

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONALIZATION IN BRAZIL – LOCAL VIEWPOINTS

PERCEPÇÕES DE ESTUDANTES SOBRE A INTERNACIONALIZAÇÃO UNIVERSITÁRIA NO
BRASIL – PONTOS DE VISTA LOCAIS

PERCEPCIONES DE ESTUDIANTES SOBRE LA INTERNACIONALIZACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA
EN BRASIL – PUNTOS DE VISTA LOCALES

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to reflect on the relationship between internationalization and foreign languages (L2) as perceived by learners of a language and internationalization program, funded by the Brazilian government at a federal university. The discussion addresses the role of national/local language policies, relating them to the internationalization of higher education in Brazil. Answers to an online questionnaire used here suggest that the idea of internationalization is associated mainly with academic mobility. The importance of learning L2 for internationalization was also highlighted in the data. Problems such as the low number of language courses offered outside the main campus and the low language proficiency of lecturers at the university were also mentioned. The

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discussion of data leads to some suggestions to approach these problems, including Internationalization at Home (IaH) strategies and reallocation of resources for L2 offer, in order to deal with misconceptions still associated with internationalization.

KEYWORDS: Internationalization. Foreign languages. Language policies. Students' perceptions.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste estudo é refletir sobre a relação entre internacionalização e línguas estrangeiras (L2), de acordo com as percepções de estudantes de um programa de idiomas e internacionalização, financiado pelo governo brasileiro em uma universidade federal. A discussão aborda o papel das políticas linguísticas nacionais e locais, relacionando-as com a internacionalização no Brasil. As respostas ao questionário online utilizado aqui sugerem que a ideia de internacionalização está vinculada principalmente à mobilidade acadêmica. A importância de aprender L2 para a internacionalização também foi destacada nas percepções. Alguns problemas mencionados foram o número reduzido de aulas de idiomas oferecidas fora do campus principal da universidade e a baixa proficiência em idiomas dos professores da universidade. A discussão termina com algumas sugestões, incluindo estratégias de Internacionalização em Casa (IeC) e realocação de recursos para oferta de L2, para lidar com conceitos equivocados associados à internacionalização.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Internacionalização. Línguas estrangeiras. Políticas linguísticas. Percepções de estudantes.

RESUMEN: El objetivo de este estudio es reflexionar sobre la relación entre internacionalización y lenguas extranjeras (L2), a partir de las percepciones de estudiantes de un programa de idiomas e internacionalización, financiado por el gobierno brasileño en una universidad federal. La discusión aborda el papel de las políticas lingüísticas nacionales y locales, relacionándolas con la internacionalización en Brasil. Las respuestas a una encuesta en línea utilizada aquí sugieren que la idea de internacionalización está principalmente vinculada a la movilidad académica. La importancia de aprender L2 para la internacionalización también se destacó en las percepciones. Algunos problemas mencionados se relacionan con el bajo número de clases de idiomas ofrecidos fuera del campus principal y la baja competencia lingüística de los profesores de la universidad. La discusión concluye con algunas sugerencias, incluyendo estrategias de Internacionalización en Casa (IeC) y la reasignación de recursos para la oferta de L2, para tratar con conceptos erróneos asociados a la internacionalización.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Internacionalización. Lenguas extranjeras. Políticas lingüísticas. Percepciones de los estudiantes.

1 INTRODUCTION

Internationalization is a process that has been developed in the European context for many years. Even before the Bologna Declaration in 1999, created to establish a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and to promote student mobility (GVARAMADZE, 2008), there had been activities for cooperation in education across borders since the Middle Ages (e.g.: BERLINCK, 2013).

Systematically studied since the 1980s, internationalization became part of the academic scenario, with its inclusion in institutional strategic planning and national policies. Various publications describe and analyze internationalization (VOGEL, 2001; ALTBACH; KNIGHT, 2007; BRANDENBURG; DE WIT, 2011) as being linked to the idea of education as an international commodity (e.g.: LAUS, 2012) to be negotiated in the global market.

Within this setting of internationalization of higher education, many studies show the importance of considering the perceptions and impressions of students for language learning/teaching, such as Horwitz (1985), Brosh (1996), Noels (2001), Griffiths (2007), and Gomez (2018). These authors indicate that becoming aware of such perceptions can help teachers motivate their students, support students' autonomy, and improve learning/teaching strategies.

The study of internationalization and its relation with languages is a recent phenomenon in Brazil (e.g.: FINARDI; SANTOS; GUIMARÃES, 2016; BAUMVOL; SARMENTO, 2016; GUIMARÃES; FINARDI, 2018). According to Finardi and Archanjo (2018), the Science without Borders (SwB) program, established in 2011 to send more than 100,000 students abroad, was one of the most important (and expensive) milestones of internationalization in Brazil.

Because of the perceived lack of language proficiency of SwB applicants, the Brazilian government launched the English without Borders (EwB) program in 2012 and expanded it to include other languages, renaming it Language without Borders (LwB) during the 2014-2019 period. Initially established to develop foreign language proficiency for higher education students, LwB became the most important internationalization/language program inducing the establishment of institutional language policies, yet representing a covert language policy (LP) in Brazil. LwB still hasn't published an official document containing an explicit language policy for Brazilian higher education institutions, although some guidelines (FAUBAI, 2017) have been recently published.

