



The University of the West Indies
St. Augustine Campus
Faculty of Humanities and Education
Caribbean Studies Project
HUMN 3099

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Title of Thesis:

An investigation as to whether speech rate and accent are the two most prominent factors which contribute to the hindrance of the listening comprehension abilities of level III Spanish students at UWI.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt and most sincere gratitude to a number of persons who assisted in making the successful completion of this thesis possible. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr. Romulo Guedez Fernandez for his continuous support throughout the semester and for his most helpful and useful advice. Many thanks also go out to the students who took the time out of their busy schedule to participate in the research of this final project. I am also very grateful to the moderator for this project, Dr. Debbie Mc Collin for lending her valuable time to guide all students in the format and layout of how to approach and complete this thesis. Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank all my friends and family who supported me and gave any assistance where possible.

Abstract

This dissertation seeks to investigate certain determinants that hinder the listening comprehension abilities of level III Spanish students at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus. This paper specifically focuses on two of the above mentioned determinants; speech rate and accent. It assesses how speech rate and accent hinder students in their ability to grasp certain words or concepts that are being said by Spanish speakers from different countries. This is due to the fact that some speakers may speak faster than others or articulate their words differently from others, based on their country of origin. This research paper, through the use of a listening assessment and a questionnaire, evaluated ten students of the level III Spanish degree and then questioned them based off of the audio clips that were played. This investigation made it evident that some students from the research sample found difficulty with the accent of some of the speakers while some understood the accent but the rate at which the Spanish speakers spoke posed a hindrance in their ability to grasp what was being said. This research paper also places focus on some other factors that may not be as prevalent as speech rate and accent but undoubtedly play a role in hindering students' listening comprehension abilities.

Keywords: Comprehension, accent, Spanish, listening, rate, speech, audio.

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Introduction

Rationale

The fundamental purpose of this research paper is to provide, based on empirical evidence, a profound explanation as to whether both speech rate and accent are the two most prominent factors which contribute to the hindrance of the listening comprehension abilities of level III Spanish students at UWI. I have opted to conduct research on this particular field because as a Spanish student, I have encountered difficulty particularly in the area of listening comprehension. The difficulty posed with this component was mainly due to the two aforementioned factors which were recurring.

Over the years, research has been done abundantly on factors affecting listening skills. Some of these factors include; age demographic, background knowledge of the respective topic, speech rate, accent, language knowledge and the educational level of the listener, among others, Boyle (1984, p.35). Research that has been done in this field of study highlights the collective group of factors which has been tested and proven to affect listening skills of students. However, this paper seeks to objectively illustrate that speech rate and accent are the most crucial elements in understanding a foreign language.

Thesis Statement

With regard to the listening comprehension component of Spanish at the University of the West Indies, it can be argued that speech rate and accent of various Spanish speakers are the greatest impediments on students in their ability to comprehend audible Spanish.

Objectives

This dissertation aims to prove and explain why speech rate and accent are the two most prevalent factors which hinder the successful progression of listening comprehension abilities in level III students at the University of the West Indies. Consequently, other factors will be mentioned in order for the relevant comparison to be made between the two aforementioned factors and other factors that may hinder listening comprehension abilities of students. At the end of this research, my intended goal is to assess why the speech rate and accent of different speakers would affect level III Spanish students at UWI. My intention is to have anyone who reads this research paper say undoubtedly that speech rate and accent are the main determining factors in the success or possible hindrance of listening comprehension among students because there will be sufficient evidence to support this statement.

Methodology

For this research paper, the following methods of collection were used; Archival and Empirical. These were used to gather both qualitative and quantitative data, as well as comparative study.

Archival sources were used which gave not only background knowledge on the issue, but also comparison between the current study and past studies. Such sources included journals, articles and case studies. One of these were Yildiz & Albay (2015, p.23) who explored factors which impact or have an effect on listening comprehension abilities of learners; specifically Iraqi foreign language learners at Ishik University. There were a total of ten factors which affected the students on their listening comprehension abilities listed in terms of their significance i.e factors that had the most impact to the least impact as well as different approaches to enhance listening comprehension skills. Sumalinog (2018, p.615) also investigated different factors which affect listening comprehension of students at the Cebu University in the Philippines. His study showed that fast rate of speech as well as accent were the two prominent factors which affected students in their listening comprehension skills. Finally, Zhiying (2018, p. 55-65) illustrated the differing effects of accent on listening comprehension and the varying attitudes of students towards different accents.

Empirical sources included one on one interviews with students of the University of the West Indies and a short questionnaire as a template to guide the interviewer of what specific

questions to ask the students. The questionnaire consisted of 4 open- ended questions where the participants were able to freely give their responses.

The type of sampling used was random sampling, since the research was done on the campus of the University of the West Indies and random level III Spanish students were selected to participate in the research. Ten random students were selected and before the collection of data, they were informed of the confidentiality of the research so as to eradicate the possibility of any discomfort with the relaying of information. The students then volunteered and each student was asked to listen to three audio clips in Spanish. The clips dealt with different topics and they were selected based on different accents and rates of speech of the Spanish speakers. The clips were Argentinean, Cuban and Spanish i.e from Spain respectively.

The students had the opportunity to listen to the audio clips twice. The first playing of the clip enabled the students to get a feel of the differing speech rates and accents in the audios on which they were about to be tested. The second playing required their undivided and attentive listening abilities in order to obtain as much information as possible to assist them in answering the questions that followed. After the second and final playing of the audios, the following questions were asked and responses were recorded;

1. Could you kindly inform me of what the audio was about or what was said?
2. What difficulties did you encounter in understanding the audio?
3. What title would you give to the audio?
4. What other factors in addition to speech rate and accent hindered you in the comprehension of the audio?

After each student answered the questions, the recordings were saved for the analysis of data.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 entitled “Literature Review” presents a variety of literature written about the present topic and shows a comparison between different writers and their points of view as it pertains to speech rate, accent and other factors as well as how they affect listening comprehension.

Chapter 2 entitled “Findings” presents and analyses the results obtained from the collection of data through the one-on-one interviews with the level III Spanish students at UWI. The results are further illustrated through the use of pie charts.

Chapter 3 entitled “Discussion” presents the findings of the research and links it to the literature review. Comparisons are then made to identify if the findings of the research agree or disagree with the literature presented.

Chapter One

Literature Review

With regard to the topic of listening comprehension abilities, there have been many studies that have been done and these came in the form of articles, case studies and books, among others. A lot of the literature that has been written gives us a list of factors that affect students in their listening comprehension skills, with speech rate and accent being among those listed factors.

Sumalinog (2018, pgs. 611-617) focused on the listening comprehension levels of students at the Cebu University in the Philippines as well as factors that affected their listening comprehension skills. A total of 50 students from 10 different nationalities participated in the study. Sumalinog found that the English variation in terms of accent was the main hindrance of 88% of the participants' ability to comprehend what was being said in the sample test (615). The students stated in the study that listening to British accented speech was a struggle for them due to the unfamiliarity (615). The second highest factor that affected the comprehension skills of the students was the delivery speed of the speakers and the materials listened to, with 80% of the respondents stating the latter. Other factors were also mentioned by Sumalinog in his study such as differences in linguistic background and contexts, inclusion of jargons in the conversations and personal concerns during the listening test, among others (615).

Bloomfield, et al. (2010) discussed the factors that make listening to a foreign language difficult. Bloomfield listed these factors of difficulty which she summarizes into three headings; characteristics of the listener, characteristics of the passage and characteristics of the testing conditions (4). From the listener characteristics which deal with factors pertaining to the person

being tested, two of the most important factors listed were the vocabulary size and background knowledge. An obvious factor that can influence comprehension of a spoken passage is the overlap between the listener's vocabulary knowledge and the vocabulary of the passage (Bloomfield, et al. 2010, p.12). Nation (2001) stated that listeners must have an adequate vocabulary to understand a passage in another language (qtd. in Bloomfield 12). This is very factual because if a listener has limited words in their mental lexicon, when they listen to a piece of data in a second language, they would not be able to identify certain jargon related to a particular topic and/or not be able to ascribe meanings to words or phrases heard.

Another important factor listed under listener characteristics was background knowledge. Similar to vocabulary size, having some sort of general knowledge about a particular topic is important in listening comprehension. To further substantiate, Bloomfield, et al. (2010, p.14) stated that listeners' background knowledge about a passage can have a profound impact on their ability to understand what has been said.

Length of a sample, speech rate and accent i.e. characteristics of the passage, are also important factors which make the difference between near full or full and limited or no comprehensibility. The longer a sample audio is, the more difficult it would be for listeners to process the vast quantity of information that is being presented orally. Bloomfield, et al. (2010, p. 19) stated that unlike reading, listening happens in real time. Listeners may not have the option of going back to something they failed to comprehend (19). Henning (1990) stated that longer passages may be more likely to disrupt comprehension due to overwhelming listeners' working memory storage capacity (qtd. in Bloomfield 19).

Speech rate and accent are very prevalent factors in the comprehension of any sample audio. Floccia et al.(2009) highlighted that this is due to the fact that accented speech has been

found to affect both the extent to which listeners successfully retrieve a speaker's message and the effort involved as listeners identify particular words in the message (qtd. in Bloomfield et al. 50). Weil (2001) stated that in the case of a speaker with a different accent, a listener must cope with variation arising from both the speaker's own idiosyncrasies and additional variation the speaker shares with others from the same linguistic background (qtd. in Bloomfield et al. 50). Such difficulties in adaptation are further exacerbated when the spoken language is not the listener's native language, particularly when proficiency in that language is low (Bloomfield et al. 2010, p.50). Speech rate of a sample or more specifically, fast rate of speech can significantly hinder one's ability to fully comprehend an audio sample. The results of several studies done prove that a faster speech rate can have a negative effect on listening comprehension (60). One such study is Griffiths (1990, 1992) who used an experimental design in which a given text appeared with different speech rates (Bloomfield et. al 2010, p. 60). In the first study, Griffiths (1990) observed higher comprehension scores for passages presented at 1.93 or 2.85 syllables per second (syll/sec) relative to passages presented at 3.8 syll/sec. In the second study, Griffiths (1992) observed higher comprehension scores for passages presented at 2.5 syll/sec relative to passages presented at 3.75 or 5 syll/sec. Although Griffiths (1990, 1992) described the listeners as lower intermediate learners, more recent evidence suggests that speech rate also influences listening comprehension among relatively advanced L2 users (Bloomfield et al. 2010, p. 60).

