

# **Why, Who and Where? Portuguese Language Learners and Types of Motivation**

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## **Abstract**

This study focuses on the types of motivation to learn Portuguese exhibited by heritage versus non-heritage learners at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (UMD) and Bridgewater State University (BSU). BSU students are more ethnically diverse compared to UMD students, who are mostly of Portuguese descent. Self-assessment measures are higher for all heritage learners in comparison to non-heritage learners in both institutions. Surprisingly, there are no significant differences between UMD and BSU students as far as the support of parents, teachers and friends in taking Portuguese. On the other hand, there are significant differences between heritage language learners and non-heritage language learners as far as language use and language contact in both institutions. Finally, learners from both institutions as well heritage language learners versus non-heritage language learners indicate instrumental and integrative motivations to take Portuguese. Future research is recommended in the area of learning outcomes and debriefing methodology.

**Key Words:** heritage language learners/speakers, instrumental/integrative motivation, Portuguese language maintenance.

## **1. Introduction**

This research study is a continuation of several investigative projects (Ferreira, 2005, 2007; Gontijo, 2010a, Gontijo, 2010b and Silva, 2010) that aim at uncovering and analyzing the sociolinguistic profiles and diverse types of motivation among Portuguese learners in institutions of higher learning in New England, United States. These investigations have proposed to establish a paradigmatic model of the Portuguese language learner with the ultimate objective of advancing the understanding of the status of this minority language and suggesting curricular guidelines for Portuguese programs.

Thus the primary areas of interest in this investigation are: the traditional versus heritage language learner motivation to pursue Portuguese studies, the effects of a local area college versus a larger university in the motivation to learn Portuguese, and the

contact with and use of Portuguese in the surrounding community. In that sense, this research aims at identifying the impact of academic programs as well as non-academic settings on language learning and minority language maintenance.

As a starting point, the types of motivation mentioned in this study include *integrative* and *instrumental* motivations as initially conceptualized by Gardner and colleagues (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Normally understood integrative reasons are exemplified by the learner's affinity with the language group and the desire to closely emulate the language and culture of that group. On the other hand, instrumental motivation is related to instrumental goals, such as passing a course, fulfilling a requirement or finding a job. However, these motivations can easily co-occur and researchers disagree as to which reasons may neatly fit into these categories.

Furthermore, researchers have inquired if in fact learners need to identify with a specific language community in order to imitate their linguistic behavior. To be sure, Japanese learners' attempts to learn English, for example, are not precisely associated with a community but rather with a more global world of non-native and native English speakers (Ushioda, 2006). Furthermore, positive learning outcomes in a language course, for example, can propel students to continue learning the language. In fact, Gardner and Lambert (1972, p.139) clarify that learning outcomes and motivation are cyclical and are both determinant factors in language acquisition. The advances in the restructuring and conceptualization of motivation in the field of second language acquisition informed this research in significant ways. Specifically, the more recent work developed by Dörnyei & Ushioda (2009) and others helped understand the need to redirect the concept of

motivation away from more external predictors to more internal reasons, relating mostly to self-identification.

For the purposes of this and previous studies, the well-known definition of heritage learner put forth by Valdés (2001, p. 38) is used as a starting point. That is, a heritage language learner is someone who “is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the heritage language, and someone who is to some degree bilingual in that language and English”. This conceptualization points to a large spectrum of diverse learners, as does the definition expressed by scholars Cho, Cho & Tse for whom a heritage language can be defined as “the language associated with one’s cultural background and it may or may not be spoken in the home” (1997, p. 106). These notions of heritage language and heritage learner will be important as we discuss the various student populations in the present study.

## **2. The Present Study**

As evident in previous research (Ferreira, 2007) lower rates of proficiency among Portuguese learners, namely third-generation or broadly-defined heritage language learners, have prompted this researcher to propose a history of language loss similar to what occurred with French and German in the United States. This fact is also mentioned in Silva (2010) when analyzing the performance of Generation 1.5 learners (those who were born and partially educated abroad). Despite these clear signs of shift to English, Portuguese seems to have held its ground among speakers living near Portuguese communities in Bristol County, Massachusetts. At the same time, an influx of Brazilians in the Boston area, along with an increased interest in learning Portuguese, prompted by

the economic development in Brazil, have engaged traditional learners to take Portuguese classes.