LwB was a national program offering online courses, face-to-face classes and proficiency exams free of charge to its member institutions in eight languages: English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Chinese and Portuguese as a foreign language (PFL). Not all languages were offered in LwB member institutions, due to limitations of human resources. The activities were available to undergraduate and graduate students, as well as to faculty and administrative staff of member higher education institutions (HEIs). In addition, LwB was concerned with teacher education, since LwB instructors were undergraduate students who used their theoretical knowledge in a real teaching environment – they also had training sessions, with coordinators of LwB.

The Federal University of Espirito Santo (UFES) is a public university located in Southeast Brazil, member of EwB/LwB since 2012. UFES participated in two calls (2013 and 2017) to be accredited for EwB and LwB, respectively. UFES was engaged in promoting foreign language proficiency, and offered courses of English, French, Italian and PFL, through LwB.

The 2013 call was launched for Brazilian universities to receive funding from the Ministry of Education (MEC) for activities in the English language. The 2017 call kept the funding for English and expanded LwB for other languages (with local funding from the universities), requiring member institutions to create their own language policies. This requirement suggests an implicit policy in favor of English, making HEIs responsible for funding other languages.

In order to understand how students perceived the relation between LwB and internationalization in a local context, a questionnaire was sent to people who had been LwB language learners between 2015 and 2018. The goal was to analyze local views embodied in students' perceptions concerning foreign languages and internationalization, relating them to global views embodied in national language policies and internationalization agendas.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This study attempted to tackle the notion of satisfaction. Along with effectiveness (outcomes) and efficiency (the benefit-cost ratio), satisfaction is a measure with a long history in the social sciences, despite its limitations (DI PALO, 1997). This author states that “the most effective, efficient [...] program is of limited use if it does not fulfill the needs of the individuals or groups receiving the service, i.e., if it does not produce satisfaction” (DI PALO, 1997, p. 422). In the field of education, one can also find studies about student satisfaction, such as Fieger (2012).

The issue of native language (L1) influence in second language (L2) learning, along with related challenges/opportunities, such as discussed by Bhela (1999), Bernabé (2008) and Santos and Magalhães (2018) was also important for the present study. These authors indicate that though some difficulties may arise due to the influence of L1 in L2, L2 can be a useful tool to develop L1, along with translation.

Internationalization can be understood as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (KNIGHT, 2003, p. 2). Knight and De Wit (2018, p. 3) state that internationalization “has come of age”, because it is no longer a marginalized or *ad hoc* part of the higher education scenario. Many other concepts unfolded from this initial definition, such as active/passive internationalization (LIMA; MARANHÃO, 2009), comprehensive internationalization (HUDZIK, 2011) critical internationalization (VAVRUS; PEKOL, 2015), and Internationalization at Home (BEELEN; JONES, 2015).

Internationalization is a theme present in HEIs strategic plans, international declarations, and academic articles – all that indicating the centrality of this topic in the higher education area. Internationalization can happen in multiple ways, including (but not limited to) student mobility, joint research, international agreements, and language courses.

Knight and De Wit (2018) indicate an increasing generation of knowledge, resulting from internationalization, and the use of this knowledge as a form of soft power, influenced by competitiveness, dominance, and self-interest. These authors present an alternative called “knowledge diplomacy”, in which education and knowledge creation can promote international relations – a reciprocal process with mutual benefits for the parties. In other words, this diplomacy requires partners to contribute in a balanced way for creating knowledge, instead of having one institution as the center of knowledge and others receiving it passively.

Concerning language policies (LPs), Spolsky (2004, p. 9) states that LPs exist in a complex scenario of “social, political, economic, religious, demographic, educational and cultural factors”. Besides, due to the centrality of language to education and the languages chosen to be the medium of instruction, LPs have acquired an important role in various levels of education. Spolsky (2004) also indicates that LPs have three main components: 1) language practices; 2) language beliefs/ideology; 3) efforts to modify practices (intervention, planning, and management). Besides, Ricento (2006) states that LPs examine the effects of ideologies about language on language behavior.

Languages also play roles in social life and each of them acquires a status, namely, a “perceived relative value of a named language, usually related to its social utility” (RICENTO, 2006, p. 5), which does not depend exclusively on official status written on legal documents – status can be related to aesthetics and political ideology, for example.

Shohamy (2006) observes that language is often used by policymakers to manipulate social, educational, and economic agendas. She adds that language can also be used to demonstrate group membership, inclusion/exclusion, economic status, and categorization of people/identities, through overt and covert mechanisms.

Moreover, LPs aim to influence language practices in society. In the case of higher education, such policies are usually issued by institutions such as ministries of education, although in practice these policies might have little impact on everyday teaching – “in other words, language managerial decisions are closely linked to agent beliefs and behavior and thus need to be viewed in relation to one another” (DAFOUZ; HÜTTNER; SMIT, 2016, p. 126).

