

# *Internationalization in English language courses within Languages without Borders*

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**Abstract:** Internationalization has been discussed and considered an important topic to higher education. In Brazil, the lack of English proficiency perceived with the academic mobility program Science without Borders led to the creation of English without Borders, which was later amplified to Languages without Borders. In this paper, we analyze how internationalization is dealt with in LwB decrees and how the principles of the program are put to practice in its English language courses, specifically those offered at the Federal University of Sergipe. We also discuss the contributions of the program to internationalization in Brazilian universities.

**Keywords:** Internationalization. Languages Without Borders. English Language Courses.

## 1. Introduction

According to Knight (2003), discussions on universities international orientations are not new; in fact, 'internationalization' has been used since early 1980, when it increased in popularity. Before that the preferred label was 'international education', which is still utilized (KNIGHT, 2003). However, there has been great change over the years regarding its definition which involves "a dynamic combination of political, economic, socio-cultural and academic rationales and stakeholders", as De Wit (2019, p. 10) defends. There are many ways to do internationalization, given the diverse studies and ideas surrounding the meaning of this word. De Wit et al. (2015, p. 29) define it as a thoroughly thought process which integrates "international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society."

In Brazil there have been some actions towards internationalization. Initially, the focus was on academic mobility, through the offer of scholarships for Brazilian undergraduate and post-graduate students, as well as researchers to study and research abroad with the program Science without Borders (SwB) (BRASIL, 2011). In addition, scholarships were offered to foreigners who wished to conduct studies in the country. The goals of this program included promoting training for the academic community, partnerships among universities and research groups; increasing the quality of education; propitiating visibility for Brazilian scientific and academic studies; and fostering competitiveness of national companies. As the program was implemented, it became clear that the levels of proficiency in other languages were insufficient to allow Brazilians to do research in countries where Portuguese was not the official language or one of the main languages. In order to solve this issue, another program was created: English without Borders (BRASIL, 2012), to promote the learning of English in universities. At first, only this language was favored, which can be related to power issues and the status attributed to it, often referred to as "the language of science". In 2014, the program was changed so as to include other languages, such as French, Italian, and Portuguese for Foreigners, among others (BRASIL, 2014). In this paper, we focus on the possible contributions of this program (henceforth LwB) to internationalization. Our goal is to

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analyze how internationalization is dealt with in LwB decrees and how the principles of the program are put to practice in one of its English language courses offered at the Federal University of Sergipe.

First, we present definitions for internationalization, highlighting its relation to globalization and power relations, given socioeconomic and historical factors. Then, based on this discussion, we analyze the decrees that create, reform, and amplify the program under analysis, addressing its actions and the role of English. Thirdly, we examine the teaching plan of an English course offered in 2019 so as to understand how the principles of the program are practiced and/or resignified. Finally, we make some final comments on the matters regarded in this paper.

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## **2. Defining internationalization**

De Wit (2011) states that internationalization, a topic discussed and redefined over the years, has been increasingly considered as crucial for higher education all around the world. Even though global changes have always affected universities, the globalization process has intensified that.

Kalantzis and Cope (2006) explain that there have been three globalizations in human history. In the first globalization, humans have walked around the planet and claimed spaces where they settled and built communities which developed cultures and ways to communicate. The features of a group would characterize its people as belonging to one tribe, whilst they would also differ one community from the other. As a result, around 10,000 symbol systems were constructed. The groups did not live in isolation, therefore, to deal with differences and to be able to communicate, they became “hugely multilingual and develop[ed] interlanguages” (KALANTZIS; COPE, 2006, p. 404). The second globalization is marked by farming practices and the consolidation of writing. Near to its end, the process of civilization got more intense, and Europe had conquered most territories in the world, imposing their language as a lingua franca or first language, as a result of imperialism. Homogenization and standardization become two important goals, as the colonizers try to impose their values and language to the colonized, in order to control them better. Power relations get increasingly unequal and “the agency of the few habitually dominates the agency of the many” (KALANTZIS; COPE, 2006, p. 406). Ideals of mass production (in less time) and more profit at less cost are spread and solidified. In the third globalization, the one we

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live in today, these ideals lead to the shrink of central state and to the solidification of neoliberalism. This word is defined by Harvey (2005, p. 2) as referring to “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.” Neoliberalism, according to the author, is a hegemonic discourse that permeates people’s thinking to a point that it is considered common-sense. So, it influences many areas of life, including education.

