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BEYOND CULTURAL PROXIMITY: LINKS BETWEEN GALICIAN AND PORTUGUESE LANGUAGES IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION¹

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Abstract

This paper reflects on the role of Galician as a vehicular language between Portuguese and Spanish. Based on several institutional actions, a comparative study of the use of Galician language in business environments, in Portuguese speaking countries (*Lusofonia*, Lusophone countries), is presented, taking as reference different promotional campaigns initiated by the *Xunta de Galicia* (Galician Government).

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The research collects information from several in-depth interviews held with embassy officials from five Portuguese-speaking countries and Galician businesspersons who negotiate in those countries. The hypothesis for this paper suggests that Galician language contributes to a better understanding within Lusophone areas, but further language immersion is necessary to deal with international negotiations. This language immersion process shall also include cultural skills, such as protocol and ceremony, the value of gastronomy or the sense of time, among others.

Keywords: Communication. Language. Galician. Portuguese. Business.

Resumen

Planteamos una reflexión sobre el uso del idioma gallego como lengua vehicular entre el portugués y el español. A partir de varias acciones institucionales, proponemos un estudio comparativo sobre el uso de la lengua gallega en los negocios en el ámbito de la lusofonía, tomando como referencia varias campañas promocionales del gobierno de la Xunta de Galicia. La investigación recopila datos mediante entrevistas en profundidad a responsables de las embajadas de cinco países lusófonos y a empresarios gallegos que negocian en los mismos. La hipótesis manejada es que la utilización del gallego contribuye al entendimiento dentro del ámbito de la lusofonía, pero hace falta una mayor inmersión en el idioma a la hora de afrontar una negociación internacional; este proceso de inmersión lingüística también debe incluir conocimientos culturales como el uso del protocolo y el ceremonial, el valor de la gastronomía o el sentido del tiempo, entre otros.

Palabras clave: Comunicación. Idioma. Gallego. Portugués. Empresarios.

1. Introduction

Galicia and Portugal share important historical, cultural, social and economic ties. Language is the most obvious one, given that Galician and Portuguese have a common historical root: the Galaico-Portuguese language. They both belong to the same linguistic system, which should be considered (Ledo-Andión 2011) a valuable tool on its own, and a priceless exchange factor for the circulation of communication subjects and objects.

This paper takes a sociolinguistic approach, from a business communication and international protocol perspective, and intends to broaden its scope, covering other Portuguese-speaking countries in order to verify the degree of cultural proximity between Galicia and those countries.

This historical and social link between both cultures is taken as a starting point, together with the consensus among Galician sociolinguists about the advisability of exploiting the potential of the language to improve relations with Portuguese-speaking countries.

Nevertheless, despite this proximity, when initiating international relations, it is necessary to avoid communication noises, which often go beyond the language itself and are caused by misunderstandings related to nonverbal communication or other cultural factors that build a country's identity.

To better understand the specific situation of Galician language in Portuguese speaking countries (*Lusofonía*, Lusophone countries), we present a study that builds on the conceptualization of international communication in business environments, with the intention of determining the social and cultural differences identified from the different Spanish embassies in the Portuguese-speaking countries, as well as the experiences of several Galician companies that work with those countries. Those differences may derive in communication noises and hinder bilateral relations, and therefore their identification is key in order to overcome them.

2. Objectives and assumptions

This research project has the following objectives:

1. To reflect on the theories about the role of cultural factors in international business, and how language is one of the key elements to create ties in a society.
2. To study the globalization phenomenon, with the aim of devising a theoretical framework that defines its impact on the world economy.
3. To explore the Lusofonía and to analyze its cultural sphere, with the purpose of collecting useful information to help Galician companies and institutions seeking to negotiate in that environment.
4. To understand the potential of Galician language as a business language in Portuguese speaking countries, given the great similarities between Galician and Portuguese.
5. To develop a comparative analysis with the information about the Lusophone cultural sphere, using a sample of five countries, which

covers the main verbal and nonverbal communication elements that influence international negotiation.