Another point to consider is the connection between internationalization and LPs for language learning. According to Hughes (2008, p. 111), Anglophone countries have dominated the internationalization process and four English-speaking countries (UK, USA, Australia, and Canada) “deliver more than 50% of programs involving students abroad”. According to this author, non-Anglophone countries (or those that do not adopt English as a medium of instruction) were not able to attract the “brightest and the best” students and researchers. Therefore, institutions without a clear language policy, training, and ongoing support may “damage more than the quality of teaching” (HUGHES, 2008, p. 111). However, with an increasing number of institutions recently entering into international collaboration/competition, this scenario might be changing (DAFOUZ; HÜTTNER; SMIT, 2016).

In Brazil, there has been an increase in studies connecting internationalization and LPs: Finardi and Porcino (2014); Baumvol and Sarmiento (2016); Finardi, Santos and Guimarães (2016); Miranda and Stallivieri (2017); Hildeblando Junior and Finardi (2018); Morosini and Corte (2018); Guimarães and Kremer (2020) are some examples. The main discussions are about the use of English as a strategy for local internationalization, the adjustment between internationalization and language policies, and virtual collaboration between institutions, using foreign languages.

Liu (2019) discusses policies and the role of English in higher education. Concerning the use of English as a medium of instruction (EMI), she states that “the applicability of EMI varies greatly depending on the general development of higher education”. In the case of Brazil, Martinez (2016) describes the challenges of EMI. Yet, it is important to analyze each institutional context since each may react differently to internationalization and LPs.

In the European context, according to Dafouz, Hüttner and Smit (2016), there has been an Englishization (or Anglicization) of university education, due to the growing number of programs offered in English, suggesting political endeavors of HEIs to be part of the internationalization movement. Within this context, Julián-de-Vega and Ávila-López (2018) and Ramos-García and Vázquez (2018) discuss the relations between internationalization and LPs.

In addition, Dafouz, Hüttner and Smit (2016), point out that English has become not only the language of academia but also of the internet (and social media). These authors point out that the reasons for using English in tertiary education include enabling student/staff mobility, opening access to communities of academic experts, and entering into collaboration/competition with other institutions.

Therefore, languages in university education have been connected to labels such as English-medium instruction (EMI), integrating content and language in higher education (ICLHE), and English-medium education in multilingual university settings (EMEMUS). In this context, Dafouz and Smit (2014) developed a framework to deal with dimensions related to EMEMUS, named ROAD-MAPPING, which include: roles of English in relation to other languages (RO); academic disciplines (AD); [language] management (M); agents (A); practices and processes (PP); and internationalization and glocalization (ING).

In the Brazilian scenario, education is going under various reforms, in particular concerning language teaching. The Law of Guidelines for Education (LDB in its acronym in Portuguese) defines various aspects of Education in Brazil, including L2 teaching in elementary education and high school. The previous version of LDB (1996) allowed schools to choose the L2 to be taught, according to local needs. For example, schools located near the border with Spanish-speaking countries could choose Spanish, since it was relevant for that context. In addition, across the country, local and state schools have been pushed to expand the possibilities for learning various foreign languages, because of the struggle in the 1990s, for a more diverse policy for language teaching/learning.

However, a recent reform in LDB through Law n. 13.415 (2017) removed this possibility, making the offer of the English language mandatory. This had serious consequences for other languages in Brazil, such as Spanish, French and Italian. Besides, language education in the early stages of elementary education is not regulated in Brazil. In these stages, many private institutions offer bilingual programs, in order to attract more students and create more revenue.

Regarding the role of English in Brazil, Finardi (2014) claims that Brazilians tend to see English as a prestige language (although it is treated as any other foreign language in LPs). Therefore, the offer of English courses in private language institutes abounds, creating a social gap between those who can afford to study English and those who cannot. Indeed, this gap was one of the strongest motivations for the creation of the EwB/LwB programs.

Although there is no national language policy for higher education in Brazil, in recent years this situation has changed, due to national government-funded initiatives such as the SwB, EwB, and LwB. Finardi and Archanjo (2018) state that SwB was the most expensive investment ever made in Brazil for international mobility in higher education for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) areas. SwB was responsible for exposing the lack of proficiency in L2 in Brazil, since most of the applicants opted for Portugal and Spain, due to the languages spoken in these countries.

Considering such setting, Amorim and Finardi (2017) analyzed the perceptions of the academic community in a local context (UFES) about internationalization. The study offered a starting point for the method for this paper. Using a hybrid approach and case study design (DÖRNYEI, 2007) the aforementioned authors analyzed data from questionnaires and institutional/governmental documents related to LPs and internationalization, in three levels. At the *macro* level, the study analysed national policies; at the *meso*-level, institutional policies; and at the *micro*-level, the perceptions of the academic community. Because the micro-level showed the most important data in that study, the present study aims at expanding the analysis of the academic community.

