

Dialogues on the internationalization of higher education and university: an interview with Kyria Finardi /

Diálogos sobre internacionalização da educação superior e universidade: uma entrevista com Kyria Finardi

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Received in: em 13 nov. 2024. **Aproved in:** em 15 nov. 2024.

How to cite this interview:

CHAGAS, Lucas Araujo. FINARDI, Kyria Rebeca. Dialogues on the internationalization of higher education and university: an interview with Kyria Finardi. *Revista Letras Raras*. Campina Grande, v. 13, n. 5, e4773, dez. 2024. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14563956>

Lucas: Kyria, I would like to say that it is a pleasure to have a dialogue with you about the movements of internationalization of higher education and the various issues that they have influenced in the day-to-day of our universities. I have been following your career for many years, and I am convinced that our talk will be significant for the dossier about the theme in

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the *Journal Letras Raras*. Thank you in advance for accepting the invitation to participate in this interview.

Kyria: Well, I am the one who thank you for the opportunity to discuss topics that are so dear to me, and I feel very honored to be interviewed.

Lucas: To start our dialogue, let's begin with a broader question. Looking at your academic path, we can see that you have engaged with various research approaches and dealt with different objects of study, however we observe that in the last years you have dedicated a significant amount of your research to the internationalization of higher education and the different elements that are transversal to it. When did your interest in this field of study and work emerge, and what has motivated you to establish yourself as one of Brazil's leading researchers on this topic?

Kyria: To answer this question, I need to go back to the beginning of my academic career at university. I did my master's and PhD at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). The master's degree was focused on teacher education and the PhD in Psycholinguistics. At the end of my PhD, I applied for teaching positions at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and the Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES) and was fortunate enough to pass in both, what required me to carefully consider where to take up a position. At that time, I remember that UFRJ already had postgraduate programs in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics with many projects and research being developed in the area, whereas UFES did not. That's when I thought to myself: perhaps I could go to UFES and help to build a postgraduate program in Applied Linguistics there. So, that was how I began my career as a Professor at UFES in 2009. I started my journey at the institution in the field of teacher education, particularly in the curriculum components of supervised teaching in English, which I continue to work with until today.

Contrary to what I had dreamed or hoped for, when I arrived at UFES in 2009 I wanted to immediately join the postgraduate program, but I was not encouraged to do it. In fact, until I completed my probationary period, I was not allowed to establish a line of research in Applied Linguistics (AL) outside of my center (Education) and linked to the existing postgraduate program in Linguistics. So, I had to wait until 2012 to create a research line on AL linked to the Linguistics (PPGEL) program at UFES. I remember that around 2011 and 2012, there was already significant academic interest in and focus in the internationalization of higher education, due to the launch of

the Program *Ciências Sem Fronteiras (CsF)*, which allocated over 100,000 scholarships for students in the Exact Sciences, primarily for sending Brazilian students, mainly at the undergraduate level, abroad. There was this notion that we needed to ‘import’ knowledge produced in prestigious universities in Europe and the United States, as if we produced nothing ourselves and had no capacity to ‘export’ knowledge/science.

At that time, I was deeply frustrated by the fact that the *CsF* Program focused only on one type of audience and was appropriated by universities solely for the purpose of importing knowledge and exporting resources by sending students abroad, particularly from the STEM¹ areas. This frustration led me to begin a continuous dialogue with the UFES administration and later with the UFES International Relations Office, as well as with other university departments, aiming to explore possibilities for expanding internationalization to areas not covered by the *CsF* program. As we all know, the *CsF* program faced difficulties sending students abroad due to their low English proficiency. It was in this context that, in 2012, the Federal Government created the *Inglês Sem Fronteiras (IsF)* program which, if we think about it, was more of a quick ‘fix’ to cover the English proficiency gap that hindered students from the STEM areas from participating in the *CsF*.

In response to the criticisms that the *CsF* received for focusing only on one area of knowledge, the program was expanded to include other fields of science, and the *IsF* program was renamed *Idiomas Sem Fronteiras (Languages Without Borders)* in 2014 to include the offer of other languages besides English. At that time, as I had already been in constant dialogue with UFES stakeholders, I intensified our advocacy and negotiations to bring language and teacher education into the internationalization initiatives outlined by the Federal Government. We began submitting proposals to funding calls for internationalization, focusing on language training, and mobilizing internal support within UFES to encourage local managers to invest in linguistic education to support internationalization.