The final category of factors that affect listening comprehension stated by Bloomfield is under the sub-heading testing conditions. One such factor under this heading is multiple hearings i.e allowing a listener/examinee/student to listen to a selected audio sample more than once. This can have benefits such as allowing the listener to grasp or identify words or phrases that may not have been acquired in the first listening. Field (2008) stated that listeners can use the first hearing

to gather bits of information (e.g. picking out propositions) from the passage, and use the second and additional hearings to discover the structure of the passage as a whole, such as the central theme (qtd. in Bloomfield et al.71-72). Buck (2001) further stated that allowing more than one hearing of the passage may overcome idiosyncrasies of the test environment, such as experiencing an interruption from a noise in the testing room while listening to the passage (qtd. in Bloomfield et al.72).

Yildiz & Albay (2015, p.20) speaks about differing factors that affect listening comprehension amongst individuals and what individuals can do to improve these skills. The case study was done at the Ishik University amongst a group of Iraqi foreign language learners. Yildiz & Albay (2015, p.20) quoted Boyle (1984 p.35) of saying that factors that affect listening comprehension can be categorized into three groups: listener factors, speaker factors and factors in the material and medium. The listener factors can be defined as factors that are intrinsic or factors that are directly related to the listener. Some of these factors mentioned were; educational level of the learners, age of the learner, motivation and language knowledge, among others (35).

The speaker factors deal with what the speaker says and the manner in which the message is delivered. Some of the speaker factors listed were; pronunciation and accent of the speaker, delivery speed of the speaker which the case study mentions is a major factor and listening to well-known and prestigious speakers that could assist in motivating the listener (35). This factor can be directly linked to the aforementioned listener factor of motivation.

Lastly, the case study speaks of factors in the material and medium. These deal with the content of what is being said and the environment where the listener is at the given time of listening to a sample. Factors under this category include; the choice of listening material, the content of the material and a quiet listening environment (35).

For this case study, a total of 65 students were surveyed and one of the questions was “What are the most important factors that affect listening comprehension of Iraqi foreign language learners at Ishik University?” After the survey was conducted and the results were finalized and presented through the use of a bar graph, it showed that the top two factors for the Iraqi students were language knowledge at 85% and language level of the material at 82% (23-24). For the Iraqi students, speech rate was the third highest ranking factor at 80% and accent was the fifth highest factor that affected their listening comprehension abilities at 58% (23-24). From this case study, it was seen that speed delivery of the content as well as speaker’s accent were not the top two factors that affected students who were studying a foreign language but rather listener factors such as language knowledge and factors of the material such as the language level of the audio.

Chapter Two

Findings

This chapter presents an analysis of the data that was given in the interviews by the level III Spanish students. The students were required to listen to three different audio clips which entailed different speakers from varying Spanish speaking countries which were Argentinean, Cuban and Spanish respectively. The audio clips dealt with different contemporary issues and they each differed in speech rate and accent. This chapter will be divided into three sections. Section one will focus on the students' responses and analysis of said responses based on the Argentinean audio clip. Section two will focus on the analysis of the responses given by the students on the Cuban audio clip. Section three will focus on the analysis of responses given by the same students on the Spanish audio clip.

Section One: Analysis of the responses given by students on the Argentinean audio clip.

The results of what the students heard and gathered from the Argentinean audio clip were done through one-on-one interviews. The title of this audio clip was “¿Qué piensan los argentinos de los extranjeros?” which translates to English as “What do Argentines think about foreigners?” This extracted audio clip was 0:35 seconds in length and it entailed a man interviewing two people asking what they thought about foreigners coming to their homeland of Argentina for the purposes of studying. In summary, both the interviewees said that they found it was a good idea for people to come to their country in hopes of obtaining a better life or fulfilling their dreams and that it would be a very unique experience for the foreigners to come to Argentina to study. The audio clip was played twice. The first playing was solely for the purpose of the students getting in tuned with the clip on which they were about to be examined.

No questions were asked after this first playing. Questions were then asked after the second playing of the clip. The first question asked was “Could you tell me what the audio entailed or what was said?” The majority of the respondents being 70% were able to identify what the audio clip entailed either by giving a detailed description of what was said or by stating a general idea based on words or phrases that they were able to grasp. For example, interviewee 7 gave the following response:

It’s about a study abroad programme. Something to do with studying because I heard “estudiar” and they mentioned something about how it happens in other countries, I’m not sure if it happens there I didn’t quite get that part but it could be something that they could benefit from.

This response shows that although the student was not able to fully grasp the idea of the audio in its entirety, he/she was able to pinpoint the word “estudiar” which means ‘to study’ and based on that he/she was able to contextualize what was stated. The remaining 30% of the students failed to identify what was said in the audio due to certain factors which will be discussed in the analysis of the responses to the second question. Figure 1 below further illustrates the above information.

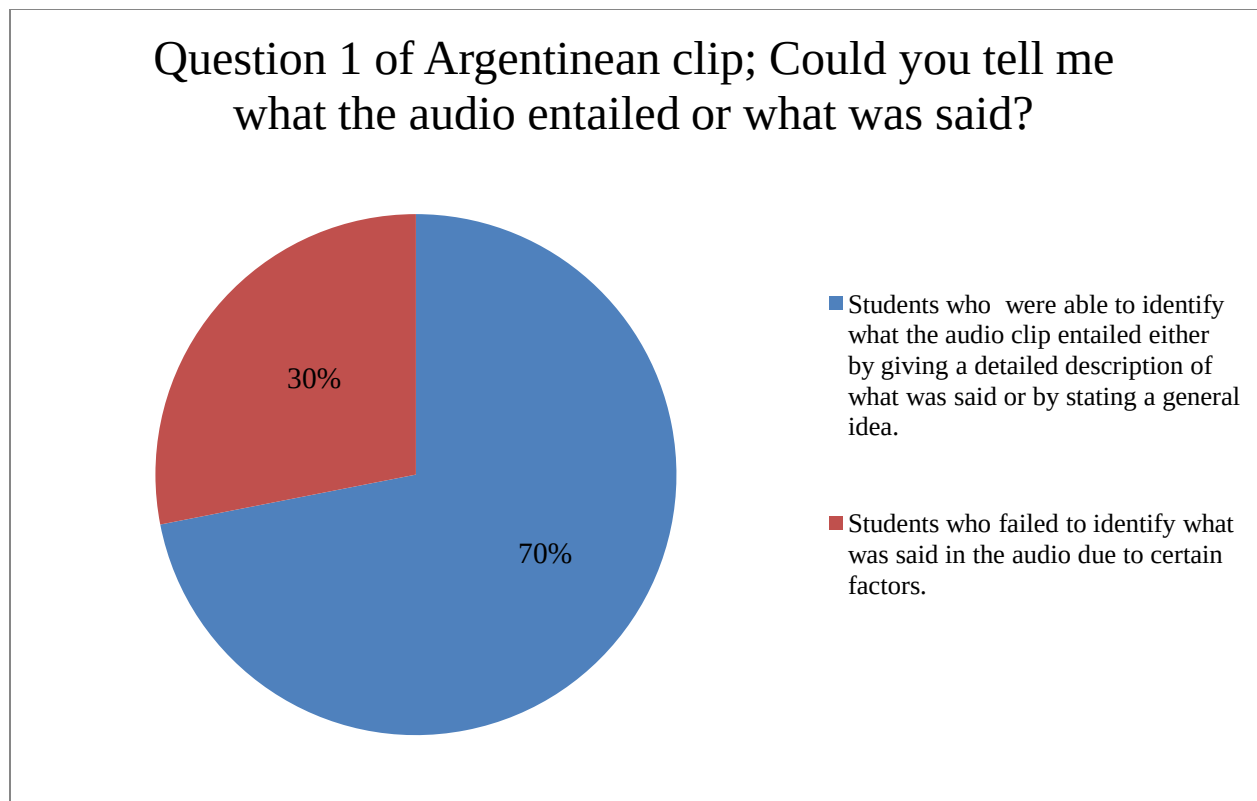


Figure 1 - Pie chart representing how students answered the first question with regard to the Argentinean clip; “Could you tell me what the audio entailed or what was said?”

Question number 2 asked the following, “What difficulties did you encounter in understanding what was said in this audio?” Fifty percent of the respondents 50% indicated that the speech rate of the interviewees affected their ability to comprehend what was said in the audio clip. Forty percent 40% stated that the accent of the interviewees in the clip posed an issue in the comprehension of the audio. The remaining 10% stated that the hindrance with the comprehension of the audio was the fact that it was out of context. Based on this response, this student demonstrated that it was neither the speech rate nor the accent or any of the above listed factors that hindered his/her ability to understand the audio, but the fact that it was extracted

from a longer clip. This particular student meant that if he/she were perhaps introduced to a title of the audio or even got an opportunity to listen to the entire clip from which the audio was extracted, they would have fully understood what was taking place and therefore been able to answer the question at hand. Illustration of the above data is seen in Figure 2 below.

