An internationalization framework for Brazilian higher education and the role played by languages

Um modelo para a internacionalização do ensino superior brasileiro e o papel desempenhado pelas línguas

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ABSTRACT: Globalization, technological advances, and new geopolitical organizations have impacted the political, economic, and social world systems, generating new ways of engaging with and "being" in the world. Higher education has responded to those changes by devoting efforts to internationalization, acknowledging its contribution to the quality of education and research. In this direction, this paper aims to provide a brief history of the internationalization of Brazilian Higher education, highlighting the language ideologies and policies that underlie the different historic moments, in order to establish the groundwork to propose a successful internationalization plan which is able to answer the demands of the present challenges faced by the Brazilian higher education institutions. Borrowing De Wit *et al.*'s (2015) conceptualization of internationalization, this paper reflects on some core elements that relate to who should be involved in the process, why and how it should be conducted and to whom it is aimed. Anchored in data provided by the methodological approach of a SWOT analysis, a five-dimension framework is proposed for the development of an institutional internationalization plan that can incorporate the complex variables that involve the process. The analysis developed demonstrates how language and internationalization are interconnected and how different perspectives of internationalization are associated with specific strategic languages. Furthermore, language is seen as a tool to promote internationalization at home, contributing to the internationalization of the curriculum for all, including students unable to go abroad. In this perspective, internationalization at home is viewed as an inclusive and equitable process. Language is also seen as a two-way channel: it values Brazilian identities and cultures while serving to participate in a globalized world. Finally, it acknowledges the fundamental role of language as a tool to welcome and value different cultures. In doing so, it helps individuals reconstruct their identities in new contexts and build a sense of belonging. This, in turn, enables the promotion of multiculturalism, fosters mutual respect, and facilitates cultural integration rather than cultural assimilation.

KEYWORDS: Internationalization. Higher education. Brazilian educational system. Languages. Internationalization at Home.

RESUMO: A globalização, os avanços tecnológicos e as novas organizações geopolíticas impactaram os sistemas políticos, econômicos e sociais do mundo, gerando novas formas de se envolver e "estar" no mundo. O ensino superior respondeu a essas mudanças dedicando

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esforços à internacionalização, reconhecendo sua contribuição para a qualidade da educação e da pesquisa. Nessa direção, este artigo visa fornecer um breve histórico da internacionalização do ensino superior brasileiro, destacando as ideologias e políticas linguísticas que fundamentam os diferentes momentos históricos, a fim de estabelecer as bases para propor um plano de internacionalização bem-sucedido que seja capaz de responder às demandas dos atuais desafios enfrentados pelas instituições de ensino superior brasileiras. Tomando emprestada a conceituação de internacionalização de De Wit et al. (2015), este artigo reflete sobre alguns elementos centrais que se relacionam a quem deve estar envolvido no processo, por que e como ele deve ser conduzido e a quem se destina. Ancorado em dados fornecidos pela abordagem metodológica de uma análise SWOT, uma estrutura de cinco dimensões é proposta para o desenvolvimento de um plano institucional de internacionalização que possa incorporar as variáveis complexas que envolvem o processo. A análise desenvolvida demonstra como a linguagem e a internacionalização estão interconectadas e como diferentes perspectivas de internacionalização estão associadas a idiomas estratégicos específicos. Além disso, a linguagem é vista como uma ferramenta para promover a internacionalização em casa, contribuindo para a internacionalização do currículo para todos, incluindo alunos que não podem ir para o exterior. Nessa perspectiva, a internacionalização em casa é vista como um processo inclusivo e equitativo. A linguagem também é vista como um canal de mão dupla: ela valoriza as identidades e culturas brasileiras ao mesmo tempo em que serve para participar de um mundo globalizado. Finalmente, reconhece o papel fundamental da linguagem como uma ferramenta para acolher e valorizar diferentes culturas. Ao fazer isso, ela ajuda os indivíduos a reconstruir suas identidades em novos contextos e a construir um senso de pertencimento. Isso, por sua vez, permite a promoção do multiculturalismo, fomenta o respeito mútuo e facilita a integração cultural em vez da assimilação cultural.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Internacionalização. Ensino superior. Sistema educacional brasileiro. Línguas. Internacionalização em Casa.

1 Introduction

International Relations are closely tied to the political, economic, and social changes that have shaped the world in recent years. The phenomenon of globalization, a process of rapprochement and integration among countries, cultures, and political-economic systems that started in the 20th century, contributed significantly to the need to open the world to new forms of belonging. Political-economic events, such as the end of the Second World War, the end of the Cold War, and the collapse of the Socialist bloc, among others, generated new geopolitical organizations and the creation, in the 90s, of large economic blocs, such as Mercosur (1991), the European Union (1993), and

NAFTA (1994). These political shifts were complemented by technological advancements that revolutionized communication.

The academia, as an integral part of society, promptly responded to this impact. In Brazil, the role played by internationalization in higher education has changed along the years, responding to different political and economic movements that marked the history of the country. Throughout this process, language has emerged as a vital tool to promote internationalization. Moreover, different perspectives on internationalization have been associated with different endorsements of particular languages.

In this sense, this paper will provide a brief history of the internationalization of Brazilian higher education, trying to highlight the language ideologies and policies that underlie the different historic moments. The concept of internationalization will then be discussed to lay the groundwork for a methodological approach to institutional internationalization planning. Finally, the last section will propose a five-dimension framework for internationalization that is able to accommodate all the complexity that involves the process, focusing on the role played by language as a strategy for internationalization.

2 Theoretical assumptions

To better understand the current status of the internationalization of Higher education in Brazil and, so, propose a framework to contribute to the consolidation of this process at the institutional level, it is fundamental to understand the background issues that underlie this process across different historic periods. As an attempt to provide a more didactic explanation, these historic periods are divided into four phases, starting in the nineteen hundreds, when the first Brazilian universities were created.

2.1 Phase 1: beginning to the final years of the 20th century

The 20th century was marked by important world events such as the end of the Second World War and the foundation of the United Nations Organization, both in 1945.