More or less at the time, there was a resolution from the National Education Council questioning dual degrees in Portuguese and other languages. It’s also important to note that until 2017, before the change in the Education Guidelines and Framework Law, foreign language education was compulsory in Basic Education curricula, but not necessarily English. This allowed schools to offer other foreign languages, such as Spanish, French, Italian, and German. The obligation to teach

¹ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

English in Basic Education and its implications for other foreign languages and teacher education programs, especially for languages other than English, was something that concerned me as well. As I had already been involved in postgraduation and research focusing on the role of languages for internationalization since 2012, I started to approach issues such as the role of English and its impacts on other languages and knowledge produced in those languages, given the national and local scenario that we were experiencing.

I go back a little in the narrative to say that when the IsF program started to be implemented in universities in 2012, I was invited to coordinate it at UFES and began a movement of advocacy, negotiation, and awareness-raising among other language teachers and professors, as at the time other languages were still part of the Basic Education curriculum, and many universities offered dual degree programs in Portuguese and foreign languages. I felt that we could not have an internationalization perspective focused on just one area (as was the case of CsF in the beginning) and one language, as it was the case with the IsF program between 2012-2014. As part of these negotiations, after many discussions and raising awareness among the academic community, we worked towards expanding the presence of other languages in the internationalization movements that universities were adopting. This was solidified when, in 2014, the IsF program was renamed and started offering foreign languages such as Spanish, Italian, French, German, and Japanese, if I'm not mistaken, to the academic community. Additionally, from that point on, the actions were no longer exclusive to the STEM areas but extended to all areas of knowledge, including Language courses. This is when we launched a strong movement to raise the visibility of and increase investment in language education in Brazil, with a focus on internationalization, taking advantage of the fact that internationalization was in the radar of the government.

Well, we can say that despite all the criticisms and challenges faced by the CsF program, it had the merit of putting internationalization on the agenda of Brazilian universities. I say this because, up until 2011 and 2012, when the CsF program was launched, we could count on one hand the number of universities that had internationalization on their institutional agenda. In Brazil, only large universities like UFMG, UFRJ, and USP had their own internationalization programs. These were the only universities that were engaged in internationalization and understood its importance for the institution. Therefore, it was only after the launch of the CsF program that the internationalization became a subject of discussion, negotiation, and public policy within Brazilian universities. The CsF program helped our universities to see internationalization as a principle of

science, meaning that it must be shared and co-constructed. It is not possible to think about only some areas, some languages, some countries, or some people being part of these dialogues and of this co-construction.

Returning to the question, my involvement with internationalization came into practice through my work experience, and involvement at the university, when in 2012, I participated in the creation of the International Relations Office (SRI) and the Language Division of the SRI at UFES, where I served as the coordinator for a decade. Regarding my theoretical interest, in the same year, I created the research group *Educação, Multilinguismo, Internacionalização, Tecnologia e Inglês* (EMITI)². As soon as my department allowed me to register in the postgraduate program as a permanent Professor, I started to gather researchers, students, professors, and collaborators interested in researching these issues. Since my undergraduate years in English Language, I have believed that technology, the internet, and English along with other languages, especially English as a lingua franca play a crucial role in democratizing and expanding the access to information and education and enabling a true internationalization of higher education. Thus, a convergence of personal experiences and national contingencies allowed me to focus on internationalization as a research and practice/living topic.

I must emphasize that I was the first researcher, as far as I am aware, to register a research project with CNPq on the theme of internationalization, which made me one of the pioneers in the field of research on internationalization in Brazil. My work in this area led me invitations to several events in Brazil and abroad to speak about it. Wherever I went, I challenged everyone by insisting that internationalization should not be seen as a synonym of physical mobility and that it is a much broader thing that includes a variety of activities, multilingual practices, a diversity of countries, and a more inclusive dialogue. When we had funding for physical mobility through programs like CsF, or later through Capes PrInt, no one paid much attention to my arguments and the administrators continued to use the limited resources to send a very small percentage of our academic community abroad. Generally, less than 1% of students at Brazilian universities can participate in physical mobility programs. Therefore, if we think about it, physical mobility is a very exclusionary activity that benefits only a minority of the academic community. Before we had a boom in the practices of Internationalization at Home (IaH), I was already discussing its importance, trying to show university

² Source: <http://dgp.cnpq.br/dgp/espelhogrupo/36995>. Access: 29 Oct. 2024.

administrators that, through technology, specifically the internet and the use of foreign languages, it was possible to broaden dialogues, strategies, and resources using, for example, virtual exchange so that all the academic community could engage in internationalization, and not only the just 1% who had the means or opportunities to travel abroad.