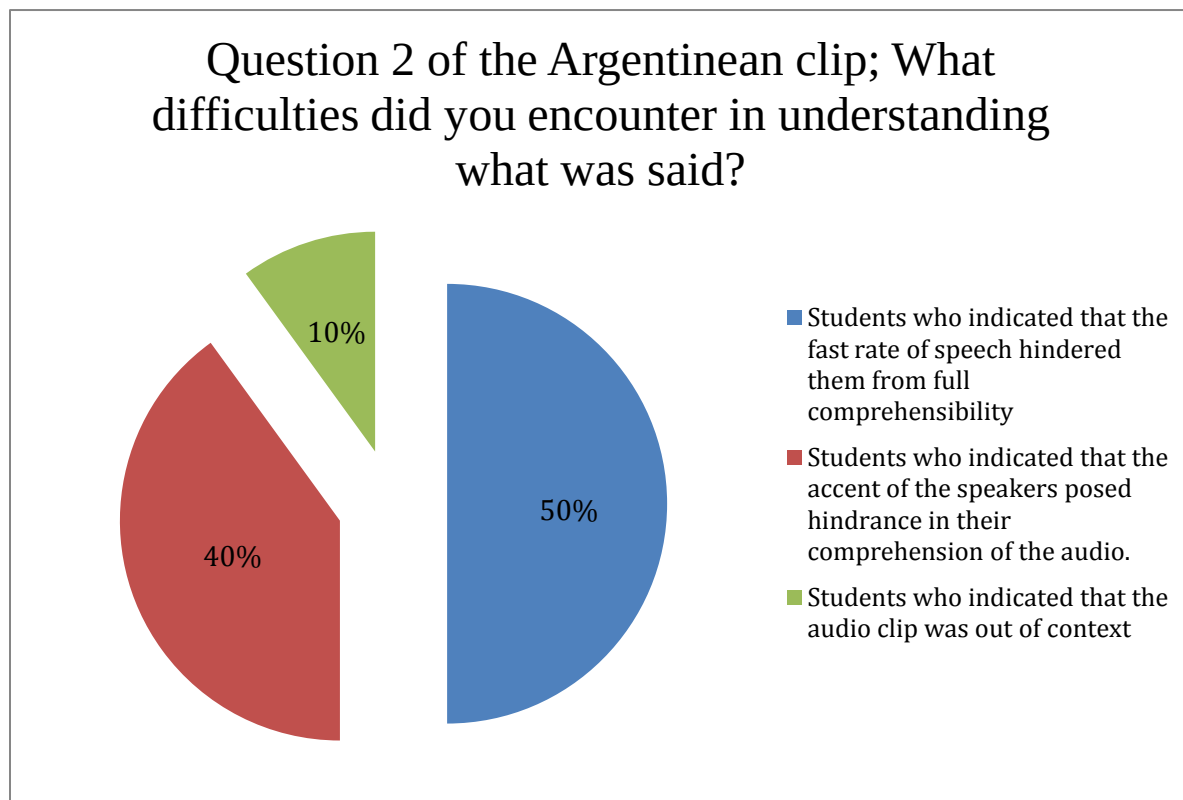


Figure 2 - Factors that hindered students in understanding what was said in the Argentinean audio clip.

The third question that was asked to the students was “If you were to give a title for this audio, what would you give it?” The main purpose of asking this question to the students was in an attempt to identify if the students can use the information that they grasped and summarize it to a point where they would be able to create a title that would encompass the main idea or the

main points posited in the extracted audio clip. Also, from the researcher's standpoint, a comparison would be made amongst the original title and the different titles that were given by the students to see how closely the students came in selecting an appropriate title. The extracted audio, as mentioned previously, entailed two interviewees responding to the question "What do Argentineans think about foreigners coming to their country?" The young man, who was the second interviewee, mentioned the fact that it would be a unique experience for someone to come and study in their country because of the amount of possibilities that there are for studying. Also, they know about these opportunities but yet they do not take advantage of them. Based on what the interviewees stated, students were then required to invent a title closest to the general idea of the clip. Therefore, any title that mentioned key terms such as studying abroad or in another country, foreigners, taking advantage of opportunities or having a better life in a foreign country would have sufficed. An astounding 80% of the respondents gave a title that, in some manner, encompassed studying in a foreign country or having opportunities in another country. Some of the titles given included "Advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad", "The experience of studying abroad", "Study abroad opportunities" and "The perception of opportunities in your home country as opposed to a foreign country", among others. The remaining 20% gave titles that were vague and not related to the central theme of the clip. Their responses included; "About my country" and "My life or something like that." These responses demonstrated that these particular students did not obtain a full grasp or had some level of difficulty in understanding the general message.

The final question asked was "What other factors in addition to speech rate and accent hindered you in the comprehension of this audio?" This question was asked for the sole purpose of identifying any other main factors, in addition to speech rate and accent, which may have

contributed to the hindrance of the students' ability and capacity to understand what was being said in the extracted audio clip. Fifty percent, 50%, of the respondents said that there were no other factors beside the speech rate and the accent that hindered them in understanding what was said. Twenty percent, 20%, of the respondents said that the lack of background knowledge affected them negatively because there were already limits to the full comprehension of the audio because of the fast rate of speech and the accent. Thus, having no prior background knowledge on the topic at hand gave rise to further hindrance of the comprehension of the audio because they were not able to easily identify certain words or jargon associated with the topic of immigration. Another 20% of the respondents stated that an additional factor that contributed to the hindrance of the comprehension of the audio was background noise and therefore partial inaudibility of the clip. This was due to the fact that the interview was conducted on the streets of Argentina. Hence, there were other people like pedestrians passing by, vehicles driving on the streets, etc. These background noises did not overshadow what the interviewees were saying but it made the students listen even more attentively in order to block out the background noise of the audio. The final 10% of the respondents stated that in addition to the fast rate of speech and the accent of the speakers, the lack of visuals posed an issue. This student stated that he/she would have preferred a video in order to see the context and also to see the situation unfolding due to the fact that he/she learns best visually. The information above is graphically represented in Figure 3 below.

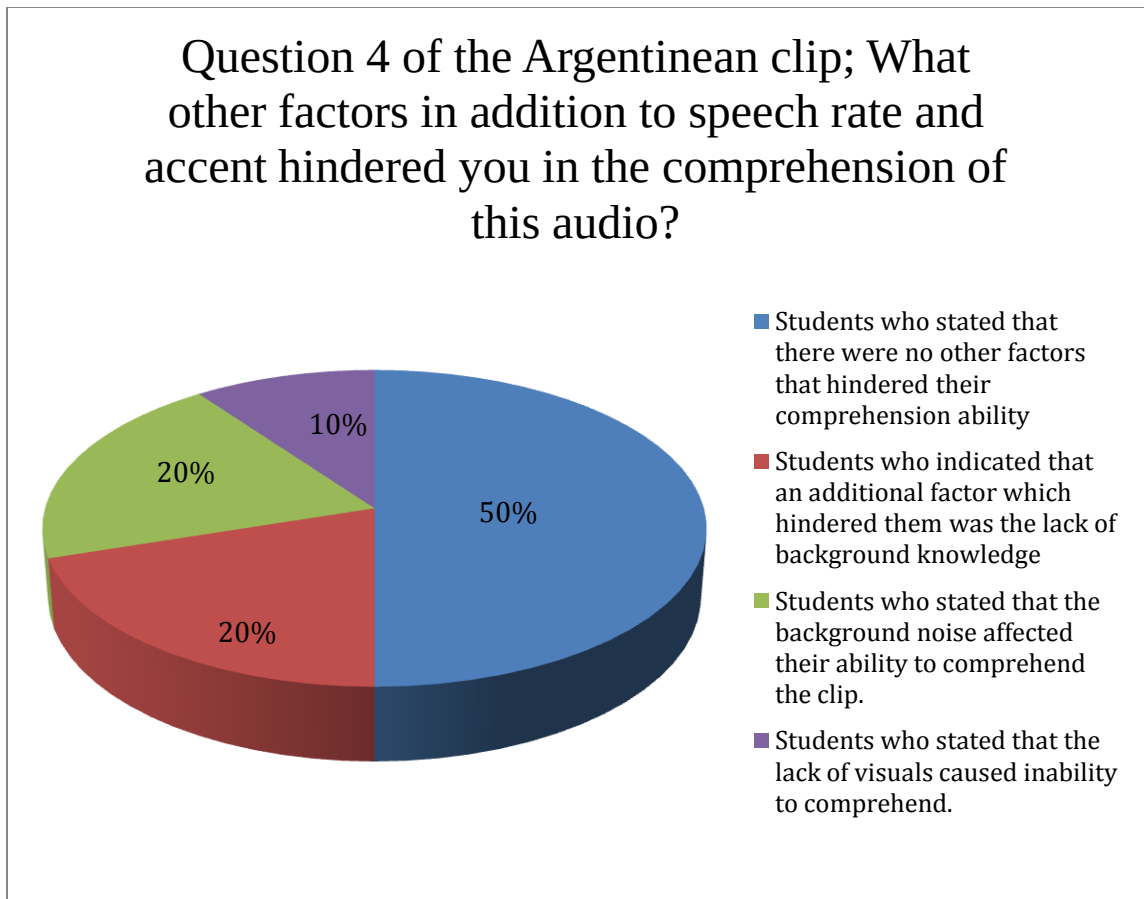


Figure 3 - The additional factors of hindrance for the respondents besides speech rate and accent.

Section Two: Analysis of the responses given by students on the Cuban audio clip.

This section analyzes the responses of the students on the Cuban audio clip. The questions were once again repeated for this clip. The title for this clip was “¿Existen clases sociales en Cuba?” which translates to “Do social classes exist in Cuba?” This audio clip was 0:37 seconds in length and it entailed a Cuban man by the name of Armando Suarez who is an expert in economic topics. In summary, he spoke about the disparity between the rich and the poor in the society and how the rich have better access to resources like food and other items. Similar to the Argentinean audio, this clip was played twice. Once for the students to get a gist of

what they were about to be tested on and to get their auditory system in tuned and the second playing required attentive listening for the answering of the questions that followed.

The questions for the Cuban audio clip remained the same as the latter audio. Hence, the first question was “Could you tell me what the audio entailed or what was said?” An astounding 60% of the respondents either gave a synopsis or an in-depth description of what the audio entailed. An example of this is the response from interviewee 10 which is as follows:

His accent was a bit more complicated than the first one so it was a bit more difficult to hear, however I understood that he was talking about a comparison between the rich and the poor so I guess they are talking about a disparity between the wealth or the opportunities that each one has. He said that the majority of the country or the population they need or they depend on... basically injustice. They need to get away from the law as it is at the moment in order to help the majority of the people who need the benefits and access to whatever resources etc.