Our starting assumptions are the following: the linguistic proximity between Galician and Portuguese languages is obvious, and goes beyond the mere language perspective, reaching sociocultural, political and economic areas, particularly in the case of Portugal, given its geographical vicinity. Nevertheless, this proximity is not total, and the differences are increased when comparing Galicia with other Lusophone regions, where more comprehension limitations and communication noises are revealed.

3. Methods

A deductive approach is mainly used for this paper, based on theoretical and practical assumptions. First, a literature review is provided, using different bibliographical references. Then, Galician and Lusophone cultures are studied, in order to analyze their main common grounds, as well as those that may become communication noises.

Next, an in-depth interview collects data about cultural elements, aspects related to protocol, chronemics, proxemics, kinesics and negotiation models. Public officials from Spanish embassies and/or consulates in different Portuguese speaking countries were interviewed, specifically from Angola, Cape Verde, Brazil, Portugal and East Timor.

Regarding the selection of countries for this study, one per continent was chosen, the one with the largest number of Portuguese speakers. Therefore, Portugal was analyzed for Europe, Brazil for the Americas, East Timor for Asia, and Cape Verde and Angola for Africa. The reason for selecting two countries for the African continent was grounded on its cultural melting pot.

The embassies chose the persons who were interviewed. The institutions were contacted to request an interview with a person whose profile better matched the needs of the research project.

Several Galician businesspersons who live in those countries were also interviewed, based on their experience in international environments and the use of Galician language in negotiations within the Lusophone culture. Their selection and contact information were facilitated by the Pexga Network, part

of the Instituto Galego de Promoción Exterior (IGAPE, Galician Institute for Economic Promotion).

The interviews included six specific segments:

- Segment 1: Society and business, where information is collected about general traditions and rites, the role of women, the sense of time, food and drink or transportation.
- Segment 2: Relations with other people, where data is compiled about presentations, greetings and treatments, professional titles and the importance of hierarchy.
- Segment 3: Nonverbal language. Proxemics and kinesics are analyzed in this segment.
- Segment 4: Verbal language, focused on the study of paralinguistics.
- Segment 5: Negotiation, which includes an analysis of negotiation strategies, the role of the foreign negotiator and the work proposal, the use of business cards, gifts, invitations, spaces where negotiations take place and other aspects to bear in mind while negotiating.
- Segment 6: Generic, where the interviewee can refer to any other aspects.

The interviews were administered through a questionnaire with closed questions, over the phone or via videoconference, depending on the needs of the interviewee.

With all that information, once the data were analyzed and compared with results for Galicia, conclusions were reached, which cover the current role of both languages, Galician and Portuguese, regarding their common use for international negotiation, as well as the relevance of mutual knowledge in that interaction, regarding cultural differences.

4. Economic globalization and international negotiation

Economic globalization affects international markets and bilateral negotiations between countries and regions.

Otero (2008) affirms that globalization is a process where the economic activity of a country goes beyond its borders and seeks to integrate clients and products from other countries in the world, and where national limits for

economic activities are blurred, to yield for free access to production factors and goods markets.

Closely related to that term, “international business” is defined by Daniels, Radebaugh and Sullivan (2015: 7) as “all commercial transactions –private or governmental; sales, investment and transportation–, that take place between two or more countries”. This kind of transactions is not characterized by the fact that they take place between two or more countries, or that they are commercial or private, but by the fact that, when they happen, they require communication with people from a culture that is different from ours.

Furthermore, nowadays the so-called “intellectual and relational capital” is an inseparable part of the business culture, through a group of intangible assets that contribute to creating added value. To that extent, the best companies are the ones that look for knowledge assets better and faster than their competitors, something that has already been studied for the automotive sector in Galicia and Northern Portugal (Da Silva, Froilán & Fernández 2009), and is considered a key factor for innovation

4.1 Brief note about trends in the current global economy

The current global economy involves a series of trends that confirm the need for companies to go international and to run business in a global context. As Carbaugh (2008: 1) says: “all aspects of a nation’s economy – its industries, service sectors, levels of income and employment, and living standards – are linked to the economies of its trading partners”.

