



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Internationalization and the English language in a public educational institution

Internacionalização e língua inglesa em uma instituição pública de ensino

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Como citar o artigo.

PAIXÃO, N. S.; KOBAYASHI, E. Internacionalização e língua inglesa em uma instituição pública de ensino. *Revista Horizontes de Linguística Aplicada*, ano 24, n. 1, AG3, 2025.

Abstract

Discussions surrounding the English language and the internationalization of academic institutions are not recent phenomena, as research from Europe in the 1990s illustrates. However, in Brazil, there is a need for improvement and greater effectiveness in internationalization processes, as highlighted in the Capes report (Brasil, 2017). This case study aimed to explore the perspectives of professors and a director at a public institution regarding internationalization and the English language. Data were collected through questionnaires and an analysis of the institution's strategic plan for internationalization. The findings reveal that while both internationalization and proficiency in English are regarded as highly significant, many professors have only basic English skills, and a majority do not actively engage in internationalization efforts. Furthermore, there needs to be some changes to ensure that the institution's internationalization strategies are better aligned with its official guiding documents.

Keywords: Internationalization. The English language. English proficiency levels.

Resumo

Discussões sobre língua inglesa e internacionalização em instituições acadêmicas não consistem em algo novo, uma vez que investigações desenvolvidas na década de 1990 na Europa podem ser facilmente encontradas. Entretanto, no Brasil, a internacionalização ainda necessita de ajustes para atingir uma melhor eficácia, segundo o relatório da Capes (Brasil, 2017). Este estudo de caso tem o objetivo de compreender as visões de diretor e professores de uma instituição de ensino pública sobre internacionalização e língua inglesa. Suas opiniões são analisadas por meio de questionários, assim como pelo plano estratégico de internacionalização da instituição. Os resultados demonstram que apesar da internacionalização e o inglês serem considerados muito importantes pelos participantes, o nível de proficiência na língua de muitos docentes ainda é básico, e a maioria deles ainda não está realmente envolvida na internacionalização. Além disso, é necessário ajustes para alinhar o processo de internacionalização do campus e o documento norteador.

Palavras-chave: Internacionalização. Língua inglesa. Nível de proficiência em inglês.

Apoio financeiro: Não há.

Conflito de interesse: Os autores declaram não haver.

Recebido em: 14 Out 2024. Revisões requeridas: 12 Jun 2025. Aceito em: 04 Jul 2025.



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1 INTRODUCTION

Internationalization refers to the integration of an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purposes, functions, and offerings of education, as the seminal contribution by Knight (2004) shows. The concept includes international academic mobility, collaborative research initiatives, and institutional partnerships, among other elements. However, internationalization initiatives may not be developed as expected in higher education institutions (HEIs) as a result of professors' lack of English language proficiency, as well as their lack of time for English training, among other factors (Miranda; Stallivieri, 2017; Kim, 2014). These aspects underscore the challenges associated with internationalization and the insufficient proficiency in English among some participants in this process.

International initiatives in higher education have expanded significantly in recent decades, reflecting the breadth of the internationalization process (Altbach; Knight, 2007). In Brazil, however, this process requires adjustments and enhanced efficiency, as indicated by a CAPES report (Brasil, 2017). The report reveals that while some universities have made advances – such as implementing international mobility programs, hosting visiting professors, offering instruction in foreign languages, and supporting sandwich doctoral programs –, many Brazilian academic institutions still need a strategic plan for internationalization, which should encompass foreign language training and the attraction of international researchers (Brasil, 2017).

English is vital in some societal domains, including science, technology, and business. As noted by Vila (2021), the language has increasingly become the dominant medium of instruction in higher education. “English has attained a hegemonic status within the fields of science and technology and is progressively emerging as the primary language of instruction in higher education,” thereby reinforcing its function as a global *lingua franca* (Cardoso, 2020; Vila, 2021; Suzina, 2021). Moreover, the English language is foundational to various professional duties of academics, including teaching, research, and engaging with international trends and demands. As Meadows (1999, p. 126, our translation) observes, “scientists from countries where English is not the native language require additional time for reading and processing material written in English”¹.

The American Council on Education (ACE) outlines six key areas for implementing internationalization policies in its Comprehensive Internationalization Framework: (1) strategic vision, (2) curriculum and learning, (3) organizational structure, (4) faculty support, (5) mobility, (6) collaboration and partnership. Given the focus of this study, we highlight the fourth area since faculty plays a key role in teaching, research, and service. Therefore, it is essential to know the professors' view on internationalization and the English language.

Thus, this case study investigates the process of internationalization and the implications of English as an international language, focusing on the perspectives of professors and the director of a campus at a public educational institution in the state of São Paulo. The study explores faculty expectations and interests regarding internationalization, their proficiency in the English language, and the role of English in the process of internationalization. The study also seeks to understand the director's expectations for the institution's internationalization efforts, as well as the level of English proficiency among the faculty.

In the following section, the concepts of internationalization are introduced, along with a discussion on their relationship to the English language. This is followed by a detailed description of the methodology, including the research setting participants, and data collection instruments. The fourth section provides an analysis of the collected data, and the final section presents the key conclusions.

¹ In the original: “os cientistas de países onde a língua materna não é o inglês precisam de mais tempo de leitura a fim de dar conta do material escrito em língua inglesa” (Meadows, 1999, p. 126).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The process of internationalization encompasses academic, social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions, and can enhance both the institution's and the country's competitiveness in both local and global contexts. Furthermore, the motivations driving this process include the expansion of knowledge, the promotion of intercultural understanding, the enhancement of teaching and research quality, and improvements in economic competitiveness, among other factors. In this context, the economic, scientific, and technological development of a nation influences its internationalization efforts (Hudzik, 2011; Castro; Neto, 2012).

In light of such factors, the Bologna Declaration emerged as a key outcome of internationalization efforts, with the aim of "building a European space of knowledge, leveraging the continent's vast intellectual, cultural, social, and technical capacities, largely developed within universities"² (Sobrinho, 2007, p. 112, our translation). Thus, the declaration sought to increase the international competitiveness of European higher education systems through internationalization. The agreement included a credit system designed to facilitate academic mobility, as well as frameworks for structuring academic phases (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels) and promoting curriculum development, interinstitutional cooperation, and other initiatives (Magalhães, 2011; Matias; Xavier, 2008).

