

**PORTUGUESE AS A NON-NATIVE LANGUAGE AT THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY
OF ESPÍRITO SANTO: A BRIEF HISTORY**

***O PORTUGUÊS LÍNGUA NÃO MATERNA NA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO
ESPÍRITO SANTO: UM BREVE HISTÓRICO***

***EL PORTUGUÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA EN LA UNIVERSIDAD FEDERAL
DE ESPÍRITO SANTO: UNA BREVE HISTORIA***

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this article is to discuss the history of Portuguese as a non-native language (PNNL) at Federal University of Espírito Santo, mainly within the Languages and Literature Department and the Language Center, as well as the configurations and theoretical and methodological concepts adopted throughout the specific period of time. We noticed that the main actions of PNNL at the institution are related to the offer of courses to the community. Those courses went through significant changes regarding their organization and their concept of language(s) and language teaching, focusing on teaching and learning practices based on the concept of language-culture (MENDES, 2011, 2015, 2018), which influenced the development of courses and the use of teaching materials with an intercultural perspective. The analysis of the PNNL history at Ufes is essential to demand policies that are not restricted to courses, but that also approach teacher education and institutionalization of PNNL at the university.

KEYWORDS: Language policies. Interculturality. Portuguese as a non-native language.

RESUMO: *O objetivo deste artigo é discutir o histórico do Português Língua Não Materna (PLNM) na Ufes, sobretudo no âmbito do Departamento de Línguas e Letras e do Núcleo de Línguas, bem como as configurações e concepções teórico-metodológicas adotadas ao longo de seus principais períodos. Observamos que as principais ações de PLNM na instituição estão relacionadas com a oferta de cursos para a comunidade. Tais cursos passaram por mudanças significativas, tanto na organização quanto na concepção de língua(s) e de ensino, chegando a práticas de ensino e de aprendizagem embasadas no conceito de língua-cultura (MENDES, 2011, 2015, 2018), que influenciaram o desenvolvimento de cursos e usos de materiais didáticos com foco na visão intercultural. Analisar esse histórico do PLNM na Ufes é essencial para que possamos exigir políticas que não sejam restritas à oferta de cursos, mas que contemplem a formação docente e a institucionalização do PLNM na universidade.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Políticas linguísticas. Interculturalidade. Português língua não materna.*

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RESUMEN: *El propósito de este artículo es discutir la historia del Portugués como Lengua Extranjera (PLE) en la Ufes, especialmente el relacionado con el Departamento de Lenguas y Letras y el Centro de Idiomas, así como las configuraciones y concepciones teóricas y metodológicas adoptadas a lo largo de sus principales períodos. Notamos que las principales acciones de PLE en la institución están relacionadas con la oferta de cursos a la comunidad. Dichos cursos sufrieron cambios significativos en su organización y sus concepciones de lengua(s) y enseñanza de lenguas, alcanzando prácticas de enseñanza y aprendizaje basadas en el concepto de lengua-cultura (MENDES, 2011, 2015, 2018), lo que incidió en el desarrollo de cursos y usos de materiales didácticos con perspectiva intercultural. El análisis de la historia del PLE en la Ufes es fundamental para exigir políticas que no se limiten a la oferta de cursos, sino que aborden la formación docente y la institucionalización del PLE en la universidad.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Políticas lingüísticas. Interculturalidad. Portugués como lengua extranjera.*

Introduction

This article is an offshoot of a case study carried out in a master's research³ in the Postgraduate Program in Linguistics (PPGEL) at the Federal University of Espírito Santo (Ufes). Through this article, we intend to discuss, in general terms, the history of Portuguese Non-Mother Language (PLNM) at Ufes – especially within the scope of the Department of Languages and Letters (DLL) – as well as the theoretical-methodological configurations and conceptions adopted when throughout its main periods. For this, as methodological procedures for data generation, semi-structured interviews with some of the subjects involved in these periods, as well as document analysis, were adopted. The generated data were categorized according to the themes and moments considered most relevant to the historical (re)construction of the PLNM at the university.