In Brazil, this period is associated with the creation of the first universities and the end of Getúlio Vargas' government in 1945, establishing what came to be known as the "first re-democratization period" in Brazil.

By this time, the internationalization efforts at higher education institutions could be described, as observed by De Wit (2020, p. i), as "more *ad hoc*, fragmented, and implicit than explicit and comprehensive".

A significant shift, marked by a more intentional focus on internationalization, started with the Constitution of 1946, followed by the one in 1967, which, among other things, ensured free public education in Brazil.

Furthermore, in 1949, the law project for the creation of the National Research Council (CNPq)[1] was approved in 1951. Among CNPq's attributions was "the promotion of scientific and technological investigations by one's own initiative or in collaboration with other institutions in the country or abroad" (Ramos, 2016, p. 105). On the same token, the Decree Nº 29.741, from July 1951, establishes the "National Campaign of Personnel Improvement in the Superior Level (Capes)[2]". Created as a national foundation, associated with the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), the first mission of Capes was to grant scholarships for graduate students to take master's or PhD in the country or abroad[3]. The policies and the scholarships granted by those two funding agencies induced Brazilian scholars to look for qualification in Brazil and abroad.

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[1] CNPq stands for "Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico".

[3] Capes stands for "Coordenação Nacional de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior". The "C" in its creation referred to "campaign", however, the term was replaced by "coordenação" (Coordination)" in 1952.

[4] Today another important role played by Capes is the evaluation of Brazilian Graduate Programs.

Later, the Post-Graduate National Plan (PNPG), established by MEC in 1974, strengthened and generated an expansion of graduate studies in the country, engendering a demand for faculty training. As there were few graduate programs in Brazil, a great number of scholars were compelled to have qualifications abroad.

This first moment is characterized by a vertical internationalization process[4], that is, a movement from the South to the North hemisphere, since the Northern hemisphere institutions were considered the centers of excellence.

This vertical movement is still observed today. Morosini (2011, p. 101), basing on data provided by Capes and CNPq, notes that the countries that most attract Brazilian scholars for qualification are France, the United States, Germany, Spain, Great Britain, and Portugal.

This country choice explains in part the predominance of English[5] as a foreign language in the academic context, since from the six above-mentioned countries in which most Brazilian scholars qualified, three of them use English as a medium of instruction (USA, Great Britain, and Germany), and the other three are similar to Portuguese for having the same Neo-Latin root.

2.2 Phase 2: end of the 20th century to the first decade of the 21st century

This second phase corresponds to the closing years of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, when there was an expansion of the internationalization scope with the signature of the first bilateral international agreements by Capes in 2001 (Morosini, 2011, p. 99). At the institutional level, bilateral agreements enabled student mobility and reciprocal credit transfer. Likewise, there was financial support for graduate students' and scholars' mobility. According to De Wit (2020, p. i), along with

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[4] The term "vertical internationalization" is understood as the mobility of students from underdeveloped and developed countries to economically stronger countries (Unesco definition, quoted by Stallivieri, 2017, p. 100).

[5] There are other reasons for the preponderance of English, but they are going to be mentioned in other parts of this paper.

students' and scholars' mobility, the signing of agreements and co-authored international publications "have not only been key manifestations of this perception of internationalization but also have driven its agenda and actions."

Another significant fact in this period was the expansion of the federal network of Brazilian universities through the national program Reuni[6], and the creation in 2010 of the two Brazilian international universities: the Federal University of Latin-American Integration (Unila)[7] and the Federal University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (Unilab)[8], demonstrating the national objective to enhance academic ties with particular world regions: Mercosur countries and Portuguese Language Countries, with a focus on Africa.

Finally, it was also in this phase that the most important Brazilian educational associations were created, such as Andifes[9], in 1989; Faubai[10], in 1998; and GCUB[11], in 2008. Andifes and its colleges, among them its college of international relations - CGRIFES[12], have the critical responsibility of being a forum to discuss Higher education at the federal level and propose actions and policies to the national government. Faubai and GCUB are also important since they contribute to promoting the internationalization process of its affiliated institutions through programs and

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[6] Reuni stands for Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais. This program was created by Decree Nº 6.096, from April 24th, 2007.

[7] The Federal University of Latin-American Integration (Unila) was created with the aim to contribute to the development and integration of Latin America, with emphasis in the Mercosur.

[8] The Federal University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (Unilab) was created with the aim of forming human resources to contribute to the integration of Brazil with the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), especially African countries.

[9] Andifes stands for "Associação Nacional dos Dirigentes das Instituições Federais de Educação Superior". It is an association that gathers together the rectors and presidents of the federal Higher education institutions in Brazil.

[10] Faubai stands for "Associação Brasileira de Educação Internacional". It was created with the name "Forum of the Association of Brazilian Universities for International Matters". Although the name has changed, the acronym is still the same.

[11] GCUB stands for "International Cooperation Group of Brazilian Universities", created originally as "Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities".

[12] CGRIFES stands for "Colégio de Gestores de Relações Internacionais das Instituições Federais de Ensino Superior".

actions while also working on building capacity for internationalization and promoting the international visibility of Brazilian universities.

This second phase is still marked by a preponderance of English as the main international language, being considered the language of the scientific community and international publication; however, other languages came to the stage to achieve national strategic goals, such as "Spanish", given Brazil's involvement in Mercosur, and the variants of Portuguese spoken in the CPLP[13] countries.

2.3 Phase 3: the Science without Borders period

The third phase in Brazil is inaugurated with the creation of the Science without Borders Program (SwB) in 2011. Other programs in partnership with foreign countries have also been very relevant for the internationalization process of Brazilian Higher education. We could mention, for example, the Brafitec, Brafagri, Capes-Cofecub Programs (in partnership with France), Branetec (in partnership with the Netherlands), PLI (in partnership with Portugal), and the European programs such as Erasmus. However, the SwB's scope was much bigger, reached a larger number of Brazilian students, and had a compelling impact in the educational system in Brazil.