Another characteristic of the third globalization is the presence of digital technology, which has reconfigured the boundaries of time and space, allowing more interactions and exchanges among people from different nationalities and among scholars. Understanding globalization is important to comprehend internationalization, because, even though they are not synonyms, they are closely related. On the topic, Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (*apud* DE WIT, 2013, p. 15) define globalization as

the reality shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and communications technology, the emergence of an international knowledge network, the role of the English language, and other forces beyond the control of academic institutions [...]. Internationalization is defined as the variety of policies and programs that universities and governments implement to respond to globalization.

Features of the third globalization often appear in the implementation of internationalization, which leads to misunderstandings on what the latter is and may reinforce ideologies that favor certain groups in society. De Wit (2011) addresses nine misconceptions related to internationalization: it is education in the English language; it is studying abroad; it means offering an international subject; it implies having lots of international students; it is a success when there are a few international students in the classroom; it is not necessary to test intercultural and international competencies; it means having more partnerships; higher education is naturally international; and internationalization is a goal in itself. The first one regards reducing internationalization to the teaching

and learning of/in English. Given the imperialist roots and the power (social, political and economic) linked to it, English is considered the language of science and given preference over other languages. This reasoning limits the concept of internationalization, which highlights the importance of diversity. Therefore, a paradox is created. Fabricius, Mortensen, and Haberland (2016, p. 584) explain that, although linguistic pluralism is an expected outcome of internationalization, it “often leads to linguistic uniformity, simply because English comes to be seen as a one-size-fits-all lingua franca, even when this is not necessarily so.” The second, third, fourth and fifth misconceptions are oversimplifications of internationalization, which is understood solely as a synonym of mobility, of offering subjects that address ‘international’ discussions or of having a certain number of international students enrolled in courses within universities. Related to the previously mentioned misconceptions, the seventh “assumes that students acquire intercultural and international competencies naturally if they study or do their internship abroad or take part in an international class” (DE WIT, 2011, p. 15). However, it is not guaranteed that studying abroad or taking a course on international subjects and learning English will make students develop these competencies. The next misconception, in turn, emphasizes the number of partnerships among universities over quality; the idea is that having more international partners means being successful in the process of internationalization. The eighth view regards the belief in the international nature of higher education where nothing else should be done. The last misconception, on the other hand, holds that internationalization is an end in itself. De Wit (2011), nonetheless, explains that its end is to improve the quality of research and education, as well as to contribute to the development of society. Therefore, it requires thoroughly defined plans and actions that involve creating or modifying legislations and university policies.

Internationalization is defined by Knight (2003, p. 2) as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education.” De Wit et al. (2015, p. 29), aiming to emphasize that internationalization is a means to make education better and to help improve life in society, add “in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society” to the definition. De Wit (2019) highlights the importance of rethinking

internationalization from a critical perspective, making it more accessible (as opposed to exclusive and elitist) and focused on solving problems that affect society. The author explains that it has to truly promote diversity and to become less competitive and economy driven.

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### **3. Languages without Borders and internationalization**

After discussing the (mis)conceptions related to how universities and people, in general, may understand internationalization, it is vital to check to what extent universities interact with the International Affairs Department, in order to plan collaborative actions which may help the institutions to be more internationalized. In fact, it is necessary to investigate the way universities approach the internationalization of higher education to identify the importance given to foreign languages and how cultural differences and academic life are included in this scenario. As LwB was launched taking into consideration that the program might help institutions when designing their internationalization projects, it is necessary to analyze its legislation.