Therefore, the ideas presented by Knight (2011) and De Wit (2011) were used in this study. Knight (2011) indicates that myths are implicit assumptions (usually untrue) about internationalization, which include (but are not limited to) foreign students as

internationalization agents; international reputation as a proxy for quality; international institutional agreements. De Wit (2011) states that misconceptions about internationalization include (but are not limited to) education in the English language; studying or staying abroad; having many international students; the more partnerships, the more international.

Given the role of LwB in fostering L2 learning and LPs in Brazil, and the relationship between L2 and internationalization (FINARDI; SANTOS; GUIMARÃES, 2016; GUIMARÃES; FINARDI; CASOTTI, 2019), the present study aimed at analyzing the relationship between students' perceptions of the LwB program and internationalization in a local context. With that aim, the method used in the study is described next.

3 METHOD

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed to collect data from language learners of the LwB at UFES about: a) participants' demographics; b) reasons for choosing the LwB program; c) opinions about languages, materials, and methodology; d) views about internationalization; and e) the type of support the university could offer for internationalization and L2 learning.

Despite some disadvantages of using questionnaires, such as unmotivated respondents, the main advantages of using them include the efficiency in terms of (DÖRNYEI; TAGUCHI, 2010): a) researcher time; b) researcher effort; and c) financial resources. Questionnaires are also versatile since they could be used in various situations, with different people, with a variety of topics – the vast majority of research projects in the social sciences involve collecting questionnaire data (DÖRNYEI; TAGUCHI, 2010). In addition, the possibility of using online questionnaires (for wider audiences) expands their versatility.

Concerning the profile of respondents, they include undergraduate and graduate students, lecturers, and administrative staff of UFES. Their ages range from 16 to 34+ years old. Convenience/opportunity sampling was used in this study, since members of a target population met criteria related to this study, such as being part of the UFES academic community and being a language learner in LwB, as well as easy accessibility through the LwB database. Thus, participants had key characteristics to the purpose of this investigation.

The questionnaire had two main sections (DÖRNYEI; TAGUCHI, 2010): the first related to *factual* questions, to find out about who the respondents are; the second one related to *behavioral* questions (what respondents are doing or have done in the past) and *attitudinal* questions (to find out what respondents think). It had 19 questions, including multiple-choice questions and Likert-scale questions.

It was originally administered in Portuguese, but an English translation is provided as an appendix to this paper. Piloting was conducted online with LwB teachers and learners. The administration format was by e-mail, containing a link for the questionnaire, with an expected completion time of 15 minutes. The survey took four weeks to be finished, starting in mid-January 2019. Follow-up invitations were sent two weeks after the initial ones.

3.1. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The university where this study was developed (UFES) is a public one, with four campuses in the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil. UFES offers more than 100 undergraduate courses and more than 60 graduate courses. With more than 25,000 students and 3,000 employees, it is considered a medium-sized university, by Brazilian standards. Regarding language teaching, UFES was part of the EwB/LwB program in their first format, between 2012-2019. UFES has also a Language Center (LC) that offers classes at a low cost for the internal/external communities, in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and PFL.

In order to keep receiving funding from LwB, UFES has approved its language policy. Although there was a great debate around it, the will of the Central Administration of UFES prevailed, in a top-down and authoritarian fashion, excluding heritage languages

such as Pomeranian, indigenous languages such as Guarani, and Brazilian sign language (LIBRAS). It became a document focused on internationalization only, reflecting the views of national LPs and the short-sighted interests of local administrators.

Such focus on internationalization (only) hindered discussions about the importance and relevance of multilingualism in higher education, especially in activities related to Internationalization at Home (IaH), understood as “[...] the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments” (BEELEN; JONES, 2015, p. 69). Through IaH, students from different language backgrounds could learn various languages for academic purposes, according to their own needs, without the need to participate in exchange programs abroad, which serve only a small amount of the elite student population, due to their high costs (e.g.: WANG *et al.*, 2014). By adopting IaH and other alternative approaches, one could fight the Anglicization of higher education and practices which may exclude several students (e.g.: LJOSLAND, 2011; JENKINS, 2014; DAFOUZ; HÜTTNER; SMIT, 2016).

Concerning incoming mobility, UFES used to receive around 30 international students every year, mainly from Latin America and the Caribbean (PAEC-OEA program), and Africa (PEC-G program) – most of them speak Portuguese, Spanish or French. The main language of instruction at UFES is Portuguese, with very few subjects offered in English, as described in the Brazilian EMI Guide 2018-2019.

In relation to outgoing mobility, UFES used to send around 30 undergraduate students every year, mainly to Portugal, France, and Italy. Graduate mobility used to send abroad around 40 students per year to various countries (mainly in the Global North) – as in the CAPES (Coordination for Development of Higher Education Personnel) list. Many students of UFES who go abroad use the services of the Language Center at UFES and some of them were language learners in LwB, due to a limited number of places in LwB classrooms.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was sent to 2,738 language learners of LwB at UFES. The learners include people who enrolled in courses between 2015-2018, although some of them attended courses in 2012, 2013, 2014, when EwB/LwB were already established at UFES. The year 2019 was included because there were summer courses available for enrollment when this questionnaire was sent.

