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Portuguese as a Foreign Language: Motivations and Perceptions

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Portuguese as a Foreign Language:
Motivations and Perceptions

Desirée de Almeida Oliveira

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Portuguese as a Foreign Language: Motivations and Perceptions

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Portuguese enrollments have been on a continuous rise at universities in the United States. Due to this increase it is important that teachers and department administrators understand what the motivations of Portuguese students are. This study reports on the findings of a survey conducted with lower-level Portuguese students at Brigham Young University regarding their motivations to study the language and compares these motivations with those of students of French, German, Italian, and Spanish. In addition, the study reports on students' perspectives on Portuguese in contrast to their perspectives on these other four European languages. Other issues considered include Portuguese students' native and foreign language backgrounds, their motivation to further pursue the study of Portuguese in the future, and their interest in two different varieties of the language, Brazilian and European Portuguese.

Results revealed that only for Portuguese students were career plans the main motivation to study the language. Most Portuguese students already spoke Spanish fluently, either as a native or foreign language, and were also greatly motivated by the similarity between the two languages. Many Portuguese students were interested in pursuing their language studies in the future. Students reported being very interested in Brazilian Portuguese, but minimally interested in the European variety. Portuguese students' perceptions of the language were for the most part more positive than their perceptions of French, German, Italian, and Spanish, whereas non-Portuguese students' perceptions of Portuguese were mostly less positive than their perceptions of these other four European languages. Based on Portuguese and non-Portuguese students' responses to the survey questions, the study gives recommendations to promote the study of Portuguese as a foreign language at the post-secondary level.

Keywords: foreign language teaching, less commonly taught languages, motivation, Portuguese

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Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES	vi
CHAPTER 1	1
Introduction	1
Rationale and Need for the Study	4
Overview of the Study.....	5
Contributions of the Study	7
CHAPTER 2	9
Introduction	9
Foreign Language Teaching in the US.....	10
A Brief History	10
The Current State of Foreign Language Teaching Post-Secondary Instruction.....	13
Portuguese Instruction	15
Motivation and Language Learning	18
Defining Motivation	18
Conceptualizing the Construct.....	19
LCTL Students’ Motivations.....	26
Portuguese Students’ Motivations	27
Foreign Language Choice	28
Students’ Perceptions of Specific Foreign Languages	29
CHAPTER 3	31
Introduction	31
Methods.....	31
Participants	32
Survey Instruments	35
Data Analysis.....	35
CHAPTER 4	36
Introduction	36
Data Analysis	36
Demographic Information	36

Students' Native and Family Language Background	38
Students' Foreign Language Experiences	41
Motivation to Continue Studying Portuguese	44
Motivations for Studying Language of Choice	45
Attitudes toward Brazilian and European Portuguese	57
Perceptions of Portuguese as a Foreign Language	58
CHAPTER 5	70
Findings, Conclusions, and Implications	70
Portuguese Student Backgrounds	70
Motivational Aspects of Studying Portuguese	73
Ways to Expand Portuguese Enrollments	77
Limitations of the Study	82
Recommendations for Future Research	83
Conclusion.....	84
REFERENCES	85
APPENDIX A Survey Instrument of Portuguese Students	89
APPENDIX B Survey Instrument of Non-Portuguese Students	92

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Language classes in which students were enrolled	36
Table 2: Gender of Participants According to Language	37
Table 3: Age of Participants According to Language	38
Table 4: Native Language of Students According to Foreign Language Class	39
Table 5: Origin of Portuguese Students	39
Table 6: Students That Have Family Members Who Are Native Speakers of the Language	41
Table 7: Students Who Have Studied Other Languages Besides the One of the Class	42
Table 8: Students' Previous Foreign Language Experiences	43
Table 9: Likelihood of Taking a Portuguese Class Next Semester	44
Table 10: Likelihood of Taking an Advanced Portuguese Class in the Future	45
Table 11: Interest in Studying European Portuguese	54
Table 12: Interest in Studying Brazilian Portuguese	55
Table 13: Percentages of Students According to Language Motivations	58
Table 14: Ranking of Students' Motivations for Studying Language of Choice	58
Table 15: Responses to "Knowing this language would help me in my career	60
Table 16: Responses to "Knowing this language would help me to be considered an educated person in society"	60

Table 17: Responses to “Knowing this language would help me with my hobbies and personal interests”	61
Table 18: Responses to “Knowing this language would help communicate with family and/or friends who speak it”	61
Table 19: Responses to “I am interested in cultural aspects of countries where this language is spoken”	62
Table 20: Responses to “I am interested in travelling to countries where this language is spoken”	63
Table 21: Responses to “Countries where this language is spoken play an important economic role in the world”	64
Table 22: Responses to “I would like to learn this language”	64
Table 23: Portuguese Students’ Responses to Statements 1, 2, 3, and 4	65
Table 24: Portuguese Students’ Responses to Statements 5, 6, 7, and 8	66
Table 25: Native Spanish Speakers’ Responses to Statements 1, 2, 3, and 4	67
Table 26: Native Spanish Speakers’ Responses to Statements 5, 6, 7, and 8	67
Table 27: Other Languages Students Are Interested in Studying	68

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Course enrollments in languages other than English at institutions of higher education in the United States have been on a continuous rise since 1995. Enrollments experienced an increase of 6.6% between 2006 and 2009, following a growth of 12.9% between 2002 and 2006 (Furman, Goldberg & Lusin, 2010). Recent surveys by the Modern Language Association at two-year colleges and four-year institutions reveal not only an upward trend in enrollments, but also an increasing diversification of languages studied. Although only three languages (Spanish, French, and German) still represent 71% of the total enrollments, students have demonstrated an increasing interest in some of the more than 200 languages taught in US institutions of higher education (Brown, 2009).

Even though the most recent MLA study reveals that enrollment figures in less commonly taught languages (LCTL) have been increasing dramatically, the question about what kind of student is attracted to LCTL courses remains unanswered. Most data about LCTL students' motivations come from teachers (Johnston & Janus, 2003; Stenson, Janus & Mulkern, 1998) rather than from the LCTL students themselves. Brown (2009) points out that one of the few studies with data gathered directly from the LCTL students was carried out by Morahg (1993) with Modern Hebrew students. According to Brown, "empirical data gathered from LCTL students themselves relative to their motivations, their academic background, and their identity are conspicuously underrepresented in scholarly research" (pp. 407-408). More studies are deemed necessary in order to better understand LCTL students' motivations and to better attend to the needs of this category of students.

Portuguese is a less commonly taught language; however, students have demonstrated an increasing interest in it. Course enrollments in this language have been consistently on the rise since 1980. It is important to note that the Modern Language Association reported a double-digit gain of 10.8% in Portuguese enrollments between 2006 and 2009. This gain was superior to that of commonly taught languages such as Spanish (5.1%), French (4.8%), German (2.2%), and Italian (3.0%) which now have been growing at a more modest and slower pace (Furman et al., 2010).

Kelm (2002), a professor of Portuguese and Spanish linguistics at the University of Texas in Austin, has noted several reasons that seem to motivate students to learn Portuguese. These reasons range from an interest in music, capoeira, and literature to media communications, Maritime Law, and the fauna and flora of the Amazon. Kelm goes on to say that if you talk to almost any teacher who has taught both Portuguese and Spanish, you will hear that Portuguese learners are different. He states that even though there are wonderful and highly motivated students of Spanish, they often fall into the category of “default” language learners. In his experience, Portuguese learners have been shown to have “more specific and personal motivations for language learning” (p. 633).

Portuguese for special purposes is an area of interest for many post-secondary students. According to Kelm (2002), over the years hundreds of students at UT-Austin have expressed interest in learning Portuguese with a business focus, either because they want to study at various business schools in Brazil or because they want to do business in Latin America. Many of the Portuguese students have interest in the markets of both the Portuguese and Spanish Latin America.

If enrollment figures in Portuguese have been increasing at colleges and universities, a substantial part of it is due to the growing interest Spanish speakers have demonstrated in learning Portuguese. Students who already speak Spanish as a native or foreign language seek Portuguese classes, among other reasons, as a way of acquiring another language in a short amount of time (Carvalho, 2002). Classes tailored to Spanish speakers are ministered in a more accelerated format than classes for students with no Spanish or other Romance language background. These classes also deal with specific aspects of language transfer that can be beneficial and at the same time problematic to the student. Due to the interest Spanish speakers have demonstrated in learning Portuguese, the document *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* briefly addresses their needs (National Standards, 2006).

Despite the increasing interest of students, Portuguese remains a less commonly taught language. Enrollment figures are still very low when compared to other languages. Clearly, the term LCTL refers not only to the limited availability of courses dedicated to the teaching and learning of these languages, but also to their underrepresentation in scholarly research. Stenson et al. (1998) recognize that attitudinal studies among students and surveys on why people study a LCTL may help change general orientations towards LCTLs in the future.

The fact that only three languages (Spanish, French, and German) represent 71% of the total enrollments in foreign language courses obviously has a great effect on the remaining 216 languages in various areas such as materials development, instructor morale, classroom teaching, and professional development (Brown, 2009). Tradition, history, and the availability of certified teachers have made French, German, Latin, and Spanish the commonly studied languages, but as argued in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, many of the LCTLs are languages spoken by peoples with whom the United States has important economic and strategic relationships as

well as an increasing cultural awareness (National Standards, 2006). A better distribution of the number of students among a greater variety of language courses could benefit American society as a whole. Understanding the motivations of LCTL students is a crucial step in the advocacy for LCTL programs.

Rationale and Need for the Study

Although a lot is known about LCTL enrollment trends and overall challenges, very few studies (Brown, 2009; Johnston & Janus, 2003; Morahg, 1993; Stenson, Janus & Mulkern, 1998) have looked closely at LCTL students' motivations. Besides the dearth of empirical research in the area, some studies (Johnston & Janus, 2003; Stenson, Janus & Mulkern, 1998) have obtained their data anecdotally from instructors rather than directly from students. It is expected that LCTL students' characteristics and motivations are different from those of mainstream language students; however, more scholarly effort is necessary to identify what they are.

To my knowledge, there have been no studies analyzing Portuguese students' motivations at any educational level. With the number of Portuguese enrollments increasing at a steady and consistent rate in colleges and universities, there is a need to investigate what brings learners to the Portuguese classrooms. Even though we have some idea of what motivates students to learn Portuguese, as with other LCTLs, the evidence is more anecdotal than empirical. This study examines the motivations of Portuguese learners at the post-secondary level and directly compares them with those of students of four commonly taught languages at the same university. According to Brown (2009) little empirical work has examined how the characteristics of students enrolled in LCTL courses compares with those of students in CTL courses within the same university.

Considering that enrollments in Portuguese are still low even though they have been increasing, it is also important to investigate how students of other languages, who have never studied Portuguese, perceive this language. Students' perceptions of Portuguese reveal important information regarding why enrollment figures are still low despite the growth they have been experiencing. Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold.

Overview of the Study

This study has two purposes: to identify Portuguese students' motivations, and to identify non-Portuguese students' perceptions of Portuguese as a foreign language.

In order to gather information on Portuguese students' motivations, this research involves an anonymous survey of all students enrolled in the lower-division Portuguese classes offered in the 2011 Winter semester (102 and 202 classes) at Brigham Young University. I limited the participants of the survey to lower-division students, rather than also including upper-division ones, so that the study would be focused in its scope. Upper-division students at this particular university have, for the most part, different motivations to study Portuguese due to their previous experience living in a Portuguese-speaking country. Therefore, including data from them could have altered the results of the study.

In order to gather information on students' perceptions of Portuguese as a foreign language, students enrolled in the first semester (101 classes) of four other language courses (French, German, Italian, and Spanish) at the same university were surveyed with a similar anonymous questionnaire to the one administered to the Portuguese students. The similarity between the two questionnaires makes it possible to compare and contrast the perceptions Portuguese and non-Portuguese students have of the study of Portuguese as a foreign language. This similarity also makes it possible to compare and contrast the motivations of Portuguese and

non-Portuguese students. A copy of the Portuguese and non-Portuguese questionnaires can be found in Appendices A and B respectively. Only students of French, German, Italian, and Spanish were asked to participate in the non-Portuguese group because these are the most commonly taught European languages at Brigham Young University. Keeping the scope of the research within the realm of European languages makes the study more valid and feasible.

The surveys were administered to the students in paper and pencil format during their respective foreign language classes after previous arrangement with their teachers. It was expected that by administering students the questionnaires in class the return rate would be greater than if students were to take an online survey outside of class. Of the 54 Portuguese students invited to participate in the study, 49 (90, 7%) of them responded to the questionnaire. Of the approximately 313 non-Portuguese students asked to participate, 267 (85, 3%) responded to the questionnaire. These 267 students were distributed as follows: French (88), German (50), Italian (41), and Spanish (88). Non-Portuguese students were all enrolled in 101-level classes whereas Portuguese students were enrolled in either 102 or 202-level classes because these were the only lower-division Portuguese classes offered during the 2011 Winter semester at BYU. Besides the Portuguese 102-level students, the researcher decided to include Portuguese 202-level students in the study so that the Portuguese language group would be more equivalent in size to the non-Portuguese language groups. In total, there were thirty-five Portuguese students enrolled in 102-level classes and fourteen students enrolled in a 202-level class.

The research questions that guided the design of the surveys in order to obtain information on Portuguese students' motivations and non-Portuguese students' perceptions of Portuguese as a foreign language are the following:

1. What are the motivations of lower-division Portuguese students to study the language?
2. How motivated are students to continue to study Portuguese in the future?
3. What variety of Portuguese do students have the most interest in studying (European or Brazilian)?
4. What first language background and foreign language experience do Portuguese students have?
5. How do non-Portuguese students perceive Portuguese in comparison with four commonly taught European languages?
6. How do language motivations of Portuguese students compare with those of non-Portuguese students?
7. How motivated are non-Portuguese students to study Portuguese?

Contributions of the Study

The results of this study contribute to both the field of LCTL pedagogy and Portuguese pedagogy. Understanding the motives of students who enroll in a foreign language class is the first step that should be taken in any foreign language course in order to plan classroom instruction and meet the specific needs of students. Without an awareness of the characteristics and interests of students, instruction and learning are jeopardized. Studies that focus on LCTL students' motivations are very sparse; there is a great need for more studies that focus on this increasing segment of foreign language education. Furthermore, there are no studies to my knowledge that look at Portuguese students' motivations.

In addition, the results of this study will help scholars and instructors in their advocacy of Portuguese as well as other LCTL courses as it will put them in a better position to recruit

potential students. In order to increase enrollments in LCTL courses, it is fundamental to understand how students perceive these languages. Nevertheless, a limitation of this study is that it was carried out among students from a single university (with a focus on Portuguese); however, to the extent that the results can be extrapolated to other contexts, they can prove very useful for LCTL instructors, curriculum designers, foreign language program administrators, and even governmental organizations.