Despite advocating for virtual exchange since 2012, it was only in 2020, during the pandemic, that everything I had been saying began to have an impact and become real. With travel suspended due to social distancing rules, universities were forced to stop physical mobility programs. So, everyone had to adapt quickly to continue internationalization efforts, for example, through virtual exchanges and online activities. What I had been researching and proposing such as the use of hybrid and active approaches and virtual exchanges as a strategy for Internationalization at Home (IaH) and internationalization of the curriculum (IoC), began to be implemented by the Brazilian universities under necessity in 2020 due to the pandemics. It's important to highlight this because, while the pandemics brought numerous tragedies, it was also a time of great learning and opportunities in the field of internationalization. For me, it was a period when I could finally put into practice everything I had been advocating since 2012. For the first time I incorporated technology into teaching approaches and on the preparation of educators so that they could use these technologies in the future. Until then, I could only implement technologies and virtual exchanges in my courses as supplementary/complementary/optional activities, not as part of mandatory and credit-bearing subjects.

During the two years of the pandemics, I was able to use hybrid and active approaches to tear down the walls of the university, opening it up to a world, literally without borders. In my teaching practices at UFES, as I mentioned, I am the Professor responsible for the supervised practicum course, so I am an English teacher trainer. For two years I couldn't take my supervised students (preservice English teachers) to school because they were closed, and everyone was having only online classes. So, I had to think about how I could teach and bring the practice, the reality of the classroom and of the schools to my classes, which were online, as the teachers at these schools were isolated too. That's when I had the idea to introduce virtual exchange into my supervised practicum course. To make it real I got connected with teacher education programs abroad, where social isolation measures were not as strict as in Brazil, and for two years, we collaborated with undergraduate courses in England, Spain, Turkey, and Chile, each semester in one country. In this period, we had many exchanges, learnings and the opportunity to experience dialog and teacher

education without borders, as I had imagined, through the use of the technology and English as a lingua franca to mediate these exchanges. And it was not only through the use of English as a lingua franca, because, for example, when we exchanged with Chile and Switzerland, some participants also communicated in other languages that they knew such as Portuguese, German, French, and Spanish, fostering multilingual engagement.

It was extremely frustrating however when, in April 2022, I received an email from my department stating that social distancing rules would be lifted on the other day, and everyone was required to return to in-person classes making online teaching again, against the rules. Virtual exchanges as part of the curriculum had to be discontinued, as online activities were prohibited in the return to in-person teaching. Of course, I was happy to return to face-to-face interactions and to see the end of the pandemics, but with the return of the in-person classes my institution banned the incorporation of technology and online activities into formal classes as if nothing had happened during the pandemic. All the progress I had made in integrating these approaches into the curriculum had to be relegated once again to supplementary/optional activities. It felt like we had "thrown the baby out with the bathwater." After all the effort and hardship to learn and integrate technology into our teaching, to adopt hybrid approaches, and to democratize internationalization through virtual exchange, we were forced to go back to in-person teaching as if nothing had happened. When I tried to discuss this with my colleagues and argued against the abandoning of these advances, one of my administrators told me to "stop talking about online and hybrid approaches because, after two years of the pandemics, there was a feeling of 'hang over' with online". Now, in 2024, this sentiment persists. At UFES, for example, we are still not allowed to incorporate any online activities into the formal curriculum. I continue to lead virtual exchanges, also known as COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) or VE (Virtual Exchange), every semester at UFES, but only as part of optional supplementary activities, not within mandatory undergraduate or graduate courses.

Lucas: Throughout your academic career as a professor, researcher, advisor and political leader in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, what work have you developed or followed that can be considered a milestone for studies on internationalization in education? Why? Tell us about the work.

Kyria: Well, I have several milestones, some professional, others academic and others from personal experience. Among the academic milestones that I had at UFES, I think that I can mention

2012, the year I created the Applied Linguistics research line at PPGEL, and when I started the first research, the first supervision of PhD in Brazil with the theme of internationalization. My first advisees to defend their theses were Felipe Guimarães and Gabriel Amorim, and both are professors today. Gabriel Amorim is a professor at UFG and Felipe Guimarães is a professor at UFES. Gabriel's thesis produced a self-assessment matrix so that higher education institutions could self-assess their internationalization, and Felipe proposed an institutional, multilingual language policy model so that institutions would not see English as the only language of internationalization. These are two works that have left a lasting mark on research in the field, not only because they were the first two PhD theses supervised by me, but because both became references in Brazil and abroad (both were awarded international prizes for their theses).

