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## Factors Influencing the Growth of Portuguese Enrollments in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### Abstract

Data from the Modern Language Association demonstrates that the growth in post-secondary enrollments in Portuguese since 1998 has been at a higher rate than other foreign languages. From 1998-2002 the growth rate was 21% and from 2002-2006 it was 22.4%, although the latest information for 2006-2009 shows a somewhat lower rate of 10.8%. While these numbers are encouraging, the total figures for matriculations in Portuguese at post-secondary institutions is still rather small at 11,371 in 2009, especially when compared to other Less Commonly Taught Languages such as Japanese (73,434), Chinese (60,976), Arabic (35,083) and Russian (26,883).

This essay will examine four factors that have contributed and will continue to contribute to the growth of enrollments at both secondary and post-secondary levels in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These factors are 1) the increased investments made by the private and public sectors to support the study of Portuguese; 2) the impact of heritage speakers of Portuguese, 3) the interest of Spanish speakers in Portuguese; and 4) the action of Portugal and Brazil in the maintenance and promotion of the Portuguese language. Although it is not possible to gauge the exact impact of each of these factors, there is some room for optimism that the growing economic importance and visibility of Brazil on the world stage has generated a greater demand for the study of Portuguese in secondary and post-secondary education. The good news in this picture is that the growing interest in the language has been aided by a growing capacity in good materials, trained instructors, and a meaningful course curriculum that can lead to linguistic and cultural proficiency. The not so good news is that access to Portuguese materials and instruction remains limited to certain regions of the U.S. and to research universities.

### Introduction

The premise of this essay about Portuguese enrollments is that as a Less Commonly Taught Language (LCTL), Portuguese must acquire visibility as a viable language of study so that potential students, administrators, legislators and commercial interests will see it as a valuable asset that must be supported with financial and human resources. In the United States, the presence of Portuguese in communities and in secondary and higher education has never been evenly or equitably distributed. The study of Portuguese has been located in immigrant communities from Portugal and the Azores in California and New England, and more recently in New England, Florida and Georgia where Brazilian immigrant communities have grown since the 1980s, as noted by anthropologist Maxine Margolis.

Funding from the federal government has helped research universities add Portuguese to their curricula even when no community support has been available. The case for Portuguese in secondary education is still made on the basis of local interest, although an awareness of global economic development has inspired its adoption in areas where the language is not spoken locally. Nonetheless, Portuguese has not established itself as a “must have” language of study at the secondary or post-secondary level, and its existence in many colleges and universities is often limited to survival-level classes or is regularly slated for cancellation due to low enrollments. What has changed between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries to suggest more optimism with regard to the growth of Portuguese enrollments is the quantity and quality of the investments that have made Portuguese more visible and more attractive for study.

While some of the factors that are having an impact on enrollments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are similar to those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it might be helpful to review briefly the events and institutions that shaped Portuguese study before the millennium. Although Portuguese was taught at Ivy League schools in the 1920s, the biggest factors influencing the interest in and study of Portuguese were driven primarily by the U.S. government. President Roosevelt’s efforts to build ties with Latin America began in the early 1930s and by the early 1940s it had led to the funding of translations of major literary and sociological works and to the making of films about Latin America to entertain and educate the American public. Following WW II, the Cold War and competition with the USSR led to the creation of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958 and funding to update the teaching of foreign languages in the United States. While Portuguese was included in the list of languages that received funding, the location and number of opportunities available was quite limited compared to those offered for instruction in Spanish, French and German. Whereas instructors of the more commonly taught languages received immersion and pedagogical training to advance their skills, Portuguese was introduced to potential instructors and graduate students. Nonetheless, growing relations between the U.S. and Latin America did have an impact on increasing the interest in Portuguese. One sign of that

impact was the change made to the name of the largest professional organization -the American Association of Teachers of Spanish- that became the AATSP (P for Portuguese) in the early 1940s. The biggest impact on the study of Portuguese in the later years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century came from the Department of Education's Title VI funding for Area Studies that emphasized the importance of LCTLs.

