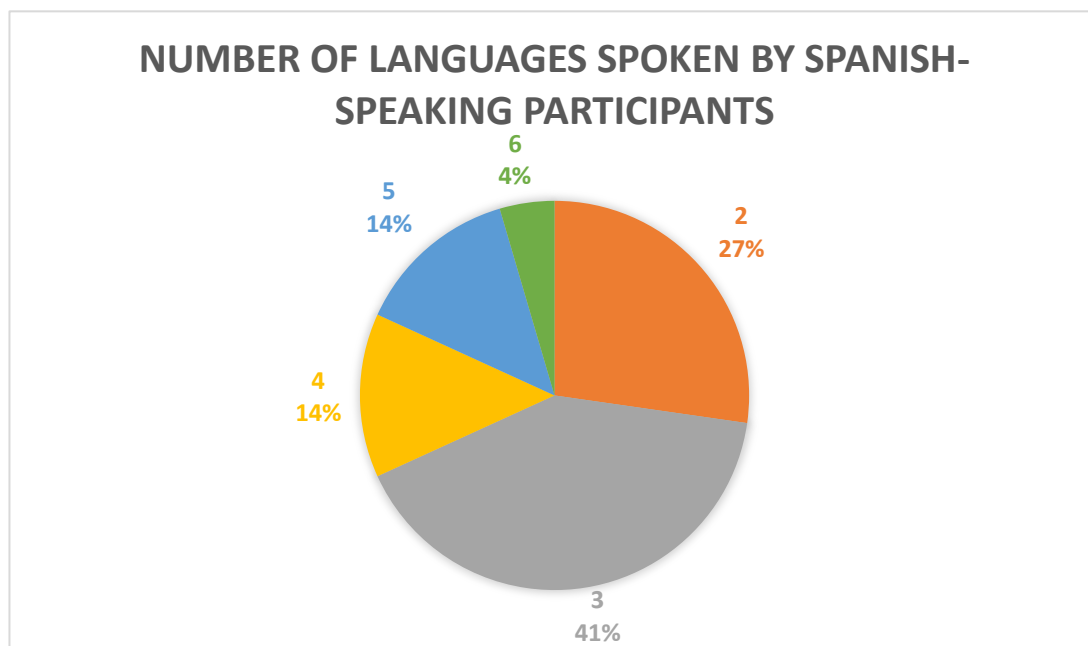


Figure 3 Number of languages spoken by Spanish-speaking participants

It can be noted here that although not a single one of the participants have enough experience with Portuguese that it would be considered a language they speak, there were a number of participants who simply listed the number of languages they speak as a number instead of identifying them. Based on answers to subsequent questions, a reasonable estimate would be that two or three applicants can speak Portuguese at some basic or intermediate level. An interesting aspect, however, is the one participant who mentioned Galician as a

native language and the other three that mentioned it in passing in answers to other questions. As previously indicated, speaking Galician could prove to be useful when understanding Portuguese, and those participants will be analyzed separately to see if it did, in fact, help.

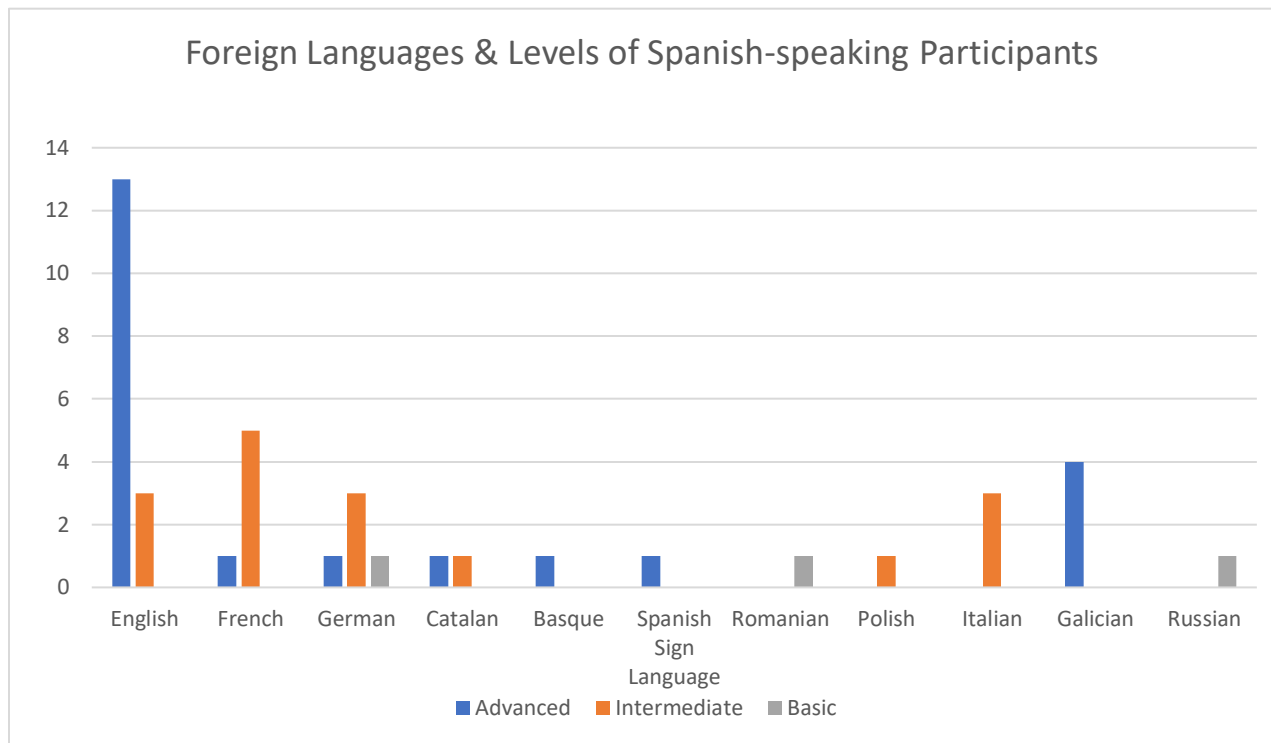


Figure 5 Foreign languages & levels of Spanish-speaking participants

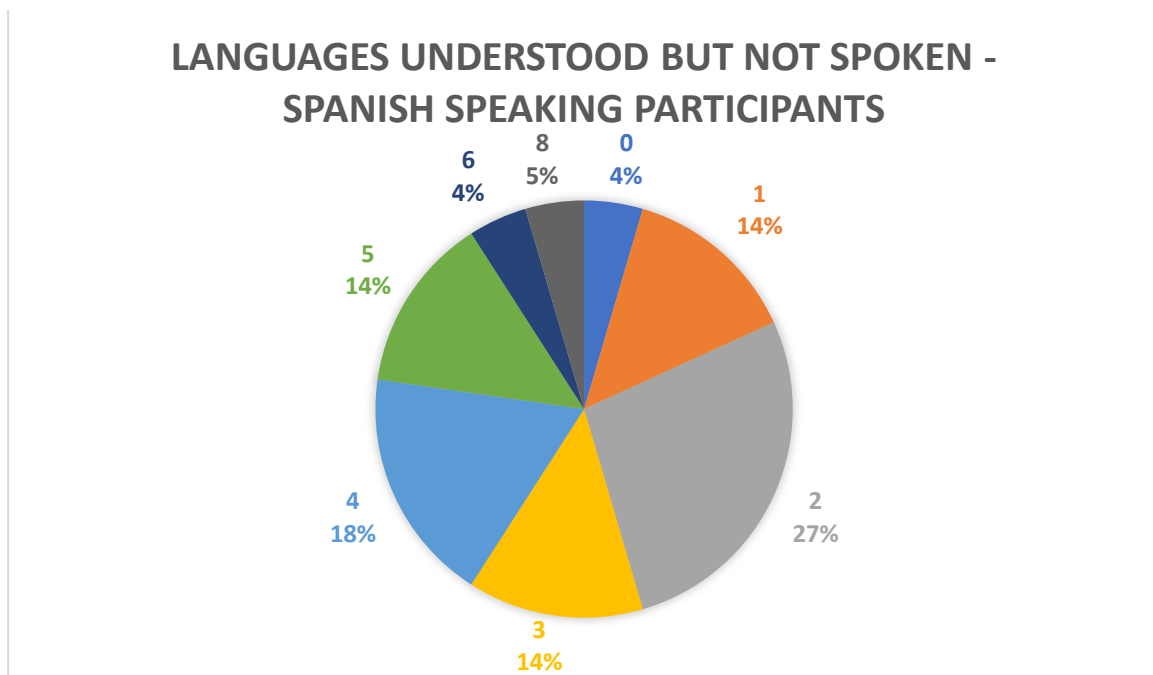


Figure 4 Languages understood but not spoken by the Spanish-speaking participants

The next question asked one of the most important questions of the survey: how many languages do you understand even if you do not speak them? As outlined earlier, in order for intercomprehension to work, the person must be aware of the concept and therefore be predisposed to using it in the correct moment. This set of data, although not containing the information about what languages the participants feel they can understand, shows that the majority of the participants are in fact aware of the concept and are able to put it to use. With just one participant answering that he/she cannot understand any languages she/he doesn't speak, 21/22 of the Spanish speakers are aware of and have already put intercomprehension into use.

The following questions asked about the language(s) spoken at home and at work/at school. The importance of actually using a language instead of just learning it in a classroom is very large and therefore these data help to measure the participants' active usage of a language. In addition, as referenced above, intercomprehension does not just pull on the previous knowledge of one language, but rather it uses all resources connected with all known languages to assist the passive comprehension of the language in use. The vast majority (15) only speak Spanish at home, which is curious given the large span of languages that the participants do speak. The most common bilingual households used English, French, or Galician to communicate with their housemates/family.

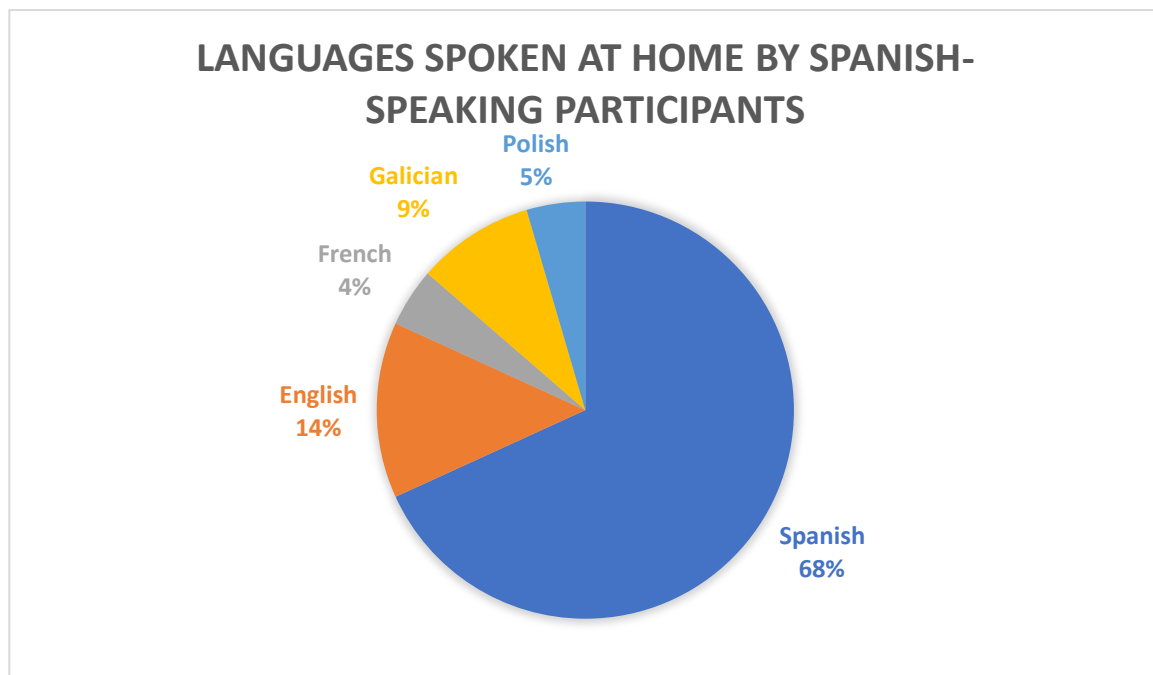


Figure 6 Languages spoken at home by the Spanish-speaking Participants

For the question about what languages are used at work or school, the participants were asked to provide the percentages to show the time they used each language. All of the participants answered referring to one or two languages and in order to facilitate the visual representation of the data, the options will be simplified into two graphs, the first showing languages used at work or school and the second showing which language, if any, is used primarily. Interestingly enough, all participants use English at work, with Spanish a close second. Combined with the information received from the question about languages used at home, the majority of the participants have regular access to exposure to a foreign language,

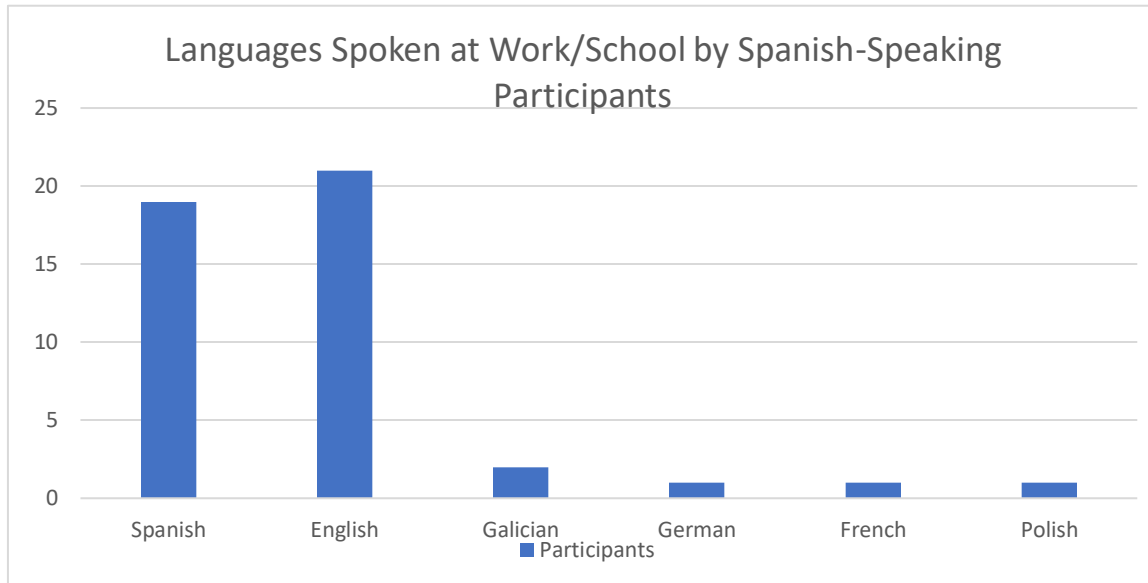


Figure 7 Languages spoken at work/school by the Spanish-speaking participants

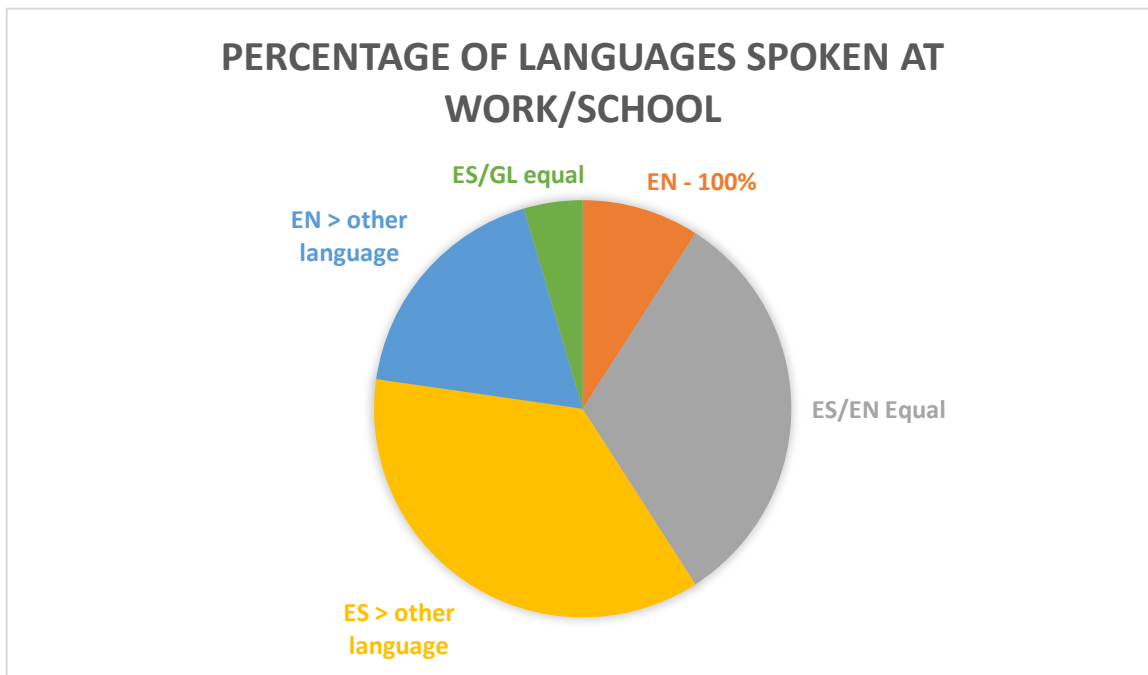


Figure 8 Percentage of languages spoken at work/school by the Spanish-speaking participants

which helps increase the likelihood of success with intercomprehension.

Once the information about the language background had been collected, participants were instructed to fill out information about their experience with Portuguese. Although no participants indicated that they had experience with Portuguese, given the proximity of Spain to Portugal (and Colombia to Brazil), reports of exposure and some experience were expected. Surely enough, although no participants indicated they had a level of Portuguese such that they would claim to speak it, a number of participants did indicate they had experience with the language. The question was open-ended so that the participants could provide as much information as possible and in a way that was most accurate to them. Responses were sorted into four categories: no experience, little experience, moderate experience, and a lot of experience.