In this first chapter, I have emphasized the importance of investigating Portuguese and other LCTL students' motivations, and the perceptions students have of these languages. I have situated both Portuguese and LCTLs (in a general sense) in terms of the increasing enrollments they have experienced at the post-secondary level in the past few years in the US. Moreover, I have given an overview of my study, which involves a survey of lower-level Portuguese and non-Portuguese students at Brigham Young University, and explained its limitations and potential contributions to the field. Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to foreign language motivation and Portuguese as a foreign language. Chapter 3 describes the design and procedures of the study, and Chapter 4 contains an analysis of the data gathered from the Portuguese and non-Portuguese students. This study concludes in Chapter 5 with a discussion of findings and conclusions as well as implications and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

In recent years there has been an increased emphasis on the importance of learning a foreign language as a prerequisite to becoming a worldwide citizen and as a means to enhance one's personal education. However, the benefits of studying a foreign language may be even more far-reaching. Some research studies indicate that students' cognitive abilities improve as they engage in the process of studying another language. This enhanced cognitive ability helps them achieve higher levels of performance in other areas of study (National Standards, 2006). The following statement in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* acknowledges the importance of learning a foreign language:

The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. (National Standards, 2006, p. 7)

Fortunately, student enrollments in foreign language courses in the US have been on a continuous rise since 1995. Foreign language programs are thriving everywhere at all levels of education. The array of languages students are interested in learning is also much vaster than in the past (National Standards, 2006), and less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) such as Portuguese have been gaining more attention and increasing in their enrollments. This increase in LCTL enrollments calls for more studies that investigate LCTL students' motivations and perceptions of these languages in general. In this review of the literature, I will relate several key

aspects of foreign language motivation and the state of foreign language teaching in the United States in order to contextualize this study.

Foreign Language Teaching in the US

A Brief History

Foreign language teaching has an interesting and perhaps unique history in the United States. This history illustrates how language priorities in the country have evolved over the years based on national interests and major historical events.

Prior to World War I (WWI) foreign language programs were limited almost exclusively to classical Greek, Latin, French, and German. After WWI, German classes almost disappeared due to the anti-German sentiment in the country and were “replaced” by Spanish. Around that same time other foreign languages such as Portuguese and Hebrew began to receive some attention as well (Parker, 1954).

However, it was only during World War II (WWII) that the US government realized that Americans were not adequately prepared to communicate with the peoples and nations of the world (Wiley, 2005). This realization led the government to determine foreign language priorities and to question what languages the schools should teach as well as what languages they could afford not to teach. In the summer of 1943, a total of 25 languages were being taught in 18 institutions, and most of them had never been offered at an American college before. Among these languages were Hausa, Arabic, Modern Greek, Burmese, Malay, Thai, Japanese, and Chinese (Parker, 1954).

Looking back at the beginning of the 20th century, prior to World War I, when national interest in foreign languages was limited almost exclusively to classical Greek, Latin, French and

German foreign language education has come a long way with more than 200 languages being taught at American academic institutions today at the beginning of the 21st century.

Economic, political, and security interests were determinants that shaped foreign language teaching policy and planning in the US in the past, and they continue to be determinants for the state of foreign language education in the country today. However, in a world that has become ever more complex and intertwined, the need to include a much greater range of languages has been proven to be imperative. Policymakers have felt the urge to reconsider the teaching of foreign languages at schools, colleges, and universities. Even though for most Americans studying a foreign language still means Spanish, French, and German, the government is seriously engaged in the task of fostering the study of LCTLs that are critical for the nation's security, economic stability, and success. Wiley (2005), from the National Planning for the Teaching of the Less Commonly Taught Languages at Michigan State University, argues that the needed LCTLs are not restricted to the obvious ones of the major regional powers such as Russian for the ex-Soviet Union, Portuguese for Brazil, Mandarin for China, and Japanese, Korean, and Arabic.

At the forefront of governmental focus is the funding of the teaching and learning of many of the considered LCTLs in academia. In 1991, President George H. W. Bush signed the David L. Boren National Security Education Act which enabled the government to give scholarships and other incentives for students to study languages from regions of the world considered vital for the United States. The rationale offered for these incentives is articulated in the following manner in Title VIII of that Act: "The future national security and economic well-being of the United States will depend substantially on the ability of its citizens to communicate and compete by knowing the languages and cultures of other countries" (p. 243). This security

and well-being cannot be achieved without increasing the “*quantity, diversity, and quality* of the teaching and learning of subjects in the field of *foreign languages*, area studies, counterproliferation studies, and other international fields that are critical to the Nation’s interest” (pp. 243-244, emphasis added).

Incentives for some LCTLs continued with subsequent presidents. More recently, President George W. Bush allocated \$114 million of his 2007 budget for the teaching and learning of critical languages, the languages for which there is an urgent need for producing proficient speakers. Some of these languages listed on the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) website are Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Indonesian, Punjabi, Turkish, and Urdu.

There is no question that when talking about the development of foreign language teaching in the United States the impact of immigration in the establishment of linguistic enclaves across the country must also be mentioned. Because of several waves of Spanish-speaking immigrants from Latin America, Spanish became the most studied foreign language in the US and many Spanish-English bilingual schools were created at both the elementary and secondary levels of education. However, the creation of bilingual schools did not remain restricted to the CTLs. In areas of the country where there is a larger concentration of LCTL groups, such as Japanese and Chinese in the Pacific Northwest, bilingual schools of these languages were also created (Brown, 2009).

The development of foreign language teaching in the US is a complex subject of which we have only touched the surface. Major international events such as conflicts and national ones such as immigration were the main factors that contributed to the development of foreign language teaching in the country. The same factors continue to determine the route foreign language teaching takes.

From its small beginnings with only a handful of languages prior to World War I, United States institutions (elementary, secondary, and post-secondary) have come a very long way. Together they offer students over 200 languages today. The nation's Language Resource Centers and Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Centers are also a tremendous asset. Despite the enrollment imbalance among languages, the array of languages which students can choose from is certainly a great achievement to be celebrated.

The Current State of Foreign Language Teaching Post-Secondary Instruction

The United States probably has the most advanced and developed array of foreign language programs in the world. No other educational system provides instruction in so many of the less commonly taught languages (Wiley, 2005). Foreign language course enrollments in institutions of higher education have been on an uninterrupted rise since 1995. According to the most recent survey carried out by the Modern Language Association, enrollments grew by 6.6% since the 2006 survey. The total number of post-secondary students taking foreign language classes grew to 1,682,627 in 2009 from 1,577,810 in 2006.

Nevertheless, enrollment growth was not even across institution types and educational levels. The increase occurred only at the undergraduate level, whereas at the graduate level there was an overall decrease in enrollments. Spanish, ASL, and Korean were the only languages of the 15 surveyed that experienced growth at the graduate level. Furman, Goldberg and Lusin (2010) recognize that the decrease of enrollments at the graduate level is striking when compared to the increase at the undergraduate level. In terms of enrollments in two-year colleges, Korean was the only language that experienced a decrease out of the 14 languages surveyed.

The MLA survey reveals that even though overall enrollments in modern languages increased by 106,556 between 2006 and 2009, the enrollment ratio per 100 total enrollments in

higher education is only 8.6. This ratio is far inferior to the 16.5 ratio of 1965. These differences could be partly due to the fact that foreign language requirements today are not as frequent as they used to be in the 1960s. Also, even when there is a requirement, students have to take fewer classes to complete it than they used to in past decades (Furman, Goldberg & Lusin, 2010). The ratio discrepancy between 2009 and the 1960s is ironic when considering the emphasis society and the government have been putting on the importance of foreign language education.

Spanish, French, and German continue to lead in the number of enrollments, representing 71% of them (Brown, 2009). However, according to the 2009 MLA survey, even though these three most commonly taught languages continue to grow in enrollments, they have been doing so at a more modest and slower pace than some less commonly taught languages. In 2009 Spanish enrollments grew 5.1%, whereas the growth had been 10.3% in 2006, and 13.7% between 1998 and 2002. Despite the smaller growth in 2009, Spanish surpassed the enrollment number of all other modern languages combined by 100,646 students. In 2009, the French enrollment growth of 4.8% was superior to the one of 2.2% in 2006. The German enrollment increase of 2.2% in 2009 was inferior to the one of 3.5% in 2006.

The Modern Language Association survey revealed that the most commonly taught languages on college campuses in 2009 were in descending order: Spanish, French, German, ASL, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, Latin, Russian, Ancient Greek, Biblical Hebrew, Portuguese, Korean, and Modern Hebrew. For the purpose of the MLA survey, Portuguese as well as the other languages in this list were considered commonly taught languages because they were among the 15 languages with the highest number of enrollments. However, in this study Portuguese is considered a less commonly taught language due to the low enrollment rates this language has when compared to the very top commonly taught languages.

Among the LCTLs surveyed by the Modern Language Association (Portuguese counted among the commonly taught languages), European languages were the group that experienced the largest increase in enrollments in 2009. Their growth totaled 40.2%, followed by Asian and Pacific languages, which grew by 27.3%. Native American languages enrollment growth was also significant, 18%. Even though the number of Middle Eastern and African languages studied increased by 22.9%, enrollment growth in these languages was of only 0.2%. The almost null growth in enrollments in Middle Eastern and African languages stands out in contrast to the 55.9% increase in 2006.

Overall, LCTLs had an enrollment increase of 20.8% between 2006 and 2009, but the growth was not the same across languages, institution types, and educational levels. At the undergraduate level in both two and four-year institutions almost two out of three LCTLs experienced an enrollment increase. On the other hand, at the graduate level fewer than two out of five LCTLs had an increase between 2006 and 2009.

Portuguese Instruction

Portuguese is a language of over 250 million people around the globe. It is the third most spoken European language, after English and Spanish (National Standards, 2006). As one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, Portuguese is present on five continents, and in South America it is the most spoken language (CIA- *The World Factbook*, 2011). Portuguese is the official language of Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mozambique, and East Timor.

Despite the fact that the number of native Portuguese speakers is greater than that of other European languages such as French and German, the rate of enrollments in Portuguese foreign language classes is still very low when compared to the rates of other languages.

Interestingly, it is not uncommon to find people who believe that Spanish is the official language of Brazil (the largest Portuguese-speaking country). As pointed out in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*, it is a paradox that some of the less commonly taught languages are actually some of the most widely spoken languages in the world (National Standards, 2006). Nevertheless, low enrollments in Portuguese and in other languages at American universities are most likely due to the geographical distance between the US and the countries where these languages are spoken as well as the lesser economic importance of some of these countries in the world. It is expected that enrollments in Portuguese will increase with the economic and political prominence Brazil has been gaining in the world (National Standards, 2006).

In the United States, Portuguese classes are offered at the elementary and secondary school levels mainly in California, Miami, New York City, and the New England states because these are areas where there is a larger concentration of people of Brazilian and Portuguese descent (National Standards, 2006). In Massachusetts, for instance, Portuguese is the third most spoken language, preceded only by English and Spanish (Rubinstein-Avila, 2005). However, the number of schools which offer Portuguese classes is extremely low across the board. According to a recent nationwide survey, Portuguese classes are available at only 0.3% of the elementary schools with foreign language programs and at 0.1% of the secondary schools (Rhodes & Pufahl, 2010).

Something to be celebrated is the increase of Portuguese enrollments in United States colleges and universities. The Modern Language Association publication on *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education* revealed an increase of 10.8% in Portuguese enrollments between 2006 and 2009, a gain that was superior to

that of some commonly taught languages such as Spanish, French, German, and Italian (Furman, Goldberg & Lusin, 2009). Since 1980 the number of students enrolled in Portuguese has more than doubled, and the growth has been consistent.

As discussed previously in Chapter 1, enrollment figures in Portuguese have been increasing at colleges and universities. Much of this increase is due to the growing interest Spanish speakers have demonstrated in learning this language. Carvalho (2002) asserts that many Spanish speakers, both native and non-native, are attracted to Portuguese classes by the benefit of learning a foreign language in a short amount of time. It is common to find Portuguese classes that cater specifically to Spanish speakers in colleges and universities. These classes are taught at a faster pace than regular ones, thus capitalizing on the similar language backgrounds of students. Due to the high proportions of Spanish speakers in Portuguese classes, their needs are addressed in the Portuguese chapter of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (National Standards, 2006).

Another segment of Portuguese instruction that seems to have a lot of potential is Portuguese for special purposes. Kelm (2002), a professor of linguistics at the University of Texas - Austin, has had hundreds of students over the years who expressed interest in learning Portuguese with a business focus. Students' interest led the professor to create a website for business Portuguese.

Portuguese is considered a less commonly taught language in academia. However, it is one of the LCTLs that have experienced the highest increase in enrollments in the past few years according to the Modern Language Association 2009 survey. Although the reality of Portuguese instruction in the United States is still far from ideal, more programs are expected to be established throughout the country as a result of the growing importance of Brazil in the world

market and its influence and impact in the political stability of South America (National Standards, 2006). The future of Portuguese instruction in the United States will follow the trend of other languages in the past, that is to say, it will depend on the unfolding of international events and circumstances.

Motivation and Language Learning

Defining Motivation

Motivation is a term so widely used and overgeneralized that at first glance it seems to be a quite simple and straightforward term to define and explain. Nevertheless, there is little agreement in the research literature about its exact meaning. Its complexity, however, should be no surprise if one remembers that motivation tries to explain no less than one of the most intriguing questions there is, why people do what they do and behave as they do. In fact, because of its multifaceted nature there is no language or psychological theory to this day that has been able to elucidate motivation in all its intricacies (Dörnyei, 1998).

Recognizing the complexity of motivation, it would be very simplistic to interpret it, as most tend to at first, as a disposition toward doing something. It would also be a mistake to believe that one specific definition from an expert could entirely serve the purpose of this study. Nonetheless, Williams and Burden (1997) provide an elaborate definition that suits our purposes to a good extent:

Motivation may be construed as a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals) (p. 120).

This definition, although not complete, encompasses a number of aspects that tie directly or indirectly to the research questions of this study. Some of these research questions and their

relationship to the definition above are: (1) What motivates Portuguese and non-Portuguese students to study their respective languages, or in other words, what kind of cognitive and emotional arousal did they have? (2) How motivated are non-Portuguese students to study Portuguese, that is to say, what is their cognitive and emotional state towards the language that could possibly lead them to study it (act) in the future? (3) How motivated are students to continue to study Portuguese in the future, or in other words, what level of sustained intellectual and physical effort are they willing to put forth to achieve their language goals?

Due to the crucial role motivation plays not only in foreign language learning but also in human life as a whole, psychologists have studied the topic in depth. Because of its peculiarity, L2 motivation becomes an even more complex subject. Gardner (1985) attributes the nature of such complexity to the social adaptations and changes that learning a foreign language entails. He explains that “languages are unlike any other subject taught in a classroom in that they involve the acquisition of skills and behaviour patterns, which are characteristics of another community” (p.146).

Until the 1990s research about L2 motivation had been dominated by some influential Canadian linguists with a social psychology interest and approach, such as Robert Gardner, Wallace Lambert, and Richard Clément. During the 1990s, however, a number of other researchers surfaced who were interested in reopening the agenda for the subject (Dörnyei, 1998). Following is a review of the literature that over the years has proved to be of central importance to L2 motivation.

