

More intelligible than English? Investigating comprehension of a related language compared to English used as a *lingua franca*

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Using English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) for communication between two speakers of closely-related languages is a recent phenomenon, and represents just one of the communication options available to speakers in this type of exchange. Another such strategy is for each speaker to use their native language, though this relies on the listener to be able to comprehend the related language adequately, raising the question of whether comprehension of the related language or the speaker's L2 English is easiest.

The present study follows in the tradition of research into mutual intelligibility between related languages (Gooskens, 2006, 2007; Jensen, 1989) and of L2 speech and its deviations from native-speaker norms (Field, 2005; Jenkins, 2002; Munro, Derwing, & Morton, 2006).

The method is based on retellings of short films by Croatian, Spanish and Swedish university students in their native languages as well as in English. The recordings of those retellings are presented to Slovenian, Portuguese and Danish listeners respectively who answer multiple-choice listening comprehension questions about the films' content for both English and related-language stimuli.

A statistical analysis will be performed to gauge the variance that can be explained by pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary errors in the English-language stimuli, giving insight into factors that most affect comprehension. The results of this study, in which the efficacy of communication in English as a *Lingua Franca* and the use of receptive multilingualism are directly compared, paint a partial picture of a cross-border verbal communication situation and will shed light on the listener- and speaker-dependent factors that play a role for the comprehension of a related language and ELF.