Although the participants had an open-ended question to answer, the responses were categorized in this way for ease of presentation. Those who simply answered ‘No’ to the question were placed in the “no experience” category while those who listed their experience as traveling to Portugal or listening to music fell into the “little experience” category. The “moderate” level of experience was reserved for participants who listed their experience as classroom experience or extended travel in Portugal, defined as upwards of six months. The fourth category is the most interesting: two participants explained their unique situations of growing up in Galicia and therefore being located close to Portugal and having the influence of Galician in their daily lives. Although these two participants never having had formal Portuguese classes, they were confident in their ability to read and understand Portuguese.

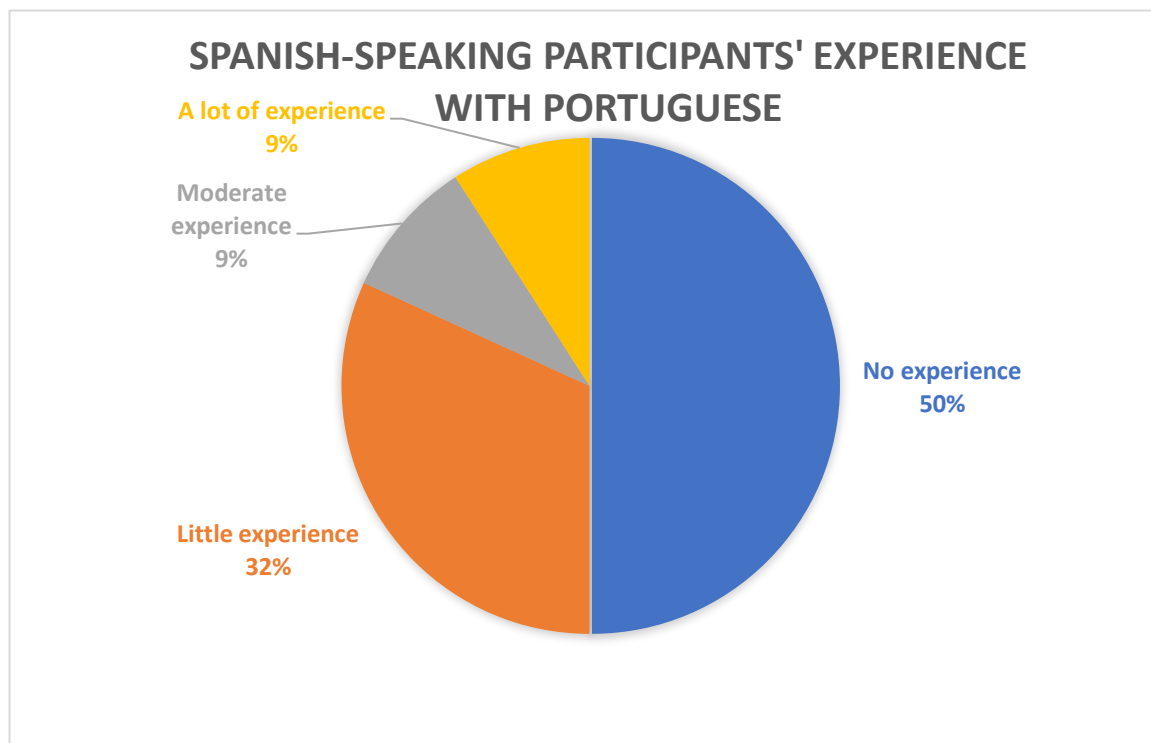


Figure 9 Spanish-speaking participants' experience with Portuguese

For the last question about their linguistic backgrounds, participants were asked if they believe intercomprehension is used frequently. Their responses were largely

unsurprising based on their previous indications of the languages they use and understand without speaking, but the majority of the participants believe that yes, intercomprehension is used frequently, and just four participants answered “maybe.” Awareness and openness to intercomprehension is essential for the functionality, and given the results of the survey, the Spanish-speaking participants are predisposed to success.

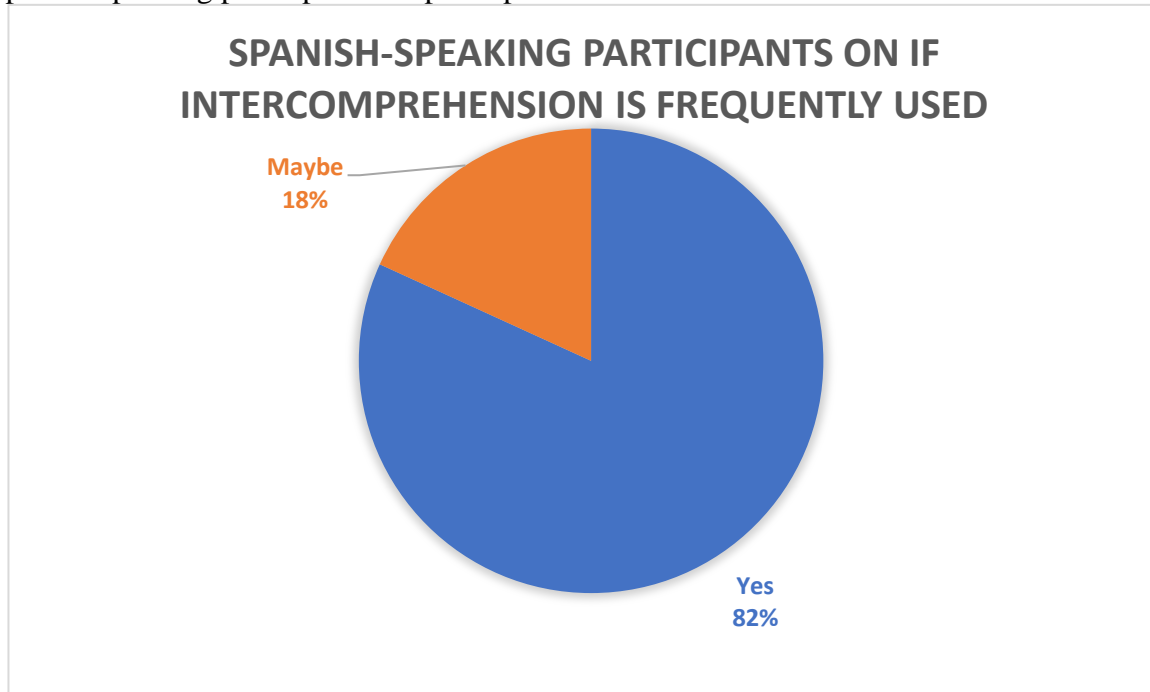


Figure 10 Spanish-speaking participants on if intercomprehension is frequently used

The last two questions, although still part of the information section, were geared more towards the actual activities of the investigation, the reading comprehension and the oral comprehension sections. In the introduction to the survey, the participants had been informed about the study and intercomprehension and the steps that the survey would take. First, they were to answer questions about themselves and then answer questions about a text and then a recording. Therefore, the last two questions served as a reminder of the introduction and looked to gauge the confidence levels of the participants heading into the tasks.

The first question asked the following: “You are about to read a text and after you will listen to a recording about migration and residency in Brazil. On a scale of 1 to 10 in which 1 is not confident and 10 is very confident, how sure are you that you will understand the message?” The rather diverse set of results is displayed below on the pie chart and as is visible, while the participants leaned towards being more confident, 9 and 10 had no takers and the majority of the participants fell in the middle of the scale. The answers, which are across the board, show both the confidence that some participants have and the doubt when faced with the direct challenge of understanding a foreign language. The second question asked, “Do you think you will understand better the recording or the text?” and every participant but one answered in favor of the text. This answer falls into line with the question about the confidence; given that the participants are wary of the tasks ahead, it makes sense

that they would be more confident being able to see a written text in their context instead of listening to a recording from a native speaker.

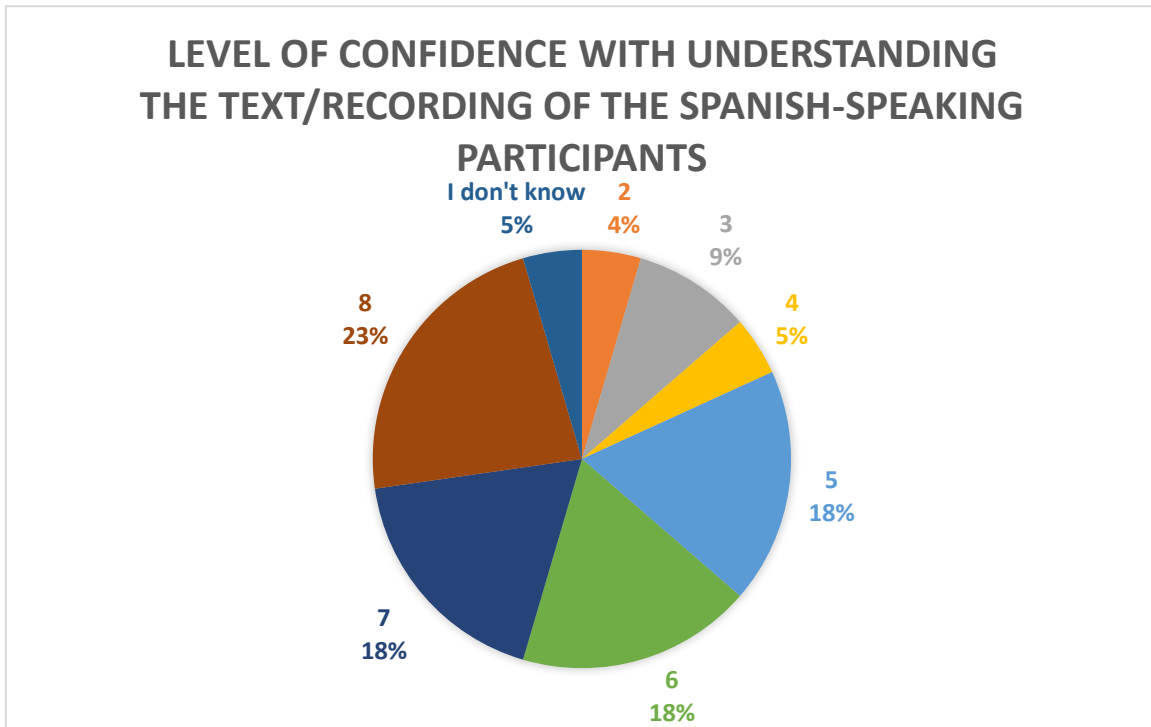


Figure 11: Level of confidence the Spanish-speaking participants have with the text and the recording.

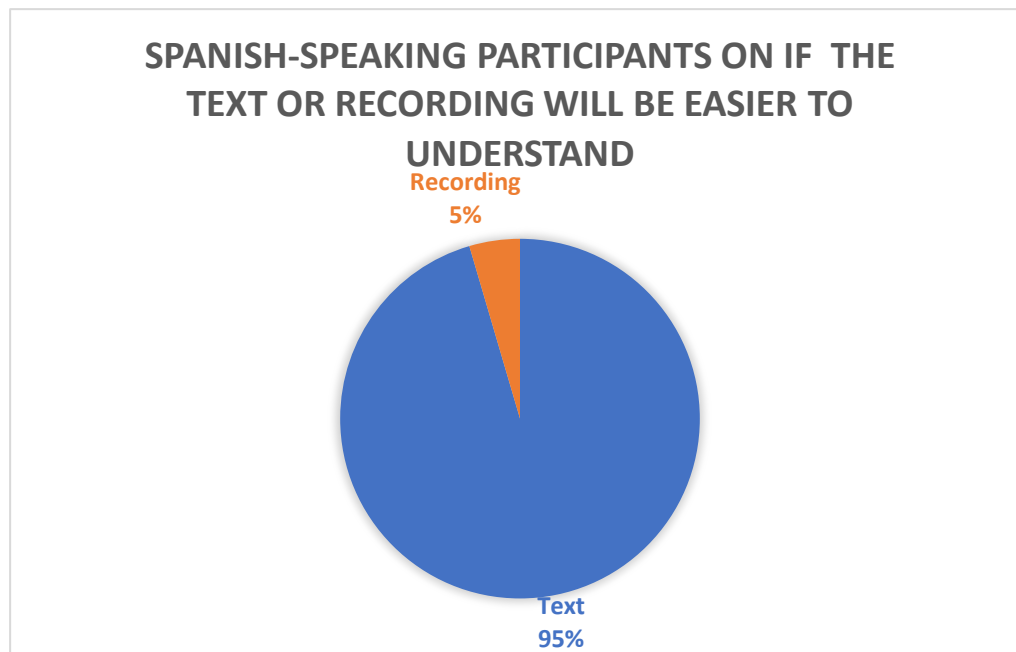


Figure 12: Spanish-speaking participants on if the text or recording will be easier to understand.

7.2 Background Information Collected – Portuguese-speaking Participants

The Portuguese speakers were asked to answer the same questions as the Spanish-speakers, and their results will be presented here. Although all participants answered that they speak Brazilian Portuguese, the details of where the participants live are more varied than that of the Spanish speakers. As seen below on the chart, while the majority of the participants are currently living in Brazil, a quarter of the participants are living outside of Brazil and in areas where they could have a much higher level of exposure to Spanish, especially the participants living in the USA and Spain. The diversity of living location among the Portuguese speakers, which the Spanish-speaking participants lack, will be interesting to analyze alongside the performance on the tasks. It is important to note, however, that although there is one participant currently living in Lisbon, Portugal, this participant is Brazilian and speaks Brazilian Portuguese.

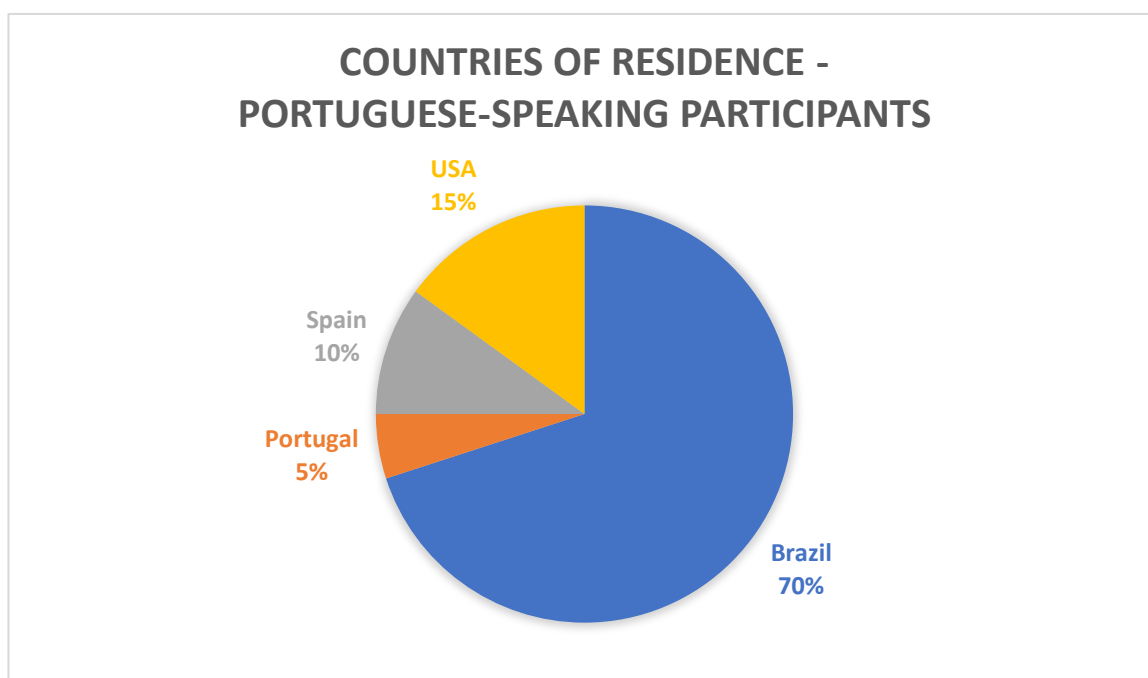


Figure 13 Countries of residence of the Portuguese-speaking participants

Although there is still a large amount of bilingual and multilingualism here, the number of languages spoken by the Portuguese speakers is considerably less than that of the Spanish speakers. 18 of 20 participants speak at least one other language, with more than half of the participants speaking three or more; however, the real difference comes with the answers to the following questions, which ask for specifications regarding languages spoken and the level. As seen in the second graph, the range of second and third languages is much smaller than that of the Spanish speakers. In Brazil, there are no co-official languages like there are in Spain, and this also limits the languages that the participants might have had the chance to learn while growing up. Similarly to the section for Spanish speakers, some participants simply listed the number of languages they spoke and at which level instead of

indicating the specific languages. Therefore, the second graph shows the results of the participants that indicated the languages they speak in their response. In contrast to the Spanish-speaking participants, eight of the twenty respondents have at least a basic level of Spanish.

