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## Assessing the Economic Value of the Spanish Language

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## **Cover Page Footnote**

The author thanks L2TREC at the University of Utah for their cooperation, and for support in the form of partial funding for research from the "Great Ideas in the Humanities" grant from the College of Humanities. Dr. Kenneth Jameson, Dr. J. Hacking, and Dr. F. Rubio provided insight that is gratefully acknowledged.

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University of Utah

## ASSESSING THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE SPANISH LANGUAGE

*Trade, migration, and the increase and mixture of population must not only have opened people's eyes, but also loosened their tongues. It was not simply that tradesmen inevitably encountered, and sometimes mastered, foreign languages during their travels, but that this must have forced them also to ponder the different connotations of key words (if only to avoid either affronting their hosts or misunderstanding the terms of agreements to exchange), and thereby come to know new and different views about the most basic matters.*

Friedrich von Hayek  
*The Fatal Conceit*

*A language has economic value even when nobody benefits from it, or that its mere existence and use—not its study—somehow adds scientific value to the world. The only way to understand these statements is to say that languages are valued by individuals for the specific end of economic advancement or scientific progress.*

Daniel Hieber  
“Why Do Languages Die?”

### ABSTRACT

This article summarizes the field of economics of language since its inception, in order to introduce this interdisciplinary field to the foreign language academic community. The article traces the key areas in economics of language research, specifically tailoring the data available to assess the calculations of value of the Spanish language.

**KEYWORDS:** economics, value, Spanish, human capital, econometrics, language dynamics

In order to explore “the value of language”—specifically of Spanish—it is useful to adhere to the interdisciplinary field of investigation that Françoise

Grin defines as the “economics of language,” which explores “the mutual effect of language-related and economic variables” (Grin, 1994). The economics of language “refers to the paradigm of theoretical economics and uses the concepts and tools of economics in the study of relationships featuring linguistic variables; it focuses principally, but not exclusively, on those relationships in which economic variables also play a part” (Grin, 1994, p. 25). The objective is to trace the etymology of the term *economics of language* for foreign language academics, discuss the four main lines of research with some findings specific to Spanish language, and explain why this topic merits consideration. As a disclaimer, the reader will note references to various studies that recently have produced quantifiable “sums” regarding the economic value of Spanish. Colleagues in economics and linguistics question how these quantities were derived. However, my discussion is limited to the reiteration of the data and results as published in reputable academic or governmental sources, rather than undertaking a validation or explanation of how they came about. The thrust of this study is an expostulation on the dimensions and body of interdisciplinary research arising in the field of economics of language, understood as a field that “considers the effect of language on culture, income, markets for language-related goods and services, and the costs and benefits of language planning options, preservation of minority languages” (Grin, 1994; Lazear, 1999). Moreover, we will examine the case of the Spanish language because of the significant growth in this burgeoning area. However, this retrospective approach is only beneficial if we utilize this information to help chart a course for strategic policy decisions in Spanish or for other foreign language programs for the twenty-first century.

#### ETYMOLOGY

One of the first examples of an economist’s delving into the study of languages is found in Adam Smith (1776), among other Scottish Enlightenment figures. He was interested in the philosophical question of rhetoric and evolution of language (taking stock of the role of different parts of speech and origins) within the broader debate of Rousseau’s ruminations on equality, as well as guided by an eye to the pragmatic desire to admonish Scots against the improprieties of speech that might undermine their political clout. His focus is mostly directed toward the dynamics of language. Yet, Smith found value in language for entertainment (Berry, 1974, p. 131) further acknowledged in his examination of the origin of language, whereby it indeed served as a medium between rational speakers of different tongues in their need to com-

municate with one another when trading; an act defined as “to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another” (Smith, 1776, bk. 1, chap. 2, p. 17). Smith lectured on rhetoric, and was concerned with elocution, style, and the status of the Scots’ language as received in written and oral communication. He, like Rousseau and others, debated the evolution and origin of language, the value of eloquence, and rhetoric in persuasion. As Berry describes, “Smith set about *accounting* for the evolution of abstractions and metaphysical elements” (1974, p. 134). Much of his work explained the imperfections of language and how it became central in the Organic school of thought, wherein “language grew alongside human development” (Berry, 1974, p. 133). His writings were divided between the use of language and an analysis of the development of various parts of speech.

