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## ABSTRACT

All 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities in the United States were surveyed regarding registrations in foreign language courses. A total of 2,633 institutions responded, of which 2,341 reported•enrollments in one or more foreign languages. In addition, a representative sample of 207 institutions and 286. foreign language departments were surveyed regarding the distribution of language course enrollments according to course level. Overall, registrations declined in ancient Greek and Russian, and Spanish continued to be the most commonly taught language. Twenty tables present full survey data by state or region for the seven most commonly taught languages and comparative data from 4 previous years. Additional tables report course level data from the subsample. (RW)

FINAL REPORT
Grant No. G008001736

## SURVEY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSE REGISTRATIONS

IN U.S. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, FALL 1980

Richard I. Brod
Modern Language Association of America
62 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10011

July 1982

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This report is in two parts. The first is based on a questionnaire survey sent to the registrars of all pwo-year and four-year colleges and universities in the United States. Replies were received from 2,633 institutions, of which 2,341 reported registrations in one or more foreign languages. The second part, a new feature of the 1980 investigation, is based on a questionnaire survey using a sample of 207 institutions and 286 foreign language departments selected to be representative, by size, geographical location, and highest degree offered, of American higher education.

The fall 1980 survey shows a decline of $.9 \%$ in total foreign language registrations between 1977, the year of the last previous survey conducted by the MLA, and 1980. Registrations declined by more than ten percent in Ancient Greek and Russian, but modest increases were reporied in French, Italian, Latin, Spanish, and the aggregate of the so-called "other" or less-commonly taught languages. Spanish continued to be the leading language in U.S. colleges and universities, accounting for $46.7 \%$ of the • total.

The repopt contains two sections and two appendices. The first section consists of an introduction, six summary tables, and fourteen detailed tables, all reporting the full survey of college and university enrollments. The detailed tables present data by state on by region for the seven most commonly taught languages and for the "other" languages as a block, as well as detailed comparative figures from surveys undertaken in 1968, 1970, 1974, and 1977. Section two includes a summary and six tables, reporting the new sample survey which characterizes the distribution of language einrollments according 'to course level.
The two appendtces are an institutional directory of language enroliments and a copy of the enrollment survey instrument.

## CONTENTS

Foreword ..... v
Abbreviations Used in the Report ..... viPART ONE: Foreign Language Enrollments in U.S. Institutionsof Higher Education-Fall 1980
Introduction ..... 6
Detailed Tables
PageTotal Registrations in All Foreign Languages, by State: Fall 1980-(Combined Totals for All Two- and•Four-Year Colleges andUniversities).11
Table 2. Total Registrations in All Foreign Languages, by State: Fall 1980(Totals for Four-Year Colleges and Universities).13Table 3 Total Registrations in All Foreign Languages, by State: Fall 1980(Totals for Two-Year Colleges).15

Table 4. Trends, in Total Foreign Language Registrations in All Two- and FourYear Colleges and Universities, by Region: Fall 1968, 1970, 1974,1977, 1980 (Combined Registrations in All Foreign Languages; CombinedRegistrations in the Five Leading Modern Foreign Languages*).17
Table 5.' ..... 18
and Universities, by Region: Fall 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, 1980.Table 6. Trends in Total Foreign-Language Registrations in Two-Year Colleges,:by Region: Fall 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, 1980.Summary of Trends in the Five Leading Modern Foreign Languages* inAll Two and Four-Year Institutions of Higher Education, withBreakdown by Language and Region: Fall 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, 1980.19.
Table 7.Summary of Trends in the Five Leading Modern Foreign Languages inFour-Year Colleges and. Universities, with Breakdớwn by Language andRegion: Fall 1968, 1970; 1974, 1977, 1980.22

Table 9. Summary of Trends in the Five Leading, Modern Foreign Languages in Two-Year Colleges, with Breakdown by Language and Region:Fall 1968, 1970, 197.4, 1977, 1980.24

Table 10. Summary of Trends in Latin, Ancient Greek, and "Other" Foreign Languages in All Two-Year and Four-Year Institutions of Higher Education, with Breakdown by Region: Fall 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, 1980.

Table 11. Total Undergraduate Registrations in Foreigñ Languages, by State: Fall 1980.

Table 12. Total Graduate Registrations in Foreign Languages, by Staté: Fall 1980

Table 13. Summary of Trends in Graduate Registrations in Forèign Languages, by Region and Language: Fall 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, 1980. (Combined Registrations in all Foreign Languages; Combined Registrations in the Five Leading Modern Foreign Languages; USA Graduate Totals by Language).

Registrations in the Less Commonly Taught Languages, by Language: Fall 1980.
PART TWO: The Distribution of Language Enrollments in Two-Ỳear and Four-Year Institutions of Higher Education in the United states.

## Summary:

## Detailed Tables

Table 2.

Table 3.

Table 4.

Table 5. Four-Year Colleges and Universities with Advanced Enrollments in Excess of Intermediate Enrollments50

Table 6. Estimate of Literature-in-Translation Registrations Counted Among Registrars' Reports of Language Enrollments.

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Directory of Foreign Language Registrations in Institutions of ** Higher Education, by State and Institution: Fall 1980.

Part A: Two-Year Colleges
Part B: Four-Year Colleges and Universities
Appendix II. Report Form Used in the Fall 1980 Suqvey

The present s.tudy of college language registrations is the fourteenth in a series that Fhe Modern Language Association has conducted under contract with or grant from the United States Office or Depyrtment qf Edreation. It is the sixth to present data for all foreign languages, both classical and modern, in colleges and universities in the United States. The main body of the report consists of a set of six summary tables (designated A through F), a set of fourteen tables giving detailed breakdowns of the Fall 1980 data as well as trends going back to 1968, plus a computer-pinted directory of the complete language registration data reported the $\psi^{\prime}, 341$ responding institutions which reported enrollments in one or more foreign language
To facilitate the study of trends in foreign language registrations over the 20 year period between 1960 and 1980, registration data from surveys undertak\&n in 1960, 1965, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1977, and 1980 were incorporated into summary tables A, C, D, E, F; and data from the 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, and 1980 surveys are juxtaposed in several of the detailed tables (specifically, tables 4 through 10 and 13). In the latter set of tables, the year 1968 has been chosen as the base year for the calculation of comparative index figures for the individual languages and regions to show the trends over the past decade. The survey of 1968 reflects the peak of total foreign language errollments in higher education.
It should be borne in mind, in consulting the comparative figures, that they derive from different institutional bases in the different years, ranging from a base of 1,661 institutions in 1960 to 2,341 in 1980. In each year, however, the response rate achieved by the MLA survey, has been above $95 \%$, In the last four suryeys above $99 \%$.