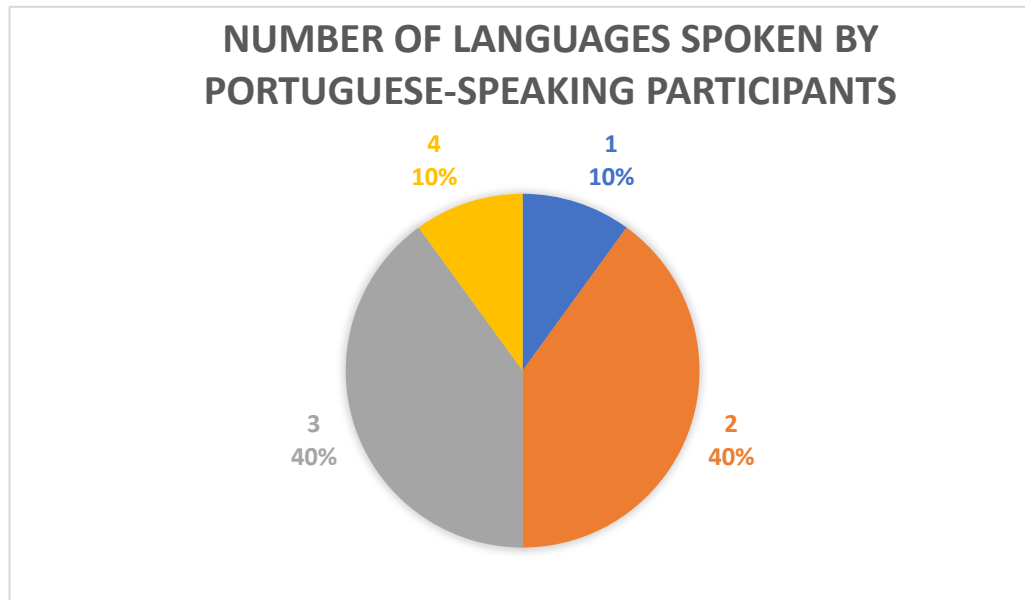


Figure 14 Number of languages spoken by the Portuguese-speaking participants

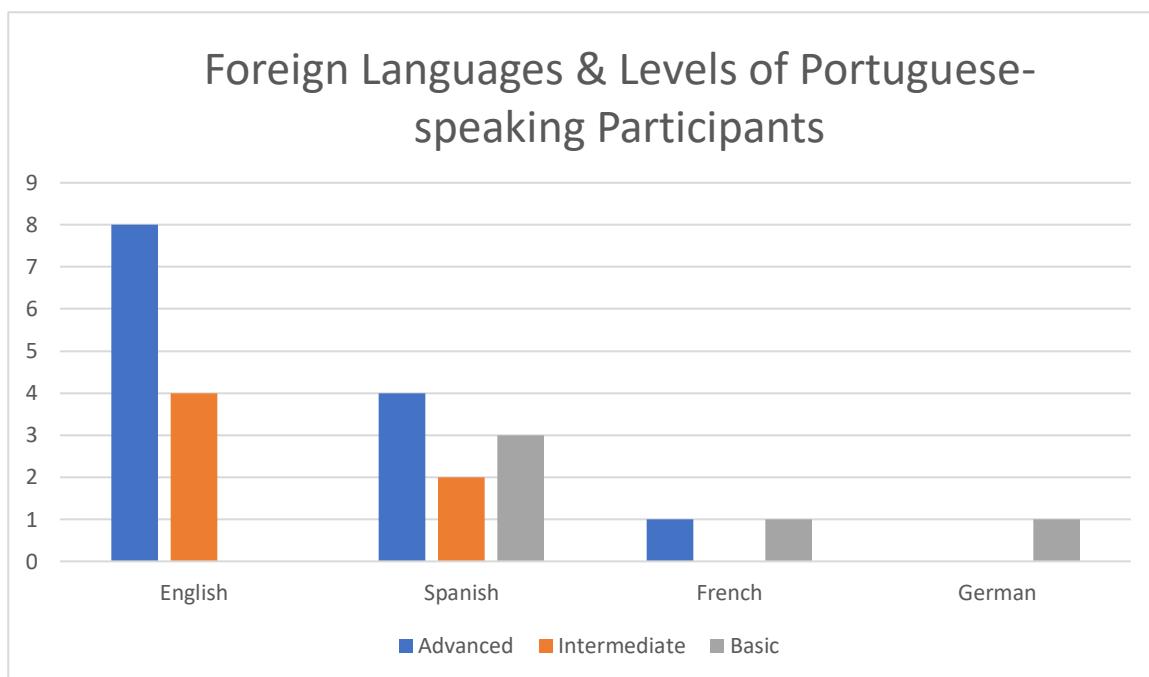


Figure 15 Foreign languages & levels of Portuguese-speaking participants

The participants were also asked about the languages they can understand but not speak and this question yielded similar responses to those of the Spanish speakers. All but one of the participants answered that they can understand at least one foreign language, with more than half understanding one or two foreign languages. Although the majority can understand just one that they do not speak, and most of the Spanish speakers were answered that they understood at least two, the very understanding and awareness of intercomprehension off the bat helps to provide more of an opportunity for success in the tasks of the research.

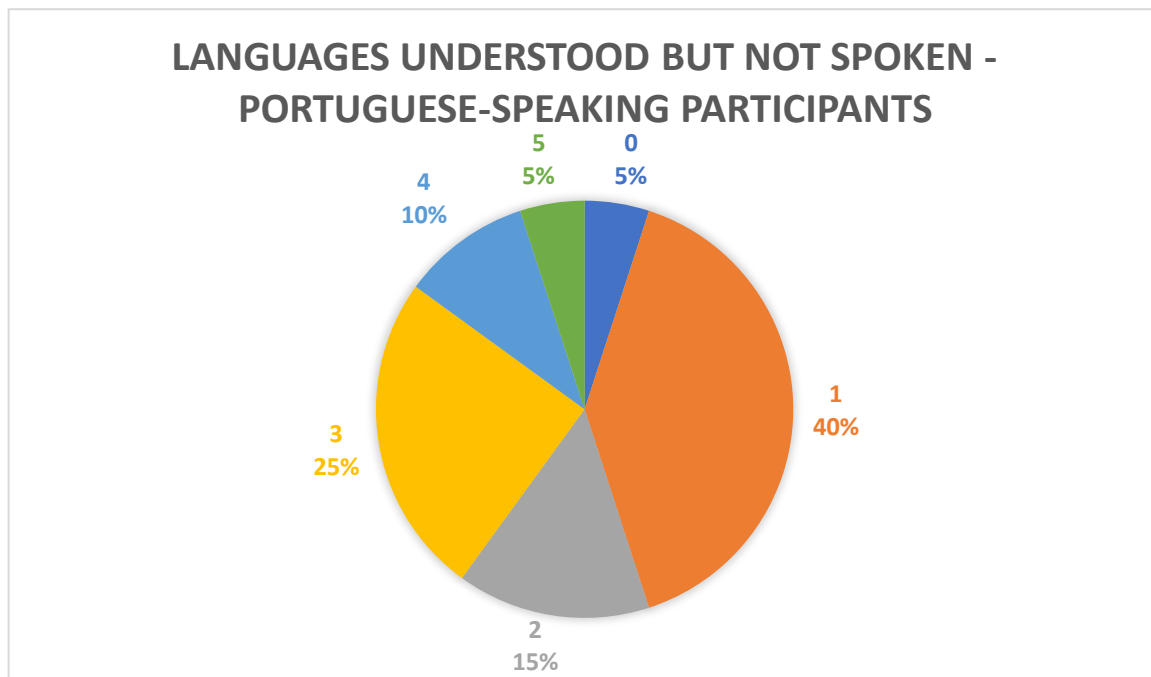


Figure 17 Languages understood but not spoken by the Portuguese-speaking participants

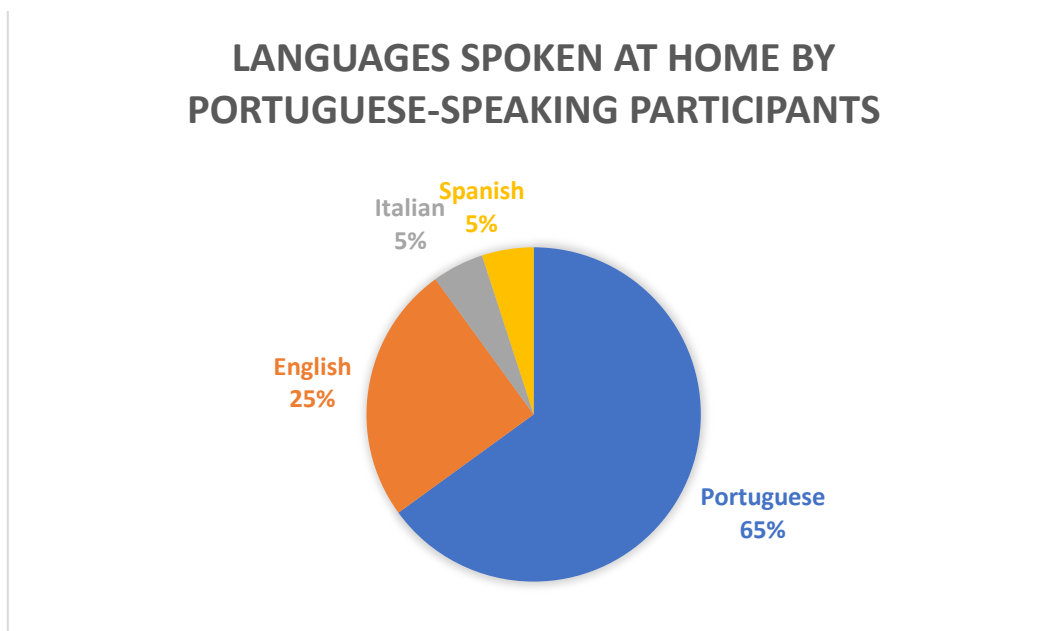


Figure 16 Languages spoken at home by the Portuguese-speaking participants

The participants were then asked about the languages they speak at home and at work/school. Although the data of the language(s) spoken at home are similar between the two groups, the languages spoken at work and school are quite different. The majority of the participants speak just Portuguese at work and school while not one Spanish-speaking participant selected that option. However, although the diversity of languages and the usage of those languages are much smaller among Portuguese-speaking participants, Spanish is present, unlike Portuguese to the Spanish-speakers. English is again a major presence in work, school, and home life, which shows that the Portuguese-speaking participants also have an active presence of foreign languages in their life, even if not Spanish.

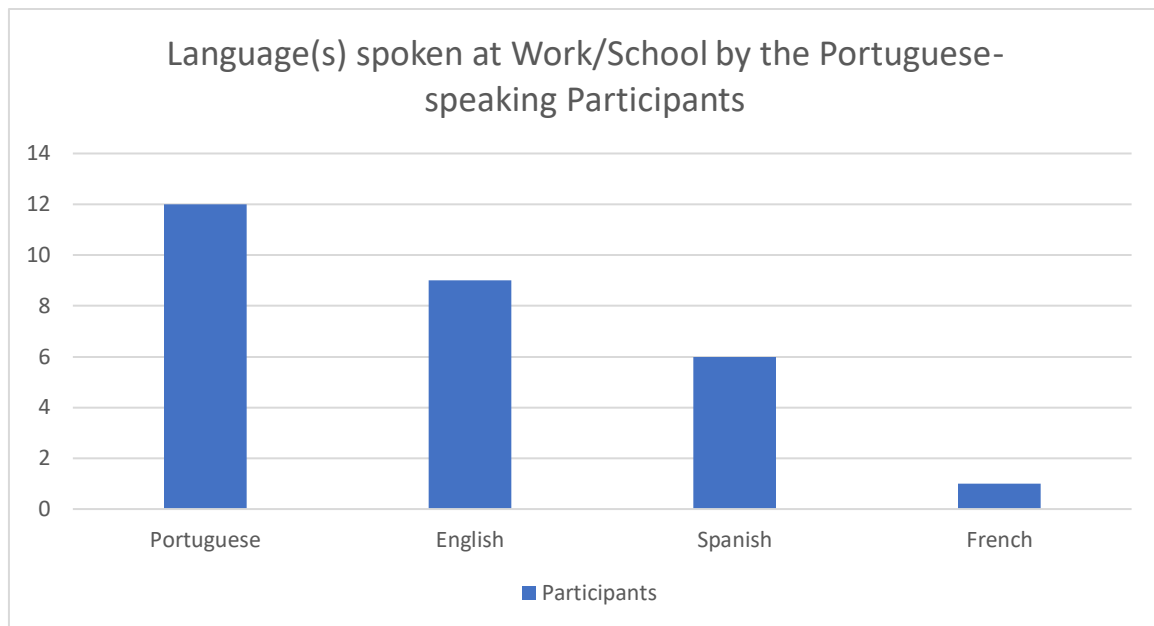


Figure 19 Languages used at work/school by the Portuguese-speaking participants

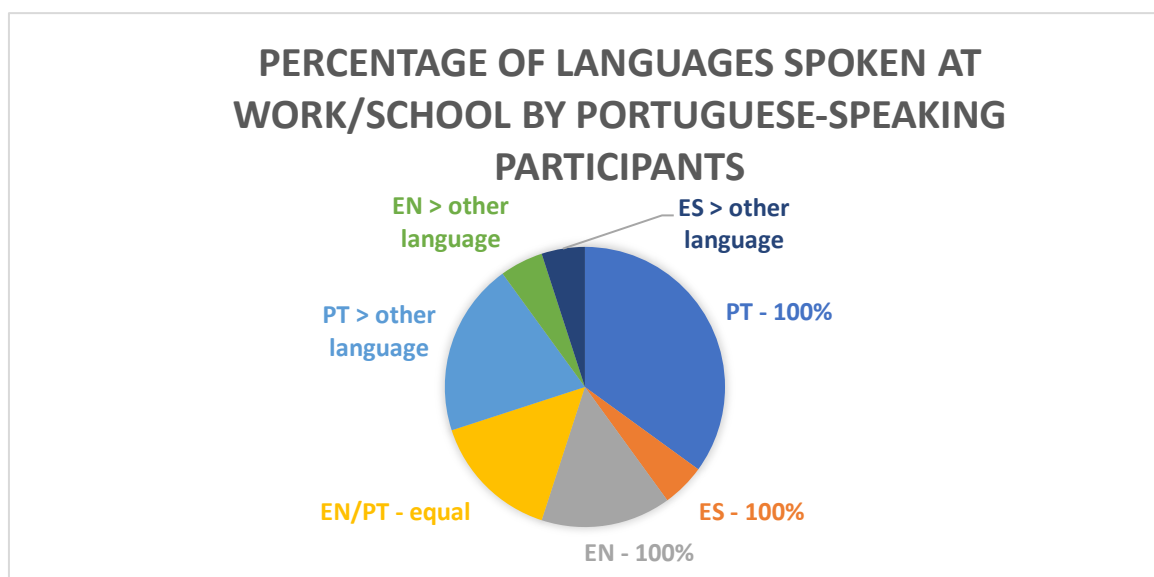


Figure 18 Percentage of languages spoken at work/school by the Portuguese-speaking participants

The participants were then asked about their experience with Spanish. As the only country of Latin America that does not speak Spanish, these participants have a higher likelihood of being exposed to Spanish, be it in social media, classes, friends, or family. In the interest of displaying the information in a more concise format, the answers were sorted into four categories: no experience, little experience, moderate experience, and a lot of experience. Those who answered that they had no experience were placed in the first category, those with experience through travel or media were placed into “little experience,” those with experience with Spanish in a classroom were placed into “moderate experience” and those with more than five years of Spanish language instruction, extended time spent in a Spanish-speaking country, or those who work regularly with Spanish were placed into the “a lot of experience” category.

The difference in the results here is particularly interesting; the majority of Spanish-speaking participants fell into the ‘no experience’ category with Portuguese while only 16% of the Portuguese-speakers had no experience with Spanish. This could be due in large to geography - while Spain has Portugal as a neighbor just as Brazil has Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and other countries, Brazil is uniquely surrounded by Spanish-speaking countries while Spain has the influence of many other European languages just as close – French, Portuguese, and Italian to name a few. The diversity of the languages available to the Europeans may take away from the focus that could be placed on Portuguese; as the Portuguese participants show, their proximity to only Spanish-speaking countries can increase the exposure to the language significantly.

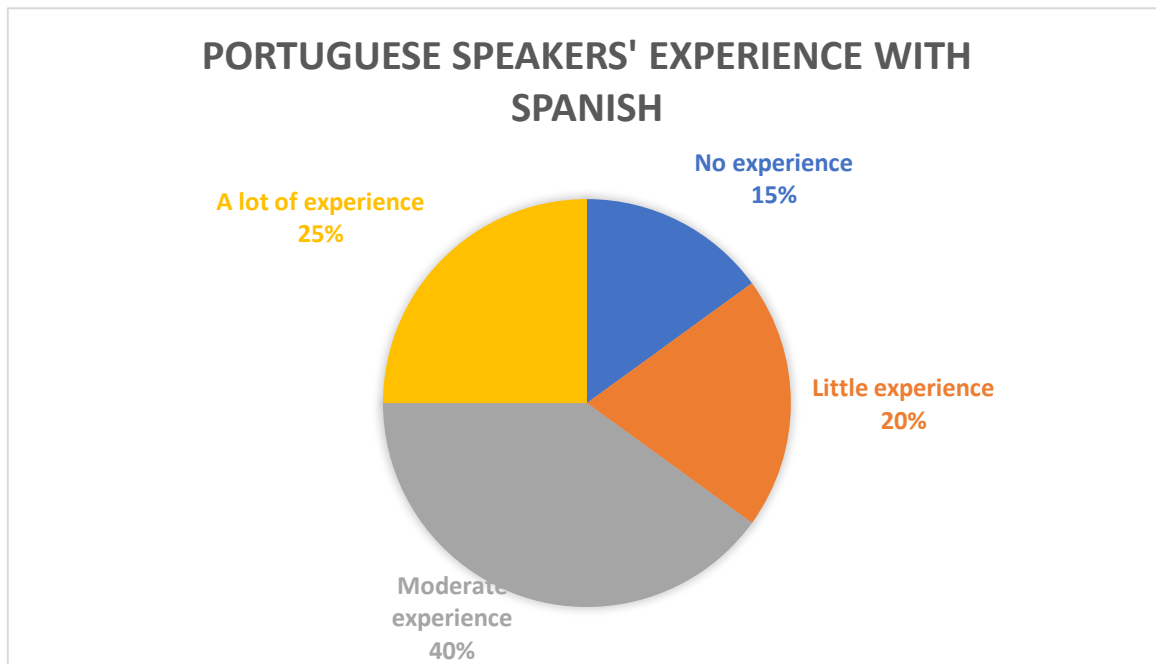


Figure 20 Portuguese-speaking participants' experience with Spanish

Based on the fact that many participants already indicated they could understand a language without speaking it, answers to the question “Do you believe intercomprehension is used frequently?” were not surprising. 80% of the participants believe that it is, while just four participants answered “maybe.” On par with the Spanish participants, not a single participant answered negatively.

PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING PARTICIPANTS ON IF INTERCOMPREHENSION IS FREQUENTLY USED

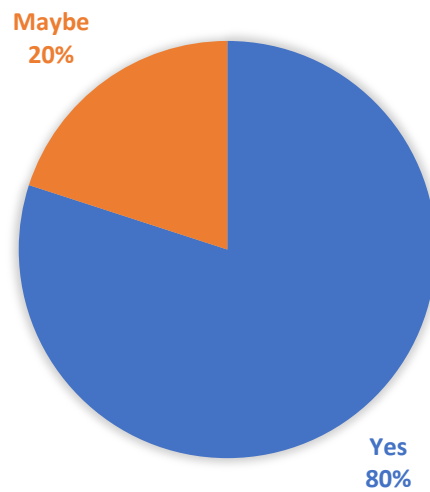


Figure 21 Portuguese-speaking participants on if intercomprehension is frequently used

Although the answers about the level of confidence varied considerably, similar to those of the Spanish speakers, the Portuguese speakers were altogether more confident about their abilities. Excluding those who answered, “I don’t know”, the average level of confidence for the Spanish speakers was a 5.9 while the average level for the Brazilians was 6.9. The Portuguese speakers’ greater confidence level could be attributed to their altogether higher exposure and experience with Spanish. Alternatively, it could also come from the participants already having used intercomprehension in the past. Like the Spanish speaking

LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE WITH UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT/RECORDING OF THE SPANISH-SPEAKING PARTICIPANTS

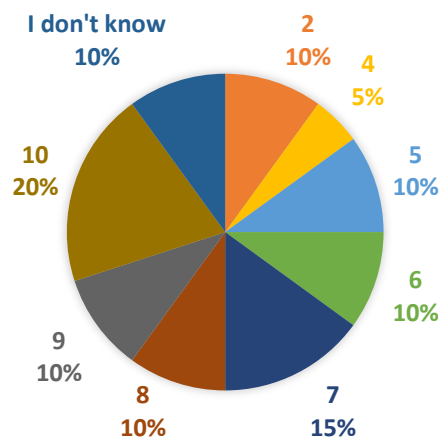


Figure 22 Level of confidence the Portuguese-speaking participants have with the text and the recording.

participants, they were also asked if they were more confident about understanding the text or the recording, and the result was overwhelmingly in favor of the text.



Figure 23 Portuguese-speaking participants on if the text or the recording will be easier to understand

7.3 Reading Comprehension Results – Spanish-speaking Participants

After all of the background information was collected on the participants, the participants were directed to the reading comprehension part. As previously explained, each section had five questions, with the first asking for a translation of certain words pulled from the text. The participants were prompted to enter a translation for the word and were given the option of answering “I don’t know” if they could not come up with a translation. In addition, some participants failed to provide any answer at all for some words, which will be noted if it was the case.

The first word, *prazo*, falls into the category of having a cognate in Spanish, and every one of the participants correctly translated into Spanish as *plazo*. Although the word is orthographically similar to that of Spanish, the context might have also provided additional assistance to the participant; as the heading of *prazo* was followed by a time period, *imediato*, it might have been more clear to the participants that it was referring to a period of time. The next word, *pela*, notably caused a few more challenges, as expected, due to the combination of the article and the preposition. However, the majority (16) of participants was able to correctly provide the translation of *por la*; some of the participants provided the plural form, but that was still accepted as the correct answer. The incorrect answers were the incorrect substitution of *por* for *para*, which occurred three times, one response of *monda*, a didn’t know, and the last declined to provide a translation.

No caused a similar amount of problems from the Spanish-speaking participants. Although the word appears identically in English and Spanish, as well as other languages, it does not have the same meaning. In Portuguese, *no* is a combination of *em* and *o*, the masculine definite article, which would be *en el* in Spanish. These answers were tougher to evaluate, as a number of participants answered with just *en* instead of including the definite

article as well. Seven of the participants correctly answered with both words, while eight simply provided *en*. While not completely correct, providing even just *en* shows an understanding of the word and the text, which is the goal of intercomprehension. Six participants provided the false cognate and simply assumed it was the same word in Spanish, which, as previously discussed, is a serious mistake that would negate the entire thought and change the meaning of the sentence. One participant did not leave an answer for the word.

The next word, *além*, provided an interesting group of responses from the participants. *Além*, translates to as well as, in addition to, or furthermore, depending on the context, and therefore the various meanings create a window for multiple answers that were correct to varying degrees. The sentence in Portuguese that used *além* referred to it in a way that would most closely translate to as well as, or *además* in Spanish, which twelve of the participants answered. Curiously enough, a number of participants provided words that while they were not the exact translation, showed that they understood the meaning of the sentence. One participant provided *también*, which translates to English as ‘also,’ which shows an understanding of the meaning even though it is not the exact translation, and three participants gave *junto con* which has the translation of ‘together with’ which again is not the Spanish translation of *além*, but shows an understanding of the meaning. Two participants, however, provided incorrect translations of *por tanto* (therefore) and *allá* (there), another two answered ‘I don’t know’, and one did not provide any answer.

The fifth word, *cartão*, was another word with a potentially misleading similarity to a word in Spanish. The sentence that used *cartão* referred to the document or card that is needed for entry and exit, which led to a number of incorrect answers from the Spanish speakers. Although the Spanish word *carta* is orthographically more similar to *cartão*, they have different meanings. *Cartão* means a card, as in an entrance card or a credit card, not a letter, which is what *carta* means in Spanish. Six of the participants were confused by this and entered in fact *carta* as their answer, while seven were able to provide the correct translation of *tarjeta*. Another six responses provided a curious thought – four participants wrote *carne* and another two wrote DNI. In Spain, the DNI is a *carne*, just using its specific name (*Documento Nacional de Identidad*, National Identity Document) and is what most Americans would refer to as an ID or driver’s license. From these answers, it seems safe to assume that these participants understood that the *cartão* in question was a specific card needed, although they did not understand that it was not the ID card everyone carries. Three participants provided *visa* or *visado* as the answer which just like the answers for *além*, showed an understanding of the content, but the inability to provide the correct word. However, for the first time, all participants showed some degree of understanding.

The following word, *até*, caused the biggest variety in answers received thus far. Six different answers were recorded, and six participants failed to provide an answer - combined with three participants that answered, ‘I don’t know’, almost half of the participants could not provide any sort of translation for this word. Only six, however, were able to provide the correct translation of *hasta* (until) which makes it the word with the fewest number of correct answers in the translation section. The incorrect answers, however, bring an interesting point to light that has yet to be discussed; the four other answers received (*allí*, *antes*, *a ti*, and *al*) all, although not close to the correct meaning, depending on accent and familiarity with the language, could sound like *até* if spoken quickly. These participants, not knowing the correct answer, could simply have provided a Spanish equivalent they believed to sound similar. This is speculation, but the proximity of the chosen Spanish words to the pronunciation rather than the meaning provides an interesting look into the functionality of intercomprehension

in real life: if the words are not the same, but as assumed to be based just on pronunciation, could more problems be caused?

Heading into the next three words, the Spanish speakers were given a bit of an easier chance with *estrangeiro* (foreigner), *viagem* (trip), and *artigo* (article), with similar Spanish translations of *extranjero* and *viaje*, respectively. All but one of the participants provided the correct translation of *extranjero*, although two did change the plurality of the word to reflect more than one foreigner. The remaining participant selected ‘I don’t know’ as her option. With regards to *viagem*, eighteen participants answered correctly, while two, while understanding the meaning of the word, placed the word in the infinitive form of *viajar*, which means to travel, instead of the noun form of travel (*viaje*). While definitely positive that they understood the basic meaning of the word in the context of the article, changing the noun to the verb could in some cases have a negative effect on the overall understanding of the document. One participant, however, provided the translation of *vigente*, which means active, or not expired, and would not make much sense in the context of the document. *Artigo* also was largely well-understood by the Spanish-speakers, with eighteen also providing the correct translation of *artículo* (article). Although no incorrect answers were provided for *artigo*, one participant did not provide a response and three selected ‘I don’t know.’ As a cognate, this was expected to be understood, especially because it appears in the document in the same form that *artículo* would appear in Spanish, with the article number following the word. This could be explained by these participants simply trying to understand the word on its own instead of using the text to deduce the meaning, which is not the best way to facilitate the proper understanding of a foreign language.

The last word was selected to provide a challenge to see if the participants could pull from the context clues of the text to provide the correct translation. In contrast to the previous words that do not have a cognate in Spanish, *elencados*, is not a connector or indicator of time, but an adjective describing an aspect of the sentence. The direct and most accurate translation of *elencados* would be *listados*, or listed, but there are various words here that convey the correct meaning of the original sentence. The direct translation of the sentence “*No caso dos nacionais dos países elencados na Decisão CMC 18/8...*” would be “In the case of dual nationality of the countries listed in the CMC Decision 18/8,” but listed could easily be substituted for mentioned, included, or a variety of synonyms. Six participants provided *incluidos* (included), two wrote *mencionados* (mentioned), one wrote *en la lista* (in the list), one *establecidos* (established), and another *enlazado* (listed), which could all easily be substituted for listed. Two participants, however, gave answers that while close, do not fully encapsulate the meaning of the Portuguese original: *que pertenezan* (that belong to) and *requeridos* (required). Nine participants total, however, combined to either not give an answer or write “I don’t know.”

After the participants had provided their translations for the ten given words, the questions shifted to require a deeper understanding of the text and not just selected words. Under the ‘Observations’ section, the text provided information about the requirements for minors traveling alone and the first question asked the participants to indicate what is demanded for internationally travelling minors. The text provides the following information (translated from Portuguese): For minors under the age of 18 completing international trips without the company of one or both parents, in addition to the travel document, an authorization is required. Seventeen of the Spanish-speaking participants correctly answered that the travel document and document are needed for minors, and the other five participants answered just one of the documents. The use of *além* might have caused some problems; as

already indicated in the answers to the translation, many participants did not realize this meant ‘in addition to’ and may have not realized that there was more than one document needed. However, all participants were able to provide at least some of the correct answer, indicating they did in fact understand part of the text in question.

The following question, however, proved much more challenging question by demanding a solid understanding of the text and the capability to recognize one of the largest grammatical differences between the two languages: the personal infinitive. The question asked: When are foreigners required to have a visa? Although the answer appeared on a list after a bullet point for foreigner requirement, a number of participants were unable to even provide an answer, with five answering ‘I don’t know.’ Another five provided variations of “when they want to work, study, or live in Brazil,” which was provided as reasoning for another type of identification card further down the page. Similarly, five participants also confused the question for another part of the document and answered, “upon entry/exit”, which is required in a different case. Two wrote “always”, one put “from countries outside of Mercosul,” and another wrote “it will depend on where the trip ends.” All of these answers pull from information in the text, but not from the correct section. Only three were able to properly give “when it is required” as the answer. Excluding those participants that did not provide an actual answer, this question showed that although when using intercomprehension the content may be understood word-for-word, it may be hard to sort out small details that, in turn, could prove very important down the line.

On the next question, however, many of the participants were able to correctly provide the answer. The question asked the participants to indicate what is required of foreign residents of Brazil when entering/leaving the country and the correct answer is a passport and their CIE (national identification card) or proof of application for the CIE. Because the second item can be either the CIE or proof of application, either answer was accepted as correct alongside a passport. However, just seven (you just said it was many) were able to provide this answer, although another two confused the ‘or’ for an ‘and’ and understood that three items were required. A number of participants as well, eight in total, were unable to differentiate foreign residents from just visiting foreigners, and provided the requirements for foreign visitors instead, which is a valid passport and an entrance/exit card. Another five answered a visa and a passport, which is not indicated anywhere on the document as a requirement for any group of people, which demonstrates the inability to understand the content of the text. The final participant answered, ‘when they pass through bored control,’ which indicates a misunderstanding of the original question.

The final question for the Spanish speakers in the reading comprehension section asked, “Until when is an Entry/Exit card needed?” Proving to be the most successful question of the section, eighteen respondents provided the correct answer of “until leaving the country.” Although embedded in the text and not listed, the participants all around were successful at finding the correct answer; this may be credited to the card in question being mentioned only once, so if the participants located it, they had a better chance of determining the answer. In previous questions, certain themes were repeated with key differing words which may have complicated the process. In addition, although the question was posed in Spanish on the form, the actual name of the card was kept the same as it appears in Portuguese instead of translating. This may seem like providing an advantage, but in terms of practicality when it comes to intercomprehension and a Spanish speaker being successful or not, this term would of course be used in Portuguese in Brazil, and therefore translating it to Spanish would not correctly reflect a real life situation, which is the purpose of this survey. Not all

participants were able to provide the correct answer, however, with two answering “I don’t know”, and another two answered ‘until the authorities take it’, which is curious. The full sentence in question says “Cartão de Entrada e Saída devidamente preenchido. The card should be presented by the foreigner upon arrival in Brazil and kept until the moment of his departure, when it will be collected by the Federal Police.” This creates an interesting situation; technically the answers are correct, that they need it until they leave, which is when the authorities will take it, but it does bring into question whether the part about ‘until the moment of departure’ was understood or not.

Following these five questions, the participants were asked to indicate any difficulties that they had with the text. This open-ended question was intended so that participants could provide as little or as much information as possible. Ten participants cited the vocabulary being the biggest issue while others mentioned the complexity of the text and having to re-read the text a number of times to properly understand it. A number of the participants were confident in their performance as well, with three citing they had no problems whatsoever beyond finding the information in the complexity of the text. There were additional conflicting opinions; some said the structure, conjugations, and prepositions caused problems while others said they are extremely similar to Spanish and therefore did not cause difficulties. Interestingly enough, two participants specifically cited false cognates and the fear of assuming words are cognates but being wrong. These participants wrote that they were cautious of this phenomenon and were not as trusting with what they thought was right. The varying opinions reflect the varying answers of the participants on the questions, especially when considering that some participants were overly confident, and others were cautious of relying too heavily on Spanish. After all the data has been laid out here, the answers of participants will be analyzed to see if those who were more cautious about false cognates had experience with Portuguese or other languages, or intercomprehension in general, and if those who confidently relied on the similarities with Spanish were right in that decision and successful in their answers.

7.4 Oral Comprehension Section Results – Spanish-speaking Participants

Following the same scheme as the reading comprehension section, the oral comprehension section prompted participants to follow a link to a recording where they could listen to a recording and then answer five questions about the content, beginning with translations of Portuguese words. In the instructions, they were asked to limit themselves to listening to the recording just three times. While this guideline was given, respondents were on the honor system as they assayed this section. To simplify the process, only five words were given for the translation question instead of ten during the reading comprehension section. The words, *endereço*, *meios de contato*, *residente fronteiriço*, *taxas*, and *branco*, however, were chosen in a similar way; some cognates were chosen on purpose while false cognates were also included in order to really challenge the participants. In addition, with the added difficulty of listening to the text with a new and different accent it might have been harder for the participants to pull out the word to translate. It is also relevant to note here that the majority of the Spanish speaking participants indicated that their experience, if any, was with European Portuguese. Therefore, the recording, which featured a native Brazilian speaker from São Paulo, could have added even more complications to the already complex task.

The first word, *endereço*, certainly was challenging for the majority of the participants with eleven answering “I don’t know.” While more ‘I don’t know’s’ were expected during this section as it is understandable it would be harder to recognize a word without seeing it, the split in answers in this question was interesting because eight participants, however, were able to provide the correct answer of *dirección* (address). Although a word that looks nothing like its equivalent in Spanish, *endereço* was chosen because of the context clues around it that could have easily tipped the participants off to its meaning; it appeared on a list of items that were needed alongside date of birth information, means of contact, and identifiable information. Four participants declined to provide a response as well and can, for all intents and purposes, be grouped with those who answered, “I don’t know.”

The next word came from the same part of the recording and was mentioned two times, *meios de contato*, but was met with much more success than the previous word. This could be because it is quite orthographically similar to its Spanish equivalent, *medios de contacto* (means of contact), or because it appeared twice in the text, which provided more opportunities for recognition and understanding. While four participants answered, “I don’t know”, the other eighteen were able to provide the correct answer, even though it came in various forms. In the text, the phrase is simply referring to the ways or means of contact, and this can be expressed in many ways. Fourteen participants translated directly to Spanish and provided the exact translation of *medios de contacto*, while two wrote *formas de contacto/contactar*, one wrote *información de contacto*, and another gave *datos de contacto* which are all synonymous in this context and correctly relay the message from Portuguese. It is interesting, however, to see that those four participants chose to translate the message in a different form into Spanish, instead of keeping it as similar as possible. This shows that those participants were not simply translating words but were truly understanding the message at hand. In addition, the pronunciation of *meios de contato* in Brazilian Portuguese does not differ greatly from that of the Spanish pronunciation of *medios de contacto*, so the participants likely did not struggle much with that in this context.

The third word, *residente fronteiriço*, was as also handled well by the participants. Nineteen, nearly all, were able to correctly provide the translation of *residente fronterizo* (border resident). One participant just wrote *residente* (resident), which does not fully encapsulate the idea, and the other two could not come up with a translation, instead providing “I don’t know.” The overall success of this translation is surprising; the pronunciation of *residente* differs significantly between the two languages; the ‘r’ in Portuguese at the beginning of the word is pronounced like a ‘g’ in Spanish (or like an ‘h’ in English) and the ‘te’ combination mirrors the ‘ch’ sound in Spanish or English. These two changes significantly alter the pronunciation, and, moreover, the ‘te’ as ‘ch’ pronunciation is unique to Brazil, so Spaniards with familiarity with Galician or European Portuguese would not be predisposed to this difference. Upon review, due to the fact that the translations were given on the survey written out, it is very likely the participants were able to provide a translation based on the written form and rely much less on hearing it in the recording.

Taxas, the fourth word, succeeded in causing trouble with the vast majority who simply assumed the word based on its appearance instead of its context. Although *taxas* is quite similar to the Spanish word *tasas*, which can mean fee or tax, in the context of the text, it exclusively referred to fee and not tax, which tripped up quite a few participants. Ten participants provided *impuesto* (tax) as the translation, which in some cases could be the translation of *taxa* but does not correctly convey the meaning here. Eight participants

provided *tasa*, which in Spanish holds two meanings: tax and fee. There are words that are more common ways in Spanish to say ‘fee’, such as *honorario*, so the evaluation of this question is more difficult than others. However, although *tasa* is not the typical word for fee, it is not the first word usually used for tax either (*impuesto* is widely used for tax), so in this case, the benefit of the doubt will be given to these eight participants. Two participants answered that they did not know.