The SwB's goal was to send Brazilian students enrolled in hard sciences and technological majors to international universities of excellence and to develop international internships in major world companies. To accomplish this goal, the federal government paid the tuition and afforded plane tickets and other types of financial aid for Brazilian university students, pre-selected by their home institutions. The aim was to prepare better professionals to work in Brazil in the midterm. 104,000 scholarships were awarded between the years of 2011 and 2017, when the program was discontinued. The program was criticized for national budget committed to its development, for the restriction of areas, and for the lack of assessment instruments to

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[13] CPLP stands for "Comunidades dos Países de Língua Portuguesa".

evaluate the real achievements. However, no matter the criticism, there is no way to deny that the SwB brought lots of unexpected gains that would engender important transformations in the educational system in Brazil.

First, due to the large number of students developing international academic mobility with the need to transfer credits, there was a pressure to revise course pedagogical plans (PPCs), making room for flexibility. This fact contributed to a whole restructure of the Brazilian academic curriculums.

Second, the SwB exposed a serious weakness in the formation of Brazilian professionals: the lack of proficiency in a foreign language, which led to the creation of another important national program: the English without Borders, then Languages without Borders, and, today, the Andifes Network of Languages. This program will be better discussed in Section 4.2 of this paper. Anyway, the SwB highlighted the need to invest in institutional language policies that could integrate the formation of Brazilian university students.

Third, the program gave outstanding visibility to Brazilian universities. Many foreign partners came to Brazil, and an unprecedented number of international agreements were signed. It also increased the visibility of Brazilian universities that were not located in the capitals, contributing to the interiorization of internationalization and disclosing Brazilian rich diversity.

Fourth, there was an expansion in the number and scope of partnerships. As pointed out by De Wit *et al*. (2015, p. 53), collaborations now involve "partnerships between universities or departments, between universities and schools, between governments and universities, between industry and universities, and between local and overseas universities".

Finally, it ultimately contributed to showing the importance of internationalization within the educational system, having effects on the national policies. The federal government in Brazil created at that time the "PDU Internacionalização", which was a portion of the national budget sent to universities

destined strictly to strengthen the international offices and, in doing so, strengthen also the internationalization process in Brazilian federal universities.

Even though it has been discontinued, the legacy of the SwB Program still resonates today. The Brazilian internationalization process reached such a plateau that there could be no way back.

2.4 Phase 4: second decade of the 21st century

The beginning of the fourth phase is marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to keep physical distance. In 2020, many would say that there would be a throwback in the internationalization process with the end of the mobility programs. However, on the contrary, the quarantine compelled educators and students to find alternative ways to keep the educational system working. Video conferencing tools like Zoom and Google Meet became widely used and were appropriated for educational purposes. The result was that, not ever before, it was so easy to interact and work with people around the globe. Therefore, contrary to what had been expected, this new phase reinforced the acknowledgement that although mobility is important, the process of internationalization goes far beyond academic mobility to involve other actions, such as: joint international research projects and programs, international publication and the internationalization of the curriculum. The quarantine demonstrated it was not only possible but desirable to develop joint international endeavors online. There was an increase in Coil (Collaborative online international learning) programs, in the number of international research networks, and the development of virtual international mobility.

Another element worth mentioning is the "Internationalization at Home" process. The term was coined by Nilsson (2003), acknowledging that the internationalization process should embrace the whole university: all staff and all students - not only a few professors and the few mobile students who received

scholarships for academic mobility - and, second, that multiculturalism should be valued and cultivated at the university as a tool for internationalization.

One of the ways to establish the internationalization at home process is through the internationalization of the curriculum, providing equal opportunities for all students to benefit from an international dimension in their formation, even without leaving the country. This goal can be achieved in different ways. Kitano, 1997 (*in:* Clifford, 2016), establishes three categories of internationalization of curriculum:

a) exclusive – one that privileges mainstream perspectives and practices, focusing on global perspectives. However, it does not allow for a multicultural perspective. For Clifford (2016, p. 26), this approach is a first step towards internationalizing the curriculum, "and can be incorporated into classroom practice without any disruption of the program of the course or rethinking of the curriculum";

b) inclusive – this kind of curriculum internationalization adds alternative perspectives to mainstream practices. It will have a focus on students' intercultural competence. Students are required to contribute to the learning process, bringing their personal experiences and knowledge to the topic. Multicultural groups are formed to accomplish assignments. According to Clifford (2016, p. 26), "this is where much internationalization of the curriculum activity currently takes place";

c) transformative – this kind of curriculum internationalization requires a new conceptualization and redevelopment of curriculum. Adopting a critical learning perspective, this kind of curriculum allows for the questioning of dominant theories and encourages new ways of thinking. There is a shift in the power relationship, creating spaces to engage students and teachers with critical global issues, such as social justice. For Clifford (2016, p. 27), the goal is "to equip graduates for global citizenship (…), and to address the issues of power, inclusion/exclusion, oppression, or marginalization".

In Brazil, Internationalization at Home and the internationalization of the curriculum were in great part motivated by Capes. In its Guide for the Acceleration of Internationalization of Graduate Education, Capes defines three steps for the institutional internationalization process. Among them, the one that shows the consolidation phase requires work towards developing institutional competencies for the attraction of international scholars and students, what Capes refers to as "active mobility". Therefore, the attribution of grades by Capes to graduate programs in Brazil takes into consideration this "institutional attractiveness" element. In response to this requirement, the universities have been devoting efforts to promote the internationalization at home process, with actions that involve the offering of content courses in a foreign language, the invitation of visiting professors and researchers, and the creation of opportunities (vacancies and scholarships) to attract international students.