Thus, questions about the lasting impact of Portuguese language studies in institutions of higher learning such as the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth were brought forth in post-presentation discussions. The work completed by Gontijo (2010a and 2010b) highlight the impact of the Portuguese community among non-heritage learners, who also claim similar motivations to learn this regional language. Gontijo (2010b) uncovered that integrative motivation is not the only key determining factor among heritage learners. At the same time, non-heritage learners exhibit integrative motivation and positive identification with the ethnic community. It is crucial to investigate the connections between types of motivation and these learner profiles. Hence, the following were research questions proposed for the present study:

#### A. Research Questions

- 1) Are there differences between Bridgewater State University (located in Plymouth County) and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (located in Bristol County) students as far as motivation to study Portuguese?
- 2) What are the differences/similarities between heritage language and non-heritage or traditional learners as far as types of motivation (integrative, instrumental) to learn Portuguese?
- 3) Are there connections between language use/language contact and students and students' sociolinguistic profiles?

Again, the reason for extending the investigation to the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (UMD), which is located in Bristol County, was based on a number of reasons. Portuguese academic programs at UMD are financially supported by the Center for Portuguese Studies, which has a large endowment and offers scholarships for promising scholars in the field. The Center also regularly sponsors lectures in conjunction with the Ferreira-Mendes Archives in Portuguese cultural studies. Secondly, the number of academic programs available at UMD, such as a full baccalaureate program, a master's degree in Portuguese and a doctorate in Luso-Afro-Brazilian Studies and Theory is a testament to the vivacity of this language, at least in the academic setting. By contrast, Bridgewater State University has only a minor program in Portuguese, a lower number of students who claim Portuguese ancestry (Ferreira, 2010) and no language requirement in the Core Curriculum. On the positive side, the lack of a language requirement at BSU might be an indication that students registered in Portuguese classes are truly interested in learning the language and not just completing a requisite for graduation. Hence, the following are the working hypothesis for the present study.

## B. Hypotheses

- 1) Students at BSU and UMD will show significant differences in types of motivation and support they receive from the larger Portuguese community.
- 2) Heritage language learners will more likely indicate more integrative reasons for taking Portuguese than non-heritage language learners.
- 3) Heritage language learners will more likely make use of the community opportunities to speak Portuguese.

### C. Research Instrument.

The survey instrument (Appendix 1) used to gather data for the present study had six parts, as described below: a) Background Information, b) Language Use in the Family, c) Language Use and Contact, d) Language Self-Assessment, e) Language Motivation/Orientation and f) Class and Teacher Motivation.

The Background Information section asked questions related to the age of the learner, his or her previous experience with language study, specific experience in learning Portuguese (elementary and high school), as well as his or her ethnicity or nationality. In addition, this section inquired about the first language of the learner's parents. The Language Use in the Family section asked learners to indicate the level of proficiency of their parents, grandparents and relatives using a Likert-type scale. It also inquired about the frequency of use of Portuguese among these family members. The section on Language Use and Language Contact was restricted to information in the previous year of study for the learner. It inquired about the settings where the learners used Portuguese. It also asked about the contact with various media (radio, television) in Portuguese. The fourth section dealt with the learner's self-assessment of their language ability, also using a Likert-type scale. The section of Language Motivation/Orientation aimed at determining the exact types of motivation for learning or studying Portuguese. Students responded positively or negatively to statements describing instrumental or integrative reasons for taking Portuguese. Later, participants were required to choose the top three reasons for taking Portuguese. Finally, the last section aimed to uncover the connection between learning inside and outside the classroom environment. The section included

statements regarding the participant's opinion of the teacher, the class activities, his or her level of confidence in class, and the extra-curricular activities provided by the institution and the community.

#### D. Participants

The following table is a summary of the number of participants in the study, their institution and their language heritage.

**Table 1. Study Participants**

|  | <b>BSU</b> | <b>UMD</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> |
|--|------------|------------|--------------|
| <b>Heritage Language Learner (Azores, Madeira, Portugal, Brazil)</b> | 12         | 21         | 33           |
| <b>Non-Heritage Language Learner</b>                                 | 13         | 09         | 22           |
| <b>Cape Verdeans</b>   | 06         | 00         | 06           |
| <b>Spanish Speakers (DR and PR)</b>                                  | 05         | 01         | 06           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | 36         | 31         | 67           |

Table 1 shows that heritage language learners were mostly found among UMD students (21 versus 12 students of a total of 33) while most non-heritage language learners students were registered at BSU (13 versus 9 of 22 students). All the Cape Verdean students were found at BSU and all but one student of Hispanic descent were registered at BSU. These students were either from the Dominican Republic or from Puerto Rico.

