

Internationalization practices in higher education: experiences of a Brazilian public university¹

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to map internationalization strategies in order to understand how these practices are developed in a public university in southern Brazil. Actors in this process were interviewed and, through content analysis, it was perceived the need to go beyond mobility and offering courses in a foreign language, acting on proposals that can bring internationalization to teaching practice in the classroom.

Keywords: Internationalization of education; Curricula; Teaching practice.

Práticas de internacionalização no ensino superior: experiências de uma universidade pública brasileira

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Resumo: O objetivo deste estudo é mapear estratégias de internacionalização, a fim de compreender como essas práticas são desenvolvidas em uma universidade pública do sul do Brasil. Atores desse processo foram entrevistados e, por meio da análise de conteúdo, percebeu-se a necessidade de se avançar para além da mobilidade e oferta de disciplinas em idioma estrangeiro, atuando em propostas que consigam levar a internacionalização para a prática docente em sala de aula.

Palavras-chave: Internacionalização da educação; Currículos; Prática docente.

Prácticas de internacionalización en la enseñanza superior: experiencias de una universidad pública brasileña

Resumen: El objetivo de este estudio es identificar las estrategias de internacionalización para comprender cómo se desarrollan estas prácticas en una universidad pública del sur de Brasil. Se entrevistó a los participantes en este proceso y, a través del análisis de contenido, se puso de manifiesto la necesidad de ir más allá de la movilidad y de la oferta de asignaturas en lengua extranjera, trabajando en propuestas que puedan llevar la internacionalización a la práctica docente en el aula.

Palabras clave: Internacionalización de la educación, Currículos, Práctica docente.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Universities are unique and complex organizations with characteristics that distinguish them from others. The management of universities is a challenge in itself, given the multiplicity of social actors involved and the triad of objectives that universities are supposed to achieve (research, teaching, and extension). In this sense, since the 1990s, in parallel with the globalization process, it has been observed that educational institutions and other organizations have begun to think about the internationalization of education in a broader sense, not only concerning research but also about the teaching function (Morosini, 2006). From this point on, the internationalization of education began to be considered more comprehensive (De Wit, 2013), going beyond agreements between institutions, research projects, and mobility programs.

In this context, internationalization is presented as the "intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of postsecondary education" (De Wit et al., 2015, p. 29, translated by us). The inclusion of this perspective aims to promote the development of the quality of education as a whole, whether in terms of research or teaching, in a comprehensive manner: that is, it must reach all the actors involved, from students to teachers, without forgetting the technical teams and the community surrounding the institution. It is therefore expected that these internationalization efforts will lead to the development of the whole society and the formation of a global citizen.

Of all the internationalization strategies adopted by educational institutions, physical mobility is the most visible. However, it is a highly exclusionary process. According to 2019 data, only 2.6% of higher education students worldwide participated in mobility programs (UNESCO, 2022). In this sense, given that internationalization should be for everyone, the challenge facing educational institutions is how to involve the entire academic community in this process. Therefore, thinking about how to extend the effects of internationalization beyond agreements and protocols between institutions, research projects, and mobility programs to teaching activities and the daily lives of students and professors is imperative.

Studies carried out on the internationalization of education show that internationalization strategies occupy a place in the institutional development plans of universities, although sometimes

in a limited way and without the necessary scope to translate the effects of internationalization processes into teaching actions in the classroom (Cipriani et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, it is understood that internationalization is an intentional and structured practice in each institution, as established in its Political Pedagogical Project (PPP) or its Institutional Internationalization Policy (PII). Studies that promote and analyze institutional internationalization are essential for understanding and improving the strategies adopted by universities. In addition to contributing to the theoretical advancement of the subject, they can promote the decolonization of knowledge, the development of effective public policies, the improvement of educational quality, the positive socio-economic impact, and the development of teaching practices that contribute to the comprehensive education of students.

In view of the above, this article seeks to map strategies for internationalization processes in a public university in southern Brazil in order to understand how internationalization is developed and implemented in this institution.

To this end, qualitative research with an exploratory-descriptive method and structured interviews was used to obtain data that could help understand the institution's internationalization process and its contributions to education. Two strategic actors for the institution's internationalization policy were interviewed, and the data were analyzed through content analysis using specific software for data processing.