Since 1968 the foreign language, research staff has made use of the MLA's computer for recording, compiling, and sorfing institutional registration figures for the less commgnly taught languages, i.e., all languages other than French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Latin, and Ancient Greek. Since 1974 an expanded computer capacity has enabled the staff to record the entire body of data for commonly and less commonly taught languages alike, a total of 9,230 separate records in 1980. The data can be sorted and printed either by state and institution or by language. The directory, portion of the present report consists ' of the complete print-out by state and institution, separately for the four-year and twoyear institutions.

In a departure fìom past surveys, the current one inciudes an innovative sample survey, which provides data never before avalimble. By means of a sampling of 207 institutions that were carefully selected by size, highest degree offered, geographical location and public/private control, the survey collected data on level and type of course. Previous surveys have not been able to suggest the levels of course difficulty at which students were enrolled. This sampling provides an indication of the percentage of American stu-4 dents at advanced levels of language study and an estimated attrition rate between levels of language study--nationally, regionally, by language, and by category of institution.

The data for the present report were-compiled and tabulated by research associates Martha Browne and Douglas LeMaster, under the supervision of Kurt E. Muller, Assistiant Director of Foreign Language Programs. Computer programs for the sorting and printing of the data were developed by MLA's Computer Operations Manager, Cuyler Blepecker. .

The staff is grateful-to Mrs. Julia Petrov, Chief of Research Programs for the Office of International Education of the U.S. Department of Education, for her helpful cooperation and responsiveness to inquiries and requests. We also acknowledge here the continued excellent cooperation of the college registrars and department chairmen who supplied the data upon which the report is based.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENROLLMENTS IN U.S. inSTITUTIONS
OF HIGHER EDUCATION-FALL 1980

In 1981. the foreign language research staff of the Modern Language Association completed work on its Fall 1980 Survey of Foreign Language Registrations in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education, the fourteenth in a series of surveys conducted since 1958 under contract with the U.S. Office of Education or ies successor, the U.S. Department of Education. Data for the survey were obtained from a questionnaire sent to the registrars of the 2,639 two-year and four-year institutions listed in the MLA's computerized files, plus 240, additional institutions-primarily . seminaries-listed in the Education Directory, Colleges and Universities, published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). . Replies were received from all but 6 of the institutions canvased, giving the MLA a response rate of $99.8 \%$. Among the respondents, 2,341 , or $81.5 \%$, reported registrations in one or more languages other than English.

The $1980^{\circ}$ survey shows a total of 924,837 foreign language registrations-a drop of only $0.9 \%$ since the last published report, for the fall term 1977. The 1970 survey report was the first in the series to show any decline at all: about $1.4 \%$ below the peak enroll: ment year of 1968. The 1972, 1974, and 1977 surveys showed further declines of $9.2 \%, 6.2 \%$, and $1.4 \%$, respectively. The 1980 results confirm the bellef of tmany observers that enrollments in foreign
language courses have stabilized: While this belief is wèll supported by the absolute members, language enrollment trends are less encouraging when compared with the continuing growth of college enrollments in general. On a percentage basis, fewer students are énroling in foreign language courses. Table A compares total college enrollments (as reported by iNCES) with the MLA's figures for modern foreign languages, giving a percentage ratio for each of the years in which the MLA conducted its survey.

Table B presents the results of the 1980 enrollment survey, with a breakdown by language for the twelve most commonly taught languages, plus an aggregate figure for the "other" languages; separate tallies for two-year colleges and undergraduate and graduate registrations in four-year colleges and universities; comparative totals from the 1977 survey; and a figure indicating percentage change in the language totals between 1977 and 1980. As the table shows, the various languages reveal widely different trends. Decreases in ancient Greek and Russian, for example, were more severe than the drop in German; Italian and Spanish held steady; and enrollments in French and Latin showed Encreases for the first time since 1970. Italian is now firmly established - In fourth place among the languages. Russian, which held fourth place until 1977, has now fallen to sixth, behind Latin. The biblical languages, ancient Greek and Hebrew, hold sevénth and eighth places; Japanese is ninth and Chinese--showing a rise of $15.9 \%$ over 1977 levetenth; iPortuguese, showing a loss, and Arabic, with a $12.9 \% \mathrm{gain}$, are in eleventh and twelfth places.

The six $\frac{1}{\lambda}$ eading languages-Spanish; French, German, Italian, Latin, and Russian-accounted.for $90.6 \%$ of the total registrations in foreign languages in the colleges and universities covered in the survey; the other six languages listed in Table $B$ acefonted for an . maditional. $7.9 \%$, and the remaining $1.5 \%$ were distributed among 111 additional languages, ancient and modern. Spanish, having dispiaced French from its : leadership position in 1970, remains the most widely taught foreign language in U.S. colleges and universities, as it has been in secondary schools for_many years. . Spanish' now accounts for 46.6\% of the total registrations in the five leading modern languages. : In 1960, Spanish had only $30 \%$ of the total, and French had 38.4\%. Table C, based on the registrations in the five leading modern languages, shows the percentage of the total in each language from 1960 to 1980 . . Table $D$ depicts growth trends $\operatorname{in}^{-1}$ the twelve leading languages over the same twenty-year period.

