

*Nascentes***HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ABOUT EMI IN A  
SOUTH BRAZILIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY<sup>1</sup>***Gabriel Salinet Rodrigues\***Juliana Michelin Ribeiro\*\***Graciela Rabuske Hedges\*\*\**

**ABSTRACT:** This work aims at investigating Brazilian students' views on English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) from a pre-implementation standpoint so that their interest, linguistic and pedagogical needs, concerns and suggestions are identified. Through online questionnaire, we identified a significant interest in EMI, associated to concerns with language support and the preference for a flexible regulation, considering the interest and needs of each area and department. Most envisage EMI as an opportunity to prepare for mobility and to compensate part of the experience to those who would not be able to afford it. The results contribute to an assessment of the feasibility of EMI and a local language policy aware of the necessary language support, professional development and offer regulation.

**KEYWORDS:** Brazilian Education; English as a Medium of Instruction; English Language Teaching; Higher Education; Internationalization at Home.

**Introduction**

Brazilian Higher Education scenario has been changing due to internationalization, and the pedagogical practices have been reassessed and redesigned in some specific institutions. The launching of Science without Borders<sup>2</sup> in 2011, a student mobility program that introduced a new set of academic literacies needs in additional languages, particularly in English, marked the starting of a countrywide internationalization process in Brazil's tertiary education. Between 2011 and 2015, Science without Borders (hereafter, SwB) offered 64,000

---

<sup>1</sup> This article stems from an undergraduate final paper presented to the Major in English Teaching at Federal University of Santa Maria under the umbrella project *Inglês como meio de instrução na UFSM: políticas, percepções e implementação em direção à internacionalização*.

\* Mestrando em Letras (Estudos da Linguagem) pela Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM).

\*\* Mestranda em Letras pela Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM).

\*\*\* Professora da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM). Doutora em Linguística Aplicada e Inglês pela Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, com ano sanduíche em 2006 na University of New South Wales, Sydney, Austrália.

<sup>2</sup> The homepage of *Ciência sem Fronteiras* can be accessed at: <http://cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf/o-programa>.

scholarships of 12 to 18 months<sup>3</sup> to Brazilian undergraduate students— especially Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics students – engage in international exchange experiences (Ciência sem Fronteiras, 2019a, b).

Low English proficiency soon appeared as an obstacle to SwB<sup>4</sup> (Sarmiento, Abreu-e-Lima and Moraes Filho, 2016), and the Brazilian Ministry of Education launched Languages without Borders program (hereafter, LwB) in 2012 to offer free-of-charge additional language courses focusing on academic literacies education in public universities. Besides English, French, German, Japanese, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese as additional language courses, proficiency tests were offered and applied in partner institutions (Abreu-e-Lima and Moraes Filho, 2016). LwB has brought a good amount of spotlight to the field of applied linguistics and additional languages since professors and both graduate and undergraduate students of the area were responsible to conduct the program's activities.

Both SwB and LwB have been considered language policies (Guimarães, Finardi and Casotti, 2019) associated to internationalization. Especially LwB has been supporting the establishment of a multilingual, multicultural environment in Brazilian institutions by offering courses in several languages. In this view, the PDI of UFSM (Institutional Development Agenda 2016-2026 for the Federal University of Santa Maria-UFSM) may be understood as a language policy because it addresses additional language needs and interests of students, administrative staff and professors of UFSM (Author 3, 2018).

The academic community that participated in the elaboration of this document frequently mentioned the availability of curricular courses delivered in English as a strategy to overcome the internationalization challenge, a practice that can be understood under the scope of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI). EMI consists of teaching curricular courses in English at university settings where the first language is not English (Dearden, 2015) and one of the reasons for its adoption in universities worldwide has been to attract incoming mobility.

Considering SwB, the program was distinguished by:

- favoring outgoing mobility;

---

<sup>3</sup> To stay 18 months in the foreign country/university, the exchange had to 'include a language course' (Ciência sem Fronteiras, 2019b).

<sup>4</sup> The first SwB public calls that offered scholarships to universities in Portugal and Spanish (in 2012) received substantially more applications – 12,126 and 9,918 respectively – than the first SwB public call to universities in the United States of America (in 2011) – 7,997. Portugal was excluded from the SwB in 2013 after the second public call to Portugal received 28.191 applications, the highest number of applications in a SwB public call.

- revealing low proficiency in English of Brazilian university students; and
- being limited to a very small percentage – 0.9% – of the 6,739,689 undergraduate students enrolled in universities in 2011 (considering only public universities, it represents 3.6% of the 1,773,315 students)<sup>5</sup>

We consider that the research on EMI as a potential practice at UFSM could work to fill gaps in all three mentioned aspects as it can

- encourage incoming mobility;
- contribute to improve English proficiency of UFSM students; and
- be an opportunity of an internationalization experience ‘at home’ (Beelen and Jones, 2015) to those students who will not be able to participate in international student mobility.

Author 3 (2018) stated that the salience given to EMI by the community might steer the university's concern towards the use of English in class and challenge English language teaching experts at UFSM to offer pedagogical support. The absence of any specific policy at UFSM in relation to EMI to regulate the implementation of this practice also suggests the relevance of research about the adoption of EMI at UFSM that could inform its institutionalization. It is in this niche that our research group has been investigating (Author 3, 2018).