The results show that, according to the interviewees, the studied institution still has a vision focused on mobility strategies, language teaching, and foreign language courses. They also point to the richness of the cultural exchanges that result from the presence of foreign students and faculty and the enrichment of the experiences of participants in mobility programs. At the same time, they point to the low level of student interest in these strategies and the difficulty of recruiting foreign teachers. Therefore, it is clear that there is a need to involve the entire academic community in the internationalization process through actions that consider other strategies in addition to those presented by the actors.

To this end, this article is divided into five stages. The first, introductory, defined the research problem and the objective of the study. The second stage elaborated the theoretical framework regarding policies and strategies for the internationalization of education, which supported the proposed discussions and served as a support for the inference and interpretation of the data. The third

stage described the methodological and analytical aspects of the study. The fourth stage presented the data from the structured interviews and explored the results using content analysis techniques (Bardin, 2011). Finally, the fifth stage sought to compose a synthesis of the central points, highlighting the most relevant aspects regarding the strategies of the internationalization processes in a public university in southern Brazil.

2 INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION

According to Knight (2015), it is essential that the international dimension of higher education is related to all aspects of education and the role it plays in society. The author emphasizes that internationalization should be seen as an intentional and continuous process that involves the integration of a global perspective into the mission, functions, and delivery of higher education.

Likewise, Stallivieri (2020, p. 26, translated by us) complements this view by stating that "as the concept of internationalization evolves, so do the questions and the need to think about how everyone can benefit from internationalization". This idea suggests a critical reflection on the benefits of internationalization, highlighting the importance of ensuring that all actors involved in the educational process have access to the opportunities offered by internationalization.

Stallivieri (2017, p. 19, translated by us) argues that "internationalization is no longer an issue that goes beyond academic life. It must be included in the policies and strategic decisions of higher institutional councils. It ceases to be an option and becomes a goal to be achieved, for obvious reasons". This statement emphasizes the need to incorporate internationalization in institutional policies, recognizing it as a central strategy for the development and competitiveness of higher education institutions in the global scenario.

Morosini (2021) confirms this very well when he presents the challenges of the current panorama of the internationalization of higher education in Brazil:

[...] internationalization as a quality criterion; strong presence of the concept of internationalization as personal mobility; lack of policies for the implementation of internationalization in undergraduate and graduate studies, limited to a few institutions and not to the system; limited tendency towards a model of integral internationalization in the institution towards countries of the global north; virtualization of internationalization and the challenge of internationalization as university integration (Morosini, 2021, p. 363, translated

by us).

These challenges highlighted by Morosini underscore the need for more robust and comprehensive policies that cover all levels and modalities of education and promote true international integration that goes beyond traditional academic mobility.

Effective strategies for the Internationalization of education are essential to respond to global demands and promote sustainable educational development. According to Gacel-Ávila (2018, p. 61, translated by us), "they represent a proactive response by the academic world to global dynamics that favors a strategic educational practice designed for the world and in line with local demands and needs for sustainable development". This implies a strategic approach that aligns internationalization initiatives with local needs to ensure relevance and positive impact.

In addition, Knight's (2004, p. 11, translated by us) classic definition of Internationalization remains relevant: "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of higher education institutions and systems". The author gives this concept a broad scope, emphasizing that it should permeate all aspects of the educational institution, from the curriculum to co-curricular activities and institutional policies. Such an approach is essential in educational internationalization strategies to ensure that the global perspective is effectively integrated into the Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC) process.

Consequently, to address the challenges highlighted, several practical strategies for implementing Internationalization are discussed, including international partnerships, exchange programs, the development of global curricula, and the use of digital technologies to facilitate international collaboration. These strategies aim not only to increase student and academic mobility but also to promote intercultural understanding and prepare students to act in a globalized context (Morosini et al., 2023; Cusati et al., 2021).

2.1 Internationalization at Home (IaH)

According to Almeida et al. (2019), Internationalization at Home (IaH) can promote common values and closer understanding between different peoples and cultures, in addition to improving cooperation between higher education institutions and enhancing the quality of education and human

resources through the exchange of good practices and mutual learning.

IaH has the aspect of exchanging experiences and learning without leaving the country. Leask (2015) highlights this feature well. "Teachers can teach to an international audience, supervise students, and collaborate with colleagues without leaving their offices. Similarly, students can collaborate with other students and teachers in different countries without leaving their homes" (Leask, 2015, p. 19, translated by us).