The significance of these data rests on the fact that the typical Portuguese Heritage learner was a student at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, whereas students at Bridgewater State University exhibited more ethnic diversity. There is a small number of Cape Verdean students ( $N = 6$ ) in this sample, who learned Portuguese through their early schooling in Cape Verde and who immigrated to the United States typically in their teenage years. These students do not fit the definition of the Heritage group or the Non-Heritage group and their numbers are too small to be statistically analyzed as a separate group. The same is true for Spanish speakers ( $N = 6$ ) who immigrated to the United States as adults and are fluent in this closely related Romance language. Thus, for the purposes of these statistical analyses they have been dropped from the sample, leaving a net usable sample of less than sixty students ( $N = 55$ ).

### 3. Results and Discussion

As a starting point, the self-assessment of the learners as far as their language abilities must be described. Participants were asked to rate their language abilities by circling a descriptor which was later assigned a number. This Likert-type scale was as follows: *not at all* = 1, *very little* = 2, *somewhat well* = 3, *well* = 4, *pretty well* = 5. Table 2 shows the results of the self-assessment section of the survey.

**Table 2. Participant Language Self-Assessment**

| Skill    | Group           | Mean        | SD          | t           | Df        | <i>p</i> |
|----------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Speaking | <b>Heritage</b> | <b>3.46</b> | <b>1.30</b> | <b>3.31</b> | <b>63</b> | 0.002    |

|               |                     |             |             |             |           |       |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
|               | <b>Non Heritage</b> | <b>2.47</b> | <b>0.90</b> |             |           |       |
| Writing       | <b>Heritage</b>     | <b>3.30</b> | <b>1.13</b> | <b>3.01</b> | <b>65</b> | 0.004 |
|               | <b>Non Heritage</b> | <b>2.53</b> | <b>0.90</b> |             |           |       |
| Reading       | <b>Heritage</b>     | <b>3.51</b> | <b>1.10</b> | <b>2.76</b> | <b>65</b> | 0.008 |
|               | <b>Non Heritage</b> | <b>2.80</b> | <b>1.00</b> |             |           |       |
| Comprehension | <b>Heritage</b>     | <b>4.14</b> | <b>1.13</b> | <b>4.21</b> | <b>65</b> | 0.000 |
|               | <b>Non Heritage</b> | <b>3.07</b> | <b>0.04</b> |             |           |       |

Not surprisingly, there are highly significant differences in the self-assessment of heritage learners versus non-heritage learners. That is, as a group, learners who were identified as having a Portuguese family background rated themselves significantly higher than non-heritage or traditional learners in all four skills. The statistical treatment of those averages shows that those were highly significant differences in all categories. Interestingly, the standard deviations among heritage learners were higher than among traditional learners. In other words, among heritage learners some rated themselves fairly high while others rated themselves fairly low. Results for non-heritage learners were closer (smaller deviations) but lower on average. This statistical result matches the observed reality in the classroom, where second-generation Portuguese students exhibit both very high and very low self-esteem as far as their learning outcomes. By the same token, most traditional learners rate themselves lower across the board with very little difference in their individual ratings. In other words, smaller standard deviations mean that there is more homogeneity in the group and, by the same token, more reliable

answers. Higher standard deviations, as seen among heritage learners, indicate a lot more variation in the group.

In order to present the results it would be helpful to restate the research questions and hypotheses described above. **Research Question 1** asked “Are there differences between Bridgewater State University (located in Plymouth County) and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (located in Bristol County) students as far as motivation to study Portuguese?” *Hypothesis 1* stated that “Students at BSU and UMD will show differences in types of motivation”. To be sure, these differences would be dictated by several conflicting realities. First, UMD students benefit from financial and academic support of organizations on campus. In addition, UMD students benefit from the geographical proximity of the Portuguese communities. On the other hand, differences in motivation could arise from UMD’s four-semester language requirement. BSU students are not required to take Portuguese or any other language in order to graduate. That said, they are required to complete “Global Culture” and “Humanities” requirements for which Portuguese is a possible course among many.

**Table 3.** Top Reasons to Take Portuguese

| UMD   | BSU   |
|---|---|
| 1. “I need to fulfill my language requirement.”           | 1. “I would like to visit a Portuguese speaking country.” |
| 2. “I would like to visit a Portuguese speaking country.” | 2. “I want to communicate with friends who speak it.”     |
| 3. “I want to communicate with my                         | 3. “I have an interest in Portuguese                      |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| relatives.”   | culture.”                                    |
| 4. “I think it will help me get a job in the area.” | 4. “I have a general interest in languages.” |

Results in Table 3 show that aside from the need to fulfill a language requirement, UMD and BSU students have two similar integrative reasons for learning Portuguese. Both sets of students want to visit a Portuguese speaking country and want to communicate with friends or relatives. It’s interesting to note that “relatives” are mentioned by the UMD students (who are in their majority heritage learners) while “friends” are mentioned by BSU students, who are mostly traditional learners with no Portuguese background. It is also noteworthy that instrumental motivations (two out of four top choices) are mentioned by the UMD students. By contrast, BSU students mentioned either a general interest in languages or a particular interest in associating with Portuguese culture, following what has been described as weak integrative reasons (Clément & Kruidenier, 1983). Thus, results point to a split in similarities and differences among these learners. To be sure, both sets are motivated by integrative reasons even though UMD students indicated one top instrumental reason: competing the language requirement.