The last word, *branco*, caused a similar amount of confusion among the participants. As a few of the participants cited at the end of the reading comprehension exercise, some were wary of the assumption that the languages are the same, and although *branco* appears the same as its counterpart in Spanish, it also appears the same as another word, which led to some difficulties here. The answers here almost certainly prove that some of the participants were simply translating the words based off of the survey instead of finding them in the recording and using the text to make sense of the translation. The recording referred to a *fundo branco*, or white background, in reference to pictures that are needed for the residence card. Ten participants were able to correctly translate *branco* for *blanco* (white) and given the context, the word is not too hard to discern even if they were not cognates. However, seven participants did in fact just translate the word based on how it appears to *banco* (bank) which, although appears quite similar to *branco*, has a completely different meaning that makes the text generally incomprehensible. These answers may indicate that the participants heavily rely upon Spanish which, while not always negative, can also cause problems when the context is not carefully examined. Five participants were unable to provide a translation, answering “I don’t know.”

To properly gauge understanding of the recording, the second question was open-ended and simply asked: what was the recording about? Due to the broad nature of the question it would be hard to mark questions right or wrong; instead the responses will be evaluated on the thoroughness. For example, the document provided information about the steps those who want to apply for residency authorization must take, along with the needed documentation. The majority of participants were able to answer that it provided information related to residency, the steps to residency, or outlined the necessary documentation, but to varying degrees of complexity. Some included all details and others simply indicated it was about residency in Brazil. One participant, however, did indicate that although they understood it was giving some type of official information, the vocabulary was too complicated for them to determine exactly what the message was. With the exception of this single participant, the rest were able to give some sort of summary of the topic, indicating they did understand the concept on some level.

The following questions were more direct and sought to challenge the participants into truly understanding specific parts of the text, instead of providing a general answer. The next question asked who can use this service. This was mentioned in the first twenty-five seconds of the recording and directly after a heading that asked the same question in Portuguese. One of the answers, immigrants, is phonetically similar in both languages, so difficulties with this section were not anticipated, albeit success was dependent on understanding the question in Portuguese. Although the recording provided multiple groups of people who could use the service, any of the correct answers was accepted (immigrants, border residents, or visitors) and eleven participants provided the correct response, with five of those eleven providing all three which shows a very solid understanding of the text. One, however, provided emigrant as the answer which is slightly different from immigrant and therefore incorrect. Two participants wrote “everyone” which can be understood to mean the

three groups mentioned above and will be considered as correct as well as the ‘foreigners’ response from a different participant; both answers will be included as correct. There were three participants, however, who did get caught up in the information provided. As mentioned above, the recording lists three groups of people that are included in this service, immigrants, border residents, and visitors and two of the participants understood that to mean that this service was strictly limited to border residents, which is not the case. The last participant to provide an answer, as four wrote “I don’t know”, showed an understanding of the material from various parts of the recording, but ultimately was unable to sort it out correctly. Later in the recording, the speaker indicates that immigrants from Portuguese speaking countries of the CPLP are excluded from this requirement and the participant in question understood this to mean that this service is uniquely for those immigrants, instead of the opposite.

The last part of the recording was a list of the documentation/information required to apply for this kind of residency authorization where six items were given: the application (signed and completed), two 3x4 recent photos with a white background, email and other contact information, identification information that includes the date and place of birth and other identifying information, valid passport or travel document that proves the applicants’ identity and nationality, and a legal document proving citizenship. The participants were asked to provide at a minimum three of the six items listed in their answer. The answers to this question were quite varied, although eight participants were able to correctly give a response and provide at least three of the listed items, and a few even provided more. However, the remaining twelve had a variety of issues with the task at hand. Two declined to even provide anything, writing “I don’t know”, and one participant listed “Federal Police Authorization and National Migration Service” which was not anywhere to be found in the recording. One participant was able to list just one of the six items while another five listed correctly just two of the given items. The last group, however, is the most interesting. The five participants left provided a mix of correct information, sometimes with three correct items or possibly two, but also included items that were not included on the list. Interestingly enough, all wrote “declaration of interest” which is not found anywhere in the recording. This was curious however, that various participants provided the same incorrect answer. After a careful review of the recording, the answer might have been found. In the list, an indication of the applicant’s address is requested and, as already established during the translations section, address in Portuguese is *endereço*. With the speed of a Brazilian native speaker who has the tendency to ‘swallow’ the end of the word, this could very easily be mistaken for *interés*, or interest. This is just a theory, but one that provides an answer to this repeated error.

The questions asked about the text tried to be relevant and focus on important information that a potential Spanish speaking immigrant arriving in Brazil would need to be aware of to make use of this recording. Presuming that in a real-life situation, the recording would instead be an officer at the border, this type of exercise helps to see if interpreters are needed, or if the information is transferred properly through intercomprehension. The last question about the content of the recording asked the participants to provide the details about the photo requirements listed under the documentation section which are as follows: two recent, colored, 3x4 photos with a white background. In a realistic situation, all these requirements would need to be met to achieve authorization and consequently the only answers considered correct are those that provide the correct information. However, no participants were able to give all of the necessary characteristics, with all of them leaving off the recent part. Given that there are five requirements provided about the photo, the

participants will be sorted in how many they were actually able to provide and those that provided three or more will be considered fully correct. Seven participants provided four things (all but recent), nine were able to give three of the items (most of them left out the number of photos along with the recent requirement), two gave two requirements, and another two just provided one. One answered, “I don’t know”, and the final participant, although providing three other correct requirements, indicated that the photo had to be black and white, which is the opposite of what the recording demands. Although the majority were able to give a combination of the correct answers, the across the board failure to account for the recent requirement is quite interesting. The word in Portuguese, *recente*, resembles that of Spanish, *reciente*, but is pronounced differently (‘r’ in Portuguese as ‘g’ in Spanish and ‘te’ as ‘ch’, respectively); the confusion of this word and not *residente* during the translation section may indicate that in fact this difference is troublesome for Spanish speakers and the success of the Spanish speakers during the translation section was due largely to the fact that they had the words written down and did not have to find a meaning from the recording.

Just like after the reading comprehension section, the participants were prompted to describe any challenges or difficulties they had had with the recording and the questions and in this section the participants were much more united in their responses. A number of participants cited that it was very difficult to follow the text and truly understand what was being said, although some indicated that the second and third times listening to it made the process easier, possibly because their brain had become more accustomed to hearing the foreign sounds. The majority also griped about the speed, the accent, and the pronunciation, with some specifically saying that Brazilians are harder to follow. Specific words, the meaning of an entire sentence, and the new sounds were also given frequently as challenges, which was to be expected from the participants. Most also said that it was much harder than the reading comprehension section, which confirmed the confidence level that the majority had coming into the survey (95% indicated in the introductory part that they anticipated an easier understanding of the text).

7.5 Reading Comprehension Results – Portuguese-speaking Participants

The Portuguese speakers had the same tasks to complete as the Spanish speakers: a reading comprehension section with ten words to translate and then four questions regarding the content of the text. Respondents were asked to provide a translation for each but were given the option of writing “I don’t know” if they could not come up with a translation. Although this participant will be counted in the “I don’t know” section for all of the individual work discussions below, it is important to note that one participant wrote “I don’t know” for all of the words and failed to provide even an attempt at the translation.

The first word, *aun* appeared in the context of “the police can deny access (even with valid passport/visa) in the following cases.” Eleven of the participants were correctly able to identify *ainda* as the Portuguese translation of *aun* (even), while one provided *mesmo que* which, although is not technically the translation of *aun*, does convey the message correctly in this context, and will be counted as correct. Six answered “I don’t know” and the remaining two participants each provided a different word, *algum* (*algún*, any) and *assim* (*así* que, so). Although the majority were able to give some sort of answer, it is interesting that the two incorrect answers provided also began with ‘a’; this could show that the participants who truly did not have an idea of what *aun* meant did what they could to provide a word that they thought was orthographically similar to that of the Spanish word.

The next word, *asimismo*, caused a great deal of challenge with the Portuguese speakers due to the different meanings of the Spanish word and the Portuguese word that is most similar. *Asimismo*, although quite similar in both written and spoken form to the Portuguese phrase *assim mesmo* or *mesmo assim*, means virtually the opposite; both are used as sentence connections but *asimismo* means likewise or in addition while *assim mesmo/mesmo assim* means ‘however.’ Twelve of the participants fell prey to the assumption of similarity between the words and entered *assim mesmo/mesmo assim* and four answered “I don’t know” in place of providing a translation. There are various ways to convey the meaning of *asimismo* as it is used as a connector, and three participants provided correct variations of it with *igualmente* (likewise), *além disso* (in addition), and *ainda mesmo* (also). One participant gave *por isso mesmo*, which, although functioning correctly as a connector and conveying the general meaning of the sentence, is better translated as ‘therefore’ and it is not precisely the sought-out answer for this question.

Hospedaje, the following word, created almost no problems for the participants. Seventeen were able to correctly provide the Portuguese translation of *hospedagem* (accommodation). Two other participants provided *lugar para ficar* (a place to stay) and *alojamento* (lodging) which are completely acceptable synonyms for *hospedaje* and therefore accepted as correct. Just one of the participants could not come up with a translation and wrote “I don’t know.” The ease that the vast majority had with this word could be due entirely to the fact that the selection of a cognate simplified the translation process immensely. Similarly, the fourth word did not bring up too many problems from the participants; *ningún* (no, any, not a single) proved a successful translation for many, with sixteen of the participants correctly providing *nenhum*. Two, however, were not able to translate the word into Portuguese and answered “I don’t know” and the remaining two participants once again got caught up in the similarities between the words and provided the translation of *ninguém* that, although orthographically similar to the Spanish word, does not have the same meaning. *Ninguém* means no one or nobody. The use of *ninguém* in the context of the test does make much sense; these participants may have leaned heavily upon the assumption that the words would be similar, as we have seen before frequently.

The following word, *sometidos*, caused an almost even split in the answers that the participants provided. It was used as an adverb in the sentence: “...*en el listado de países sometidos a la obligación*” (in the list of countries subject to the obligation). Eight were stumped and were not able to come up with a response and responded “I don’t know” while of the other twelve, eleven were able to correctly translate *sometidos* for *submetidos*, a word that sounds quite similar. However, one participant did include *moderado* (moderated) as their translation, which shows a misunderstanding of the original sentence. The following word was well received with eighteen of the participants correctly providing *viagem* as the translation for *viaje* and the other two indicated “I don’t know.” *Cualquier*, the next word, had an even higher number of correct answers, with nineteen correct translations to *qualquer*. The only participant not to provide that translation was the one that had indicated “I don’t know” for every word. The success of these translations is not surprising due to the word being quite common and the similarities between the words in each language.

After the general success on the previous words, the next did provide some challenge from the participants. Another eight were unable to provide any translation at all, and wrote “I don’t know,” but translations were given for the word *sostenimiento* (sustainment) by the remaining twelve participants. The word was used in the context of outlining that foreigners must provide proof of the economic means to sustain themselves when applying for a visa

and in this case, a few words can be used, even in English to convey the same message. One could say instead ‘for their sustainment’ or ‘to support themselves’ among many options. Therefore, although the other twelve participants who provided answers combined for four different options, they are all considered correct. Seven provided *sustento* while two gave *sustentação* (sustainment), which are both ways to say sustainment and another two wrote *suporte/apoio* (support/backing) and the last wrote *sustentamento* (sustainment), altogether making twelve correct answers. Although *sustentamento* is perhaps considered the best translation because it takes the same form as the Spanish word and could be directly swapped for the Spanish word, intercomprehension aims to find an understanding, and these twelve participants clearly understood the meaning of the word in this situation.

Se trate, the next words to be translated, generated a variety of different responses, but the majority of participants were able to properly understand the meaning. The sentence read “*Asimismo, se requerirá que no figuren en la lista nacional de personas no admisibles del Estado miembro de que se trate*” (They cannot appear on the national alert list of the member state in question.) The phrase *de que se trate*, or *trata*, or even the verb in its infinitive form, *tratarse*, is used to mean a variety of things in English, but in this case, it can most closely be translated as ‘in question.’ In this particular usage, it is in its subjunctive form, and seven participants were able to correctly give the Portuguese equivalent of *se trate* or *trate-se*, which are equivalent given that in Portuguese the object pronoun can either follow or come before the verb. Another six participants provided the correct verb but used the indicative conjugation of *trata-se* or *se trata*, which will also be counted as correct in this case as it does not drastically change the meaning. Likewise, two participants provided the infinitive form of the verb, *tratar-se* or *se tratar* and another one gave *tratar de*, which, although in a different form, conveys the correct meaning. Two participants wrote “I don’t know” and the remaining two gave translations that, while showing an understanding of the idea around the term, do not exactly portray the exact meaning; *preocupada* (concerned) and *que seja o caso* (as appropriate) could work if the sentence was reworded, but in many uses of the term would not correctly portray the meaning.

The last word, however, caused the greatest deal of trouble amongst the participants, with only one correctly providing the translation. *Demás* was chosen specifically as a false cognate to see if the assumption that Spanish and Portuguese are alike would outweigh a word not making sense in a sentence and in this case, it certainly did. Fourteen participants gave *demais* as the translation, which, at only one letter of a difference, certainly seems like it could be correct. However, *demás* means ‘others’, while *demais* means ‘too many’ or *demasiado* in Spanish. Similarly, two participants provided *de mais*, and two more provided *além* and *além do mais*, which all are translations for ‘in addition.’ One participant wrote “I don’t know” and only one was able to provide the correct translation of *outros*, or others. This participant, however, is one of the two that lives in Spain and therefore has a much higher chance of recognizing this difference. The other participant that lives in Spain, however, was not able to determine the difference and provided the false cognate, showing that knowledge and exposure of the other language is not enough to completely eliminate the false confidence that comes with two closely related languages.

Following the translation questions, the participants were prompted to answer questions regarding the content of the text. The first text, following the scheme of the Spanish participants, asked what documents are required for minors traveling alone which, according to the text, is the DNI (National Identity Document) and parental permission. Thirteen of the participants provided the correct answer while four gave just one of the two required items

(three wrote parental authorization alone while one wrote just DNI). Another participant confused the minor requirement with the requirement for above legal age foreign travelers and gave that requirement, which is the DNI or a passport. One indicated “I don’t know” while the last participant provided a long list of requirements that are again taken from a different section. Although the participant was able to understand the requirements from this section and put them in Portuguese without a problem, this is what is demanded of a minor traveling alone and in a realistic situation could cause problems.

The next question posed few problems with seventeen understanding the text without problem. The question asked, “In accordance with this document, which countries require a passport, but are within the European Union?” In this case, the “in accordance with” was added because at the time that this study was conducted, the UK (one of the answers) was no longer a part of this document and the web page from which the document was taken had yet to be updated and the goal was for the participants to provide the correct answer based on the text, and not let current affairs influence that decision. The correct answer of the UK/Ireland was given by seventeen participants while two indicated “I don’t know,” leaving one participant that answered “Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein.” These four countries were listed right above the relevant information about the UK and Ireland in the following sentence, “The citizens of any European Union member state, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein only need the DNI and current passport. The United Kingdom and Ireland do not belong to the Schengen Area and need a passport.” Based on the structure of the first sentence, it is clear that those four countries are listed in addition to the EU and therefore not member states; however, this participant clearly confused the structure of the sentence to mean the opposite which in real life could create a disastrous situation.

The fourth question of the reading comprehension section resulted in a large variety of answers from the participants. As with the open-ended question that asked about the documentation that could be necessary to enter Spain during the Portuguese recording, any response that included at least one of the listed documentations was accepted as correct. The three items given in the text were physical evidence of accommodation from hotel/private individual, booking confirmation and itinerary, and a return ticket, which five participants were able to correctly provide. One participant provided two of the three while another five gave just one of the options. There were, however, a number of incorrect responses that came from other areas of the text; residency permission, visa, and a passport and visa each received two responses, while one participant simply provided the DNI as the supporting documentation and another wrote “I don’t know.” The last participant wrote “*Recordes de banco para provar que podem apoiar-se no pais/pagar pela viagem/estadia*” (bank records to prove that they can support themselves during their trip/stay) which shows again a difficulty with understanding exact what information goes with each qualifier.

The last question during the reading comprehension section created less variety in the answers, but still caused a great deal of trouble. The question asked for the name of the list that indicates which foreigners need a current visa and appeared in the text both underlined and in a different color, which should have drawn attention to it. However, only eight were able to provide the correct answer of “the list of countries included in the visa requirement to cross foreign borders” and five did not provide any response, answering “I don’t know.” In addition, one participant provided ‘people from third countries,’ referencing what came before the official name of the list in the document. Although this is not the actual name of the list that was requested, the participant clearly understood the question and provided the

right answer. Another five answered ‘Schengen,’ referring to the Schengen area that is not a list but instead a grouping of countries, and one provided ‘member state.’ These answers indicate that the participants were unable to find the correct answer and decided to write another word that was highlighted as important, such as the repeatedly mentioned Schengen area or the EU Member States.

To close off the reading comprehension section, the participants were asked to provide details about any difficulties or challenges that they had with the task and the text. Although some took the question quite literally and gave details about outside factors that complicated the process, such as the small font of the text or a neighbor playing the guitar, three cited the vocabulary as the most difficult part of the text and included that the complexity of the words complicated the process, as they were not common, everyday words. Some participants also gave exact parts of the text that caused challenges, with four specifically indicating that the translation part was the most difficult and others referenced exact paragraphs that they found hard to understand. Others provided the content as the most difficult part to follow due to its complexity, writing that they needed to re-read it many times in order to understand which ended up being quite time consuming. One participant, however, wrote that they were cautious of relying too heavily on the Portuguese and instead of assuming that a word meant the same as an orthographically similar word in Portuguese was challenged by the task of really reading through the text multiple times to make sure they actually understood what it was saying. Four participants, nevertheless, had more positive responses, saying that it was ‘better than I thought’ and that they had no problems with the tasks.

Although the level of experience with other language differs between the two groups, the answers yielded similar results. The comments after the reading comprehension section were also quite alike, with a share of participants complaining about the vocabulary, content, and structure and others saying they had no problems. Both even included a few participants who were wary of the similarities and tried to not rely too heavily on the assumption that the two are similar, which is very interesting.