To the best of our knowledge, most available works assess students' perspective at a post EMI implementation period, when they have already enrolled and/or after concluding an EMI course. There seems to be little investigation regarding this public's opinion before institutionalizing the practice, consulting students' interest and needs in order to turn them collaborators in the construction of an institutional language policy. One exception would be Morell et al. (2014). Further to that, Macaro et al. (2018) concluded there was still relatively few investigations about EMI in Latin America Higher Education, niche which this study intends to help enlarge. Therefore, the present work aims at mapping the interest in EMI at UFSM and the attitudes of the student community about the adoption of EMI and related language needs. It is expected from this paper to assist the definition of parameters to the

---

<sup>5</sup> According to data from the 2011 census of INEP - *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira*, available at: <http://portal.inep.gov.br/web/guest/sinopses-estatisticas-da-educacao-superior>. Accessed 21 November 2019.

development of an institutional agenda to regulate the adoption of EMI and for the production of intellectual and pedagogical technologies that will contribute to the implementation of EMI at UFSM and also contribute to the understanding of EMI in Brazil and Latin America.

### **Internationalization and EMI on Language Teaching**

Various approaches to the teaching of curricular subjects and/through additional languages have arisen, many of which have contributed to the strengthening of Internationalization at Home (hereafter, IaH). IaH is an alternative to *traditional* Internationalization, because it is conceived as a process of internationalization that can be conducted at the local university environment (Beelen and Jones, 2015) as opposed to an understanding of internationalization as mobility only. In fact, Internationalization is a process which refers to an ‘integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education’ (Knight, 2004 quoted in Beelen and Jones, 2015: 60) in such a way that although it includes mobility, it does not limit itself to this aspect.

According to Corrales, Paba Rey and Santiago-Escamilla (2016: 322), ‘while IaH does not require that courses be taught in a particular language in order to become internationalized (Beelen & Jones, 2015), more and more universities have shifted to using a common language’ in this process, and EMI ‘parece estar recebendo mais atenção nos contextos de educação superior’<sup>6</sup> (Baumvol and Sarmiento, 2016: 73).

EMI, as understood by our group, is a comprehensive kind of use of English focused as a teaching language for academic courses/subjects others than English itself without a specific interest on language learning aims in regions where it is not the first language of the majority of people (Dearden, 2015; Macaro *et al.*, 2018; Schmidt-Unterberger, 2018; Dafouz, 2021). Different from a defense for an English-only policy, we recognize its importance on a globalized world and more specifically on an increasingly globalized/internationalized education connected to diversity of research and pedagogy agendas in which a framework of English-Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings (EMEMUS) (Dafouz and Smit, 2016; 2020) seems advisable. For the purpose of this research, we will continue to refer to EMI – considering it as a more widely familiar term -, but we want to make it explicit our position in favor of the employment of EMI as one tool in academic environments of multilingual nature.

---

<sup>6</sup> ‘seems to be receiving more attention in higher education contexts’ (our translation).

Since the start of the Bologna Process (The European Higher Education Area, 1999) the aim of internationalization has been to facilitate mobility by mainly standardizing documentation and easing academic credits transfer (Baumvol, 2016). In this scenario, English – already considered the ‘Higher Education language’ (Coleman 2006 quoted in Baumvol and Sarmento, 2016: 73) – was chosen as a medium of instruction, i.e., a language of instruction, due to its growing presence in academic environments. EMI differs from other approaches such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) because it does not have the explicit purpose of teaching language in class. EMI is focused on disciplinary content taught through English. According to Morgado and Coelho (2013: 11),

while in EMI we may find content teachers devising strategies (simplifying, classifying, translating, etc.) to help students understand content, and in ESP we find language teachers helping students to learn content-specific language, in CLIL language and content are integrated.

Based on Morgado and Coelho (2013), we understand that a successful adoption of the practice involves the articulation of both preparatory and supplementary courses on (i) EMI policies, practices and epistemology, and (ii) additional language education. Whilst the former focuses on the specific subjects and disciplinary conventions, the latter is interested in the language education of students and professors, specifically in their processes and products (genres) that develop Academic Literacies in English. This view suggests that EMI can benefit from support of the local English language specialist community, such as ESP, EAP (English for Academic purposes) and Academic Literacies programs and projects<sup>7</sup>.

Moreover, participating in classes in which English is used in authentic communicative situations to learn disciplinary content may also improve students' linguistic proficiency (Muñoz, 2012 quoted in Baumvol and Sarmento, 2016). Besides this, EMI is a tendency built by multiple factors, some of which Martinez (2016) lists as factors leading most universities to decide to implement EMI:

- attract students from other countries;
- prepare students for mobility and a globalized labor market;
- raise the profile and ranking position of the university. (Martinez 2016: 192 based on Wächter and Maiworm, 2014)

---

<sup>7</sup> Considering UFSM context, examples would be *Línguas no Campus* (LINC) and Languages without Borders (LwB).

Further to this, Martínez states that EMI may enhance the participants' future opportunities, as it might bring an 'upward for students who, for example, might obtain better employment through being educated in English, upward for the university for which EMI can increase its international draw and place in international rankings' (Martínez, 2016: 193). Although there seems to be a number of benefits from EMI adoption, it is yet an issue to be discussed with the local community.