In addition to these results, the survey instrument asked participants to rate questions that focused on the support of the community and the teachers in their pursuit of Portuguese language learning. These two questions are important because the expectation was that UMD students would differ from BSU students in their perception of the external support to learn the language. The first question was “How much did your parents encourage you to learn Portuguese?” and the second question was “How much

did your teachers and friends encourage you to learn Portuguese?” Table 4 shows the results of these questions.

**Table 4. Results of Relevant Questions on Community Support**

| Question                                    | Group | Mean | SD   | t    | Df | <i>p</i> |
|---|-------|------|------|------|----|----------|
| <b>Parents’ encouragement</b>               | BSU   | 2.64 | 1.55 | 1.54 | 54 | 0.131    |
|   | UMD   | 3.29 | 1.60 |      |    |          |
| <b>Teachers’ and Friends’ encouragement</b> | BSU   | 3.04 | 1.17 | 0.53 | 54 | 0.595    |
|   | UMD   | 3.23 | 1.38 |      |    |          |

Table 4 demonstrates that there are no significant differences between BSU and UMD students as far as their perceived support from parents, teachers or friends. Even though UMD students indicate higher support than BSU students, these differences are not statistically significant. These results disprove our hypotheses that there would be significant differences between these sets of learners and their universities.

**Research Question 2** was stated as follows: “Are there differences between heritage language learners and non-heritage or traditional learners as far as types of motivation (integrative, instrumental) to learn Portuguese?” Previous research on motivation of Portuguese learners (Gontijo, 2010b) indicates that both sets of learners show integrative motivation, that is, a strong self-identification with the Portuguese-

speaking communities. Moreover, heritage learners are interested in learning Portuguese to communicate with their relatives, while non-heritage learners want to communicate with their friends and identified closely with the Portuguese community. Despite those similarities, *Hypothesis 2* states that “Heritage language learners will more likely indicate more integrative reasons for taking Portuguese than Non Heritage Language Learners.”

A simple numeric analysis of section V of the questionnaire (Language Motivation/Orientation) show that the top five out of fifteen reasons for heritage language learners to take Portuguese are:

- 1) I want to communicate with my relatives (31/33) [integrative]
- 2) I want to fulfill a language requirement (28/33) [instrumental]
- 3) I have an interest in Portuguese culture (27/33) [integrative]
- 4) I have a general interest in languages (25/33) [instrumental]
- 5) I think it will help me get a job in the area (25/33) [instrumental]

Being that there were 33 heritage learners in the study, the list above reflects how many respondents checked the “yes” box for that statement. Out of those responses, the interest in communicating with relatives and the interest in Portuguese cultures are integrative. It is noteworthy that the second top reason for heritage learners is the same as the top reason for UMD students to take Portuguese. This result could be due to the fact that most heritage learners in this research study are registered students at that institution.

By contrast, the top five reasons of fifteen statements that motivate non-heritage or traditional learners to take Portuguese are as follows:

- 1) I have an interest in Portuguese culture (22/22) [integrative]
- 2) I have a general interest in languages (19/22) [instrumental]
- 3) I need to fulfill a language requirement (19/22) [instrumental]
- 4) I have an interest in Brazilian culture (18/22) [integrative]
- 5) I want to communicate with my friends who speak it (17/22) [integrative]

There were 22 non-heritage learners in the study, thus these numbers reflect how many of them checked the “yes” box for that statement. These results show that the reasons reported by heritage and non-heritage learners have similar motivations to learn Portuguese. More specifically, both sets of learners have an interest in Portuguese or Brazilian culture. Also, both sets show important integrative motivations: heritage learners want to communicate with their relatives while non-heritage learners want to communicate with their friends. In addition, both sets of learners mention the need to fulfill a language requirement as well as a general interest in languages, all instrumental motivations.