This response, like some of the others within the 60%, shows that the interviewees within this percentage had a profound understanding of the topic at hand. The remaining 40% gave either very vague answers or answers that were not related to the topic. These responses would have been based on either a lack of understanding of what was said or a few words or phrases that some of the respondents would have grasped while listening to the audio. Examples of these included; “I think it had something to do with milk and coffee” and “It sounds like he is talking about café con leche, romper something, lees.. I don’t have a general idea of the audio.” from interviewees 7 and 1 respectively. Graphical illustration for this question is seen in Figure 4 below.

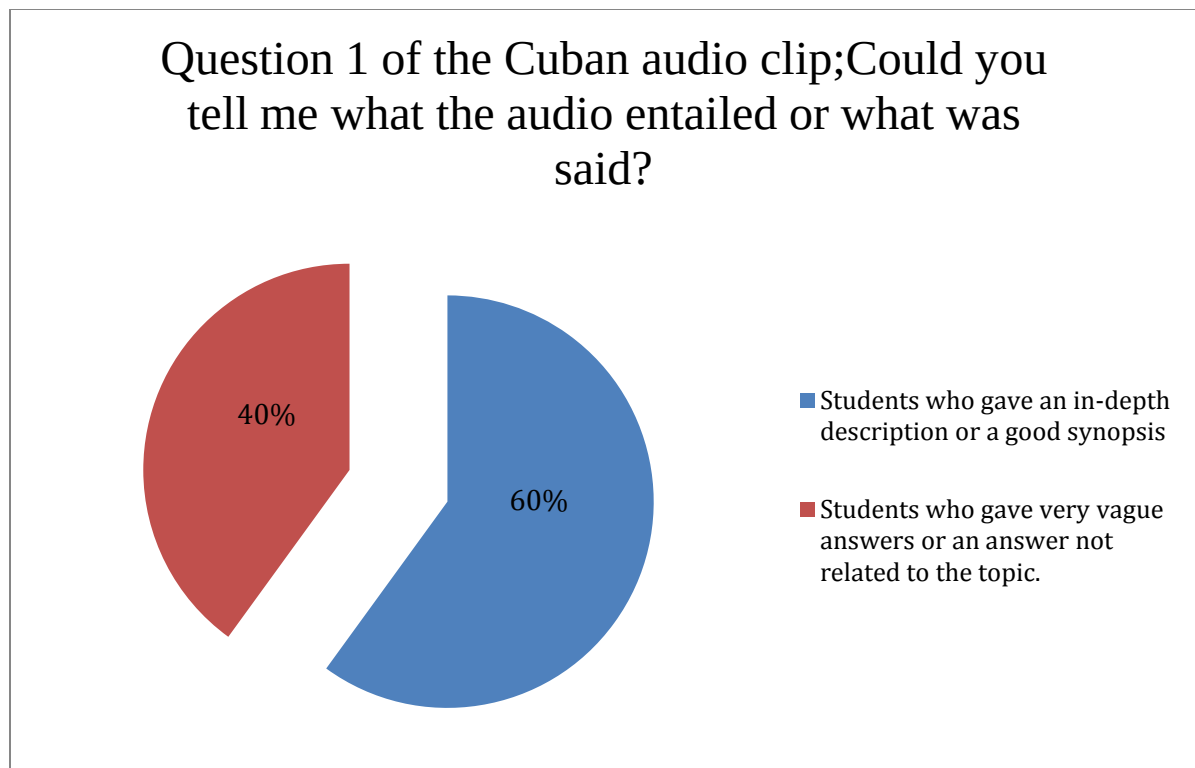


Figure 4 - Students who gave profound descriptions of the audio vs. students who gave vague responses.

The second question was “What difficulties did you encounter in understanding what was said in this audio?” This question was another way of asking the students what factors played a role in hindering you from understanding the audio clip. The majority of the respondents being 70% stated that the accent of the speaker in this Cuban audio clip caused the most hindrance. The remaining 30% of the respondents stated that it was the speech rate or how fast the speaker spoke that hindered their full understanding. See Figure 5 below for a graphical representation of the above mentioned data.

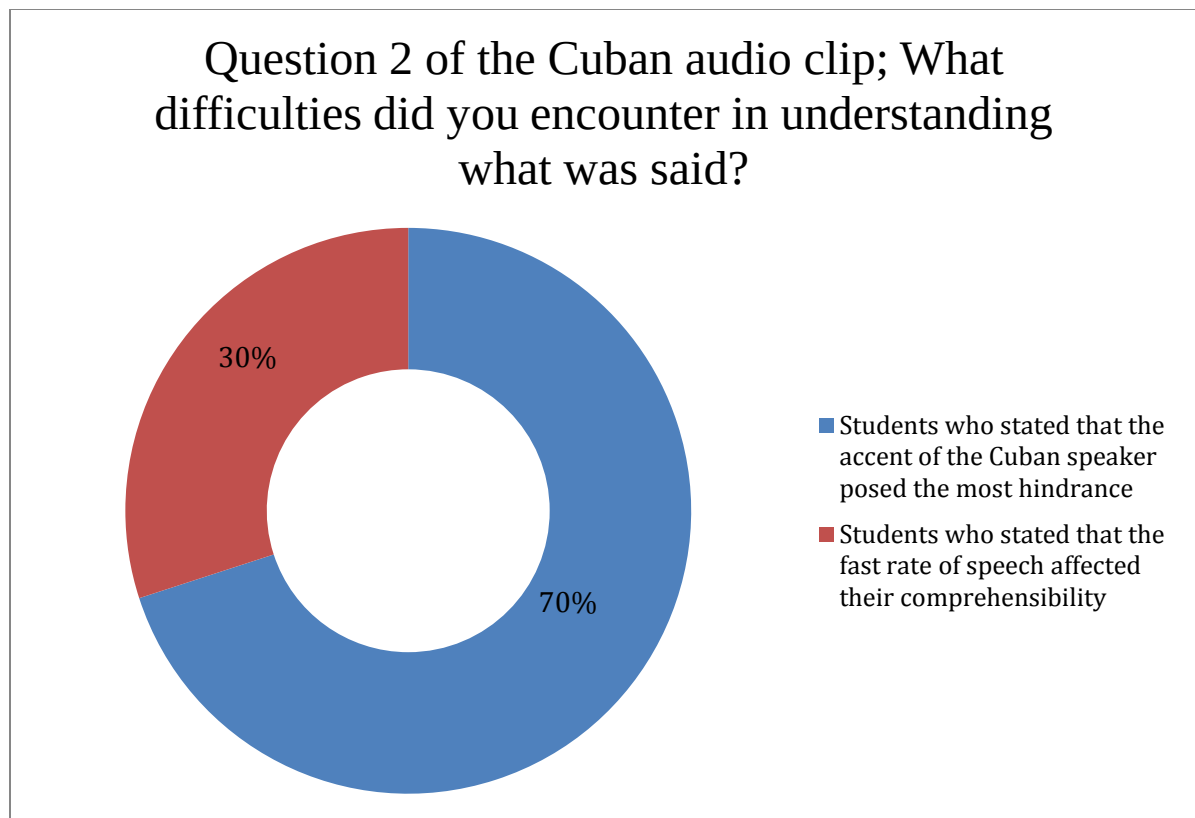


Figure 5 - A graphical representation of students who stated the factors that affected their listening comprehension of the Cuban audio.

The third question asked was “If you were to give a title to this audio, what would it be?” For this question, 60% of the respondents gave titles that were related to the central theme of the extracted audio. The titles that included anything pertaining to disparity, inequality or social class were considered valid responses. Responses like these demonstrated that the students understood the main idea of the audio and compiled it into a few words to create a relevant title that would encapsulate the theme in its entirety. Some of the responses within the 60% included, “Examining social class” and “Inequality in society and how it affects members of the society.” by interviewees 6 and 9 respectively. The remaining 40% of the respondents gave responses that

were not related to the topic because some of the respondents heard a specific word and used that word or phrase to create a title that did not relate to the audio in question. Examples of these included, “Milk and coffee” and “Grocery shopping or grocery list”. These responses arose from the fact that the man, at a point in the video, said the word “leche” which translates to “milk” in English. However, he was speaking about items like milk that the underprivileged cannot afford.

The final question was “What other factors in addition to speech rate and accent hindered you in the comprehension of this audio?” The majority of the respondents, 60%, stated that there were no other factors that hindered their ability in the comprehension of the audio besides the speech rate and especially the accent for this clip. Twenty percent, 20%, of the respondents indicated that the lack of background knowledge was an additional factor. The remaining 20% stated that the audio was not clear. In other words, there was partial inaudibility and therefore comprehensibility because the respondents found that the speaker’s voice was muffled and therefore not clear. Graphical representation of the above data is seen in Figure 6 below.