The socioeconomic trends that rule international relations in the present century are the following (González Gurriarán *et al.* 2000):

- Progressive growth of foreign trade.
- Continuous increase of world production.
- Constant progression of direct foreign investment.
- Sustained development of international technology transfer.
- Progressive increase of international capital movements.
- Growing economic significance of international cooperation.
- Increase of regionalization in international economy.

4.2. *About Culture, Communication and International Negotiation*

As Maldonado (2006) indicates, culture is a marginal element in international relations, which is only taken into account when a face to face meeting with our foreign counterpart takes place and the first misunderstandings arise, often caused by the unavoidable cultural contrast generated between both sides.

In order to avoid these cultural interferences and solve any issues in a fluent and smooth way, the first step is to know the other culture in depth, and to endow it with the real weight it has in international relations.

Knowing the elements that form a culture is important, although sometimes it is difficult to list them, given that their number varies from author to author (Rodríguez 2007). In any case, it is considered that a culture includes the following key elements (Rugman & Hodgetts 1997):

- Religion.
- Values and attitudes.
- Manners and customs.
- Aesthetics.
- Education.
- Material elements.
- Social institutions.

4.3. *A special cultural element: language (verbal and nonverbal)*

Language is the main means of communication used by the members of a society to communicate with each other. When we think about that concept, our mind takes us to the universe of words and verbal communication. However, language is also reflected in gestures and corporal expression, in what is known as “nonverbal communication”.

When a businessperson intends to negotiate in an international environment, he/ she must have specific skills in the language used for communicating with his/ her foreign counterpart, because only with those skills will he / she be able to establish a truly effective dialogue, understanding all cultural nuances, decoding information without requiring an interpreter, and deciphering any double meanings that some sentences and expressions may entail, acquiring different nuances depending on the context.

Nonverbal language, according to Cuadrado (2007), gathers its most characteristic elements around three key concepts: kinesics, paralinguistics and proxemics. To that initial list, we would like to add a new variable: chronemics.

Kinesics studies the messages that our body transmits through its movements, its expressions and even its physical appearance. Paralinguistics analyzes the nuances that go together with the way we speak, such as tone of voice, rhythm, pauses or pronunciation speed. Proxemics decodes the messages that lie around the area where we move, and the use we make of our personal space. And last, chronemics is related to the use of time.

The dimensions of language go beyond the verbal threshold, and leak to other aspects that must be taken into account by any conversation partner, businessperson or not, who intends to get their way abroad, by establishing interpersonal relations that are appropriate for each specific cultural standard.

According to Watzlawick *et al.* (1971) not communicating is impossible, given that each gesture, each action, each sociocultural approach is significant for others, and often understood as intentional. It is necessary to be aware of any cultural differences and possible communication noises or interferences that may arise when different cultures come into contact.

4.4. *Requirements for an effective intercultural communication*

The following are key requirements for mutual understanding in intercultural environments:

- a. To know your own culture. When someone is aware of their own cultural bases, they are no longer an obstacle for efficient communication. This leads to sensitivity regarding other identities. It is necessary to collect information about possible differences, and to do it through reliable sources, such as embassies, consulates, or business and professional associations that know both cultures and may act as intermediaries.
- b. Accepting the principle of cultural relativity is key. It indicates that no culture is superior or inferior to another culture.
- c. First impressions last.

- d. To eliminate any communication interferences, both from a linguistic and from a nonverbal communication point of view.
- e. To obtain information about your counterparts beforehand, both individually and as a collective.
- f. To master negotiation techniques, given that some cultures are colder, and some others are warmer, some are more temperamental than others, and some value time in different ways than others.
- g. It is necessary to know how to receive and how to be received, showing a great capacity for action and a constant adaptation.

5. Galician and international negotiation

The business world is becoming increasingly international, therefore social intelligence is key for intercultural negotiation. Galicia is no exception to this trend, and its need for internalization seems larger than in the rest of Spain, according to López Facal (2012: 20). The goods that are subject to exchange are part of a modern industrial economy, and Galicia holds the sixth position in the Spanish exports rank, according to the Instituto Gallego de Promoción Empresarial (IGAPE).

