

Linguistic identity in the border of Ourense with Portugal

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This work presents the development and results of a project framed in the field of Perceptual Dialectology, through which we investigate the imagotypes that the inhabitants of the rural border of the province of Ourense project in relation to their neighbors and the Portuguese language they speak.

The field work was conducted in twenty-one Galician villages of the border with Portugal. The main objective is to discover the perception of the speakers with respect to the linguistic differences between Galician and Portuguese attending to different aspects.

We conducted a qualitative study based on a directed interview and we observe that informants' ideas are conditioned by cultural knowledge and the ability to understand Portuguese. Based on this axis, when informants focus on the belief of being comparing two different languages, they claim that both of them are largely deviated. However, the perception of difference goes waning if speakers focus on the intelligibility between Galician and Portuguese.

To complete this observation, it should be noted that our informants make a distinction between the Portuguese spoken in the border area between Galicia and Portugal and the language spoken in southernmost regions, perceived as more attached to the norm. These reflections fit in with the notion of "dialectal prescriptivism" (Preston, 1989, p.22; Ferreira, 2009, p.253) and explain why our informants think that the northern Portuguese is not prototypical.