Results for class and teacher motivation were based on several questions about the support learners received in and out of the classroom, as summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5. Class and Teacher Motivation**

|                                 | Group        | Mean | SD   | t    | Df | <i>p</i> |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------|------|------|----|----------|
| <b>Instructor's<br/>dialect</b> | Heritage     | 4.34 | 1.05 | 1.46 | 65 | 0.148    |
|                                 | Non Heritage | 3.93 | 1.25 |      |    |          |

|   |              |      |      |      |    |              |
|---|--------------|------|------|------|----|--------------|
| <b>Interesting class activities</b>     | Heritage     | 4.47 | 0.65 | 1.42 | 39 | 0.165        |
|   | Non Heritage | 4.10 | 1.29 |      |    |              |
| <b>Confident About success</b>          | Heritage     | 3.95 | 1.14 | 1.29 | 65 | 0.203        |
|   | Non Heritage | 3.55 | 1.38 |      |    |              |
| <b>Supportive classmates</b>            | Heritage     | 3.95 | 1.14 | 0.07 | 65 | 0.946        |
|   | Non Heritage | 3.97 | 1.02 |      |    |              |
| <b>Extra curricular activities</b>      | Heritage     | 4.05 | 1.06 | 2.17 | 65 | <b>0.034</b> |
|   | Non Heritage | 3.41 | 1.35 |      |    |              |
| <b>Support of Surrounding Community</b> | Heritage     | 3.92 | 1.24 | 2.50 | 65 | <b>0.015</b> |
|   | Non Heritage | 3.07 | 1.56 |      |    |              |

When reacting to the statement “my instructor’s dialect of Portuguese motivates me to learn it” both sets of learners (Heritage and Non Heritage) indicated that they “somewhat agreed” to that statement (4 on the Lykert scale). That is, the mean for the first group was 4.34 while for the second group it was still very close to that, 3.93. Most importantly, there are no significant differences between those learners ( $p = 0.148$ ). Later, when reacting to the statement “The class activities are interesting and useful in learning it”, both sets of learners also “somewhat agreed”. Again, there are no significant differences among the sets of learners ( $p = 0.165$ ). The next question selected for analysis

was “I feel confident about my success in the next level of Portuguese”. This question is important because of research on language acquisition and self-confidence of learners (Clément, 1986). Even though heritage learners felt slightly more confident (3.95 versus 3.55), given the standard deviations, there is no statistical significance among these two sets of learners ( $p = 0.203$ ) regarding this assertion. Similar results are found for the statement “My classmates are helpful and supportive in my learning Portuguese”. This question is important since the learning environment has been mentioned as a potential factor in learners’ desire to continue to learn a language in subsequent levels. Again, there are no significant differences among these sets of learners ( $p = 0.946$ ) regarding this statement, even though both groups thought they “somewhat agreed” with it.

In responding to the statement “the extra-curricular activities about Portuguese and Brazilian culture are helpful in my learning” heritage learners are significantly more in agreement with that statement than non-heritage learners ( $p = 0.034$ ). The same is true for the statement “the surrounding Portuguese and Brazilian communities help me in my learning Portuguese” ( $p = 0.015$ ), that is, heritage learners agree with that statement more than non-heritage learners in a significant way. When compared to the results in Table 4, where there was no significant difference between the two groups of learners on the value of “teacher and friends’ encouragement”, one might find results on Table 5 somewhat surprising. To be sure, there were significant difference among learners with respect to the support of surrounding communities. However, it should be noted that the simple presence of Brazilians and Portuguese speakers around the community is not the same as the constant support of teachers and friends in learning or maintaining the language.

Finally, **Research Question 3** asked “Are there connections between language use/language contact and students’ sociolinguistic profiles?” *Hypothesis 3* stated that “Heritage language learners will more likely make use of the community opportunities to speak Portuguese.” In order to verify that claim, the survey asked participants to rate frequency of language use/contact by circling descriptors which were later assigned numbers, as follows: *never* = 1, *almost never* = 2, *sometimes* = 3, *most of the time* = 4, *always* = 5. Table 6 shows the results of the Likert-type scale regarding the typical language use by learners and contact with the target/heritage language.

**Table 6. Language Use and Language Contact**

|                      | Group        | Mean | SD   | t    | Df | <i>p</i>     |
|----------------------|--------------|------|------|------|----|--------------|
| <b>Speak at home</b> | Heritage     | 2.89 | 1.13 | 5.06 | 65 | <b>0.000</b> |
|                      | Non Heritage | 1.63 | 0.85 |      |    |              |
| <b>Read</b>          | Heritage     | 2.30 | 1.13 | 5.14 | 52 | <b>0.000</b> |
|                      | Non Heritage | 1.23 | 0.50 |      |    |              |
| <b>Listen Radio</b>  | Heritage     | 2.00 | 0.94 | 2.54 | 65 | 0.130        |
|                      | Non Heritage | 1.47 | 0.73 |      |    |              |
| <b>Watch TV</b>      | Heritage     | 2.32 | 1.03 | 3.00 | 65 | <b>0.004</b> |
|                      | Non Heritage | 1.63 | 0.81 |      |    |              |
| <b>Listen Music</b>  | Heritage     | 2.54 | 1.12 | 2.20 | 65 | <b>0.032</b> |
|                      | Non Heritage | 2.00 | 0.83 |      |    |              |