Finally, this phase is also characterized by a focus on partnerships at the Global-South level. At this point, it is necessary to distinguish the South-South relations from the Global-South ones. Although both are important, the south-south relations are based on a geographical instance, involving countries located in the South Hemisphere, like South America, Africa, South Asia, and Oceania. The Global-South relations involve a more geopolitical classification, used to refer to countries that share a set of political, geopolitical, and economic commonalities. Espindola & Leite (2022, p. 50), for example, describe Latin American countries as "characterized by complexity of variables: colonial policies, diverse cultures, conflicting national development agendas, nation-state issues, unstable economies, civil society movements, and constant political changes". However, the term Global South is not restricted only to Latin America; it involves other continents like Africa, Oceania, and South Asia, as

well as the countries of India and China[14]. The term designates a counter-hegemonic movement that challenges the dominant political and economic powers, symbolized by the northern hemisphere countries, especially the United States hegemony.

The current focus in Global-South relations in Brazil is in great part related to the political and economic leading position that Brazil has assumed in this bloc and in critical world forums, such as the COP-28[15].

In this new scenario, other languages gain importance, like Spanish, Mandarin, and others from non-hegemonic countries.

The following section will present a possible methodology to implement an internationalization plan for Higher education institutions, taking into consideration the Brazilian challenges and the features described above.

3 Methodology

This section will propose a possible methodology for establishing an institutional internationalization plan. As demonstrated in the previous section, different approaches towards internationalization have been adopted, responding to different historic moments. Therefore, defining what is understood as internationalization is a central issue in conceiving any internationalization plan. That is what is going to be presented in the next section.

3.1 Defining Internationalization

This paper adopts the concept of internationalization proposed by Knight (2008) and later expanded by De Wit *et al*., who consider internationalization as

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[14] The participation of China in the bloc of countries that comprise the Global-South is controversial since China is a developed country and has exerted power in the world economy. Besides, China does not have a history of colonialism as the other countries in the bloc.
[15] COP-28 is the 28th world conference on climate change, developed by the United Nations Organization.

> the **intentional** process of integrating an 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** (De Wit *et al.*, 2015, p. 29).

The emphasis given in the quotation aims to highlight the critical elements that comprise this definition. The first core element is intentionality, which means the universities should devote efforts to make internationalization happen. As De Wit (2020, p. iv) mentions, "such a process does not proceed by itself but needs clear intentions." Therefore, as stated by Stallivieri (2017, p. 47), internationalization should be embedded in the political and strategic decisions of Education Boards and recognized as the fourth mission of the university, alongside Education, Research, and Outreach. "It can no longer be considered an option, but a university goal".

The second element is "purpose, functions, and delivery", which means that internationalization is not limited to academic mobility. Although mobility is important, it is only one aspect of internationalization. Moreover, internationalization is not restricted to international offices. To be considered internationalized, the whole institution should be involved, from the institution administration to the sectors and services that give support to the main university goals.

The third element is "quality of Education and Research", which means that the ultimate goal of internationalization is to contribute to the improvement of education and research. However, this improvement is not a one-way route. All the actors involved benefited: the host university, the international partner, the society in general, and the countries of origin of the faculty, staff, and students involved. The quality education will help prepare better professionals to perform in their home countries and in the globalized world.

The fourth element is "for all"- it is imperative to understand that internationalization is not limited to faculty and graduate students, nor is responsibility solely of the international offices. It must involve all participants and

sectors of the academic community. Furthermore, as De Wit *et al.* (2015, p. 29) acknowledge, it must be "more inclusive and less elitist by not focusing predominantly on mobility but more on the curriculum and learning outcomes".

Finally, the fifth element is "meaningful contribution to society", being this "society" understood as local or global society. Therefore, internationalization is not an end in itself; it should be developed to make contributions to solve local and global problems. One way of doing that is to develop strategic partnerships and have joint projects within the United Nations 2030 Agenda, which outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed at addressing global challenges[16].

Having chosen a comprehensive definition of internationalization, the next step is to have an overview of the current institutional situation concerning the internationalization process, basing this analysis on the five elements highlighted before. One effective tool for this analysis is a SWOT framework, which helps assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

3.2 Developing a SWOT analysis

As demonstrated in the previous sections, different approaches to internationalization have evolved over various historical periods, shaping how this concept is understood and implemented. Therefore, a solid methodological framework is essential for assessing the current situation and guiding future actions to address the challenges inherent in this process. This section will explore these aspects through the application of a SWOT analysis.

A SWOT analysis is an effective administrative tool to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of an entity in a particular period to provide data to inform a prospective administrative plan. Data collection can be done using a range of instruments: surveys, questionnaires, interviews, reports, and others.

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[16] For a better understanding of the United Nations' 2030 agenda for sustainable development, go to https://brasil.un.org/pt-br/sdgs.

In the particular case of my institution, data collection comprised an online form to be filled out by the faculty, data taken from the *Languages without Borders* reports, searches for specific data in the different university sectors, and official records of permissions granted for international qualifications and event participation. The data collected indicated the main languages spoken by our university academic community, the countries of interest of our scholars, the number of foreigners hired by the institution, the number and destination of faculty who qualified in international institutions, the number of active international agreements, and the number of international groups and programs to which the university was affiliated. Through this data, it was possible to identify the institutional strengths and weaknesses.

The strengths involved the number of highly qualified faculty and the consequent number of high-impact publications; the number of students who were proficient in English; and the support from all the institutional actors.

Among the main weaknesses was "language". Although many teachers had qualified abroad, few reported feeling comfortable teaching in a foreign language. There was not a Portuguese as an additional language course either, and the university staff did not have any proficiency in languages and were not prepared for the internationalization process. Another weakness was the infrastructure of the campuses, which was not adequate to receive international guests. Finally, the institutional norms many times constrained the development of internationalization actions.

Concerning the opportunities, the open calls for internationalization at that time were consulted, mainly the ones that had regular annual calls. Strategic groups and programs were identified for future affiliations, based on the faculty areas of expertise. Lastly, there was a selection of the main internationalization events that would be of interest to our institution to participate.

As for the threats, the main ones were associated with budget cuts and discontinuity of ongoing programs.

The SWOT analysis provided an X-ray of the current situation at that moment and gave insights into the necessary actions to be implemented in a comprehensive internationalization plan. The next step, therefore, was to propose a plan for internationalization.