Leask (2013) goes further, noting that the tools for internationalization at home have evolved, resulting in new approaches such as virtual mobility. This technology allows students to study at foreign universities and professors to teach and collaborate with an international audience, all without leaving home. Moreover, virtual mobility, especially in Europe, is occurring simultaneously with a revival of traditional mobility, where students combine virtual collaboration with short-term physical mobility. This demonstrates a conceptual shift in IaH in response to new conditions and environments.

2.3 Global Citizenship and Interculturality

Defining global citizenship has been a challenge for those working on the topic due to the rapid changes in the contemporary world, whether political, economic, technological, or social. UNESCO (2016, p. 14, translated by us) states that "the growing interest in global citizenship has also drawn greater attention to the global dimension of citizenship education and its implications for policy, curricula, teaching and learning".

In this context, Leask (2015) argues that in theory and practice, curriculum internationalization is linked to the concepts of internationalization and globalization of universities. Furthermore, the author states that curriculum plays a crucial role in the interaction between people, knowledge, values, and actions in the contemporary world. Leask (2015) emphasizes that the connections between internationalization in higher education and globalization are complex and dynamic, affecting the type of work done, the way of working, and professional interactions. Leask also notes that universities are not only affected by globalization but also act as both agents and products of this process and thus bear some responsibility for the current state of the world.

In the UNESCO report "Education for global citizenship: topics and learning objectives," the

term global citizenship encompasses this entire relationship when UNESCO defines global citizenship as "a sense of belonging to a wider community and a common humanity. It highlights the political, economic, social and cultural interdependence and interconnectedness between the local, national and global levels" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 14, translated by us).

According to De Wit (2011), collaboration between students of different nationalities and cultures in the classroom is essential for promoting interculturality and fostering global citizenship. He emphasizes that the true significance of international students only becomes clear when there is a substantial focus on this intercultural collaboration, which is essential for the development of global interactions and understanding.

Walsh (2009) agrees with De Wit, stating that interculturality, understood as both a concept and a practice, involves contact and exchange between cultures in an equitable manner that promotes relationships of equality. She emphasizes that this interaction should not be limited to ethnic issues alone but should involve continuous communication and learning between different people, groups, and knowledge. The aim is to build mutual respect and promote the integral development of individual and collective capacities, overcoming cultural and social differences.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study has a qualitative approach because it seeks an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena, often through interviews, observations, and content analysis. It is often used in exploratory studies and the social sciences (Freire; Macedo, 2022). The method used is characterized as exploratory-descriptive and aims to map strategies of internationalization processes in a public university in southern Brazil, in order to understand how internationalization is developed and implemented in this institution.

To achieve the proposed objective, two social actors from the university participated: the coordinator of the international relations sector, referred to in this research by the codename actor 1, and the language teacher who works in the exchange processes that take place in the institution, identified by the codename actor 2. It should be emphasized that the use of pseudonyms refers to the guarantee of confidentiality guaranteed by Resolution No. 510/2016 of the National Health Council on the standards applicable to research in the human and social sciences (National Health Council,



2016).

Research participants are understood as social actors because they have some interface with the internationalization of the institution, whether in teaching, learning, and/or management. According to Jarzabkowski and Wolf (2015), any group of strategic social actors (practitioners) can be included as subjects of analysis, depending on whether their participation in the activities developed contributes to the research objectives.

To produce the data, a structured interview was used, which is developed based on a fixed list of questions whose order and wording remain the same for all interviewees (Gil, 2008). This research technique can be applied to different areas of knowledge because it allows participants to construct knowledge and make sense of the world around them (Minayo, 2010).

The interview script was prepared based on two main axes: (1) strategies for internationalization processes for students and (2) strategies for internationalization processes for teachers. Axis (1) consisted of ten questions that addressed issues related to mobility and academic exchange, institutional partnership programs, joint supervision and double degrees, support and assistance for foreigners, foreign language courses, and disciplines. Axis (2) consisted of eight questions with specific questions about strategies for recruiting faculty from other countries, faculty exchanges, and prospects for attracting international faculty.

Data analysis is followed by content analysis (CA) (Bardin, 2011). CA is a tool for analyzing data in various fields of knowledge and aims to describe the content objectively and systematically through three basic stages: pre-analysis, exploration of the material, and treatment of the results (Mozzato; Grzybovski, 2011). In the pre-analysis stage, the interviewees' responses were skimmed and the data generated were organized and prepared according to the research objectives. In the stage of material exploration, the organization was carried out to classify, group, and categorize the research data. In processing the results, we tried to make the produced data meaningful and valid. This stage consisted of inference, interpretation, and proposition of the data.

MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2022 (Release 22.6.0) software was used to support the analysis process, providing the opportunity to explore the data produced in its widest scope (Gibbs, 2009). Technological tools such as the use of software are of great importance in qualitative research. Firstly, they allow for integrated data analysis, which makes it easier to interpret and visualize the results more clearly and understandably, for example using figures and graphs. In addition, MAXQDA helps





to organize and code the data, making the analysis process more efficient and systematic, which is particularly useful in research involving large amounts of information (Kuckartz; Rädiker, 2019).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In an effort to recognize the structure and narrative presented, the pre-analysis phase involved skimming the respondents' responses. This was done using the MAXDictio "word frequency" function in MAXQDA software and allowed the identification of recurring patterns and themes, which were organized into groups called pre-analysis categories, as shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1 – Distribution of frequencies of occurrence for the keywords found in the skimming of the interviewees' answers

Pre-categories of analysis	Frequencies in responses
Courses	37
Foreigners	36
Language	35
Actions	27
Teachers	27
Disciplines	21
Projects	21
Exchange	20
Teachers	20
Strategies	17





Pre-categories of analysis	Frequencies in responses
Countries	16
Programs	16
Languages	14
Teacher	10
Language	8

Source: Survey data (2024).

The pre-categorization process is important in CA because it allows us to identify aspects that stand out in the pre-analysis but are not always used in the final categorization of the data. Thus, it can be observed that the keywords with the highest frequency of occurrence in the respondents' answers are related to courses (37), foreigners (36), and language (35). The high frequency of these keywords in the respondents' answers is representative of the axes used in the construction of the structured interview. They may indicate that both the provision of courses and disciplines, as well as support for foreigners and the language issues are central and interrelated aspects in the themes addressed by the two axes.

Therefore, based on the pre-categories, we tried to identify the similarities and content patterns in each of them to construct the categories of analysis of the study. To this end, the next stage of the exploration of the material represents the grouping of the pre-categories identified in the skimming. This process allowed the creation of six codes², namely: (i) Teacher Exchange, (ii) International Teachers, (iii) Foreign Language Courses, (iv) Foreign Language Subjects, (v) Institutional Programs, and (vi) Academic Mobility. In order to better understand the process, the code visualization matrix was plotted in the MAXQDA software using the "Visual Tools" function, which can be seen in Figure 1.

² In the qualitative software MAXQDA, the term "Code" is used to designate the grouping of the same chain of ideas, so in this study we will use the term "code" as a synonym for "Category of analysis".



Figure 1 – Codes generated from the grouping of pre-category content

Lista de Códigos	eixo 1 - ator 1	eixo 1 - ator 2	eixo 2 - ator 1	eixo 2 - ator 2	SOMA
Intercâmbio docente			1	4	5
Intercâmbio			1	1	2
Países				3	3
Docentes Internacionais			5	7	12
Docentes			4	2	6
Professor(es)			2	4	6
Cursos de Línguas Estrangeiras	2	5			7
Cursos	1				1
Estrangeiros		1			1
Língua(s)		3			3
Idioma(s)		2			2
Disciplinas em Línguas Estrangeiras	1	3			4
Disciplinas	1	3			4
Programas Institucionais	5	11			16
Ações	2	5			7
Projetos	2				2
Estratégias	2	3			5
Programas	2				2
Mobilidade Acadêmica	14	18			32
Países	4	5			9
Intercâmbio	11	12			23
Σ SOMA	47	71	13	21	152

Source: Research data (2024).