Concerning the limitations, the time of the year when the questionnaire was sent may have affected the return rate, since most students and some lecturers and administrative staff were on vacation. Both institutional and non-institutional addresses were included, in the case the respondents did not have access to institutional e-mail. The return rate was 6,65 % - from the 2,738 people in the LwB database, 182 responded. Though non-participation may have affected the return rate, Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) indicate that a range from 1%-10% of the population is accepted in the survey research literature.

Questions A (name) and **B** (e-mail) were included for the purpose of eliminating duplicate answers. **Question C** was related to gender, to check the level of participation of different genders in LwB. Most of the respondents were female (59,9%) when compared to male respondents (40,1%). Considering the age range (**Question D**), most of the respondents (28,6%) were in the 34+ years range. Our hypothesis is that graduate students were the main audience of the LwB program (or more likely to respond to questionnaires). They were followed by the 22-24 years old (18,1%), 25-27 years old (15,9%), 31-33 years old (14,8%), 28-30 years old (13,7), 19-21 years old (8,2%) and 16-18 years old (0,7%).

Concerning the profile of respondents (**Question E**), most of them were graduate students (48,9%), followed by undergraduate students (40,1%), university lecturers (8,2%), and administrative staff (7,7%). Some categories may overlap – for example, some members of administrative staff may also be graduate students. This result confirms what is suggested in the results of Question D, indicating that graduate students were the main audience of LwB classes (or they are more liable to complete questionnaires).

Considering the campus of origin (**Question F**), most of the respondents (80,2%) were from the Goiabeiras campus (the largest), followed by Maruipe (12,1%), Alegre (4,4%), and São Mateus (3,3%), because most classes were offered in Vitoria, the capital, where Goiabeiras and Maruipe are located. Offering courses in distant towns, such as Alegre and São Mateus, depended on the availability of teachers, transportation, and accommodation.

In relation to the skills to be developed (**Question G**), most respondents indicated Speaking (49,5%), followed by Listening (24,7%), Writing (11,5%), and Reading (9,9%). Other skills (4,4%) mentioned by participants include “grammar skills”, and combinations of the skills mentioned in Question G, such as Speaking + Listening.

Considering that undergraduate and graduate programs have a selection process which includes a written exam, with text comprehension in a foreign language, it is no surprise that Reading was not the most sought after skill, since students must know how to read (with a reasonable level of proficiency) in a foreign language, before being admitted at UFES.

Speaking and Listening were the most sought-after skills because, in general, foreign language education in Brazil (at public schools) includes few speaking/listening activities due to limitations such as large groups (more than 30 students), few classes/hours per week, and schools with few resources to invest in audio/video equipment (TILIO, 2014). This issue is not limited to Brazil when one considers studies like Noom-ura (2013).

Concerning the year in which respondents attended LwB classes (**Question H**), most of them enrolled in 2018 (36,3%), a year in which the number of courses offered was high. The years 2012 (3,8%) and 2013 (4,9%) were the initial years of the program, so the low number of participants is understandable. Students may have enrolled in more than one year, as long as they do not repeat the same course. The year 2019 had a low participation level because more classes were planned to occur after the end of this survey.

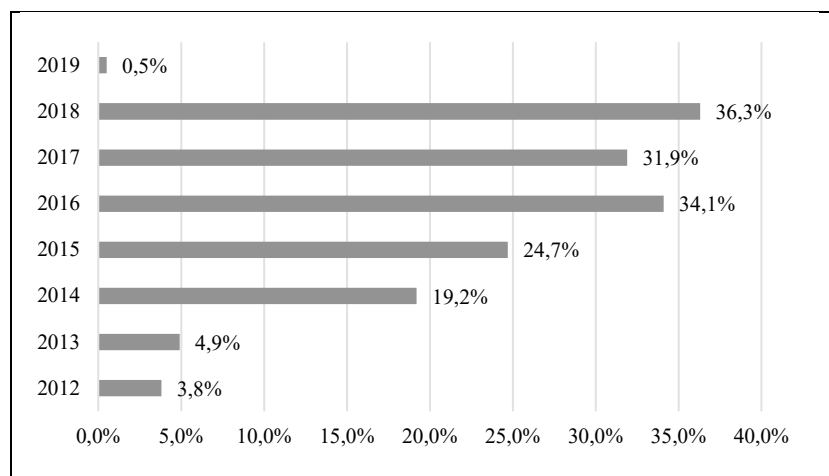


Figure I: Participation (%) in LwB classes, by year

Source: Authors'

In relation to the means by which respondents first heard about the LwB program (**Question I**), most of them (63,2%) stated that e-mail was the main platform for communication, followed by the university website (17%), friends/colleagues (12,1%), social media (5,5%) and others (2,2%). Other sources mentioned by participants are advertising on campus; the LwB website; and invitations sent by the Ministry of Education (MEC). It is surprising that social media did not have higher participation in this question. This may have happened because only recently a secretariat was established to develop social media websites for LwB at UFES. It is interesting to notice that friends/colleagues had an important role (12,1%) in inviting new learners to LwB.