There is consensus regarding Jacob Marschak in 1965 as point zero for the launching of the line of inquiry labeled “economics of language.” He did this in his apologetic essay on the justification for taking an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the intersection between material worth and language (Marschak, 1965). He speaks of worth not as money, rather as the probability of success of a mission or realization of an objective (“attaining a goal”); in other words, optimal systems, efficiency, or economical (p. 136) outcomes. Thus economics for Marschak is defined as the search for optimality in the area of production and distribution of marketable goods. Language falls within the economics of uncertainty, in that unlike efficiencies of markets, languages have superfluous, uneconomical elements (two words can do the work of one), and thriftiness is not an exclusive criterion in esthetics. The point of departure, or rationale for examining language communication systems from the economic perspective, is the theory of evolution—i.e., robustness for survival—tied back to the achievability of a mission as a criterion of worth; the premise being that a language ultimately has “value” if it endures, but to “explain why a language is what it is, one must show why its properties are on balance, conducive to its survival” (Marschak, 1965, p. 140).

Marschak thus introduces a communicative utility formula of language, which assesses number of users, “the size of the pool of trading partners” (Lazear, 1999), economic and political influence of the linguistic community, and intellectual ascendancy (cultural authority in international circles) including dissemination and appropriation for leisure, political, military, educational, or commercial activities. Communication economics as delineated by Marschak differentiates between a normative inquiry (good/bad, determining value, remedial action recommendations) realized by policy-

setting institutions and academies; and an explanatory (descriptive, constative) inquiry that examines properties and dynamics. In the case of this article, the corpus of quantitative research emerging on “value of Spanish” has led to an epistemic investigation of the ways in which the academy calculates worth with regard to language dynamics, the utilitarian attributes of language, public policy implications, and the econometrics of earnings differentials for Spanish speakers or bilinguals. Beyond the two polarities regarding classification of query, little scholarship fleshes out the formal taxonomy of this field. Vaillancourt (1978, 1980, & 1985) mentions vaguely that language economics is “writings by economists on language questions,” and nonetheless provides a literature review on the topic as well as “empirical” validation from studies conducted originally in Quebec on French/English econometrics of labor.

In the summation by leading researcher Françoise Grin (2003), the main lines of research in language economics fall under four categories. They are (1) language and earnings, (2) language dynamics (rise/spread or decline of language status), (3) language and economic activity, and (4) language-policy evaluation. Most of the research (Grin, 2006) is focused on an econometric investigation of earnings differentials among speakers of different languages, which makes sense in the twenty-first century given the significant Spanish-speaking migrant workforce coming from Mexico and Latin America into the English-speaking US, with corresponding remittance accounts. Moreover, the current climate of general consternation about the impact of a lower-cost workforce at a time of 7–9% unemployment in 2013 further prompts these studies in the US.

#### LABOR ECONOMETRICS OF EARNINGS DIFFERENTIALS BY LANGUAGE

Typically, labor market econometric researchers look at the effects of language on labor income. At the outset, many were “embedded in their social and political context,” and this inevitable intermingling persists well into our decade (Grin & Vaillancourt, 1997, pp. 44–45). Originating in Canada and the US, initial econometric studies underscored demographic attributes related to people’s native tongue as it affects their earnings, a nascent topic at the time in a two-official-language country like Canada. Simultaneously their studies provoked an interrogation, according to Grin, into possibly latent language-based discrimination. Approaching the cross-fertilization of demographics and econolinguistics, Jane Hacking (2013), Co-director of the L2 Teaching and Research Center (L2TRCenter) at the University of Utah,

describes those born as English speakers, who are naturally poised to earn a higher salary, as “predisposed or having a home-court advantage” in the labor market. Indeed, one study found a “salary premium” of 30% for the native-born speaker of Spanish (Cortina, 2009), though an explanation of how this premium was computed is beyond the scope of this qualitative study. Paying heed to the favored position arising from demographic attributes related to native speakers is noteworthy, since 16.7% of the US population in the 2011 US Census is Hispanic, speaking the language at home, and that segment is expected to grow exponentially this century.