Ufes, especially within the DLL, has been a space for offering PLNM courses since the 1970s. Subsequently, from 1997 to 2019⁴, the offerings were concentrated through the course “Portuguese as a Foreign Language” which is now the Ufes Language Center, an integral and permanent sector of the university's Center for Human and Natural Sciences (CCHN). We observed that the courses offered in these two major periods (from 1970 to 1997 and 1997 to 2019) differ in several aspects, such as structure, target audience, mandatory foreign students, theoretical-methodological concepts, among others. Concerning the

³“The education of teachers of Portuguese as a Foreign Language/Second Language at the Federal University of Espírito Santo” (VIEIRA DE MELLO, 2021).

⁴At the end of the first semester of 2019, the course underwent reformulations, no longer being offered as of 2019/2 without there being, until the period of completion of the research, a forecast of resumption.

theoretical-methodological concepts, the course, which began in the 1970s, was marked by more structuralist views of language and, although this trend was also adopted in the first offers of the Núcleo de Línguas, the objectives of the target audience motivated the adoption of more communicative theoretical-methodological approaches. Furthermore, it has developed the intercultural vision on teaching practices from the language-culture conception (MENDES, 2011; 2015; 2018).

Other PLNM Portuguese teaching initiatives for foreigners were also observed at Ufes. This is the case of the course offered by the University's Department of International Relations (SRI), available until 2019. There is also the Portuguese and Brazilian Culture Course, offered by the Permanent Commission on Human Rights, in partnership with the Pro-Rectory of Extension (Proex) and with the Sérgio Vieira de Mello Chair, in an extension project entitled⁵“Building Citizenship Through Language”. The course is aimed, above all, at foreign refugees from countries in conflict and who need to learn the Brazilian language and culture. These initiatives, however, will not be included in the research section explained here, as they are not strictly related to DLL.

When we look into the history of PLNM at Ufes, we observe the relevance of DLL and the Núcleo de Línguas in concentrating PLNM development actions at the university. Even so, we believe that the institutionalization of the PLNM is fundamental for this field to be contemplated in the language policies of Ufes, aiming to "conduct concrete actions of public interest related to the language(s) that matter to the people of a nation, of a state or even larger transnational instances". (RAJAGOPALAN, 2013, p. 21, our translation).

Therefore, the purpose of this article, when tracing the history of PLNM in the institution, is to discuss the need to implement concrete PLNM actions. Therefore, it is necessary that the PLNM is not only understood as a synonym for the offer of courses but also encompasses the role of this language in university policies, as well as in the planned and dialogued proposals aimed at teacher initial education.

The research presented here is an attempt to contribute to the area of PLNM, especially that of the Federal University of Espírito Santo, as we perceive, at Ufes, an alarming scarcity of research⁶ focused on this area. We also hope that this article will help to disseminate the history of PLNM at Ufes, which can serve as a context for future researchers interested in PLNM.

⁵However, during this period, the course was no longer mandatory for foreign undergraduate students at the university.

⁶At the time this text was being prepared, we found only one record of a master's thesis focusing on PLNM in the Postgraduate Program in Linguistics at the University.

Methodological procedures

As mentioned, this work was characterized as a case study, an investigation through which it is possible to explore and describe, in more detail and depth, "a particular event or situation, without the concern of discovering a universal and generalizable truth" (LEFFA, 2006, p. 15, our translation).

Data generation involved document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Thus, documents that govern the Ufes Language Center and some documents that guide PLNM initiatives within the scope of the university's DLL were analyzed. In addition, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were carried out, using audio recordings, with some of the subjects involved in the teaching and training of PLNM teachers: PLNM teachers (one member of the Nucleus of Languages at Ufes and another, from the DLL of the university) and (former) professors/interns of the teaching of PLNM within the university - in particular, the Language Center. Each PLNM teacher interviewed was a fellow from a different period between 2014 and 2019 – except for the teacher who worked in the PLNM at Ufes in the 1970s. The following table presents a summary of the participants' profiles.