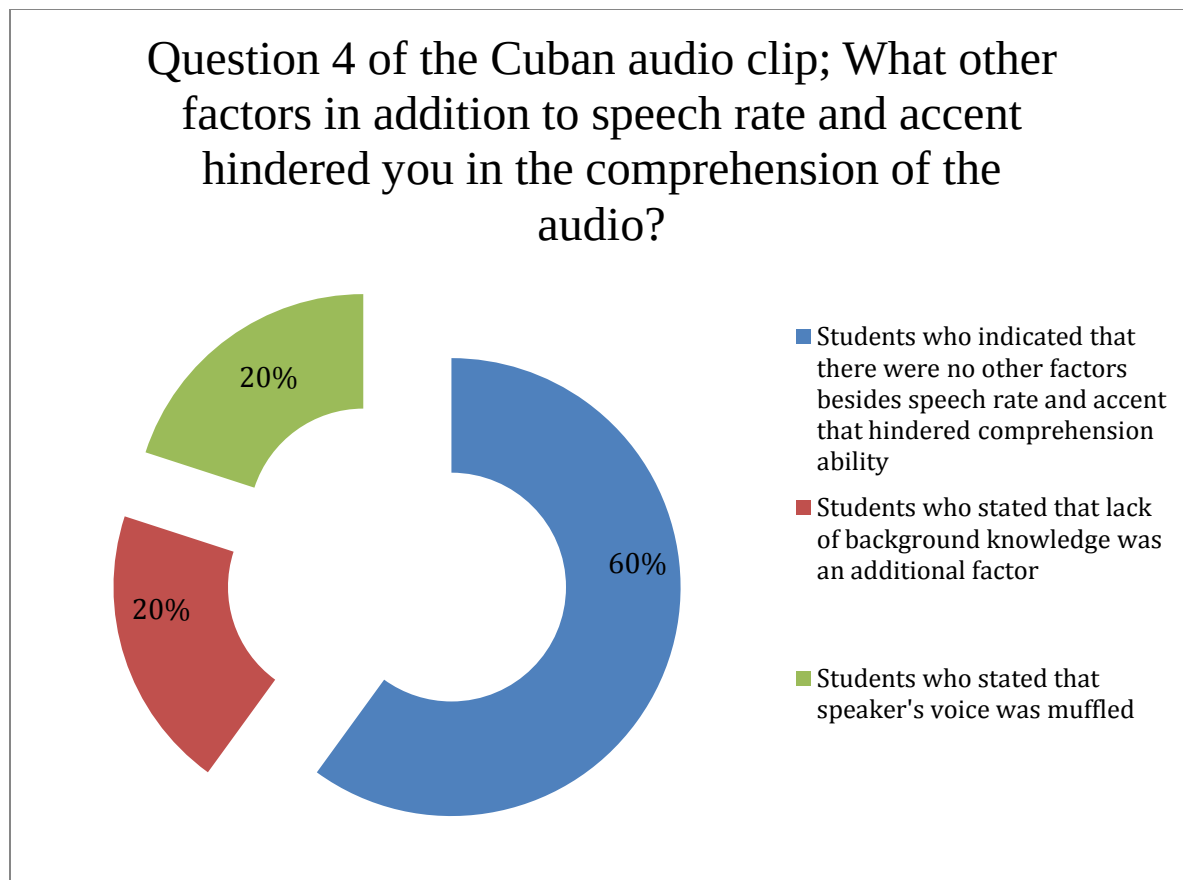


Figure 6 – Factors other than speech rate and accent which affected students’ ability to comprehend the audio.

Section Three: Analysis of the responses given by students on the Spanish audio clip.

This section analyzes the responses of the students on the Spanish audio clip. The questions were once again repeated for this clip. The title for this audio was “La publicidad- ¿salvará el mundo?” which translates to “Advertising- Will it save the world?” This audio clip was 1:17 seconds in length and it entailed a lady by the name of Juana Manso Maya who is the Marketing Director for a company called “Campofrio” and she speaks about the advantages of advertising. Similar to the two previous audios, this clip was played twice. Once for the students

to get their ears accustomed to the clips and the second playing for attentive listening and for the acquisition of the main idea in order to answer the questions that followed.

The questions for this clip remained the same as the former and latter audios. Question 1 asked “Could you tell me what the audio entailed or what was said?” An amazing 70% of the respondents gave accurate responses which entailed anything to do with advertising and its benefits. Even though some were not able to give an in-depth description, they grasped the fact that the central theme of the audio dealt with advertising. Some of the responses included; “I think it was about advertising and increasing sales of a product.”, “I think that was about publication and advertising.” and “It was something about sales and improving the quality of a product.” from interviewees 2, 6 and 7 respectively. The remaining 30% gave responses that did not relate to the central theme of the audio. One of the reasons for this was due to the fact that there was limited understanding in the vocabulary of the audio for some respondents. This was evident in one of the responses given by interviewee 3 which is as follows:

This lady was talking about finding a solution to some problem; I can’t identify what was the problem. I was trying to understand the vocabulary, but I did not understand what the problem was but she was trying to find a solution. She was talking about the advantages and what inspired her but I don’t know what inspired her. Those were the things that were the main thing for me.

This respondent showed that there was lack of knowledge of vocabulary and as a result, it hindered his/her ability to fully grasp the idea of what was being said. See Figure 7 below for a graphical illustration of the above data.

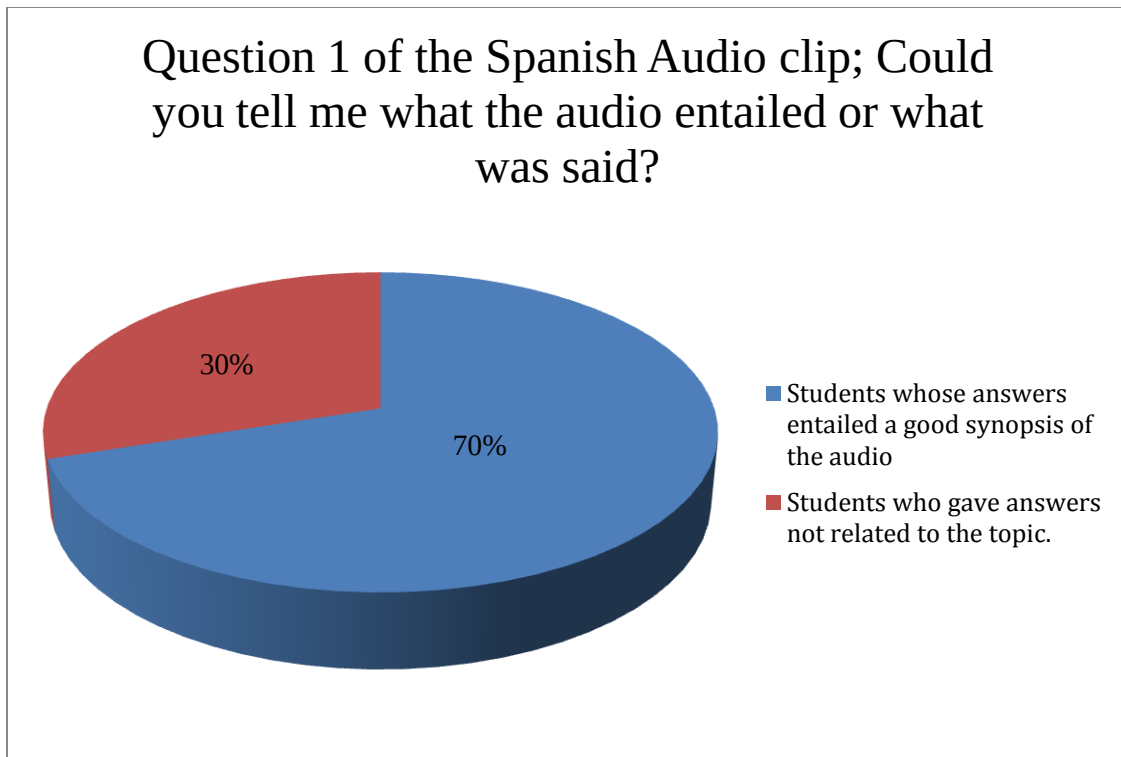


Figure 7 - Students who gave responses related to the topic as opposed to students who gave answers not relating to the central theme of the audio.

Question 2 asked “What difficulties did you encounter in understanding what was said in this audio?” More than half of the respondents which equated to 60% stated that the fast rate of speech gave rise to the hindrance of their comprehension of the audio. Thirty percent, 30%, stated that the accent posed a difficulty in understanding the content of the audio. This signifies that the Spanish accent is a lot more understandable to students than that of the Cuban accent. The main hindrance in this instance is how fast Spaniards speak. The remaining 10% indicated that they were not able to understand the audio because the audio was out of context. In other words, the excerpt was not sufficient for the extrapolation of the main idea. These respondents

needed more information or the entire audio from which this clip was extracted. The above data is summarized in Figure 8 below.

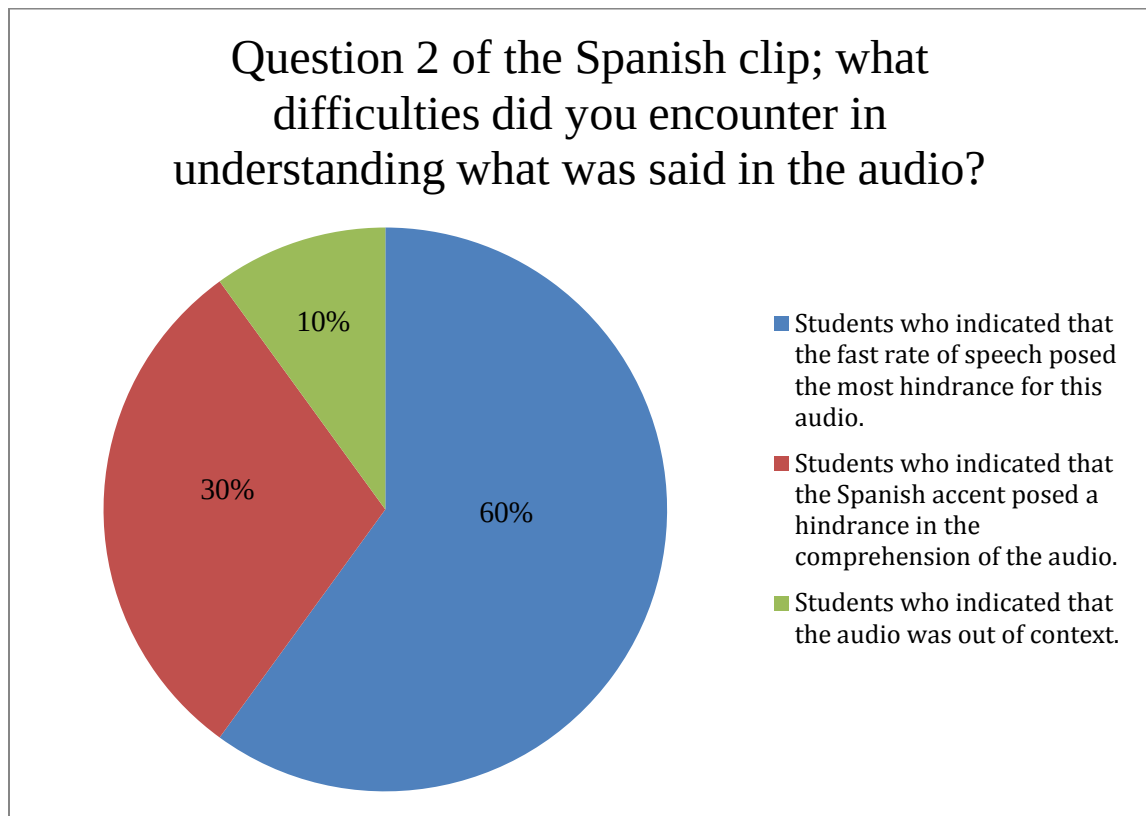


Figure 8 – Factors which hindered students’ in their ability to understand the Spanish audio clip.