The Decree number 1.466 (BRASIL, 2012) instituted English without Borders (henceforth EwB). Its main goal was to prepare undergraduate students to take the proficiency tests required by Anglophone universities (to support academic mobility promoted by SwB), based on the argument that these institutions are best ranked among high-quality universities in the world (SILVA; SILVA, 2019). The focus was on one language: English, which reinforced its hegemony. Even though the program aimed to contribute to internationalization, it would go against plurilingualism and promote linguistic uniformity. The emphasis on Anglophone universities is to be highlighted as well; it limits partnerships and exchanges with countries where English is not adopted. Considering these (and other) issues, the program was reshaped and established under the name 'Languages without Borders' (LwB) through the Decree number 973 (BRASIL, 2014, p. 1). Its main objective was "to foster language education among students, professors and the administrative technician body of private and public Higher Education institutions, as well as language public-school teachers of basic education and to promote training for foreigners in Portuguese." This goal is wider; rather than focusing on preparing students to take English proficiency tests, it defends language education in a more diverse way, including other languages. There is also a change of emphasis; instead of only addressing mobility – sending students to Anglophone universities, the aim is to foster language proficiency of those linked to a

university and of public-school teachers. Therefore, it works on improving language teaching in schools, by investing on the development of teachers' proficiency, and it regards the improvement of research because learning other languages facilitates the access to more scientific texts and conferences, in addition to being beneficial to the diffusion of findings and studies. This objective is more aligned to what De Wit et al. (2015) defend: internationalization must improve the quality of education and contribute to society. The emphasis on teachers' education was a consequence of the work done in regard to preparing LwB teachers to plan and deliver classes in accordance with the principles of the program. In order to work as a language teacher in LwB, it is necessary to be an undergraduate or (post) graduate student; therefore, the training they get would be part of their initial teacher education process. LwB is compared to medical residency in the sense that, just like what happens in LwB, doctors learn by doing and by sharing knowledge with more experienced professionals (KIRSCH; SARMENTO, 2016; SILVA; SILVA, 2019).

Another aspect to be highlighted lies in the fact that LwB (BRASIL, 2014) also stimulates teaching Portuguese for foreigners. This makes the process an exchange of knowledge where the official language of Brazil and its culture are supposed to be learned and studied. As Beck and Ilieva (2019, p. 35) put it, "relationality within internationalization needs to be creative/nonlinear/non-reductionistic/dialogical by inviting reciprocity, allowing diversity to emerge, giving voice to different perspectives, and engaging meaningfully with both "here and there." Therefore, instead of only valuing English, it is necessary to promote learning on Portuguese as well, so the relation is not only "receiving", but also "giving". This way, power relations start to be questioned and Portuguese is invested as a language that can be used in scientific and academic matters.

Two years later, the program was amplified by Decree number 30 (BRASIL, 2016). This decree emphasizes initial and continuing education of language teachers and also aims to contribute to the development of a language policy in Brazil. The latter is important to the process of internationalization, according to authors like Almeida Filho (2001), Leask (2013) and Rajagopalan (2003). Fabricius, Mortensen, and Haberland (2016, p. 590) consider it to be a means to get the 'international' aspect of internationalization.

"the international" is not a necessary or automatic consequence of "internationalization"; rather it is something that one must

work actively to create. One way to do this would be to have an explicit and active policy of internationalization which integrates ideas about which language or languages should be involved in creating a meaningful form of internationalization.

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Even though contributing to a language policy is part of the program objectives, there are no details on how this might happen in this decree (BRASIL, 2016). However, in order to participate in the program, universities must present an institutional language policy; guidelines on what should be included were given by the general committee (BRASIL, 2017). We will not go further on it, since it is not the focus of this paper. This matter is discussed in more details on Santos, Gomes and Silva (2021).

The LwB (from 2012 to 2019) worked through an English online course (My English Online), face-to-face language courses for different languages, and the application of Test of English as a Foreign Language - Institutional Testing Program (TOEFL ITP). LwB started to be redesigned in November 2019, following the instructions of the decree that creates the ANDIFES-LwB network (ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DOS DIRIGENTES DAS INSTITUIÇÕES FEDERAIS DE ENSINO SUPERIOR, 2019), but we will focus on the functioning of the program until 2019. Table 1 shows the actions of the program that took place until the given year.