Dearden's report on EMI worldwide (2015) analyzes the example of the Politecnico di Milano, in Italy, in which the adoption of EMI caused reaction from the teaching staff. The university decided that most of its courses 'would be taught and assessed entirely in English rather than Italian' (Dearden, 2015: 18). Otherwise, they 'risked isolation and would be unable to compete as an international institution' (Dearden, 2015: 18). Given this scenario, professors claimed this decision would diminish the quality of teaching due to translation to English. As a result, a 'compromise seems to have been reached and the university website now shows undergraduate and graduate courses taught in English and in Italian' (Dearden, 2015: 18).

The Italian case casts some light on an aspect to be careful with in order to implement EMI: the *fashion*. Martínez (2016: 192) indicates that EMI practices can be initiated by either a 'mostly top-down (e.g., from the university administration) or bottom-up (e.g., from the faculty and/or students) fashion'. The Politecnico di Milano case seems to fall on the first format. Further to fashion, Martínez (2016 based on Cummins, 2000) indicates that this case conjugates an aspect of 'subtractive' EMI policy - or EMI-only policy -, in which the first language loses nearly all its space in the curriculum. Especially if the EMI practice is of a top-down origin and combines this subtractive aspect, it can suffer from a greater resistance to be accepted.

### **EMI in the Brazilian Context**

In Brazil, EMI practices are usually isolated due to its origin on a few professors' interest to bring the additional language closer to the teaching reality (Baumvol and Sarmiento, 2016). In addition, Dearden (2015: 23) indicates that the public opinion about EMI refers to the practice as 'something for the elite' and not among the most useful investments in education. Martínez (2016) also shows that although there has been a growth in the number of universities adopting EMI since 2010, the number of courses taught in this modality is discreet. To put in the author's words: 'if EMI is a swimming pool into which many countries

have dived head first, most universities in Brazil are still just barely 'dipping their toes' in it' (Martinez 2016: 208).

Guimarães, Finardi and Casotti (2019), mentioning a *Folha de São Paulo* report, showed university courses taught in English act as a strategy to call attention of foreign students and in most cases comprise short-term courses and undergraduate (regular or elective) courses. Martinez (2016) shows that universities seemed to require no specific level from students, being the expression 'no proficiency restrictions' found in different Brazilian universities (Martinez 2016: 205). The author cites the annual publication of *English First English Proficiency Index*, which set Brazil as a low proficiency country in 2015. This may be one main reason why institutions in general demonstrated this tendency of not demanding high proficiency levels, once the chances of little enrollment would probably arise. Another aspect that this scenario raises is the necessity of language courses, pointed by Morgado and Coelho (2013) as a fundamental aspect of EMI, which will probably have a significant share on the success or failure of the whole project.

It is important to highlight that several studies cited by Macaro et al. (2018)<sup>8</sup> showed students' preoccupation with their proficiency to cope with classes in English. Some of them reported believing to be learning less than if they had opted for instruction in their mother language.

Gimenez et al. (2018) identified a number of languages working as medium of instruction in Brazil: English (80% of the occurrences), Spanish, French, German and Italian. As the major additional language applied in instruction, Martinez (2016)'s mapping seems to agree with Sahan et al. (2021)'s in concluding that little evidence suggest EMI initiatives prior to 2010 in Brazil. It is around 2014 that EMI actions appear to significantly grow in number and salience, possibly following the results of SwB program. Gimenez et al. (2018) has also captured a growth in relation to previous mapping, indicating an increase from 44 to 406 graduate courses and from 197 to 235 undergraduate courses offered in EMI on Brazilian Institutions.

### **Reports on Students' Perspectives on EMI Abroad**

Morell et al. (2014) reflect on professors' and students' perspectives and needs regarding EMI at a Spanish university. In relation to students, the authors stated that the group feared that their proficiency level would be too low to register in an EMI course and that

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. in Macaro *et al.* (2018) references to Cho 2012; Ellili-Cherif and Alkhateeb 2015; Islam 2013; Kang and Park 2005; Khan 2013.

their results would be negatively affected by the practice. Moreover, they also defend that the approach should be conducted alongside an ESP support. Morell et al. (2014: 2628) claim '[t]he results from both the student and teacher surveys coincide with the belief that there should be more [training] courses and a greater support system for EMI' at the institutional level.

Corrales, Paba Rey and Santiago-Escamilla (2016) analyzed EMI in a Colombia non-profit university. In that university, EMI was a top-down decision and the majors they investigated had an eight-level program of additional languages, in which nearly all students chose English. In their situated investigation, they found that 72% of students could understand the concepts and did not consider their proficiency level a barrier to understand the content. However, around 90% of students were enrolled in the language course level of the corresponding semester to the EMI course or in an upper level. In addition, 64% of the student respondents stated their English level had improved by taking the EMI course (Corrales, Paba Rey and Santiago-Escamilla, 2016). Finally, all respondents said that EMI courses should be part of the university's programs and that the course they took was a contribution to the improvement of their international and intercultural skills (Corrales, Paba Rey and Santiago-Escamilla, 2016).