Table 1 – Participants and respective works in the PLE/L2 area of Ufes

Participant ⁷	Work
Ester Abreu	Former teacher of PLNM at Ufes (the 1970s and the 1980s)
Sandro	Former; DLL teacher; former teacher of PLNM (the 1970s and the 1980s)
João	Former PLNM advisor at the Language Center (2014 to 2019)
Carla	Former trainee teacher of PLE/L2 at the Language Center (2014 to 2016)
Hanna	Former trainee teacher of PLE/L2 at the Language Center (2016 to 2018); Scholarship in the IsF program (2018)

Source: Authors' collection.

The generated data could be categorized to delineate two major periods of PLNM at Ufes: the period that began in the 1970s and extended to the regulation, in 1997, of what became the current Ufes Language Center; and from 1997 to the end of the first semester of 2019 - and, from 2014 to 2019, the course took its last configuration, with more diversified teaching and learning approaches. The following items will deal with each of these periods.

⁷Since their activities are recent and/or current in the PLNM of Ufes, we have inserted fictitious names for the participants Sandro, João, Carla and Hanna in order to preserve their identities.

The teaching of PLNM at the Federal University of Espírito Santo: origins

Historically, the first offers of teaching PLNM by the Department of Languages and Letters at Ufes date back to the 1970s. In that decade, at the University of São Paulo (USP) and the State University of Campinas (Unicamp), the first courses of PLNM in Brazil, and the area also had the creation of a discipline and the hiring of research professors for this framework. Until then, the PLNM as an area of research and professional activity had still taken some initial steps, such as the publication, in 1957, of the book *O Ensino de Português para Estrangeiros* (1957), by Mercedes Marchant, and when it met in Austin, Texas, a team comprising Americans and Brazilians to prepare a manuscript for an experimental edition of *Modern Portuguese*, linked to the Modern Language Association of America, published in 1966.

Given the difficulty in recovering documents referring to the period, the (re)construction of the historical processes of PLNM at Ufes took place mainly through an interview with Prof. Dr. Ester Abreu Vieira de Oliveira, the first teacher to teach PLNM at Ufes, a position held for 16 years since that decade. The target audience at that time consisted of both university students and the external community, composed mainly of workers from foreign multinationals and their families. The requirement to take the PLNM course – which, at the time, totaled three years – for foreign university students was made due to the linguistic-cultural difficulties faced by them in their undergraduate courses at Ufes. Sandro, DLL professor, explains how these courses were organized:

The course consisted of three subjects, each lasting 75 hours: Basic Portuguese, Intermediate Portuguese, and Advanced Portuguese. [...] In the first semester, students did Geography, History, and Portuguese. And in the two subsequent years, in fact, in the two subsequent semesters, they did Intermediate Portuguese and Advanced Portuguese. I was part of the working group [...] that taught a group of students [at advanced levels] and I was part of the group with responsibility, in a way, for the offer of teacher Ester Abreu [...] And soon afterward, around the 1990s, the university began to organize a proposal to offer foreign language courses to the community (Sandro, interview).

The classes of this course, whose classes were composed of students of different nationalities and cultures, focused mainly on the phonetic and phonological aspects of Brazilian Portuguese, with constant use, in laboratories, of equipment in booths to listen to material recorded in Portuguese and repetition of words. About these instruments and the theoretical-methodological concepts related to them, Paiva (2015, p. 06, our translation) explains that, although they were a strong trend at the time, these types of laboratories were

not very successful due to the rigidity of the facilities and, above all, the “linguistic and learning principles that supported it: the concept of language as a set of syntactic and learning structures, as the creation of automatic habits”, concepts that lost strength in the face of teaching and learning models that aimed at interaction and communication. Professor Ester Abreu informed, during the conversation, that, shortly after her performance, the devices were discarded by Ufes.

However, the work carried out resulted in the publication, by the teacher, of the textbook Portuguese for Foreigners: 31 lessons (1981). The publication, which currently has a digital version⁸ of 2019, is, therefore, one of the pioneering works for the area of PLNM, and reflects a lot of the theoretical-methodological conceptions put into practice by the teacher at the time: they are lessons and structural activities then adopted in the classroom, as well as grammar summaries normative, phonetic notions and comparative glossaries involving words from Portuguese and from German, English, Spanish, French, Italian and Japanese (OLIVEIRA, 2019).