Two factors that should be mentioned in this historical overview are the impact of the loss of foreign language requirements in higher education in the 1970s, and, on the positive side, the impact of Spanish speakers on the study of Portuguese. The loss of most foreign language requirements in post-secondary education produced a sharp drop in enrollments. The 2009 MLA enrollment survey records that in 1965, 16.5 out of 100 students studied a foreign language. That number dropped to a low of 7.4 out of 100 in 1980 and has leveled off at about 8.6 since 2006. With regard to Spanish speaking students, some of the earliest course materials for Portuguese were aimed at those who knew Spanish and could learn to translate Portuguese based on knowledge of the sister language. The appearance of new pedagogies, especially the audio-lingual method that was employed by those offering NDEA workshops, provided a stimulus to create audio-lingual materials to teach Portuguese to Spanish speakers in the 1960s. Both the research on and development of pedagogical materials aimed at Portuguese for Spanish speakers have grown substantially since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

To summarize, Portuguese enrollments during the 20<sup>th</sup> century reflect the impact of federal funding to support it as an "uncommon" language (the term used by the NDEA), taught primarily at the post-secondary level. Survey research by the Modern Language Association marks the changes in enrollments for Portuguese:

1958 - 582 matriculations in Portuguese	1977 - 4,954 when most language requirements had been removed.
1968 - 4,048	1990- 6,116 when trends begin to improve

The story of the growth in Portuguese enrollments begins in the 1990s when the factors contributing to that growth increase beyond federal funding sources to a wider range of investments made by institutions on a national and international level.

#### Factor 1) Public and Private Sector Support

The two major federal departments that have a history of supporting foreign language education in the U.S. continued to exercise that function during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The notable feature of this federal funding is the expansion in the number of opportunities that either are aimed specifically at Portuguese or include Portuguese as a LCTL. The Department of Education expanded its FIPSE grants (Fund for the Improvement of Post- Secondary Education) by signing agreements with Brazil that encouraged the teaching of Portuguese and educational exchanges with Brazil. Title VI funding has helped support the development of Portuguese teaching materials using technology, as well as support for CIBERs (Centers for International Business Education and Research) that have ventured recently into promoting Portuguese for business. As of 2013 there were thirty-one institutions of higher education with CIBERs. Funding to increase the exposure to LCTLs was expanded with the introduction of STARTALK centers and summer programs with federal funding administered by the University of Maryland. Although Portuguese was the last language to be included in this funding effort in 2012, the program provided monies to both train Portuguese instructors and introduce high school students to Portuguese in summer camps. In 2013 there were thirty-five programs funded for Portuguese with nine of those focusing on language learning and twenty-six designed to train Portuguese instructors. The summer programs offered both residential and day programs. The Department of Defense contributed to the support of LCTLs with funding for the National Security Education Program. Although the flagship centers focused on non-European languages, the University of Georgia won the competition for the one flagship for Portuguese in 2012. Flagships are designed to offer innovative and intensive language

learning experiences to students of any subject matter so that by the time they reach graduation they will have achieved high levels of language proficiency and competency in their field of study. Finally, the Institute of International Education (IIE) has sponsored or facilitated several initiatives with Brazil. The Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistantship (FLTA) program was expanded in 2007 to include Portuguese thanks to funding from Fulbright Brazil and the Brazilian government. Institutions of higher education can apply for a Portuguese-speaking FLTA through the website at the IIE. The requests for students are made in February, assignments and contracts are usually signed in April and the students arrive on campus before classes begin in the fall semester. Brazilian graduate students spend one year on college campuses promoting and developing the study of Portuguese. When the program began there were approximately seven institutions that sponsored FLTAs. In the past two years the numbers have grown to about thirty institutions across the U.S., some of which have never offered Portuguese classes before. The International Academic Partnership Program connects U.S. universities with higher educational institutions in Brazil in order to establish student and faculty exchanges as well as cooperation on research and degree programs. This year sixteen universities will visit Brazil to build closer educational ties. IIE has several other initiatives in Brazil that are designed to improve language study and access to education for all races.

In the private sector there is also encouraging news about the expansion of summer immersion study of Portuguese for high school and higher education students. There were two summer programs that opened in the early 2000s, a seven-week campus-based course at Middlebury College for university students and a two-week camp for high school students in California sponsored by the Luso-American Educational Foundation. Enrollment figures for Middlebury show a growing interest in the summer immersion experience with beginning enrollments for 2003 at twenty-six growing to sixty-two for the summer of 2013. The average enrollments have been forty-two students each summer. The Youth summer camps offered at different university campuses in California and sponsored by the Luso-

American Education Foundation began in 2001 with ten students in grades eight through eleven. In 2013 there were twenty-nine students participating with an average of about twenty students per year. The Youth camps are aimed at heritage speakers of Portuguese with ties to Portugal and the Azores. Concordia Language Village in Minnesota opened its high school summer immersion campus for Portuguese called “Mar e Floresta” in 2008. The two week camp is offered to students aged eight to fourteen and has attracted about thirty students each summer.