4 Results

Based on the SWOT analysis, a framework for an internationalization plan was designed that could incorporate all the challenges identified at the institutional level, as well as the complex variables that are an integral part of the Brazilian political, economic, social, and educational system. To accomplish this goal, this framework comprises the following dimensions: academic, cultural-linguistic, structural, political-strategic and social.

Although this plan was designed with the specific needs of a particular university in mind, its comprehensive nature allows for adaptation by other Brazilian higher education institutions to address their unique characteristics and challenges

The following sections will go further in each of the five dimensions.

4.1 Academic dimension

The academic dimension refers to the internationalization of the main areas of the university: Education, Research and Outreach. Many different actions can be developed in order to achieve this goal. The first and commonest is student and faculty mobility, such as in credit-transfer programs, technical visits, "sandwich programs", and international internships. Although important, academic mobility is only one possible way of internationalizing curriculum, and I dare say it is not the main one since it is restricted to a limited number of people. Even if the university can award scholarships for academic mobility, they are given to a small number of students, approved by selection processes. And what about the great majority of students who are not selected and are not able to cope with the costs of a semester abroad? The

answer is the process of "Internationalization at Home". As it was discussed in Section 2 of this paper, to build a multicultural environment on campus and integrate an international dimension into the education of undergraduate and graduate students are key issues to providing equal opportunities for all, not only to an elite of individuals that can benefit from the process. Different actions can be developed to achieve this goal:

1. creating opportunities for COIL – collaborative online international learning. This is an interesting action that involves faculty in the home country and their peers in international universities offering a joint online course to students in both countries. Usually, there is no cost involved, and the geographical barriers are overcome since the course is online. In this kind of course, students take advantage of having a class in a foreign language in an online multicultural environment. For the sake of exemplification, I mention an innovative experience in this direction jointly developed by two federal universities in Minas Gerais: UFSJ and Ufop, and their common international partner: Avans University in the Netherlands, under the Program: Living Lab Biobased Brazil. The course was conducted using a project-based approach in the format of an "academic battle", in which students had to work in multicultural groups to develop a project addressing a specific problem. In this case, the problem was "how to reuse coffee residue for industrial purposes". All the interactions were conducted in English, although English was not the native language of any of the participants. The English language was used in this context as the mediating language, a tool to enable communication. The main focus was not learning the language, but to use it strategically to achieve other goals. The usage of a common language that was not their own contributed to fostering collaboration and innovation among students with diverse cultural backgrounds Many other initiatives were created, especially being motivated by Faubai, which assigns a special seal to successful Coil programs nationwide.

2. Offering content courses in a foreign language - another way to create a multilingual and multicultural environment is to offer the regular content courses in a foreign language. The class can be taught by a regular teacher, or by an international guest, or by a virtual lecturer. In this modality of class, the foreign language is used as a medium of instruction, and the students benefit from learning technical terms in their area of expertise in another language. This is the "exclusive" approach in Kitano's model discussed in Section 2. In Brazil, the offering of content courses in a foreign language is still very incipient, although there have been slight advances, especially at the graduate level, in most part motivated by Capes requirements for better evaluations of Brazilian graduate programs. Thus, creating language policies and better preparing faculty to deliver classes in a foreign language and students capable of attending those classes is fundamental if internationalization of curriculum is sought.

3. Delivering international content courses – what defines a particular content as international may vary among researchers, but in general, international content would be understood as the kind of content that triggers international students' interest, or the ones that tackle important global issues and involve students in reflections and collaborative interactions trying to find solutions to common problems involving different countries. This is the inclusive approach in Kitano's model. Another possibility would be offering content courses that enable reflection and intercultural understanding, questioning stereotyped visions and practices, and opening room for alternative approaches that are not dealt with in the mainstream literature (Kitano's transformative approach). Finally, I add another modality, which I will call "cultural identity valorization" that would comprise a set of courses to be offered to Brazilian and international students that would value and showcase Brazilian richness and diversity to the world and within the own country. For example, a course to present

the Brazilian Public Health System - SUS[17], which is a unique health system in the world, would be appealing to health professionals and students worldwide. Other ones could explore the Brazilian natural resources and biodiversity, the richness and heterogeneity of Brazilian people, and Brazilian cultural elements such as food, music, literature, and so on.

4. International virtual mobility – this modality gained force during the pandemic period. From the year 2020 on, new forms of interaction were facilitated by apps like Zoom and Google Meet. This fact enabled what came to be known as "virtual mobility", which is a kind of mobility program in which students can attend classes or develop international internships in a partner university or company abroad without the need of being physically present. Many initiatives were created during the recent years. A noteworthy Brazilian initiative was *ANDIFES Virtual International Mobility Program: Destination: Brazil*. This program was conceived by CGRIFES and involved the offering of online courses by 42 federal Brazilian universities and institutes from 20 different states. The program was created to showcase the rich academic diversity of Brazilian universities and attract international students who would be motivated to develop face-to-face mobility later. Another aim was to contribute to the internationalization of the institutions involved, to motivate the offering of courses in foreign languages, including Portuguese as a foreign language, and to contribute to the internationalization of the curriculum of Brazilian students. A total of 104 online courses from different areas of knowledge were offered in six different languages: English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese as a foreign language. There were 3,823 students' enrollments from 600 different institutions worldwide[18]. Three facts need attention in this initiative. First, the courses most sought after by international students were the Portuguese as a Foreign Language course, which show the general interest of international partners in our language and culture. Many would

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[17] SUS stands for "Sistema Único de Saúde".

[18] Data were taken from the CGRIFES Report presented at the CGRIFES Assembly in November 2022.

argue that the Portuguese should not be considered a tool for internationalization; however, the experience brought by the *Destination: Brazil* Program demonstrated that there is a pent-up demand for Portuguese language and culture online courses that can contribute significantly to the internationalization process of Brazilian Higher education institutions.