## Method

The present study was designed to be a cartographic study aiming at unveiling students' perceptions, interests and needs regarding institutionalization of EMI as a potential pedagogical approach at UFSM's teaching culture. Considering the necessity of collecting vast amounts of data from a large population, the adopted research instrument was the cross-sectional, web-based questionnaire survey. Following Dörnyei (2003: 09), we believe that questionnaires are advantageous because they are quite efficient in such aspects as '(a) researcher time, (b) researcher effort, and (c) financial resources'. Further, it can be said the 'online' characteristic may be helpful in mitigating eventual embarrassment of researcher and/or participants and may offer participants autonomy to manage their time to answer the questions.

## Universe of Analysis

Our universe of analysis comprised a community of around 26,042 students (technical/vocational high school, technical/vocational post-secondary education, undergraduate and postgraduate levels) enrolled in both on-campus and distance education and divided in



four *campi* in the South of Brazil. Students from the *Letras* [Languages] teaching majors and post-graduation were excluded, due to the possibility for them to take classes in which English is both the content and the medium of instruction.

### The Research Instrument

The self-administered online questionnaire was designed in Portuguese, expecting to enhance respondents' understanding, and consisted of 33 items. These items included four types of questions: multiple-choice, checkbox, semantic differential scales and short-answer. It was created on *Google Forms* platform once it is more user-friendly and appealing to students, who widely use it for academic purposes. By the end of the questionnaire, respondents had the opportunity to inform their e-mail if interested in continue on the research and provide feedback on the research instrument and the research topic itself.

The 33 items were distributed in five main sections: (a) academic profile; (b) use of English in university-related activities; (c) EMI experience(s); (d) perspectives on institutional limitations and role of EMI on internationalization; (e) interest in EMI; and (f) language/institutional needs. Results of sections (c), (d), (e) and (f) are presented and discussed in this work.

The questionnaire was developed considering some disadvantages of this data collection instrument indicated by Dörnyei (2003). Unmotivation to answer was approached by pointing to the relevance of the study for internationalization and to the institutional support of the International Office (SAI – *Secretaria de Apoio Internacional*); pedagogical support was also indicated as a future implication of the study. Lack of specialized knowledge in the field of academic literacy and EMI was predicted and the questions were formulated to be straightforward and to contain ordinary terminology or to include definitions of terms; instructions also clarified when more than one option could be chosen in a question.

### Data Collecting and Analysis Procedures

The questionnaire hyperlink was distributed through institutional Data Processing Center – which manages a database with all e-mail addresses of UFSM's students - following approval of the Ethics Committee. The sample was determined by self-selection, i.e., volunteering, by the participants. Reminder notices were published during the survey period<sup>9</sup> in an

---

<sup>9</sup> The reminders were published at the university's website: <https://www.ufsm.br/2019/11/06/adocao-dos-ingles-em-disciplinas-curriculares-e-tema-de-pesquisa-on-line-com-alunos-da-ufsm/> and on wide reach

attempt to increase participation rates. Answers were collected for 26 days in October and November 2019. The students' data set was primarily analyzed quantitatively as a means to determine patterns and respective percentages regarding interest, perspective and needs about EMI implementation.

## Results

From 26,042 potential respondents, 689 (2.65%) accessed the form and 679 (2.61%) participated in the study by answering it in full<sup>10</sup>. We took the institution's PDI as a parameter to validate the representativeness of our sample. Under this parameter, our survey reached a larger percentage of participation than PDI (Table 1).

**Table 1 – Comparison between PDI's and EMI's questionnaires response rate**

Survey	Potential respondent	Effective Answers	Percentage
UFSM PDI	29,253	429	1.47
EMI project	26,042	679	2.61

Source: the authors based on Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (2016)

Data revealed 86.3% of students are interested on EMI while only 1.5% reported no interest in the practice. We also considered participants who might not be interested at the moment, regardless the reason. This third group represented 12.2% of participants. Given this scenario, there were more than 500 students who reportedly stated they would engage in EMI courses. In the next subsections, we present these groups perceptions and needs.

### Students' perception: limiting factors and relevance of EMI

When asked about the reasons why EMI is not widely adopted at UFSM, students mainly pointed to unfamiliarity with the concept of EMI (75.1%) and to their own low proficiency in the language (58.5%) (Table 2). Professors' proficiency does not appear in the first group of factors, it is the eighth determining factor according to students. Focusing on the five most mentioned reasons limiting EMI, only one is about language proficiency. To some

---

Facebook pages such as 'Spotted UFSM' <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Spotted-UFSM-930267327004173/>.

<sup>10</sup> Seven answers we identified as duplicates, i.e., containing the same answers of another response and; therefore, were disregarded. More information on this problem is available on the platform developer's forum: <<https://support.google.com/docs/thread/40048414?hl=en>>. Other three did not agree with informed consent and did not actually respond. Accessed 05 July 2020.

extent, students signal one major aspect to be discussed with them is the practice, along with the educational system and how they can relate. Moreover, around 21% of participants believe EMI is not used at UFSM because it could exclude students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Not the lack of interest (near 19%), infrastructure (around 10%) or relevance of the language in their area of study were pointed as fundamental aspects limiting EMI at UFSM.