When Spain joined the EU, the Galician economy suffered a “brutal shock”, according to Sáez Ponte (2012), due to the competitiveness decrease of some of its main production sectors. Nevertheless, this situation brought the Galician and Portuguese business communities closer, particularly after the creation of the EuroRegion, which brought about important subsidies that mainly helped to upgrade infrastructures.

This translated, in the period between years 1993 and 2000, into exports from Galicia, first to Portugal, and then to the rest of the European market. Consequently, over the last decade, Galicia's GDP grew more than the Spanish one, with a positive trade balance (Sáez Ponte 2012: 18).

All the same, Galician business community needs to diversify its markets abroad, in order to minimize negative impacts caused by an excessive risk concentration in the European internal market. Cordal (2012: 22) builds on this idea by implying that “our external action cannot be limited to Europe [...] and we must be ambitious in order to achieve other goals”.

Therefore, Galician businesses need to reach for emerging markets, and both its geographical location and its cultural and linguistic factors, award Galicia a privileged position to start business relations with consolidated and emerging countries in the world economic arena, such as Brazil or Angola.

In addition, Galician and Portuguese geographical vicinity enabled, over the last decade, exchanges through new channels for mobility, training and employment in the cross-border area (Rial, Valcarce, Barreira *et al.* 2012), when the Galicia - North Portugal EuroRegion was created, including several Galician and Northern Portugal cities. This reinforced economic, political and institutional relations in the area (Trillo & Lois 2011).

5.1. *The great language advantage*

Each country uses its own linguistic code, but many of them, even with different values, traditions and conceptions of society, use the same language. Based on that, geolinguistic areas are created (Melo Alves 2007), organized as robust promotion and cooperation instruments within the globalization of international relations.

The countries that are part of those areas know that their strength lies in their union, and that union resides in their common bond: language. When a language, in addition to its communicative and cultural value, acquires a strategic dimension, it can become a very powerful tool in other fields outside linguistic factors. That way, the economic power of a language lies in its number of speakers, and the financial figures of the countries that identify with that language.

In that sense, Galician language, regarding Portuguese, has a great potential, according to the assumptions set forth by Antero *et al.* (2012):

- People who speak the same language, or a similar one, have more possibilities of establishing relations between them.
- People who know the language spoken by others, are more open to understanding their culture and their values.
- The larger the number of speakers of a language, the more value it has at a global level. Therefore, more people are willing to learn that language, and many rush to speak it.

- The use of the same language enables easier communication between different organizations or individuals.
- Being able to speak several languages is nowadays a distinguishing factor.
- The sense of belonging.

Therefore, it makes sense that Galician businesses are interested in the Portuguese speaking countries, as well as many Galician professionals, who see great opportunities in the Lusofonía.

5.2. Galician language in the lusophone environment

Galicia has close historic ties with Portugal and its language (Bagno 2011: 36), to the extent of generating disputes regarding their degree of kinship (Monteagudo & Pintos 2010: 80).

Leaving that conflict aside (between those who reject the bonds with Portugal and prefer the bonds with Spain, and those who reject the bonds with Spain and prefer the bonds with Portugal), it is important to define the term “Lusofonía”, which is determined by the group of countries that have Portuguese as their official language.

Regarding Galician language, Monteagudo and Pintos (2010), consider that its relationship with the Lusofonía is possible and feasible, if relations between Galician and Portuguese become more active, stop being only theoretical, and involve a larger number of people. Castro (2009: 249) agrees, indicating that Galicia is a strategic hub to initiate relations with European, Latin and African markets, as well as a population who can easily work in the Lusophone areas.

Which ties between those two cultures may become competitive advantages in the Lusophone markets? According to Álvarez (2009: 259), the following:

- Linguistic affinity.
- Common history and past.
- Geographic vicinity between Galicia and Portugal.
- Strategic Atlantic location of Galicia and Portugal, which enables international business between the European Union, and the Americas and Africa.