Conceptualizing the Construct

No one disputes that motivation is a key factor that influences the success of someone’s experience in learning a foreign language. Of course, some people are naturally more gifted at

learning languages; however, motivation can compensate even for aptitude deficiencies (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). After all, ability refers to what a person can do, and motivation to what a person will do. In fact, neither ability nor good teaching without motivation is sufficient to ensure success in foreign language learning.

Motivation is not only what encourages students as they struggle through a class, but it is also what brought them there in the first place. Thus, motivation precedes the beginning of the entire learning experience. In other words, “motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in L2 acquisition presuppose motivation to some extent” (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117).

The first researchers to investigate L2 motivation were the linguists Robert Gardner, Wallace Lambert, and Richard Clément. They were influenced by social psychology, a fact that is understandable since the language learning process from the learners’ cannot be separated from their social dispositions toward the target language community (Dörnyei, 1998). Gardner’s first attempt to conceptualize this multifaceted construct dealt with the notion that students’ attitudes toward the target language community invariably influence how successfully they learn the language (Gardner, 1985). This notion is in alignment with the belief that language learning is a social venture (William, 1994). William further explains the nature of language learning, associating it with the social demands it makes on students:

Language, after all, belongs to a person’s whole social being: it is part of one’s identity, and is used to convey this identity to other people. The learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviours

and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner (cited by Dörnyei, 1998, p. 122).

Certainly, if students do not have positive attitudes towards the target language community, they will be very hesitant to make changes to their self-image as they adapt to the new social and cultural behaviors embedded in the new language. This hesitancy will undoubtedly impact their overall ability to speak the language.

In Gardner's theory, foreign language motivation comprises three crucial elements and a truly motivated learner must display all three of them. The first element, favorable attitudes towards the community that speaks the language, has already been discussed. The other two are related to desire and effort. It may sound simplistic, but the fact is that in order to learn a language one must have the desire to do it, and along with this desire effort must be put forth since it is not an easy task. Gardner (1985) summarizes the three elements stating that motivation refers to the "combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language" (p. 10).

According to Gardner, the coexistence of all three elements is indispensable in the truly motivated student. The exertion of effort by itself does not signify motivation because a student may put forth the effort in learning a language without really having the desire to learn it. The effort in that case may have been produced by some other reasons such as the pressure to please parents or the anticipation of some kind of reward. It is actually very easy to think of things we ourselves put a lot of effort into doing, even on a daily basis, that we simply hate doing. Nonetheless, we still drag ourselves to do it because we either have no other choice or the benefits that will come from it are greater than our apathy. The seasoned language teacher most

likely has encountered students in class who always had a frown on their faces, but who still showed up for class every day.

Likewise, the desire to learn a language or positive attitudes towards the community that speaks it do not constitute motivation in and of themselves. These two elements without effort are powerless. It is like the example of the millionaire. Almost anyone would like to be a millionaire, but how many people actually put forth the effort toward becoming one? The bottom line is that “when the desire to achieve the goal and favourable attitudes toward the goal are linked with the effort or the drive, then we have a motivated organism” (Gardner, 1985, p.11).

Gardner and Lambert (1959) contend that the three elements of true motivation are driven by two types of orientations, namely integrative and instrumental. Students with an integrative orientation have the initial desire to learn the language in order to become more culturally similar to the speakers of the target culture and therefore be accepted and valued by the members of the language community. On the other hand, students with an instrumental orientation want to study a language because of utilitarian purposes such as getting a better job or communicating in the dominant language of an area.

A study of the motivational orientations of Montreal high school students of French as a second language suggested that students who were integratively oriented were generally more successful in acquiring French than those who were instrumentally oriented (Gardner & Lambert, 1959). However, one must be careful when referring to integrativeness as it is an ambiguous term due to the somewhat different meanings it has for different individuals (Gardner, 2001). Gardner’s integrative/instrumental theory is often misinterpreted. These two types of orientations are not motivational components as some might think but rather antecedents to motivation. They arouse motivation at the outset of the language learning process and

characterize students' goals as either more interpersonal (integrative), or practical (instrumental) (Dörnyei, 1998).

Since the 1990s, additional studies and new researchers have shed more light on the construct of L2 motivation and what influences it. A study with foreign language students in Hungary attempted to statistically trace the interrelationship of six factors that have an impact on L2 motivation, namely: integrativeness, instrumentality, vitality of the L2 community, attitudes toward the L2 speaker/community, cultural interest, milieu, and linguistic self-confidence (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005). Some of these factors were first introduced by Gardner and his associates but were further investigated in the Hungarian study. Each of these seven factors will be discussed.

Integrativeness and instrumentality are still two of the main aspects of L2 motivation studied today. As discussed previously, integrativeness refers to the degree to which L2 students feel the desire to become more culturally similar to the speakers of the target culture, and therefore integrate themselves into it. On the other hand, instrumentality refers to how learners see the L2 in terms of its usefulness or pragmatics in the world around them. This usefulness or pragmatics can be translated into how important the particular language is in the world and whether obtaining proficiency in it contributes in the process of becoming what is considered an educated person (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005). For instance, those proficient in French have easier access to original works of literature in that language that can assist them in gaining the status of a so-called educated person. Another example would be the usefulness Spanish has in the United States due to the high rates of Hispanic immigrants in the country.

The third aspect of L2 motivation is the attitude toward the L2 speakers or community. Like integrativeness and instrumentality, this aspect was first introduced by Gardner and

Lambert (1959). Virtually all studies that have dealt with L2 motivation have looked into this aspect. The question to ask is whether learners have positive or negative attitudes toward establishing direct contact with the L2 speakers and their community.

Cultural interest differentiates itself from positive attitudes toward the target community because it is associated with the appreciation of products created by the target culture such as music, films, food, books, and even their way of life (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005). It is expected that when a specific language group is exposed to many cultural products of another language group, the first group will feel more motivated (or have a stronger desire) to learn the language of the other group. A good example of this is the interest people have in learning English due to the great exposure they have to American cultural products all throughout the world.

Generally speaking, the fourth motivational aspect, the vitality of the L2 community, refers to how important and wealthy the particular community is considered to be. Gyles and Byrnes (1982) explain that this vitality can be divided into three sociocultural factors: *status* (economic, political, social, etc.), *demographic* (size and distribution of the group), and *institutional support* (representation of the group in the media, education, government, etc.) (as cited by Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005). For instance, by looking at the demographic size factor alone it is hard to understand why Portuguese has such low enrollment rates. However, by considering the demographic distribution of its speakers it is clear why enrollments are higher in certain states of the US. The status factor explains why Portuguese may become a more studied language with Brazil's economic growth and political influence.

All of the aspects of L2 motivation covered so far have stemmed from a macrocontext perspective. The next two aspects stem from a microcontext one because they refer to influences in the immediate environment of the learner. They are called milieu and linguistic self-

confidence. Milieu relates to the influence significant others such as parents, family and friends have on the student. The way children perceive their parents' support of foreign language learning influences their "willingness to continue language study and in their own assessment of how hard they work to learn the second language" (Gardner, 1985, p. 122). The last aspect, linguistic self-confidence, refers to how confident students are in their ability to learn a foreign language. Some students experience higher levels of anxiety and lack confidence in their ability. How confident students feel is an important factor that influences their L2 motivation (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005).

In their attempt to trace the statistical interrelationship of all six aspects of L2 motivation discussed above, Dörnyei and Csizér (2005) found that integrativeness seems to be the single most important factor of L2 motivation because it subsumes or mediates the other five aspects. Because motivation is more directly related to behavior than it is to outcome/achievement, it is important that it be studied given that it explains why people do what they do rather than how successfully they do it (Dörnyei, 2001). For this reason, it is crucial to focus on two main aspects of motivated human behavior: direction (students' language choice for future L2 studies), and magnitude (how much effort students are willing to devote to learning a given language) (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005).

In summary, L2 motivation is a multifaceted construct. Students' motivational orientations can be categorized as integrative or instrumental, but in order for motivation to exist desire, effort, and positive attitudes toward learning the language are necessary (Gardner, 1985). The vitality of the L2 community, attitudes toward the L2 speaker/community, cultural interest, milieu, and linguistic self-confidence are also aspects that influence L2 motivation and play an important role in students' foreign language choice.

LCTL Students' Motivations

It is assumed that the motivations of LCTL students are different from those of CTL students. According to a summit report for postsecondary instructors of LCTLs sponsored by the Center for Advanced Research for Language Acquisition at the University of Minnesota, heritage interest appears to be the chief motivating factor for many students of LCTLs (Stenson, Janus & Mulkern, 1998).

The significance of heritage interest in LCTL classes was also confirmed in a study by Johnston and Janus (2003). However, the researchers noted that heritage learners were less preponderant in some languages than others. Several of the 234 postsecondary teachers in the survey reported that they rarely have heritage students. The teachers also reported on what they considered to be other motivations students had for studying their particular LCTL: a desire to travel to countries where the language is spoken; a specific research interest in the language; a spouse, partner, or friend who spoke the language; an extended stay in the country where the language is spoken; fulfillment of a foreign language requirement; and background in a similar language. In the case of Portuguese, for example, it was found that several students either had background in or were majoring in another Romance language. However, Johnston and Janus obtained all their data from teachers instead of from the LCTL students.

One of the few studies with data gathered from the LCTL students themselves was carried out by Morahg with Modern Hebrew students (Brown, 2009). A more recent study compared LCTL and CTL students of a public Southwestern university (Brown, 2009). Many of the characteristics of LCTL students found in the study were consistent with what had already been intuitively reported by teachers in previous studies (Johnston and Janus, 2003). The results of the study showed that LCTL students, when compared to CTL students, had a stronger

heritage connection with the language, were slightly older, were more advanced in their schooling, had spent one month or more in a country where the language is spoken, had already studied a third language, had greater experience with L2 learning overall, felt better about their foreign language experience, had greater personal interest in the language, and were less likely to take the course solely for foreign language requirement reasons.

According to Brown, “empirical data gathered from LCTL students themselves relative to their motivations, their academic background, and their identity are conspicuously underrepresented in scholarly research” (pp. 407-408). As an LCTL, Portuguese shares the same problem. To my knowledge, there are currently no studies that investigate the characteristics and the motivational patterns of students of Portuguese.

Portuguese Students’ Motivations

Even though we have some idea of what motivates students to learn Portuguese, the evidence is more anecdotal than empirical. Kelm (2002), in his own experience as a professor at the University of Texas – Austin, has noted several reasons that seem to attract students to the Portuguese classrooms. These reasons cover a broad range of interests such as music, capoeira, literature, media communications, maritime law, and the fauna and flora of the Amazon. Kelm also believes that Portuguese students are different from Spanish students concerning their motivations. In his opinion, Portuguese learners usually have more specific and personal motivations to learn the language.

As previously discussed, the vitality of the target language community is an important factor that stimulates students to want to learn a language. In some regions of the US such as the New England states, California, and Florida, where there is a stronger presence of Portuguese

speakers, enrollments and availability of Portuguese programs in schools, colleges, and universities are significantly impacted.

Foreign Language Choice

Foreign languages are divided into two groups, the commonly taught language group and the less commonly taught language one. It is natural that the two groups of languages would enjoy different status and appraisal among students, teachers, school administrators, and society as a whole. In fact, the status of each language is what determines to which group it will belong since most of the time students are directly influenced by the status of the language when making their choice of what language to study.

In the realm of foreign language education, the status or appraisal of a language has been usually interpreted in terms of the seven motivational factors previously discussed (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002, 2005; Humphreys and Spratt, 2007): integrativeness, instrumentality, attitudes toward the L2 community, vitality of the L2 community, cultural interest, milieu, and linguistic self-confidence.

Students' perceptions of a language are partially shaped by the status the language enjoys. When choosing which foreign language to study, students make conscious or unconscious judgments about the languages in regard to the seven aspects above. It is true that the status of the same language can also vary depending on the individual and the place. Dörnyei (1994) rightly asserts that "the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of second language motivation is always dependent on *who* learns *what* languages *where*" (p. 275).

Very few studies have been done that investigate students' perspectives and dispositions toward specific languages. This type of study, though rare, is crucial for foreign language instruction since students' perspectives are antecedents to motivation. They can be especially

beneficial in the case of LCTLs. By understanding students' views and dispositions toward LCTLs, educators are in a better place to motivate potential students. However, LCTLs have not been prioritized in any of the few studies that have been done so far about students' foreign language perceptions and dispositions.

Students' Perceptions of Specific Foreign Languages

Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) carried out a longitudinal study in 1993 and in 1999 with Hungarian eighth graders in which they compared the disposition of students toward five foreign languages – English, German, French, Italian, and Russian – using the seven motivational factors discussed previously: integrativeness, instrumentality, attitudes toward L2 speakers/community, vitality of the L2 community, cultural interest, milieu, and linguistic self-confidence.

Results of the Hungarian study indicated that each of the languages enjoyed different degrees of popularity and status among students. English obtained the highest scores in each of the seven factors, and students had more positive attitudes toward learning American English than British English. The endorsement of German among Hungarian students was also high, especially in regard to its instrumentality in the region. On the other hand, it was revealed that French, the third ranked language, did not enjoy the same high status as English and German. Italian actually exceeded the French ratings in terms of cultural interest and attitudes toward native speakers. Russian received the lowest ratings, and even the strongest aspect, its vitality, did not receive a rating above the midpoint of three on a five-point scale.

Another study with students at three universities in Hong Kong tried to partially replicate the Dörnyei and Csizér study in the Hungarian context (Humphreys & Spratt, 2007). Students were surveyed concerning their general views on two compulsory languages, English and Putonghua, and three non-compulsory languages, French, German, and Japanese. The study

confirmed that students indeed had different perceptions of the different languages and that the motivational factors investigated in the Hungarian context were valid and quite applicable in the Hong Kong one. The findings of the study revealed that Hong Kong students valued the compulsory languages, English and Putonghua, in terms of their instrumentality. However, English and the non-compulsory languages were rated higher than Putonghua in affective terms.

Apart from the two studies in the Hungarian and Hong Kong contexts, there are very few studies that analyze the perceptions of students toward specific languages. The situation is even more critical for the LCTLs. To my knowledge, there are no studies that investigate what perceptions and dispositions students hold toward LCTLs. More studies on students' general views of LCTLs would clarify where these languages stand on students' status scale. Stenson, Janus and Mulkern (1998) assert that attitudinal studies among students and surveys on why people study a LCTL may help change general orientations toward LCTLs in the future.

Considering the lack of studies that analyze students' perceptions and dispositions toward LCTLs and the fact that enrollments in Portuguese are still low even though they have been increasing, it is important to investigate how students of other languages, who have never studied Portuguese, perceive this language. Students' perceptions of Portuguese may reveal important information regarding why enrollment figures are still low despite the growth they have been experiencing.

In the following chapter, I will describe the design of the present study, a survey of lower-level Portuguese and non-Portuguese students at Brigham Young University.

CHAPTER 3

Introduction

This study investigates what motivations students taking Portuguese classes at Brigham Young University have as well as what perceptions students who are taking other foreign language classes have of Portuguese. In this chapter, I will detail the general procedures of this study, including the research questions, participants, the measurement instrument, and the data analysis.