**Table 2 – Limiting factors for the implementation of EMI at UFSM**

Factor	%
Unfamiliarity to what EMI is	75.1
Students' low proficiency to cope with classes delivered in English	58.5
It is an uncommon practice at Brazilian universities	47.9
Lack of discussion and evidence on EMI's strategic relevance to internationalization	45.9
Unfamiliarity to the EMI implications on learning	45.1
Lack of support or institutional policy to professors who practice EMI	34.3
Professors' low proficiency to deliver classes in English	32.4
Lack of official regulation of EMI at the institution	32.1
Perception that English-mediated instruction may limit access to low socioeconomic level groups	20.9
Lack of Interest on EMI	18.9
Professors' lack of time to prepare a course mediated by another language	17.2
International students low presence at UFSM to justify EMI	17.1
Low presence of international students at UFSM with proficiency to keep up with classes delivered in English	10.2
Lack of proper space and media infrastructure to EMI practice	9.9
EMI just became relevant in the new internationalization policy and the new PDI 2016-2026	5.3
English low relevance in some areas/departments	4.9
Fear that Portuguese language or national identity be impaired	4.4

Source: the authors.

In specific about a possible exclusion of low-socioeconomic background students, in-depth study is needed to provided any further interpretation on the matter. What we can so far report is that the questionnaire allowed us to compare the interest rate between students who held or not *Benefício Socioeconômico*, a subsidy provided by UFSM to students from low socioeconomic background as a means to assist on their maintenance at UFSM during the period of the major or graduate course which include access to three free-of-charge meals a day and possibility to live at on-campus, university-maintained, student housing. Although composing a minor group in relation to fivefold non-BSE students in the sample, we perceived a slightly higher interest rate on the former group (87.9%) than in the latter (86.1%). All the *Not interested* respondents are from the non-BSE group.

About students' opinion with reference to an official policy for the implementation of EMI, only 6.8% think it should not be institutionalized while the majority considers it an

important step (Table 3). More than 50% suggest it will enable a growth in the offer of EMI courses at UFSM. Considerable share of students was also concerned with professors' qualifications to implement EMI (41.2%) and flexibility in the proposal (37.8%). Similarly, to what data showed about limiting factors, from the three most selected options, two are focused on the characteristics of an EMI project (educators' instruction and flexible norms) rather than the offer *per se*.

**Table 3 – Relevance of official EMI policy according to students**

Opinion	%
Important to stimulate the offer	50.7
Important as long as it include mechanisms of professor certification to indicate they have the necessary abilities to teach EMI courses	41.2
Important, as long as rules be flexible and consider the specificities of each area and teaching level	37.8
Important to encourage supportive and monitoring practices/programs to EMI practice	33.4
Important to systematize the offer	33.8
Important, as long as it be valued on students' academic record	32
It should not be institutionalized	6.8
Other	1.6
Unable to respond	19

Source: the authors.

Some participants added other viewpoints (Table 4) in relation to the institutionalization of EMI. In most cases, participants feared a *top-down* fashion EMI, especially considering an institutionalization/regulation as a means to impose the practice. Participants #51, #60, #341, and #394 mention language courses offer as a step towards institutionalization. #66 and #504 also highlight the relevance of a progressive introduction, possibly via elective courses instead of mandatory ones. Participant #114 is an example of discourse against top-down policies as no actual contrariety on interested students to engage on EMI is reported, but on *institutionalization* of the practice. The word institutionalization seems to have been taken as a proposal to fully replace Portuguese as a Medium of Instruction rather than a means to ensure the legal status of EMI and the integrity of those involved.

**Table 4 – Opinion on EMI institutionalization via official policy\***

Participant	Opinion
#51	Acho importante que os centro ofereçam curso de idiomas para os alunos, assim possa atingir mais alunos do campus
#60	Acho importante, desde que seja ofertado aulas de inglês com mais frequência, principalmente nos campi fora da sede, preparar o aluno com aulas de inglês para capacitá-lo as aulas. Sem isso, alunos de baixa renda (principalmente) serão muito prejudicados

#66	Acredito que seja importante <i>começar essas práticas sem resolução normativa, para verificar a aceitação do mesmo</i> , inicialmente como um teste, <i>uma prática piloto</i> .
#114	Acho importante a oferta <i>para alunos que se interessam, mas sou contra a institucionalização</i>
#341	<i>No atual contexto não deveria ser institucionalizado</i> , primeiro é necessário capacitar alunos e professores.
#394	Acho importante, mas <i>antes de ofertar matérias em inglês deveriam ofertar cursos de inglês</i> .
#504	Acho importante, <i>mas deveria começar por disciplinas eletivas, para criar uma cultura de aprendizagem com o EMI</i> .

\**sic*, emphasis added

Source: the authors.

In relation to the specific role of EMI in internationalization, participants frequently reported that EMI may contribute to the preparation for mobility (84.5%) or for the global professional market (70.1%) (Table 5). Only 1.6% stated they could not identify any positive result stemming from EMI adoption.

**Table 5 – The role of EMI in UFSM's internationalization**

Opinion	%
Contribute on UFSM's student preparation to international mobility	84.5
Enable students to a global professional market	70.1
Turn UFSM more welcoming to students, professors and researchers from other countries	65.5
Stimulate the broadening of mutual cooperation networks between people, institutions and countries	52.3
Give opportunity to access a pluricultural, plurilingual environment 'at home', with no involvement of mobility	45.5
Turn UFSM more inclusive, broadening the access to a more balanced academic mobility	44.5
No positive impact	1.6
Other	0.7
Unable to respond	0.4

Source: the authors.