Question 3 asked “If you were to give a title to this audio, what would it be?” This question was answered relatively well with 60% of the respondents giving good titles that captured the main idea of the audio presented. Some of these included “The benefits of advertising”, “Advertising a product” and “Marketing strategy” from interviewees 1, 2 and 7 respectively. The remaining 40% of the respondents gave titles that were not related to the audio which demonstrated a lack of comprehension. Some of these responses included “Finding a solution”, “Nada” and “Communication” from interviewees 3, 8 and 9 respectively.

The final question was “What other factors in addition to speech rate and accent hindered you in the comprehension of the audio?” The majority of the respondents being 60% indicated that there were no other factors that hindered them in understanding the audio. Twenty percent, 20%, indicated that lack of background knowledge/ vocabulary was the additional factor that posed a hindrance. The remaining 20% indicated that the audio clip was too long. Figure 9 below further illustrates the above stated information.

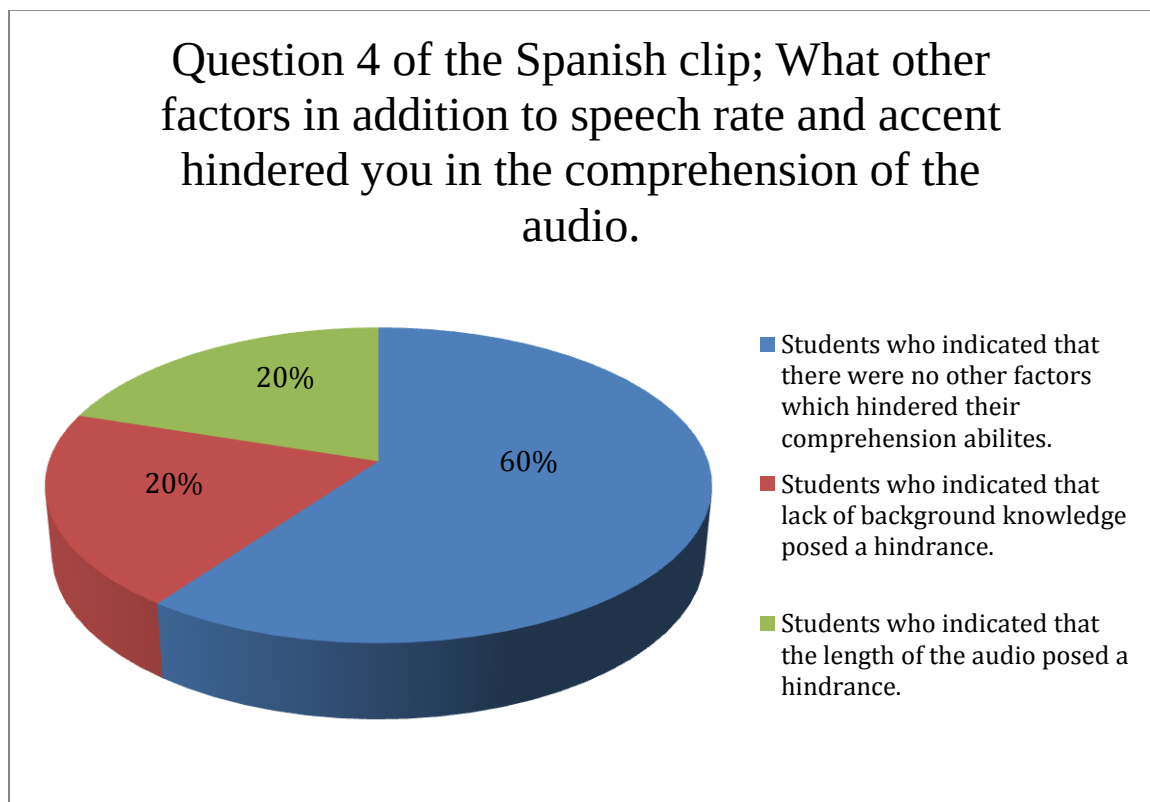


Figure 9 - Factors other than speech rate and accent which hindered students in their ability to understand the Spanish audio clip.

Chapter Three

Discussion

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate whether speech rate and accent are the two most prominent factors which hinder listening comprehension abilities of level III students at UWI. This chapter entails a discussion of the major findings and places it in relation to the literature review.

Section 1: Discussion of the findings from respondents on the Argentinean audio clip.

Based on the quantitative analysis, it was seen that there are a number of factors which hinder students' level of listening comprehension. At the paramount of these were speech rate and accent. Question 2 asked the students "What difficulties did you encounter in understanding what was said in this audio?" In the case of the Argentinean speech, the data illustrated that 50% of the students found that the fast speech rate posed a hindrance with their listening comprehension abilities. This is due to the fact that Argentines tend to speak a bit quickly. Forty percent, 40%, of the students stated that the Argentinean accent was a bit difficult for them to understand. This is due to the fact that Argentines speak what is known as "Castellano" or Castilian Spanish which differs from the Spanish spoken or taught in the Caribbean. Hence, the pronunciation of some of their words would differ from what we in the Caribbean are accustomed to hearing and this creates a language barrier in terms of understanding some of their speech. For example; the way in which we in the Caribbean ask "What is your name?" in

Spanish is “¿Cómo te llamas?” where the double ‘l’ is pronounced like a ‘y’ in English. Hence it would be as if one is saying “¿Cómo te yamas?” However in Argentina, they replace the voiced palatal approximant phoneme which is used quite often in modern day Spanish with the voiceless post alveolar fricative which is more apparent in Castilian Spanish. In other words, their double ‘l’ sounds which are pronounced like the English ‘y’ as well as words which start with ‘y’ such as ‘yo’ sound like the English ‘sh’ sound. Therefore, the above question would sound like “¿Cómo te shamas?” in Argentina. This is an example of why the Argentinean accent would pose an issue for some students.

Factors that were in the minority were as follows; Twenty percent, 20%, stated lack of background knowledge as well as another 20% stated background noise was an issue. The factors that posed the least hindrance were the audio being out of context and lack of visuals which were indicated by 10% of the students respectively. These findings were different to the findings of another study conducted by Yildiz & Albay (2015). Their study involved a group of Iraqi foreign language learners at the Ishik University who were tested on what factors affected their listening comprehension abilities. Their findings showed that the top two factors were language knowledge and language level of the material with speech rate and accent taking third and fifth place respectively (23-24). The majority of the students which amounted to 85% chose language knowledge as the primary factor in listening comprehension. Yildiz & Albay states that grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation knowledge allows learners to receive and convey messages accurately (24). Linguistic knowledge largely influences listening comprehension (24). Although speech rate didn’t rank in the top two factors, fast delivery has always been source of difficulty for foreign language learners because learners cannot receive the messages clearly so they fail to understand the text (Yildiz & Albay 2015, p. 24). Accent also did not rank in the top

two prominent factors that contribute to the hindrance of listening comprehension but its lower ranking did not subtract from its importance as a contributing factor to listening comprehension. Pronunciation and accent of speakers are significant factors to receive the messages accurately (Yildiz & Albay 2015, p. 24).

Section 2: Discussion of the findings from respondents on the Cuban audio clip.

The results from this section indicated that speech rate and accent once again ranked as the top two factors that hindered students' ability in listening comprehension. An astounding 70% of the students indicated that the accent posed the most difficulty in understanding the Cuban audio. This is due to the fact that Cuban speakers tend not to pronounce the endings of their words and they sometimes begin to articulate another word without even finishing the previous word that was being said. This was highlighted by one of the students in their response to this question. Interviewee one stated the following:

Definitely the accent. The Cuban accent is one of the hardest to understand because we are brought up on learning proper or standard Spanish so the Cuban accent tends to be very colloquial at times so they cut off a lot of their words and their words tend to be merged together so you can't pin point individual vocabulary or words so whatever you are able to pin point is sometimes very limited in this case.

Other responses from this percentage of students also mentioned the way in which Cubans articulate their words which posed a major issue in understanding the Cuban speaker in the audio. The remaining 30% indicated that the speech rate posed an issue. The percentage for the speech rate for this audio was not as high as the Argentinean because the man in the clip spoke at

a moderate pace in such a way that if the comprehensibility of the audio was solely based on his rate of speech, most if not all of the students undoubtedly would have understood the majority or everything that he said. Other factors of hindrance that appeared in the minority were lack of background knowledge which was the response given by 20% of the students as well as the clip not being clear in terms of its audibility given by another 20% of the students.

The findings for this Cuban audio clip can be closely related to another study done which tested students on the factors which affected their listening comprehension abilities. Sumalinog (2018, p. 615) illustrates that from among the factors listed that hindered students in their comprehension ability, accent, 88%, and speed of delivery, 80%, were the two most prominent factors of the students. Other factors included differences in linguistic background and context and inclusion of jargon, among others (Sumalinog 2018, p.615).

Section 3: Discussion of the findings from respondents on the Spanish audio clip.