Results indicate that most heritage learners engage in more opportunities to speak Portuguese at home, watch TV and listen to music in Portuguese while non-heritage learners do not engage in those nearly as much. More specifically, the means for these activities for heritage learners are close to the descriptor *sometimes* while for most non-heritage speakers the results are closer to the wording *never* or *almost never* as far as engaging in these activities. The statistical tests show that these are highly significant differences (p values are 0.000 for speaking and reading, for example). The differences are significant except for the statement “listen to radio”, which has no statistical difference among sets of learners ( $p = 0.130$ ). That is, most heritage learners indicate that they rarely listen to the radio (*almost never* = 2) while most non-heritage learners indicate that they *never* engage in such activity (*never* = 1). Overall, learners are very different in the ways in which they have contact with the comprehensible input in Portuguese: most heritage learners have opportunities to engage with the language outside of the classroom while non-heritage learners rely on the classroom to listen to and read in Portuguese.

#### **4. Conclusions and Discussion**

The research focused on the similarities and differences among UMD and BSU students with respect to their motivations to learn Portuguese. It would be expected that students from UMD, culturally connected to the Portuguese community, would be more inclined to demonstrate integrative motivation as opposed to purely instrumental orientations, such as trying to find a job. However, in this study, the top reason for students at UMD to take Portuguese was instrumental, that is, completing the language requirement. At the same time, they also claimed integrative motivation, such as

communicating with relatives and visiting a Portuguese speaking country. These results parallel those found by Gontijo (2010a and 2010b) in that UMD students claim an array of reasons for engaging (and continuing to engage) in studying Portuguese. It was surprising to note that BSU students also had a number of integrative reasons to learn Portuguese, closely matching their UMD counterparts.

At this juncture, it is helpful to mention the new model of motivation developed by Dörnyei and colleagues. According to Dörnyei (2005) if one is to engage in an “ideal L2 self” one must engage in activities that are effective in achieving those intended goals. Specifically, The ideal L2 self is “the L2-specific aspect of one’s ideal self” (p.106). It represents an ideal image of the kind of L2 user one aspires to be in the future. Thus, from Dörnyei’s perspective, these heritage learners seem to be more apt in completing language tasks, judging from their active engagement with the language outside of the classroom (cf. Table 6). These activities act as motivators to diminish the gap between what they are now and what they aspire to be in the future as a fluent speaker.

At the same time, most heritage learners who attend UMD also reflect the characteristics of the “Ought-to L2 self” (Dörnyei, 2005) in that they are concerned with duties and obligations imposed by teachers and institutions. This less-internalized aspect of the L2 self refers to the attributes that one believes one ought-to possess as a result of perceived duties, obligations, or responsibilities. For instance, if a person wants to learn a second language in order to live up to the expectation of his/her boss or teacher, the ought-to L2 self can act as the main motivator for L2 learning. For the present study, this can be translated as the completion of the language requirement for UMD students.

That is not to say that the paradigmatic or exemplary Portuguese learner attends only UMD. In fact, learners are more similar in the two campuses. Results reveal that learners do not differ significantly when it comes to the encouragement of their parents or their teachers to learn Portuguese. Again, these are concepts related to Dörnyei's "Ought-to Self" thus are applicable to both sets of learners. It would be helpful to statistically compare the questions related to "extra curricular activities" and "support of surrounding community" (cf. Table 5) between not only heritage and non-heritage learners but also between UMD and BSU students. It is the authors' assessment that those differences would not be significant, judging from the general direction of the other related questions in the survey.

Research in language motivation has shifted in recent years from a purely statistical albeit theoretical and longitudinal stance (Gardner et al., 2004; Noels et al., 2003) to a gradually more qualitative approach (Lynch, 2008; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). It is expected and self-reflective interviews (i.e. debriefing) of learners might reveal deeper explorations of the Self and the reasons that propel students to learn a language.

Lastly, the present study uncovered several interesting facts related to differences and similarities among diverse sets of Portuguese learners. First, the results show that there is greater ethnic diversity of students registered at BSU as opposed to those attending UMD. As previously stated, BSU is closer to the City of Brockton and the presence of the Cape Verdean, Haitian and Latino populations. On the other hand, UMD is located in Bristol County, near the cities of Fall River and New Bedford, places with significant Portuguese-American populations, originating mostly from the Azores (Becker, 2009). This conclusion is supported by studies on the nature and composition of Massachusetts

student populations, especially at UMD (Silva, 2008). Despite the fact that the sample for the present study is rather small, it clearly parallels the aforementioned studies. In sum, most heritage learners at UMD have origins in the Azores, while BSU heritage learners have a much more diverse background.