Consistent with this econometric orientation, Barry Chiswick’s prolific publication record on Spanish/English language and migrant earnings is unmatched in the US. He examines the effects of fluency on earnings and earnings differentials for English-speaking labor versus Spanish-language users or Hispanics. He argues cogently for considering Spanish speakers as a multivariate, heterogeneous group (Chiswick, 1987), in comparison to others who have broken out Hispanic workers by place of origin. Chiswick’s other studies trace how earnings reflect academic and vocational instruction, or the impact of English-language proficiency (Chiswick, 1986). The preponderance of these normative and explanatory studies examines the economic aspects of reading or oral proficiency, native-language skill acquisition, labor market adjustment to immigrants, and the quantification of language as a measure of human capital. This research has earned him a place squarely at the forefront of public policy debates. In line with this trend, most US studies equate, to this day, the economics of language with an econometric investigation of earnings differentials between Hispanics and Anglophones (Grin, 2006). For second-language users or migrants, myriad studies reveal that increased earning correlates with an ability to speak and read the majority language. In *Lengua y emigración* (Alonso & Gutierrez, 2009), the authors investigated the interstice between labor markets and Spanish language in the economy of Spain and the US labor market. There is empirical data to support a measurable monetary effect on salaries and rewards.

#### LANGUAGE DYNAMICS

A second category of inquiry is language dynamics, defined as the study of language evolution or extinction, endangered status, “rapid disintegration of the world’s linguistic heritage or aversion to a language decline” (Abrams & Strogatz, 2003). Language dynamics research moves from a macro to micro exploration of the evolution of language, beginning with the relative position

of global languages vis-à-vis Chinese and English today. The *Atlas de la lengua española en el mundo* (Moreno Fernández & Otero Roth, 2007) maps out the dynamics of Spanish starting in the former Spanish empire in Latin America as well as in neighboring countries with the largest concentrations of Spanish speakers (Portugal and Brazil), Spanish language in the diaspora, migration patterns of speakers globally, continued usage in former colonies, countries with an official language status of Spanish, and how Spanish functions in the knowledge economy.

Language dynamics shows a healthy picture for Spanish. Looking at sheer numbers of speakers—categorized as native speakers, limited competency speakers, and learners—natives considered as community-users based on living in countries for which Spanish is the official language in 2004-05 numbered 400 million; just two years later, 439 million. Today Spanish ranks second after Chinese (Rupérez & Vítóres, 2012, pp. 9–11). In 2012, after extensive research Telefónica culled 500 million speakers from various sources (Rupérez & Vítóres, 2012, pp. 9–11). The net market of people studying the language, purported to be 100 million learners, is the outer limit (Cortina, 2009), and student enrollments according to the Cervantes Institute are estimated at more than 14 million worldwide (Instituto Cervantes, 2011). The preference to study Spanish as a foreign language, currently a second choice, is surpassed only by English (Elcano, 2009). As early as 1983, Grenier and Vaillancourt examined individual decisions to learn a language motivated by economic calculations.

The ACTFL and MLA figures for enrollments in the US, and statistics on Spanish as a foreign language or numbers of docents in K–16 in the US, are also revealing. Other sources quote that globally Spanish is taught to 43,000,000 students, with “a minimum disbursement of 50 dollars in course materials per student/year, which gives us a total of 2,194 million euros” (Millán, 2001) spent annually. How Millán derived this amount is beyond the scope of this article, yet it is noteworthy that academics, in particular a linguist and former editor for the publishing houses Taurus and Cátedra, are quantifying the value from all angles. Growth of language is related in part to new learners as much as to establishing a base count of the current speakers in all these groupings, and ineluctably these figures present commensurate economic opportunities and value.