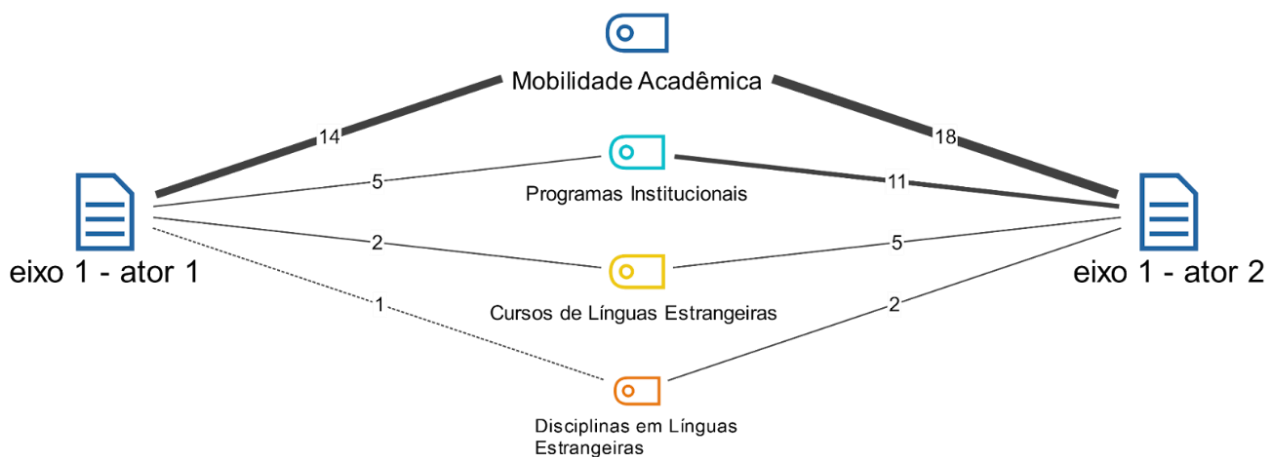
The code construction was based on the homogeneity of the responses, taking into account the keywords identified in the pre-categorization stage. In this stage, the MAXQDA software was used to code the qualitative data, that is, for each sentence or paragraph (segment), a code was created using the "New code" function. As can be seen in Figure 1, 75 segments were identified and assigned to six different codes.

In the next stage, **processing the results**, we tried to establish relationships between the results obtained and the theoretical framework adopted in order to expand the meanings of the research. In this way, we tried to infer the segments belonging to each code, the interpretation of the content, and

the general proposition of the data. For this purpose, the representative map for each of the six codes and the respective coded segments were plotted in MAXQDA software using the MAXMaps function "Model with a single case": Teacher Exchange (5), International Teachers (12), Foreign Language Courses (7), Foreign Language Subjects (3), Institutional Programs (16), and Academic Mobility (32).

It is worth noting that it was decided to present first the codes associated with Axis 1 - Students and then the codes associated with Axis 2 - Teachers. For analysis purposes, the following parameters of the tool are taken into account: a) the size of the circumference of the code reflects its predominance; b) the width of the line reflects the frequency of the code in the interview, and c) the numbers represent the totality of the segments associated with each code, as can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Representative map of codes belonging to internationalization strategies for students



Source: Research data (2024).

Figure 2 shows a strong emphasis on academic mobility. However, the actors' reports reveal a lack of strategies to attract students. "Students who want to do an exchange program find [name of institution omitted] and make contact with professors who have a partnership with their institution. And then they come here. That's how it works today, without a specific strategy" (Actor 1, 2024, translated by us).

Consequently, the number of foreign students at the institution is small, as Actor 2 reveals: "Today, between master's and doctoral degrees, we have a total of 6 students, related to technological areas and applied social sciences" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us). According to Actor 2, these are

not mobility students but foreigners living in the region. "The reality that we have today are students who come from other countries, who reside here in [city omitted], who come from Haiti, from Venezuela" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

One of the justifications for the low number of foreign students and the absence of foreign exchange students is the language issue. "We do not receive many exchange students. Firstly, because there are no subjects offered in a foreign language. Especially in the fields of engineering and health, which are the most by demand" (Actor 1, 2024, translated by us).

This statement is confirmed by Actor 2, who emphasizes the importance of being able to speak and write well in another language in the academic world but acknowledges the low level of language proficiency among students. "There is a problem with language proficiency, both with the foreign students we receive and with the students from [name of institution omitted] who go on exchange" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

Another reason for the low number of students in mobility programs is the financial issue. "There is no funding. It is direct, so to speak. What we finance is the tuition fees of the students when they are abroad. But no, there is no specific support for foreign students" (Actor 1, 2024, translated by us). Actor 1 explains that the exemption from tuition fees, both for foreigners attending the institution and for national students going abroad, is part of a policy of reciprocity.

However, the exemption from tuition fees has not been sufficient to attract or encourage students to go abroad, as travel, accommodation, food, and other expenses paid in foreign currency are high for national students. For foreign students from countries with stronger currencies, the participants' reports indicate that the main problem seems to be the lack of courses in a foreign language, especially English. Because they do not understand Portuguese, these students would have difficulty following the classes, even though the university offers Portuguese courses for foreigners.