Methods

In order to investigate students' motivations for language study, I compiled two survey questionnaires that were guided by the following research questions:

- What are the motivations of lower-division Portuguese students to study the language?
- How motivated are students to continue to study Portuguese in the future?
- What variety of Portuguese do they have the most interest in studying, European or Brazilian?
- What first language background and foreign language experience do Portuguese students have?
- How do non-Portuguese students perceive Portuguese in comparison with four commonly taught European languages?
- How do language motivations of Portuguese students compare with those of non-Portuguese students?
- How motivated are non-Portuguese students to study Portuguese?

So as to ensure that the survey items were appropriate and really reflected the research

questions, they were reviewed by Dr. Blair E. Bateman and other experts in foreign language pedagogy. They gave valuable feedback which was incorporated to refine the survey items. For some additional testing, the non-Portuguese student questionnaire (found in Appendix B) was administered to a group of students before being administered to the real participants. This testing revealed that the items of this particular questionnaire were valid for the purpose of the study and research questions. The Portuguese student questionnaire in Appendix A was not tested prior to being administered to the real participants because there were not sufficient lower-division Portuguese students with whom the researcher could test the survey. Nevertheless, foreign language pedagogy experts considered this questionnaire to be valid for the purpose of the study. Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was requested and granted to perform the study.

Participants

There were two different groups of participants in this study. The first group consisted of the students enrolled in all the lower-division Portuguese classes at Brigham Young University. Only Portuguese 102 and 202-level classes were offered in the 2011 Winter Semester at BYU. The researcher decided to include both 102 and 202-level Portuguese classes so that the number of Portuguese students would be more equivalent in size to the number of students in each of the other languages. In total, there were thirty-five Portuguese students enrolled in 102-level classes and fourteen students enrolled in a 202-level class. Except for seven Portuguese students in a regular 102-level class, all the other Portuguese students were enrolled in classes of accelerated format catered specifically to students with knowledge of another Romance language.

The second group comprised the students enrolled in all the first-semester classes (101-level) of French, German, Italian, and Spanish during the same semester. It is important to note

that the motivations obtained for the Portuguese and the non-Portuguese students may have been impacted by the fact that the two groups of students were not enrolled in the same level classes. Motivations change over time and because of that Portuguese students in 102 and 202-level classes may have motivations that are somewhat different from the motivations they had when they started studying the language at the 101-level. Another difference is that students who continue to study a language after their first semester tend to be more motivated than students who stop studying it after the first semester. Unfortunately, there were no Portuguese 101-level classes during the 2011 Winter semester at BYU who could have been used in this study.

Only lower-division class students were included in this study because upper-division students at this particular university may have different motivations for foreign language learning due to the previous experience the majority of them have living in countries where the respective languages they study are spoken. Only French, German, Italian, and Spanish were selected for this study because the researcher wanted to compare Portuguese with other western European languages.

Students in the first group were administered the questionnaire found in Appendix A, whereas students in the second group were administered the questionnaire found in Appendix B. The existence of different groups and questionnaires is due to the twofold purpose of this study: (1) to identify Portuguese students' motivations to study the language, and (2) to identify non-Portuguese students' perceptions of Portuguese. These two purposes are embedded in the research questions of the study.

After obtaining consent from the IRB, the researcher personally contacted the foreign language teachers in order to ask permission to use a few minutes of their class to administer the questionnaires to students. The best day and time were scheduled according to the teachers'

convenience. On the date scheduled, the researcher personally went to the classes and handed students the surveys. Before having students fill out the questionnaires, the researcher read out loud with them the form of implied consent printed on the top of the first page. This form clarified to students the voluntary and anonymous nature of their participation as well as other important aspects concerning the study. The students who were willing to participate answered the questions by hand and afterwards the completed surveys were handed back to the researcher. It took approximately four minutes for students to answer the questionnaires in class.

Exceptions to the above procedure occurred in three of the Portuguese classes. In the researcher's own class, she arranged with her supervisor to come and administer the survey in order to minimize the possibility of students' feeling pressured to participate in the study. The researcher left the classroom and only returned after her supervisor had already collected the questionnaires back from students. In two other Portuguese classes the researcher had the teachers themselves administer the survey because that was more convenient for the teachers. Nevertheless, the researcher instructed them on how to proceed. A couple of students in one of the classes whose teacher administered the survey decided to take the questionnaires home and bring them back completed the next day.

There were approximately 362 students enrolled in the classes that took part in this study, and out of this total 316 (87, 3%) answered the surveys. The percentages are also high for both of the groups (Portuguese and non-Portuguese) considered separately. Of the total of 54 Portuguese students, 49 (90, 7%) answered the survey. Of the approximately 313 non-Portuguese students, 267 (85, 3%) completed the questionnaires. The non-Portuguese students who participated were distributed according to language as follows: French (85), German (49), Italian (41), and Spanish (87).

Survey Instruments

The surveys were administered in paper and pencil format during students' respective foreign language class time because the researcher believed that the return rate would be greater this way than if students took an online survey at a different time and location. As previously mentioned, the dates for the administration of the surveys were established according to the teachers' convenience. All classes were surveyed in early April, at the end of the university's 2011 Winter Semester.

Both questionnaires had the implied consent form printed on the top of the first page. The questionnaire for the Portuguese students had a total of thirteen items and the one for the non-Portuguese students a total of seven items. Overall, they carried question items very similar to each other. Four items in the Portuguese questionnaire were in a Likert scale format. The last item was identical in the two questionnaires, which allowed for comparing and contrasting the answers the two groups gave about their perspectives of Portuguese as a foreign language.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated using the SPSS software. The qualitative data of the open-ended survey responses were coded and grouped thematically according to frequency. In Chapter 4, the reader will obtain the details of the data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

In this chapter I will present the results of a survey administered in April 2011 to obtain information about Portuguese and non-Portuguese students' motivations to study their respective foreign languages, as well as these students' perceptions of Portuguese. Results of the two student groups are compared and contrasted.

Data Analysis

Demographic Information

This study comprised a total of 316 participants of whom 84.5% belonged to the non-Portuguese group, and were taking 101-level classes of French, German, Italian, and Spanish (see Table 1). Because there are fewer Portuguese classes, the researcher decided to include both 100 and 200-level students in the study so that the number of Portuguese students would be more similar to the number of students taking the other languages. Not surprisingly, the majority of the respondents were enrolled in French and Spanish classes, followed by German and Italian respectively. The number of Portuguese participants is almost the same as that of German, and greater than that of Italian, due to the inclusion of both 100 and 200-level Portuguese students in the study.

Table 1

Language classes in which participants were enrolled

Languages	Number of Participants	Languages	Number of Participants
French	88	Portuguese	49
German	50	Spanish	88
Italian	41	<i>Total</i>	<i>316</i>

The first few items of both questionnaires gathered information regarding the participants' gender, age, foreign language experience, and native language background. Out of the 316 participants, 203 were female and 113 were male (see Table 2). A greater number of females was expected because it has been a trend in this university to have the bulk of beginning and intermediate foreign language classes filled by females, and the bulk of the advanced level ones filled by males. This phenomenon is due to the two-year break most male students at this university take to serve a religious mission. Many of them learn a foreign language and develop high proficiency while on their missions, which enables them to move straight to a more advanced class of that language when they come back to college.

However, unlike all the other languages in the study, the majority of Portuguese students were male (63.4%). This high percentage of males may be an indication that students who return from their missions already fluent in a second language, especially in Spanish, decide to take Portuguese as a third language. This possible connection between Portuguese male enrollments and returned missionaries is even more striking considering that 48.4% of the male Portuguese students were native English speakers who had served Spanish-speaking missions. By adding the number of male Spanish-speaking returned missionaries and male Spanish-speaking natives who were taking Portuguese classes, it is concluded that 61.3% of the male Portuguese students were either fluent or had a high level of proficiency in Spanish.

Table 2

Gender of Participants According to Language

Gender	French	German	Italian	Portuguese	Spanish
Male	30.7% (27)	36% (18)	29.3% (12)	63.4% (31)	28.4% (25)
Female	69.3% (61)	64% (32)	70.7% (29)	36.6% (18)	71.6% (63)

Table 3 displays information about the age of participants. No apparent difference was found among the languages as far as the age of students.

Table 3

Age of Participants According to Language

	French	German	Italian	Portuguese	Spanish
Mean	20.84	20.46	21.29	22.02	21.79
Median	20	19	19	21	20
Min	18	17	17	18	18
Max	52	50	49	44	58
StDev	4.04	4.76	6.29	3.94	6.98

Students' Native and Family Language Background

As shown in Table 4, there are a fair amount of native Spanish speakers in the Portuguese classes. In fact, the highest percentage of native Spanish speakers by total number of students in each language was found in the Portuguese classes. Of all Portuguese students who responded the survey, 24.5% were native Spanish speakers, and except for one, all of them were enrolled in accelerated classes, which are tailored specifically to students with Spanish or other Romance language backgrounds. Besides English and Spanish, there were no other students of different native language backgrounds enrolled in the Portuguese classes.

The overwhelming majority of students in all languages were native English speakers. The second largest population in all classes was of Spanish native speakers (except in Spanish classes). The number of students of other native language backgrounds was very low. There were two Russian, one Korean, and one Vietnamese native speakers taking a Spanish class, one

Ukrainian native speaker taking a French class, and one Portuguese native speaker taking an Italian class. The high numbers of native Spanish speakers enrolled in the classes emphasize the importance of this kind of student not only for Portuguese but for the other languages as well. However, it is clear that the percentage of native Spanish speakers was much greater in the Portuguese classes.

Table 4

Native Language of Students According to Foreign Language Course

Course Native Language	French	German	Italian	Portuguese	Spanish
English	85.2% (75)	98% (49)	85.4% (35)	75.5% (37)	95.4% (84)
Spanish	13.6% (12)	2% (1)	12.2% (5)	24.5% (12)	---
Other	1.2% (1)	---	2.4% (1)	---	4.6% (4)

Portuguese students were also asked where they were originally from. Table 5 below displays the origin of the students.

Table 5

Origin of Portuguese Students

Country/Continent	Number of Students
United States	37
Mexico	6
South America	4
Central America	1
Europe	1

Because family members may influence students' motivations to learn a specific language, one of the questions in the surveys tried to elicit the participants' family language background by asking them whether they had family members who were native speakers of the

language of the class. However, it was not the purpose of the study to determine the amount and depth of the contact these students had with the language in their home or family circles prior to taking the course. Also, the question was not limited to the students' immediate family, but included extended family and in-laws as well.

The number of students that had family members who were native speakers of the language of the class they were taking seems to be higher for German and Spanish (see Table 6). Twenty percent of the German students had native German-speaking family members, and most of them were the students' parents, grandparents, or both. Likewise, most of the Spanish students who had native Spanish-speaking family members reported that they were their parents, grandparents, or both. The same was also true for the French and Italian students, although the total number of students that had family members who were native speakers of these languages was much smaller. Unlike French, German, Italian, and Spanish students, there was only one Portuguese student that reported having parents and grandparents who were native Portuguese-speakers. The other three Portuguese students did not have any heritage connection with the language because their native Portuguese-speaking family members were in-laws, spouses, or both.

Therefore, students of French, German, Italian, and Spanish seemed to have a stronger heritage connection with the languages they were learning. The fact that only one Portuguese student could be considered a heritage speaker is an interesting finding that stands in contrast with studies that have indicated heritage interest as a key motivating factor for many of the LCTL students. Nevertheless, this low heritage connection may be idiosyncratic to Brigham Young University. It is possible that other universities have Portuguese students with a stronger heritage connection with this language, especially at universities in areas of the country such as

Massachusetts, Florida, and California where there is a larger concentration of native Portuguese speakers and their descendants.

Table 6

Students That Have Family Members Who Are Native Speakers of the Language of the Class

Options	French	German	Italian	Portuguese	Spanish
Yes	5.7% (5)	20% (10)	4.9% (2)	8.2% (4)	21.6% (18)
No	94.3% (83)	80% (40)	95.1% (39)	91.8% (45)	78.4% (69)

Students' Foreign Language Experiences

Portuguese students were asked whether they had studied Portuguese prior to college. Only three students out of the forty-nine answered yes to the question, and two of them reported they had studied it while living for a period of time in a Portuguese-speaking country. The other student reported she had not studied it formally but had heard it all her life from her native Portuguese-speaking parents. Since Portuguese classes are rarely offered before the post-secondary level, it was already expected that very few students would have had studied it before college.

Table 7 summarizes the results for the question about whether Portuguese and non-Portuguese students had already studied other foreign languages besides the language of the class they were taking. The greatest number of students with previous foreign language experiences was found in the Portuguese classes (93.9%), but that number did not differ much from the results obtained for German (90%) and Italian (92.7%) students. The percentage of students who had not studied any other foreign language previously was much bigger for French (28.4%), and Spanish (38.6%). These higher rates for French and Spanish make sense because as the two most

commonly taught languages many students tend to pick them as their first choice of foreign language study.

Table 7

Students Who Have Studied Other Languages Besides the Language of the Class

Options	French	German	Italian	Portuguese	Spanish	Total
Yes	71.6% (63)	90% (45)	92.7% (38)	93.9% (46)	61.4% (54)	77.5%
No	28.4% (25)	10% (5)	7.3% (3)	6.1% (3)	38.6% (34)	22.5%

Only Portuguese students were asked about the setting in which their previous experiences with other languages had occurred. However, since it was an open-ended question many students were not very specific in their answers. More than 24% of the answers just stated “school” or “class,” which make it impossible to know whether students were referring to high school or college, for example. The question could have been improved by being rephrased as “Where did you study these languages?” Nevertheless, some relevant data can still be drawn from Portuguese students’ answers. Most students reported previous experience with only one other foreign language, but some reported experience with two or more. Many of the previous foreign language experiences happened while students were on a religious mission (31.4%), and another 21.3% occurred in high school. Only 8.2% of their previous experiences with other languages were reported to have occurred in college. Therefore, answers suggest that despite the fact that 93.9% of the Portuguese students had already studied another language, Portuguese could have been the first language that a considerable number of students chose to study at the college level. However, the researcher has no means of confirming the exact number of students whose first foreign language experience in college was with Portuguese because, as previously

stated, more than 24% of the answers were not very specific as to the setting in which the previous foreign language experiences took place. A little over 15% of the previous foreign language experiences occurred in settings other than the ones cited above, such as at home and abroad.

Students were asked what specific languages they had studied besides the language of the class they were taking (Table 8). By far the most studied language was Spanish, followed by French, and German. Fifty-seven percent of the Portuguese students had already studied Spanish previously. Only ten students (3.7%) of the 267 non-Portuguese ones had already studied Portuguese in the past. Interestingly, there was no Spanish student who had already studied Portuguese. However, these were beginning Spanish students, and Spanish-speaking students who choose to study Portuguese are almost always more advanced in their Spanish. Usually, Portuguese functions as a third language to Spanish students and not the other way around.