Taking a demolinguistic (demographic linguistic) approach, one approximates linguistic hegemony, or at a minimum, consideration of a language as a *lingua franca*, a common tongue utilized by diverse language-speaking groups



to facilitate communication. Achieving linguistic hegemony depends on (1) sheer size of the number of speakers generally within an empire (intraimperial); (2) usage as a means to ease trade (extraimperial); (3) universality and usage in global communications and institutions (Internet/phone/cultural diffusion/transportation/medical/ legal); (4) designation as a *de jure* or *de facto* official language; and (5) measures of educational attainment, literacy rates, technological change, patterns of international migration and trade (language as a medium of international trade [see Carr, 1985]), global distribution of language publications, usage in diplomacy, and in modern times, potential designation and utilization by air traffic control or other modes of transportation crossing international borders. Frequently, linguistic dominance follows the cultural, political, military, technological, and economic preeminence of an imperialist power. Even though Spain was an imperial power, Spanish never gained international stature beyond Latin America; not insignificant in numbers or economic potential by any means, there were 230,000,000 speakers in South and Central America in 2008, 51% of total speakers of Spanish (SEO, 2013). Spanish is considered the *de jure* language in 22 countries. Yet, the hegemony of the English language is, according to Fernando Rubio, Co-director of L2TReCenter at the University of Utah (2013), a function of time; “no language achieved significant impact beyond its geographical borders until modern communication technology” made dominant languages a ubiquitous economic tool in the global economies. Latin was confined to wherever Roman roads could reach, and similar bounded dispersion can be seen with the Chinese and French languages.

Other research traces penetration patterns in virtual space measured by data about the Internet regime, vis-à-vis users or language dominance. Spanish was the third most used language on the Worldwide Web in 2010 after Chinese and English. The Americas had the second highest Internet penetration rate at 61%. Of the 2,749 million in the first quarter of 2013, 582 million Internet users were in the Americas (Internet World Stats, 2013). In e-commerce, 7% of intrahispanic electronic transactions in 2001 were in Spanish (Millán, 2001), and this figure is obviously much higher today, though no data was found. In addition one could count patents and similar filings in the copyright industries, as Millán did in his address “How Much Is a Language Worth? A Quantification of the Digital Industry for the Spanish Language” (2001).

Dynamics can be taken a step further as depicted by data on global cultural dissemination and weight of Spanish or geoeconomics. Estimations of economic weight globally in relation to other languages correlates with the

affluence of the regions where Spanish is spoken, seen in the GDP on a global scale (Millán, 2001; Davis, 2004), as much as global dissemination of cultural, technological, legal, intellectual property, and health-related products. The *Journal of Communication and Education: Language Magazine* and *Hispanidad* (Gutiérrez, 2011), both citing a Telefónica report (García Delgado, Alonso, & Jiménez, 2012), claim Spanish was purported to account for 3% of Spain's domestic GDP, increasing to 16% in the early twenty-first century. Other studies calculate GDP aggregated across Spanish-speaking countries. One could be skeptical about the numbers, but the salient point is the rising attention toward computing this intangible asset.

Quantification might also turn to ascertaining cultural rankings by delving into aspects of intellectual/cultural diffusion (Elcano, 2009): in the literary world (book publishing), the arts (number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites and major museums), sports (cultural cache of soccer-sports players internationally), dispersion of cuisine, and the distribution and circulation of music and film industry products. Other indicators assess the role of Spanish within regional blocks or supranational entities, relative to Spain's position as fifth-largest power in economic and political terms in the EU. Because of its deep colonial penetration historically in Latin America, Spain is hailed as a regional player with a global projection (Elcano, 2009). This type of research claims language boosts the "value" of a country.

Under certain circumstances, the economics of a language has a positive effect; in others negative, or null. Applying a supply-and-demand model, Vaillancourt (1989) proposes that the increased use and status of a language raises investments in the language for individuals and societies alike. The incentive to "speak" another language is directly related to extrinsic rewards. If adopted internationally, the benefits are obviously very high. In air traffic control, English is ubiquitous; scientific journal publications are also principally written in English. Within international business, science, technology, medicine, law, and much of diplomacy, English retains its *lingua franca* status.

It is true that "the language of consumption will vary through time with the market power of language groups" (Vaillancourt, 1989). Hispanics' Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) is surging, with comparable investments in Spanish-language promotional marketing. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Spain claims the PPP of Spanish speakers was 525 billion dollars in the US (Romero de Terreros, 2004). Determining global economic weight vis-à-vis fluctuating or waning disposable income of Spanish speakers is useful for marketing campaigns and distribution of products, advertisements, and labels.