Actor 2 emphasizes that a semester or a year of Portuguese language courses is not enough because, in addition to the formal language, they need to learn the academic language. "In the university environment, they also need to learn everyday things. So we realized that these Portuguese as a foreign language classes are often not enough to accommodate these students" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

The lack of welcoming programs is highlighted by Actor 2 as one of the factors that make the institution less attractive to foreign students, who end up not integrating into the local academic

community for various reasons. "This experience in the institution is very weak and does not last. The bond becomes very weak and does not last, right, precisely because it is weak during the time they are here, and over time it dissolves, right?" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us). The actor emphasizes that he has often been the refuge of these foreign students in different situations. "And the student who is sick? They call me. To take them to the hospital or about something that has happened at home. So, very small things, but the thing is that sometimes they feel totally helpless" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

Regarding the institutional programs, it can be seen from the actors' statements that they are mobility programs for double degrees, where the student does part of his or her studies abroad and at the end, having fulfilled the requirements, receives two degrees, one from the home university and the other from the host university. Actor 1 points out that a double degree program in Sweden has existed in the past and that the institution currently has two students in this type of mobility, one in the United States and the other in Germany. However, these are unidirectional programs. "We only send our students there, there is no mobility from there to here" (Actor 1, 2024, translated by us). Furthermore, Actor 2 points out that these programs are specific and segmented, without any articulation with the university.

Regarding foreign language courses, the actors emphasize that the university offers courses at different levels and languages. "There are courses for language improvement. We have courses in English, German, Spanish, and Italian. We have classes in Portuguese as a foreign language, and there is also English without Borders" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us). The latter is free for students at the institution. Portuguese for foreigners, on the other hand, is offered free of charge to foreign students on mobility at the institution. The other courses are paid.

The institution also uses proficiency tests for student mobility and has even offered international certifications. "During the Science Without Borders period, we used the tests. Our students were prepared to get the necessary grades because most of our students took the course within [name of program omitted] to prepare for the tests, right?" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

Despite the provision of language courses, the actors consider the proficiency level of the institution's students to be low, a factor that also contributes to the low demand for foreign language courses. "Students, in addition to being interested in taking courses in other languages, need to have a certain level of proficiency to understand, comprehend, and learn, right? The content presented in

other languages" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

However, this would not be the only reason for the low demand and supply of these subjects. The lack of teachers with knowledge of other languages is highlighted as crucial by one of the actors. "Because there is also a lack of teachers who speak certain languages so they can teach in those languages, right? So the teacher has to have a good knowledge of Spanish or German or English, for example" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us). The Actor also states that the institution does not have this type of professional. On the other hand, Actor 1 mentions organizational factors that hinder this offer. "But there is a complexity of schedules, classes, and everything else" (Actor 1, 2024, translated by us).

Actor 2 suggests creating programs that facilitate the acquisition of a second language and make better use of the subjects studied in the curriculum. Students often fail to take or follow a subject in a foreign language because it would be additional to the curriculum. The actor believes that if this subject could replace another in the curriculum, whether as an elective, optional, or part of the curriculum itself, there would be more interest on the part of students. Joint programs with other institutions could also attract attention. "It is very isolated, today there is no connection with other universities. Therefore, there is no demand for subjects in other languages" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

Actor 2 also emphasizes that communication needs to change, with more investment in marketing and not just in advertising. "We are not awakening or motivating students so that they somehow have this kind of desire. Or even the need to seek new horizons, a different view of research, teaching, getting to know other cultures, getting to know a new university" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

Regarding Axis 2 - Internationalization Strategies for Teachers: Exchange and Attraction of International Teachers, Figure 3 presents the data obtained from the interviews with the actors.

Figure 3 - Representative map of codes belonging to internationalization strategies for teachers



Source: Research data (2024).

Regarding the percentage of international faculty working at the institution, the actors highlight the presence of foreign professors as tenured professors. "However, it is a very small percentage, around 1%, 2% (Actor 1, 2024, translated by us). According to Actor 2, these professors are not linked to exchange programs and there are no visiting professors at the university. Overall, the percentage of foreign professors would be less than 1%. "We have a Moroccan professor, a Cuban professor, an Argentine professor, and an Austrian professor" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

The difficulties in accepting other foreign professors, according to Actor 1, would lie in legal issues. "Since our institution is public, it cannot make direct hires, except on a visiting basis, but these hires of visiting professors are usually specific to postgraduate programs" (Actor 1, 2024, translated by us).