The increased interest in studying Portuguese has also produced an improved market for textbooks from both university and commercial presses. A common lament of instructors, students, and learners with an interest in Portuguese during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and before was that there were “few options.” The limited materials available from either U.S. publishing houses, Portuguese publishing houses, or from Brazil were often out dated, repetitive, or not applicable to U.S. learning styles. A common topic for faculty at professional meetings was not only the need for more teaching materials, but also the improvisation required to create materials that responded to student needs. The 21<sup>st</sup> century offers a changed landscape with a range of commercial and university press publications in textbook, CD, and on-line formats that reflect the pedagogical trends of communicative foreign language learning. In most cases, publishers that were active in providing materials to the foreign language market began adding Portuguese to their catalogs. Much like the late arrival of Portuguese to the well-established STARTALK or flagships program, major publishing houses looked at their existing textbook or commercial book formats and found authors to follow that existing format for Portuguese. Thus, series such as “for Dummies” or “Everything about” added Portuguese, as did major textbook publishers such as Pearson, McGraw-Hill, and in the UK, Routledge. Recently, the first text to teach Portuguese for business was published by Georgetown University Press. The majority of these books focus on Brazilian Portuguese, although the most widely used textbook, *Ponto de Encontro* from Pearson, treats Portuguese as a world language and provides examples from Brazilian, European and

Lusophone African Portuguese. It is important to note that the books being published in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are not just language learning books, but specialized materials such as phonetics or reference materials for grammar or readers for intermediate students. The range of options for learning Portuguese on-line or for accessing support materials through the internet is unlimited. The University of Texas sponsors several sites for Portuguese through the Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning (COERLL) and faculty at many institutions of higher learning have developed wikis. Also available on the internet are You Tube sites with access to movies from all the Portuguese speaking countries as well as sites that will help learners understand Portuguese by communicating with individuals all over the world in written and spoken language. There are radio programs, soap operas, video games, newspapers, and television shows that can be accessed through the internet. If the earlier lament was for more, the complaint of instructors and learners now may be that there is an overload of accessible materials and it is hard to know which ones are the most effective.

As suggested earlier, the turn in the fortunes of Portuguese began in the 1990s with a rise in enrollments nationwide at both secondary and post-secondary levels that has continued well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A parallel movement associated with the greater enrollments in language study was the growth in faculty with a need for specialized professional organizations that focused on the Portuguese speaking world. The first organization to be formed was BRASA (Brazilian Studies Association) in 1992, followed by the North American Portuguese Teachers Association in 1994 (U.S. and Canada), APSA (American Portuguese Studies Association) in 1996 and in 2008, the AOTP (Association of Teachers of Portuguese) and a Special Interest Group in Portuguese for ACTFL (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages). While all but one of these organizations attends to the interests of language and literature instructors at the secondary and post-secondary levels, BRASA brings together faculty from all areas of research and teaching about Brazil. It was an outgrowth of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA).

## Factor 2) The Growth of Portuguese Heritage Speakers

My survey research in 2010 of the reasons for growth in Portuguese enrollments at post-secondary institutions identified five major external causes that faculty believed to be responsible for growth. In order of rank those causes were a) the presence of Spanish speakers, b) the presence of heritage speakers, c) media attention given to Brazil, d) interest in study abroad, and e) economic development in their region, mostly attributed to Brazilian companies. Before turning to the role of Spanish speakers, it is appropriate to examine more closely the role of heritage speakers.

Portuguese heritage speakers represent a growing demand on both high school and university education in the geographical areas where they are present in large numbers. In fact, as Richard Brecht, the former Executive Director of the Center for Advanced Study of Language at the University of Maryland, has pointed out in an interview in *The Language Educator*, heritage speakers are the key to broadening the appeal of LCTLs in the U.S. education system. He notes that there are almost 60 million speakers of languages other than English at home which provide a source of rich national resources for building and expanding immersion education and language maintenance.