The second aspect observed was that although the program was created aiming to reach international students, most enrollments (1,193) were from Brazilian students, followed by Colombian, Argentinian, Mexican, Chilean, and French students. What this data demonstrates is that, first, Brazilian university students are not only prepared but willing to receive instructions in a foreign language. Moreover, Brazilian students are eager to participate in international interactions, whether in person or online, and praise initiatives that contribute to curriculum enhancement.

The third aspect is that although English has been acknowledged as a tool for internationalization, other languages also have a role. The enrollments in *Destination: Brazil* demonstrated a considerable interest of South American students in Brazil, highlighting Spanish's potential role in the internationalization of Brazilian institutions.

Another virtual mobility program worth mentioning at the national level in Brazil was the "Faubai-Fara" Program. Faubai-associated universities were invited to offer online content courses in English to Nigerian graduate students who were selected to take Master's and PhD degrees in Brazilian universities, being supported by the Forum of Agricultural Research[19] in Africa (Fara). As the participation in the program was tied to the need to offer the courses in English, many Brazilian universities put efforts into identifying faculty who were proficient in English and created courses in their areas of expertise. The result was a robust catalog of international content courses in English that motivated many Nigerian students to

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[19] Although the original name of the forum focused on agricultural research, currently Fara awards scholarships to African graduate students from all areas of knowledge.

come to Brazil. As a secondary effect, many universities that didn't have a catalog of international courses before were able to start their first actions in this direction.

4.2 Cultural-Linguistic dimension

The second dimension of internationalization is the promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism on campuses and the strategic use of languages to promote internationalization.

Developing a well-informed language policy requires a clear understanding of 'language.' This text adopts a broader, critical perspective rooted in Ecological and Critical Linguistics. In the Ecological perspective, language is seen "as relations (of thought, action, and power), rather than as objects (words, phrases, and rules) (Van Lier, 2004, p. 51)". Language from this perspective is not an object existing in the external reality that can be "acquired". It emerges via interaction between the individual and other individuals and between the individual and the environment, understanding "environment" here as the individual's physical and socio-historical context". Advancing this concept and adopting a critical instance, it is no longer possible to understand language as a mere instrument of communication, an expression of thought, much less a pre-structured system. In a critical perspective (César; Cavalcanti, 2017), language should be conceived as a historically and socially instantiated practice, whose heterogeneity of uses takes on a cultural and therefore a political dimension. Therefore, it is of vital importance to establish language policies that can favor and provide access to different languages, expanding the exchange of experiences and knowledge among individuals with the aim of promoting the formation of global citizens and assuring respect for diversity. This can be achieved by a language policy that acknowledges the importance of languages in four main axes:

1. The teaching and promotion of Portuguese as a native language and the valorization and teaching of other Brazilian languages, such as Brazilian Sign

Language and the languages of Brazilian Native Peoples (indigenous languages), aiming to strengthen Brazilian's national identities;

2. The teaching and valuing of foreign/additional languages and cultures, with the aim of promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism, respecting diversity, and combating xenophobia.

3. The teaching of Portuguese language and culture for international students as an additional and welcoming language, with the aim of promoting internationalization and disseminating Brazilian languages and cultures worldwide.

4. The teaching of strategic languages as tools for internationalization.

For the sake of keeping the main objective of this paper, I will focus this discussion on the axes 2, 3, and 4.

In order to consolidate an internationalization process, it is imperative to recognize the importance of stimulating a multicultural and multilingual environment. This can be achieved by the teaching of foreign/additional languages and cultures and the promotion of multiculturalism on the campuses (axis number 2). Actions like the offering of language courses by the universities' language centers and the organization of cultural activities, such as cultural fairs, implementation of multicultural centers, and others are some examples of what can be done in this direction.

Regarding the offering of language classes, it can be a challenge since a great number of universities do not have language centers, or, when they do, there aren't enough professionals with proficiency in several different languages, especially the ones that are not so common in the Brazilian context. At this point, it is important to highlight the crucial role the *Languages without Borders Program* (LwB) has been playing nationally by supporting the teaching and learning of multiple languages across Brazil.

Established by the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC) in 2012[20] as "English without Borders" and changed into "Languages without Borders" in 2014[21], the Program was created as an answer to a demand from the Science without Borders Program when it was acknowledged that Brazilian university students did not have enough language proficiency to successfully participate in the academic interactions abroad. This program contributed significantly to enhancing the language proficiency of the academic communities in Brazilian Higher education institutions. The SwB Program was discontinued in 2016, but the LwB Program got stronger and changed in model and scope. Since 2019, the program has been developed under the responsibility of Andifes[22] renamed "Andifes Network of Languages"[23]. Instead of adopting the old model of language centers that privileged just the academic community of a particular university, the new model was designed to attend students, faculty, and staff in the whole country through collective offers of language courses developed by the several affiliated Higher education institutions. The Program also counts on the collaboration of international partners and diplomatic organisms. Due to this joint effort, nowadays the program can offer language courses involving seven different languages: English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Portuguese as foreign/additional languages.

Concerning the teaching of Portuguese as an additional language (axis number 3), it has proved to be a very important tool to promote internationalization and the dissemination of Brazilian cultures[24] worldwide.

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[20] MEC Ordinance No. 1,466, from December 18, 2012.
[21] MEC Ordinance No. 973, from December 14, 2014.
[22] Andifes Resolution No. 1, from November 12th, 2019.
[23] In Portuguese, Rede Andifes de Idiomas.
[24] The use of the world "cultures" in the plural is intentional with the aim to acknowledge the cultural richness and diversity that characterizes Brazil.

A great number of Brazilian universities started to offer courses of Portuguese for international students, in response to the needs of the Brazilian PEC-G program[25]. PEC-G seeks to provide opportunities for international students coming from underdeveloped and developing countries to have a degree in Brazil. However, to participate in the program, those students must attest to language proficiency through the Certificate of Proficiency in Portuguese Language for Foreigners (Celpe-Bras), the Brazilian official language proficiency certification. Since 2022, the Division of Educational Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brazil (DCE-MRE) has supported this action, granting scholarships for teachers and tutors as a way to leverage the teaching and dissemination of Portuguese language and culture to foreigners in all Brazilian territory.