7.6 Oral Comprehension Results – Portuguese-speaking Participants

Once the reading comprehension section was completed, the participants were directed to the oral comprehension place and to listen to an audio recording. The recording was followed by five questions yet again, with the first question asking for the translation of five words: *concesión*, *cuenta ajena*, *reglamentariamente*, *vacaciones*, and *vinculación* and the rest asking specific questions about the recording to judge how much was understood by the participants. The first word, *concesión*, was largely a success, with fourteen participants providing the correct translation of *concessão* (concession) and although three participants answered, “I don’t know,” the other participants left interesting answers. One participant wrote *autorização* (authorization) which would not translate correctly as *concesión* in all cases, functions sufficiently as a translation here and will be considered as correct. The remaining two participants, however, got caught up in the similarities between words and provided *consentimento* (consent) and *conceção* (design, concept) as the translations. The latter is certainly wrong and would not be considered a correct translation under any circumstances, but *consentimento* is hard to categorize as correct or incorrect in this situation; it does not function in the sentences as it is written in Spanish, but does convey the altogether

meaning of the Spanish original. Therefore, it will be evaluated as ‘understanding shown’ and receive half credit.

The following pair of words might have been the hardest and the most telling of the translation section, *cuenta ajena*. As a term used to define working for others, which means if one works for *cuenta ajena*, they are employed by the outside or by an employer which distinguishes them from being self-employed. The term directly translates to mean ‘foreign account’ and is very frequently used in Spain to define types of employment, but most participants were left stumped by this translation with twelve writing “I don’t know” and one declining to provide a response. One participant wrote *conta*, which is just ‘account’ and wrong, and the remaining six provided a variety of correct responses. Two participants wrote *conta de outros* which correctly translates to *cuenta ajena*, and *por conta de outra pessoa* (on another’s account) and *patrocinado por terceiros* (third-party account) each received one response. After doing research, those three answers were the most commonly found as the translations for *cuenta ajena* in Brazilian Portuguese, which made the remaining two responses the most interesting. The last two participants, who also happen to be the two residing in Spain, wrote *conta alheia*, which is the direct translation of *cuenta ajena*, but appears to be quite rare within Brazilian Portuguese and more frequently used in Portugal. These two participants, with their experience in Europe and Spanish, might have been more exposed to this Spanish term and possibly the European Portuguese translations that exist in Spain which enabled them to provide the right answer.

Although more successful, the next word, *reglamentariamente*, provided quite the variety of responses with seven different responses apart from the four that wrote “I don’t know.” The Spanish word was used twice within the same paragraph to modify the verb ‘to establish’ and therefore took the form of an adverb. Putting aside the two participants that simply rewrote the Spanish word, which does not exist in Portuguese, the remaining responses all demonstrate an understanding of the text and the word but struggle in recognizing the correct form and keeping it in adverb form. As all the words, however, correctly convey the meaning, they will all be considered correct. Eight participants provided *regularmente*, the most direct translation, two wrote *regulamentação* (the noun form), while *reglamentado*, *reglamento*, *reglativamente*, and *reglamentada* all received one answer, respectively. These fourteen answers will be evaluated as correct for the purposes of this task, but it is relevant to point out that in other situations, mistaking the word class, could change the meaning.

The next word was very successful for the participants with eighteen providing the correct Portuguese translation of *férias* for the Spanish *vacaciones*. One wrote “I don’t know” and the last participant wrote *vocação* (vocation), which seems to be an attempt to find the closest orthographically similar word to the Spanish, even if it did not make much sense in the recording which referred to it as “*un periodo de vacaciones*” which is not too hard to figure out given the context. As this word is not similar in any way to Portuguese but is a cognate of the English ‘vacations’, it is interesting to think if the participants’ previous English knowledge, which most of them have, played a role in the correct understanding of the term. Intercomprehension is used based on not only the knowledge of the language that is similar to the target language that the participant already knows, but in addition all other outside knowledge that the participant brings to the table and in the case of *vacaciones*, this could be what is happening.

The last word was once again one where the participants provided many variations of a similar word. The word, *vinculación*, was mentioned in the subtitle of the recording and

meant connection and like many of the words in this section, multiple synonyms can correctly convey the meaning. Apart from the one participant that answered, “I don’t know,” all the participants provided the correct answer in various forms; *vínculo* and *vinculação* was written by eight participants each which are exact translations of the Spanish word provided. One participant wrote *vínculos*, the plural form, and another wrote *vinculado* and both are considered correct answers for the purposes of this exercise. The last participant also provided the correct answer of *conexão* (connection); this participant was interestingly the only one to provide the correct meaning in a different form (that is, not following the exact set-up of the Spanish word).

The first question about the content of the text was similar to that of the Spanish participants’ version and asked what the survey was about, and almost all participants were able to provide some degree of correct information. The recording outlined the steps to take for legal residence in Spain for work or other connected reasons and all except for one participant wrote about that it gave the steps for legal residence in Spain, with some including the differences between permanent and temporary residence, showing a solid and thorough understanding of the recording. Others simply wrote that it was about living in Spain or residency in Spain and just one indicated “I don’t know.”

The next question asked about the two types of residency that are available to foreigners coming to live in Spain which was clearly defined in a sentence towards the beginning of the recording that read, “Residence in Spain can be temporary or permanent.” Seventeen participants were able to correctly provide the answer while two answered “I don’t know.” The last participant, however, seemed to get a little confused with the *permanente* word used in Spanish, and instead answered *temporal e periodicamente* (temporary or periodically). This, of course, conveys a very different message than that of the original text and is not considered correct; nonetheless half of the answer is correct, and the participant will be recorded as having shown an understanding to receive half of the point.

The fourth question, on the other hand, was not as well received. It asked, “After receiving residency authorization, what is the next step?” which was mentioned in the beginning of the recording. The correct answer was ‘to obtain a visa,’ given by ten participants. There was a variety of other answers but none was correct. Apart from the five that wrote “I don’t know,” the remaining five participants combined to provide five different answers, two being *autorização* (authorization) and *emitir sua DNI* (issue their DNI) which was the information provided elsewhere in the text. The last three, although worded differently, all wrote about proving that the applicant could support themselves financially in Spain which was curiously enough not mentioned anywhere in the recording but was mentioned in the reading comprehension section on the other document. It remains uncertain if the participants simply remembered that from the previous exercise or provided a random guess.

The last question asked the participants to provide a definition of long-term residency. The sentence in Spanish gave two defining aspects for long-term residency and either will be accepted as a correct response because the question did not specifically ask for both; the aspects were indefinitely and the ability to live in the same conditions as Spaniards and each of the responses was provided by six participants. One wrote “I don’t know” and four provided incorrect answers of *permanente* (permanently), *tempo de duração* (time duration), *para sempre* (forever), and *ter seu próprio negocio ou exílio* (have your own business). All of those convey a different meaning than the intended one of the text and cannot be considered correct in this exercise. The last three participants, however, provided an answer

that was unexpected, yet not completely incorrect. In the section leading up to that of the long-term residence description, the definition of temporary residence was given which outlined that it lasted up to five years which led to these participants giving “more than 5 years” as the answer. This was tough to evaluate – although the participants clearly understood the distinction between the temporary and long-term residence, the latter was never defined as more than five years; the only time description given is that it is indefinite. However, due to the fact that it is not the answer provided in the text, these participants will receive half credit and the answers will be recorded as “understanding shown.”

The last part of the task prompted the Brazilians to provide details about any challenges or difficulties they had with the oral comprehension part. The majority cited problems understanding the accent and the speed of the speaker in the recording, which was to be expected. Theoretically, Brazilians would be more accustomed to Latin American accents, and the speaker from Murcia has a strong Spanish accent and can speak quite fast. Therefore, this complaint was not surprising, along with the common comment that the pronunciation of the words was difficult to comprehend the first time, and many ended up listening to the recording multiple times to familiarize themselves with the accent. Two participants cited that they had problems with the audio and most mentioned challenges such as understanding the whole content, certain words, or sifting through the detailed information, but three participants again said they had no trouble with it whatsoever.

8. Data Analysis

Now that all the data has been presented, the two sets of data will be put next to each other to compare. In order to compare the results in a way that allows for the two sets of results to be studied, each answer will be assigned a point value which will then be divided by the number of questions in this section to see how many that participant was able to get right and the average score of each group. On the score sheet, the answers are sorted into four categories: correct, wrong, assumption made to PT/ES, and understanding shown. Correct answers will be given 1 point, wrong and assumption made to PT/ES will receive no points and understanding shown will receive .5 points. The addition of the understanding shown category is so that those who understood the material but could not come up with the correct answer are still credited with that; after all, in intercomprehension, that is the goal. The assumption made to PT/ES distinction is made purely for the ease of analyzing the results later on to see where participants went wrong by assuming similarities between the two languages.

Given the sheer amount of data collected, comparisons could be made on a number of levels. Almost all of the identifying data that participants gave in the initial page of the study could be separated and compared to see if that had an effect, but for the purposes of efficiency and time, the following comparisons will be made: total percentage of both answers, success in reading comprehension versus oral comprehension, success rates for those with language experience and those without, frequency of assumption with the other target language, comparison of success with those who speak other languages (any other languages).

As previously explained, each answer was assigned a point value to facilitate the evaluation of the responses. The reading comprehension section had fourteen questions (ten translation questions, four content questions) and the oral comprehension had nine (five translations and four content questions). For the Spanish speakers in the reading comprehension section, the average score was 8.2 questions right out of the fourteen total questions (58.77%). The highest score was 13/14 (85.71%) and the lowest was 4/14 (28.57%) and the backgrounds of both of these participants will be discussed. Participant 18, who scored the lowest out of the twenty-two was the only participant not from Spain; she is from Colombia and speaks three languages (English and Spanish and did not provide the third). Despite entering the survey with a confidence level of seven and having more faith in her performance with the text, she only got five correct answers, did not give an answer for four, wrote “I don’t know” for one, and had four wrong (with two classified as assumptions made from Spanish). In addition, she claimed some experience with Portuguese through traveling to Portugal, giving her some exposure to the language. In contrast, the most successful participant was able to provide correct answers for almost all of the questions, scoring 13/14 correct. This participant, who is Spanish, lives in Luxembourg and speaks four languages – English, Spanish, French, and Italian, but has no experience with Portuguese and entered the exercise with a level of confidence of 6 and preferring the text. She answered all questions correctly except for one, which she answered incorrectly and was not connected to Spanish at all.

In the oral comprehension part, which had nine questions, the average score was 6.4 correct out of nine, with a lowest score of 2/9 and a highest of 9/9, which three participants achieved. The lowest score was from Participant 13, who with only 22.22% and entered with confidence level of 8, scored in the middle of the scores on the reading comprehension part,

but had more trouble with the oral part. This participant ended up giving six questions with “I don’t know,” two correct answers, and one wrong answer and after both sections wrote that they had a lot of problems with understanding the content.

The three participants who scored perfectly on the oral comprehension part had varied biographical information. One of them was Participant 19, whose data has already been discussed above. Participant 9, who similarly scored high on the reading comprehension with 11/14 correct, was classified in the category of ‘a lot of experience’ with Portuguese, as he had studied six months in Porto, Portugal and used the language, although never having studied it. This participant entered with a confidence level of 8 and more confidence in the text, even though he ended up performing better in the oral comprehension part and answered that he speaks six languages altogether, while understanding another eight. Portuguese was not specified in any of these answers, but evidence points to it being included in at least the latter category. The third to receive a perfect score was Participant 14, who had the same score as Participant 9 in the reading comprehension section, in contrast cited zero experience whatsoever with Portuguese, just speaks English and Spanish, understands another four languages, and only entered with a confidence level of 6. These two participants, to use an example out of many possible cases, have very different cases but were able to perform quite similarly in the tasks. The average percentage of correct answers on both sections combined was 63.93%; the highest performing participant all around was Participant 19 (96.65% correct) and the lowest was Participant 13, with an average of 34.78%.

For the Portuguese participants, the average number of correct questions on the reading comprehension section was 9/14, or 64%, which was around 5% higher than that of the Spanish total. One participant, however, wrote “I don’t know” for all responses during the reading comprehension section; if that participant is removed, the average score becomes 9.4 and the percent rises to 68%, which is around 10% higher than that of the Spaniards. Participant 20 scored 100% correct on the reading comprehension section, which is most likely due to the fact that she lives in Spain currently and has an advanced level of Spanish; if she is removed, two participants were able to answer 12/14 right, Participants 5 and 15. Participant 5 lives in the US and speaks Portuguese, English, and Spanish and has a high level of experience with Spanish; Participant 15, a resident of Brazil, has slightly less experience with Portuguese than that of Participant 5 and just speaks Portuguese and English. Both participants, however, answered with a confidence level of 10 going into the exercise while Participant 20, the one who scored perfectly, gave herself a 9. Participants 5 and 15 have very similar results despite their different backgrounds and both got caught up on relying too heavily on Portuguese and providing words that appeared similar to the Spanish word but were in fact false cognates. Eliminating the participant who did not provide any answers during this section, the participant who performed the worst was Participant 11, whose data does make a little more rational sense. This Brazilian participant has no experience with Spanish and just speaks Portuguese, something that only two participants had. She relied heavily on Portuguese, with three instances of assuming a cognate, and frequently answered “I don’t know.”

On average during the oral comprehension section, the participants answered 6.5 questions correctly out of 9, which totaled 73%, which is just slightly higher than that of the Spanish participants’ score. Although no participants scored perfectly, seven participants scored 8/9, answering 89% of the questions correctly. Two of those were Participants 20 and 15, which were previously mentioned for their success in the reading comprehension part, and the others were Participants 1, 3, 7, 8, and 14. The seven participants clearly all

performed well, and their wrong answers were spread out among different questions, and all fall on the lower scale of the number of languages understood, with five participants at just one or two other languages. None of these seven, however, listed no experience with Spanish; five were classified in the top two categories and the other two as some experience with the language.

The participants that performed the worst on the oral comprehension section were 11 and 12, earning scores of 4/9 (44% correct), however Participant 11 cited problems with the audio and wrote “I don’t know” for half the answers and although Participant 12 provided some answers for this section instead of just answering “I don’t know” for all questions as he did in the reading comprehension section, these results may indicate that these participants did not put forth their strongest effort in doing the survey to the best of their abilities. Both of these participants had low or no experience with Spanish and entered the survey with a confidence level of 2, so that may have contributed to their performance. Combining the two sections, the average percentage right was 67.93%, with Participant 20 earning the highest overall score of 95.65% correct, and, if Participant 11 scored the lowest with just 17.39%. However, if she is removed due to the fact that she did not provide a single answer during the first part, the overall average jumps to 70.59% and the worst performing participant becomes Participant 12.

The initial hypothesis, which was that the Portuguese speakers would perform better than the Spanish speakers, is proved true when looking at this data, but not by as big of a margin as was expected. If correct answers on the questions are counted as understanding the material, then the Portuguese speakers understood 70.59% of the material, while the Spanish participants only understood 63.93% of the same material. However, there are a number of other factors that go into the ability of incomprehension, and those comparisons will be laid out now. Perhaps the most obvious is that of the previous experience with the other language before this survey. To see if that played a role in the scores of this exercise, the average total score of each level (no experience, a little experience, moderate experience, and a lot of experience) will be compared. For the Spanish speakers, the averages were as follows: participants with no experience averaged 62% correct, a little experience averaged 68% correct, moderate experience averaged 41% correct, and a lot of experience averaged 69% correct. Although the highest score was achieved by the group with the most experience in Portuguese, just 1% of a difference over those with a little experience does not indicate that previous experience would help much in understanding; the performance of those with moderate experience with Portuguese indicates that as well. One of the only defining factors here is that the group that was most likely to provide a wrong answer that was based on Spanish was the group with no experience with Portuguese.

For the Portuguese participants, the numbers followed a roughly similar pattern; the group with no experience with Spanish averaged 55% correct, a little experienced rose to 74%, the moderate group dropped once again to average 63%, and the group with a lot of experience scored highest, but barely, with 75% correct. Interestingly enough, in this group, the most assumptions made to similarities with Portuguese came from the group with moderate experience, unlike that of the Spanish speakers. Based on the information gathered in the introduction section, on a scale of one to four with four being a lot of experience and one being no experience, the Portuguese speakers averaged an experience level of 2.75 while the Spanish speakers’ average was 1.7. Although this does demonstrate a fair amount of difference between the experience pre-survey, the results divided by each group show that ultimately, the experience level did not dictate the success on the survey.

Another comparison that will be made to look at success is the country of residence of the participants and, more specifically, if those living in a country where the language is not that of the test scored higher. This comparison does yield quite interesting results; the Spanish speaking participants that live in Spain currently had a success rate of 60% while those who live outside Spain (in the UK, Poland, and Luxembourg) had an average of 86%, which is significantly higher. Similarly, with the Portuguese participants, the residents of Brazil scored an average of 69% and those that currently live outside of Brazil, in the US or Spain, averaged 74%. Although the difference between the residents of Brazil and those who live outside is certainly smaller than that of the Spanish participants' difference, it is still large enough to be considered relevant. An important note would be that although both groups host a participant that lives outside Spain or Portugal, but still in a Spanish or Portuguese speaking country (Colombia and Portugal), those participants were included in the total with Spain/Brazil.

The country of residence could have an effect on the performances of the participants for a variety of reasons. It is clear that the Brazilian participants that currently live in Spain have an advantage, and they did perform well, with overall totals of 95.65% (Participant 20) and 73.91% (Participant 19), 19 was very close to average. The Spanish speaking participants who live outside of Spain all speak another language than Spanish in their house (French, Polish, or English) and are at least bilingual; the Brazilians that live outside of Brazil all use English or Spanish at home, along with Portuguese, although in this section, the languages used at work and school may be more telling. By having an everyday influence on other languages, and although French may be more directly related to Spanish, intercomprehension pulls on all previous knowledge to work, these participants may be more likely to succeed. Four of the five participants living outside of Brazil use at least three languages at work and school and the last uses two; three of the Spanish speaking participants use two normally in the same places and one regularly employs three. Although there are many factors at hand here, as previously discussed, the clear higher rate than those in a country where another language is primarily spoken is a clear advantage. It should also be noted that the levels of confidence of these participants was much higher than the average, which could come from being exposed to various different languages normally and using intercomprehension already. The Portuguese speakers in question averaged a 9.2 level of confidence, in comparison to the group average of 6.94, while the Spanish speakers in question averaged 6.7, which, although lower than that of the Brazilians, still beats the altogether average of 5.9.