In addition, Wielewicki and Oliveira (2010) emphasize the Bologna Declaration's influence on the internationalization processes of other countries, as reflected in the subsequent treaties of Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), London (2007), and Louvain (2009). These treaties focused on expanding the learning cycle system, enhancing the quality of educational systems, and advancing academic mobility.

The Bologna Declaration also underscores the link between English and internationalization. Phillipson (2005, p. 15, cited in Baumvol, 2016, p. 365, our translation) asserts that "in the Bologna process, internationalizing means fostering the use of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher education institutions"³. EMI represents an internationalization initiative that involves the use of English as a medium of instruction in countries where English is not the official language (Vinke; Snippe; Jochems, 1998). According to Macaro (2018), English Medium Instruction (EMI) can be defined as the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries where English is not the first language of the majority of the population. Baumvol (2016) further argues that EMI contributes to the linguistic development of both professors and students, as proficiency in the language is essential for teaching and learning in English-medium programs.

English is also crucial for communication among participants in academic mobility programs. However, a study by Finardi and Rojo (2015), which analyzed two universities (one private and one public), revealed that English proficiency posed a significant barrier to the internationalization of their business programs. The study also noted that the programs did not offer English language courses, exacerbating the issue.

Given the widespread use of English globally, the language has become a key tool for internationalization. An example of this is the fact that much of the scientific, academic, and technological information worldwide is published in English. English has also become the *lingua franca* of academia (Cardoso, 2020; Knobel, 2011). The authors emphasize English as a *lingua franca*, underscoring how the language has influenced and transformed interactions between native speakers and non-native English users in the international context. According to Jenkins (2009), English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF) is primarily utilized in intercultural communication within multilingual settings, where native English speakers may be absent. While this paper does not focus on the distinctions between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a *Lingua Franca*, it is essential to acknowledge the significant role of English

² In the original: "construir um espaço europeu do conhecimento a partir das enormes capacidades intelectuais, sociais e técnicas do continente, em grande parte desenvolvida nas universidades" (Sobrinho, 2007, p. 112).

³ In the original: "no processo de Bolonha, internacionalizar significa ter uma educação superior no qual o inglês é o meio de instrução" (Baumvol, 2016, p. 365).

in the process of internationalization. As Kruseman (2003, p. 7, cited in Coleman, 2006, p. 4) observes, "English is the language of science. It is the language we must use if we wish to prepare our students for international careers in a globalizing world."

Consequently, inadequate English proficiency may hinder the effectiveness of internationalization programs at universities. In Brazil, for example, the "Science without Borders" (CsF) program – launched in 2010 as the country's largest international mobility initiative – required students to submit international English proficiency certificates, such as the TOEFL, as part of the application process. This requirement proved to be a barrier for many Brazilian students, who struggled to meet the language proficiency standards, ultimately affecting the program's outcomes (Sarmento; Abreu-e-Lima; Moraes, 2016), as well as causing a washback effect in English teaching programs (Kobayashi, 2016). Additionally, a study by Willer and Reis (2022) on the CsF program at a Brazilian public university found that the low level of English proficiency among students influenced their preference for applying to universities in Portugal, where language requirements are less stringent.

These studies highlight the importance of the English language in the internationalization of higher education. However, it is also relevant to consider other stakeholders and dimensions, as outlined in the ACE's Global Internationalization Framework, which identifies key areas for development: strategic vision, curriculum and learning, organizational structure, faculty support, mobility and collaboration, and partnerships. This study focuses on the faculty component, which plays a central role in teaching, research, and service. Nevertheless, faculty perceptions and opinions regarding both the process of internationalization and the role of the English language are not always positive.

In Kim's (2014) study, engineering professors at an international university in Korea, where EMI programs were regularly offered, expressed ambivalence towards the institution's internationalization policy and the use of English in the classroom. While they acknowledged the importance of the language, they cited being too busy to attend English training programs. Similarly, Corrales, Paba Rey, and Santiago Scamilla (2016) discuss how internationalization processes are sometimes managed in a top-down manner. In their study, faculty at a Colombian university were assigned EMI classes despite their discomfort with the institution's internationalization policy and their limited proficiency in English.

Zare-ee and Hejazi (2017) found similar concerns in their study of faculty at an Iranian university. While professors acknowledged the significance of English as the language of science and expressed some positive views on EMI, they also reported inadequate English proficiency, making the implementation of EMI programs challenging.

Professors are integral to the internationalization process, as they serve as catalysts for the initiative and can foster students' interest in global academic relations (Carter, 1992; Miura, 2006). Seidlhofer (1999, cited in El Kadri, Gimezes, 2013, p. 126) asserts that professors who learn English for specific academic purposes are better equipped to teach students, thereby fostering the learning process. Furthermore, Romani-Dias, Carneiro, and Barbosa (2017) claim that foreign faculty members can also contribute to advancing the process of internationalization.

Thus, it is evident that professors play a pivotal role in the internationalization of higher education, and the English language directly influences their professional activities and perspectives. Specifically in Brazil, the process of internationalization is still being developed, despite significant progress since 1990 (Laus; Morosini, 2005). This observation is consistent with the findings of the Capes report (Brasil, 2017), which highlights the need for adjustments and improvements in the process of internationalization and emphasizes its importance for Brazilian higher education in addressing the challenges of a globalized society. Carvalho and Araújo (2019) further underscore that institutions must stay current with initiatives of internationalization.

Governmental agencies such as CAPES, CNPq, and research foundations work to increase the involvement of Brazilian students, researchers, and faculty in international networks and collaborative research projects (Barbosa; Neves, 2020). Brazil has promoted several internationalization initiatives, most notably the CsF and the Capes Institutional

Internationalization Program. However, Vieira (2019) suggests that these programs could have yielded better results if they had addressed issues such as limited university engagement with internationalization, low foreign language proficiency among students, and insufficient monitoring and assessment of participants.