Conversely in business, using the same language reduces costs of transactions and diminishes psychological distance between parties. Neither tied to decreases or augmentative in effect, the “language of the workplace varies between industries and through time according to a) the ownership of employers; b) their markets; c) their technology and d) the language make-up of their labor supply” (Grin & Vaillancourt, 1997, p. 48). On the other hand, depending on the industry, the use of one’s native tongue might be sufficient.

Incursions by other languages into these areas indicate a shift away from exclusive English dominance. One such example pertains to technology in the information age. Millán has calculated the linguistic added-value inherent in digital products and services on the Web with regard to Spanish. Linguistic technologies—including morphological dictionaries, thesauri (semantic networks), syntactic dictionaries/syntactic rule sets, encyclopedical dictionaries, terminological databases, and task-oriented usage—have an actual worth for a three-year period of 9.2 billion euros (Millán, 2004).

Approaches to these calculations are broad; Fundación Telefónica published ten lengthy reports as part of its social and cultural branch studying the subject—with titles such as “Economics of Spanish” (2007), “Spanish and International Migration” (2010), “Spanish on the Internet” (2010), “Spanish and the Technology of Information Systems” (2011), “The Economics of the Industry of Spanish Culture” (2011), “Spanish in the Fluctuation of International Economics” (2011), and “Spanish in International Relations” (2012). There is plenty of economic data to be harvested from these reports.

## HUMAN CAPITAL

Another branch of econolinguistics research analyzes language as a form of human capital, and was initiated by Vaillancourt (1980). Chiswick defines human and physical capital:

Anything that is productive is a resource—sunlight, plows, and language skills. To be capital, however, there must be costs for it to be produced or acquired. Thus, sunlight is a natural resource, not capital, while plows and language skills are capital. Capital is of two types, physical and human, depending on whether it is embodied in the person. (Chiswick & Miller, 2007)

Human capital accumulates as driven by the unconscious and deliberate desire of maximizing returns in the future, with some comparison of individual/innate or inherent attributes (native-born fluency) to expected returns of higher salaries, prestige, or social status. We find

more educated parents tend to have higher expected rewards from education. We all seek and benefit from lower costs—born into bilingual family, live in multilingual environment, are exposed to languages in educational setting, and given language is part of human capital, parents would want their children to have more languages since this equates to more human capital, better return on investments and functionality in society. (Grenier & Vaillancourt, 1983)

Individuals, parents, and environmental factors shape human capital development and decisions. Similarly, there is an opportunity cost associated with learning a new language to bolster human capital, but the barrier to entry is low.

Chiswick (Chiswick & Miller, 2007) propounds language proficiency as part of the human capital equation, explicitly imputing language skills among immigrants and native-born linguistic minorities—principally Spanish and English speakers—as quantifiable in positive and negative outcomes. The report assesses labor market consequences of language skills in terms of higher earnings premiums, “lower costs of consumption, greater political involvement and larger social/communication networks” (Chiswick & Miller, 2007, p. 6). On the other hand, Reksulak, Shughart, and Tollison (2004) state that language is a “non-economic aspect of human behavior.” To build human capital, Thurow claims formal training or education shapes “individuals’ productive skills, talents and knowledge” (Thurow, 1970), and consequently plays an increasingly important role in what Cascio calls the formulation of the “New Human Capital Equation” (Cascio, 2006), where employees are a corporation’s greatest asset. Previously numerous economists (Breton, 1998; Vaillancourt, 1980; Grenier, 1984) considered language to be an asset of human capital and applied the human capital model framework (Becker, 1964, Mincer, 1974, in Grenier & Vaillancourt, 1983) to the study of acquisition that Grenier and Vaillancourt had outlined (1983, p. 472), so this is not new.

#### GENERAL ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE

For other economists though, delineation of the economic aspects of language assumes distinct forms. Lazear suggests language is an “exchange-facilitating institution” like money, though not the exclusive economic purpose of language (in Grin, 2006). The characteristics of the economics of a language as defined in the *Atlas de la lengua española en el mundo* (Moreno Fernández & Otero Roth, 2007, p. 110) suggests it is a “good without any cost of production,” that does not deplete or exhaust its supply with use, cannot be

appropriated, has a one-time cost of entry, and increases in value with the number of users.