The other milestones of my career, in addition to the creation of the Applied Linguistics research line at PPGEL, is the creation of the Languages Division within the International Relations Office at UFES, which plays a very important role in the internationalization of the institution. Another thing that marked my career was when, in 2018, I took office as the presidency of the Brazilian Association of Applied Linguistics³ (ALAB). While I was president, I fought hard for multilingualism in the basic education curriculum, since English is the only mandatory language in the curriculum (BNCC) since 2017. One of the issues that I have addressed during my mandate at ALAB was the protection of other languages and multilingualism in basic education. During the CLAFPL⁴, which was held in Belém, Pará, we even held a roundtable to discuss the resolution of the National Education Council that guided dual degree programs in Language Teaching, to see how the association could fight to protect multilingualism in basic education. In addition to this work at the national level, in Brazil, my administration at ALAB was also very important for my current position as the president of the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA). In 2019, when I was president of ALAB, I participated for the first time in the annual meetings of the AILA Board of Directors and National Associations. I remember that, at the time, the representatives, in this case the presidents of the national associations, were sitting in a semicircle and I was the last one, the least visible of the group and, coincidentally, the only representative from Latin America. When it was my turn to speak, I mentioned that I found very strange that AILA called itself an international association, having only one representative from Latin America and none from Africa at that time.

³ Source: <https://alab.org.br/diretorias-anteriores> . Access: 29 oct. 2024.

⁴ Congresso Latino Americano de Formadores de Professores de Língua

I believe that my comment bothered some people and touched others and had a great impact on AILA so that a year later, in 2020, I was able to create the Ibero-American Association of Applied Linguistics⁵ (AIALA) and a year after that, in 2021, I was elected vice-president of AILA and created a research network on multilingualism, virtual exchange and other topics that I was working on⁶. Last August I took office as President of AILA⁷, in a 9-year mandate 2021-2024 as vice-president, 2024-2027 as president and 2027-2030⁸ as past president. My first action, when I returned from the AILA 2024 world event in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was to go to Chile to meet with fellow applied linguists to create the Chilean Association of Applied Linguistics. One of my goals is precisely to increase the representation and visibility of national applied linguistics associations from Latin America and Africa in AILA. Today I can say that we already have representation and applications from associations in Chile, Colombia and Paraguay, here in Latin America, and an association in Rwanda, in Africa, and another one applying in South Africa. I am very happy to see AILA effectively expanding as an international institution and with greater representation from the global south and from speakers of the languages of these countries.

I should also highlight my activism and leading role in the creation of AIALA, which, despite being one of AILA's four regional associations, in addition to its geographic subscription, aims to give greater visibility to the languages of the region, mainly Spanish, Portuguese, and indigenous and minority languages spoken in the region. AIALA has a linguistic rather than geographic focus, so the idea is to give visibility to other languages that are spoken besides English, within AILA and in LA. I must mention that as the creator and coordinator of AIALA, I have been contacted, for example, by people in India, China, Malaysia, Africa, and countries outside of the IberoAmerica region who want to be part of AIALA but do not want to be part of, for example, the Asian regional association or the European regional association. So, for me, the creation of AIALA was another important milestone in my career. If not more so, perhaps as important as my term at ALAB and AILA now, which is expanding the seeds that I planted in my path.

Lucas: In your opinion, as a researcher in the field, if we consider the studies on internationalization in education in the Brazilian context and the Brazilian public policies

⁵ Source: <https://aila.info/about/regionalization/aila-ibero-america/> Access: 29 oct. 2024.

⁶ Source: <https://aila.info/research/list-of-research/english-as-a-medium-of-education-multilingualism-and-the-sdgs-equity-diversity-and-inclusion/>. Access: 29 oct. 2024.

⁷ Source: <https://aila.info/aila-presidents-vision-2024/> . Access: 29 oct. 2024.

⁸ Source: https://aila.info/about/organization/executive_board/. Access: 29 oct. 2024.

that address it in the last 10 years, how have we evolved and what do we still need to advance?

Kyria: Well, I believe that, although the CsF Program has had the merit of putting the internationalization on the agenda of higher education institutions in Brazil, and this is a merit that we must recognize, however, we have made very little progress in terms of a more comprehensive, situated and contextualized vision of internationalization. As I said, if we look at the last 10 years, at least, even with the suspension of the CsF Program in 2016, and then with the arrival of Capes PrInt, internationalization has been seen and practiced mostly through physical mobility, which, in my opinion, is an exclusive, limited and limiting vision of internationalization. I believe that we need to expand our internationalization practices to a more situated, contextualized and local perspective in a way that we can stop looking at others and to copy models from the North, what do not benefit us, and start looking at our demands, our identity and how we can, for our community as a whole and not just for that 1%, carry out a more comprehensive, critical and situated internationalization. So, for me, this is the great challenge we face.