Although academic mobility remains the principal strategy of internationalization in Brazil, Ortelani (2017, p. 106, our translation) asserts that professors, especially in the Brazilian educational context, bear substantial responsibility for introducing students to the "context of academic knowledge production."⁴ As such, faculty involvement in teaching abroad, international joint research programs, and their engagement with foreign students makes them central figures in internationalization strategies (Postiglione; Altbach, 2013; Pereira; Heinzle, 2020). Hofling and Zacarias (2017) argue that it is crucial for professors to be well-prepared to teach international students and that teaching in English contributes to both their linguistic development and their professional and research positioning within the global academic community.

However, the challenges identified in the studies by Kim (2014) and Zare-ee and Hejazi (2017) – particularly regarding faculty language proficiency – may point to possible obstacles to the successful implementation of internationalization programs in Brazil. Similarly, Miranda and Stallivieri (2017) claim that the lack of proficiency in a second language – specifically English – among faculty members may hinder the success of initiatives for internationalization.

Therefore, given the centrality of faculty in the process of internationalization and the critical role of English, it is imperative to examine faculty members' perceptions and attitudes towards both internationalization and English language use in higher education.

3 METHODOLOGY

This investigation presents a case study conducted at one of the campuses of a public academic institution located in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. The campus offers both undergraduate and graduate programs across three main areas: business and management, chemistry and engineering/automation. At the time of the research, the institution was in the early stages of its process of internationalization, with an office that had been recently established and strategic planning being developed at each campus. Although faculty members at the studied campus had engaged in discussions and formulated strategic plans for their respective areas, these plans had not yet been implemented. Nonetheless, other activities for internationalization promoted by the university's central administration had reached the campus and its faculty, including international training opportunities and mobility programs.

Data for the investigation were gathered through questionnaires administered to the institution's faculty members and its director (Appendixes 1 and 2). Additionally, the strategic plan for internationalization was analyzed.

The questionnaire comprised three types of questions: open-ended, closed-ended, and Likert scale items. Open-ended questions provided respondents with the opportunity to express their views and offer detailed feedback. Closed-ended questions, such as multiple-choice items, facilitated the handling processing, and analysis of the data. Likert scale questions aimed to assess the respondents' attitudes regarding various statements (Mattar, 2013). At the time, 70 faculty members affiliated with the campus were invited to participate in the questionnaire, which was distributed via email.

The faculty questionnaire sought to explore their perceptions, interests, expectations, priorities, and involvement in the process of internationalization. Regarding the English language, it focused on the participants' proficiency levels, the importance they attributed to the language, and how their English proficiency could be related to participating in internationalization initiatives.

⁴ In the original: "contexto da produção do conhecimento acadêmico" (Ortelani, 2017, p. 106).

With specific regard to their English proficiency, a general overview of each level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), ranging from A1 to C2, was provided to facilitate self-assessment by the participants. The director was invited to carry out an evaluation of the group as a whole. It is important to highlight that these level descriptors encompass language competencies expected of users across a variety of communicative contexts.

The director's questionnaire aimed to elucidate how the institution is currently addressing or plans to address the processes internationalization, as well as the question of the English proficiency levels of faculty members in light of increasing language requirements.

To analyze the data comprehensively, triangulation was employed. According to Flick (1998, p. 230-231), triangulation refers to "the best method for combining a multiplicity of methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers within a single study." Specifically, source triangulation was used, a widely applied technique that involves comparing data on the same subject obtained from different sources (Denzin, 1978). Thus, the primary sources of data in this study were institutional documents, the director, and the faculty members.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Internationalization Strategic Planning (ISP)

The Internationalization Strategic Plan (ISP) for the campus under study consists of activities organized into three main areas, corresponding to the programs: Business Management, Chemistry, and Engineering/Automation. The ISP was developed within each area based on the interests, objectives, and recommendations of the respective coordinators and faculty members. While faculty participation in the development of the plan was not mandatory, it was encouraged by the institution's internationalization office. Chart 1 summarizes the actions for internationalization and their respective areas.

Chart 1. The Internationalization Strategic Plan

International actions	Areas
EMI training for the faculty	Engineering/automation
International mobility programs	Engineering/automation
Translation of course content into English	Engineering/automation
EMI	Business Management, Engineering/automation
Establishing areas for international joint-research	Business Management
Increase in scientific research output	Business Management
Encouragement of entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems	Chemistry
Fostering internationalization with the academic community	Chemistry
Visiting professor programs	Chemistry
Making scientific research accessible	Chemistry

Source: The authors (2021).

From Chart 1, it is evident that the actions outlined in the Internationalization Strategic Plan (ISP) involve the use of the English language, as well as the participation of faculty members. For example, EMI training – the implementation of English Medium Instruction – and the translation of course content into English are all directly associated with English. Such

activities can contribute not only to the language acquisition of those involved but also stimulate the interest of students and faculty in learning the language, so that they can participate in these initiatives. By engaging in internationalization efforts, individuals may recognize the practical benefits of acquiring English proficiency, which further reinforces the importance of English in the academic landscape. As Baumvol and Sarmiento (2016) assert, faculty and students engaged in EMI have more opportunities to participate in activities that require the use of English, such as mobility programs and academic events.

International academic mobility programs often require the use of English, as it is the dominant language in academic and scientific settings (Kruseman, 2003). Furthermore, English is commonly used in countries where it is not the official language. This is particularly relevant in the context of carrying out scientific research, which is one of the goals within the Business Management area of the institution. Since international academic journals predominantly publish in English, researchers aiming to get more audience for their work often seek to publish in such journals, thus directly linking English proficiency to academic success. Additionally, the establishment of international joint-research areas and the encouragement of foreign faculty to visit Brazil are activities that, while indirectly related to English, still anticipate its usage. Although other foreign languages may be involved in these collaborations, English remains the predominant language in scientific communication (Cardoso, 2020).

Moreover, promoting internationalization within the academic community and engaging in science outreach initiatives require the involvement of faculty, students, and other stakeholders. These objectives reflect two central areas of the ACE framework: organizational structure and faculty support.

It is also evident that the activities detailed in Chart 1, which are encompassed in the ISP, engage faculty members to the extent that their involvement can either contribute to or hinder the institution's internationalization efforts. These activities emphasize the critical role of the English language, as it features prominently across many of the initiatives.