**Table 1. LwB actions**

Action	Languages
Online course (My English Online <sup>1</sup> )	English
Application of Proficiency Tests (TOEFL ITP and Celpe-Bras <sup>2</sup> )	English
Face-to-face classes	English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese for Foreigners
Online teachers training course to LwB teachers	English

Source: Elaborated by the authors

1 This course was discontinued in December 2019, given the end of the contract with the program.  
2 Celpe-Bras is a proficiency test for foreigners who want to certificate their fluency in Portuguese. There are application centers all over the world. In Brazil, usually, universities work with this test. Within LwB, since 2017, it is a requirement for institutions that offer courses of Portuguese for Foreigners to become application centers of Celpe-Bras (BRASIL, 2017).

It is clear from Table 1 that in spite of the presence of a diverse number of languages, English concentrates more actions within the program. This is clearer in the decree (BRASIL, 2016) which establishes that only English (not other languages) teachers should get scholarships from the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES)<sup>3</sup> to be part of the program (being trained and teaching face-to-face classes, among other activities). Teachers of other languages could get scholarships from other sources, such as their university, or teach voluntarily. At UFS, specifically, teachers of Spanish, French, and Portuguese as a foreign language worked as volunteers.

According to Rajagopalan (2003), English started to become the “most important” foreign language in Brazil with the emergence of the United States, after World War II. The position of power this language occupies has to do with a sociohistorical, political and economic context:

English is clearly a foreign language [in Brazil]. Equally foreign is what makes it the case that, if English is the *lingua franca* of international contact, that has to do with the success of British and [North-]American imperial enterprise, in relation to which Brazil invariably acted as a servile client. Thus, the distrust of foreignisms is the distrust of Anglophone presence in the day-to-day life in Brazil, especially that of the omnipresence of North-American corporate interests (GARCEZ; ZILLES, 2001 *apud* RAJAGOPALAN, 2003, p. 96).

Given the power relations and ideologies that permeate English (and we add, any other language), it is important to deal with it from a critical perspective, especially when it comes to language teaching. Developing and implementing language policies and internationalization plans also require a critical look; when dealt with from an uncritical point of view, they may reinforce mainstream ideologies, favoring majority groups over minorities.

We highlight, in this sense, that there have been political and ideological struggles with regard to changing the decrees of the program. The emphasis on English is not due to the decision of LwB

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<sup>3</sup> All the scholarships from CAPES were discontinued in 2019, now teachers can work in the program either as volunteers or with institutional scholarships granted by their university.

experts but to a broader social, political, historical, and cultural context. In fact, the actions, effort, and self-evaluation from LwB members and, specially, its leaders were the reasons why the program kept changing to contribute more to teacher education and language teaching.

To clarify and demonstrate how internationalization is understood in each decree, we list below the main principles of each one.

- Decree number 1.466 (BRASIL, 2012): aims to prepare undergraduate students to take the proficiency exams required by anglophone universities; focuses on academic mobility; seeks to contribute to the creation of language centers and to the linguistic development of higher education pupils.
- Decree number 973 (BRASIL, 2014): includes other languages; aims to promote language education to university students and staff, as well as public-school language teachers; seeks to strengthen language education in Brazil and language centers in higher education institutions; includes the commitment to teacher education.
- Decree number 30 (BRASIL, 2016): includes the aim to contribute to the development of a national language policy; reaffirms and amplifies the goals established in the previous decree; reinforces language teachers education; provides more details regarding the responsibilities of those involved in the program.

The decree which creates English without Borders links internationalization to academic mobility, considering that it sought to prepare linguistically the students who would be granted a SwB scholarship, and promotes only English teaching – not other languages. In turn, the decree which creates LwB understands internalization from a different perspective: as a means to contribute to society, in this case, going beyond the walls of the university and including public schools. In this sense, academic mobility is seen not as the goal, but as one of the options which can lead to the improvement of the quality of research. Other languages are also included, which is more linked to plurilingualism. The decree which amplifies LwB (BRASIL, 2016) incorporates the development of a national language policy in its goals and emphasizes teacher education. It shows the perspective of internationalization as a way to bring about positive change to society and to improve the quality of education not only in universities but

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also in public schools (through the offer of courses for public-school language teachers). This perspective is in consonance with De Wit's et al. (2015; 2019). Concerning how it deals with culture, the decree only mentions it when addressing the aim of sharing the Brazilian culture abroad. However, within the program, the work with culture is stimulated. Among the options of courses available in the national catalog, there are many courses which focus on cultural matters, such as "intercultural communication" and "cultural differences".