When asked why they had enrolled in LwB classes (**Question J**), most participants said that they wanted to learn languages for both academic and general purposes (53,3%), followed by academic purposes only (29,7%) and general purposes only (15,4%). Other purposes (1,6%) mentioned include improving vocabulary and developing speaking skills. Considering that one of the main purposes of the LwB program (as stated on its website) was developing languages for academic purposes, our hypothesis was that

LwB participants were not aware of the main goals of the program, or they might have used LwB to develop general language skills, not only academic ones.

When asked about the role of the first language (L1) in foreign language (L2) learning (**Question K**), most respondents (41,8%) said that L1 helps in L2 learning, followed by the ones who said that L1 does not interfere in L2 learning (28,6%). 15,4% stated that they could not tell the influence of L1 in L2 learning. Only 14,2% said that L1 hinders L2 learning.

Since Portuguese and English do not belong to the same language group, it is interesting to see that Portuguese speakers consider their L1 helpful in learning L2. Besides, some methodologies in the past discouraged the use of L1 in the L2 classroom, as well as translation (FINARDI; PORCINO, 2014) – these answers suggest a change in contemporary times in Brazil for language learning/teaching, such as discussed by Bernabé (2008) and Santos and Magalhães (2018). According to these authors, L1 can be helpful in learning L2 and translation tasks can be included in class, as a tool for L2 development.

Considering the learning materials (**Question L**), almost half of the participants considered them Good (44,5%). If taken together, Good, Very Good (21,4%) and Excellent (9,9%) represent more than 75% of the opinions.

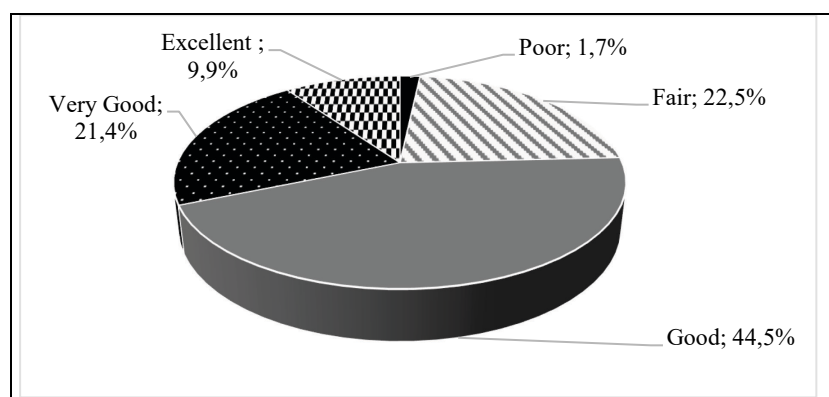


Figure 2: Students' opinions about the learning materials (%)

Source: Authors'

Participants were also asked if they knew that LwB materials were prepared by their very own teachers (**Question M**) – almost two-thirds of them knew (65,9%) and 34,1% did not. Although many language learners lack knowledge regarding material design, they might have compared the LwB materials with other previous experiences and chose to rank them as "Good". This question was included because one of the aims of LwB was preparing teachers to design materials.

When asked about the methodology used by LwB teachers (**Question N**), most respondents said it was Good (44,5%), followed by Very Good (28%), Excellent (16,5%), Fair (9,9%), and Poor (1,1%). If Good and Very Good are taken together, they made up almost 75% of the opinions, suggesting that the education LwB teachers acquired, along with training sessions, had a good impact on classroom methodology.

Concerning the overall rate of satisfaction related to the LwB program (**Question O**), most participants considered it Very Good (61,5%), followed by Excellent (23,6%), Good (7,1%), Fair (6%), and Poor (1,8%). If taken together, Very Good and Excellent made up more than 85% of the opinions, suggesting that the UFES community appreciated LwB.

Concerning **Question P**, most respondents considered LwB a program for language learning only (45,6%), followed by both a language and internationalization program (41,8%) and an internationalization program only (12,6%). This result suggests that LwB learners were becoming more aware of the connection between language learning and internationalization.

In relation to the languages chosen for learning (**Question Q**), the great majority of respondents chose English (97,8%), followed by Italian (5,5%), French (4,9%), and Portuguese as a foreign language (0,5%). Participants could have learned more than one language between 2012 and 2019, but French, Italian, and PFL had just been added to LwB at UFES in that period.

When asked about the meaning of internationalization (**Question R**), most respondents (80,8%) answered that it was associated with “studying abroad/exchange programs”. This is in line with the myths and misconceptions about internationalization discussed by Knight (2011) and De Wit (2011), in which many people still believe that the main purpose of internationalizing is to promote mobility, along with establishing more agreements with foreign institutions.

Amorim and Finardi (2017) showed similar results for this issue, although in the present study the relation between foreign language learning and internationalization was placed second (68,1%), while in that study it was placed third, suggesting an increase in the awareness of this issue among LwB learners. Other issues (0,5%) mentioned by respondents in Question R include globalization; international joint research; integration of content, language, and culture. In addition, few participants said they could not answer this question because they did not know the meaning of “internationalization” – it seemed that the community at UFES was becoming increasingly aware of this concept.

