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Linguistic identity on the border of Ourense with Portugal

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INTRODUCTION

- We asked speakers about:
 - What knowledge and impressions they have of Galician and Portuguese.
 - The internal variation that they notice in each language.

- Our main objectives are the following:
 - aesthetic assessment of language varieties,
 - opinions about correctness,
 - perception of dialectal variation in both Galician and Portuguese, and
 - mutual intelligibility between Galicians and Portuguese speakers.

METHOD



Survey points

- Informants' profile:
 - over 60 years of age,
 - not highly educated, and
 - not very geographically mobile.

LINGUISTIC SELF-IDENTIFICATION

- The perspectives of analysis in Perceptual Dialectology we use in order to build a picture of how speakers view their linguistic identity takes into account:
 - Ratings of dialect varieties. Informants rate their own speech variety and that of other speakers in terms of correctness and pleasantness.
 - Geographical perceptions. Speakers' opinions about variation in spatial terms.

Correctness rating analysis in combination with geographical perspective

Where do you think the best Galician is spoken?

- Standard features of informants' responses:
 - The variety that is viewed as more correct is usually distinct from the informant's own dialect.
 - The idea that a variety is more correct is based on intralinguistic features such as speakers' accent or skill at expressing themselves.

Pleasantness rating in combination with geographical perspective

Where do you think the Galician that is spoken sounds nicest?

- Very often one's own variety is perceived as more pleasant, which does not necessarily mean that it is more correct.

Perceptions of diatopic variation

What dialect features do speakers recognise? / With what geographical areas do they associate those features?

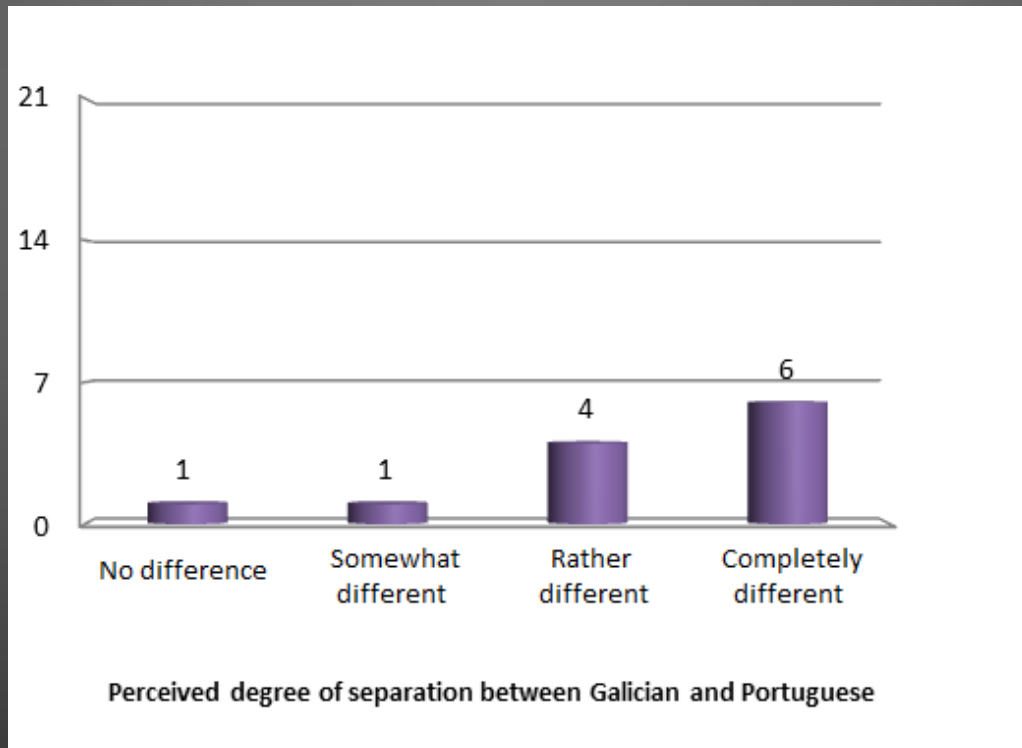
- Participants claim to recognise the differences between their own form of speech and those of people who live elsewhere:
 - In the case of Galician places in close proximity, they are able clearly to identify some linguistic features that characterize the other variety and in some cases can pinpoint their geographic location accurately.
 - When they are asked about more distant places, they find it more difficult to relate linguistic features to speech areas, or if they do, they tend to refer to very large areas which lack exact boundaries.

LINGUISTIC IDENTITY OF THE OTHER

- Given that one's own linguistic identity is built through contrast with other identities, it was thought to be particularly important to elicit informants' perceptions about their Portuguese neighbours and their language.

Rating of linguistic identification

- In a general sense, our subjects consider that the language variety of the community in which they live is not the same as that spoken by their Portuguese neighbours.



Rating of mutual intelligibility

- Although informants see their own form of speech and the one spoken by their Portuguese neighbours as different linguistic varieties, they perceive that they have similarities. As a result, the mutual intelligibility between speakers of the two parts is possible without much difficulty.
- The estimation of mutual intelligibility between Galician and Portuguese decreased when asked about their ability to communicate well with somebody from the south of Portugal.

CONCLUSIONS

- Informants find it difficult to associate an ideal form of the language with a particular territorial area because of the lack of a clear point of reference.
- It is very common for the variety perceived as most pleasant to be one's own.
- Speakers recognise the existence of linguistic differences throughout the Galician territory and are able to identify and pinpoint geographically some of the most salient dialect features.
- The language variety used by Portuguese in the border area is perceived by the survey participants as different from their own, even though many recognise that they share common linguistic features.

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THANK YOU!

GRAZAS!