In the following topic, we discuss how internationalization is used as a guideline to plan English courses in the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), institution linked to LwB. We consider, to do so, the understanding of internationalization that permeates the decrees of the program. In other words, we contrast how the principles displayed in the decrees are addressed in courses at UFS by analyzing one example.

#### **4. A course analysis**

The language courses designed within the LwB at UFS, in consonance with the national guidelines, are based on three main premises: they must be planned to focus on academic life and internationalization issues; students must enroll in courses aimed at their language development, according to their areas of interest and respecting their level of proficiency, since it is not a regular and sequential language course; and students need to bear in mind that the final goal of the course is to prepare them for situations connected to internationalization, especially those related to academic mobility and collaborative projects with foreign researchers, in addition to helping students and researchers to read and produce academic papers in other languages, as well as to participate in international events.

Within LwB, the languages an institution works with depend on the availability of professors in the area to be coordinators and language (under and post) graduate students to be teachers. According to Silva and Silva (2019), finding teachers for the program is a challenge in some universities, given that some of them do not offer (under)graduate courses in language, so they have to accept external candidates. In addition to that, low levels of proficiency are an issue. The authors claim that many undergraduate students come from public schools and, considering economic inequality in Brazil, could never afford to take a language course.

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At UFS, French, English, Portuguese for foreigners, and Spanish are part of LwB because these languages are part of undergraduate courses available in the university; consequently, all teachers are linked to this institution. The face-to-face courses can be 16, 32, 48 or 64-hour long. Before enrolling in an English course, students must take the placement test of My English Online or TOEFL ITP, so they can attend the course most appropriate to their level of proficiency. Based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR), there are courses for elementary (A2), intermediate (B1), and upper-intermediate (B2) levels. There is a predefined catalog of course options to be chosen; they present course name, references and sources, and aims of a course, but the classes and planning are done by the teachers who will be responsible for it. LwB courses emphasize, specifically, the academic sphere and the development of internationalization in Brazilian universities (SARMENTO et al., 2016). In this sense, the program aims to address the needs of undergraduate and (post)graduate students, professors, and university staff; the courses are developed considering LwB goals and the local necessities of the institution – these needs are constantly researched, some of the results of such studies can be found in chapters of Sarmento, Abreu-Lima, and Moraes Filho (2016). These necessities can be related to internationalization at home and/or internationalization abroad:

[y]ou can see now basically two components evolving in the internationalisation of higher education. One is *internationalisation at home* – activities that help students to develop international understanding and intercultural skills. So it is much more curriculum-oriented: preparing your students to be active in a much more globalised world. [...] And the second movement is that of *internationalisation abroad*, including all forms of education across borders: mobility of students and faculty, and mobility of projects, programs and providers. These components have not to be seen as mutual exclusive but are intertwined in the policies and programmes (DE WIT, 2013, p. 17, his highlights).

Internationalization at home includes, but it is not limited to, the need to publish and to read papers and books in other languages. On the other hand, considering internationalization abroad, the focus

is on preparing students to present in international conferences, attend lectures and classes and other situations they might face as participants in academic mobility. All of these necessities are considered when the LwB courses are prepared at UFS. Considering the national catalog, the options offered focus on one ability (reading, writing, listening, speaking, cultural awareness) individually, that is, even though all of them can be addressed in courses, one of them is highlighted. Students, then, based on the areas they need to improve, choose which course to attend – for instance, an undergraduate who was put in the level A2 wants to enhance reading skills, so he or she can enroll in a A2 course of reading strategies.

The English courses offered, as we said previously, are selected from a catalog. It was created by the LwB team, based on the suggestions of local LwB coordinators. More options can be added to the list of possible courses, given that general and pedagogic coordinators can send proposals. One thing, however, is common for all courses in the catalog: they address aspects or skills that are related to internationalization. Considering the needs the academic community presents in each university, coordinators can suggest new courses to address them. Taking the course analyzed here, Oral production: academic communications, as an example, one academic genre is regarded: communications in scientific events. This course was, initially, a suggestion from one coordinator who noticed that people in their university needed to present studies in international congresses. In this sense, there is a process that begins locally but is expanded to the national sphere, once the course becomes an option in the catalog. Different topics are addressed, they can deal with internationalization at home and abroad. Here are some examples: written comprehension: papers, oral comprehension: lectures and classes, international academic mobility: first steps, English language varieties, oral production: reception of foreigners, IELTS: strategies, to name but a few. Regarding internationalization, some things can be mentioned. First, rather than oversimplifying the concept by limiting it to a single aspect – such as academic mobility, a misconception previously discussed (FABRICIUS; MORTENSEN; HABERLAND, 2016) –, many elements can be addressed, given the local needs of the academic community. Internationalization is, therefore, seen as being in service of the university. The needs of its community are considered, and they