Table 8

Students' Previous Foreign Language Experiences

Languages Studied	French	German	Italian	Portuguese	Spanish	Overall
Spanish	39	26	23	28	---	116
French	---	10	15	10	15	50
German	5	---	3	3	13	24
ASL	3	6	4	1	5	19
Italian	2	4	---	2	3	11
Japanese	3	4	---	---	4	11
Latin	1	4	1	1	4	11
Portuguese	6	4	0	---	0	10
Mandarin	1	1	0	1	5	8

Motivation to Continue Studying Portuguese

Magnitude, a main aspect of motivated human behavior (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005), reveals how much effort students are willing to devote to learning a given language. Table 9 summarizes the results of the question “How likely are you to take a Portuguese class next semester?” Students’ responses were quite encouraging (Mean = 3.23, SD = 1.51). On a 5-point Likert scale, 31.3% of the students stated they were definitely going to take a class next semester, and 14.6% marked number 4, which also demonstrates high likelihood. In total, about 46% of the students indicated that they planned to continue to study Portuguese the following semester. However, the number of students who marked 1 or 2 was a bit alarming (35.5%), especially because most of them (76%) were dropping out after their first semester. For an LCTL such as Portuguese losing 35% of their students, particularly beginning students, severely impacts enrollments because these students are not as easily replaced as they are in CTL.

Table 9

Likelihood of Taking a Portuguese Class Next Semester

Answer Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
1 Definitely not	9	18.8
2	8	16.7
3	9	18.8
4	7	14.6
5 Definitely	15	31.3

Fifty percent of the students marked 4 or 5 on the Likert scale, which demonstrates their strong desire to pursue their Portuguese studies all the way up to the advanced level (see Table

10). Almost the same amount of students who were very likely to take a class the following semester (46%) were also very likely to take an advanced class in the future (50%). An interesting and positive finding was that five students who were less likely to take a class the following semester raised their rating to 3 for their likelihood to take an advanced class in the future. Therefore, they might be considering stopping studying Portuguese just temporarily due to schedule conflicts or other priorities. Likewise, four students who had marked 3 for their likelihood to take a class the following semester raised their rating to 4 as to the probability of their taking an advanced class in the future. Overall, results were very encouraging for this survey question ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.31$).

Table 10

Likelihood of Taking an Advanced Portuguese Class in the Future

Answer Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
1 Definitely not	4	8.3
2	11	22.9
3	9	18.8
4	12	25.0
5 Definitely	12	25.0

Motivations for Studying Language of Choice

Portuguese students' responses to the question "Explain the reasons why you chose to study Portuguese instead of another foreign language," and non-Portuguese students' responses to the question "Explain the reasons why you chose to study the language of this class instead of another foreign language" have provided great insights into students' motivations. Most students

pointed out more than one reason for studying the language of their choice. These reasons were associated with the following motivational aspects discussed in Chapter 2: instrumentality, milieu, culture interest, vitality of the L2 community, and linguistic self-confidence. Another motivation found among students was affective in nature, and integrativeness was not among the motivational aspects identified because students' responses did not provide sufficient information regarding their desire to become more culturally similar to the speakers of the target languages. Likewise, enough data were not elicited from students' responses concerning their attitudes towards the target language native speakers. The impact of heritage connection and foreign language requirements on students' decision to study the languages will also be discussed.

Table 13 on page 54 displays the percentage of students that reported having each of the different motivations, and Table 14 on page 55 shows the ranking of motivations for each language. Portuguese and non-Portuguese students' motivations to study their respective languages will be compared and contrasted.

Instrumentality. As discussed previously, instrumentality refers to how useful students consider the language to be in the world around them. Students with an instrumental motivation desire to use the language for a specific instrumental purpose such as working or travelling.

In justifying their foreign language choice, Portuguese students gave various responses associated with this type of motivation. The most frequent of them was that studying Portuguese would help them with their majors and consequently with their future careers. More than 26% of the Portuguese students reported this motivation, a percentage similar to the French (22.7%) and Spanish (36.4%) ones, and much higher than the percentage found among German (8%) and

Italian (2.4%) students. The following quotes are representative of Portuguese students' number one motivation to study the language.

Always wanted to know Portuguese. Also, I want to be part of the Foreign Service, and work anywhere within South and Central America.

I want to work in Global Health someday, and visit countries in Central and South America to help with their health-care programs.

Brazil is growing really fast economically, and since I am studying Business Management I think it will be very helpful in my major.

The focus of my major is Latin American studies. I am fluent in Spanish, so adding Portuguese will allow me to communicate with most people in Latin America.

Very few Portuguese students mentioned a desire to travel to Portuguese-speaking countries as one of their motivations to study the language (8.2%). Likewise, travelling was not one of the main motivations for Spanish students (6.8%). On the other hand, the number of Italian students who mentioned travelling as one of their motivations to study the language was impressively high (43.9%). In fact, this was Italian students' number one motivation as can be seen in Table 14. Travelling was also a big motivation among French (20.4%), and German (24%) students. As a matter of fact, 14% of all the German participants mentioned that they were preparing to go on a study abroad in Austria the following semester.

Three of the Portuguese students were also preparing to go on a religious Portuguese-speaking mission and decided to take the class for this instrumental reason. In a university where so many students do this kind of service, it is important to look at this motivation separately.

However, despite the fact that many students go on foreign language speaking missions, the number of students enrolled in the classes for this reason was not very high for any of the languages. Nevertheless, students have very little advanced notice about whether they will serve a foreign-speaking mission or an English-speaking one. This short notice does not enable many of the students to register for a language class prior to leaving on a mission.

The general usefulness of a language in a given place can also constitute a great source of motivation. The number one reason given by Spanish students to learn this language was its unmatched usefulness (46.6%). Students commonly responded that after English, Spanish was by far the most useful language in the United States because of the high rates of Hispanic immigrants. They saw the learning of Spanish as a great life skill. Some students even thought about studying other languages, but Spanish seemed the most practical and easy to keep up with due to its applicability on a daily basis. As shown in Table 13, the usefulness of Spanish far overrides all the other motivations Spanish students reported. The number of Portuguese students whose motivation was the general usefulness of the language was very low (8.2%). However, it was the second highest of all the languages in this regard. Students argued that Portuguese was widely useful in South America, and one of them wrote about his belief that if he was able to speak English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese he would be able to communicate with a third of the population of the world.

Milieu. As discussed previously, milieu relates to the influence significant others such as parents and friends have on students' foreign language motivations. Milieu was an important factor for many of the Portuguese students as well as for many of the students of the other languages. Three separate motivations were identified under milieu: family members who had

already studied the language, family members who were native speakers of the language, and friends who spoke the language.

Many students reported that their motivation to study their respective language came by the fact that family members were also studying it or had studied it in the past. In many cases, these family members had spoken the languages while serving religious missions. The percentage of students with this kind of motivation, as well as the position in which this motivation was ranked, was similar across languages. More than 14% of the Portuguese students were motivated to study the language because of the influence of family members. A student wrote: “My husband served his mission in São Paulo, Brazil, and I enjoy speaking Portuguese with him.” Another Portuguese student stated: “My twin brother is learning it, and it is similar to Spanish, so I thought I could learn it fast and talk with him.”

The influence of family members who were native speakers of the languages students were studying was also an interesting finding. However, these family members refer exclusively to spouses and in-laws because family members through bloodline such as parents and grandparents were counted under the motivation category of heritage connection. The findings for heritage connection will be discussed later in this chapter.

Curiously, Portuguese students were almost the only students who reported having family members who were native speakers of the language of the class (10.2%). Some students were married or were going to get married to a native Portuguese speaker, and others just had a brother or sister-in-law who was a native of the language. A student wrote: “My boyfriend is from Brazil, and his whole family speaks Portuguese. We plan to be married, so this is to get me started in the language.” Only one Spanish student and no French, German, and Italian student

mentioned the existence of family members (spouses and in-laws) who were native speakers of these languages as a source of language study motivation for them.

The last motivation identified under milieu was the influence of friends who speak the language of the class. This was an influence greater felt among Spanish students (11.4%). One of these students commented: “I grew up in an area where most of my peers spoke Spanish.” On the other hand, only about 6% of the German and Portuguese students mentioned this kind of motivation. However, the sole reason mentioned for one of the Portuguese students to study the language was the fact that most of his soccer friends spoke Portuguese.

Culture interest. This motivation refers to the appreciation of products (literature, music, food, films etc.) created by the countries where the target language is spoken. Surprisingly, except for Italian (19.5%), culture interest was not among students’ top motivations as shown in Table 14. Quite a few French students (12.5%) expressed this kind of motivation but culture interest was still ranked low when compared with other motivations French students had. Culture interest was particularly low among German (8%), Portuguese (4.1%), and Spanish (3.4%) students. Nevertheless, these low percentages do not signify that most students were uninterested in the cultures of the countries where these languages are spoken, but that culture was not among students’ most important and mentioned motivations.

Vitality of L2 community. How important and wealthy the communities that speak a language are considered to be is a factor that may influence students’ motivation to study the language. Interestingly, except for Portuguese (6.1%) and Spanish (1.1%), the economic importance of the countries where the other languages are spoken was not at any time brought up as a source of students’ motivations. According to the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, Portuguese will most likely see its enrollments increase because of the economic

prominence Brazil has been gaining in the world. It is already possible to find students who were drawn to Portuguese classes due to this very reason as the following quotes illustrate.

I am a businessperson, and I recognize the future of Brazil in the world. I want to be able to do business there.

Brazil will have booming economy. Portuguese will come in handy with my major (International Relations).

Brazil is growing really fast economically, and since I am studying Business Management I think it will be very helpful in my major.

Linguistic self-confidence. A relatively high number of Portuguese students (22.4%) were confident in their ability to learn Portuguese due to the similarity this language shared with romance languages they had previously studied. In almost every case, the previous language had been Spanish. Students commented they believed Portuguese was going to be an easy language to learn because of their background in Spanish. In reality, this was Portuguese students' second most common motivation, and in some cases this was the sole motivation students referred to in their answers. How easy students felt it would be to learn a language because of its similarity to another language they had already studied was much more of an issue to Portuguese students than to non-Portuguese students.

On the other hand, some French (23.9%), German (18%), and Spanish (13.6%) students mentioned that one of the reasons why they decided to study these languages was because they had already studied them prior to college. In fact, this was the second motivation among French

students, and also a top motivation among German and Spanish ones. Students' pre-college experience might have been a source of linguistic self-confidence.

Heritage connection. Grouped under heritage connection were students whose motivation to study the language was related to having either ancestors or immediate family members such as parents and grandparents (not spouses and in-laws) who were native speakers of the language.

Portuguese students' heritage connection was surprisingly low. Studies have indicated that heritage interest is a key motivating factor in LCTL classes. However, this was certainly not the case with Portuguese at this university. French and Portuguese were actually the languages where the lowest number of students with heritage connection was found. Portuguese students who did have this connection stated they wanted to learn the language to communicate better with their family (4.1%). Nevertheless, as previously explained, the low heritage connection found among Portuguese students may be idiosyncratic to Brigham Young University.

There were also few Spanish students (7.9%) whose motivation was their heritage connection, but this may be due to the fact that all classes surveyed were for beginners, and heritage speakers are usually placed in more advanced classes. On the other hand, heritage connection was higher among Italian students (12.2%), and much more so among German students (26%). A German student wrote: "The language is a part of my heritage, and family history records are in it." The majority of the Italian and German students had a heritage connection with these languages through ancestry, and not through immediate family members.

Affective motivation. Another top motivation for Portuguese (20.4%) as well as French (31.8%), German (22%), and Italian (29.3%) students was affective in its nature. These students were motivated to study these languages because they thought these were pretty or interesting

languages to learn. Sometimes this was the only motivation students made reference to. A Portuguese student wrote “When I heard it on my trip to Portugal, I thought it was beautiful and I wanted to learn it.” In fact, French students’ most frequent motivation to study the language was how pretty they thought the language to be.

Foreign language requirement. Very few Portuguese students stated they were taking the class as a foreign language requirement (4.1%). The students who did report taking the language to fill a requirement had other motivations as well. A student mentioned he specifically chose Portuguese to fulfill his language requirement because of its usefulness in South America. Another student chose Portuguese to fulfill the requirement of her major in Spanish linguistics because Portuguese was close to medieval Spanish.

Most students who reported to be taking their language class to fulfill a foreign language requirement were in German (12%) and Spanish (12.5%) classes. However, the majority of these students also had other motivations to have chosen the languages they did. A German student mentioned that doctorate programs in music usually require proficiency in another language, and German is one of the most useful in the field. It is very encouraging that students had further reasons to study their respective languages because doing it solely as a requirement is not a very strong source of motivation.

Table 11 shows the percentage of students who mentioned each type of motivation. Percentages do not total to 100 because students usually reported more than one motivation. Table 12 ranks students’ motivations in each language from 1 (highest) to 10 (lowest). Some motivations received the same ranking because they were reported by the same percentage of students.

Table 11

Percentages of Students According to Language Motivations

Motivations	French	German	Italian	Portuguese	Spanish
Instrumentality					
Career/Major	22.7%	8%	2.4%	26.5%	36.4%
Religious mission	---	---	---	6.1%	1.1%
Travelling	20.4%	24%	43.9%	8.2%	6.8%
Usefulness (general)	6.8%	2%	---	8.2%	46.6%
Milieu					
Family members studied it	13.6%	10%	17.1%	14.3%	12.5%
Friends speak it	1.1%	6%	---	6.1%	11.4%
Native family members (spouses/in-laws)	---	---	---	10.2%	1.1%
Culture Interest					
Culture interest	12.5%	8%	19.5%	4.1%	3.4%
Vitality of L2 Community					
Economic importance of countries	---	---	---	6.1%	1.1%
Linguistic Self-Confidence					
Pre-college experience	23.9%	18%	---	---	13.6%
Similarity with language previously studied	6.8%	---	12.2%	22.4%	---
Heritage					
Heritage connection	1.1%	26%	12.2%	4.1%	7.9%
Affective					
Pretty/interesting language	31.8%	22%	29.3%	20.4%	9%
Other					
Foreign language requirement	4.5%	12%	7.3%	4.1%	12.5%

Note. Percents do not total to 100 because students were allowed more than one response option

Table 12

Ranking of Students' Motivations for Studying Language of Choice. 1 (highest) and 10 (lowest)

Motivations	French	German	Italian	Portuguese	Spanish
Instrumentality					
Career/Major	3	7	8	1	2
Religious mission	---	---	---	7	10
Travelling	4	2	1	6	8
Usefulness (general)	7	10	---	6	1
Milieu					
Family members studied it	5	6	4	4	4
Friends speak it	10	8	---	7	5
Native family members (spouses/in-laws)	---	---	---	5	10
Culture Interest					
Culture Interest	6	7	3	8	9
Vitality of L2 Community					
Economic importance of countries	---	---	---	7	10
Linguistic Self-Confidence					
Pre-college experience					
Similarity with languages previously studied	2 7	4 ---	---	---	3 ---
Heritage					
Heritage connection	10	1	5	8	7
Affective					
Pretty/interesting language	1	3	2	3	6
Other					
Foreign language requirement	8	5	7	8	4

Note. Some motivations are ranked equal because they have the same percentage of students

Portuguese and non-Portuguese students' motivations to study their respective languages have been compared and contrasted. Portuguese students wanted to study the language mainly

for career purposes. Students of all the other languages surveyed had a reason other than career as their main motivation.