As I mentioned previously, after the pandemics ended, institutions went back to their daily routines as if nothing had happened, wasting the opportunity that the pandemic brought us to incorporate technologies and other languages into the curriculum as vehicles for dialogue with other institutions and realities. I see that rescuing the advances we made at that time and naturalizing them in our teaching practices at Brazilian universities today is our main challenge. In addition to this, we still copy a lot of internationalization practices and send most of our students to the global North. We need to encourage and focus more on South-South cooperation and have a vision of internationalization as cooperation and not as competition, as the North sells us. We need to get rid of the idea of cooperation based on rankings, that is, of cooperating only with those who are the best, and who who 'look better' in the picture. I think that in Brazil and Latin America, universities have a different role than they do in the global North. Here, universities are important for social development due to the demand to respond to the dilemmas experienced by the society in which they are established, especially public universities. Therefore, this neoliberal vision of internationalization as financing higher education and as a competition or a race for rankings is not justified. For me, these are our main challenges.

Lucas: How do you believe that decolonial or postcolonial studies have enabled reinventions in perceptions, practices and research on internationalization in education in the Brazilian context over the recent years?

Kyria: I think that decolonial or postcolonial studies have enabled us to have a more situated, critical, decolonial and democratic view of society and of what I believe internationalization should be, which is collaboration and not competition, as I mentioned before. I believe that the great advantage and benefit that these approaches have brought to us is a different way of seeing not only the university, but also science, internationalization and society. As I keep saying, a decolonial perspective supports us to do research “with”, and not “about”. This changes everything we know about research and enables us to generate situated, contextualized and sensitive research that provides relevant answers to the context in which the research takes place. Decolonial and postcolonial studies can contribute greatly to building a more situated and collaborative vision for internationalization practices in the coming years.

Lucas: We have noticed a boom in artificial intelligence (AI) in academic discourses in the recent months. How do you think AI will impact the ways of perceiving, implementing and researching internationalization in education?

Kyria: I believe that artificial intelligence will impact not only internationalization, but all areas of knowledge and all dimensions of our lives and society. We know that artificial intelligence uses a type of automatic language, which is based on evidence from human language. However, I fear that it is a “double-edged sword”, because, if used incorrectly, it can inhibit the motivation to learn other languages, for example. In the case of internationalization, the ease with which it promises to translate texts and formulate automatic responses can make students lose the motivation to learn other languages. Let me give you an example. I mentioned to you earlier that since 2012 I had been invited, in Brazil and abroad, to speak about internationalization where I met many colleagues from the hard sciences, which were involved in the CsF. For these colleagues, it was very important to publish and read articles in English. I remember a talk with a colleague from physics, who said that a physicist, for example, does not need to know other languages. It was enough for him to know English, because all the texts he read were in English. He also said that when physicists had to publish, they paid for the translation and it was very simple, so they didn't even question the use of other languages in publications.

I always argued with him that if we only publish in English, we live aside the society to which the research should be directed to, since not everyone has access to that language, and that the university would be, in view of this, producing research for communities that do not have access to it. After a decade of dunning on this topic, I met this colleague again last year, and we talked about how artificial intelligence is being used by colleagues in the hard sciences. I even joked with him saying, “So now you are no longer paying to translate the texts, since artificial intelligence has been doing this work”. And he replied, “Kyria, you have no idea. It is much simpler than that. I am not translating anything. I take my data, put it in the ChatGPT and tell it to “write an article”, and the Chat GPT does everything for me”. Taking this statement from my colleague as an example, my fear is that Chat GPT and other artificial intelligence tools will inhibit not only our motivation and engagement to learn other languages, but also our ability to write and use what I think is one of the most important skills of a researcher, that is thinking/reading/writing in other languages.

If we accept that the number of languages that we speak represent the size of the realities and contexts in which we can understand things, we will see how the boom in artificial intelligence used uncritically can limit our abilities. So, I see the positive side, of course, because, for example, many journals that previously only published in English, now, with artificial intelligence, and without researchers having to pay a translator, publish more translations and more articles artificially translated into other languages. As a result, these articles become more accessible and have a larger readership. However, this can be a “shot in the foot”, especially for those of us who study languages and literature, because I think that this may inhibit what was already very timid, that is, the desire of Brazilian academics to learn other languages and read and write in them. If we think about the hegemonic role of English, what will happen to other languages? If it was already difficult to convince people and show them the relevance of learning other languages, now, with artificial intelligence, it will be even more difficult. I think that we need to be very careful with the thoughtless adoption of artificial intelligence, especially in the area of Linguistics that deals with languages.