Students also highlighted EMI's potential to create a welcoming environment to international staff and students and establish a plurilingual setting to study (English during instruction, Portuguese in ordinary interactions and other languages students and staff might include). However, these roles related to pluricultural setting and inclusion are yet secondary to a traditional view of internationalization, which is conceived as a synonym to mobility. This is an important aspect to be discussed in EMI courses or forums. In the next section, we focus on students' language and institutional needs.

### Students' needs: towards EMI policy

A significant majority of the participants (67.5%) indicates the need of broadening linguistic education in English at UFSM (Table 6). The necessity of specialists in English to monitor the EMI students follows it with 48.3% of mentions.

**Table 6 – Institutional measures to EMI practice support according to students**

Institutional measures	%
More courses on English language education	67.5
Projects with available professionals from English language area to monitor EMI students	48.3
Establishment of reward policy to students who enroll in EMI courses	43.6
Establishment of an institutional policy to regulate EMI offer	40.6
Courses/workshops on English language education to professors	40.5
Courses/workshops on characteristics and functioning of EMI	26.4
Improvement of media infrastructure in classrooms	20.6
None, I believe this is not one of the institution's tasks	2.2
Unable to respond	0.4

Source: the authors.

The data collected showed that a substantial part of the students (nearly 44%) would be more willing to enroll in EMI courses if any official advantage results from it. In addition, they consider necessary to set a policy to administer the EMI offer. It is important to note that students are more often concerned with the need of language assistance to them than to their instructors, what is consonance with their assessment of their own low proficiency rather than their professors' as a limiting factor to EMI implementation.

In our mapping of EMI, we also considered important understanding the current role of the English language in the activities conducted at UFSM's classes. In general, 82.1% of the students declared they use English in their classes. Data showed nearly 73% read bibliography in English indicated by the professors and 48.7% understand technical terminology from their field in English (Table 7).

**Table 7 – Presence of English in class-related activities**

Activity	%
Outside classroom, I study/read bibliography in English, by indication of the professor	72.8
I understand disciplinary terminology in English used by the professor during explanations	48.7
During classes, I study/read bibliography in English, by indication of the professor	33.9
I read slides used by the professor during classes	20.6
I write assignments in English to hand in to the professor	11.5
I cope with classes orally delivered in English	6.0
Take course tests/exams in English	6.0
I interact orally in English with classmates from other countries during in class group activities	4.6
I present seminars/assignments orally in English with slides written in English	4.3

I present seminars/assignments orally in English, but with slides written in Portuguese	2.4
I interact orally in English with the professor (questions and answers)	2.1
I interact orally in English with Brazilian classmates during in class group activities	1.9

Source: the authors.

A surprising number of students (6%) has taken course examinations and other 6.7% have delivered oral presentations in English (with the slides written in Portuguese or English). In addition, 6% stated they had classes orally delivered in English. These results signal to a relevant presence of English in the academic culture and in the local academic literacy practices at UFSM. We consider it remarkable because nor EMI or any other similar approach is currently officially institutionalized. If we concentrate on the five most mentioned class-related activities, four are connected to written skills (reading and writing) and, pedagogically, only three are during the session/class.

### Previous experiences with EMI and further uses of English in class

Despite 6% answered they had been to classes delivered in English, only sixteen students (2.3%) reported they had already taken EMI courses. Six of these students (37.5%) classified their proficiency at the Beginner or Basic level, whereas five (31.2%) at the Advanced or Proficient level. The remaining participants presented discrepant self-assessments of their communicative skills, usually giving lower assessments to their oral skills and higher to written skills.

About the reasons to enroll in an EMI course, the students mainly pointed to the absence of another option (50%), followed by the desire of improving their proficiency in English (37.5%) (Table 8). The role of the additional language to the disciplinary field was also frequently mentioned. However, it is important to highlight the first reason to have enrolled on EMI course was not a fully personal decision, and only one student did it for the experience (6.2%). Considering the setting of parameters for an EMI policy these traces of top-down approach (only option, mandatory course) should not be encouraged.

**Table 8 – Reasons for previous experiences with EMI**

Reasons	%
There was no other available option	50
To improve my English [proficiency]	37.5
Because English is essential in my disciplinary field	31.2
Because it was a mandatory course	12.5
To interact with classmates in English	6.2
To get prepared to mobility and to attend classes in foreign universities	6.2

For the experience	6.2
Because I like classes in English	6.2

Source: the authors.

In answering what difficulties they have faced during the EMI classes, 37.5% reported their low proficiency as the major obstacle and their shyness to interact orally was pointed as equally impactful on the experience. However, 31.2% declared having no problems to cope with the EMI course (Table 9), which is consistent with the number of self-assessed Advanced/Proficient EMI students.

**Table 9 – Students' difficulties on an EMI course**

Factors of difficulty	%
My low proficiency	37.5
My shyness to interact orally	37.5
No difficulty	31.2
Lack of support on the course or from my major to help with my difficulties with English	12.5
Professor's accent, who spoke an English to which I am not used	12.5
Lack of a assistance from an English teacher/monitor to help me with my difficulties	12.5
Professor's pace, who spoke English too quickly	12.5
Lack of a course tutor to help me with difficulties on the content	6.2
Brazilian professor's low proficiency	6.2

Source: the authors.