## Foreign Languages in Two-Year Colleges

In 1960, 455 two-year colleges reported•foreign language regis-
trations; by 1972 the number had peaked at 899. In the fall 1980
survey, foreign language offerings were reported by 835 two-year colleges, the same number as in 1974 but fewer than in 1977. Having increased steadily since 1972, total language enrollments in two-year colleges underwent a slight ( $0.8 \%$ ) decline between 1977 and 1980. While enrollments in Spanish and. French rose during the three-year -period, those in German fell by $9.4 \%$. Spanish, with 95,499 enrollments, accounts for $58.2 \%$ qf the two-year college tiotal; French has $22.8 \%$,

German 9.7\%. Italian, Japanese, and "Chinese" (in that order) together account for an additional $6.1 \%$ of the two-year college language en- . rollment total:

## Less Commonly Taught "Languages

References to the category of "critical" or "strategic" languages were used by the MLA, the U.S. Office of Education, and other agencies during the early 1960s but were later replaced by the designation "less comonly taught" languages. The line between commonly and less commonly taught is arbitrary. but most MLA survey reports have drawn it below the seventh language on the list in descending order of reported registrations. The group of commonly taught languages includes the five "leading" modern foreign languages-Frénch', German, Italian; Russian', and Spanish-plus Latin and ancient. Greek. The remaining 116 languages : for which enrollments' were reported in 1980 fail into various overlapping'categories: "strategic," that is, languages widely spoken in politically sensitive areas of the world, for example, Arabic, Hindi, Indonesian; "ethnic," that is, languages spoken by populä̈ions of immigrants (or descendants of immigrants) residing in the United States, for excample, Polish, Norwegian, Armenian; biblical languages, like Hebrew; ancient languages, such as Ugaritic, Old Church Slavonic, and Oid Icelandic, studied thrqugh written texts, and primarily by graduate students and scholars; and languages of native American minorities, such as Hawailan, Navajo, and Yupic. Several languages fall into more than one category, like Portuguese (strategic and ethnic) or Hebrew (ethnic and biblical). Although the MLA's survey questionnaires re-
quest registrars tó súpply registration figures for alí languagès, ancient and modern, it is likely that some officials omit data for ancient languages because they assume from the MLA's name that ancient language American fanguages because these are not, strictly speaking, foreign. Accordingly, the MLA cannot claim authoritative accuracy with respect to enrollments in these categories. Needless to say, there are other instances where information supplied by a registrar may be less than wholly reliable: when, for example, the registrar fails to-recognize an unfamiliar foreign word as the name of a language or fails to distinguish between language courses and literature-in-translation courses. On the basis of long experience with the surveys, the MLA believes such . errors are relatively rare and that inflated figures, if there are any, - are probably balanced by "hidden" enrollments overlooked by responding registrars.

Taken togethers the less commonly taught languages--that is, all languages other" than the "top seven"--have experienced considerable growth in recent years. In 1968, total enroilment in these languages was 32,813 ; in 1970, 45,752; in 1972, 59,532; in 1974, 64,132; in 1977, 63,938; and in 1980, 64,263. While less commonly taught languages as at group have grown nearly $96 \%$ during this twelve-year period, certain languages have more than doubled their registrations, most notably Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Yiddish. Enrollments in Hebrew more than doubled between 1968 and 1974, but they have receded since then to a level that represents $91 \%$ growth above the 1968.figure. Similarly, enroliments in Swahili more than tripled between 1968 and 1977, but they have now fallen to a level below that of 1968 .


Table. Rall 1980 Survey of Foreign Language Registrations in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education*


Table C Distribution of Students-among the Five Leading Modern Foreign Languages, 1960-80, in Percentages


Table D Registration in Ten Less Commonly Taught Foreign Languages, 1960-80


Table E
Trends in Registrations in the Five Leading Modern Lánguages, 1960-80, by Language (All Institưtions)


FOREIGN LANGUAGE REGISTRATIONS, HIGHER EDUCATION, FALL 1980 (AII Levels)

table 1. fotal registrations in all foreign languages, by state: fall 1980
(TOTALS TWO \& FOUR YEAR INSTITUTIONS)


## (Continued).

table 1. total registrátions in all foreign languages, by state: fall 1980
(TOTALS TWO \& FOUR YEAR INSTITUTIONS)

table 2. TOTAL REGISTRATIONS IN ALL FOREIGN LANGUAGES, BY STATE: FALL 1980
(TOTALS FOR FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES)

táble 2. tOTAL REGISTRATIONS IN ALL FOREIGN LANGUAGES, BY STATE: FALL 1980 (TOTALS FOR FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES)


TOTALS

table 3. .. TOTAL REGISTRATIONS IN ALL FOREIGN LANGUAGES, BY STATE: FALL 1980 (TOTALS FOR TWO-YEAR COLLEGES)

table 4. TRENDS in totál foreign language registrations in all two- and four year INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, BY REGION: FALY 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, 1980


## TABLE 5: TRENDS IN TOIAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE REGISTRATTIONS IN FOUR-YEAR COLUEGFS

 AND UNIVERSITITES, BY REGION: FALC 1968, 1970, ${ }^{\circ} 1974,1977,1980$

TABLE 6. TRENDS IN TOTAL EOREIGN LANGUAGE REGISTRATIONS IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES, BY REGION: FALL 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, 1980