Although there are some exceptions, the effort for language maintenance is driving most of the growth in Portuguese study at the K-12 and university levels. There are Portuguese classes at the middle schools and high schools in five Northeastern states, in California, and in Georgia and Florida. Even though the largest numbers of heritage speakers are linked to Portugal, the Azores, and Brazil, there are also heritage speakers from Cape Verde, East Timor and the Lusophone African nations living and studying in the U.S. One effort to encourage the teaching of Portuguese in high schools is being conducted by the Portuguese American Citizenship Project (PACP) in order to inform community members about how to pressure local Boards of Education. Their thirty-four page booklet, "Starting Portuguese in your School" represents part of an effort to encourage voter registration and participation by the Portuguese American communities in California and the Northeastern United States. Portuguese



for heritage speakers is also a growing area of research and teaching at universities and colleges in California and the Northeast where the growing populations are providing the impetus to develop special classes. The numbers of students requesting heritage classes has also meant that minors or majors in Portuguese are being proposed and accepted at post-secondary institutions. One challenge that Portuguese language activists have not been able to overcome is the lack of an Advanced Placement for high school students. Many schools are not willing to teach the language without this recognition of its role in helping high school students to earn college credit. Census data and projections for growth help to sketch out the presence of Portuguese speakers in the United States. There has been growth in the number of Portuguese speakers in the home, most notably from 2000-2008 when the increase was 22%. Nonetheless, since the economic crisis the Brazilian government reports that Brazilians are going home in larger numbers. For comparison, from 1995-2000 there were 88,000 who returned, while from 2005-2010 there were 175,000 who returned. The Brazilian government reports that 20% of Brazilians living in U.S. have returned since 2008. While it is worrisome that Portuguese speakers from Brazil are leaving the U.S. and immigration from Portugal has slowed significantly, since immigrants represent a major force in language maintenance, the growing interest in bi-lingual education and the study of Portuguese should help contribute to language maintenance.

According to U.S. census figures the number of Portuguese speakers in the U.S. was the following:

1980- 351,875

1990- 430,610

2000- 564,630

2009- 731,282

Based on U.S. Census estimates from the American Community survey data for 2009, Shin and Ortman projected growth in the Portuguese speaking population for 2020 to be 857,000. In the same census

data of those over 5 years of age who spoke Portuguese, 58.6% of the respondents said they spoke Portuguese very well, 20.8% said they spoke it well. The Modern Language Association Language Map shows the percentage of speakers by county based on Census data. Portuguese registers a range from 0% to 12.46%.

It can be concluded, then, that Portuguese is a language that is growing in the number of speakers at home. To the extent that communities and educational institutions respond to this presence, or are pressured by these speakers, Portuguese as a heritage language will help keep the interest in Portuguese alive in regions where speakers are in greater numbers. One example of the impact of descendants of Portuguese immigrants can be seen in the Portuguese American Leadership Council of the United States (PALCUS). This association has been active for many years in publicizing activities of its members and in offering scholarships and internships to youth of Portuguese-American descent. Recently the organization mounted a national survey in response to the possible inclusion of Portuguese as part of a Hispanic identity for the 2020 Census. There was overwhelming disagreement with this proposal and it was dropped by the Hispanic Origin Research Working Group.

### Factor 3) The Increasing Interest of Spanish Speakers

Unlike the geographical concentration of Portuguese heritage speakers, Spanish speakers can be found in all areas of the U.S. and they are a diverse group of both heritage and native speakers. As mentioned above, my survey research in 2010 suggested that faculty believe Spanish speakers to be the number one factor driving the growth in Portuguese enrollments. In my study, faculty estimated that 45% of their students were Spanish speakers (including Spanish and second language learners), compared to 15.9% who were English-only speakers and 18% who were heritage Portuguese speakers. While the growth of Portuguese speakers is promising for enrollments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is Spanish speakers who offer the greatest opportunity for growing Portuguese enrollments. A few statistics will

help clarify the point. According to a study published by ACTFL, the enrollments in Spanish at the K-12 levels for 2007-2008, totaled 6,418,331 students or 70% of all the foreign languages being studied. Data from the Modern Language Association reveal that there were 864,986 matriculations in Spanish in higher education in 2009, a number that surpassed the total of all other world languages. The U.S. is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest Spanish speaking population in the world with 29 million Latinos speaking Spanish at home. According to census projections from Shin and Ortman mentioned earlier, by 2020 there will be about 41 million Spanish speakers of five years or older. In figures similar to those of Portuguese speakers, of the Spanish speakers over 5 years of age who said they spoke Spanish, 54.3% said they spoke Spanish very well, and 18.0% said they spoke it well. According to the Modern Language Association's map of language speakers, there are areas of the U.S. with a concentration of Spanish speakers at 97.84%.