Regarding the hiring of foreign professors, Actor 1 acknowledges that there is no strategy in this regard, but states that professors visit the institution for a short period of time. "Necessarily for internships, presentations, short courses, yes, this actually happens" (Actor 1, 2024, translated by us). Actor 2 is also unaware of any institutional policies or initiatives to attract professors. "Today, within the university, the recruitment of foreign professors to come to Brazil is done through projects or exchanges of professors or mobility of academic professors. There is no specific policy to attract foreign professors" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

Both actors recognize the importance of foreign teachers, especially for cultural exchange. "The arrival of foreign teachers is very important because it brings another way of studying, another way of evaluating, another way of explaining the content" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us). A teacher from a different cultural context, teaching in a foreign language, can enrich the students' experience, according to Actor 2: "This also helps our students to leave their comfort zone" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

Finally, concerning the arrival or departure of teacher exchanges, the actors point out that there are agreements with some countries, but the practice is not systematic. "That's why occasionally some teachers go to Sweden or Germany" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us). Actor 1 also emphasizes that teacher mobility does not happen continuously. "What happens is that teachers go to other countries to do internships or research periods, but there is no specific action (Actor 1, 2024, translated by us).



In the past, however, academic mobility was more organized, with different projects and countries. "Our teachers would go abroad, stay there for a while and teach, and then other teachers from there would come here, so there was this constant exchange and it was very fruitful at the time. But this partnership has not been effective anymore, especially in this post-pandemic period" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

Nevertheless, actors recognize the importance and contribution of this exchange. "Bringing a professor, bringing a researcher to the university is something that promotes this cultural exchange, this exchange of information, this exchange of research, of knowledge. It is very interesting (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us).

What can be seen from the data obtained, both in terms of students and teachers, is a greater emphasis on mobility processes and the benefits of having foreign students and teachers on campus. Nevertheless, the mobility figures presented by the actors are low and cover a very small percentage of students and teachers.

It seems that some myths or misconceptions about internationalization, already pointed out by Knight (2011) and De Wit (2011), still persist. Among the myths and misconceptions pointed out by these authors are the idea that a larger number of foreign students necessarily generates a more internationalized curriculum and institutional culture; that promoting courses in English is in itself synonymous with internationalization; that the number of international agreements determines the degree of internationalization of a university; that conducting mobility necessarily promotes the acquisition of intercultural and international skills, among others.

There is a consensus that international mobility, international agreements, research in international networks, and courses or subjects taught in a foreign language are constituent elements of the internationalization process. However, it is also clear that in most cases mobility is limited to a few students and faculty. As a result, most members of the academic community remain unaware of mobility movements and end up spending years at the university without experiencing internationalization. In this sense, given that internationalization is a process that needs to encompass the entire academic community (De Wit et al., 2015), how can institutions make internationalization inclusive, so to speak? Internationalization at Home (IaH), also called Internationalization on Campus, is seen as "the intentional integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students in domestic learning environments" (Beelen; Jones, 2015, p. 69).



This type of internationalization aims to answer an important question: what are educational institutions doing with students not being exposed to intercultural learning environments and international experiences? (Teekens, 2013).

This is a concern that should be included in the institutional policies of all universities. Finally, in a world where international issues directly affect the lives of people in their countries of residence, the development of intercultural skills and knowledge of international issues is fundamental. In this sense, IaH is a set of tools and activities aimed at developing these skills in all students (Beelen; Leask, 2011).

IaH does not require the presence of international students or faculty, although this can be beneficial, although there is no guarantee. Studies show that international students often do not integrate into the local student community, but end up interacting only with other international students, without exposing themselves to the local culture and without exposing their peers to the process of cultural exchange (Harrison; Peacock, 2010). There are also cases of xenophobia, discrimination, and the spread of hate speech in university contexts against foreign students (Barcellos, 2022; Moreira; Silva, 2017).

Another important aspect of IaH is that the language of instruction is irrelevant. Although learning other languages is important to broaden horizons and facilitate contacts, it is possible to promote internationalization strategies in the language widely used by all students (Beelen; Jones, 2015).