The preparation of international students for Celpe-Bras, although important, is not the only goal of Portuguese classes for foreigners. Two other ones are worth mentioning. The first is to value our own culture and disseminate it worldwide, as has already been said. The other is to motivate international students to come to Brazil and better prepare them for the academic genres in Portuguese. In this direction, online Portuguese courses for foreigners have proved to be very effective. Among others, the online modality provides the advantage of reaching all university international students, in the case of multi-campus institutions. This facilitates the teaching logistics with no cost or need for additional human resources. Another advantage is that the online classes can be offered to international students while they are still in their home countries, as a way to either motivate them to come to Brazil or to start their language preparation before they come.

At this point, it is important to mention that the methodologies and approaches used to teach Portuguese as an additional language are similar to the ones used to

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[25] PEC-G and PEC stand for "Programa de Estudante Convênio de Graduação e Pós-Graduação". Those programs are developed by MEC and MRE in partnership with Brazilian universities.

teach foreign languages in general and considerably different from the ones used to teach Portuguese to Brazilian students. The main difference relies on the focus of what is taught. International students must learn not only how to communicate in Portuguese but also how to appropriately behave and interact in and with the Brazilian culture. A more critical approach demands that international students can recognize the different aspects of both cultures: their own and the host country culture, respecting and valuing both, and bringing their previous knowledge and values to contribute to the learning process. This requires mutual respect and openness of mind to different ways of "being" in the world.

In addition, it is important to mention that as language is encapsulated in culture, there is no way of teaching a language if not providing opportunities for cultural experience. So, regardless of whether Brazilian Portuguese is taught face-to-face or online, it is imperative that international students can not only learn about, but most significantly, "live" the culture. In this sense, the Portuguese courses, if offered face-to-face, should include site visits and trips, participation in community projects, and so on. If it is taught online, teachers should think of creative ways to provide cultural experiences, such as virtual tours, workshops of Brazilian culture, and other creative ways to enable cultural immersion in the virtual environment.

Finally, it is also worth discussing the importance of establishing some languages as strategic for internationalization (axis 4). If the aim is to promote multilingualism and multiculturalism, then all languages are equally important; however, when talking about strategic use of languages for internationalization, each institution should elect the languages that will best fit their goals. In our institution, we have been focusing on English, Spanish, and French in this order of priority. English because it is the language used by the scientific international community in international conferences and in publications. Moreover, English is the most spoken language by non-native speakers. In other words, English is the language that reaches

a wider range of audiences. This is why I am writing this paper in English, despite being a native Brazilian.

The second strategic language chosen by my university is Spanish. It was argued before that there has been a shift in the internationalization process from a vertical to a horizontal movement, privileging collaborations within the Global South. Therefore, the Spanish language assumes a very important role in this new political-economic scenario.

The third language is French, because of the good interinstitutional partnerships with France and due to the Brafitec[26] Program. Besides, it is the second most spoken foreign language by the scholars at the university.

As it was mentioned before, this choice of languages is very particular to each university; therefore, different universities will also have different language choices according to their strategic goals.

4.3 Structural dimension

This dimension refers to the preparation of the institution for the internationalization process. It involves both the physical organization of the campus and the capacitation of the human resources.

Many people may think that the Office of International Relations is the only sector that should be structured for the process of internationalization, and definitely it is very important that this sector is well organized to accomplish its purpose. However, it is far from being the only sector that needs organization.

Let's start with the campuses. It is fundamental that it has multilingual signs to help the international newcomers. It is also necessary that all the staff at the university,

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[26] The Capes Brafitec Program consists of joint educational projects developed by Brazilian and French universities in all Engineering areas. It is exclusively offered at the undergraduate level to encourage academic mobility in both countries and encourage the approximation of curricular structures, including equivalence and mutual recognition of credits.

from the receptionists until the directors and department heads, are prepared to give information and to communicate in an international language, at least in English.

Concerning the academic community, English academic writing courses should be offered to help graduate students and researchers prepare for international publication. EMI[27] courses should be organized to enable faculty to deliver their content courses in a foreign language. An initiative that was very useful for the Brazilian universities in recent years was the American Embassy "Virtual English Language Fellow Program", which provided a North American language specialist to spend one year working with Brazilian universities in the virtual mode. Under this program, our university could offer the following courses to its academic community: Academic Writing for Publication; Academic Genres in English, and English for Specific Purposes: English for administrative purposes. All members of the academic community – graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, and staff - could benefit from the courses.

Preparation courses and application of language proficiency certificates should also be motivated in order to prepare the academic community for prospective mobility programs. An initiative in this direction was the agreement signed by Andifes and Mastertest[28], enabling students and faculty to take TOEFL exams at no cost or paying half of the price.

Along with language improvement, internationalization also requires workshops and training programs for staff, enabling them to understand the unique procedures involved in the internationalization process, which differ significantly from the ones adopted in the national practices.

Another critical aspect refers to the institutional norms and resolutions that often constrain institutional internationalization actions. Therefore, a revision of

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[27] EMI stands for "English as a Medium of Instruction".
[28] Mastertest is the Brazilian branch of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and is the authorized company to distribute those tests in Brazil.

established norms and the creation of new ones that facilitate the process is necessary. However, this is not so simple, since in many situations there are major Brazilian laws that hinder the efforts to achieve this goal.

Still concerning the institutional resolutions, it is fundamental that norms are created to allow the use of international languages, in particular English, in the writing and defense of dissertations and theses, in the participation in examination boards, in the delivering of content courses, in allowances to leave the country, and in the issuing of institutional documents, such as transcripts and declarations of any sort.

Clear instructions should be provided for those who wish to develop academic mobility, and the credit-transfer processes should be legally recognized.