As an example of the impact of Spanish speakers on Portuguese enrollments, there is the case of Tulare, California that was presented by Diniz Borges in an on-line webinar about Portuguese programs in May of 2013. According to Borges, Portuguese language classes have been offered at three high schools in the area since 1975. The coursework was aimed at the local Portuguese community with origins in Portugal and the Azores. In 1998 there were enough students and interest to offer Portuguese VI which is an honors course. Regrettably, the number of world languages being taught in Tulare has decreased from French, German, and Latin, to only Spanish and Portuguese in the high schools. There have been other changes as well. Since 1975 the population of Tulare has altered in demographics with the Hispanic community growing to 65%. At present, there are 405 students enrolled in the study of Portuguese at the three high schools, and of those 45% are Hispanics. Even though these Hispanic students have ties to Latin America and are interested in Brazil, they enroll in the Portuguese classes to learn the language and the culture of the heritage Portuguese community.

It is possible to conclude, along with the faculty of university Portuguese programs nationwide, that Spanish speakers constitute the largest and strongest potential audience for the study of the

Portuguese language. There is no evidence to suggest that the number of Spanish speakers will diminish in the U.S. My survey research suggests that Spanish speakers study Portuguese because of its similarity to their own language which makes it appear easier to learn, among other reasons. In response to the growing presence of Spanish speakers in Portuguese classrooms, regular conferences and publications have addressed the best ways to respond to the special needs of Spanish speakers. Those conferences have produced several scholarly collections, as well as articles published in scholarly journals. One need that must be met in order to serve Spanish speaking students better is a series of beginning through intermediate textbooks or pedagogical materials aimed at addressing the special strengths and the challenges of language transfer between these cognate languages.

#### Factor 4) Activity from the Portuguese and Brazilian Governments

The contributions of the Portuguese government to the maintenance of Portuguese in the U.S. have been significant and have taken place since at least the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast, the interest of the Brazilian government is smaller and a 21<sup>st</sup> century phenomena. While the Portuguese government lends support to the teaching of the Portuguese language and culture at high schools and colleges across the U.S., the Brazilian government has invested in a few programs that target community schools and universities. While the recent economic woes of Portugal have caused a reduction in its educational investments, Brazil has become more active in encouraging cultural and educational exchanges. Both governments have focused their investments on the areas where immigrants and their descendants live in greatest numbers, but they also have ventured into new geographical areas in response to local needs and interests.

The main provider of Portuguese language and cultural materials is the “Instituto Camões” which supports more than sixty elementary schools, more than fifty high schools, and more than seventy-five colleges or post-secondary institutions with materials and personnel. The institute

sponsors workshops to train Portuguese teachers in California and in the Newark and Boston areas, and operates Portuguese Language Centers in Berkeley and Santa Barbara, California; Newark, New Jersey; Boston, Massachusetts, and other areas. The institute also offers certification for K-12 students using the Common European Framework, and they offer CAPLE which is a five part Portuguese proficiency test in reading, writing, listening, language structure and speaking also based on the Common European Framework. Lastly, the institute has established memoranda of understanding with school districts in Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and in Florida where 5,000 students are studying Portuguese in the Miami-Dade County schools. The second provider of funding for projects to promote the language and culture of Portuguese in the U.S. is the “Fundação Luso-Americano de Desenvolvimento” (FLAD) which offers grants for faculty and language program development, as well as for short term study in Lisbon or Lusophone Africa together with the Council of American Overseas Research Center (CAORC). FLAD has sponsored competitions with partnered high schools in Portugal and the U.S., and has supported translations of major literary and historical works from English to Portuguese and Portuguese to English.