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can have the opportunity to amplify their scientific interactions, which can, in turn, enrich their studies. Internationalization is also dealt with as being twofold, that is, students are prepared to read papers, listen to lectures, travel etc. but the university staff can also take courses which focus on receiving students from other countries, for instance. Therefore, the understanding of internationalization is in consonance with the decrees number 973 and 30 (BRASIL, 2014; 2016), which, as we explained in the previous section, are aligned with De Wit's et al. (2015) definition.

In order to analyze how the goals of the program are addressed in courses offered at UFS, we will discuss a 32-hour long English course which was offered in December 2019 to the academic community on the upper-intermediate level (CEFR B2). Its title is "Oral production: academic communications" and, as any other course in the program, it accepts no more than 25 students. In Table 2, we present the course plan, which was elaborated by the first author, who is also a teacher in the program, under the supervision of the local coordinators.

**Table 2. Course plan - Oral production: academic communications**

Class	Theme	Academic Communication Ability	Issue addressed
1	Getting to know the teacher and each other	-	-
2	Architecture	Elaborating introductions	Buildings architecture in history
3	Technology	Developing and understating arguments	The impact of digital technology on human abilities and social interactions
4	Astrology	Using indirect speech to back arguments up and to explain theories	Astronomy as a social tool
5	Chemistry	Explaining topics	Benefits and Problems Associated with Pesticides
6	Sources of Energy	Using connectors to contrast and find similarities between theories	Impacts of sources of energy on nature
7	Pictures and images	Elaborating conclusions	How photography can guide readers' understanding of happenings
8	Identity	Asking and answering questions in academic discussions	Identity and stereotypes
9	Art	Asking for and giving clarification; being an active participant in a discussion	What is art and how it is related to power
10	Review		Motivation
11	First evaluation	Writing a speech (considering the abilities discussed so far)	Free for students to choose
12	Music	Understanding the difference between scientific facts and one's opinions	Taste for music vs results of researches
13	History	Using the future to organize academic presentations	The presence of monarchy in governments currently
14	Medicine	Getting ready for academic presentations	Access to health care
15	Final evaluation	Presenting in academic conferences	Free for students to choose
16	Feedback session	-	-

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Source: Elaborated by the authors

Each class lasts two hours, so there are 16 classes in a 32-hour course. The focus of this course is on oral skills, but the other ones (reading, writing, and listening) are also approached, since they are all

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interconnected. The goal is not only to help students develop speaking skills in general; it is to teach them how to prepare oral presentations in academic communications. In other words, the course was designed to help students achieve this communication goal, which is related to the sharing of research results in scientific events. In addition, each class has a theme that is related to one or more areas of study, so that more students can feel connected to the discussions. In both evaluations, they would have the opportunity to choose the topic of their written speech/presentation, so as to make them more meaningful because in real-life situations they would talk about the results of their studies.

Table 2 shows the theme of the classes. After choosing them, we thought of global issues – which can also be local and affect students – to be regarded, considering the importance of engaging students in discussions on global matters and putting them in the condition of agents who can act and question reality. Internationalization, in De Wit's (2019, p. 14) conception, has to meaningfully contribute to society and be “more directed to the role of higher education in solving global problems.” This perspective was not noticed in the decrees of the program, but it was incorporated in the course. Therefore, one principle is resignified here: in addition to working with the goal proposed for the course (present studies orally in academic communications), we addressed a global issue in each class to promote critical perspectives.