The languages spoken can have a great influence on the utilization of intercomprehension in real life, and this is a factor to be analyzed as well. The number of languages were sorted into three categories to better help compare them: 1-2 languages spoken, 3-4 languages spoken, and 5-6 languages spoken. Those that speak more languages are expected to perform better, as more exposure to languages helps the brain work with comprehension. Once again, however, the data did not yield the expected results, the average score of participants that speak one or two languages was 73%, three to four languages average was 62%, and five to six languages was 75%. Although the most successful group was that that speaks the most languages, it had just a 2% advantage over one or two languages, which is not statistically significant. The much lower score of the middle group, the group that speaks three to four languages may be explained by the high number of participants that fell into this group. Thirteen of the participants, more than half, speak three or four languages, which leaves more room for outliers and low performing participants to

fit in. The highest performing participant, 19, fell into the three to four group, showing that it is not the only factor at play.

The Portuguese speakers had a maximum of four languages spoken, so they were grouped by each number instead. The speakers of one language averaged 26%, two and three languages both average 72%, and four languages fell narrowly below with 71%. The first group, however, could be discounted for the purposes of this study; this group contains just two participants, one of whom did not provide a single answer during the reading comprehension part of the study, and the other cited audio problems, but still attempted to answer the questions during the oral comprehension section. Therefore, these two, given their very low scores in comparison with the rest of the participants, could be discounted. The next three groups indicate, almost without a doubt, that the number of languages spoken did not influence the survey results. The three remaining groups averaged almost identically, which may indicate that success with intercomprehension is not directly linked to number of languages previously spoken, as the Spanish speakers' data shows as well.

An interesting section to analyze is that of the "assumption with ES/PT" that was acknowledged as well during the scoring. Although these participants did not receive any sort of points for being scored like this, it was set aside to see how many participants relied upon their maiden tongue when faced with the other language studied. It was graded the same as a wrong answer and received no points, but did provide an interesting insight into the study and one of the biggest doubts surrounding intercomprehension, which is that participants would lean heavily on their native tongue to the point that it would stop working in favor of mutual intelligibility, and instead work against it. For the Spanish participants, assuming a connection to Spanish was used a total of twenty times across all questions, totaling around 4%. This is very low and were all found within three of the translation questions, for *no*, *cartão*, and *branco* with an even distribution across all three words. Curiously enough, those who fell prey to this were also scattered, with only one participant relying on Spanish for all three of the translations. In general, the participants who were guilty of relying on Spanish when they should not have did not repeat the mistake on other questions, which does not indicate that it is a continuous problem.

The Portuguese speakers, however, relied more heavily on their native language knowledge than the Spanish speakers. There was a total of twenty-nine instances of it among all the questions for all the participants, which averages to around 6.5% of the time, a small increase from the performance of the Spanish speakers. The distribution of these errors, however, varied a little; while they were spread out over four words, *demás*, *asimismo*, *ningún*, and *concesión*, the majority of the mistakes, twenty-seven to be exact, were concentrated on *demás* and *asimismo*, two false cognates that create a lot of problems between the languages. Just two participants got caught up on *ningún* and one on *concesión*, leaving the rest to fall prey to *demás* (fifteen total) and *asimismo* (eleven total). Given the high percentage of participants that provided a false cognate for *demás* and *asimismo*, many did repeat the mistake, although just one erred on three out of the four instances. The high number of errors on *demás* and *asimismo* as opposed to the more varied mistakes from the Spanish participants could indicate that the words chosen for the Portuguese participants were more likely to cause confusion than their counterparts on the section for Portuguese speakers, although the words were chosen with the aim of providing the same level of difficulty.

An interesting point to be raised is that the assumptions made from the participants' native language were only in the translation section; that is, the answers provided in the parts that asked more specifically about content did not generate an incorrect response that relied

heavily on the native language. This indicates that this relying heavily on the native language could not be as much of an issue as previously anticipated as in a real-life context, it is more likely that those in need of the service would be able to understand the idea based on the whole text or conversation, and that the understanding of individual words would not change that drastically.

The last comparison that will be made within the groups is that of languages understood. The participants were asked this question for two reasons, the first clearly being that if they could already understand languages without speaking them, they were already using intercomprehension, and second to see the depth of their linguistic knowledge. Although they were not asked to clarify which languages (some did anyway, and this will be discussed further on as a possible error), the very fact that so many were not only utilizing intercomprehension but that they were also aware of it helps promote it heavily. The answers ranged from zero to eight additional languages, so they were sorted into the following categories: 0-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6+. The first group of zero to one additional language understood averaged 61%, the second of two to three languages averaged 60%, the third averaged 68%, and the last group, of six or more languages understood, averaged 87%. The last group had only one individual who claimed to understand an additional eight languages to the six already spoken but did not provide clarity on what those languages were. Based on these numbers, it does not seem like the number of additional languages understood but not spoken affected the results strongly; perhaps understanding no other languages or just one does not provide an advantage, but once that number rises to two or three, it could play a small role. However, this seems unlikely as the averages are much lower when compared with the averages from the languages spoken comparison and it seems that scores are much more evenly distributed in this comparison.

The Portuguese participants did not have any answers for this question surpass five languages spoken but not understood, so the last 6+ section will be discarded while the other three are maintained. Although somewhat more spread out, the Portuguese speakers' data does not indicate a strong effect of languages understood on final results. The group that understands zero or one additional languages averaged 68%, two to three languages averaged 74% (when Participant 19 is removed, it increases to 84%), and four to five additional languages averaged 73%. The numbers here, although not indicating a powerful effect of other languages spoken on the results, show that when the two groups are compared side-by-side, the Portuguese speakers of each group did perform better.

One group that drew attention from the beginning was the Spanish speakers with Galician experience. Galician, a co-official language of Spain, is very similar to European Portuguese and spoken commonly in Galicia, a region of Spain that borders Portugal. As some of the participants speak Galician or are from Galician and therefore exposed to this relative of the Portuguese language with frequency, these participants' data will be extracted to see if they performed better on the survey than those who are not familiar with Galician or are not from the region in question (O'Rourke, B., 2014). Of the twenty-two participants, four had some connection with the region; three speak Galician to some degree of fluency and the other lived in Galicia for her life. This participant did not specifically indicate that she speaks Galician, but she mentioned the influence of Galician when asked about her experience with Portuguese, so she will be included in this. These four participants averaged 73% correct on the entire survey, which places them around 10% higher than the average of all participants, but when their performances on the reading comprehension and the oral comprehension parts are separated, the data becomes interesting. On the reading

comprehension section, their average score was 60%, placing them just one percent higher than the average of all the participants; on the oral comprehension, their average was 92% which is twenty-one percent higher than the average score. This difference is notable and could be due to the fact that most of the co-official languages in Spain are used more in daily conversation and therefore they are more accustomed to hearing Galician than seeing it written down; it could also draw upon the study introduced in the *marco teórico* in New Guinea and shine a light on the importance of exposure when it comes to intercomprehension (Sankoff, G., 1980). Although a distinct language from Portuguese, the similarities and history between Portuguese and Galician cannot be denied, nor the high scores of these participants on this section. All four participants as well indicated after the oral comprehension section, when prompted to write any difficulties, that the Brazilian accent was new and confusing for them.

On a similar note, one participant from each group was expected to do well for a different but related reason. As discussed earlier on, the differences in Castilian Spanish and Latin American Spanish are evident, as are those between European Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese (and Asian and African Portuguese as well, but European and Brazilian Portuguese are the two used in this study). In the Spanish group, there was one participant who is Colombian but currently living in Madrid, Spain and the Portuguese group hosted a Brazilian who was currently living in Lisbon, Portugal. There is a general consensus that Latin American Spanish is more similar to Brazilian Portuguese than European Portuguese, just as European Portuguese is more similar to Castilian Spanish than Latin American Spanish and this distinction was expected to cause problems for the participants of this study, as the majority of them came from Brazil or Spain and those were the dialects chosen as well. As has already been both explained and proven, exposure is crucial to the proper employment of intercomprehension, and any sort of familiarity or previous exposure to the specific dialect of the survey could have proved important.

The Spanish speaking participant from Colombia has been previously discussed, but to summarize did not perform as well as expected. In fact, she finished below average in both categories; her reading comprehension score was 28.57% (the average was 58.09%), answering only three questions correctly, and her oral comprehension score, although higher, fell right below the 71.46% average with 66.67% correct which averaged to a 43.48% on the entire survey. In addition, she speaks three languages and had some experience with Portuguese, which is more than other participants could report. Her perceived advantage of having more direct contact with Brazilian Portuguese based on natural exposure turned out to not yield much of an advantage; based on her results, it does not seem like it provided any sort of advantage whatsoever. The Brazilian participant currently residing in Portugal, however, did perform well, even though her experience of Spanish, as well as her level of confidence at a seven, equaled that of the Colombian's. This participant scored 71% on the reading comprehension score, narrowly surpassing the average of 68%, but had more of a berth on the oral comprehension, scoring a 78.26%, around eight points higher than the average. Her final total score put her in the middle-high level of the group; this success could indicate that this unique experience sets her apart from some, but there is not enough to clearly determine whether or not this was the deciding factor.

Lastly, the three Brazilian residents of the United States will be analyzed as they come from unique situations. Two of the three reside in Framingham, Massachusetts, USA where there is an extremely large Brazilian population, as well as a Hispanic one, and the other resides in Washington, D.C. where the Latino population is diverse. These three participants

have the unique situation of natively speaking one language, living in a place where another language is spoken, and yet another language is still frequently used, the last language referenced being Spanish. Although their average final score was 68%, narrowly falling short of the 70% average, they performed quite well in the vocabulary sections, answering almost all of the words correctly. Two out of three also did much better on the oral comprehension section than the reading comprehension section, which could be a direct result of having more influence on the spoken language instead of written government documents, as these texts were.

9. Conclusión

9.1 Discusión de Errores

Antes de sacar las conclusiones, se harán aquí varias observaciones sobre el estudio y los posibles errores u omisiones. Para empezar, es imprescindible destacar el trasfondo de la investigadora, en esta sección y en el estudio en general. Ella es estadounidense, y tiene como lengua materna, el inglés, en segundo lugar, el español y, en tercer lugar, el portugués. Aunque habla todos estos idiomas con fluidez o con proficiencia, no es nativa en ninguno de los idiomas utilizados aquí, por lo que hay margen para el error humano en la encuesta, pero también en el análisis de los datos. Para mantener el margen de error lo más bajo posible, utilizó hablantes nativos para leer los textos de las grabaciones para la comprensión oral con el fin de llegar a la situación más realista posible. Después de redactar la encuesta, también usó hablantes nativos de los dos idiomas para la revisión de los textos, tanto en lo que respecta a la escritura como al significado, y solo distribuyó la encuesta cuando todas las partes habían sido debidamente revisadas. El último problema con el que se encontró fue con la creación de las preguntas de la encuesta, que no eran demasiado fáciles ni demasiado difíciles. Una vez más, recurrió a los hablantes nativos para asegurarse de que las preguntas tuviesen un nivel apropiado de dificultad y que la elección de las palabras o las preguntas no afectara el desempeño de los participantes. Aunque trabajar en su segundo y tercer idioma añadió un gran desafío que no habría existido si un hablante nativo realizara el estudio, fue cuidadosa con el trabajo y se aseguró de que se hiciera y se probara correctamente.

Probablemente el punto más importante que se planteó fue el de las participantes. Debido a la pequeña escala del estudio, la mayoría de los participantes provienen de España o Brasil, lo cual elimina una gran porción de los hablantes de ambos idiomas. Esto se debe enteramente al hecho de que la investigadora vive actualmente en España y ha vivido en Brasil y como ella era la única responsable de la búsqueda de participantes dentro de su red, estos se reflejan en sus conexiones. Además, a pesar de que la variedad de ciudades de las que provenían los participantes era más extensa en el grupo español, y cubría más de España, geográficamente, el grupo de hablantes de portugués se limitaba exclusivamente a los estados de São Paulo y Santa Catarina y, como el portugués dentro de Brasil varía considerablemente, la inclusión de más dialectos brasileños habría producido respuestas más diferenciadas. Se mencionará más adelante, también, pero la pregunta en la parte introductoria sobre el país de residencia fue redactada en el tiempo presente, y muchos participantes indicaron su actual país de residencia, que podría ser un lugar diferente de en el que fueron criados. La recogida de datos sobre las ciudades de origen o lugares de nacimiento de los participantes podría haber sido un aspecto interesante del estudio. En un estudio más amplio, con más alcance, habría sido útil tener más participantes; los veinte de lengua portuguesa y los veintidós hispanohablantes proporcionaron datos y resultados suficientes para analizar, sin duda, pero más participantes podrían haber producido más variedad, lo cual podría haber dado más información para el estudio de intercomprensión entre el español y el portugués.

También, en lo que respecta a los participantes, un aspecto fundamental es el de los diferentes niveles de experiencia con el otro idioma de estudio. Si bien solo unos pocos participantes hispanohablantes tuvieron experiencia con el portugués fuera de viajar o escuchar música brasileña, la mayoría de los participantes que hablan portugués sí la tenían, un factor que puede haber influido en su desempeño. Aunque los datos no indican directamente que los más experimentados en el otro idioma se desempeñaron mejor, es

probable que haya ayudado de alguna manera, y los participantes de este grupo que viven actualmente en España sí se desempeñaron bien. Si bien se trata de una mera casualidad y un riesgo, el hecho de haber seleccionado a los participantes al azar puede haber influido en los datos y en el éxito general de los participantes que hablan portugués.

Dados los dos idiomas estudiados y los países de los que provienen la mayoría de los participantes, es comprensible que sea más común que las escuelas brasileñas enseñen el español dada su ubicación en América Latina, mientras que los estudiantes españoles tienen una plétora para elegir y los idiomas más comunes son el francés y el alemán. Esto hace difícil asegurarse de que los participantes voluntarios tengan niveles equivalentes de experiencia en el otro idioma, pero tal vez el hecho de no permitir que participen personas con cierto nivel de dominio del otro idioma eliminaría cualquier duda o preocupación sobre el tema. Dentro de un estudio limitado con recursos también limitados, sin embargo, es difícil de controlar y se gestionaría mejor en un estudio a mayor escala. Tras separar a quienes tienen más experiencia en el otro idioma de los que tienen menos, los resultados no fueron lo suficientemente amplios para demostrar que tenían una ventaja, pero puede ser algo que se tenga en cuenta para futuras iteraciones de este estudio.

La confianza que se puso en manos de las participantes es un aspecto fundamental de la validez y la certeza del estudio. La encuesta fue completada de manera virtual y los participantes fueron contactados a través de redes sociales, tales como WhatsApp, Facebook, o Instagram, para completar el estudio, y muchos participantes pasaron el estudio a otros grupos después de realizarla. Por lo tanto, la realización del estudio se hizo en el tiempo libre de los participantes y la investigadora no pudo supervisarlos ni verificar que la completaran correctamente. Para la parte de comprensión oral, en específico, no pudo asegurarse de que solo escucharan la grabación un máximo de tres veces o que no solicitaran ayuda a alguien, lo que pudiera haber cambiado los datos. Además, durante el examen entero, dado que la mayor parte de este fue escrita, es posible que los participantes utilizaran herramientas online de traducción, tales como Google Traductor o DeepL para dar una respuesta. A pesar de ser un peligro de prácticamente todas las encuestas online, un estudio más extenso podría administrar la encuesta de manera presencial o tener un sistema para evitar el uso de Internet mientras se completa la encuesta. Se dio el beneficio de la duda a los participantes, y se ha considerado que todos han sido honestos durante el análisis, pero vale la pena mencionar este aspecto.

Un punto adicional con respecto a los participantes tiene que ver con el grupo hispanohablante. Dado que la investigadora está cursando un programa de traducción e interpretación en un programa al que asisten en su mayoría españoles, no solo estos estudiantes, sino también amigos de ellos de la carrera fueron los principales participantes de la encuesta. Existen muchos aspectos importantes en este hecho, pero el mayor es que si la mayoría de los participantes son estudiantes de traducción e interpretación en España, estas personas, es seguro decir, están generalmente predispuestas a los idiomas y tienen un mejor entendimiento de estos. Además, cuando estos participantes del programa envían el estudio a sus compañeros, ellos también vienen de estudios de traducción e interpretación en la carrera, lo que expande el número de participantes que tienen experiencia con otros idiomas y hablan al menos dos en un alto nivel, teniendo experiencia con la comunicación intercultural y otros fenómenos lingüísticos y cuestiones relacionadas con la intercomprensión.

También hay algunas excepciones a este caso entre los hablantes nativos de español; no todos provienen de este conjunto de estudios de traducción e interpretación, la

investigadora encontró otros a través de otras conexiones. Los hablantes de portugués, sin embargo, provienen principalmente de los campos de STEM, que no tendrían la misma exposición a la lengua y la teoría del lenguaje que la experiencia de los participantes hispanohablantes. Eso no quiere decir que tuvieran menos experiencia o que estuvieran limitados en lo que podrían aportar al estudio, sino que solo es un punto para destacar, ya que esta experiencia podría haber ayudado a estos hablantes nativos de español a tener un desempeño mejor que los demás en el estudio. La nota para futuros estudios tiene dos partes; en primer lugar, asegurar que los participantes procedan de un nivel educativo similar podría eliminar cualquier duda en torno a este punto, y, en segundo lugar, incluir una pregunta para recoger datos sobre el nivel educativo o las experiencias no solo con los idiomas, sino también con la teoría del lenguaje podría ser útil en el análisis de los datos.