- Cultural and habitat similarities.
- Close relations in scientific and cultural sectors.
- Relevance of Galician migrations to Portuguese speaking countries.
- Fishing map.

5.3. Promoting Galician Language

The 1978 Spanish Constitution recognized other official languages, in addition to Spanish, in specific areas of Spain. At that point, language promotion policies came into place, initiated by several public institutions. The first efforts were addressed to promoting an internal use of the language; years later, the focus shifted to promoting its use outside Galician borders. That second line of action has become more intense over these past years, by claiming the market value of the language as a communication instrument for relations with Portuguese speaking countries. As example, the words of the former Galician president, Xerardo Fernández-Albor, to the newspaper *O Xornal de Galicia* on May 23rd 2010, regarding the importance of Galician language as a way to learn Portuguese: “we have a fantastic option to connect with Brazil and the Portuguese speaking countries in Africa”.

A statement from the Galician Government's General Director for Language Policies (Director Xeral de Política Lingüística, Xunta de Galicia), Valentín García, to the newspaper *Galicia Confidencial* (May 17th 2013) points in the same direction: “The Lusofonía is a great opportunity for Galician language. Furthermore, we are focusing on the economic sector, because [...] our businesses, unlike Catalanian businesses, never emphasized the defense of our language, although that is currently improving. That is the reason why we see an opportunity in teaching those businesses about the relevance of our language when exporting to Portuguese speaking countries. For us, having contact with the Lusophone world is key”.

The Project Director for the Galician Federation of Industrial States (Director de Proyectos de la Federación Galega de Parques Empresariales de Galicia, Iván Vaqueiro) (2013), asserts: “It is true that Galician language is an opportunity, but we possibly need to improve communication tools from a sectoral, technical and specific point of view, based on the particularities of those countries. Galician language is a good complement to Portuguese

language, and the other way around. Like everything surrounding business, in case we do something, we should do it well, and for that purpose the Galician Government must provide funds for training programs in this area”.

In the same vein, we are including below some of the institutional initiatives for promoting the use of Galician language in business environments, particularly for international negotiations:

- “O galego, chave para os teus negocios no mundo²” (Galician language, key to your business around the world): This was a joint campaign, promoted from the FEGAPE (Federación Galega de Parques Empresariales, Galician Federation of Industrial States) and the Secretaría Xeral de Política Lingüística, Xunta de Galicia (General Secretariat for Language Policies, Galician Government) back in 2012. Its goal was to encourage the Galician business community to use their own language when doing business. The campaign had a printed format, distributed through the FEGAPE network and relevant Galician economic organizations.
- “Exportar en galego³” (Exporting in Galician): A new campaign was launched in 2013, as a continuation of the abovementioned one. Once again, promoted by Secretaría Xeral de Política Lingüística and FEGAPE, guidelines were presented to businesses interested in learning about their possibilities in the Lusophone market.
- “ConsumoGustos⁴” (a pun using the words “consumo” = consumption; “gustos” = pleasures, but also tastes; and the expression “con sumo gusto” = with great pleasure, delighted to). Promoted by the Enrique Peinador Forum and the Asociación Galega de Adegoeiros (Galician Association of Wine Producers), with the cooperation of the Consellería de Cultura, Educación e Ordenación Universitaria (Galician Ministry for Culture, Education and

2. http://www.lingua.gal/o-galego/promovelo/rede-de-dinamizacion-linguistica/programas/_/contido_0103/galego-chave-para-teus-negocios-mundo

3. http://www.lingua.gal/o-galego/promovelo/rede-de-dinamizacion-linguistica/programas?content=/Portal-Lingua/Contido/iniciativa/Programas/contido_0101.html

4. http://www.lingua.gal/c/portal/layout?p_l_id=1639655&content=Programas/contido_0103.html

Universities), through the Secretaría Xeral de Política Lingüística. Consumogustos started in 2012 and promoted labeling Galician food and produce in Galician language.