Lucas: Translation and interpretation tools and academic writing AI have been considered by some as the solution to low proficiency in foreign languages and the linguistic literacy gap. It is known that these tools do, in fact, help students a lot; however, they do not eliminate the demands of learning foreign languages that are necessary for the operationalization of internationalization in education. Taking this in consideration, how do

you see the need to (re)politicize language teaching and learning with a focus on this context, especially in Brazilian universities?

Kyria: As I mentioned earlier, these translation and interpretation tools and artificial intelligence play an important role in helping with academic writing and reading. For example, with my schedule as a researcher and undergraduate and graduate professor, I am not able to keep up to date by reading 10 or 15 articles per week. I am not able to read that many texts, but I am able to read 10 or 15 abstracts, and often, artificial intelligence tools help me mapping information so that I can, if not read the entire article, read at least abstracts or see what the trends in certain areas are. So far, I think that artificial intelligence is very important, but we must be very careful so that it does not atrophy our faculties. I think that if I learn to read and write in Portuguese and in other languages and learn to use the dictionary after I am learning the other languages, the dictionary or translator can be a very important tool. Now, if I only use the translator and the dictionary, without trying to understand the meanings and words in other languages, this will, in the long run, atrophy my ability to learn other languages or to express myself in my own language, or even in a certain genre, as it is the case with academic writing.

As I said before, I see many advantages, but also many dangers associated with indiscriminate use before someone has acquired certain skills and acquired essential abilities, such as reading and academic writing in another language. For those who already speak, read and write in another language, I think that using tools like this is not harmful, but at the beginning of a career and academic journey it can hinder people from developing the mental muscles that are necessary to produce these skills independently, in the future. I really like the metaphor of the butterfly, in which a man sees a caterpillar struggling in its cocoon and feels sorry for it and opens the cocoon. As a result, the butterfly emerges completely atrophied and cannot fly, because its wings are atrophied. The caterpillar needs to struggle several times in the cocoon to build muscle in its wings and strengthen them, only then it can break out of the cocoon and fly. Just like the butterfly, I understand human development. We need to create awareness that we only use certain strategies, tools and aids after we have built up muscles and mental abilities to deal with something. But at the beginning of a career, for those who are still learning to write, read and speak another language, I think it can be very dangerous to use AI in an indiscriminate way. So, these tools must be used very sparingly and very carefully so that this doesn't happen.

Lucas: We know that language teachers play a fundamental role in the development of intercultural practices and language teaching for internationalization in education. Even so, we see little recognition of these actors in universities and even in basic education. Many language teachers end up investing money from their own pockets to fund their projects, research and teaching activities, or their projects are not even mentioned when the universities and schools where they work present the actions that the institutions develop in the field of internationalization. How do you believe that we can politicize the work of language teachers in the Brazilian context, so that they can be seen, valued and recognized as essential agents and mediators of the internationalization movements in education?

Kyria: I agree that we know that language teachers, despite the essential and extremely important role they play in the internationalization process and in the development of intercultural practices in Brazil, are not seen as important. The failure of CsF, in my opinion, was evidence that the government did not recognize the importance of the humanities in general and languages in particular in the internationalization process. I think that we really need to show and to give more visibility to the role of language teachers and to the education of language teachers. One criticism I have made since the beginning of my career is that the internationalization of education should not begin in higher education, but rather end up on it, in other words, it begins in basic education and culminates in higher education. I feel there is a profound lack of investment and public policies for the internationalization of education or from basic education onwards. In fact, it is not even in basic education, but rather from early childhood education to higher education, that is, it should culminate in higher education, and not start in higher education, so that we can have the development of intercultural and linguistic skills from early childhood education and basic education. To this end, it is essential to invest in the education of language teachers. So, this is my activism, and what I do within 'my square' at UFES.

Since 2009, when I took office at UFES as a professor, I have been working with teacher education as the professional that is responsible for the supervised practicum and, although it is not part of the curriculum or the official agenda, I have always included issues of interculturality and internationalization in the teacher education curriculum, in the hope that these teachers can take this seed to basic education, so that this tree can be sown and watered. There is a saying that I really like, which says that working in education is like planting date trees. We plant dates and a date tree takes more than 100 years to bear fruit. So, whoever plants a date tree will not eat the

fruit of the tree that is planting. I am aware that many of the fruits that I am planting as a professor, as a teacher educator, will not be harvested and witnessed by me, but I have great faith that these fruits will germinate and on the belief that the greatest investments are always the ones that we make in education, the one that starts from the bottom, from the base. It does not help much starting from the top.