Maintaining a pattern demonstrated by the whole group, students who took EMI courses at UFSM demonstrate a better evaluation of their professors' proficiency than their own. Another relevant finding is that from the sixteen EMI students, fourteen (87.5%) reported they would continue taking EMI courses. The other two students declared not interested at the moment. None of the students who had the EMI experience answered 'not interested' in the practice.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we aimed at developing a short cartography of students' interest, perspectives and needs in relation to EMI at UFSM. Through our survey, we noticed there is a stark interest on English-mediated courses. Based on students' perspectives on limiting factors and the relevance of EMI on internationalization interconnected with their language and institutional needs, it is clear the EMI project at UFSM must not limit itself on offering curricular courses on the additional language.

The unfamiliarity with EMI and the lack of discussion on the practice students reported as aspects that lead to the limited employment of EMI at the institution (Table 2) as



well as the crystalized association of internationalization as mobility they still seem to hold (Table 5) signal to a necessity of including a wide discussion about the practice at an initial phase of its institutionalization, prior to the offer *per se*. This discussion could be established through small talks on selected aspects (e.g., whether should be a minimum proficiency level, if the discipline would be simultaneously offered in Portuguese, assessment) and continuously instigating students to actively participate in these talks. The participants also considered their professors should receive a specific professional development on the practice and that an EMI policy should respect the particularities of each area and study level.

Regarding linguistic education, the community showed concern with the availability of language education courses. Most of them (64%) have never taken English language courses at UFSM and around 20% had not even known about the existence of projects UFSM have on this area before answering the questionnaire. The language support; however, is not circumscribed to a preparing phase, but it is also connected to the monitoring of EMI students (Table 6). Further, more than monitoring to assist the comprehension of the content, the participants who took EMI courses demonstrated greater need of language support to EMI courses. Especially in this aspect, the institution could help on the enhancement of the promotion of the language projects and their courses offer.

The majority of students who took EMI courses pointed the reason why they enrolled in these courses was that it was the only available option (Table 8). Although this group is modest, this might indicate *top-down* fashion (Martinez, 2016). Moreover, several students seemed concerned with the idea of institutionalization of this modality via institutional regulation, understanding it would be an imposed practice, rather than a regularized one. On the other hand, this unclearness signaled the adoption of *top-down* fashion would not be well accepted by the community.

Because of this, it is necessary to ratify that under no circumstance we advocate for an EMI-only policy. Conversely, we believe EMI should be configured as a means to empower Brazilian science and academy by not 'ignoring the imperialist [culture]'s language, but rather knowing how to make use of it in favor of the Third World [countries]<sup>11</sup> (Moita Lopes 1996: 59). Therefore, the preparing and monitoring projects within the umbrella-project of EMI at UFSM should also address that we can consider English as a *Tyrannosaurus rex* (Swales, 1997) due to its carnivorous trait in relation to other languages, especially in academic publications. This EMI configuration would then be one that allows a widening in Brazilian academia

---

<sup>11</sup> From the original: 'não é portanto ignorar a língua do imperialista, mas saber fazer uso dela em benefício do Terceiro Mundo o que se advoga aqui?.'

participation on the international scenario at the same time it aspires to draw attention to local productions as it opens way to other additional languages as medium of instruction at the institution towards the construction of multilingual university environment.

## PERSPECTIVAS DE ALUNOS DO ENSINO SUPERIOR SOBRE EMI EM UMA UNIVERSIDADE PÚBLICA DO SUL DO BRASIL

**RESUMO:** Este trabalho visa investigar visões de alunos brasileiros sobre o Inglês como Meio de Instrução (EMI) a partir de um período pré-implementação, a fim de que seu interesse, suas necessidades linguísticas e pedagógicas, preocupações e sugestões possam ser identificadas. Por meio de um questionário online, identificamos um interesse expressivo em EMI, associado a preocupações sobre suporte linguístico e a preferência por regulação flexível, considerando os interesses e necessidades de cada área e departamento. A maioria compreende o EMI como uma oportunidade para se preparar para mobilidade ou de compensar essa experiência para aqueles que não têm a possibilidade de investir nela. Os resultados contribuem com a avaliação da viabilidade do EMI e de uma política linguística informada do suporte linguístico requerido, da formação profissional e regulação de oferta.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Educação Brasileira; Inglês como Meio de Instrução; Ensino de Língua Inglesa; Ensino Superior; Internacionalização em Casa.