At the end of the 1990s, the regulation of a project that brought together, in a single physical space, the university's language teaching initiatives brought significant changes, including the teaching and learning of PLNM. This, therefore, will be the subject of the next item.

PLNM at the Ufes Language Center

As mentioned earlier, in 1997, the language teaching initiatives related to DLE and the university's Proex were brought together - such as the PLNM course conducted by the professor and other professors following her - from the regulation of the then "Language Courses". for the Community” (CLC). However, some changes in this space were still to come. In 2011, after a reorganization to meet new demands from the university, CLC became the “Language Center: Integrated Teaching, Extension, and Research Project”. However, during this period, as it consisted of a project, the institution experienced relative instability due to the need for constant renovations, which led to the project being regulated in 2016, by resolution n. 39/2016, and become “Language Core: Teaching, Extension, and Research” of Ufes, being subordinated to Human and Natural Sciences Center (CCHN) of Ufes (CESTARO, 2017).

⁸Available at: https://www.academia.edu/39970930/Portugu%C3%AAs_para_estrangeiros_Ester. Access on: 10 Mar. 2020

Thus, from 1997 to 2019, the PLNM was, at the university, one of the modern languages covered by the Language Course Program through the regular course entitled “Portuguese for Foreigners”. It is worth mentioning that, in the 1990s, still amid restricted policies of expansion and internationalization of the Brazilian Portuguese language, research, events, and publications of materials in the area of PLNM multiplied. Some of the historical landmarks that contributed to this were the signing of the Treaty of Asunción, in 1991, which gave rise to the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), with Portuguese and Spanish being its official languages; the foundation of the International Society of Portuguese as a Foreign Language (SIPLE) in 1992, during the III Brazilian Congress of Applied Linguistics, held at Unicamp; the creation, in 1993, the Certificate of Proficiency in the Portuguese Language for Foreigners (Celpe-Bras), the official Brazilian exam for the certification of proficiency in PLNM and one of the main Brazilian policies to promote the Portuguese language in Brazil; and the establishment of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) in 1996.

At Ufes, the target audience of the “Portuguese as a Foreign Language” course included the external community (immigrants/foreign public in general with a minimum age of 15 years) and students with regular enrollment, under agreements and projects, such as the Undergraduate Student-Agreement Program (PEC-G)⁹. The general objectives of the course, as stated on the Núcleo de Línguas online page¹⁰, involved

Enable students to acquire Brazilian Portuguese, experiencing in the process of immersion the Brazilian cultural values, conveyed linguistically in relevant and diversified situations and contexts of use; in addition to offering the student the learning and practice of the oral and written skills required at Celpe-Bras¹¹[...] (UFES, 2013, our translation).

We are aware that the most recent actions, not explicitly linked to DLL, result from the internationalization process of Brazilian universities. These courses aimed at programs such as the PEC-G can be considered an important step towards the internationalization of universities to be carried out “at home”, in which foreign students and professionals here learn to produce knowledge also in Portuguese (GUIMARÃES; FINARDI; CASOTTI, 2019).

⁹The PLNM course at the Nucleus had intern professors with scholarships, undergraduate students of the Letters courses, and an advisor, that is, an effective professor from the Nucleus who more directly followed the work of the intern professors, promoting periodic meetings, consulting, reflections training, in addition to serving the student population.

¹⁰Taken from: <http://www.nucleodelinguas.ufes.br/portugues-lingua-estrangeira-ple-regular>. Accessed on: 26 Aug. 2019

¹¹Ufes was accredited as an Applicator Post for the Celpe-Bras Exam in 2016, with the Language Center being an important space for this process.