It is our contention that Cape Verdeans are not considered heritage learners of Portuguese even in the broad sociolinguistic definition put forth by Valdés. Some Cape Verdeans are indeed bilingual in Portuguese and Cape Verdean Creole (or *Kriolu*). Portuguese is still the official language and language of instruction in the Cape Verdean school system. However, most are only fluent in their native or “home” language. This makes for a clear diaglossic situation in that island country. Thus, these speakers are culturally identified with their home country, Cape Verde, and by extension, their native tongue, Cape Verdean Creole. A deeper discussion of Lusophone identity (or *lusofonia*) is beyond the scope of this article. However, we have observed that Cape Verdeans are nowadays very proud of their independent political status and linguistic identity. In the past few decades they might have felt closer to the colonizer but more recently, they feel culturally closer to Brazilians and Angolans (Halter, 2009). Thus, for the purposes of this study, Cape Verdeans were excluded from the sample (N=6), but their motivation to learn Portuguese is mostly instrumental in nature (“I want fulfill a language requirement” and “I just need one more elective”). Perhaps taking Portuguese also reflects a conscious effort to continue their bilingual status, as they are also learning a third language, English.

Spanish speakers in the study (N=6) are interested in connecting with the Brazilian community but also reveal instrumental reasons similar to the Cape Verdeans (“I just

need one more elective” and “I want to get an easy A”). Anecdotal evidence from the classroom reveals that Cape Verdeans and Hispanics can add to the classroom environment, since they have prior contact with Portuguese which facilitates their comprehension of the target language. At the same time, purely instrumental reasons to take Portuguese at the lower elementary levels may be a detriment to the learner and the classroom environment, since these students are not normally challenged by the linguistic input.

The research verified that students with a Portuguese background rated themselves significantly higher in all categories of language self-assessment, as expected. This is important since learner’s self-confidence is mentioned as a factor in their perceived abilities and learning outcomes (Clément, 1986). An analysis of students’ individual performances and their self-assessment was outside the scope of this research, but it would be a natural continuation for future research. It is our expectation that this study of Portuguese learners will add to the practical as well as theoretical discourse of these types of motivation vis-à-vis the heritage status of learners.

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**APPENDIX 1**

# \_\_\_\_\_

**PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE****I. Background Information**

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What language(s) did you speak as a child (ages 5-10)?  
\_\_\_\_\_3. Do you still speak this/these language(s) at home?  
\_\_\_\_\_4. Did you study Portuguese in elementary or high school? If so, how long did you study it?  
\_\_\_\_\_5. If you learned Portuguese somewhere other than at home/school please explain where (i.e. did you visit your extended family in Portugal, did you learn it from relatives or close friends, etc).  
\_\_\_\_\_6. Do you speak Portuguese outside of class? If so, with whom?  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your ethnicity/ nationality? (Choose only one category)

a.  Americanb.  Portuguesec.  Braziliand.  Portuguese-Americane.  Brazilian-Americanf.  Cape-Verdeang.  Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is your father's first language? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your mother's first language? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Where were your parents born? (city / country)

Father\_\_\_\_\_

Mother\_\_\_\_\_

**II. Language use in the family.** Please indicate your answer by circling the word/expression that best reflects your situation.

11. How well does/did your father speak Portuguese?

Not at all      Very Little      Somewhat      Well      Very well      [does not apply]

12. How well does/did your mother speak Portuguese?

Not at all      Very Little      Somewhat      Well      Very well      [does not apply]

13. How well does/did your older siblings speak Portuguese?

Not at all      Very Little      Somewhat      Well      Very well      [does not apply]

14. How well does/did your grandparents speak Portuguese?

Not at all      Very Little      Somewhat      Well      Very well      [does not apply]

15. How often does/did your father speak Portuguese?

Never      Few Days a Week      Some Days a Week      Most Days      Every Day      [does not apply]

16. How often does/did your mother speak Portuguese?

Never      Few Days a Week      Some Days a Week      Most Days      Every Day      [does not apply]

17. How often do/did your older siblings speak Portuguese?

Never      Few Days a Week      Some Days a Week      Most Days      Every Day      [does not apply]

18. How often do/did your grandparents speak Portuguese?

Never      Few Days a Week      Some Days a Week      Most Days      Every Day      [does not apply]

19. How often do/did you speak Portuguese to your mother?

Never      Few Days a Week      Some Days a Week      Most Days      Every Day      [does not apply]