Lucas: The internationalization in education is a thriving field of research in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. As a researcher in this area, what possible objects of study related to it would you say that could emerge in the coming years?

Kyria: You are right. Internationalization is indeed a very fertile field of research and possibilities for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. I would say that it is not only the objects of study that can be explored in this area, but mainly the approaches and perspectives used. For example, using decolonial approaches it is possible to investigate power relations that are intertwined in this process, through approaches such as discourse analysis, we can research what discourses and imaginaries are constituted and that constitute this process in different contexts. In short, there is an endless range of possibilities. I believe that we have a lot of “material to cover” in our area, because some institutions give more importance than others to these processes. I will give you a basic example of what I have seen at my institution. At UFES, around 90% of the international students we receive come from Spanish or Portuguese-speaking countries, and despite this, every year, as an English teacher who also teaches in English, I am harassed by my stakeholders and by the managers of my institution to offer courses in EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction). When I say, “Guys, if we receive people who speak Portuguese or Spanish, it would make much more sense for us to offer courses in these languages,” the excuse I receive is that the audience they want to attract is a different audience than the one we are already attracting, thus justifying the need to offer courses in English. So, the way each institution views the internationalization process, the strategies each institution uses, and the languages that are more or less important in each one also show how this process can be analyzed with approaches and research within our field.

Lucas: At the beginning of the interview, you mentioned that when you applied for a job and arrived at the university, you faced some restrictions on immediately starting your postgraduate and research career. We know that Brazilian universities still stigmatize young professors and researchers, and, in some cases, we have even noticed a “reverse ageism”

in which only the oldest ones have access to verticalization. This academic culture, which is somewhat colonial, seems a little unfair to newly arrived professors and researchers, since today we live in a different era in the university, in which those who want to work on it choose the academic career path while still in their graduation and dedicate themselves bravely for more than 10 years to get there. When they apply for a job, they arrive full of desires but end up getting frustrated with the restrictions. As someone who has a very active experience in the political scenario of research and academic associations, how do you evaluate this scenario and how do you see that we can intervene in it so that universities can become more democratic, loyal to young people and intercomprehensive with newcomers?

Kyria: The answer to this question may be a bit longer and complex, because it is related to the rigidity and institutional structure of public universities and the career paths of researchers and university professors in Brazil. I don't know if I mentioned this in previous questions, but it is interesting to note and think that in Brazil we do not have a career as a researcher. We only have a career as university professors. Because of this, anyone who wants to work at a public university and wants to do research will first have to take a teaching position. In the competitive process to take a teaching position, even though the examiners look at scientific production and someone's trajectory as a researcher, the institutions are really concerned with the issue of teaching. Although career progression is theoretically based on the three pillars of teaching, research and extension/outreach, some institutions focus only on teaching as a mandatory component for progression. Although university professors must dedicate themselves to these three pillars, it is quite clear that the exam is designed for teaching, so it is perfectly possible for someone to be prepared, pass the exam and be promoted, as long as they teach and despite the fact that they do not engage in research or extension/outreach.

Although it is possible for a university professor to teach without having a research or extension project, the opposite is not true. It is not possible to be just a researcher, for example, and have only a research or extension project, or both, to fulfill work activities. Because of this, public universities clearly show the importance they give to teaching, research and extension. In this order and in this hierarchy. So, when a professor takes a competitive exam, as is my case, for example, they must first take a competitive exam for the university, accept to take on teaching responsibilities, and only then (if allowed) develop research. In many cases, they are only allowed to do research

and become accredited in postgraduate programs after they finish their probationary period. It is also worth noting that they will not be excused from any teaching activity to dedicate themselves to research and will not receive anything extra for it. For example, I am responsible for a 200-hour undergraduate course (each semester), but I still have responsibilities in postgraduate programs and worked for a decade in two postgraduation programs (PPGEL and PPGE). I work extra and don't get paid a dime more. I also remember that we are only dismissed from the institution as professors if we don't teach undergraduate classes. So, if I don't have a research or extension project, there's no problem in staying at the university, even if I'm not able to handle this tripod, as I mentioned.

This is an unfavorable situation for research in Brazil. In general, professors are accredited in postgraduate programs without any reduction in their undergraduate responsibilities. They do not receive a single cent more for this, nor do they receive any incentives or, let's say, any compensation for the work they do in their research. In order to finance my research and expand the possibilities for my students in the form of joint supervision, scholarships, and purchase basic tools for research such as a subscription to Zoom or SurveyMonkey, for example, to carry out my data collection and my virtual exchanges, I have to apply and compete for external calls for proposals such as FAPES, CAPES and CNPQ, because we do not receive support from the institution itself. When I calculate the triple workload and see that my remuneration is the same as of some colleagues who only do the minimum, which is to teach undergraduate classes, it is a bit frustrating, because, in the end, university rankings look at research to make institutional assessments. In other words, some work in research, but everyone takes the credit when the institution or course receives a good grade in CAPES evaluations.