## REFERENCES

- ABREU-E-LIMA, D. M. de; MORAES FILHO, W. B.. O programa Idiomas sem Fronteiras. In: SARMENTO, S.; ABREU-E-LIMA, D. M. de; MORAES FILHO, W. B. (Org.), *Do Inglês sem Fronteiras ao Idiomas sem Fronteiras: a construção de uma política linguística para a internacionalização*. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2016. P. 293-308.
- BAUMVOL, L. K. O uso do inglês como meio de instrução no contexto do ensino superior brasileiro: percepções de docentes. *Proceedings of the IX Colóquio de Linguística, Literatura e Escrita Criativa*, 2016, p. 362-370.
- BAUMVOL, L. K.; SARMENTO, S.. Internationalization at Home and the use of English as a Medium of Instruction / Internacionalização em Casa e o uso de Inglês como meio de Instrução. In: BECK, M. S.; MORITZ, M. E.; MARTINS, M. L. M.; HEBERLE, V. (Orgs.), *Echoes*. Florianópolis: EdUFSC, 2016. P. 65-82.
- BEELEN, J.; JONES, E. Redefining Internationalization at Home. In: CURAJ, A.; MATTEI, L.; PRICOPIE, R.; SALMI, J.; SCOTT, P. (Org.), *The European Higher Education Area: Between Critical Reflections and Future Policies*. Cham: Springer, 2015. P. 59-72. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20877-0\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20877-0_5)
- Ciência sem Fronteiras. (n.d.). *Metas*. Available on: <<http://cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf/metas>>. Accessed 24 November 2019a.
- Ciência sem Fronteiras. (n.d.). *Graduação*. Available on: <<http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf/graduacao>>. Accessed 24 November 2019b.
- CORRALES, K. A.; PABA REY, L. A.; SANTIAGO ESCAMILLA, N.. Is EMI Enough? Perceptions from University Professors and Students. *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, v. 9, n. 2, p. 318-344, 2016. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5294/la-clil.2016.9.2.4>
- DAFOUZ, E.; SMIT, U. Towards a Dynamic Conceptual Framework for English-Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings. *Applied Linguistics*, v. 37, n. 3, p. 397-415, 2016. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu034>.

- DEARDEN, J. *English as a medium of instruction - a growing global phenomenon*. London: British Council, 2015.
- DÖRNYEI, Z.. *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003.
- GIMENEZ, T. N.; SARMENTO, S.; ARCHANJO, R.; ZICMAN, R.; FINARDI, K. R. *Guide to English as a Medium of Instruction in Brazilian higher education institutions 2018-2019*. [S.l.]: British Council/FAUBAI, 2018.
- GUIMARÃES, F. F.; FINARDI, K. R.; CASOTTI, J. B. C.. Internationalization and Language Policies in Brazil: What is the Relationship? *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada*, v. 19, n. 2, p. 295-327, 2019. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1984-6398201913553>
- MACARO, E.; CURLE, S.; PUN, J.; AN, J.; DEARDEN, J.. A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching*, v. 51, n. 1, p. 36-76, 2018. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000350>
- MARTINEZ, R... English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Brazilian Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities. In: FINARDI, K. R. (Org.), *English in Brazil: Views, policies and programs*. Londrina: EDUEL, 2016. P. 191-228.
- MOITA LOPES, L. P. da. *Oficina de Linguística Aplicada*. Rio de Janeiro: Mercado das Letras, 1996. P. 37-62
- MORELL, T.; ALESON-CARBONELL, M.; BELL, D. B.; ESCABIAS LLORET, P.,; PALAZÓN SPECKENS, M.; MARTÍNEZ-ESPINOSA, R. M.. English as the medium of instruction: a response to internationalization. *Proceedings of the XII Jornadas de Redes de Investigación en Docencia Universitaria/Jornades de Xarxes D'Investigació em Docència Universitària*, 2014, p. 2608-2631. Available on: <<http://rua.ua.es/dspace/handle/10045/42431>>. Accessed 10 September 2018.
- MORGADO, M.; COELHO, M.. CLIL vs English as the medium of instruction: The Portuguese Higher Education Polytechnic context. *Egitania Scientia*, v. 12, n. 7, p. 123-145, 2013.
- SAHAN, K.; MIKOLAJEWSKA, A.; ROSE, H.; MACARO, E.; SEARLE, M.; AIZAWA, I.; ZHOU, S.; VEITCH, A. *Global mapping of English as a medium of instruction in higher education: 2020 and beyond*. London: British Council, 2020.
- SARMENTO, S.; ABREU-E-LIMA, D. M. de; MORAES FILHO, W. B.. Apresentação. In: SARMENTO, S.; ABREU-E-LIMA, D. M. de; MORAES FILHO, W. B. (Org.), *Do Inglês sem Fronteiras ao Idiomas sem Fronteiras: a construção de uma política linguística para a internacionalização*. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2016. p. 11-18.
- SCHMIDT-UNTERBERGER, B. The English-medium paradigm: a conceptualisation of English-medium teaching in higher education. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, v. 21, n. 5, p. 527-539, 2018. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2018.1491949>
- SWALES, J. M. English as a Tyrannosaurus rex. *World Englishes*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 373-382, 1997. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-971X.00071>
- THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA. *The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999*. 1999. Available on: <[http://www.magna-charta.org/resources/files/BOLOGNA\\_DECLARATION.pdf](http://www.magna-charta.org/resources/files/BOLOGNA_DECLARATION.pdf)>. Accessed 02 July 2019.
- UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA MARIA. *Plano de desenvolvimento Institucional 2016-2026*. Santa Maria: Gabinete do Reitor/UFSM, 2016. Available on:

<<http://pdi.ufsm.br/images/DocPDI/00-DocumentoPDI-TextoBaseCONSU.pdf>>. Accessed 11 September 2018.

*Recebido em: 01/08/2022.*

*Aprovado em: 23/03/2023.*