Brazil’s interests in promoting Portuguese in the U.S. have been much less and had a smaller impact. In the 1990s Brazil gave funds to establish university chairs dedicated to the study of Brazilian social sciences. A major conference on the status of Brazilian Studies in the U.S. was sponsored by the Brazilian Embassy at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There has been funding available for community schools in San Francisco and New York City areas to help small children and their parents retain their language skills and ties to Brazil. In addition, Georgetown University received funding to sponsor workshops on the teaching of Portuguese and Portuguese as a heritage language. The Brazilian Consulate in Chicago has offered scholarships to students who wanted to attend the “Mar e Floresta” summer language camp in Minnesota. Brazil has also trained faculty at several U.S. universities to administer the CELPE-BRAS, a proficiency test based on Brazilian Portuguese. However, the biggest

investment Brazil has made to date is in scholarships for Brazilian students to attend universities in the U.S. for one year in order to advance their skills in science and technology. The Brazil Science without Borders program, now known as the Brazil Scientific Mobility Program, does not directly impact the study of Portuguese in the U.S., however it will bring over 100,000 Brazilian students to university campuses across the U.S. and thus increase the exposure that university students have to Portuguese speakers from Brazil.

Jointly Brazil and Portugal are the two most populous member nations of the “Comunidades de Países de Língua Portuguesa” (CPLP), an organization that works to maintain good relations between the Portuguese speaking nations. Within CPLP is the “Instituto Internacional da Língua Portuguesa” that has taken on the task of establishing Portuguese as an official language of written documentation, websites, and as a working language for the United Nations, UNESCO, and other international organizations. The goals of the institute are comprehensive in their efforts to improve the status of Portuguese as a world language. Those goals focus on better teacher training and pedagogical materials in the member countries, but also worldwide television programming in Portuguese, post-secondary degrees in Portuguese in countries outside the member nations, promotion of literature written in Portuguese, and maintenance of Portuguese in diaspora communities. These are not goals that can be realized quickly or without funding, but they are goals that demonstrate the growing awareness of the Portuguese speaking nations that they are responsible for protecting and promoting the Portuguese language within their national boundaries and beyond. From the standpoint of developing the visibility and viability of the Portuguese language in the U.S., efforts by Portugal and Brazil as well as the other CPLP nations to promote the language and its usefulness to educators, law-makers, and students would be most welcome.

Media attention to Brazil and economic development in the U.S. by Brazilian companies were mentioned as having an impact on Portuguese enrollments in the U.S. according to my survey

information. This impact is somewhat difficult to track, but I have anecdotal evidence that students in advanced Portuguese classes on the East Coast are attaining jobs in the U.S. based on their language skills. I also have received communication from former students who are teaching Portuguese to their colleagues with business interests in Brazil. Since the early 21<sup>st</sup> century Brazil earned attention as a member of the BRIC nations, those emerging developing economies that were projected to earn greatness by 2050. It also garnered the international spotlight with its selection as host of the World Cup in 2014 and the summer Olympics in 2016. Until recently, Brazil's economic growth seemed limitless. Then, just like the collapse of the empire of one of the world's richest men, Brazilian Eike Batista, the *Wall Street Journal* and other journals have reported on the less than stellar performance of Brazil's economy and the problems with its banks. It is difficult to reconcile these current woes to the reports published in 2011 and 2012 about the healthy economic relationship between the U.S. and Brazil. Of importance to the potential growth in enrollments of Portuguese are the investments that Brazil is making in the U.S. and the jobs that the U.S. dedicates to the manufacture of exports to Brazil. A quick review of that economic exchange printed in a fact sheet from the Office of the Press Secretary to President Obama (April 2012) points out the following:

- U.S. goods and services exports to Brazil totaled \$63 billion in 2011, supporting 300,000 U.S. jobs
- In 2011, 1.5 million Brazilians visited the U.S. and spent \$6.8 billion on travel and tourism.
- Brazilian firms invested nearly \$3.7 billion in the U.S. in 2011
- By 2012, foreign investments from Brazil in the U.S. had risen to \$14 billion

As recently as December 2013, the governor of Maryland announced that a pharmaceutical company from Brazil would be opening its U.S. headquarters in the state and investing \$200 million in the U.S. While this is not a complete economic report, it does make clear that there is enough economic activity

between the U.S. and Brazil to provide job opportunities for Portuguese speakers in the U.S. Economic growth creates the need for employees with Portuguese language skills and changes the nature of job opportunities from the commonly held view that those studying Portuguese will need to seek employment opportunities outside the U.S. to one in which Portuguese is needed to fill jobs in the U.S.