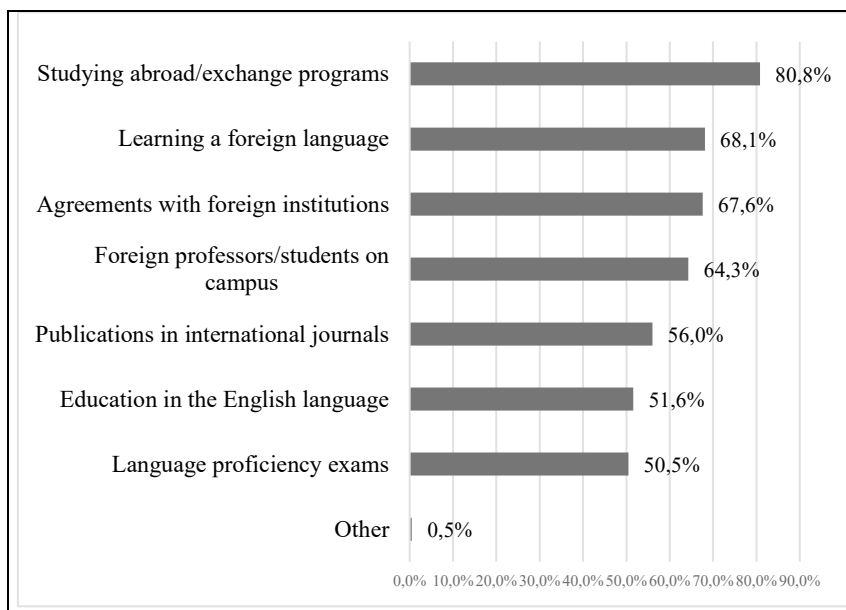


Figure 3: What internationalization means for the participants

Source: Authors'

Finally, when asked about the type of support UFES should provide to promote internationalization (**Question S**), the great majority of respondents (80,8%) insisted on the idea of offering “more exchange programs abroad” – in line with the myths and misconceptions about internationalization. Other items are displayed in the figure below.

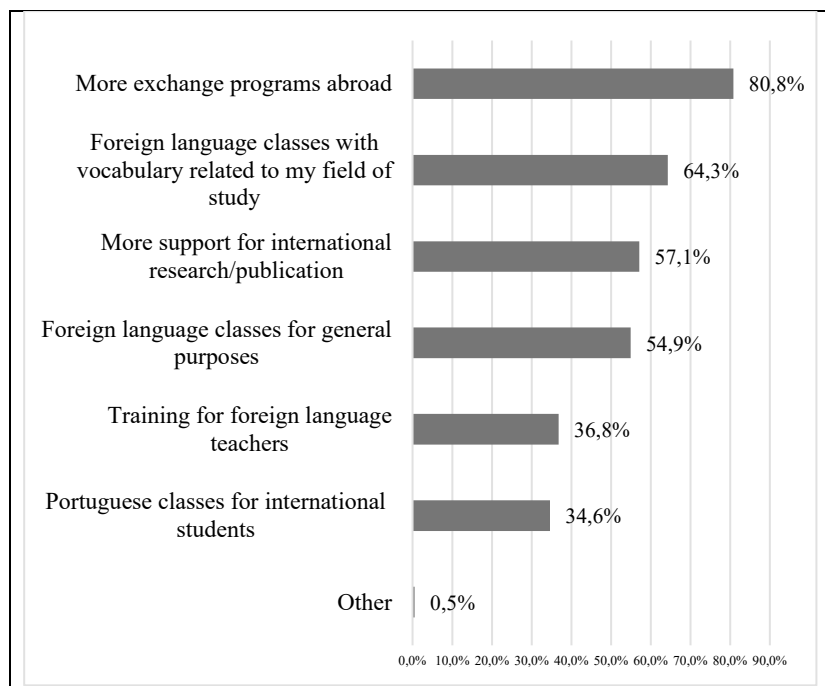


Figure 4: What UFES can do to support internationalization

Source: Authors'

“Other” answers (0,5%) included: more foreign lecturers at UFES; more L2 classes outside the main campus; more cooperation with foreign institutions; support for lecturers with low level of foreign language proficiency, especially the ones who welcome international students; integration of LwB classes to the curriculum of all courses, as an optional subject; keeping the LwB program running.

When compared to Amorim and Finardi (2017), this question had similar answers, especially the focus on “more exchange programs abroad”. However, the second option in the current study (foreign language classes with vocabulary related to my field of study) suggests that participants became more aware of the importance of foreign languages for internationalization (as discussed by VOGEL, 2001) when compared to the 2017 study. It seemed that participants were seeking to develop language skills related to their specific field of interest/research. Thus, they could participate in mobility, have access to international expert communities, and enter into collaboration with other institutions (DAFOUZ; HÜTTNER; SMIT, 2016).

Language classes for general purposes were similarly rated as propellers of internationalization in 2017 and in this study, as well as Portuguese classes for international students, and training for foreign language teachers. One should notice that few participants of PFL classes responded to this questionnaire, and many still do not see the importance of teaching Portuguese for international students at UFES.