- To round off all those promotional efforts, the Galician Government presented in 2016 the “Plan de dinamización da lingua galega no tecido económico⁵” (Promotion Plan for Galician Language in the Economic Community), which was to be implemented between years 2016 and 2020, involving the main administrative and business agents in Galicia. It intended to start a range of actions to reinforce and increase the presence of Galician language in economic environments. The plan had three main goals: a) To raise awareness about the good results of using Galician language for achieving business goals, and improving work, trade and banking relations. b) To increase the use of Galician language in economic environments, and work, trade and banking relations. And c) To use the language to boost a differential brand image for Galicia and its products, linked to quality and innovation.

But the structural proximity between Galician and Portuguese languages should not be misleading: effective communication between speakers of each language is filled with obstacles.

6. Comparative study of protocol and social uses of Galician language vs. those of Portuguese speaking countries

For this section, information was compiled through interviews with Galician businesspersons and employees from the Spanish embassies in Portugal, Angola, Cape Verde, Brazil and East Timor.

6.1. Brazil

Brazil's population is known for their entrepreneurship and positiveness, together with a slightly careless personality, which derives in low efficiency

5. <http://www.edu.xunta.gal/portal/es/node/19831>

levels. Religion is very important. It is a contact society. Brazilians are very expressive, both verbally and nonverbally.

Brazilian society is very diverse, and one of its main features is its cultural mix, which is visible in its social and religious coexistence, and the appraisal of pagan traditions and rites. This is a society with sharp contrasts, with very differentiated social levels, according to the embassy employees.

Women play a significant role both in Brazilian society and business environments, which is equal to the role of men.

In Brazil, their idea of time is close to the “time is eternal” saying, therefore punctuality is not very common. Nevertheless, it is important to set meetings in advance.

Gastronomy is very important in the country, and it is very varied. In informal lunches and dinners, talking business is acceptable.

Their contact society is more prudent in business environments, where the formal “você” is used, together with professional and academic titles.

Regarding language, Portuguese is official, but Brazilians can usually speak Spanish and English. Like in other Latin America countries, many Brazilians assimilate Galician language with Spanish language and are not aware of the existence of Galician itself, but value its use as an attempt to come closer, linguistically and socially.

Starting relations with casual small talk is recommended, preferably about sports and travelling. Politics, social inequalities or corruption are only mentioned in closer environments.

During negotiations, emotional factors are more valued than rational ones. Business cards are very important and shall be handed at the beginning of the meetings and thanked for when received.

6.2. *Angola*

Angola's society is relaxed, patient and happy. Their friendly personality allows for mixing business and family environments. They often gesticulate and their tone of voice is quite high.

Angolans deeply respect their beliefs and traditions, and religion and rites are important when doing business.

Their value of time is quite loose, given that their conversations are very relaxed. Punctuality is not very frequent.

Social status prevails in both personal and business spheres, therefore using professional and academic titles is very common. Hierarchy is very marked.

Regarding the role of women, it is not equal to men's, but the situation is considered to be improving.

During the first contacts, formal treatments (such as "você") are used, and addressing Angolans by their name, preceded by Sr./ Sra. (Mr. /Ms.) and the corresponding professional and academic titles is recommended. After that first contact, when a certain level of mutual trust has been developed, a more informal treatment form may be used.

Angolans like a casual initial conversation, where avoiding topics such as wars or colonization is recommended.

Although Portuguese is the most widely spoken language, English is also frequently used for business purposes. Most people are not aware of the existence of Galician language, therefore do not have an opinion on it whatsoever.

Angolan gastronomy is heavily influenced by the Portuguese one, with fish, meat and vegetables as main courses. Beer is the most common beverage, although wine is becoming more popular. In business environments, whiskey is the preferred option, and champagne is chosen for toasts. Business meetings often take place during meals and mixing professional conversations with other topics is acceptable.

During negotiations, emotional factors are more valued than rational ones. Directly looking at their conversation partner is appreciated, transmitting peacefulness and honesty. They prefer simple and well-presented proposals. Coffee or appetizers are often served in business meetings.