## registrations

INDEX OF CHANGE FROM FALL 1968 ( $=100.0$ ) TO:
$\cdot *$
19701974 * 1977
1980

COMBINED REGISTRATIONS
IN ALL FOREIGN LANGUAGES

| USA totals | 130,628 | 154,103 | 154,466 | 165,550 | 164,176 | 118.0 | - 118.2 | 126.7 | 125.7 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| New England | 9,597 | 10,410 | 6,778 | 5,594 | 5,040 | 108.5 | 70.6 | 58.3 | 52.5 |
| Mid East | 26,957 | 38;929 | - 32,293 | 27,048 | 22,779 | 144, 4 | 119.8 | 100.3 | -84.5 |
| Great Lakes. | 15,091. | 17,023 | 14,003 | 17,264 | 16,143 | 112.8 | 92.8 | 114.4 | 207.0 |
| Palins | 6,504 | 6,106 | 4,214 | 3,844 | 3,878 | 93.9 | 64.8 | 59.1 | 59.6 |
| Southeast | 21,671 | 19,457 | 17,469 | 16,656 | 17,324 | 89.8 | 80.6 | 76.9 | 80.0 |
| Southwest | 8,373 | 11,062 | 15,124 | 18,363 | 17,175 | 132.1 | 180.6 | 219.3 | 05.1 |
| Rocky Mountains | 1,700 | 1,871 | 2,275 | 1,944 | 1,827 | 110.1 | 133.8 | 114.4 | 07.5 |
| Far West , | 40,735* | 49,245 | 62,310 | 74,837 | 80,010 | 120.9 | $153.0$ | 183.7 | . 4 |

COMB INED REGISTRATIONS
IN 5 FML's

| USA totals |  |  | 126,779 | 150,234 | 147,155 | 154,818 |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| New England |  | 9,335 | 10,294 | 6,593 | 5,479 | 4,684 |
| Mid East |  | 26,336 | 38,194 | 31,696 | 25,459 | 22,320 |
| Great Lakes |  | 14,556 | 16,619 | 13,567 | 15,607 | 15,800 |
| Plains |  | 6,091 | 5,893 | 3,973 | 3,397 | 3,553 |
| Southeast |  | 21,120 | 19,259 | 16,606 | 16,485 | 17,082 |
| Southwest. |  | 8,159 | 10,841 | 14,731 | 17,892 | 16,957 |
| Rocky Mountains |  | 1,700 | 1,871 | 2,224 | 1,944 | 1,809 |
| Far West. |  | 39,482 | 47,263 | 57,765 | 68,555 | 73,225 |

table 7. summary of trends in the five leading modern foreign languages
in all two- and four-year institutions of higher education
With breardown by language, and region: Fall 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, and 1980.


TTABLE 7.: SUMMARY OF TRENDS IN THE FIVE LEADING MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES*
IN ALL THO- AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OR HIGHER EDUCATION,
WITH BREAKDOWN BY LANGUAGE AND REGION: FALL 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, and 1980.



TABLE 8. SUMMARY̌ OF TRENDS IN THE FIVE LEADING MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, WITH BREAKDOWN BY LANGUAGE AṄD REGION: FALL 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, AND 1980

language and<br>REGION

REGISTRATIONS IN FML's
INDEX OF GHANGE FROM FALL 1968 ( $=100.0$ ) T0:



New England Mideast
Grèat Lakes Plains Southeast Southwest Rocky Mountains 'Far West

| 38,883 |
| ---: |
| 4,026 |
| 11,450 |
| 8,894 |
| 2,377 |
| 3,688 |
| 2,299 |
| 1,165 |
| 4,984 |


| 306,271 | ' 313,346 | 275,091 | 282,567 | 283,880 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 20,831 | 30,838 | 20,254 | 21,871 | 22,816 |
| 71,579 | 75,791 | 65,354 | 63,765 | 62,125 |
| 53,681 | 53,984 | 43,055 | 44,699 | 46,557 |
| 28:686 | 26,686 ${ }^{\text {- }}$ | 19,188 | 19,361 | 21,347 |
| 58,302 | 58,641 | 48,635 | -50,155 | 54,763 |
| 34,119 | 37,060 | 36,478 | 37,601 | 33,025 |
| 8,901 | 10,657 | 11,208 | 11,746 | 10;328 |
| 30,172 | 29,689 | 30,919 | 33,369. | 32,919 |
| 913;505 | - 871;231 | 685,790 | 664,476 | 657,744 |


| 30,799 | 26,273 | 23,013 |
| ---: | ---: | ---: |
| 3,908 | 3,141 | 2,836 |
| 8,129 | 7,053 | 6,279 |
| 5,666 | 4,399 | 3,595 |
| 1,962 | 1,692 | 1,586 |
| 3,722 | 3,381 | $-3,383$ |
| 2,070 | $.3,332$ | $\therefore$ |
| 1,254 | 1,032 | 1,450 |
| 4,088 | 3,243 | 3,007 |.

                913,505
    34,532
3,585
10,543
7,462
2,222
3,302
2,297
1,769
3,952

| 88.8 | 79.2 | $67.6:$ | 59.2 |
| ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| 89.0 | 97.1 | $78.0:$ | 70.4 |
| 92.1 | 71.0 | 61.6 | 54.8 |
| 83.9 | 63.7 | 49.5 | 40.4 |
| 93.5 | 82.5 | 71.2 | 66.7 |
| 89.5 | 100.9 | 91.7 | 91.7 |
| 99.9 | 90.0 | 101.4 | 63.1 |
| 100.3 | 107.6 | 88.6 | 75.3 |
| 79.3 | 82.0 | 65.1 |  |

SPANISH
SPANISH
'USA totals
New England
SPANA
USA tota1s
New England
Mreat Lakes
Plains
Southeast
Southwest
Southwest
Rocky Mountains.
Far West
Mideast
a)
COMBINED TOTALS
79.3

| 102.3 | 89.8 | 92.3 | 92.7 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| '148.0 | 97.2 | 105.0 | - 109.5 |
| 105.9 | 91.3 | 89.1 | 86.8 |
| 100.6 | 80.2 | 83.3 | 86.7 |
| 93.0 | 66.9 | 67.5 | 74.4 |
| 100.6 | 83.4 | 86.0 | 93.9 |
| 108.6 | 106.9 | 110.2 | 96.8 |
| 119.7 | 125.9 | 132.0 | 116.0 |
| 98.4 | 102.5 | 110.6 | 109.1 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 95.4 | 75.1 | 72.7 | 72:0 |

TABLE 9. SUMMARY OF TRENDS IN THE FIVE LEADING MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES
IN. 'TWO-YEAR' COLLEGES, WITH BREAKDOWN BY LANGUAGE AND REGION:
FALL 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, and 1980.


