# Challenges Communicating Severe Weather Risk in Spanish

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### The Problem

NWS making great strides improving non-English communication

 Barriers still exist, e.g., defining the "best" term for a phenomenon

 Weather salience is highly dependent on "the nativity and origin country of a Spanish speaker" (Trujillo-Falcón et al. 2024)

 Warning tools such as WEA messages may not work best simply through translation into Spanish (Trujillo-Falcón 2024)

# Rip Current Spanish Translation Study: Part I

- Evaluate the initial NWS Spanish Rip Current outreach brochure
- Survey results reveal some positives but several shortcomings
- Translation issues: The term chosen for rip current, "corrientes de resaca," means "hangover current" to certain Spanish speakers
  - Additional translation issues including other jargon and customary units
- Translation issues led to lower efficacy of Spanish brochure, as measured in post questions regarding rip current understanding (Bernhardt et al. 2024)



# Rip Current Spanish Translation Study: Part II

 Follow up survey to assess baseline knowledge and the new Spanish terminology

 National Amazon Mturk survey run late 2023 – early 2024

 279 responses to the survey, about the new NWS Spanish rip current beach sign



#### SI QUEDA ATRAPADO EN UNA CORRIENTE MARINA

- Relájese, la corriente marina no lo hunde.
- No nade contra la corriente.
- Nade fuera de la corriente y luego hacia la orilla.
- Si no logra escapar, manténgase a flote o pedaleando.
- Si necesita auxilio, grite o agite los brazos.

#### **PARA SU SEGURIDAD**

- Aprenda a nadar.
- Nunca nade solo.
- ¡Si no está seguro, no entre al agua!
- Nade cerca de un salvavidas.

Para más información acerca de la corriente marina consulte estos sitios en la internet

weather.gov/safety/ripcurrent/ usla.org





# Part II Survey Key Results

#### **Effective Areas**

#### New terminology (corrientes marinas) is working

 96% said it makes sense, though several other better terms suggested, including correinte de mar (or similar) in ~10% of surveys

#### Sign is easy to understand

 Average Likert score of 2.2 (out of 5, lower means easier)

#### Risk is being conveyed

 Average Likert score of 3.7 and 3.9 (out of 5) for how dangerous is a rip current, how likely caught in

#### **Areas for Improvement**

- Limited understanding of rip currents and their dangers
  - Only 52% respondents correctly described rip currents and their impacts (pre question)
- Continued penetration issue for rip current outreach literature
  - Only 41% had seen the sign (or something similar) previously

### Part II Survey Key Results

- Heat map of responses reinforces survey results
- Unlike previous study, text was clear but graphics confusing
  - However, last study showed simple text is better, reinforced here
- English links/URLs confusing!
- Issues with terms such as "salvavidas" – lifeguard or life jacket?



# Rip Current Spanish Translation Study: Part III

 Based on previous work, developing a Spanish VR rip current simulation

 Tested its efficacy as an outreach tool at three local high schools in NYC and Long Island, surveying 64 students



# Part III Survey Results

- Results broadly similar to the beach sign survey, though the younger population for the VR survey might make a difference
- Short responses reinforced the VR's realism and efficacy
  - Sounds; swimming using arms are realistic
  - Nearly all participants recalled what to do: call for help or swim parallel to shore; stay calm

Question	Avg Likert Response
How realistic was the simulation?	3.7
How hazardous did the simulation make you think a rip current is	3.3
How likely did the simulation make you think you will be caught in a rip current?	3.6

# Ongoing work: Snow Squall VR Simulation

 Current funding from the National Safety Council, collaboration with NWS State College and state organizations

- Developing a bilingual VR Snow Squall Simulation to enhance risk communication of this challenging hazard
- Additional barriers to understanding for Spanish speakers
  - Does the translated term make sense?
  - Roadside changeable message signs only in English
  - Does the WEA alert to your phone get translated into Spanish?

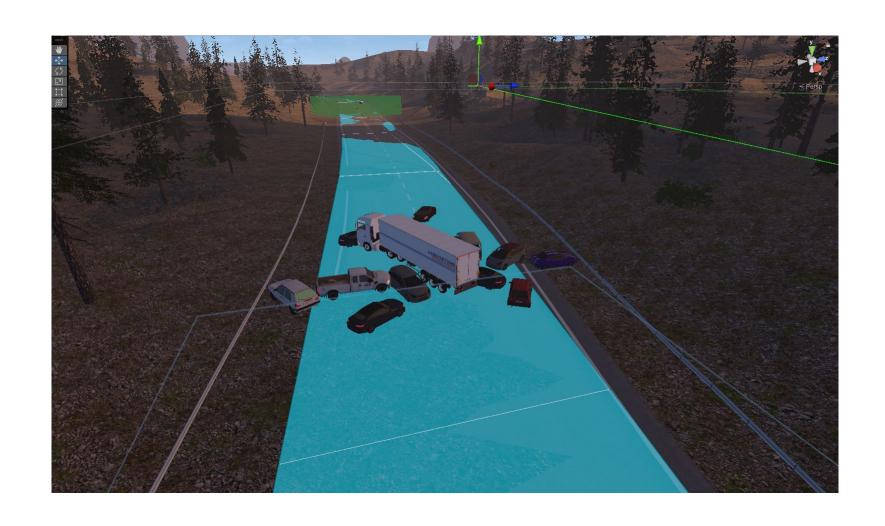








# Designing a pileup in the simulation



# Acknowledgements

- New York Sea Grant Award R/CHD-16
- National Safety Council Award D750 P8760
- Kathleen Fallon, NYSG Marine Coastal Processes and Hazards Specialist, and Greg Dusek, National Ocean Service
- NWS State College WFO: Greg Devoir, John Banghoff, Mike Colbert, Mike Jurewicz
- NWS New York WFO: Nelson Vaz and Dave Radell
- Frank Martin, VR Developer
- Joseph Trujillo-Falcón, Spanish Weather Risk Communication Expert
- Additional organizations including the Long Beach Latino Civic Association, PennDOT, NYS Weather Risk Communication Center

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