The analysis of data indicates that, in general, the academic community of UFES considers exchange programs and L2 learning relevant for internationalization, as well as agreements with foreign institutions and support for international research/publication. Although some of the perceptions were still related to internationalization myths and misconceptions, one could see a different view of LwB participants in the previous study (2017) and in the present study.

5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of LwB learners regarding this program in relation to internationalization. Therefore, an analysis of the micro-level (AMORIM; FINARDI, 2017), that is, the local community of UFES, was conducted. Data analysis suggests low participation of the 16-18 age group in LwB classes, as well as the low participation of lecturers and administrative staff. A suggestion for the managers of the LwB program would be to create new strategies to attract these audiences, such as offering classes in alternative hours (like evening classes for full-time workers) and using various communication channels (for reaching younger audiences). Considering the current revision of the LwB program, its managers could use the results and discussions of this study to plan their activities in the future.

Due to the centrality of languages to education, and the results found in this study, higher education managers should review their policies concerning languages for academic contexts. By combining different policies to meet local, national, and global (*glonacal*) needs, institutions may have more chances to promote more balanced language practices, which are multilingual and sustainable in the long term. Therefore, the participation and agency of multiple higher education stakeholders are essential, in order to understand the local needs in the face of national and global pressures.

In relation to the strong connection between internationalization and student mobility, still perceived by many participants, a suggestion would be to promote concepts/activities/approaches such as Internationalization at Home (IaH), as defined by Beelen and Jones (2015) and discussed by Guimarães et al. (2019). Thus, internationalization could be a more inclusive process, considering the very low number of scholarships currently offered at UFES for mobility. In other words, participants still consider mobility a key activity for internationalization, and many of them feel excluded from internationalization actions, mainly because of the few opportunities for mobility currently offered at UFES. Therefore, there should be an integration of international/intercultural dimensions into the formal/informal curriculum, by offering activities in which students can be part of internationalization without leaving the campus, such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL).

The “other” answers that emerged from the questionnaire show the lack of L2 activities for other campuses and so a reallocation of LwB resources for transportation and accommodation could encourage LwB instructors to work in Alegre and São Mateus. In addition, there could be regulatory changes to the curricula, in order to include L2 classes as optional courses, with credit validation. The preparation of local lecturers to deal with international students is also a necessary action for internationalization at UFES – new specific courses could be tailored for this audience.

Finally, an integration of national and local policies related to internationalization and languages is essential for promoting multilingualism and facing the misconceptions and myths around internationalization and language learning/teaching. As a suggestion of further studies, this questionnaire could be used in other member-institutions of the LwB program across Brazil, in order to compare the results from different states and regions.

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APPENDIX A – QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for students of the
Languages without Borders (LwB) Program at UFES

[Adapted from the original text in Brazilian Portuguese]

The information in this study will be used only for research purposes and in ways that will not reveal who you are. You will not be identified in any publication from this study, unless you authorize to do so.

Estimated time for completion: 15 minutes

Contact: pesquisacsufes@gmail.com

Thank you for taking part in this survey

a) Name

--

b) E-mail

--

c) Gender

Male	Female	Other	Prefer not to answer
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d) Age

16-18	19-21	22-24	25-27	28-30	31-33	34+
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e) Category (multiple answers)

Undergraduate	Graduate	Lecturer	Administrative Staff
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f) Campus

Goiabeiras	Maruipé	Alegre	São Mateus
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g) What is the main skill you want to improve with the Languages without Borders (LwB) program?

Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking	Other (please specify)
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h) When have you attended the LwB classes? (multiple answers)

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

i) How did you first learn about the LwB program?

e-mail	UFES homepage	Social Media	Friends or colleagues	Ads in the campus	Other (please specify)
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j) When you enrolled in the LwB program, you planned to learn languages for:

Academic purposes	General purposes	Both
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k) What is your opinion about your first language (L1) in the process of learning a foreign language (L2)?

It helps my L2 learning	It hinders my L2 learning	It does not affect my L2 learning	Prefer not to answer
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l) How do you like the LwB learning materials?

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
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m) Did you know that some of the LwB materials were designed by the teachers themselves?

Yes	No
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n) How do you like the methodology used by the LwB teachers in the classroom?

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
------	------	------	-----------	-----------

o) What is your overall rate of satisfaction related to LwB?

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
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p) In your opinion, the LwB program is:

A program for learning languages	A program for internationalization	Both
----------------------------------	------------------------------------	------

q) Which language did you choose to study through LwB? (multiple answers)

English	Italian	Portuguese	French
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r) What does internationalization mean for you? (multiple answers)

Publications in international journals
Foreign lecturers/students on campus
Studying abroad/exchange programs
Learning a foreign language
Language proficiency exams
Agreements with foreign institutions
Education in the English language
Other (please specify)

s) What kind of support should UFES provide for the academic community to boost its internationalization process? (multiple answers)

Foreign language classes with vocabulary related to my field of study
More exchange programs abroad
More support for international research/publication
Portuguese classes for international students
Foreign language classes for general purposes
Training for foreign language teachers
Other (please specify)