4.2 The Director's Questionnaire

To analyze the institution's expectations regarding internationalization and the proficiency level of the faculty, the campus director was asked to respond to a questionnaire consisting of ten questions (including open-ended, Likert-scale, and multiple-choice items).

Firstly, the director emphasized the importance of English for the institution's internationalization, which aligns with the objectives outlined in the Internationalization Strategic Plan (ISP). However, regarding faculty proficiency, some concern was expressed since most faculty members have not yet achieved the level of proficiency required for many internationalization activities. Specifically, the director indicated that most professors were at the A1 level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Such assessment was based on the scale provided in the questionnaire. This level, classified as basic, involves competencies suitable for simple tasks such as understanding familiar expressions and engaging in basic communication. In response to this issue, the participant suggested that providing English courses and offering publicly funded academic mobility programs could serve as viable solutions to improve faculty language skills.

Regarding the relationship between English language proficiency and the internationalization efforts outlined in the ISP, the director noted that only a limited number of internationalization actions could be developed due to the current English proficiency of some faculty members. This situation could potentially hinder the process of internationalization of the institution overall. Similar challenges were identified by Miranda and Stallivieri (2017), who underscore that the lack of second language proficiency, especially in English, can impede the progress of internationalization initiatives.

When asked about the current phase of internationalization on campus, the director stated that the process is still in development, with several of the goals set in the ISP remaining achievable. To learn more about the institution's internationalization priorities, the director

was presented with a list of potential internationalization actions taken from the Capes report on internationalization (Brasil, 2017). At the time, the list classified as essential the following: international cooperation projects, courses taught in other languages, double or cotutelle degree programs in partnership with foreign institutions, and faculty members proficient in foreign languages.

These choices are generally aligned with the objectives outlined in the ISP, which include the establishment of international joint research initiatives, the implementation of English-Medium Instruction (EMI), and the provision of EMI training for faculty.

In terms of prioritization, the director classified several internationalization actions as “very important,” including faculty and student mobility, EMI, campus faculty visits to international institutions, and EMI training for faculty.

The activities rated as very important suggest that the institution's internationalization expectations focus on actions that require English, particularly EMI and EMI faculty training. These actions are also reflected in the CAPES internationalization report (Brasil, 2017). Additionally, activities such as academic mobility for faculty and students, as well as visiting professor programs, were classified by the director as very important. Such result points out to the expectation that they will likely require English usage, regardless of whether the destination is an English-speaking country, as English is increasingly regarded as a *lingua franca* in academic settings (Knobel, 2011).

On the other hand, publication in international journals, which are predominantly in English, was deemed less important. Similarly, visiting professors to Brazil and participation in international events were considered of lower priority, despite their inclusion in the ISP. This discrepancy highlights that, while the ISP includes these activities for internationalization, the director does not prioritize them as highly as other actions. Thus, there seems to be a lack of alignment concerning such internationalization goals. However, it remains unclear how such a situation might impede the implementation or prioritization of these activities. As noted by Corrales, Paba Rey, and Santiago Scamilla (2016), internationalization is sometimes managed through top-down decision-making processes. Nevertheless, in this particular case, there appears to be a misalignment between the perceived relevance of the activities and the faculty's stated preference for focusing on scientific production but both groups perceive internationalization as a relevant and important objective.

In conclusion, the director demonstrates a clear interest in implementing the ISP, for the most part, and recognizes the importance of English for achieving these goals. However, the current level of faculty proficiency remains an obstacle to the successful implementation of these actions, posing a challenge to the campus's broader internationalization objectives.

4.3 The Professor's Questionnaire

The questionnaire distributed to faculty members aimed to identify their interests and expectations regarding internationalization and the role of English, as well as to infer their self-assessed English language proficiency. The instrument consisted of ten questions, including open-ended, scaled, and multiple-choice formats. A total of 70 professors from the campus were invited to participate, and 32 responded, representing a response rate of 45.7%.

Initially, regarding the perceived importance of internationalization, 93.8% of respondents considered it important for the institution. This finding aligns with the Internationalization Strategic Plan (ISP) and the CAPES report (Brasil, 2017), both of which highlight internationalization as a strategic means for higher education institutions to address the challenges of a globalized society.

Concerning the role of English in the process of internationalization, 75% of the respondents regarded English as essential, while 25% considered it important. Overall, faculty members acknowledged the significance of the English language in this context. However, despite recognizing its importance, participants reported varying levels of English proficiency, as illustrated in Figure 1.

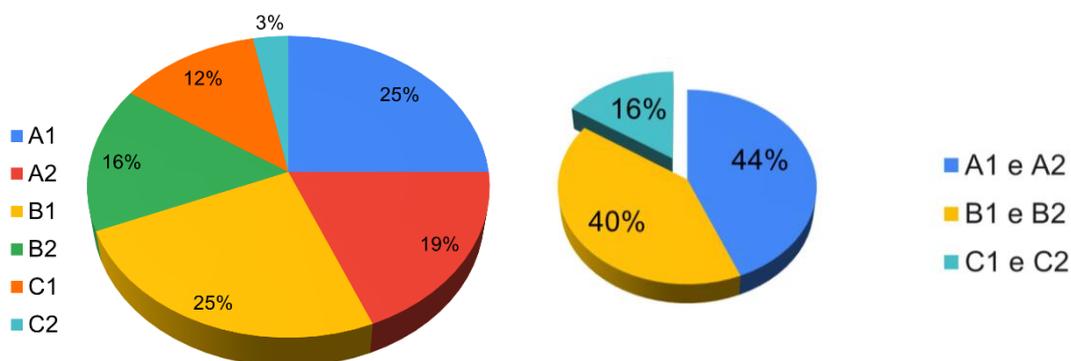


Figure 1. Professors' English Proficiency Level
Source: The authors (2021).

Figure 1 shows that 25% of participants identified their English proficiency as A1 level, which, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), corresponds to the ability to perform simple communicative tasks in English. According to the CEFR, A1 and A2 users are typically able to understand and use familiar everyday expressions, engage in basic communication, share information in a clear and direct manner, and provide simple descriptions.