| FRENCH | , |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 43,112 | 45,164 | 34,330 | 35,894 | 37,512 | 104.8 | 79.6 | 83.3 | 87.0 |
| New England | 4,058 | 4,160 | 1,966 | '1,581 | 1,413 | 102.5 | 48.4 | 39.0 | 34.8 |
| Mideast | 9,460 | 11,702 | 7,266 | 5,850 | 5,391 | 123.7 | 76.8 | 61.8 | 57:0 |
| Great Lakes | 4,777 | 5,124 | 3,790 | 4,376 | 4,292 | 107.3 | 79.3 | 91.6 | 89.8 |
| Plains | 1,961 | 1,733 | 962 | 839 | 860 | 88 , 4 | 49.1 | 42.8 | 43.9 |
| Southeast | 9,013 | 7,741 | 5,883 | 5,996 | 5,608 | 85.9 | 65.3 | 66.5 | 62.2 |
| Southwest | 1,921 | 2,080 | 1,718 | 2,164 | 2,310 | 108.3 | 89.4 | 112.6 | 120.2 |
| Rocky Mountains | 553 | 530 | 459 | - 387 | 441 | 95.8 | 83.0 | 70.0 | 79.7 |
| Far West | 11,369 | 12,094 | 12,286 | 14,701 | 17,197 | 106.4 | 108.1 | 129.3 | 151.3 |

GERMAN

table 9. SUMMARY of trends in the five leading modern forkign languages IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES, WITH BREAKDOWN BY LANGUAGE AND REGION:

FALL 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, and 1980 .
INDEX OF CHANGE FROM
FALL $1968(=100.0)$ TO
language and REGION

## REGISTRATIONS IN MFL'S



## 51

CABLE 10. SUMMARY OF TRENDS IN LATIN, ANCIENT GREEK, AND "OTHER" FOREIGN LANGUAGES
IN ALL TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION,
WITH BREAKDOWN BY REGION: FALL 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977; 1980.


TABLE 11. TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE REGISTRATIONS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN


table 12. total graduate registrations in foreiga languages, by state: fall 1977


TABLE 12. TOTAL GRADUATE REGISTRATIONS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES, BY STATE: FALL 1977



TABLE 13.: SUMMARY OF TRENDS 'IN GRADUATE REGISTRATIONS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES, BY REGION AND LANGUAGE: FALL 1968, 1970, 1974, 1977, 1980.

GRADUATE REGISTRATIONS
INDEX OF CHANGE FROM
FALL 1968 ( $=100.00$ ) TO:



FALL 1980 COURSE REGISTRATIONS IN THE LESS COMMONLY TAUGHT FOREIGN LANGUAGES

| Registra- |
| :---: |
| tions |
| 1977 |


| Registra- <br> tions | \% Change <br> 1980 |
| :--- | ---: |

$-40.3$
+12.9
-61.1
$+43.5$
$+15.9$
-
-
12
Coptic 11
Creole, Haitian - 13
Crow
Czech . -
Dakota 95
Danish $\quad . \quad 214$
Digueno " 11
Dutch , 540
Egyptian, Modern . 37
Egyptian, Ancient . 56
Elamite
1 -
Esperanto 42 .
Estonian 2
4
Finnish $156 \quad 152$
Fon - . - -
Fulani -

| Fulani | - |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Gaelic, Scottish | 6 | 3 |

Georgian . 3 3
Greek, MOpern . 693820
$820+18.3$
Hausa . . 67
Hawailan - 875
70
i 16
99
293
500
44
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1 -14.2.
$+36.9$
$-7.4$
1


152
$-2.6$
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15
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Sioux.
Slavonic, Old Church
Slovak
Slovenian
Sotho -
Sumerian
Swahili
Swedish
Syriac
Tagalog
Tahitian
Tamil
Tartar
Telugu
That
Tibetan
Tlingit
Tongan
Tuamotuan
Turkic, Middle
Turkic, Uigur
Turkish
Turkish, Ottoman
Tuvin
TwI
Ugaritic
Ukraini
Urdu
Uzbek
Vedic
Vietnamese
Welsh
Wolof
Xhosa
Yiddish
Yoruba
Yupic
Zulu

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2,225
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1,534
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25
$$

25
255
-
26
-

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12
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12
83
66
17
$\begin{array}{r}86 \\ 5 \\ \hline\end{array}$
11 $\begin{array}{r}8 \\ 5 \\ 76 \\ \hline\end{array}$
$-147$
5
-
4
44
133
4
26
5
20
3
20
4
1,144
37
15
21
21
15
576
$127^{\circ}$
85
$-82.0$
$-74.1$
$+2.7$
$+3.1$
$-16.5$

| 22 |  |
| ---: | :--- |
| 111 | $\cdot$ |



41
$\rightarrow+5$

THE DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE ENROLLMENTS IN TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES SUMMARY

UNDER contract or grant from the U.S. Office (now Department) of Education, the MLA has conducted a series of bi- or.triennial surveys of foreign language enrollments in American institutions of higher education. Since 1960 these surveys have been used in answering thousands of requests for information on the availability of instruction in various languages, across the country, in one region or another, and in individual states. They have been consulted to identify strong programs and problematic ones. They have chronicled emerging interests and have perhaps been misused to justify eliminating some programs: In documenting the proliferation or decline of programs in individual languages, the surveys have sometimes triggered alarms that led.us to seek more information.

In examining the fall 1977 enrollments, for example, we were shocked to discover that a number of institutions had apparently ceased to offer Getman or Russian between 1974 and 1977. When we questionied this development for German, about $10 \%$ of the responding institutions protested that.they had indeed taught German in fall 1977 but that the registrar must have failed to report the enrollments or that we must have failed to record them. Thile the reliance on registrars' reports has always held the potential for underreporting some enrollments,'such as a section in Bulgarian taught under alinguistics course number or a course in Provencal listed as French, and for overreporting others, ṣuch as literature$\stackrel{x}{\text { in-translation enrollments, reported as if the course }, \text { had been taught in the language, the }}$ information fromegistrars is consistent from one strvey to the next, uses official enrollment figures rather than departmental estimates, and requires fewer mailings. Since we have never had an index of the reliability of institutional reports, however, we.proposed conducting a survey of a sample of institutions to determine the kind and magnitude of errors that might influence the survey results. Also, our rekindled national concern for langùage competence demanded some indication of the level of competence of our students.