In modern parlance, language is the archetypal “network” good (i.e., it exhibits positive externalities in consumption). Unlike money and most ordinary goods, language derives value not from scarcity but from ubiquity. Words and rules for their use become more valuable the greater is the number of people who learn and apply them consistently in everyday discourse. (Reksulak, Shughart, & Tollison, 2004, p. 233)

A similar approach is taken from the perspective of efficiency and thrift in order to ascertain whether language is socially wasteful or cost effective when learning new words rather than adapting older ones; in other words, the degree of compactness of a language can be related to its survival.

A fascinating study by Reksulak, Shughart, and Tollison (2004) follows the lines of Adam Smith and Enlightenment thinkers in Europe, focusing on language properties as correlated with survival. They concentrate on lexicon—supply of synonyms, actual lexical count in the dictionary (Reksulak, Shughart, & Tollison, 2004)—and flexibility of assimilation of grammatical forms. Measuring actual increases in lexicon in a major dictionary (Oxford Classical Dictionary) that dates back to 252 CE, their article traces preferences for coining, borrowing, importing, adapting from other languages (Reksulak, Shughart, & Tollison, 2004, p. 240) or reuse of an obsolete word or neologisms in a given language, the rate of decay, and omissions. According to the study, other discernible and quantifiable aspects include disaggregating parts of speech usage over time, thriftiness of expressions, and flexibility of linguistic structures to thrive. In this vein, Ralph Penny has committed 2000 years of the history of the Spanish language to paper, providing an extensive overview of the development of the Spanish linguistic system (2002). Additional studies examine language growth and survival through possible correlation with four key determinants—populations, wealth of nation, government size, and trade patterns (Reksulak, Shughart, & Tollison, 2004). What emerges is a broad constellation of forces shaping the development of language and its staying power.

Finally, some researchers look at how language is adopted as a common technological standard to facilitate communication, innovation, knowledge, or material exchange of goods. They enumerate the properties that increase the chance of survival, such as, how word length (brevity of letters) relates to effort expended / cost of communication to learn and reproduce longer words, information rate measures, number of messages, and degree of precision.

These studies on the dynamics of language provide insights into the growth or potential extinction of endangered languages and the knowledge held within them over time. It is a less quantifiable measure, unless taken as reflection of global GDP. However, the most significant empirical research consists of providing data either about the econometrics of labor vis-à-vis migration and earnings premiums, or as a criterion for the distribution of resources among groups (Breton, 1998; Breton & Mieszkowski, 1977) in contemporary geopolitical struggles. This is the case in Spain with autonomous communities vying for resources based on their official language, which is replicated within the European Union by countries seeking official language status for their native tongue.

#### RATIONALE

The economics of Spanish language is of interest today because in the US demographic shifts denote increased Latino immigration and remittance flows during the last decade. Defense initiatives, pertaining to anti-drug-trafficking or north-south trade agreements, are putting pressure on state and federal budgets as well as academic programming to invest in foreign language education, policy, and requisite services for parties conducting business in foreign languages abroad or with US residents with non-English native-language competency in Spanish.

This relatively recent discipline is seeing renewed attention not only in the US because of immigration reform, robust trade patterns with Latin American markets, and shifting geopolitical spheres of influence (as much as US military, economic, and political interests in the Spanish-speaking world), but also in Spain, where numerous studies have been funded by multinational corporations functioning on a global level to determine the “value of Spanish” worldwide.

Yet what impelled Marschak to initiate this line of inquiry? Notably, most of his initial scholarship on the subject came from, or concerned Canada of the 1960s, where bilingualism and separatist movements were inducing institutionalization, standardization, and legislation to determine official state language policy, the economic implications of such policy, and educational reform to bolster nation-wide bilingualism and parity between the French and English contingents. Legal recognition of French language and culture was officially sanctioned by colonial British rule in a 1763 Royal Proclamation. However, Marschak’s 1965 article may well stem from what is called the Quiet Revolution in Canada, in 1960s Quebec, with the establishment of the

1963 Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. In a truly bilingual society, resources must be allocated to translation services, educational opportunities for learning the second language, as well as to incidentally or naturally related tasks that make people functional in both languages. These initiatives all incur costs, and in order to realize the objective of bilingualism, an assessment from an economic perspective assists in the determination of liability, return on investment in human capital, and overall worth of undertaking such an objective.