The second most frequently mentioned motivation of Portuguese students was how easy they believed it would be to learn the language due to its similarity to another language they had previously studied, especially its similarity to Spanish. Some French and Italian students were also motivated to learn their languages due to the similarity these languages shared with previous languages they studied, but this motivation was not nearly as important for them as it was for the Portuguese students.

A third motivation among Portuguese students was simply how pretty or interesting they thought the language to be. Likewise, this motivation was very important among French, German, and Italian students. French, German, and Italian students were also very motivated to travel to the countries where these languages are spoken.

Students of all languages were motivated by their milieu, especially by family members who were also studying or had already studied these languages. Portuguese students were practically the only ones who mentioned feeling motivated to study the language because they had native Portuguese-speaking spouses, in-laws, or both. However, Portuguese students' heritage connection was very low. In contrast, German and Italian students' heritage connection was high, and some Spanish students felt motivated to study this language because of friends who spoke it.

Portuguese students were practically the only ones who commented on the economic importance of countries where the language is spoken as a reason for them to be studying the language. Despite being a minor motivation, these comments demonstrate that the predictions made in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* concerning the future of Portuguese

enrollments hold some truth. Finally, with the exception of French and Italian students culture interest was also a minor motivation for students.

After comparing and contrasting Portuguese, and non-Portuguese students' motivations, we will move next to the second purpose of this study, which is to compare and contrast the participants' perceptions of Portuguese with their perceptions of four of the other European languages.

Attitudes toward Brazilian and European Portuguese

As demonstrated in Table 11, students' interest in learning European Portuguese was extremely low ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 1.19$). More than 47% of the students reported having no interest in studying it, and over 22% reported having very little interest. These low ratings for European Portuguese were possibly influenced by students' sparse exposure to this version of the language. Teachers who spoke Brazilian Portuguese taught all the Portuguese classes. It is possible that if students had been more exposed to European Portuguese, even by the Brazilian Portuguese-speaking teachers through media and internet for example, their interest in it would have been higher than it was.

On the other hand, as displayed in Table 12, students' interest in studying Brazilian Portuguese was extremely high ($M = 4.58$, $SD = .794$). Students were not asked why they preferred Brazilian Portuguese, but there are some apparent reasons that can explain this preference. The overwhelming majority of the Portuguese speakers in the world are Brazilians, there are more Brazilians around that students can talk to at this specific university and state, students are more exposed to Brazilian cultural products, and all the teachers spoke Brazilian Portuguese.

Table 13

Interest in Studying European Portuguese

Answer Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
1 Not interested	23	47.9
2	11	22.9
3	9	18.8
4	2	4.2
5 Very interested	3	6.3

Table 14

Interest in Studying Brazilian Portuguese

Answer Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
1 Not interested	1	2.1
2	0	0
3	3	6.3
4	10	20.8
5 Very interested	34	70.8

Perceptions of Portuguese as a Foreign Language

The last item in the surveys asked both Portuguese and non-Portuguese students to express their opinions about French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. Students read eight statements, and on a five-point scale they expressed how much they agreed or disagreed with them (see Appendices A and B). All students were asked to give their opinions about each

of the languages regardless of the language they were studying. The purpose of this survey item was to identify what perceptions students had of Portuguese in contrast with their perceptions of the other languages.

The statements about which students were asked to express their opinions were the following: 1) Knowing this language would help me in my future career; 2) Knowing this language would help me to be considered an educated person in society; 3) Knowing this language would help me with my hobbies and personal interests; 4) Knowing this language would help me communicate with family and/or friends who speak the language; 5) I am interested in cultural aspects of countries where this language is spoken; 6) I am interested in travelling to countries where this language is spoken; 7) Countries where this language is spoken play an important economic role in the world today; 8) I would like to learn this language.

Non-Portuguese students' perceptions of Portuguese

For the most part, non-Portuguese students' perceptions of Portuguese were less positive than their perceptions of French, German, Italian, and Spanish. In contrast, Portuguese students' perceptions of Portuguese were mainly more positive than their perceptions of most of the other languages. Non-Portuguese students believed Portuguese was the language that would help them the least to be considered an educated person in society as demonstrated in Table 15, and Portuguese-speaking countries were the countries to where they had the least desire to travel (see Table 16). Likewise, non-Portuguese students considered that Portuguese-speaking countries played a less important economic role in the world than French, German, and Spanish-speaking countries (see Table 17). Nevertheless, Statement 4 "Knowing this language would help me communicate with family and/or friends who speak the language" provided a very interesting result. Except for Italian students, all other students believed that after Spanish and the language

they were studying Portuguese was the language that would help them the most in this regard (see Table 18). This was the statement for which students ranked Portuguese the highest. This result is interesting because despite the fact that perceptions of Portuguese are in general lower than perceptions of other languages, students recognize that Portuguese would be more useful than other languages in a very important aspect of foreign language motivation.

Table 15

Responses to “Knowing this language would help me to be considered an educated person in society” Ranked from High to Low

French Students			German Students			Italian Students			Spanish Students		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Fren	4.22	1.01	Ger	3.78	1.07	Fren	3.72	1.08	Span	3.99	1.05
Span	4.01	1.07	Fren	3.65	1.16	Span	3.68	.97	Fren	3.80	1.17
Ital	3.78	1.11	Span	3.57	1.13	Ital	3.59	1.11	Ger	3.72	1.20
Ger	3.66	1.24	Ital	3.45	1.29	Ger	3.28	1.30	Ital	3.68	1.19
Port	3.45	1.11	Port	3.08	1.25	Port	3.20	1.15	Port	3.58	1.23

Table 16

Responses to “I am interested in traveling to countries where this language is spoken” Ranked from High to Low

French Students			German Students			Italian Students			Spanish Students		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Fren	4.81	.47	Ger	4.54	.88	Ital	4.80	.71	Span	4.59	.70
Ital	4.40	.97	Ital	4.22	1.21	Fren	4.00	1.34	Ital	4.39	.85
Span	4.02	1.25	Fren	3.78	1.50	Span	3.73	1.37	Fren	4.10	1.20
Ger	3.92	1.32	Port	3.24	1.58	Ger	3.30	1.52	Ger	4.03	1.17
Port	3.85	1.34	Span	3.24	1.57	Port	3.25	1.49	Port	3.95	1.24

Table 17

Responses to “Countries where this language is spoken play an important economic role in the world” Ranked from High to Low

French Students			German Students			Italian Students			Spanish Students		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Span	3.80	1.10	Ger	3.44	1.09	Span	3.52	1.21	Span	3.79	1.10
Fren	3.63	1.04	Span	3.37	1.20	Germ	3.17	1.23	Ger	3.23	1.21
Ger	3.35	1.21	Fren	2.96	1.19	Fren	3.05	1.23	Fren	3.09	1.21
Port	3.08	1.10	Port	2.73	1.16	Port	2.85	1.14	Port	3.08	1.11
Ital	2.95	.98	Ital	2.69	1.19	Ital	2.76	1.06	Ital	2.90	1.10

Table 18

Responses to “Knowing this language would help communicate with family and/or friends who speak it” Ranked from High to Low

French Students			German Students			Italian Students			Spanish Students		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Span	3.53	1.50	Span	3.27	1.56	Span	3.30	1.47	Spa	4.24	1.13
Fren	2.83	1.58	Ger	3.06	1.55	Ital	2.71	1.48	Port	2.54	1.43
Port	2.15	1.37	Port	2.22	1.40	Fren	1.95	1.21	Ger	2.39	1.38
Germ	1.94	1.27	Fren	2.04	1.27	Port	1.93	1.20	Fren	2.33	1.33
Ital	1.88	1.19	Ital	1.71	1.13	Ger	1.60	1.10	Ital	2.27	1.27

Spanish students were the only ones who had more positive perspectives of Portuguese in comparison to the other languages regarding how helpful this language would be in their careers. Their opinion about Portuguese in this regard was extremely close to their opinion about how helpful French, and German would be (see Table 19).

Table 19

*Responses to “Knowing this language would help me in my career”
Ranked from High to Low*

French Students			German Students			Italian Students			Spanish Students		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Span	3.91	1.15	Span	3.57	1.15	Span	3.42	1.33	Span	4.40	.92
Fren	3.67	1.17	Ger	3.20	1.08	Fren	2.63	1.33	Fren	2.40	1.11
Ital	2.59	1.19	Fren	2.59	1.35	Ital	2.63	.99	Port	2.39	1.08
Ger	2.49	1.20	Ital	2.37	1.23	Ger	2.25	1.29	Ger	2.37	1.12
Port	2.29	1.11	Port	2.18	1.16	Port	2.17	1.05	Ital	2.14	.96

Italian students favored Portuguese over German in a couple of statements. They believed Portuguese would be more helpful than German with their hobbies and personal interests (see Table 20), and they were slightly more interested in cultural aspects of Portuguese-speaking countries than in cultural aspects of German-speaking countries (see Table 21). As matter of fact, Italian students were more interested in learning Portuguese than German, whereas students of the other languages had Portuguese as the language they had the least interest in studying (see Table 22). However, when taking into consideration the means across languages, Spanish students were the ones the most interested in studying Portuguese (Mean = 2.76, SD = 1.40).

It is important to analyze not only how students of each language perceived Portuguese in comparison with the other languages, but also which students perceived Portuguese the highest and the lowest in regard to the eight statements. For example, except for Italian students, all other students ranked Portuguese as the language they were the least interested in studying. Nevertheless, Spanish students were still more interested in studying Portuguese than students of any other language, including Italian, as the mean of 2.76 in Table 22 demonstrates.

Overall, Spanish students had more positive perceptions of Portuguese regardless of how these perceptions compared to their perceptions of other languages. Spanish students had a more positive perception of how helpful Portuguese could be in their future careers, how much the language could help them to be considered an educated person in society, and how helpful the language could be in helping them communicate with family or friends.

Along with French students, Spanish students were the ones who desired the most to travel to Portuguese-speaking countries, and whose opinion were the highest about how helpful Portuguese could be with their hobbies and personal interests as well as about how economically important Portuguese-speaking countries are in the world. Spanish students were also the most interested in cultural aspects of Portuguese-speaking countries. As a whole, German and Italian students had the lowest perceptions of Portuguese. Students tended to think the highest of the languages they themselves were studying. However, in some cases they thought the highest of Spanish such as in their opinion about how helpful each language would be in their future careers.

Table 20

*Responses to “Knowing this language would help me with my hobbies and personal interests”
Ranked from High to Low*

French Students			German Students			Italian Students			Spanish Students		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Fren	4.15	1.02	Ger	3.90	1.24	Ital	3.93	1.23	Span	4.03	1.21
Span	3.52	1.24	Ital	3.12	1.48	Span	3.07	1.47	Ital	2.76	1.36
Ital	3.02	1.23	Span	2.96	1.49	Fren	2.75	1.51	Fren	2.74	1.43
Ger	2.68	1.27	Fren	2.94	1.53	Port	2.38	1.27	Ger	2.65	1.39
Port	2.51	1.27	Port	2.29	1.41	Ger	2.25	1.39	Port	2.47	1.31

Table 21

*Responses to “I am interested in cultural aspects of countries where this language is spoken”
Ranked from High to Low*

French Students			German Students			Italian Students			Spanish Students		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Fren	4.26	1.06	Ger	4.02	1.22	Ital	4.61	.80	Span	4.43	.79
Ital	3.56	1.31	Ital	3.61	1.53	Span	3.52	1.30	Ital	4.01	1.05
Span	3.56	1.33	Fren	3.06	1.50	Fren	3.60	1.42	Fren	3.70	1.26
Ger	3.19	1.39	Span	3.00	1.51	Port	2.95	1.39	Port	3.68	1.21
Port	3.05	1.34	Port	2.73	1.56	Ger	2.90	1.51	Ger	3.67	1.21

Table 22

*Responses to “I would like to learn this language”
Ranked from High to Low*

French Students			German Students			Italian Students			Spanish Students		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Fren	4.56	.79	Ger	4.38	.94	Ital	4.68	.56	Span	4.63	.83
Span	3.65	1.29	Ital	3.49	1.37	Span	3.60	1.37	Ital	3.07	1.35
Ital	3.35	1.31	Span	3.35	1.49	Fren	3.13	1.45	Fren	2.89	1.41
Ger	2.76	1.32	Fren	3.18	1.52	Port	2.58	1.35	Ger	2.80	1.37
Port	2.64	1.35	Port	2.63	1.43	Ger	2.38	1.49	Port	2.76	1.40

Portuguese students' perceptions of Portuguese

Portuguese students' perceptions of Portuguese were mainly more positive than their perceptions of the other languages (see Tables 23 and 24). Almost in every case, Portuguese had a mean larger than four in each statement, whereas the other languages, with the exception of Spanish, had much lower means.

Portuguese students were also very positive toward Spanish, and in Statements 1, 2, and 4 Spanish was considered somewhat more helpful than Portuguese. Portuguese was the language students had the most desire to learn, and they believed it would help them the most with their hobbies and personal interests. They were also more interested in cultural aspects of Portuguese-speaking countries than in cultural aspects of the other countries. Likewise, Portuguese-speaking countries were the ones to which they had the most desire to travel. Portuguese-students perceptions of Portuguese were extremely positive.

Table 23

Portuguese Students' Responses to Statements 1, 2, 3, and 4 Ranked from High to Low

Statement 1 <i>Career</i>			Statement 2 <i>Educated person</i>			Statement 3 <i>Hobbies and interests</i>			Statement 4 <i>Family and friends</i>		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Span	4.34	1.02	Span	3.81	1.08	Port	4.31	.92	Span	4.37	1.08
Port	3.98	1.03	Port	3.65	1.12	Span	3.75	1.43	Port	4.08	1.16
Fren	2.56	1.20	Fren	3.44	1.28	Ital	2.83	1.24	Ital	2.15	1.32
Ital	2.26	1.18	Ger	3.21	1.23	Fren	2.48	1.20	Fren	2.04	1.16
Ger	2.17	1.12	Ital	3.15	1.25	Ger	2.27	1.30	Ger	1.79	1.23

Table 24

*Portuguese Students' Responses to Statements 5, 6, 7, and 8
Ranked from High to Low*

Statement 5 <i>Cultural aspects</i>			Statement 6 <i>Travelling</i>			Statement 7 <i>Economic importance</i>			Statement 8 <i>Desire to learn language</i>		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Port	4.44	.96	Port	4.73	.64	Span	4.08	1.12	Port	4.71	.68
Span	3.98	1.32	Span	4.10	1.37	Port	4.06	1.04	Span	3.96	1.61
Ital	3.35	1.21	Ital	3.77	1.29	Ger	3.29	1.22	Ital	3.10	1.37
Fren	2.85	1.38	Fren	3.15	1.47	Fren	3.02	1.19	Fren	2.94	1.34
Ger	2.48	1.44	Ger	2.79	1.47	Ital	2.60	1.08	Ger	2.40	1.42

Native Spanish speakers' perceptions of Portuguese

Because Spanish speakers seem to have a special interest in studying Portuguese, the researcher analyzed native Spanish speakers' perceptions of Portuguese separately. For this purpose, only native speakers who were non-Portuguese students were included. There were a total of seventeen students. When compared with the whole group of non-Portuguese students, native Spanish speakers' perceptions of Portuguese were much more positive (see Tables 25 and 26). In most of the statements, native Spanish speakers favored Portuguese over German and Italian. Moreover, after French, Portuguese was the language native Spanish speakers expressed the most interest in learning (Mean = 4.00, SD = 1.32). This result is even more striking given the fact that in all non-Portuguese classes Portuguese was the language students were the least interested in studying, and the highest mean it obtained was 2.76 (see Table 22).