As illustrated in Figure 1, 43.8% of the participants fall within levels A1 and A2, while 40.6% report proficiency at levels B1 and B2. These latter levels correspond to a more independent use of the language, where users can produce simple and coherent discourse, describe experiences, articulate thoughts on familiar topics, and express opinions, including positive and negative aspects of various subjects. Therefore, although the proportion of respondents at A1 and B1 is the same (25%), the overall number of professors at a basic proficiency level (A1 and A2 combined) exceeds those at intermediate levels. Therefore, this result, to some extent, corroborates the director's assessment of the faculty members' English proficiency.

Furthermore, only 15.6% of the respondents reported proficiency at the advanced levels (C1 and C2). At these levels, users are capable of expressing themselves fluently and effectively, discussing complex topics, and presenting arguments and information in a coherent and structured manner.

In this context, Figure 2 shows that half of the participants believe their current English proficiency is insufficient to meet the expectations outlined in the campus's Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP). This perception suggests a level of awareness among faculty regarding the importance of English proficiency in international academic engagement, as similarly discussed by Zare-ee and Hejazi (2017) in other international academic contexts.

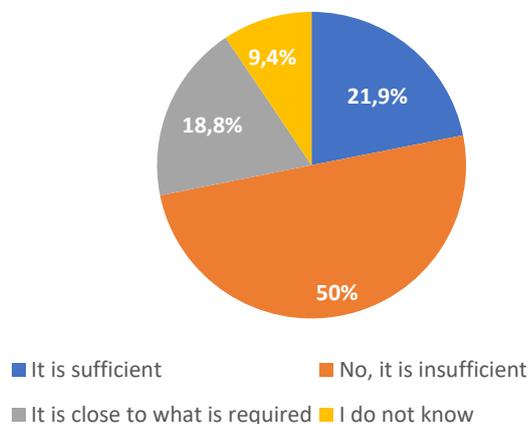


Figure 2. English Language Proficiency and Internationalization Actions

Source: The authors (2021).

On the other hand, 21.9% of the faculty members reported that their English proficiency is compatible with the demands of internationalization, while 18.8% indicated that they are progressing toward higher proficiency levels. This may suggest that a portion of the faculty is actively working to improve their English language skills. In total, 40.6% of the professors either possess or are approaching a level of English considered adequate for engaging in internationalization activities. This finding is particularly significant, as faculty members' command of the English language is widely recognized as a critical component of the internationalization process (Kruseman, 2003, p. 7, as cited in Coleman, 2006, p. 4). Nonetheless, 9.4% of the respondents indicated that they were unsure whether their English proficiency was sufficient for participating in internationalization efforts (Figure 2).

Given that the institution was in the early stages of internationalization at the time – with its strategic planning process having only recently been initiated – it is likely that participants formed their perceptions and expectations regarding English language requirements based on their own academic and professional international experiences, as well as on their interpretations of what would be necessary to implement the planned activities.

To better understand the faculty's interests in internationalization, participants were asked to rank a list of proposed activities in order of importance.

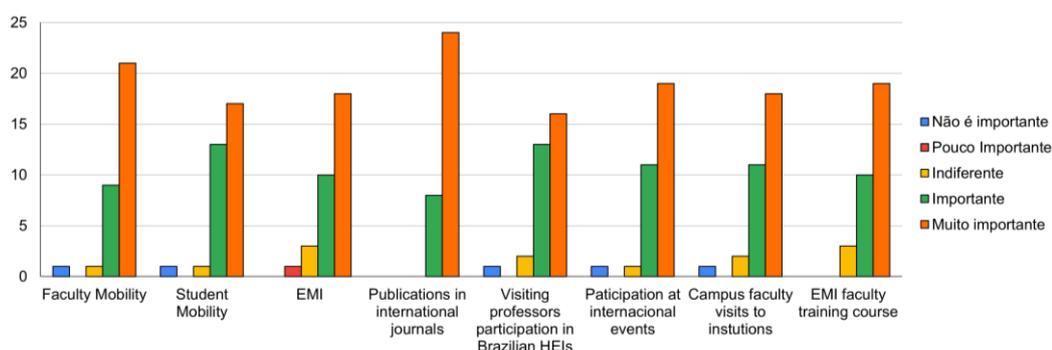


Figure 3. Importance of Internationalization Initiatives
Source: The authors (2021).

The majority of faculty members considered all the proposed internationalization activities – faculty mobility, student mobility, English-Medium Instruction (EMI), publication in international journals, hosting visiting professors, participation in international events, faculty visits to other institutions, and EMI training – to be highly important (Figure 3). In response to a follow-up question regarding their overall perception of internationalization, 62.5% of participants stated that these activities are generally relevant to the institution. Additionally, 34.4% indicated that such initiatives could contribute to their own English language development and career advancement. Furthermore, 62.5% of respondents agreed that these actions are directly related to their specific fields of expertise.

These findings suggest a strong interest in internationalization among faculty members, as the proportions of responses indicating that these activities are "not important" or "not very important" were comparatively low. Consequently, internationalization efforts appear to be viewed positively and may play a supportive role in faculty development – particularly in preparing professors to engage in international students and academic environments (Hofling; Zacarias, 2017).

Regarding faculty involvement in internationalization activities, 59.4% of respondents indicated that they were not engaged in any of such initiatives, while an additional 25%

reported limited or indirect involvement, as illustrated in Figure 3. This limited participation stands in contrast to the widely held view that professors are the primary drivers of internationalization efforts, making their active engagement essential to the process (Miura, 2006). On the other hand, it is important to consider that, at the time, Internationalization efforts at the institution were in their initial phase, and many initiatives were still in development or had not yet been fully integrated into the strategic planning process. As a result, few actions beyond the initial discussions were actively taking place. Thus, the involvement reported by the faculty may be understood as reflecting the discussions, needs, and expectations outlined in the institution’s strategic plan for internationalization. Figure 4 provides a detailed overview of the level of faculty involvement in internationalization activities at the time.