It is no use to talk about institutional internationalization if the university is not prepared to incorporate this process into its practices. Thus, the structural dimension is crucial. After all, as Stallivieri (2017, p. 88) observes, "an adequate international insertion depends greatly on the correct preparation of its actors"[29].

4.4 Political-Strategic dimension

The political-strategic dimension involves three main aspects: choice, voice, and representation.

Regarding choice, the international relations manager, the institutional leaders, and the academic community in general should decide which partnerships, countries, and languages would be strategic for the university and for their research interests. A good way to do that is to develop a SWOT analysis, as it was argued in Section 3.2 of this paper. Once strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are identified, informed decisions can be made to develop strategic actions.

Other aspects concerning political-economic issues should also be taken into consideration. As mentioned above, the key participation of Brazil in some economic

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[29] My translation for "uma adequada inserção internacional depende sobremaneira da correta preparação de seus atores".

blocks, such as Bricks and Global South, should also orient internationalization choices.

Finally, we should not ignore the relevance of the national and international funding agencies that establish their own goals and priority actions to support and drive internationalization programs. These priorities are ultimately anchored on current local, national, and international political-economic and social issues that require special attention or strategic intervention. Therefore, participation in open calls and programs is crucial to consolidating the internationalization process.

Concerning voice and representation, it is imperative that the university is represented in the main national and international forums that discuss Higher education and internationalization. The institutional voice should be "heard" and be part of national and international decision-making processes.

Moreover, the presence of university representatives in the world's largest international fairs, like NAFSA[30], EAIE[31], and, in Brazil, Faubai, has a direct impact on the development of strategic partnerships and gives international visibility to the university. Likewise, participation in international organization meetings and programs like UN, Unesco, OEA, Celac, OECD, WHO[32], and others is essential to having the institutional voice heard.

Furthermore, it is vital to participate in national and international groups that discuss and promote internationalization, such as Tordesillas Group, AULP, AUGM, Udual, GCUB, OUI[33], and others.

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[30] NAFSA is the American Association of International Education.

[31] EAIE is the European Association for International Education.

[32] UN: United Nations Organization; UNESCO: United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; OEA: Organization of American States; CELAC: Community of Latin-American and Caribbean States; OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development; WHO: World Health Organization.

[33] AULP: Association of Portuguese Language Universities; AUGM: Association of Universities of Montevideo Group; UDUAL: Unión de Universidades de América Latina y el Caribe; GCUB: Group of International Cooperation of Brazilian Universities; OUI: Organization of Interamerican Universities.

Finally, national collaborations, such as those with Uniminas and Reari networks in Brazil, also play a critical role in supporting internationalization.

4.5 Social dimension

The social dimension plays a crucial role in internationalization, particularly in addressing global inequities. Higher education institutions have a responsibility to both local and international communities. Programs such as PEC-G and PEC-PG, developed by MEC and MRE in collaboration with Brazilian universities, and GCUB-MOB, are national initiatives aimed at creating educational opportunities for students from underdeveloped and developing countries.

The universities also play an important role, opening their doors to receive the refugees. World conflicts such as the Gaza Strip Conflict, the crisis in Venezuela and Haiti, and the Russia-Ukraine war generate flows of refugees. Those individuals who are forced to leave their countries try to reconstruct their lives in another place. Therefore, receiving those groups of individuals is a social responsibility that must be part of the universities' duties.

When the goal is to offer opportunities in Brazilian universities for international students and for refugees and other forced migrants, the teaching of Portuguese as an additional language assumes a central role. Recent works (Lopez, 2016, Lopez; Diniz, 2018) argue for the use of the term "Portuguese as a Welcoming Language". For Lopez (2016), the use of this term establishes a new branch in the mainstream literature, bringing new roles for the Portuguese teaching and learning process in contexts of crisis migration. Portuguese in this context is not merely a language to enable communication, but it should be conceived as a tool to enable identity reconstruction. It calls for the understanding that those individuals who are forced to leave their countries should not be treated as worthy of pity, since they have their values, identities, and histories. They may not belong to a minority group, but when they come to other countries that are not their own, they are "minorized". For Lopez and Diniz

(2018), the Portuguese language, as the major spoken language in the country, should serve as an artifact to help those "minorized groups", who many times live in a vulnerable situation in the host country, to recover their lives and dignity. It is a two-way process: while they learn how to become a new individual, reconstructing their identity in a new culture, they also share their own culture and values. This understanding ultimately impacts the teaching of Portuguese for this target audience. For Lopez and Diniz (2018, p. 4), the teaching of Portuguese as a welcoming language should be a continuous reflexive process. Teachers should "ask themselves about those migrant individuals' identity practices, the relations they establish with different territories and languages that constitute themselves, and the ways in which the teaching of Portuguese takes place for this target public".

Therefore, the social dimension of internationalization ultimately refers to the reception of special groups of students, including the forced migrants. In this context, the teaching and learning of Portuguese as a welcoming language is desirable and advisable since it requires new approaches that make room for mutual respect and a sense of belonging.

5. Final remarks

The internationalization process of Higher education is a worldwide movement that responds to the ever-growing connectedness of global society. It was demonstrated how this process has changed in scope and form, from a mere focus on qualification abroad, passing through an emphasis on international mobility, to reaching more complex levels that involve strategic choices of partnerships and languages. Then, a methodology for developing an internationalization plan was presented, focusing on a concept of internationalization that considers how, why, and to whom the internationalization process should be conceived. Finally, an institutional internationalization framework was proposed, comprising five dimensions of the process: academic, cultural-linguistic, structural, political-strategic, and social.

Throughout the paper, it was argued the outstanding role of languages to promote internationalization. Furthermore, language is seen not merely as a means of communication but as a tool to welcome and value different cultures, and in doing so, to help individuals reconstruct their identities in other contexts and build a sense of belonging. Finally, language is seen as a two-way channel: it is a way to value our Brazilian identities and cultures, and a way to participate in the globalized world. In this direction, language is the fundamental instrument that sustains local and global relations and interrelations, mutual respect, and joint work, which is the essence of internationalization.

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