Business cards are important and should be handed at the beginning of the meetings. Receiving them with appreciation is also important. Gifts are not recommended, unless they are small items with little economic value, to avoid confusion with bribes. Invitations are frequent in business environments, either for meals, cultural activities or sports events.

6.3. *Cape Verde*

Cape Verdeans are persistent and tenacious. They value traditions and superstitions. They mix professional and personal life, although physical distance is different for each environment.

They use the formal “você” treatment in business relations, as well as professional titles. They also value hierarchy, particularly in the first contacts.

Regarding the role of women in business, it is still very limited.

The motto “time is eternal” also applies to Cape Verde, where time goes slowly, and therefore punctuality is not very frequent. Nevertheless, setting business meetings one week in advance and respecting them is recommended.

Gastronomy is extremely valued, and it does belong in the business world, therefore talking about it in informal meals is appropriate. Toasts are used to celebrate successes.

Looking at your conversation partner is very important and, unlike for Galicians, silence transmits a lot of emotions.

They communicate in Portuguese and *Crioulo*, the island’s native language. They appreciate the efforts of foreigners to speak their language and, like in Angola, they are not aware of the existence of Galician language.

During negotiations, economic aspects are key, and they like simple presentations. Business cards are an important tool and shall be handed at the beginning of the meetings. They like company gifts, which are in fact quite frequent. Cape Verdeans do not usually extend invitations but appreciate being invited.

6.4. *Portugal*

Portuguese society is characterized by its patience, its perseverance and its kindness. Portugal values traditions, although their citizens define the country as a modern society, and advocate for equal rights.

First contacts are very formal, and courtesy and formality are appreciated. For greetings, hand shaking is the most common practice, although people with closer relations use social hugs and kisses. They address people with formality, using Sr., D. (Mr.) and the corresponding academic and/ or professional titles.

From an institutional protocol point of view, their order of precedence is very similar to de Spanish one.

Portugal is a contact society, and casual small talk is recommended to break the ice, although it should not take too long.

Regarding habits and traditions, invitations to private homes only happen when there is a previous personal relation, and taking gifts is not necessary. Presents are not appropriate in a first meeting.

Portuguese people value time, at least in work environments. Nevertheless, they take their time to strengthen their relations and think about the topics being discussed, therefore initial small talk is frequent.

Given the cultural and language proximity between Galicia and Portugal, many Portuguese people believe that they can have basic conversations with Galicians using that language, but when it comes to complex and specific topics, they prefer to negotiate in Portuguese or Spanish, and to avoid the so-called “Portuñol” (an unsystematic blend of Portuguese and Spanish). Portuguese citizens can usually speak other languages, particularly English, therefore negotiations often take place in that language.

Gastronomy has an important role within Portuguese culture and traditions. Business meals are frequent, although business topics are not usually dealt with while eating.

When negotiating, Portuguese expect their counterparts to be polite, formal and to provide them with specific proposals, preferring rational ones over emotional ones. Business cards are important, handed at the beginning of the meetings and received with gratitude. Regarding invitations, they are limited to formal meetings and business meals; they do not usually mix personal and professional event invitations.

6.5. *East Timor*

The society of East Timor relies on patience when facing adversity. Its citizens are generally happy and supportive. They appreciate honesty and religion is one of the key pillars of their community.

Traditions and superstitions have a great degree of importance both in everyday life and in business environments. Social status is relevant, and present in all life areas, particularly business. The highest-ranking representatives

of the organizations attend the meetings and have full responsibility in negotiations.

Timorese women do not play an important role in business environments, being often limited to mother figures.

Timorese people work to live, and, for them, “time is money”. Therefore, punctuality is a fundamental factor. Working hours are usually flexible, and meetings shall be set at least one week in advance, although very often the scheduled dates are moved.

Gastronomy is appreciated and varied. Toasts and business meals are not frequent. Timor is a contact society, but people do not usually like their personal space to be invaded. Gestures are not exaggerated, and they use a moderate tone of voice, looking directly at their conversation partner.