20. How often do/did you speak Portuguese to your father?

Never      Few Days a Week      Some Days a Week      Most Days      Every Day      [does not apply]

21. How often do/did you speak Portuguese to your siblings?

Never      Few Days a Week      Some Days a Week      Most Days      Every Day      [does not apply]

22. How often do/did you speak Portuguese to your grandparents?

Never      Few Days a Week      Some Days a Week      Most Days      Every Day      [does not apply]

23. How much did your parents encourage you to study Portuguese?

Not at all      Very Little      Somewhat      A lot      Very Much      [does not apply]

24. How much did other people (teachers, friends) encourage you to study Portuguese?

Not at all      Very Little      Somewhat      A lot      Very Much      [does not apply]

**III. Language Use and Language Contact. (Please refer your answers to within the last year)**

25. I have spoken Portuguese at work

never              almost never              sometimes              most of the time              always

26. I have spoken Portuguese at home

never              almost never              sometimes              most of the time              always

27. I read newspapers and/or magazines published in Portuguese

never              almost never              sometimes              most of the time              always

28. I listen to Brazilian or Portuguese radio

never              almost never              sometimes              most of the time              always

29. I listen to the Brazilian or the Portuguese TV channel

never              almost never              sometimes              most of the time              always

30. I listen to Brazilian or Portuguese music

never                      almost never                      sometimes                      most of the time                      always

#### IV. Language Self-Assessment

31. I speak Portuguese

not at all                      very little                      a little                      somewhat well                      well                      pretty well

32. I write Portuguese

not at all                      very little                      a little                      somewhat well                      well                      pretty well

33. I read Portuguese

not at all                      very little                      a little                      somewhat well                      well                      pretty well

34. I understand Portuguese

not at all                      very little                      a little                      somewhat well                      well                      pretty well

#### V. Language Motivation/Orientation. What made you decide to take a Portuguese class?

35. I would like to visit a Portuguese speaking country.                      yes                      no

36. I want to study in a Portuguese speaking country.                      yes                      no

37. I need to fulfill my language requirement.                      yes                      no

38. I would get "an easy A".                      yes                      no

39. I want to communicate with my friends who speak it.                      yes                      no

40. I want to communicate with my relatives.                      yes                      no

41. I need to communicate with my coworkers.                      yes                      no

42. I want to please my grandparents.                      yes                      no

43. I have an interest in Brazilian culture.                      yes                      no

44. I have an interest in Portuguese culture.                      yes                      no

45. I have a general interest in languages.                      yes                      no

46. I just needed one more elective.                      yes                      no

47. I think it will help me get a job in the area.                      yes                      no

48. I want to communicate with boyfriend/girlfriend.                      yes                      no

49. I knew that this class would fit my schedule.                      yes                      no

50. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Out of all the above reasons please indicate the THREE MOST IMPORTANT ONES to you by circling their numbers.

**VI. Class and Teacher Motivation.**

51. My instructor's enthusiasm in teaching Portuguese motivates me to learn it.

Disagree          Somewhat Disagree          Don't Agree or Disagree          Somewhat Agree          Agree

52. My instructor's dialect of Portuguese motivates me to learn it.

Disagree          Somewhat Disagree          Don't Agree or Disagree          Somewhat Agree          Agree

53. The class activities are interesting and useful in learning it.

Disagree          Somewhat Disagree          Don't Agree or Disagree          Somewhat Agree          Agree

54. The class activities are boring and not useful in learning it.

Disagree          Somewhat Disagree          Don't Agree or Disagree          Somewhat Agree          Agree

55. I feel confident about my success in the next level of Portuguese.

Disagree          Somewhat Disagree          Don't Agree or Disagree          Somewhat Agree          Agree

56. I am apprehensive about my success in the next level of Portuguese.

Disagree          Somewhat Disagree          Don't Agree or Disagree          Somewhat Agree          Agree

57. My classmates are helpful and supportive in my learning Portuguese.

Disagree          Somewhat Disagree          Don't Agree or Disagree          Somewhat Agree          Agree

58. The classroom atmosphere is positive and helps me to learn Portuguese.

Disagree          Somewhat Disagree          Don't Agree or Disagree          Somewhat Agree          Agree

59. The extra-curricular activities about Portuguese and Brazilian culture are helpful in my learning.

Disagree          Somewhat Disagree          Don't Agree or Disagree          Somewhat Agree          Agree

60. The surrounding Portuguese and Brazilian communities help me in my learning Portuguese.

Disagree

Somewhat Disagree

Don't Agree or Disagree

Somewhat Agree

Agree

**THANK YOU SO MUCH!  
MUITO OBRIGADA!**