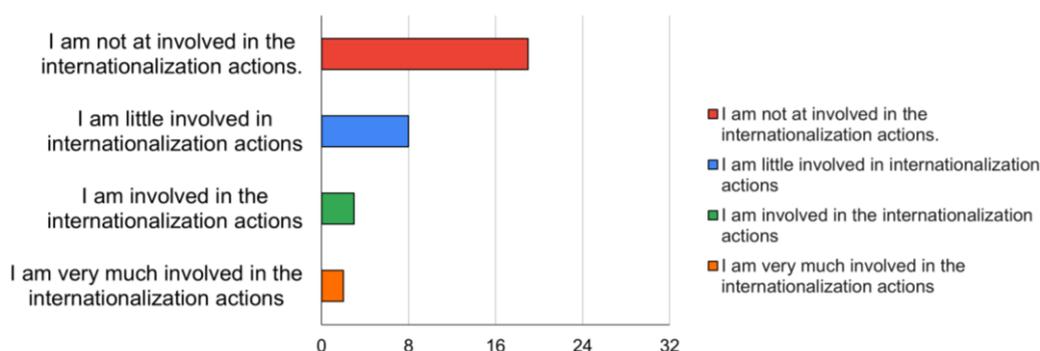


Figure 4. Professors Involvement in The Internationalization Initiatives
Source: The authors (2021).

Despite the limited involvement, faculty members responded to an open-ended question by suggesting activities they would like to see developed on campus, reflecting their expectations regarding internationalization. These responses were categorized into actions related to teaching and research, as presented in Chart 2.

Chart 2. Interests in Internationalization Activities

Teaching	Research
English language training	International Research Partnerships
EMI training	English websites (campus Research Laboratories' websites Design)
EMI program	Participation in scientific dissemination programs/automation
Use of international sources for class support	Visiting professor program
Academic faculty mobility	Publication in international journals

Source: The authors (2021)

The suggestions provided by faculty members reflect a clear interest in training and professional development to better prepare for internationalization. Notably, English language training and EMI training were among the most frequently mentioned, both of which underscore the central role of language skills – a theme consistently identified throughout the questionnaire. Furthermore, the activities listed in Chart 2 closely align with those previously ranked as highly important by respondents in Figure 3, which explored faculty perceptions of internationalization priorities.

In addition, several of the proposed activities emphasize research-related goals, such as establishing international research partnerships, publishing in international journals, and

participating in scientific dissemination programs. These areas reinforce the necessity of English proficiency. As Cardoso (2020) observes, English is the primary language of scientific publication and functions as the global *lingua franca* of science and academic communication. However, a divergence was noted between faculty and administrative perspectives regarding the importance of publication in international journals, indicating a potential disconnect between institutional leadership and academic staff priorities.

There were also reports indicating that the institution already organizes international events involving the use of English and intercultural exchange, which faculty members consider valuable.

The results suggest that professors are actively seeking to enhance their qualifications to participate in and support internationalization programs, particularly by improving their English proficiency, as evidenced by the activities they proposed. Moreover, faculty members recognize the essential role of language skills and regard internationalization initiatives as highly important. However, only a small proportion of faculty members demonstrate advanced English proficiency which may pose a significant barrier in the future.

5 CONCLUSION

The opinions and perceptions of both faculty members and directors regarding internationalization are generally positive and supportive of the implementation of the Internationalization Strategic Plan (ISP). They acknowledge the importance of English and express interest in receiving training to better engage in internationalization initiatives such as EMI and faculty mobility. However, nearly 60% of professors are currently not involved in any of the internationalization activities, and 44% consider their English proficiency to be at a basic level. These findings suggest that limited language proficiency may impede faculty participation in many internationalization programs that require a certain level of English. Furthermore, it is essential to consistently monitor faculty members' involvement in internationalization in order to assess any changes in this engagement over time.

Overall, there appears to be alignment between the perspectives of directors, faculty, and the objectives outlined in the internationalization strategic plan. Nonetheless, not all faculty members may be able to actively participate in these initiatives due to their English proficiency, despite generally recognizing their institutional importance.

Therefore, this study highlights two interrelated areas for institutional focus. First, there is a need to provide English language training for faculty members interested in participating in internationalization efforts. Second, fostering greater faculty engagement in ISP activities should be prioritized, as increased language proficiency may facilitate such involvement. Meanwhile, establishing partnerships and programs with institutions in Portuguese-speaking countries could also serve as a complementary strategy to advance the institution's internationalization goals.

As the process of internationalization at the campus under study was still in its early stages, and the main guiding document – the ISP – had been drafted primarily by those already interested in the initiative, several symmetric aspects were identified. These are likely to evolve and change over time with the gradual advance of the process, the implementation of additional activities, and a probable increase in broader institutional engagement.

To specifically address the temporal limitations of this study, a longitudinal investigation should be conducted to assess whether faculty engagement and English proficiency levels have improved following the implementation of the ISP.

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Contribuição dos autores

Este artigo é resultado de uma investigação acadêmica, cujo projeto foi elaborado pela Profa. Dra. Eliana Kobayashi e conduzido/executado pela sua orientanda na época, a acadêmica Nathália Paixão, que realizou um levantamento bibliográfico complementar e aplicou os instrumentos de coleta. A redação do artigo foi realizada em conjunto devido às especificidades da língua inglesa e a necessidade de aprofundamento da análise e da fundamentação teórica para que atingisse o nível exigido por uma revista Qualis.

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONÁRIO DIRETOR

1. Qual a sua opinião sobre o papel da língua inglesa e o processo de internacionalização do campus?

- () A língua inglesa não é importante para o processo de internacionalização, por isso não é necessário que os professores dominem o idioma.
 () O inglês é pouco importante para a internacionalização de uma instituição, por isso é indiferente que os professores tenham conhecimento do idioma.
 () A língua inglesa é importante na internacionalização, por isso é conveniente que os professores tenham conhecimento do idioma.
 () O inglês é imprescindível para o processo de internacionalização, por isso é necessário que os professores dominem o idioma.

2. Considerando o quadro abaixo, em qual alternativa se enquadraria o nível de inglês dos docentes do campus de uma forma geral?