En una nota similar, la estricta adherencia al portugués brasileño y el castellano podría haber inhibido un aspecto interesante de la encuesta; como los dialectos y la exposición son muy importantes, el hecho de que los textos fueran leídos por un hablante de América Latina y un hablante del castellano, y los textos de un país latinoamericano y el mismo cambio para la parte portuguesa, podría haber generado también una comparación interesante. Sin embargo, en la etapa de planificación de este estudio, se decidió que la longitud de este era la adecuada para el tamaño de un proyecto de este tipo; tal vez con más recursos y alcance se podría realizar un estudio de mayor magnitud, pero como algunos participantes ya se quejaron de la longitud, tal extensión no hubiera sido factible para este estudio en particular.

También podría cuestionarse la elección de utilizar dos textos similares, pero no iguales, como la proporción de palabras diferentes para la sección de traducción. Quizás sea cierto que el estudio habría sido idéntico si se utilizara el mismo texto y una parte hubiera recibido la versión traducida, pero este estudio trata de ver si se podría emplear la intercomprensión para evitar el uso de traductores e intérpretes en situaciones reales y se decidió que la mejor manera de hacerlo era utilizar documentos reales de los departamentos de inmigración de ambos países. Los dos textos y las preguntas extraídas de los textos se eligieron uno al lado del otro para que fueran lo más parecidos posible y está claro que existe la posibilidad de que una palabra elegida para una parte sea más fácil o sencilla, o lo mismo para una pregunta, pero el objetivo es ver si los participantes pueden entender la mayor parte del contenido en una situación cotidiana y actual. En uno de los estudios antes mencionado se optó por proporcionar a los participantes el mismo material, solo traducido, lo que, aunque una opción válida, podría dar lugar a dificultades adicionales. Las traducciones no siempre son precisas ni capaces de transmitir el verdadero mensaje, y el uso de un documento traducido podría dar una ventaja al lado del cual se originó la información.

Tras recibir las respuestas de los participantes, quedó claro que algunas de las palabras podrían redactarse mejor para evitar confusión y recibir respuestas más claras. A pesar de que la investigadora probó las preguntas con hablantes nativos de español y portugués, las respuestas mostraron que unas preguntas no eran tan claras como hubiera sido posible. Por ejemplo, como se ha mencionado antes, la pregunta que inquirió sobre el país de residencia podría haberse ampliado para incluir tanto el país de nacimiento como el país de residencia actual, a fin de reunir datos adecuados sobre los antecedentes de cada participante. En la pregunta siguiente, aunque se pide claramente a los participantes que escriban los idiomas que hablan y el nivel, muchos participantes simplemente escribieron los idiomas o el nivel, y muy pocos proporcionaron la combinación necesaria para analizar los datos correctamente. Además, aquella que preguntaba sobre los idiomas que se entienden, pero no se hablan, generaba resultados similares; muy pocos participantes proporcionaron el idioma,

la mayoría solo dio la cantidad. Las otras preguntas de la parte de antecedentes sí recogieron los datos deseados, de modo que la reescritura de las preguntas se centraría en recopilar toda la información de las preguntas sobre la experiencia lingüística para crear más datos y espacio para las comparaciones. Con todos los datos de idiomas hablados o entendidos, se podrían hacer comparaciones diferentes, como el rendimiento de los participantes que hablan lenguas romances y los que hablan idiomas de otras familias.

Otra área que necesitaría revisión sería el proceso de evaluación y, específicamente, la asignación de puntos por las respuestas de ‘comprensión mostrada’. No se trata de una tarea de traducción, sino de evaluar si el significado de un texto o una grabación fue transmitido y la escala de clasificación no se determinó fácilmente. La elección de proporcionar una cierta puntuación, y finalmente lo que fue decidido como puntuación media, no era fácil, pero jugó a favor del tema general de la intercomprensión en sí; a medida que se realizó el análisis, quedó claro que, en varios casos, los participantes entendieron la pregunta y esa parte del texto o la grabación, pero no proporcionó una respuesta que funcionara completamente en ese contexto específico. La decisión de asignar medio punto se tomó para tener en cuenta este mismo detalle; los idiomas no pueden verse en blanco y negro y la variedad de respuestas, especialmente de los hablantes de portugués, debería haberse tomado en cuenta al evaluar las respuestas. En un futuro estudio ampliado, podría ser interesante investigar el valor de puntos asignados y ver si la asignación de una fracción diferente se ajustaría mejor a la realidad de la respuesta, como .2 o .8. Además, podría discutirse la decisión de incluir respuestas que tienen numerosos significados, con la objeción obvia de que no está claro que los participantes hayan entendido realmente la palabra en su contexto. No obstante, el uso de la intercomprensión no es un ejercicio de traducción y las veces en que se puntuó a respuestas que tienen múltiples significados, ese punto se dio después de examinar tanto el contexto como los demás significados de la palabra para ver la probabilidad de comprensión de todo el mensaje, incluso con palabras sustituidas.

Llaman la atención los resultados de la comprensión oral, en contraposición con los resultados de la comprensión lectora. Treinta y ocho de los cuarenta y dos participantes indicaron que tenían más confianza en su comprensión del texto que en la grabación, pero solo doce se desempeñaron mejor en la parte de comprensión lectora, y la mayoría por un pequeño margen. De los cuatro que predijeron un mayor éxito en la grabación, dos se equivocaron y a los otros dos sí que les fue mejor. Sin embargo, estos dos son brasileños que viven actualmente en España y, por lo tanto, tienen una verdadera razón para entender mejor el español hablado. La mayor parte de las investigaciones realizadas también indica que, en general, es más fácil entender otro idioma escrito, especialmente en los casos del español y el portugués y el hecho de que en este estudio no haya sido así plantea la cuestión de la simplicidad de la parte de comprensión oral.

En cuanto a la comprensión oral, el primer error que se debe discutir es el de las palabras que se deben traducir. Aunque cuando se diseñó el estudio, parecía claro que los participantes intentarían al menos localizar la palabra en la grabación para descifrar el significado, muchos de los participantes, si no todos, parecían simplemente traducir la palabra escrita en lugar de completar el ejercicio como se ha sido planeado. Mientras los participantes no se preguntaron si eso es lo que habían hecho, existe evidencia que viene del éxito generalizado con palabras que son ortográficamente parecidas pero que se pronuncian de manera diferente, y más pruebas viene desde los participantes que informaron de problemas con el audio y no respondieron a las preguntas sobre el contenido, pero sí aportaron las traducciones. Esto podría evitarse en futuros estudios pidiéndole al ponente que

lea las palabras para traducir al final de la grabación, en lugar de proporcionarlas escritas en la pregunta. Sin embargo, incluso con las palabras sacadas, los participantes tuvieron un buen desempeño en esta sección, lo que lleva a una duda si esta sección fue diseñada al nivel adecuado. Al diseñar este estudio, la investigadora tenía en cuenta que la comprensión oral es supuestamente más difícil que la comprensión lectora y se intentaba que la encuesta fuera factible, pero es posible que la hiciera demasiado fácil para los participantes. En estudios futuros, asegurar que las partes de comprensión oral y lectora están al mismo nivel, mediante pruebas preliminares, podría llevar a resultados diferentes.

Este examen se realizó con recursos limitados debido al brote de COVID-19 en el invierno de 2020. Toda la investigación necesaria tuvo lugar en línea, a través de bases de datos y bibliotecas en línea, lo que limitó los recursos que podrían haber sido utilizados. Además, toda la difusión de la encuesta de los participantes tuvo que ser realizada de una manera virtual y la investigadora sola podía usar sus conexiones directas para encontrar participantes. En una situación en la que no existiera el COVID-19, su camino para encontrar participantes podría haber sido mucho más amplio y extenso e incluir varios grupos de personas en lugar de sus conexiones directas. Con los obvios beneficios que un estudio similar aportaría en circunstancias diferentes, hay un cambio que sería beneficioso para el estudio: la inclusión de más grupos de participantes.

La intercomprensión no se limita a los hablantes nativos, de hecho, el mundo en el que vivimos es tan diverso y complejo que la ventaja añadida de la inclusión de los hablantes de las lenguas heredadas o de la segunda/tercera lengua proporcionaría datos nuevos que serían imprescindibles para el entendimiento de la intercomprensión. En un estudio futuro más extenso, incluir tanto a los hablantes de lenguas heredadas como a los que hablan español o portugués como una segunda o tercera lengua podría crear una nueva perspectiva y proporcionar información sobre cómo funciona la intercomprensión. Debido al pequeño tamaño de este estudio, no se consideró necesario ni apropiado, pero un estudio futuro podría incorporar este cambio para crear una nueva perspectiva, y una de cual se podría incorporar los bilingües o trilingües no nativos en español o portugués.

9.2 Conclusiones Finales

Dado que la investigación sobre la intercomprensión todavía es limitada y nueva, es difícil decidir definitivamente dónde puede remplazar a los traductores y los intérpretes en los servicios públicos. Además, el estudio ha demostrado que el conocimiento de un idioma parecido al idioma meta no es suficiente para garantizar la intercomprensión y es poco realista. En realidad, los factores que hacen que la intercomprensión funcione son tan diversos y están tan arraigados en nosotros que cada persona aporta un nivel diferente de capacidades, ventajas, y desventajas. Estas capacidades y ventajas pueden ser el conocimiento de otros idiomas, la exposición a la lengua meta a través de estudios, viajes, o redes sociales, o simplemente la familiaridad con idiomas en general. Las desventajas pueden corresponder a las mismas categorías antes mencionadas para las ventajas; muchas veces las falsas similitudes entre los idiomas pueden ser engañosas y causar más mal que bien.

Tras la revisión de la hipótesis, se puede ver que la mayoría de los supuestos hechos antes del estudio no fueron probados excepto, lo principal, que es que los participantes que hablan portugués tendrían un mejor rendimiento que los hispanohablantes. Aunque no por un margen muy grande, esta creencia se probó ya que los hablantes del portugués lograron más o menos un 5% más alto en la comprensión lectora y solo un 3% más en la parte de

comprensión oral. El aumento porcentual es similar al de otros estudios realizados sobre el mismo tema, pero la diferencia se produjo en el mayor éxito en la comprensión oral en lugar de la comprensión lectora. La gran mayoría de las investigaciones indica que es más probable que la gente entienda un idioma extranjero escrito mejor que un idioma extranjero hablado, pero en este estudio, no fue así. Las posibles razones de esto ya han sido explicadas en la discusión de errores, pero es importante señalar otra vez que esto fue en contra de una de las partes principales de la hipótesis. A pesar de no ser mencionado específicamente, cuando se seleccionaron las palabras y las preguntas originales, se esperaba que los participantes dependieran de gran medida de su lengua materna y eso podría afectar negativamente su rendimiento, especialmente con los falsos cognados. Esto resultó ser la verdad en una variedad de ocasiones que cuestiona la verdadera eficacia de la intercomprensión en una situación realista. Mientras existan muchas palabras con cognados que son mutuamente inteligibles, el gran número de palabras que son falsos cognados puede cambiar el significado de una frase, tal como la diferencia entre el “no” del español y el *no* del portugués. La posible negación de una frase que no debería ser negada puede tener efectos graves en el conocimiento general de un texto o una conversación, especialmente en los servicios públicos.

Se demostró que la segunda parte de la hipótesis que tiene que ver con los antecedentes de los participantes era falsa. La suposición era que los que tenían experiencia en idiomas, en cualquier forma, se desempeñarían mejor en la encuesta, dada la conexión directa entre la intercomprensión y la experiencia con idiomas, pero no se vio que esto fuera cierto aquí. Aunque los que tenían más experiencia en otro idioma de trabajo sí obtuvieron mejores resultados, estos fueron solo ligeramente mejores que en otras áreas, y las cuatro categorías de mucha experiencia, experiencia moderada, poca experiencia, y no experiencia fueron más o menos similares en los resultados recibidos. Dada la investigación realizada sobre la intercomprensión, en la que se explicaron como factores esenciales como la experiencia previa en cualquier idioma, fue un resultado inesperado, al igual que el hecho de que la mayoría de los participantes no tuvieron más del 75% correcto, lo que demuestra que la intercomprensión no podría ser utilizada por los que exigían servicios lingüísticos. Sin embargo, este hallazgo llevó a la extensión del pensamiento original.

El objetivo final de este estudio fue determinar si se puede prescindir de los traductores o intérpretes en situaciones en que la intercomprensión es posible porque los clientes pueden entender el otro idioma a nivel suficientemente bien, es decir, los idiomas de la misma familia. Esto podría eliminar la necesidad de una alta cantidad de intérpretes individuales y, además, aliviar la carga de cuántos documentos traducidos se necesitan para atender a cada par de idiomas. Volviendo a la sección introductoria, en la que se presentó el ejemplo de la Unión Europea de grupos de idiomas, este grupo de español y el portugués incluirá también el francés y el italiano. Dado que los participantes en este estudio no tuvieron un rendimiento lo suficientemente bueno para asegurar que cualquiera que sea un nativo hablante pudiese entender el otro idioma, y el español y el portugués se relacionan mucho, la idea aquí puede no ser realista.

A pesar de que todos los participantes aportaron datos diversos, como los países de residencia, la experiencia con el otro idioma de trabajo e idiomas hablados, no se pudieron extraer conclusiones sólidas basadas en esos factores, con la notable excepción de los que viven fuera de España y Brasil. Cuando se ponen en común los datos sobre los idiomas hablados o los idiomas entendidos, no hubo ningún grupo que obtuviera mejores resultados que el otro. Esto lleva a la difícil pregunta de si se podrían sustituir a los traductores e

intérpretes de cada idioma, con la ayuda de la intercomprensión. basándonos en estos datos, no parece realista. El alto nivel de variación en el éxito de los participantes cuando se los separa en grupos específicas, como el número de idiomas hablados, indica que confiar en la intercomprensión por parte de todos los que buscan los servicios lingüísticos sería descuidado; la gama de personas que buscan estos servicios públicos y necesitan traductores o intérpretes es amplia y es probable que la suposición que todos tengan las capacidades requeridas para utilizar intercomprensión causaría más mal que bien. Lo que podría suceder, sin embargo, es un cambio del punto de enfoque de la intercomprensión. En lugar de confiar en quienes necesitan entender el otro idioma, los traductores e intérpretes podrían recibir formación en la intercomprensión para que, sin hablar el otro idioma de trabajo, conozcan las principales similitudes y dificultades de comunicación con la otra parte.

Mediante la formación de traductores e intérpretes en la intercomprensión, lo cual sería similar a la idea que se presentó a la Unión Europea, los gobiernos y las administraciones estarían seguros de que podría funcionar en realidad. No significa que el traductor o el intérprete debería tener fluidez o incluso un nivel avanzado en el otro idioma, al contrario, los tres puntos principales de la intercomprensión antes mencionados tendrían que haberse cumplidos y la mayoría de los traductores e intérpretes ya poseen estas capacidades. El primer requisito de ser consciente de la intercomprensión es algo que se da por sentado, si estas personas ya tienen la formación en ella, serán conscientes de su existencia, sin mencionar la probabilidad de que ya tendrían alguna exposición a ella como lingüistas. Por otra parte, la actitud de los traductores e intérpretes hacia el otro idioma debe ser positiva; una actitud negativa o creencia negativa sobre el otro idioma de trabajo o cultura puede inhibir la utilización de intercomprensión en la vida real. Dado que la mayoría de los profesionales en este ámbito ya han tenido formación intensiva con relación a la comunicación intercultural, sería fácilmente aceptado. Por último, la exposición tanto al otra lengua de trabajo como a otras lenguas es clave; no hace falta decir que los traductores e intérpretes tienen experiencia en sus campos de estudio y al menos una lengua en adición a su lengua materna.

Esta formación, aunque es solo una idea y algo que requeriría un mayor desarrollo, daría el foco de la intercomprensión a los traductores y intérpretes en lugar de a los que buscan el servicio. Esto significaría que no se les formaría en el otro idioma, ya que la fluidez no es un objetivo de la intercomprensión, sino que se les formaría en las principales similitudes y dificultades entre los idiomas para asegurar que los errores comunes que se observan en este estudio, tales como la alta dependencia de la lengua materna incluso con falsos cognados, pudieran ser eliminados. Al basarse en estas similitudes, los traductores e intérpretes sabrían exactamente en qué aspectos pueden confiar y cuáles podrían llevar a la confusión. Esto, junto con las tres capacidades antes mencionados, podría crear una solución realista para un gran problema. Mientras el método preferido de traducción e interpretación es utilizar hablantes nativos o con un nivel avanzado, esto no es siempre posible, especialmente en los servicios públicos y la intercomprensión podría aliviar esta presión, sin dejar de prestar servicios de alta calidad.

Los servicios públicos podrían beneficiarse en gran medida de la introducción de la intercomprensión en su comunidad, no en nombre de los que solicitan el servicio, sino de los traductores e intérpretes que ya están predispuestos al éxito en el ámbito. Como se ha visto de la pequeña muestra de los participantes en este estudio, los diversos factores que cada individuo lleva consigo son tan variados y completamente impredecibles y, por lo tanto, la utilización de la intercomprensión está tan arriesgado en un campo en el que se necesita

urgentemente una comunicación de alta calidad. Es cierto que existen los que podrían entender todo adecuadamente a través de un traductor/intérprete en el otro idioma, pero sin conocer los antecedentes de quienes que solicitan el servicio, la aplicación de la intercomprensión en general es poco realista. Incluso si se recoge la información, la investigación aquí indica que los que hablan muchos otros idiomas no entienden mucho más que los que tienen menos idiomas hablados para ser un factor. Si se demostrara en otro estudio o en una expansión de este estudio que los que tienen más experiencia o exposición a los idiomas se desempeñan mejor, sí se podría permitir la consideración de la intercomprensión en algunos casos. Sin embargo, los resultados de este estudio no indican tal resultado y en un área como la de la inmigración en los servicios públicos, en la que el trabajo y la comunicación son imprescindibles, se necesita un mayor grado de funcionalidad de la intercomprensión en todo en general. La posible utilidad de la intercomprensión, no obstante, es evidente, y tal vez su aplicación por parte del traductor o intérprete sea lo que le permite alcanzar el éxito. La utilización de los conocimientos que ya tienen los traductores e intérpretes para ampliar sus capacidades podría ser de gran ayuda para un sistema que ya tiene una responsabilidad muy grande.

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