I would say that as long as universities, especially public ones, have these police of progression, hiring and public contest, the situation will still be unequal and precarious for those who want to engage with research and extension. Do you remember that I mentioned that when I arrived here in Espírito Santo I really wanted to open a line of research in Applied Linguistics, because there was no postgraduate program on it, but since I am based in the Department of Education, I was only allowed to do so after I finished my probationary period. And so, I created this line of research in the PPGEL, in the Linguistics program, as long as I also accredited myself also to the Education program (PPGE). So, for 10 years I was accredited in both programs (PPGEL/PPGE), that is, I had to divide the number of students I advised, teach courses and do everything in both programs, and

this together with my undergraduate responsibilities and extension projects. There came a time when I could no longer handle two programs, more than ten advisees, 200 hours in the undergraduate program, and the coordination of programs such as IsF and the Language Division at SRI of UFES, without any exemption in the undergraduate course where I teach 200hours every semester. So, I had to leave one of the post graduate programs, which had to be the one in Linguistics since I am based in the Education Center.

The situation of professors who also want to be researchers is difficult. I know that there are institutions that are not so strict and that, perhaps, they have an easier reality than others, especially because they have more professors to negotiate this exemption and this role in undergraduate studies, but this is the reality where I am at the moment.

Lucas: Another dilemma that we frequently discuss is the presence of women in science. We know that women face a double burden and, in many cases, give up international experiences because they have children and feel insecure about leaving their homes. In other cases, they give up their personal lives and families dedicate themselves to science and fight for respect in an environment that is still very competitive and not very human. As a researcher and academic, what policies can you foresee in the near future that will help us increase equality for women in academia, science, and internationalization movements?

Kyria: You are right about the possibility of inclusion and inequalities against women in academia, in science, etc. I always tell my colleagues that if I had children and, during the period I had to take care of my parents, for example, if I had to produce more, I probably wouldn't have been able to do that and get to where I am today. I know that the burden of caring for a family generally falls much more heavily on women, and I know that many universities abroad already have equity plans, for example, to reward women for two years after maternity leave or flexible working hours. This is also the case in Brazil at some institutions. We have made some progress, for example, in Lattes, so that it is now possible for women to register when they are on maternity leave, which means that they are evaluated differently. In my postgraduate program, for example, women who give birth or adopt a child have different criteria and different evaluations for their production for two years.

I welcome initiatives like the one we had with the Lattes platform and several graduate programs. I also note that many universities have incorporated affirmative actions for gender inclusion into their applications. For example, in the last selection process we had here, there were quotas for

black people, indigenous people, and candidates with some type of disability. This shows us that, little by little, we are making progress not only in gender inclusion, but also in the inclusion of diversity itself, which I believe is necessary and important in higher education institutions.

Lucas: Kyria, on behalf of Letras Raras Journal and the professors who organized the volume, I would like to thank you for conceiving the interview and say that your speech is always inspiring. Your reflections will certainly contribute to our thinking about the internationalization movements in universities and basic education, the university itself, the teaching career, diversity and inclusion in the academic environment and so many other issues that are important to the process of reinventing higher education institutions, which we are going through. Furthermore, your life and professional trajectory is also an example for us to remain firm and strong in the search for the political empowerment of language teachers and teacher educators in the area of Letters and Linguistics and for them to remain firm in the purpose of building a multilingual culture for Brazil. Thank you very much!

Kyria: Lucas, I am glad for the opportunity to engage in this dialogue through this space offered by your interview. I would like to conclude by returning to the central theme – internationalization – recognizing that although some authors understand internationalization as the fourth mission of the university⁹, I do not see internationalization that way. For me, it is part of the university's tripod and therefore should be present in teaching, research and extension activities and, more broadly, in society as a whole. If we could think of internationalization as a process of greater cooperation and dialogue between peoples, knowledge and languages, perhaps the current global scenario of wars and crises of the relevance of the university would be different.... That is why, for me, promoting this dialogue is my way of planting dates.... or jaboticabas.☺!

⁹ SANTOS, Fernando Seabra; DE ALMEIDA FILHO, Naomar. **A quarta missão da universidade: internacionalização universitária na sociedade do conhecimento**. Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra/Coimbra University Press, 2012.