A1	É capaz de compreender e usar expressões familiares e cotidianas, assim como enunciados muito simples, que visam satisfazer necessidades concretas. Pode se apresentar e apresentar outros e é capaz de fazer perguntas e dar respostas sobre aspectos pessoais como, por exemplo, o local onde vive, as pessoas que conhece e as coisas que têm. É capaz de se comunicar de modo simples, se o interlocutor falar lenta e distintamente e se mostrar cooperante.
A2	É capaz de compreender frases isoladas e expressões frequentes relacionadas a áreas de prioridade imediata (p. ex.: informações pessoais e familiares simples, compras, meio circundante). Consegue se comunicar em tarefas simples e em rotinas que exigem apenas uma troca de informação simples e direta sobre assuntos que lhe são familiares e habituais. Pode descrever de modo simples a sua formação, o meio circundante e, ainda, se referir a assuntos relacionados a necessidades imediatas.
B1	É capaz de compreender as questões principais, quando é usada uma linguagem clara e estandardizada e os assuntos lhe são familiares (temas abordados no trabalho, na escola e nos momentos de lazer, etc.). Consegue lidar com a maioria das situações encontradas na região onde se fala a língua-alvo. É capaz de produzir um discurso simples e coerente sobre assuntos que lhe são familiares ou de interesse pessoal. Pode descrever experiências e eventos, sonhos, esperanças e ambições, bem como expor brevemente razões e justificações para uma opinião ou um projeto.
B2	É capaz de compreender as ideias principais em textos complexos sobre assuntos concretos e abstratos, incluindo discussões técnicas na sua área de especialidade. Consegue se comunicar com certo grau de espontaneidade com falantes nativos, sem que haja tensão de parte a parte. É capaz de exprimir-se de modo claro e pormenorizado sobre uma grande variedade de temas e explicar um ponto de vista sobre um tema da atualidade, expondo as vantagens e os inconvenientes de várias possibilidades.
C1	É capaz de compreender um vasto número de textos longos e exigentes, reconhecendo os seus significados implícitos. Consegue se exprimir de forma fluente e espontânea sem precisar procurar muito as palavras. Pode usar a língua de modo flexível e eficaz para fins sociais, acadêmicos e profissionais. É capaz de se expressar sobre temas complexos de forma clara e bem estruturada, manifestando o domínio de mecanismos de organização, de articulação e de coesão do discurso.
C2	É capaz de compreender, sem esforço, praticamente tudo o que ouve ou lê. Consegue resumir as informações recolhidas em diversas fontes orais e escritas, reconstruindo argumentos e fatos de um modo coerente. Pode se exprimir espontaneamente, de modo fluente e com exatidão, sendo capaz de distinguir finas variações de significado em situações complexas.

Adaptado de *Council of Europe. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

() A1 () A2 () B1 () B2 () C1 () C2

- 3. Com base na resposta anterior, na sua visão, esse nível de proficiência em inglês dos docentes para a internacionalização é:**
- Muito bom.
 - Satisfatório.
 - É necessário aprimorar.
 - Insatisfatório.
- Outro: _____
- 4. Caso a resposta da pergunta 3 tenha sido “é necessário aprimorar” ou “insatisfatório”, quais medidas seriam necessárias para melhorar o nível de inglês dos professores?**
- 5. Pode-se considerar que o processo de internacionalização dentro da instituição está:**
- Estagnado
 - Progredindo, porém com barreiras
 - Em desenvolvimento
 - Progredindo como esperado
- Outro: _____
- 6. Considerando o Planejamento Estratégico de Internacionalização (PEI) do campus, com o atual nível de inglês dos docentes pode-se:**
- Desenvolver todas as ações de internacionalização sem impedimentos.
 - A maior parte das ações podem ser desenvolvidas, entretanto, há algumas que necessitam de um domínio maior da língua inglesa.
 - Apenas algumas ações de internacionalização podem ser desenvolvidas, pois com o atual nível de inglês dos docentes não é possível abranger todas as atividades.
 - Nenhuma das ações pode ser desenvolvida, pois com o atual nível de inglês dos docentes não é possível a execução das atividades.
- 7. O relatório da Capes 2017 sobre internacionalização na universidade brasileira apresenta ações de internacionalização elencadas pelas Instituições Ensino Superior (IES) participantes. Selecione aquelas que na sua visão seriam importantes para o campus. (Pode-se escolher mais de uma opção)**
- Artigos publicados em revistas com o *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)*.
 - Professores visitantes e pós-doutores estrangeiros.
 - Projetos de cooperação internacional.
 - Artigos publicados com coautoria estrangeira.
 - Aulas ministradas em outro idioma.
 - Alunos estrangeiros matriculados regularmente no campus.
 - Alunos que obtiveram dupla titulação/cotutela com uma instituição estrangeira.
 - Docentes com fluência em língua estrangeira.
- 8. De acordo com a resposta anterior, você acredita que com o atual nível de inglês dos docentes seria possível aplicar as ações escolhidas no campus?**
- sim, seria possível aplicar essas ações no campus, pois o nível de inglês dos docentes é satisfatório.
 - sim, seria possível aplicar essas ações de internacionalização na instituição, entretanto seria necessária uma preparação em relação ao inglês dos docentes.
 - não seria possível aplicar essas ações no campus no momento, pois ainda é necessário que o nível dos docentes seja mais elevado. Porém, podem ser abordadas em um futuro próximo.
 - não, essas ações não podem ser aplicadas no campus, pois os docentes não estão preparados em relação à língua inglesa.

9. De acordo com o quadro abaixo, determine a importância das ações de internacionalização dentro da instituição:

Ações	1- Não é importante	2-Pouco importante	3- indiferente	4- importante	5- É muito importante
Mobilidade acadêmica (docente)					
Mobilidade acadêmica (discente)					
Inglês como meio de instrução (EMI) (graduação/pós-graduação)					
Publicação em periódicos internacionais					
Vinda de professores estrangeiros ao campus (SZN) ("Visiting scholar" e/ou "Visiting researcher")					
Participação em eventos internacionais.					
Visita dos docentes do campus (SZN) a instituições estrangeiras ("Visiting scholar" e/ou "Visiting researcher")					
Curso de qualificação docente para o EMI.					