This final section discusses the main findings of the students after listening to the Spanish clip. The findings for this section were very similar to the two aforementioned sections. Undeniably, speech rate and accent were once again the two factors that played the biggest role in the hindrance of what was said in this audio clip. Empirical evidence was given to further substantiate this point. The findings showed that more than half of the respondents which equated to 60% said that speech rate was the most problematic factor for this audio. This was due to the fact that the lady in this audio clip spoke extremely fast and as a result, did not articulate her words in such a manner that would be fully comprehensible for the listener. This was followed by 30% of the students who stated that the accent posed an issue. The percentage for

the accent being a hindrance was the lowest amongst the three audio clips because Spanish speakers from Spain speak very clearly in terms of articulation and pronunciation of their words as opposed to Cuban and Argentinean speakers. Other factors that played a role in the hindrance of the comprehension of the audio but were in the minority were background knowledge at 20%, length of the audio at 20%, and the audio being out of context at 10%. Similar to these findings is the study done by Bloomfield et al. (2010, p. 80) which stated that factors likely to be more prevalent in authentic passages, such as unfamiliar speaker accents, varying speech rates, culturally specific information, distortion, and noise, are likely to increase the difficulty of the passage. Given the experimental findings that faster speech rates can lead to lower comprehension, it is not surprising that L2 learners sometimes explicitly point to speech rate as a source of difficulty (Bloomfield et. al 2010, p. 61). The accent can also pose a hindrance to students because of unfamiliarity. Non-native speakers are likely to have a lower level of familiarity with any accented speech for their L2 than native speakers, but non-native speakers should still find particular L2 accents more familiar (Bloomfield et al. 2010, p. 51). This was proven because a lot of the students understood the Spanish accent a lot more than the Cuban accent.

Another factor which was not as prevalent as speech rate and accent but it was still relevant nonetheless was the length of the audio. A small percentage of the students which was 20% stated that the audio was a bit too long and therefore they lost track of what the main idea of the audio clip was. As mentioned by one of the respondents, after a while he/she stopped listening and stopped understanding what was said. Longer passages may be more likely to disrupt comprehension due to overwhelming listeners' working memory storage capacity (Henning, 1990). Hence, this was a valid reason for the above response given by the student.

Conclusion

In summary, after a significant amount of empirical evidence and analysis, it was seen that speech rate and accent were indeed the two most prevalent factors which hinder students in their ability to comprehend speech in the process of foreign language learning. This is due to the fact that if a person speaks very quickly, it will be difficult to fully recognize words, phrases or concepts because the human mind is only able to grasp and internalize information at a moderate speed for the information that is being related to be comprehensible. When a person speaks too quickly, regardless of whether there is knowledge of the topic at hand, it will hinder the ability to process the information and as a result, the listener may miss key elements when trying to comprehend the speech of the speaker.

Likewise, the same hindrance occurs if a person has an accent that is different from the native language of the listener. An accent means that certain words will be pronounced differently in terms of placement of stress and intonation. This difference in pronunciation will make it difficult for the listener to comprehend what the speaker is trying to relate. Consistent practice is highly recommended for students who have issues comprehending audios due to speech rate and accent. Students should, as often as possible, practice listening to audios where the speakers speak relatively fast and other times listen to speakers who have a strong accent. In this way, their auditory system would get accustomed to fast paced speech and strong accents. Over time, this will increase comprehensibility and linguistic competence.

Limitations

This study had quite a number of limitations. Firstly, the time frame in which this research had to be conducted was a limitation. Since this topic is highly relatable to me, I would have liked to conduct extensive research on this topic over a lengthy period of time in order to gather as much information from as many people as possible. However, since this research is for the purpose of a final year project submission, a date for the submission was set therefore in this case; lengthy, extensive research would not have been possible.

Another limitation for this research was the geography. Due to the fact that this research paper had a set date in which to be submitted, it would have been very difficult to travel to another country to gather data on this topic since that would have been too time consuming and the possibility of successfully completing the research within the given time frame would have been drastically reduced.

A third limitation was a lack of access to tangible secondary sources of research. This includes books, articles and journals in hard copy form. This limitation was due to the fact that the global pandemic COVID-19 forced the closure of the University's library, the public library or any book store that would have been useful for the acquisition of hard copy books etc. As a result, the only references for this paper were online sources.

Lastly, the focus group was another limitation. A relatively small sample of students was used to conduct the research and gather information. This limited the quantity of perspectives that could have been gathered if a larger sample of participants was used in order to add profundity to the research.

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Appendix A

Argentinean audio clip - ¿Qué piensan los argentinos de los extranjeros?

arg. audio.mp3

1. Could you tell me what the audio was about or what was said?

Interviewee 1

Response- Basically, the audio was about, well it was an interview and there were two responders and they were basically talking about their feelings towards studying abroad or foreign exchange students and the advantages and disadvantages of studying in another country or in another place.

Interviewee 2

Response- They discussed what they think about studying abroad and what it represents to them.

Interviewee 3

Response- I believe they were speaking about the experience of studying in an institute but I didn't really follow much of what they were saying because it was not clear for me. There was noise, the different intonations, things like that.

Interviewee 4

Response- The first audio for me was that the person who was recording or interviewing was speaking to two students that are exchange students about their experience of studying in the host country.

Interviewee 5

Response- I'm not exactly sure what was said like I didn't really get a general idea of what was going on, I didn't understand.

Interviewee 6

Response- Basically, it's about finding opportunities in other countries. The first one (being the respondent in the video) from what I gathered it was just generally. The second one was more specific to studies in universities in another country; finding things like better opportunities things they wouldn't have in their own country.

Interviewee 7

Response- It's about a study abroad programme. Something to do with studying because I heard "estudiar" and they mentioned something about how it happens in other countries, I'm not sure if it happens there I didn't quite get that part but it could be something that they could benefit from.

Interviewee 8

Response - I think she was talking about her dreams. Honestly, I can't recall much. To me, she was talking about her dreams and maybe her lifestyle or quality of living.

Interviewee 9

Response- Not really because it was too fast but I heard specific vocabulary but not like an actual sentence; like a full sentence. I know that they were speaking about education, something about education and that's basically it. Also the background noise made it a little more difficult to understand what was being said.

Interviewee 10

Response - What I understood was that they were talking about possibilities or the availability of work or something like education; the opportunities that people have in their own country as opposed to in another country. So, the lady, she said that it seems well to her to look for opportunities outside of her country because of a dream or whatever education or work whereas the guy he said that yes it may be good but they also have opportunities in their own country that they don't take advantage of.

2. What difficulties did you encounter in understanding what was said in this audio?

Interviewee 1

Response- The accent wasn't very hard to understand, it was more about how fast they spoke and how they cut off some of the words and some of them were inaudible so you could not actually pin point the exact word but you have a general idea around what they are speaking about.

Interviewee 2

Response- The rate at which they speak and also the intonation sometimes they were higher pitched and then when they went lower you could not really hear the words clearly.

Interviewee 3

Response - Background noises, you know like when you do things in the street, it sounded like an interview in the streets. When you do those types of interviews, it has noise in the background that is kind of interrupting what is being heard. Also, I believe the accent but I'm not quite sure which accent because I'm not good with telling what accent is from what country.

Interviewee 4

Response - For me, I think it was probably just the person's accent. For instance, the accent of the woman was a bit less comprehensible to me than the accent that the guy had so I wouldn't say that it was the accent of the people in the country but the way that she spoke was a bit unclear.

Interviewee 5

Response - For me, the girl when she was speaking she would be changing the rate of how she was speaking a lot so she would be speaking slow at one time and as I begin to get the gist of it she would speed up . The guy did the same thing as well, they just speed up a lot and it was a bit hard to adjust to it.

Interviewee 6

Response - The pronunciation, not so much the accent as it was the pronunciation itself. Certain words were eaten up. I would say mumbled up per say, but similar to how in Trinidad we wouldn't pronounce all our endings or certain consonants in our language, it was like that.

Interviewee 7

Response - The first time I heard it, the accent and the speed of the speakers; I didn't get some words but then the second time it was clearer so I guess the accent and the speed of the speaking. Also, the fact that they didn't mention a specific thing, it kind of made it harder for me to figure out what they were speaking about.

Interviewee 8

Response - I understood the vocabulary in terms of understanding exactly what she was saying but in the context, I didn't know what she was talking about specifically.

Interviewee 9

Response - The background noise and the velocity of the speech.

Interviewee 10

Response - Mostly the accent, I think the speech rate was ok. In the ladies case, I understood it a little bit better but the guy he didn't speak as clear. He wasn't as pronounced so I kind of had to focus more to what he was saying.

3. If you were to give a title for this audio, what would you give it?

Interviewee 1

Response - Advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad.

Interviewee 2

Response - The experience of studying abroad.

Interviewee 3

Response - My experience of studying English.

Interviewee 4

Response - Interview to foreign exchange students based on their experience of study abroad.

Interviewee 5

Response - Sobre mi país. Translation - About my country.

Interviewee 6

Response - Opinions on immigration.

Interviewee 7

Response - Study abroad opportunities.

Interviewee 8

Response - Mi vida o algo así- Translation; My life or something like that.

Interviewee 9

Response - Education in the country

Interviewee 10

Response - The perception of opportunities in your home country as opposed to a foreign country.

4. What other factors in addition to speech rate and accent hindered you in the comprehension of this audio?

Interviewee 1

Response - The background knowledge because if you have any kind of context towards anything you are listening to its better to identify certain words or the vocabulary within the audio itself so then you are able to understand better even though there are limits to the accent or the intonation or the rate at which they are speaking then background knowledge will always be helpful.

Interviewee 2

Response - Background information to me is very important because of the vocabulary. Once you identify the vocabulary you could relate what they are saying in the video.

Interviewee 3

Response - The rhythm wasn't bad but it was a bit fast. At times I was trying to understand what they are saying to link things together.

Interviewee 4

Response - Sometimes to me, if it's not a video, like I can handle a video with background noise because you can actually see the context and see the situation unfolding but for an audio when there is like background noise because it was clearly in public that makes it a bit difficult for me to follow because for me I'm visual so I need to see to follow things.

Interviewee 5

Response - No, nothing else actually bothered me to be honest.

Interviewee 6

Response - Maybe the quality of the audio.

Interviewee 7

Response - No, I don't think so.

Interviewee 8

Response - I would have to say the speakers because I personally prefer headphones when doing listening.

Interviewee 9

Response - No, not necessarily.