Table 25

Native Spanish Speakers' Responses to Statements 1, 2, 3, and 4. Ranked from High to Low

Statement 1 <i>Career</i>			Statement 2 <i>Educated person</i>			Statement 3 <i>Hobbies and interests</i>			Statement 4 <i>Family and friends</i>		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Span	4.59	.87	Fren	4.18	1.01	Span	4.47	.94	Span	4.71	.84
Fren	3.88	1.31	Span	3.76	.90	Fren	3.76	1.34	Fren	2.76	1.39
Port	2.82	1.23	Ital	3.47	1.17	Port	3.35	1.22	Port	2.76	1.30
Ger	2.76	1.09	Ger	3.35	1.22	Ital	3.18	1.28	Ital	1.88	.99
Ital	2.59	1.06	Port	3.12	.92	Ger	2.41	1.27	Ger	1.82	1.13

Table 26

Native Spanish Speakers' Responses to Statements 5, 6, 7, and 8. Ranked from High to Low

Statement 5 <i>Cultural aspects</i>			Statement 6 <i>Travelling</i>			Statement 7 <i>Economic importance</i>			Statement 8 <i>Desire to learn language</i>		
	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Span	4.65	.60	Fren	4.76	.56	Fren	3.47	1.23	Fren	4.71	.47
Fren	4.47	.94	Span	4.59	.87	Span	3.35	1.27	Port	4.00	1.32
Ital	3.82	1.38	Port	4.12	1.11	Port	3.29	1.10	Ital	3.88	1.21
Port	3.59	1.17	Ital	4.00	1.27	Ger	3.24	1.14	Ger	2.94	1.67
Ger	2.94	1.43	Ger	3.59	1.46	Ital	2.88	.85	---	---	---

Students' interest in studying Portuguese

In order to obtain further insight into students' perspectives of Portuguese as well as their disposition toward studying this language, non-Portuguese students were specifically asked in their questionnaire (see Appendix B) what languages, if any, they would be interested in

studying in the future. The question was open-ended, and many students expressed an interest in studying more than one or two languages. Table 27 lists the languages students were interested in studying, and how many students mentioned each language. Portuguese was the language that non-Portuguese students expressed the least interest in studying when compared to French, German, Italian, and Spanish (see Table 22). However, when students were openly asked what languages they would like to study in the future, Portuguese was among the top four languages (see Table 27).

A total of thirty-five non-Portuguese students listed Portuguese as a language they would like to study. This number was very similar to the total of students who wanted to study French, and Spanish, as well as slightly superior to the number of students who wanted to learn German. Not surprisingly, the majority of these students (71.4%) who were interested in Portuguese were either taking a Spanish class or were native Spanish speakers. Students' disposition toward studying Portuguese was quite positive in the results obtained for this specific survey question.

Table 27

Other Languages Students Are Interested in Studying in the Future

Other Languages	French	German	Italian	Spanish	Overall
Italian	24	11	---	23	58
French	---	7	7	27	41
Spanish	20	12	8	---	40
Portuguese	9	5	7	14	35
German	12	---	8	13	33
Mandarin	12	3	2	7	24
Russian	1	6	4	4	15
Arabic	3	4	4	3	14
Japanese	5	5	---	2	12
ASL	2	4	1	4	11
Latin	4	4	---	1	9
Greek	3	2	2	1	8
Hebrew	2	---	---	4	6

This chapter has compared and contrasted Portuguese and non-Portuguese students' motivations to study their respective languages as well as the perceptions the two groups of students had of Portuguese. The implications of the results obtained will be discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5

Findings, Conclusions, and Implications

This chapter will discuss the findings that were reported in Chapter 4, as well as the possible implications for promoting the study of Portuguese and recommendations for future research.

Portuguese Student Backgrounds

When speaking of Portuguese class enrollments, the importance of students with background in the Spanish language cannot be overemphasized. Despite the fact that the majority of the Portuguese students surveyed were native English speakers, nearly half of these English speakers came to the Portuguese classes with a very solid knowledge of Spanish due to having previously served a Spanish-speaking mission. Out of the five languages surveyed, the highest percentage of native Spanish speakers by total number of students in each language was found in the Portuguese classes (24.5%). These figures demonstrate that virtually 60% of the Portuguese students surveyed at Brigham Young University were Spanish speakers (natives and non-natives). Hence, it would not be an exaggeration to say that current Portuguese enrollments in lower-division classes at BYU are greatly dependent upon this type of student.

The most logical explanation for such a high rate of Spanish speakers in the Portuguese classes seems to be the similarity between the two languages. According to Carvalho (2002), Spanish speakers have demonstrated an increasing interest in studying Portuguese due to the prospect of learning another language in a short amount of time. This study corroborates Carvalho's statement as it was found that Portuguese students' second most important motivation to study the language was the similarity Portuguese shared with other languages they had previously studied. The majority of students who reported having this motivation were among

those who had served Spanish-speaking missions. Native Spanish speakers also reported being motivated to study Portuguese because they believed it was going to be an easy task for them.

The fact that 60% of the Portuguese students were English-Spanish bilinguals, whose first language was English or Spanish, implies that most of the students were learning Portuguese as a third language. Students who want to learn Portuguese as a second language were fewer, and this partially explains why enrollments in Portuguese are low. Most people do not go on to study a third language after they have learned their second.

Because more than half of the Portuguese students were fluent in both English and Spanish, chances are that bilingualism was a characteristic more so of Portuguese students than of French, German, Italian, and Spanish students. That is to say, French, German, Italian, and Spanish students may have been mainly English monolingual students whose knowledge of these and other foreign languages varied, whereas Portuguese students were solid bilinguals learning a third language. Nevertheless, this study does not have the means to confirm this possibility because non-Portuguese students were not asked how many languages they considered themselves to speak fluently. However, if the possibility is true, Portuguese students have an important characteristic that sets them apart from the other students. Studies have suggested that when compared to monolingual students bilinguals are more efficient language learners in terms of general language proficiency and the acquisition of specific language features because they have enhanced cognitive skills resulted from previous language learning experiences (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Klein, 1995; Sanz, 2000). Therefore, it is usually easier for Portuguese students to learn Portuguese not just because the language is similar to Spanish, but also because it is already the third language most of them are studying.

There are some important implications relating to Portuguese students' language backgrounds, which need special consideration by both teachers and students. Teachers of Portuguese need to address specific aspects of negative language transfer between Portuguese and Spanish that will influence students' learning process. Negative transfer is much more of a problem between two similar languages, such as Portuguese and Spanish, than between languages that are essentially different (Carvalho, 2002). If on one hand, the linguistic proximity of Portuguese and Spanish motivates students, and facilitates their acquiring of receptive and productive skills, on the other hand it interferes with their ability to master the different phonetic, semantic, morphological, and syntactic features that give the two languages their own personal identities. For this reason, it would be ideal for Portuguese teachers to have a solid background in Spanish so as to explicitly teach students what the problematic aspects of language transfer are. Teachers who do not possess such background should seek for ways of familiarizing themselves with Spanish. Furthermore, teachers would greatly benefit from receiving training focused on negative aspects of language transfer between Portuguese and Spanish.

In addition, the Portuguese curriculum for classes of mainly Spanish speakers should be different from the curriculum for classes of mainly monolingual English speakers. The first should not just have a more accelerated rhythm, as is usually the case. The curriculum for Portuguese classes with Spanish speakers should be designed to specifically cover the Portuguese structures that diverge from the Spanish ones. Likewise, textbooks and other pedagogical materials that specifically attend to the needs of Spanish speakers should be used in these classes (Carvalho, 2002).

Contrary to previous literature on LCTL classes, there were only two students (4.1%) in this study who could be considered Portuguese heritage speakers. Students with some sort of

heritage connection to the language they were studying were much more common in the German and Italian classes. Heritage interest was not a key motivating factor among Portuguese students, and this finding indicates that Portuguese students have motivations that are different from the motivations of students of some other LCTLs. Nevertheless, this result may be idiosyncratic to Brigham Young University. It is necessary to perform studies at universities in other regions of the country in order to find out the role heritage interest plays in each of them.

Motivational Aspects of Studying Portuguese

Future studies. When investigating foreign language motivations it is important to analyze the magnitude of the effort students are willing to devote to learning a given language (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005). In order to find out where Portuguese students stood in regard to this magnitude and willingness, they were asked how likely they were to take a Portuguese class the following semester, and how likely they were to take an advanced Portuguese class in the future. Results obtained for these two questions indicated that many students planned to continue their studies of Portuguese (Mean = 3.23 SD= 1.51, Mean = 3.35 SD = 1.31 respectively). In addition, some students whose likelihood of taking a class the following semester was lower, reported higher likelihood of taking an advanced class in the future, which means they were motivated to further pursue the language even though they would probably stop studying it for a period of time.

Despite the encouraging results for these two questions, the question arises as to why 76% of the students who were less likely to take a class the following semester were students who were finishing their first semester of Portuguese. The ideal scenario would have been to have the majority of these students among those who were in their second or third semester of classes, as it is already more natural for fewer students to go on to the intermediate and advanced

level classes. Retaining as many students as possible from one semester to another, especially at the beginning levels, is vital for LCTL classes such as Portuguese because students who do not continue their studies are not as easily replaced as they are in CTL classes. This study did not provide any information as to the reasons why these students were less likely to take a class the following semester.

Brazilian and European Portuguese. Students were extremely interested in studying Brazilian Portuguese (Mean = 4.58, SD = .79), whereas their interest in studying European Portuguese was surprisingly low (M = 1.98, SD = 1.19). It is understandable that for geographical reasons, and the fact that the majority of Portuguese speakers in the world are from Brazil, students would be more interested in studying Brazilian Portuguese. Nevertheless, such low interest in European Portuguese is possibly a result of the very little exposure students had to it. Teachers who spoke Brazilian Portuguese taught all the classes at this particular university, and they most likely afforded European Portuguese minimal importance even though some of them used a textbook that presented both versions of the language side by side.

Students would benefit from being familiar with European Portuguese, which is certainly a valid variety of the language. Teachers who speak Brazilian Portuguese should encourage students to become more well-rounded regarding the varieties of the language, even though students may prefer to focus on the Brazilian dialect. Media, especially the Internet, is an excellent tool teachers and students can use to obtain meaningful and authentic exposure to European Portuguese. Teachers should also find ways to address cultural aspects from Portugal in class given that language and culture are intrinsically connected. It is possible that by having more exposure to European Portuguese, students will develop greater interest and appreciation for it.

Portuguese Students' Motivations. Portuguese students were asked why they had chosen to study Portuguese. Students usually reported more than one motivation when explaining this foreign language choice. The result might be surprising to some, but the number one motivation among students was the fact they believed Portuguese would be helpful in their areas of study and consequently in their future careers. More than 26% of the Portuguese students reported having this motivation and most of them had plans to work in fields related to business and international relations. As a matter of fact, only among Portuguese students was career the top motivation. Students of all the other languages had reasons other than career as their main motivation to study their respective languages. Career was the second most important motivation among Spanish students (36.4%), and the third among French (22.7%). Very few German (8%) and Italian (2.4%) students reported whether these languages would be helpful in their professional lives. This result reveals the potential Portuguese has of being studied as a foreign language that can be useful in specific professional fields. Teachers and department administrators should try to recruit potential students from these fields.

How similar Portuguese was to languages the students had previously studied or already spoke was likewise an important source of motivation. In almost every case, Spanish had been the language students had previously studied. More than 22% of the students believed Portuguese was going to be an easy language to learn due to this similarity. This kind of motivation was somewhat important among Italian students, but not nearly as important as it was for Portuguese. This result further emphasizes that students with a background in Spanish are attracted to the Portuguese classes because of the possibility of learning another language in a short amount of time (Carvalho, 2002). This possibility is also a great asset for teachers and department administrators to use in order to encourage potential students to study Portuguese.

Portuguese students mentioned other motivations related to milieu. That is to say, the motivations were related to the influence family and friends had on the students. More than 14% of the students were motivated to study Portuguese because family members had studied it in the past or were currently studying it. In many cases, these family members had learned Portuguese while serving religious missions. Similar results were obtained among French, German, Italian, and Spanish students. In addition, more than 10% of the students reported being motivated to study Portuguese due to having family members who were native speakers of the language. However, these family members consisted of only spouses and in-laws because students with a heritage connection with Portuguese were fewer. Curiously, having spouses and in-laws who were native speakers of the language was a motivation reported virtually only by Portuguese students. On the other hand, the influence of friends who spoke Portuguese was a lesser motivation among them.

The vitality of the L2 community is an important source of foreign language motivation (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005; Gyles & Byrnes, 1982). A couple of Portuguese students referred to the increasing economic importance of Brazil in the world as one of their motivations to study the language. Even though this was far from being a key motivation (6.1%), it indicates that the prediction made in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* about the positive impact the economic prominence Brazil has been gaining would have on Portuguese enrollments is slowly taking place. The economic importance of the countries where the other languages are spoken was not at any time brought up as a source of motivation, except by one Spanish student.

Culture interest was a very minor motivation among Portuguese students (4.1%). Even though it would have been excellent if more students had felt motivated to study Portuguese due to culture interest, this result suggests that the study of Portuguese has come a long way, as it

seems to no longer depend on students' admiration for samba, carnival, soccer, and capoeira. Along with culture interest, the desire to travel to Portuguese-speaking countries was a minor motivation among students. In comparison, travelling was a major motivation of French, German, and especially Italian students. The low level of interest in culture and desire to travel to Portuguese-speaking countries reported by the Portuguese students suggest that integrativeness would not be a strong source of motivation to students. In contrast with studies where integrativeness was found to be the most important motivation among students (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005), Portuguese students in this study were more motivated by instrumental reasons (Gardner, 1985).

Although the results obtained in this study cannot be easily generalized to the contexts of Portuguese students at other universities, they begin to paint a picture of the motivations Portuguese students have to study the language. To my knowledge there have been no studies in the past that investigated Portuguese students' motivations.

Ways to Expand Portuguese Enrollments

In order to expand Portuguese enrollments, it is crucial not only to understand what motivations drive students to study this language but also what perceptions exist of it. Perceptions of Portuguese varied greatly between the Portuguese and the non-Portuguese groups of students. Portuguese students had very positive perceptions of the language in regard to all eight statements in the survey. Most of the time these perceptions were more positive than their perceptions of the other languages. In contrast, non-Portuguese students' perceptions of Portuguese were for the most part less positive than their perceptions of French, German, Italian, and Spanish, even though the difference was small in many cases. These not-so-favorable perceptions partially explain why Portuguese enrollments are so low in comparison with

enrollments in the other four languages. Non-Portuguese students' perspectives of Portuguese are a reflection of the status the language enjoys in the particular setting the study took place.