Our project did not propose to examine actual proficiency in various languages, as such an investigation would need to be a major, separate project. ' At nominal cost, however, we could expand the enrollment sur'vey to solicit from a sample of departments data on
the distribution of their enrollments. The resulting. picture would let us know how much of our teaching effort is directed at each level; it would give us some idea of attrition between levels; it might yield an indication of the impact of requirements on enrollment patterns; it would identify institutions with strong upper-division programs; and it would provide textbook authors and publishers with information necessary to determine the marketability of texts for advanced coursesi.

We began our survey by acquiring from the National Center for education Statistics lists of all postsecondary institutions in the United States. Separate lists were obtained for two-year colleges, for institutions that grant bachelor's master's degrees, and for doctorallevel universities. Each of these lists was organized by broad geographical region, and within each.region institutions were ranked by the size of their enrollment. With the lists so organized we selected our sample to ensure representation from the fargest to the smallest institutions in each category. In all, we developed a system of 173 cells, all but seven of which contained a cluster of three institutions. Usable responses were received from 207 institutions in 137 of the cells, for a response ratét, by cell, of, 79.2\%. The response rate differed by type of institution: of the 64 'cells. devised to represent two-year colleges, 46 ( $71.9 \%$ ) responded; of the 77 cells representing bachelor's and master's-granting institutions, 61 (79.2\%) responded; and among the 32 cells of doctoral institutions, usable questionnaires were received from 30 ( $93.8 \%$ ).

Accompanying the questionnaire that we sent each department in the sample was a copy of the enrollment figures supplied by their registrar. The first question asked the department to account for enrollments reported, by telling us how many students were in firstyear, in second-year, and in advanced (third- and fourth-year) courses. In many instances departmental figures did not agree with the entollments reported by the registrar. A number of departments do not keep records of their enrollments and constructed estimates ex post
fatto of the registration in various courses. Because the total enrollments reported by the departments was $3.9 \%$ lower than the registrars' figures, we would assume that a number
of respondents tallied only those students who completed their courses. Although we have not calculated standard deviations that might be used in projecting a range of enrollment figures as compensation for possible faulty reporting, we shouid not 'that, as we expected, \& enrollments in the less commonly taught languages are somewhat underreported. Among. the top twelve languages, only Latin reported a net figure of enrollments higher than that accounted for by the registrars. (Of the other languages, some departments of course claimed more registrations than their registrars reported, but these were offset by lower figures from other departments.) For the responses concerning 52 less commonly taught languages, departments reported a net gain over registrar figures of 146 enrollments in' 20 lànguages. For 22 exotic languages, we discovered the kind of underreporting we had encountered for German in the 1977 survey: the registrar had failed to report all enrollments in a particular language. Many of these are small programs that may offer the language only on a tutorial basis, but one department reported 102 enrollments in Swedish that the registrar had not tallied. From our sample, the number of institutions that offer exotic languages that went unreportef by registrar are: two each in Armenian, Bengali, Bulgarian, Modern Greek, Hungarian, Bomanian, Serbo-Croatian, and Swedish, and one each in Cambodian, Danish, . Estonian, Fihnish, Indonesian, Lithuanian, Persian, Polish, Sanskrit, Swahili, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese. Even among the top twelve languages; enrollments in Chinese and Ancient Greek were not reported by the registrars at three institutions each, in Arabic, German, and Japanese at two institutions each, ánd in Italian and Latin at one institution each.

Although the data from the first question could be used in conjunction with responses to another question to discover unreported languages, the main purpose of the question was to elicit information on the distribution of enrollments. Our overall tally yields a distribution of $69.1 \%$ in elementary courses, $22.9 \%$ in second-year courses, and $17.0 \%$ in advanced courses. If our sample--which, ${ }^{*}$ when adjusted for the disparity between departmental and administrative figures, accounts for $14 \%$ of undergraduate language enrollments nationwide--is representative of all enrollment patterns, then there are approximately 536,200 students in first-
year courses, 204,700 in second-year courses, and i51,900 registrations in third- and fourthyear courses. We hasten to point out that while the drop in enrollment figures between levels amounts to an apparent loss of $61.8 \%$ between first- and second-year courses and $25.8 \%$ between second-year and advanced courses, these figures do not represent actual attrition rates. We have not fallied students who begin their college language study at advanced levels, nor have we accounted for students who begin a second or third foreign language in their junior or senior year, And since, the sample used for this projection deliberately includes institutions in which only first-year or first- and second-year instruction is available, this distribution pattern is skewed toward elementary enrollments.

Enrollment patterns differ among languages. Of the six most popular languages, four enroll less than $60 \%$ at the elementary level. Table 1 presents the distribution of enrollments for the six most commonly taught languages. Following the name of the language in column 1 , column 2 presents the number of respondents, in our sample reporting this language, the number of institutions nationally that reported instruction in this language, and a comparison of the two expressed as a percentage. Column 3 presents the total enrollments reported for each level by our sample. Column 4 expresses the distribution of enrollments • among levels; these percentages have been used to project estimates of national enroll figures at the first- and second-year levels, shown in column 6, rounded to the nearest hundred:

Our sample was constructed to seek equanimity among types of institutions, that is, we did not sample the larger institutions (whele the bulk of enrollments tend to be) to any greater extent than the smaller ones, though the response rate of the former was better than that of the small'colleges. Since we coded the questionnaires by degree offered and by full-tıme-equivalent (FTE) enrollment size, we can attempt to compare enrollment-distribution patterns by type of institution. When we remove the two-year colleges from our data base, we can use an encouraging move away from elementary instruction. Table 2 presents the distribution of enrollments in four-year colleges and universities and an estimate of advanced enrollments. In these institutions, French and Russian have the lowest concentration of
students in first-year courses; this finding for Russian is particularly encouraging in the light of the drastic decline in the study of russian over the last decade. We also find a high distribution of Russian enrollments at the advanced level; in fact, our sample tallied more ${ }^{\text {. }}$ advanced than intermediate registrations. We also note that, above the elementary level, . Russian outdraws both Italian and Latin. (It may be that the defection rate of students of Russjan is less responsible for the decline of that field than are institutional pressures to cut back programs.)