10. Na sua opinião, as ações de internacionalização apresentadas acima, podem trazer quais benefícios para o campus? Escolha as afirmações que melhor refletem a sua visão.

- () Acredito que as ações de internacionalização podem trazer o desenvolvimento no inglês dos docentes.
 () Acredito que as ações de internacionalização podem trazer uma troca cultural para o campus.
 () Acredito que a internacionalização pode trazer melhorias em aspectos acadêmicos como, por exemplo, a pesquisa.
 () Acredito que as ações de internacionalização não podem trazer benefícios à instituição.
 () Acredito que as ações de internacionalização podem abordar todos os benefícios apresentados, questões culturais, acadêmicas e linguística.

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONÁRIO PROFESSOR

1. Na sua opinião como docente/pesquisador, a internacionalização é importante para o campus?

- () Sim, é importante.
 () É pouco importante para a instituição.
 () É indiferente para a instituição.
 () Não, não é importante.

Outro: _____

2. Na sua visão, a língua inglesa é:

- () Imprescindível para o processo de internacionalização.
 () Importante para o processo de internacionalização.
 () Indiferente para o processo de internacionalização.
 () Desnecessária para o processo de internacionalização.

3. Classifique as ações de internacionalização abaixo de acordo com o seu interesse:

Ações	1- Não é importante	2-Pouco importante	3- indiferente	4- importante	5- É muito importante
Mobilidade acadêmica (docente)					
Mobilidade acadêmica (discente)					
Inglês como meio de instrução (EMI) (graduação/pós-graduação)					
Publicação em periódicos internacionais					
Vinda de professores estrangeiros ao campus (SZN) ("Visiting scholar" e/ou "Visiting researcher")					
Participação em eventos internacionais.					
Visita dos docentes do campus (SZN) a instituições estrangeiras ("Visiting scholar" e/ou "Visiting researcher")					
Curso de qualificação docente para o EMI.					

4. Considerando as ações apresentadas na questão anterior, escolha qual das afirmações melhor reflete sua visão:

- acredito que as ações de internacionalização podem aprimorar meu inglês e minha carreira acadêmica.
- acredito que as ações de internacionalização podem ser muito importantes para o progresso do campus.
- acredito que as ações de internacionalização não podem trazer benefícios para o campus.
- acredito que as ações de internacionalização são indiferentes para instituição.

5. Escolha uma das alternativas abaixo que melhor descreve o seu nível de inglês.

A1	É capaz de compreender e usar expressões familiares e cotidianas, assim como enunciados muito simples, que visam satisfazer necessidades concretas. Pode se apresentar e apresentar outros e é capaz de fazer perguntas e dar respostas sobre aspectos pessoais como, por exemplo, o local onde vive, as pessoas que conhece e as coisas que têm. É capaz de se comunicar de modo simples, se o interlocutor falar lenta e distintamente e se mostrar cooperante.
A2	É capaz de compreender frases isoladas e expressões frequentes relacionadas a áreas de prioridade imediata (p. ex.: informações pessoais e familiares simples, compras, meio circundante). Consegue se comunicar em tarefas simples e em rotinas que exigem apenas uma troca de informação simples e direta sobre assuntos que lhe são familiares e habituais. Pode descrever de modo simples a sua formação, o meio circundante e, ainda, se referir a assuntos relacionados a necessidades imediatas.
B1	É capaz de compreender as questões principais, quando é usada uma linguagem clara e estandardizada e os assuntos lhe são familiares (temas abordados no trabalho, na escola e nos momentos de lazer, etc.). Consegue lidar com a maioria das situações encontradas na região onde se fala a língua-alvo. É capaz de produzir um discurso simples e coerente sobre assuntos que lhe são familiares ou de interesse pessoal. Pode descrever experiências e eventos, sonhos, esperanças e ambições, bem como expor brevemente razões e justificações para uma opinião ou um projeto.
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C1	É capaz de compreender um vasto número de textos longos e exigentes, reconhecendo os seus significados implícitos. Consegue se exprimir de forma fluente e espontânea sem precisar procurar muito as palavras. Pode usar a língua de modo flexível e eficaz para fins sociais, acadêmicos e profissionais. É capaz de se expressar sobre temas complexos de forma clara e bem estruturada, manifestando o domínio de mecanismos de organização, de articulação e de coesão do discurso.
C2	É capaz de compreender, sem esforço, praticamente tudo o que ouve ou lê. Consegue resumir as informações recolhidas em diversas fontes orais e escritas, reconstruindo argumentos e fatos de um modo coerente. Pode se exprimir espontaneamente, de modo fluente e com exatidão, sendo capaz de distinguir finas variações de significado em situações complexas.

Adaptado de *Council of Europe. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Alternativa: () A1 () A2 () B1 () B2 () C1 () C2

- 6. Você acredita que o seu nível de inglês está compatível com as ações de internacionalização que tem interesse em desenvolver?**
- () Sim, está compatível.
 () Não está incompatível.
 () Meu nível está próximo ao desejado.
 () Não sei dizer.
- 7. Quanto às ações de internacionalização apresentadas na questão 3, qual afirmação corresponde a sua opinião?**
- () Não estou envolvido nas ações de internacionalização.
 () Estou pouco envolvido nas ações de internacionalização.
 () Estou envolvido nas ações de internacionalização.
 () Estou muito envolvido nas ações de internacionalização.
- 8. Em sua opinião, o processo de internacionalização do campus está:**
- () Estagnado.
 () Progredindo, porém com barreiras.
 () Em desenvolvimento.
 () Progredindo como esperado.
- 9. De acordo com a sua área de atuação no campus, você considera que as ações de internacionalizam fazem a diferença?**
- () Sim, as ações de internacionalização estão diretamente ligadas a minha área e por isso são importantes e fazem a diferença.
 () sim, as ações de internacionalização fazem a diferença no campus, porém não estão tão ligadas a minha área.
 () Não, as ações de internacionalização não fazem diferença para o campus, nem para minha área de atuação.
- 10. Há alguma ação de internacionalização que desperta seu interesse como docente para ser desenvolvida dentro do campus? Qual? _____**