Portuguese was the language students had the least interest in studying.

Stenson, Janus and Mulkern (1996) defend a marketing approach to increasing enrollments in LCTLs and argue that it is crucial for LCTL teachers to come up with convincing reasons for students to enroll in LCTL courses. Certainly, students will always have their personal foreign language preferences, but Portuguese, as well as other LCTLs, can clearly benefit from some public relations and marketing strategies in order to improve overall perceptions of the language, and therefore expand its enrollments.

Making a conscious effort to promote the study of Portuguese could indeed be very effective, and might actually be all that is missing for students to become more interested in this language. According to Walter Russell Mead, a leading scholar of American foreign policy, Brazil (the largest Portuguese-speaking country) has always been an "undervalued stock" in US academia since the focus of most Latin Americanists on Spanish and Spanish America has led to a distorted picture of the hemisphere. Despite recognizing good reasons for such focus, Mead states that young Americans are likely to benefit more from learning Portuguese and getting to know Brazil than from the study of Spanish. The underlying reason for this statement is economic in nature. According to a 14-page special report in *The Economist*, Brazil is poised to become one of the world's five biggest economies, along with China, America, India, and Japan. Forecasts vary, but sometime during this decade, and probably sooner than economists had initially expected, Brazil is likely to overtake the economies of France and Britain.

In spite of the increasing economic importance of Brazil, students perceived Portuguese-speaking countries as less economically important in the world than the countries where the other

languages are spoken, with the exception of Italian. Spanish-speaking countries were considered the most important countries economically. These results demonstrate that students' perceptions are somewhat skewed. A single Brazilian state, São Paulo, has a larger GDP than any other Latin American country, except Mexico (Mead, 2011). As students become more aware of the economic shifts that are happening worldwide, and a little public relations on the part of teachers and school administrators could help raise this awareness, their interest in studying Portuguese will most likely increase. In addition, more students will be able to identify how Portuguese can be helpful in their careers, especially in careers related to business and international relations.

It is necessary to be careful so as not to convey the message that students' interest in studying a foreign language should be based solely on economic circumstances of countries where the language is spoken. Japanese for instance is still less studied than Spanish in the United States, even though Japan's economy is much stronger than the economy of any Spanish-speaking country. As this study indicates, the number one motivation of students to learn Spanish is not the economic relevance of the countries where it is spoken neither the amount of people who speak Spanish in Latin America, but the extreme usefulness of this language within the borders of the US. Therefore, learning Portuguese would not necessarily give Americans a better edge than learning Spanish, as some might be prompted to state. However, because of the increasing economic importance of Brazil in the world, as well as because Portuguese is the most spoken language in South America, more attention should be given to this language than the "not-as-important-as-Spanish" type of attention it has always received at universities within the combined departments of Spanish and Portuguese.

Portuguese was also the language students perceived as the one that would help them the least to be considered an educated person in society. This perception may be related to a lack of

familiarity with and appreciation for Luso-Brazilian cultural products. Portuguese and Spanish languages and cultures have always been regarded as inferior by their English, French, and German counterparts. However, in aspects such as literature Spaniards and Spanish-Americans have been more successful in changing this perspective than the Luso-Brazilians have. The wonderful literature of the Portuguese speaking countries has never been granted the attention it deserves (Fitz, 2002). Certainly, if a survey was carried out on a college campus, students would be much more capable of naming Spanish and Spanish-American great works of literature than they would be able to name Luso-Brazilian ones. The fact that literature written in Portuguese is so little known becomes a problem especially when speaking of Latin American literature because it leads to a distorted view of the hemisphere.

Even as we have watched with admiration the ever greater respect garnered by Spanish American literature on the world stage, we have been disappointed to see Brazilian literature continue to be ignored or relegated to an afterthought, even by established scholars of what they themselves term “Latin American” literature (Fitz, 2002, 440).

Employing some public relations and receiving more support from Latin Americanists will positively impact students’ perceptions of Portuguese, and consequently help them develop a greater interest in the language.

Results of this study have demonstrated that non-Portuguese students who were native Spanish speakers had more positive perceptions toward Portuguese in regard to the eight statements than the other non-Portuguese students. Much unlike the other non-Portuguese students, these native Spanish speakers were very interested in studying Portuguese (Mean = 4.00, SD = 1.32). If a conscious effort is going to be made in order to promote the study of Portuguese, this effort should first be directed to these students because they are already more

likely to see the benefits of “buying the product.” In the semester when this study took place, Brigham Young University had a total of 348 native-Spanish speaking students in its undergraduate and graduate programs (International Students and Scholars Census, Winter 2011). However, only 3.4% of them were taking a Portuguese class. If native Spanish speakers are as interested in learning Portuguese as they have demonstrated in this study this percentage can be increased.

Because the main motivation of students was how helpful they believed Portuguese could be in their future careers, this study suggests that along with native Spanish speakers it would be easier to recruit new Portuguese learners among students who are majoring in specific areas such as business and international relations. In addition, because an ideal executive for the Americas is linguistically competent in English, Portuguese, and Spanish (Cowles, Wiedmann & Thomas, 2002), it is possible that if the study of Portuguese is appropriately encouraged there will be a need to create classes of Portuguese for special purposes in the future. In response to the hundreds of students who over the years have expressed interest in learning Portuguese for business reasons, professors at the University of Texas - Austin have created a series of in-house materials for Business Portuguese (Kelm, 2002).

The study of Portuguese as a foreign language in the United States has great potential if teachers, Latin Americanists, and department administrators give it the proper support. The goal should not only be to promote and encourage the study of Portuguese, but also of other LCTLs that have always sat in the shadows due to the disproportionate emphasis on the study of a handful of languages.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in some areas, such as in its number of participants. In particular, it is difficult to make generalizations about students' motivations to study Portuguese, and students' perceptions of this language based on the small number of respondents, the fact that they were all students of the same university as well as the fact that Portuguese students were enrolled in class levels that were different from the ones in which non-Portuguese students were enrolled. However, their responses do shed more light on the subject because they go beyond the intuitive responses that studies about LCTL students usually obtain from teachers. Therefore, to the extent that these results can be extrapolated to other contexts, they could prove valuable to instructors and foreign language program administrators.

This study also could have led to more comparisons between Portuguese and non-Portuguese students if the questionnaires had been even more similar to each other. For instance, only Portuguese students were asked about how likely they were to take a class the following semester as well as an advanced class of the language in the future. Non-Portuguese students could have been asked the same questions concerning their respective languages. Likewise, only Portuguese students were asked how interested they were in two of the different varieties of the language (Brazilian and European Portuguese). It would have been valuable to also have information about non-Portuguese students' interest in different varieties of their respective languages, especially how Spanish students' interest in American and European Spanish compared to Portuguese students' interest in Brazilian and European Portuguese.

In addition, one survey item for the Portuguese students could have been improved. The researcher does not know in what contexts Portuguese students' previous foreign language experiences took place. The question meant to obtain this information could have been rephrased

as “Where did you study these languages?” Obtaining this information was important because even though the majority of the Portuguese students had previously studied other languages, for how many of these students Portuguese was the first foreign language choice at the college level is still not known.

Recommendations for Future Research

During this investigation I have found several other aspects that if investigated could shed further light on the study of Portuguese as a foreign language. First, it would be useful to carry out similar studies with Portuguese and non-Portuguese students at other universities in order to obtain a clearer picture of what the motivations to study Portuguese are and the perceptions that exist of this language. Also it would be beneficial to perform a longitudinal study, perhaps using the same or a similar survey, in order to track possible changes that might occur to Portuguese students’ motivations as well as to the general perceptions of the language over time. This study focused on students who were enrolled in specific foreign language classes, but studies can be performed that include students enrolled in other foreign language classes, and students who are not enrolled in any foreign language class in order to obtain further insights into general perceptions of Portuguese.

Portuguese students were very interested in studying Brazilian Portuguese, and minimally interested in European Portuguese. Although there are some obvious reasons to explain such a high interest in the Brazilian variety, they still do not explain why interest in the European one was so low. It is necessary to investigate more in depth what perceptions Portuguese students have of both dialects, and to investigate how European Portuguese is approached in classes where teachers speak Brazilian Portuguese.

The fact that quite a few Portuguese students were less likely to continue to study the language after their first semester raises a concern. Just as important as investigating what motivates students to study Portuguese it is important to investigate what demotivates them to continue their studies of the language. Instead of prematurely attributing attrition to a lack of interest, we should consider other possibilities. After all, these students did have an interest because they initially chose Portuguese over more popular languages.

As more research is done on students' motivations and students' perceptions of Portuguese, the study of this foreign language will be in a better position to advance at American universities. Similar studies should be done with other LCTLs.

Conclusion

This research has investigated Portuguese students' motivations as well as what perceptions exist of the study of Portuguese as a foreign language. Understanding what these motivations and perceptions are is crucial in order to articulate ways to expand enrollments in the language.

A major finding of this study was that perceptions of Portuguese were for the most part not as positive as perceptions of French, German, Italian, and Spanish. It is imperative that a more conscious effort is put forth in order to raise awareness about the benefits of learning Portuguese. It is also important to do more public relations among students who have background in Spanish or are native Spanish speakers, and among students who are majoring in fields related to business and international relations because these are the students who seem to be naturally more interested in studying Portuguese.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument of Portuguese Students

You are invited to participate in this research study about students' reasons for studying a foreign language. This study is being conducted by Desiree Oliveira, an M.A. student in the Spanish and Portuguese Department at Brigham Young University.

You have been invited to participate because you are currently enrolled in a lower-division foreign language class at BYU.

The study involves filling out an anonymous questionnaire in class that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

This survey involves minimal risk to you. Your participation in the study may help educators better understand students' foreign language motivations.

If you decide to participate, all the information you provide will remain anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. You will not be paid or receive extra credit in your language course for being in this study.

Involvement in this research project is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or refuse to participate entirely. There will be no reference to your identification at any point in the research.

If you have questions regarding this study you may contact the researcher, Desiree Oliveira, at (801) 687-5174 or at desiao@hotmail.com. You may also contact Dr. Blair E. Bateman at (801) 422-3157 or at blair_bateman@byu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the IRB Administrator; Brigham Young University, A-285 ASB; Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu or (801) 422-1461. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

The completion of this survey implies your consent to participate.

Personal Data

1. Gender: Male Female Age: _____
2. What is your native language? _____
3. Where are you originally from? _____
4. Do you have family members who are native Portuguese speakers?
 No Yes If yes, what is their relationship to you? _____

Language Data

5. Did you study Portuguese prior to college?
 No Yes If yes, in what situation? _____

For how long? _____

6. Have you ever been to a Portuguese speaking country?

No Yes

If yes, which country? _____

For how long? _____

For what reason? _____

7. Besides Portuguese, have you ever studied any other foreign language?

No Yes If yes, which languages? _____

How did you learn them? _____

8. How likely are you to take a Portuguese class **next semester**?

Definitely
not



Definitely

9. How likely are you to take advanced-level (300+ level) classes of Portuguese in the future?

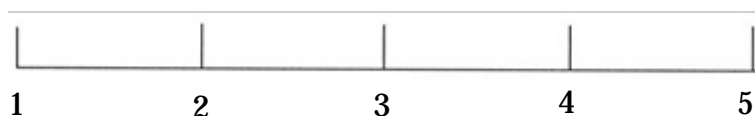
Definitely
not



Definitely

10. How interested are you in studying European Portuguese (the Portugal variety)?

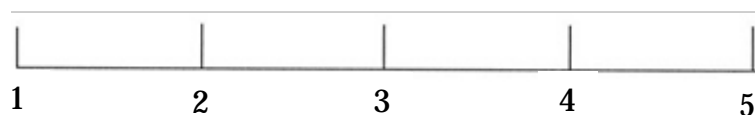
not
interested
at all



very interested

11. How interested are you in studying Brazilian Portuguese?

not
interested
at all



very interested

12. Please explain the reasons why you chose to study Portuguese instead of another foreign language? Be specific.

13. The following section asks your opinion about learning five different foreign languages.
Please answer each question below for each language, using the following key:

- 5 = Strongly agree
- 4 = Agree
- 3 = Somewhat agree
- 2 = Neutral / undecided
- 1 = Disagree

	French	German	Italian	Portuguese	Spanish
Knowing this language would help me in my future career.					
Knowing this language would help me to be considered an educated person in society.					
Knowing this language would help me with my hobbies and personal interests.					
Knowing this language would help me communicate with family and/or friends who speak the language.					
I am interested in cultural aspects of countries where this language is spoken.					
I am interested in travelling to countries where this language is spoken.					
Countries where this language is spoken play an important economic role in the world today.					
I would like to learn this language.					

APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument of Non-Portuguese Students

You are invited to participate in this research study about students' reasons for studying a foreign language. This study is being conducted by Desiree Oliveira, an M.A. student in the Spanish and Portuguese Department at Brigham Young University.

You have been invited to participate because you are currently enrolled in a lower-division foreign language class at BYU.

The study involves filling out an anonymous questionnaire in class that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

This survey involves minimal risk to you. Your participation in the study may help educators better understand students' foreign language motivations.

If you decide to participate, all the information you provide will remain anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. You will not be paid or receive extra credit in your language course for being in this study.

Involvement in this research project is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or refuse to participate entirely. There will be no reference to your identification at any point in the research.

If you have questions regarding this study you may contact the researcher, Desiree Oliveira, at (801) 687-5174 or desiao@hotmail.com. You may also contact Dr. Blair E. Bateman at (801) 422-3157 or blair_bateman@byu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the IRB Administrator; Brigham Young University, A-285 ASB; Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu or (801) 422-1461. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

The completion of this survey implies your consent to participate.

Personal data

1. Gender: Male Female Age: _____
2. What is your native language? _____
3. Do you have family members who are native speakers of the language of this class?
 No Yes If yes, what is their relationship to you? _____

Language Data

4. Besides the language of this class, what other foreign languages have you studied?
5. What other foreign languages, if any, are you interested in studying in the future?
6. Please explain the reasons why you chose to study the language of this class instead of another foreign language? Be specific.

7. The following section asks your opinion about learning five different foreign languages. Please answer each question below for each language, using the following key:

- 5 = Strongly agree
- 4 = Agree
- 3 = Somewhat agree
- 2 = Neutral / undecided
- 1 = Disagree

	French	German	Italian	Portuguese	Spanish
Knowing this language would help me in my future career.					
Knowing this language would help me to be considered an educated person in society.					
Knowing this language would help me with my hobbies and personal interests.					
Knowing this language would help me communicate with family and/or friends who speak the language.					
I am interested in cultural aspects of countries where this language is spoken.					
I am interested in travelling to countries where this language is spoken.					
Countries where this language is spoken play an important economic role in the world today.					
I would like to learn this language.					