We find the community-college influence on enrollment distribution differs among < languages. Of the six leading languages, we can consider the impact of data from two-year colleges on only five: only one institution of the 52 in our sample that reported registrations in Latin is a junior college. For the other languages, the import of the community-college data varies:
$d$
Of 142 institutions reporting enrollments in French, 39 (27.5\% are two-year colleges; Of 135 institutions reporting enrollments in German, 31 ( $23 \%$ ) are two-year colleges; Of 53 institutions reporting enrollments in Italian, 10 ( $18.9 \%$ ) are two-year colleges; Of 61 institutions reporting enrollments in Russian', 6 (9.8\%) are two-year colleges; and

Of 147. institutions reporting enrollments in Spanish, 47 (32\% are two-year colleges.

Among these colleges, the availability of intermediate instruction varies by language and by FTE size. table 3 shows the decreasing availability of intermediate language instruction as one looks from the larger to the smaller institutions. While our method of sample selection should have given us respondents 'that are representative of American higher education in general, the low number of two-year colleges reporting enrollment's in some languàges-especially when we further break the group. down by institutional size-leads us to advise caution in interpreting some of these figures. (Insert table 3 about here.)

From our sample it is apparent that language offerings in two-year colleges are for the most part restricted to French, German, Italian, and Spanish, and of these only French and Spanish enjoy solid support. We should note that several other languages are available in community colleges, and some of these programs are strong, though they tend to be oriented to a local clientele. Of the 35 institutions in our sample that taught Chinese in fall 1980, 7 (20\%) were two-year colleges. All but one of these were on the Pacific coast. Similarly, of the 32 institutions that reported enrollments in Japanese, 5 (15.6\%) were two-year colleges, all on the Pacific coast. Other languages reported by our sample were Portuguese, reported by three two-year colleges; Hebrew, Norwegian, and Polish, each mentionéd twice; and Modern Greek, Navajo, Swedish, and Tagalog, each mentioned once. Of four Tagalog programs reported, the others all at doctoral-granting universities, this one had the highest enrollment:

- By and large the less commonly taught languages remain most available in universities. Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Swahili, Ancient Greek, and Hebrew fare relatively well in the bachelor's-/master's-granting institutions: $21.1 \%$ of the institutions reporting Arabic were B.A./M.A.- granting institutions; $22.9 \%$ of those in Chinese; $29 \%$ of those in Japanese; $37.5 \%$ of those in Swahili; 38.6\% of those in Ancient Greek; and $35.7 \%$ of those in Hebrew (the latter two largely at colleges affiliated with religious denominations. Hindi, Norwegian, Polifish, Portuguese, Swedish, and Ukrainian were also reported by the B.A./M.A. group, but most exotic languages were reported only by doctoral-granting universities.

In his investigation of language programs in community colleges, my colleagueRichard Brod concluded that a critical mass of enrollment seemed necessary for success in building and maintaining language programs. ${ }^{1}$.With a similar faćtor of institutional size in mind, I questioned the impact of size on enrollment distribution and the availability of continued instruction in three languages: French, German, and Russian.

Table 4 presents the resultsof this inquiry.

Ih the four-year colleges and universities, it would seem that, regardless of degreegranting status, enrollments in second-year coursesfelative to first-year courses are higher
in the smaller institutions. On this basis, we may seek institutional factors that miliate toward a student's remaining in a language sequence.

In the four-year institutions, the concept of critical mass apparently influences lowenrollment languages, much as institutional size affects enrollment in all languages in the two-year colleges. While the smaller institutions are most likely to restrict opportunity .to continue the study of a less commonly taught language, the status of the commonly taught languages is considerably firmer in the four-year colleges than in their two-year counterparts of similar size.

We have resisted the temptation of equating a drop in enrollment rates between levels with attrition rates. A look at advanced enrollments in individual institutions reveals that a significant number of students are continuing to study a language acquired or studied previously: in the top six languages, 26\% of the four-year institutions in the sample reported advanced enrollments in excess of their intermediate registrations. Table 5 shows that these percentages vary by language, from a low of $13.7 \%$ for Latin to a high of $32.7 \%$ for Russian. Table 5 also expresses the impact of these institutions on all enrollments in these six languages: e.g., $13.7 \%$ of the colleges and universities in the United States that teach Latin are responsible for $33 \%$ of all Latin instruction in four-year institutions. These departments also enjoy a significantly higher proportion of their enrollments at the advanced level than the average institution does.

We were tempted to suspect that degree requirements may have contributed to ad-vanced-level enrollments on the part of students continuing with a language they had had in high school. But we note that this factor cannot act uniformly across institutions, as only $26 \%$ of our sample demonstrated relatively high advanced enrollments, and we had estimated that perhaps $60 \%$ of the colleges and universities have degree requirements. ${ }^{2}$ Since the MLA's last definitive report on requirements was for academic year 1974-75, ${ }^{3}$ it is difficult to assess the impact of requirements with any certainty. Nevertheless, with information from the 1975 survey, supplemented by the findings of ADFL questionnaires
distributed in 1978 and 1981, we attempted to determine the impact of requirements on these departments' enrollment statistics. The results, presented in the far right column of Table 5 , indicate that the effect of requirements on enrollments in these institutions differed by language: as far.as we could determine, $33 \%$ of the colleges and universities with heavy advanced registrations in Spanish have requirements, while $80 \%$ of those exhibiting this phenomenon in Latin have a degree requirement of some kind.