IaH can be developed in academic and non-academic activities. In the field of education, there are several strategies that can be applied through the use of technology, with or without the involvement of partner institutions in other countries. This is the case of virtual mobility and virtual exchange, for example. While the first concept relates to participation in courses, classes, or other activities facilitated online by educational institutions, the second refers to a set of approaches used in online cultural exchange projects (O'Dowd, 2018).

Although the terms are somewhat similar, in Virtual Mobility the student participates in a class taught at another institution, with students from the institution teaching the subject, and occasionally with students from other institutions. Virtual Exchange, on the other hand, involves the development of a collaborative project between the parties. One of the approaches that has been widely used in the context of virtual exchange is Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). In COIL,

professors from different institutions collaborate within their disciplines to develop an intercultural project that involves all of these professors' students, but in both synchronous and asynchronous modalities (Rubin, 2016). Thus, in each curricular component, asynchronously, students and professors develop a part of the project that is then discussed and presented in synchronous classes in which all students participate.

Although both strategies are valid for promoting internationalization to reach a greater number of students, thanks to information and communication technologies, it is important to emphasize that a planned structure is needed to implement them, both for the courses offered and for the COIL projects. Furthermore, access to virtual mobility is usually offered to partner institutions, which requires cooperation agreements between institutions, while virtual exchange requires relationships and cooperation between professors from different institutions and countries, which may not be easy. Finding a partner to develop a COIL project is a challenge, although there are international networks that try to facilitate the virtual meeting of the parties.

On the other hand, teachers can independently and autonomously promote internationalization actions within the curricular components they teach, without depending on other institutions. The inclusion of an international and intercultural perspective in the subjects should be encouraged by educational institutions. In their planning, teachers can include in their curricula content, objectives, strategies, assessment activities, and reference materials that address these perspectives. Consideration can be given to the inclusion of texts, books, videos, films, and materials produced in other countries and cultures that help to think about the curricular component from an intercultural point of view, always taking care to promote a broad and diverse source of cultures and resources, not only from particular parts of the world but from different continents.

Each subject can ask itself how certain aspects are thought and implemented in China, Bolivia, Croatia, Mexico, and Vanuatu, for example. Whether it is the health care system, laws regarding a certain social phenomenon, business behavior, communication, or the construction of bridges and buildings, it is always possible to observe a new point of view. The teacher can think of activities such as reading news from other countries, carrying out simulations in which students have to research and learn about international contexts, and even suggesting dramatizations based on research on cultural relations. In this way, they will be able to explore the full potential that cultural diversity and interculturality can offer, promoting cultural exchange and contributing greatly to the education not only of professionals but also of global citizens.

In the words of Actor 2, "specific programs, actions, and projects of the International Relations Office that take into account this cultural and linguistic diversity within the university are very important. If the university wants to have a strong internationalization program, it needs to take these issues further" (Actor 2, 2024, translated by us). In other words, it is necessary to go beyond cooperation agreements and mobility programs. It is essential to think about interculturality and the promotion of strategies for the internationalization of education.

5 CONSIDERATIONS

This research aimed to map strategies for internationalization processes in a public university in southern Brazil, in order to understand how internationalization is developed and implemented in this institution. From the analysis of the data obtained through interviews with stakeholders, it was found that there are investments and efforts in favor of student and faculty mobility, as well as offering subjects in foreign languages, language courses, and institutional programs. However, the data shows that the results of these initiatives are limited and confined to a few students and faculty.

It was also noted that there is a concern in the discourse with intercultural and international issues that still need to be reflected in actions and strategies that can reach the entire academic community. Internationalization at Home (IaH) is thus presented as a possibility, either in collaboration with other institutions to carry out virtual mobility and exchanges, or autonomously by teachers in their curricular components, with the inclusion of content, learning objectives, strategies, assessment tools, and reference materials with intercultural and international perspectives.

A limitation of this study was that it only studied the actors linked to the international area of the university, without studying the faculty members who could develop internationalization strategies in their curricular components. A new study that looks at teaching experiences in the classroom could help to understand how inter-institutional agreements, research projects, and mobility programs can translate their experiences into teaching practice and thus benefit a wider range of members of the academic community.

The research also did not take into account aspects such as the location of the university or its position in international rankings, factors that can influence the choice of the institution as a destination for mobility but also for the establishment of cooperation partnerships for virtual mobility



and exchange. An approach that took these factors into account could help other similar institutions to use the results to plan internationalization strategies that are appropriate to the local reality.

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