They speak Portuguese and Tetum languages. When using them is not possible in a business environment, they resort to English, which is also the most common language for international written documents. They appreciate formality, use the “você” treatment and tend to address people using the structure title + name + last name, in addition to the corresponding professional titles.

When negotiating, they prefer detailed but simple presentations. They value business cards, which shall be printed at least in Portuguese and English, and are exchanged at the beginning of the meetings. These shall be received with gratitude and be read before putting them away. They also appreciate business gifts, which are presented when they first meet their counterparts. On the contrary, invitations outside a strict business environment are not frequent.

7. Conclusions

The main conclusions of this paper are the following:

- Globalization is a complex phenomenon, which reveals the need for a country to establish relations with other countries, given that, nowadays, no nation can be considered self-sufficient (O1, O2).
- The success of Galician economy and businesses lies in internationalizing their activities, in their degree of immersion in emerging markets such as Brazil and Angola, and in using its language as a

competitive advantage in Portuguese speaking countries. Galician public organizations understand this and have therefore generated different promotional campaigns, addressed to businesspersons, with the goal of persuading them to use Galician language as a useful and beneficial tool in their international negotiations (O4).

- In international negotiations, Galicia and its business community have a great competitive advantage when establishing professional relations: their language.

The proximity between Galician and Portuguese brings about linguistic similarities, and consequently that tool may be key when establishing relations. The analysis of the interviews, both with the embassies and with the Galician businesses working in other countries, leads to believe that Galician language can be used to communicate with Lusophone countries and entering international relations. Nevertheless, when using that language as a business language, it becomes necessary to draw up a detailed and specific society profile for each particular Lusophone country.

The interviewees understand that, ideally, a conversation between Galician and Portuguese speaking businesspersons shall respect both languages. Correctly (and slowly) speaking in one's native language is recommended, in order not to misunderstand words and to avoid communicative noises, such as the so-called "Portuñol" (O4).

- Consequently, Galicians who wish to work in Lusophone countries shall closely study the cultural patterns for each of the regions, and strengthen their knowledge about nonverbal communication, including proxemics, kinesics or chronemics. Galicians shall be informed about the value of time, clothes, greetings, behavior standards, protocol norms, gastronomy, gestures, the role of women in business environments, or the importance and value of religion in each of the cultures (O4, O5).
- The cultural sphere in the Lusofonía is complex and varied, given that the countries that are part of it are geographically very distant. Nevertheless, broadly speaking, Lusophone societies are contact societies, with respectful, quiet and formal members. Nowadays, the main factors when initiating business contacts are religion, culture

and economy; traditions and history influence daily life; and time is considered a relative good (O3, O5).

- When negotiating in Portuguese speaking countries, rational factors are more important than emotional factors. Proposals shall be presented in a simple way, and one of the main limitations when negotiating is that the foreign person is not aware of the idiosyncrasy of the country. Furthermore, business conversations shall take place slowly, and the foreign negotiator shall show honesty, integrity, politeness, proper image and skills to function in different countries (O3, O5).
- Most Portuguese speakers are not aware of the existence of Galician language – except for the ones who are geographically closer (Portugal). They do not consider it as strong as Portuguese for international negotiations. Nevertheless, they believe that, given the linguistic proximity of both languages, they would understand a businessperson speaking Galician, and would consider it a positive gesture, understood as an effort to come closer to their culture.

Ultimately, there is no doubt that Galician businesses should try to enter the Lusophone markets, look for business opportunities in the suggested emerging countries, use their language as a tool for communicating, and bridge cultural gaps presented in this context, using the recommendations derived from the personal experience of those who live in Portuguese speaking countries.

At this point, we can confirm our initial assumptions for this research, which suggested that the linguistic proximity between Galician and Portuguese languages is obvious and goes beyond the mere language perspective, reaching sociocultural, politic and economic areas. However, this proximity is not total, and there are limitations for mutual understanding that shall be considered when seeking successful international relations, usually framed within nonverbal communication. All this is proven by our field work, where our interviewees agree on the importance of bearing in mind not only language factors, but also nonverbal and cultural communication.

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