Interviewee 10

Response - Generally, its speech, accent, and as well the clarity of the audio itself so if it has background noise, it could be very difficult to listen but in this case, it didn't have that so it was mostly the accent of the guy and his speech rate.

Appendix B

Cuban Audio clip - ¿Existen clases sociales en Cuba?

cuba audio.mp3

1. Could you tell me what the audio was about or what was said?

Interviewee 1

Response- It sounds like he is talking about café con leche, romper something, lees.. I don't have a general idea of the audio.

Interviewee 2

Response- I think they were talking about the rich and the poor and something about a new law which was privileging the rich in society.

Interviewee 3

Response - To be honest, it sounds like he was speaking about something in the household like he was talking about milk and I believe he was probably talking about what they need for their house or something like that. You know talking to their wife about what else we need in the house that they need to do some more shopping.

Interviewee 4

Response - To me I think that he was speaking about a food situation in his country and the restrictions that it has based on like how food is regulated and I think that he mentioned somewhere inside there to some aspect of privilege so I guess that some people are less affected than others; that's what I got from it.

Interviewee 5

Response - This one I got a slightly better idea of what he was saying. It was just sounding very general but I understood the words he was saying more or less. It sound like somebody talking very general about the country, the society they live in. It sounds like a kind of social commentary in a sense.

Interviewee 6

Response - I think it might be something with class dynamics, social class dynamics.

Interviewee 7

Response - I think it had something to do with milk and coffee.

Interviewee 8

Response - So the guy was talking about the inequality between the rich and the poor. I think he was talking about the availability of resources because he mentioned the milk and something about the law.

Interviewee 9

Response - It was not that clear but it was clearer than the first one but I believe he was speaking about equality or rather inequality in the society and how it affects the rich and the poor.

Interviewee 10

Response - His accent was a bit more complicated than the first one so it was a bit more difficult to hear, however I understood that he was talking about a comparison between the rich and the poor so I guess they are talking about a disparity between the wealth or the opportunities that each one has. He said that the majority of the country or the population the need or they depend on... basically injustice. They need to get away from the law as it is at the moment in order to help the majority of the people who need the benefits and access to whatever resources etc.

2. What difficulties did you encounter in understanding what was said in this audio?

Interviewee 1

Response - Definitely the accent. The Cuban accent is one of the hardest to understand because we are brought up on learning proper or standard Spanish so the Cuban accent tends to be very colloquial at times so they cut off a lot of their words and their words tend to be merged together so you can't pin point individual vocabulary or words so whatever you are able to pin point is sometimes very limited in this case.

Interviewee 2

Response - The accent was very difficult to understand. I didn't think he spoke that fast but because of the accent I couldn't make out the words properly.

Interviewee 3

Response - You know when an older person has an accent. His accent was stronger. His voice was lower, but strong. His rhythm of speech was not too fast and it wasn't too slow, it was just in between. His accent, not necessarily where he is from, but older people has this kind of accent that I'm trying to interpret while listening.

Interviewee 4

Response - It was mainly his speed.

Interviewee 5

Response - This audio was actually much better than the first. I did not have that problem with the rate of speech. It was good. However, my main issue was the heavy accent. Although he lowered his voice at times, that actually didn't hinder my ability to understand him.

Interviewee 6

Response - Yes, this audio was a bit more difficult because the pronunciation and he spoke rather quickly and some of his words; they died down when he got softer.

Interviewee 7

Response - The pronunciation of words for sure. He eats up his words so it wasn't very clear for me.

Interviewee 8

Response - I would say his accent was a little more difficult to understand in this one

Interviewee 9

Response - The velocity. He started off clear then the clarity just kind of went after a while so it was difficult to understand what he was really saying, although you could have heard specific vocabulary, there were some words that I were unable to hear.

Interviewee 10

Response - His enunciation was, you know like those classical Cuban speakers. His accent was like very... he doesn't pronounce his words and he is joining, like linking the words so it's really hard to hear.

3. If you were to give a title for this audio, what would you give it?

Interviewee 1

Response - The Cuban accent.

Interviewee 2

Response - The rich and the poor.

Interviewee 3

Response - Grocery shopping or grocery list.

Interviewee 4

Response - Interviewed xyz person based on the laws that govern food control.

Interviewee 5

Response - English or Spanish, I don't really know, it kind of just sounds like a barbershop talk to me.

Interviewee 6

Response - Examining social class.

Interviewee 7

Response - Milk and coffee.

Interviewee 8

Response – Desigualdad Translation - inequality.

Interviewee 9

Response - Equality or rather inequality in society and how it affects members of the society.

Interviewee 10

Response - disparidad – Translation - disparity.

4. What other factors in addition to speech rate and accent hindered you in the comprehension of this audio?

Interviewee 1

Response - If I had an idea or a title of the audio, I would know what to look for in order to have a general consensus of what the audio is about.

Interviewee 2

Response - I think if I had the theme beforehand I would have been able to pin point a little more of what the audio was about.

Interviewee 3

Response - No other hindrances.

Interviewee 4

Response - I feel like it's just the speed and the clarity in which he pronounces things.

Interviewee 5

Response - No nothing else.

Interviewee 6

Response - No, because the audio was clean, there wasn't any background noises or anything.

Interviewee 7

Response - No, no other factors.

Interviewee 8

Response - I think his speaking was a bit muffled, but I don't know if that is just the accent.

Interviewee 9

Response - No, not necessarily.

Interviewee 10

Response - Speech rate. He was talking fast, not clear and linking his words so all of those things combined.

Appendix C

Spanish Audio Clip- La publicidad- ¿salvará el mundo?

spanish audio.mp3

1. Could you tell me what the audio was about or what was said?

Interviewee 1

Response - She started off talking about some form of communication and it's basically about improving or optimizing on the advantages and disadvantages of whatever she is talking about in particular in the audio.

Interviewee 2

Response - I think it was about advertising and increasing sales of a product.

Interviewee 3

Response - This lady was talking about finding a solution to some problem, I can't identify what was the problem. I was trying to understand the vocabulary, but I was not understanding what the problem was but she was trying to find a solution. She was talking about the advantages and

what inspired her but I don't know what inspired her. Those were the things that were the main thing for me.

Interviewee 4

Response - I think that she was speaking about improving the sale situation of some product but the product to me is still unclear.

Interviewee 5

Response - It sounds like some kind of inspirational encouragement or something like that.

Interviewee 6

Response - I think that was about publication and advertising.

Interviewee 7

Response - It was something about sales and improving the quality of a product. Then there was something with like an advertisement. I heard some part with that but I couldn't put it all together.

Interviewee 8

Response - I think she mentioned something about sales and how they have changed.

Interviewee 9

Response - Honestly, I did not get the point of the audio. I just felt like it was just a vast amount of words but I didn't really get the point of what was being said.

Interviewee 10

Response - What I understood from this is that she was talking about the mentality of people, how they think about the things that they do or don't do. So, she was saying that we need to be more optimistic and be more empathetic to ourselves. Don't talk to yourself in a negative way but try to talk to yourself positively so you can have a positive impact on your actions and your mentality, your state of mind.

2. What difficulties did you encounter in understanding what was said in this audio?

Interviewee 1

Response- I think this was more about the rate at which she spoke than intonation or anything like that because it was rather clear in comparison to the other audios.

Interviewee 2

Response - The rate at which she spoke, the accent was ok but because of how quick she spoke the words were jumbled I could not decipher exactly what she was saying.

Interviewee 3

Response - Ok, so she started off good, it was clear and then sometimes it sounded like everything was jumbled up together and it started to get fast as time went by, then slow then fast.

Interviewee 4

Response - I feel as though I got the majority of what she said but I am still unclear of whatever it is that they are talking about. For instance, maybe if I heard what was said in the audio before what was extracted then I might know.

Interviewee 5

Response - This one was actually interesting because in my opinion, this one was the fastest but the speed did not bother me at all. It was actually the accent; some Spanish accents you actually find you still hear the differentiation between the words. This one, because of the speed, you find a lot of the words just go into each other so you have to listen for the words but the speed itself did not cause a problem.

Interviewee 6

Response - Maybe just the speed at certain times but it was clear.

Interviewee 7

Response - Just like with the other two, I think it was the speed; yeah just the speed in this one.

The pronunciation was good.

Interviewee 8

Response - It was extremely fast.

Interviewee 9

Response - This one posed an issue for me in terms of the accent. The accent was a bit difficult for me to understand.

Interviewee 10

Response- Her accent, her accent wasn't clear enough for me.

3. If you were to give a title for this audio, what would you give it?

Interviewee 1

Response - The benefits of advertising.

Interviewee 2

Response - Advertising a product.

Interviewee 3

Response - Finding a solution.

Interviewee 4

Response - Interview with xyz person on how to improve the sales of xyz product.

Interviewee 5

Response - La inspiración - Translation- inspiration.

Interviewee 6

Response - The pros of advertising.

Interviewee 7

Response - Marketing strategy.

Interviewee 8

Response - nada Translation- nothing.

Interviewee 9

Response - communication.

Interviewee 10

Response - optimism.

4. What other factors in addition to speech rate and accent hindered you in the comprehension of this audio?

Interviewee 1

Response - No other factors in this case.

Interviewee 2

Response - No other factors in this case.

Interviewee 3

Response - Lack of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Interviewee 4

Response - This one was a bit longer so after a while I kind of stopped listening or stop understanding what was being said, but it was clearer than the first two. It didn't really have much background noise. Basically, it was only the length that was a challenge.

Interviewee 5

Response - No, no other factors.

Interviewee 6

Response - No, the audio was clean.

Interviewee 7

Response - No I can't think of any.

Interviewee 8

Response - Maybe the vocabulary as well as the background knowledge.

Interviewee 9

Response - No, not that I can remember.

Interviewee 10

Response - It was a bit longer so to understand the full message or the general message was a bit harder. In extended audios it is more difficult to understand because it is a lot of words and every word in Spanish has a rule. So there could be a key word that I can miss and if I don't know the vocabulary or I don't know what it means, I would not understand it properly, so that is the difficulty with extended audios.