Yet another matter is addressed, even though it is not addressed in the decrees: culture. We highlight, nonetheless, that there are courses in the national catalog which focus on cultural differences. Regarding intercultural awareness, one important aspect of internationalization to be mentioned is that, in this course, we work from a transcultural perspective. Benessaieh (2010) defends that transculturality explains culture better in a reality of global societies. This concept questions the understanding of cultures as separated and isolated from each other. Whereas the term ‘interculturality’ suggests that there is a pure (non-mixed) essence of each culture that the other (the foreigner) would have to understand, transculturality holds that there are no clear boundaries among cultures; one influences the other constantly, as there is interaction and contact. Transculturality

places a distinctive emphasis on commonality and connectedness, viewing cultures as mobile flows in close interaction with one another, where negotiation and change operate alongside

conflict. The transcultural does not dualize or polarize cultures as essentially different or potentially antagonistic, as the term interculturality can often suggest (BENESSAIEH, 2010, p. 19).

Therefore, rather than teaching students about the culture of the other (e.g. the culture of the United States, the culture of South Africa), we had them thinking about how one culture interacts with the other, focusing on how their identities are influenced by the ones they interact with through movies, music, etc. For instance, in the eighth class (about identity), students talked about how the social groups they interact with influence their likes and dislikes. They also had to think of the 'most important' aspects that defined their identities (e.g. nationality, language, ethnicity). Stereotypes related to being Brazilian were discussed as well, when they talked about how they think the world sees us, if they felt represented by that, and how they see people from other countries. By reflecting on who they are and their preferences, students get to see how their interactions with different cultures, which is intensified with globalization, constitute their identities, and so does learning another language, given that language and culture are entirely connected.

In conclusion, the understanding of internationalization that permeates the course is in consonance with the LwB's - contributing to society and to the development of higher education institutions. However, some principles were added or resignified. First, global issues were addressed to promote a more critical perspective. Second, intercultural awareness, in spite of not being in the decrees, was worked with, based on transculturality.

## 5. Further considerations

The EwB program was created to deal with the lack of proficiency of students and researchers who wanted to participate in academic mobility through SwB (BRASIL, 2012). Internationalization was mostly understood in terms of mobility and of teaching English which reinforces misconceptions of internationalization and promotes monolingualism, even though plurilingualism is defended. In 2014, the program was reshaped (BRASIL, 2014), and other languages were included, promoting more diversity; however, English continued to be privileged and more invested on. The power position of this language is the result of a historical, social and political background, so its teaching must happen from a critical

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perspective and awareness. Understanding the power relations behind language policies, which are an important part of internationalization, is crucial for English teachers and, especially, professors, because when the language is approached as being neutral and a-ideological, dominant ideologies may be reinforced, causing intolerance with diversity and the imposition of beliefs and understandings. As we have discussed, internationalization should be truly diverse, embracing the difference and giving space for the minorities to talk, so power relations have to be discussed and questioned. LwB also emphasizes that Portuguese and the Brazilian culture should be disseminated, providing some balance, given that EwB was worried only about teaching English.

LwB amplifies the understanding of internationalization by addressing different languages, mobility, academic exchanges, and the improvement of higher and basic education by investing in language education for public-school teachers and the academic community; therefore, contributing to society. Both internationalization abroad and internationalization at home are regarded, given that the actions of the program prepare students to academic mobility and to read and publish papers and books in other languages, among other things.

The principles of the program are put into practice in English courses – each usually dealing with one of them, as we discussed when talking about the catalog of options. However, the principles which will guide the planning of each course locally can be resignified to address matters that are related to local needs or/and to dialogue with different theoretical perspectives. The course we have analyzed emphasizes speaking skills for academic communications. In each class, one issue related to a main theme and that is global was discussed, so students could reflect and think of solutions, pros and cons, in an attempt of making them more engaged in global matters, like De Wit (2019) defends. Culture was also worked with, but rather than an intercultural perspective, transculturalism was elected, considering that it explains better cultural flows in the globalized world. Finally, we highlight that, in order to become more culturally aware and to develop transcultural competence, one does not necessarily need to be part of mobility programs and travel, language courses can foster it. Internationalization cannot be understood as only academic mobility or teaching English, given that they are only a small part of what this word means. Internationalization is a means to improve higher education and to contribute to society, not an end in itself, as De Wit (2019) puts it.

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