Although we have taken some pains, above, not to identify enrollment distribution with enrollment attrition, there will be some inclination to do so. Since the data we have provide the best available picture of attrition in registration, we shall offer some of our findings, fälty as they are. We looked at the two- and four-year colleges and universities that reported enrollments at both first-and second-year level and then subtracted from this group those institutions we could identify as having a degree requirement. Theremainder should come close to providing a "free-market environment" for language study. Our chart presents the registrations reported by the institutions in our sample that do not have requirements and indicates the percentage drop in enrollment level from elementary to intermediate instruction, These data are presented in the hope that they will prove useful by enabling our readers to compare their own departmental enrollment patterns.

Our survey also attempted to elicit information on the number of students registered. in sèyeral language courses simultaneously", as multiple registrations slightly inflate our estimate of the percentage of students involved in lañguage study. The response rate to these questions was relatively poor, however, so we have not attempted to project the impact of multiple registrations on our national enrollment figures.

Our respondents did provide considerable information on literature-in-translation courses that were reported by registrars along with language registrations. These registrations have not been used in arriving at our distribution patterns. Table 6 presents data on overireports discovered by our sample.. If our sample is representative of American higher education
in general, the finding that Russian is considerably overreported is significant. It would lead us to project that Ancient Greek has a higher total enrollment than Russian.

## Implications

As with most research, our findings lead us to ask more questions and to recommend adelitional study. In a positive sense, the heavy distribution of enrollments at the first-year lent confirms our attainment of egalitarian goals. If beginning language study is available in most college curricula, then in effect we have refuted any elitist image. The negative finding is of course the severe restriction of advanced-level offerings in some types of institutions, One respondent from a community college, apparently not realizing that we sent the same questionnaire to all types of institutions, remarked that obviously the department only taught first- and second-year courses because the institution is a junior college. Indeed, by far the great majority of two-year colleges teach at these only levels. But if they are restricted by compact with their funding sources fromoffering advanced language courses, then they fail to provide their students with the chance to continue studying a language begun in high school and they fail to offer any language-maintenance opportunity for the adult population. (Another community-college chairman, who forgave us for using the term "foreign language" in our inquiry about enrollments at his institution, reported more registrations in Navajo than were listed by any of the institutions in our data base; but none of these was in an advanced course.) i

A small minority of institutions evidence a relatively low proportion of their enrollment at the elementary level. We should now seek information on the precise circumstances that contribute to continued language study. Are feeder patterns from high school to college a significant factor? Does the co-occurence of entrance and degree requirements contribute to continuing a previous language? How do requirements vary in their impact on different languages? The data we have on institutions with large advanced enrollments seem to indicate that Spanish does not benefit disproportionately from the existence of a requirement (Latin
seems to!), but we can not know whether this is so until we compare the distribution of enrollments among languages--their market shares, as it were-in colleges with and those without requirements. Readers are encouraged to submit suggestions for additional questions that should be asked in future surveys.

NOTES :
$\mathrm{I}_{\text {Richard I. Brod, "A Study of the Role of Foreign Languages in the Curriculum of Junior }}$ and Community Colleges in the United States," ADFL Bulletin, 13, No. 2 (1981), 37-44, especially p. 40.
${ }^{2}$ [Richard I. Brod,] "Survey of Foreign Language Requirements," MLA Newsletter, 13, No. 3 (1981), 1.
${ }^{3}$ Richard I. Brod and Jeffrey H. Meyerson, "The Foreign Lainguage Requirement-Report on the 1974-75 Survey," ADFL Bulletin, 7 , No. 1 (1975), 43-48.

Table 1. Distribution of Enrollments in the Six Most Commonly Taught Languages, Two- and Four-Year Institutions of Higher Education

*Rounded to nearest hundred.

Table 2. Distribution of Enrollments in the Six Most Commonly Taught Languages, Four-Year Colleges and Universities

| Language | First-Year | Second-Year | Advanced | Estimated No. of <br> Advanced Enroll- <br> ments, Nationally* |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| French | $52.0 \%$ |  |  |  |
| German | $57.3 \%$ | $26.9 \%$ | $21.1 \%$ | 43,300 |
| Italian | $74.7 \%$ | $13.2 \%$ | $19.6 \%$ | 20,800 |
| Latin | $69.4 \%$ | $13.9 \%$ | $11.4 \%$ | 3,200 |
| Russian | $53.3 \%$ | $20.3 \%$ | $10.2 \%$ | 2,400 |
| Spanish | $55.9 \%$ | $23.2 \%$ | $23.5 \%$ | 5,100 |

*Rounded to nearest hundred, this estimate is based on the proportion of advanced enrollments reported here and the undergraduate registrations in four-year colleges and universities, reported in the preceding issue of the ADFE. Bulletin, 31-36.

Table 3. Two-Year Colleges Reporting Registrations in Both Elementary and Intermediate Language Courses

*No two-year college of this size reported enrollments in either elementary or intermediate 1 courses.

Table 4. Drop in enrollment Rates and Availability of Intermediate Instruction, By Size of Institution


## Notes

${ }^{1}$ Key: $\quad A=$ two-year college; $B=$ institution grants up to the master's degree; $D=$ institution grants a doctorate in a field other than this language; $P=$ institution grants a doctorate in this field; $1=$ FTE enrollment over 20,000; 2 = FTE 10,000-20,000; $3=$ FTE 2,000-10,000; $4=$ FTE under 2,000
${ }^{2}$ Fewer than five institutions in the sample; data for drop in enrollments not analyzed.
${ }^{3}$ One or more respondents registered higher enrollments at the intermediate level than at the elementary level.
${ }^{4}$ One institution did not report intermediate enrollments but did report advanced enrollments. This institution has not been counted in calculating percentages.

Table 5. Four-Year Colleges and Universities with Advanced Enrollments in- Excess of Intermediate Enrollments:


Table 6. Estimate of Literature-in-Translation Registrations Counted ámong Registrars' Reports of Language Enrollments .