## Conclusion

A recent article published in *Language Magazine* (June 2013) entitled “U.S. Demand for Portuguese Increasing” makes several observations that can serve to close this essay. Based on interviews with two Portuguese professors at Dartmouth College, the article argues that the demand for the language is greater than the supply because the students seeking out language training cannot find university programs or materials to fit their needs. The increased demand is from students wanting Portuguese for professional reasons and can be attributed to the visibility of Brazil as an emerging market and the realization that Spanish is not enough for those wanting to work in or with Latin America. The article suggests that private language courses offering immersion training and service learning in Brazil are responding to student needs.

As documented in this essay, it is true that university programs in Portuguese are not readily available in all areas of the U.S. and that when they are available they do not offer a complete complement of courses that provide advanced language and cultural proficiency. My survey research from 2010 found that one-half of the one hundred institutions responding enrolled eighty students or less a year, one-half offered five classes or less a year, and almost one-half of those institutions had only one instructor teaching Portuguese. It is also true that language materials oriented for the professions are less available and instructors are not trained to provide this type of specialized language instruction. The first Portuguese textbook aimed at the business world, *Working Portuguese*, is an introductory textbook. The article also suggests a connection between those studying Spanish and the rise of interest



in Portuguese as a useful language for conducting business in Latin America. One claim made by the article that does not appear to be true according to my research is that the “old” image of Portuguese students is made up of heritage speakers and humanities students who were lovers of the language and culture of Brazil, whereas the “new” students are those with professional interests. My research would suggest that both images are still true and that the future of Portuguese as a language of study at the high school and post-secondary levels depends on the interests of both types of students. It is encouraging to think that the demand for Portuguese is greater than the supply, although it is difficult to measure that demand based on just one article.

It seems likely that enrollments will continue to grow at both secondary and post-secondary levels, even though there is a wide diversity of geographic locations and institutional differences. Where there are local communities or institutions with a link to Portuguese as a language and culture, growth will be easiest. Although the status of Portuguese has certainly improved in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Portuguese has not achieved national or professional acceptance as a language worthy of study. There are several obstacles to the expansion of Portuguese into high school and university education. There is still no Advanced Placement exam in Portuguese, and many states do not have a process to certify Portuguese instructors. Both of these make it difficult to introduce Portuguese study into high schools. The state of Utah has found a creative approach to the problem of certification by implementing immersion study of Portuguese at the elementary level with native Portuguese speakers from Brazil who are certified in elementary education. A further complication is that ACTFL does not yet have training materials recorded in Portuguese for its popular Oral Proficiency Interview instrument which has become a standard for assessment of student proficiency in secondary and post-secondary education. Thus, faculty preparing to be OPI raters must do their training by listening and rating recordings in either English or Spanish.

There are steps that could be taken to expose students to Portuguese before they reach university level by offering workshops to Spanish teachers or developing on-line materials, such as video games or learning models that could introduce Portuguese to middle or high school students of Spanish. Many students reach university without knowing that Portuguese is an option for study and only discover the language in their junior and senior years. Late learners cannot achieve the same levels of proficiency as those who begin their study earlier.

There are several limitations to my research that must be mentioned here. It is difficult to gauge the impact of private sector language teaching on the study of Portuguese in the U.S. or in Brazil for that matter. I have looked for listings of private language schools that teach Portuguese in the U.S., but could not find enough data to draw any conclusions. There are companies that offer immersion study of Portuguese in Brazil and individualized service learning. Again, I could not find a listing of those companies or the number of students who participate in their programs.

It would be helpful to develop a mathematical model that could predict the impact of the factors I have outlined here, but for the present, my understanding of the big picture is that Portuguese language study is at the healthiest and most promising point in its history to date. In spite of the economic decline in the U.S. from 2008-2011, and of the threat of budget cuts that have and might cut language programs, the impetus for the study of Portuguese seems well established and growing in California, the Northeast, and Florida and Georgia. Even more promising, preparatory schools in many parts of the U.S., including in the Southwest, are introducing Portuguese and community colleges and four year colleges are also getting on the bandwagon. I do not predict a rapid and explosive growth such as that associated with Arabic that was directly related to U.S. military action, but I do believe that the 21<sup>st</sup> century offers many opportunities for growth in the teaching and learning of Portuguese.

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