Since decisions in the political realm incur costs for implementation of legislative decrees, the Europeans have approached the issue from the perspective of teaching and learning. The consolidation of the European Union into a political body comprising over 20 major languages had policy implications for managing and administering the geographic supranational entity that encompasses those national boundaries, cultures, and languages. A historical retrospective on European language policy (European Union, 2013) posits the year 1957 as the point of formal inception, with emphasis squarely placed on language teaching with an intergovernmental approach. By 1989 threshold-level specifications were published, and in 2001 the *Framework of Reference for Languages, European Language Portfolio* (ELP), developed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, was charged “to support the development of learner autonomy, plurilingualism and intercultural awareness and competence; to allow users to record their language learning achievements and their experience of learning and using languages.” Between 1963 and 1972 fomentation of international cooperation on “audio-visual methods” began the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA), which advanced the field in part (European Union Council, 2013).

In the US, foreign language policy tended to emphasize developing bilingualism in minority speakers while slowly shifting toward accountability in English only. With the 2001 termination of Title VII Bilingual Education Act (enacted 1968) and passage of *No Child Left Behind* (2001), Congress sought to ensure progress through yearly exams in English. Primarily in the US, the field of the economics of language has become focused on the econometrics of earnings differentials between Hispanics (the largest second-language minority) and Anglophones, rather than efforts toward bilingualism and biculturalism, or implementing any sustained effort at foreign language competency. The twenty-first-century trajectory in the US away from embracing globalization as internationalization of languages and multilingualism is evidence of how much the controversy over bilingual education is often enmeshed

in a larger political and cultural context. Political sentiment is taking new directions with Spanish emerging as the *lingua franca* of the largest minority group in the US, which may be one of the motives for increasing research on the econometrics of labor as well as an overall reevaluation of policy on bilingualism and dual immersion schooling in Spanish and other languages.

Many in the field of pedagogy involving a foreign language are familiar with the adage that bilingualism and multiculturalism make better leaders and citizens, realizing an implicit value to pluricultural perspectives and multilingualism in the workplace and society. Anecdotal information inundates us on a daily basis, demonstrating the significance of speaking another language as a unique linguistic register, a vessel for alternative knowledge, and an aid to discerning distinct cultural mindsets. Studies do corroborate correlation for those who study or are bilingual with stronger communication skills, math and language arts capabilities, intercultural sensitivity, cooperation, negotiation, and compromise. Moreover, it has been shown that bilinguals have:

... enhanced awareness of other people's points of view,... They are also better than monolinguals at giving selective attention to specific features of a problem, while ignoring misleading elements, and at switching between different tasks... Bilinguals do not switch off their "other" language, meaning their brains grow to be more adaptable than those of monolinguals—a vital asset in a complex business world. (Hill, 2013)

## CONCLUSION

We have reviewed some of the econolinguistic, demolinguistic, and language communication research in theory that has quantifiable results now emerging regarding Spanish, adding to initial studies on French and English. More data emerges continually that demonstrates earnings premiums or economic benefit derived from bilingualism.

Yet, recent reports have begun to look at the opposite side of the coin: the real costs of monolingualism in all of its facets. Hill points out that Business School professor "James Foreman-Peck of Cardiff determined the cost to the UK economy of under-investment in language skills as the equivalent of between a 3 and 7 per cent tax on British exports" (Hill, 2013). Countries are evaluating these costs in relation to human capital investments, like individuals, parents, and corporations in the workplace, and other international, geopolitical, or economic institutions as well. The results of a study by the European Commission note "'a significant amount of business' was sacrificed because of poor language skills across Europe: 11 per cent of small- and



medium-sized enterprises had lost a contract as a result” (Hill, 2013, p. 2). The question is not so much the relative intrinsic and extrinsic worth of languages, rather the costs for our future hegemony and sustainability without multilingualism as the norm.

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