Through an interview with João, the last advisor of the PLNM course at the Núcleo de Línguas, we realized that the PLNM offers from 1997 to 2019 could also be categorized according to their structures and the approaches used. From 1997 to mid-2014, structurally, the course was divided into academic semesters, which, for the advisor, was not compatible with the public:

the profile of our public didn't fit. [...] Because foreign people had to go back to work, come back to the country [...] to get a visa, they had to leave for some reason, to travel for some reason. Some people were missionaries, who had to go to another state, to Amazonas, and back. So, the profile, we noticed, in this whole story, up to two thousand and... a little before [I joined the coordination], which was not... the ideal for the foreigner that we have to work with, our public. (John, interview).

This period also had specificity about the teaching and learning approach. The former advisor reported that structuralism was quite strong, which, for the public at the time, was not so suitable, mainly because it was an audience that was interested in learning the language to use it daily, in more real communication situations:

So, [...] [in 2014] we did a survey. A hundred percent! one hundred percent [of the students] said that the class was very structural [...]: “We learn a lot of grammar!”, “We learn a lot... a grammar list”. [...] At that time, they wanted to talk; they wanted to communicate with people on the street, they wanted to go to Rua da Lama¹², have a beer (João, interview).

Until then, the textbook used was *Ponto de Encontro – Portuguese as a world language*¹³, by Pearson Publishing. Also, according to the former advisor, the book *Ponto de Encontro*, being bilingual (English/Portuguese) and making a lot of use of activities, according to him, decontextualized and distant from the real use of communication, did not meet the demands of students at the Center:

[...] we were using a bilingual book, which was... excluding the other languages a little, [...] in a country where not everyone could read English, not all foreigners could read English, and then I realized that I could not use it for our audience. Are we going to use in Brazil, a book that is used in the United States, for English to see? [...] So, for example, in English, there was structure, explanation, guidance [...], and then there was comparative grammar, those things. And then I realized, “No, it's not the book. It's thick, it's not our methodology, it didn't fit our methodology” because it was very... it's still very structural. [...] It wasn't very malleable, very creative [for situations beyond those foreseen in the activities]. (John, interview).

¹²Bohemian point in the Jardim da Penha neighborhood, in Vitória.

¹³Book by the authors Clémence MC Jouët-Pastré, Anna M. Klobucka, Patrícia Isabel Santos Sobral, Maria Luici De Biaji Moreira and Amélia P. Hutchinson.

In 2014, the reformulations in search of a course more compatible with the public included changes in the structure, in the approach(es), and the teaching material(s). The course was divided into small modules of 30 hours, with a minimum and sufficient workload for certification, which was more suitable for the public.

In addition to structural change, approaches and methods were also adjusted around greater flexibility to meet the needs that would arise from students. For this, from 2014 onwards, with each selection of interns, the longer and more expressive was the training period before (“pre-internship”) and during the performance, to familiarize these students (who, in general, were from the Portuguese Language Course) with the main methodologies adopted in the Nucleus courses, situated in the communicative approach – and, in the case of the PLE/L2 course, the communicative approach associated with the intercultural perspective, to be discussed in a next item. Also, in the field of training PLNМ teachers, DLL started to offer, in the Licensure in Letters course, the subject “*Portuguese as a Foreign Language*” – frequently offered between 2015 and 2016, mainly because of the Núcleo de Línguas’ accreditation as an applier place of Celpe-Bras exam.

If in the beginning, “the” communicative approach was the focus, little by little, this conception became more flexible to increasingly meet the needs and objectives of students:

we started training people to know about the approaches. Because [...] it has already happened here that an intern of ours gives a class, realizes the specific need of that student and modify the methodology, get a method from a different approach to use in the classroom [...] And that it worked for that individual. [...] So what I put in people's minds at the time was that what they were giving exists in terms of approach, [...] we can vary. There is the communicative approach that she embraces all the others, it is more supportive. (John, interview).

The textbook became the Novo Avenida Brasil – Basic Portuguese Course for Foreigners¹⁴, by Editora Pedagógica e Universitária (EPU). However, despite the change and adoption of Novo Avenida Brasil, PLE/L2 teachers still needed to create and/or adapt most of their materials, as former intern Hanna highlighted:

We had material at the time that was the Novo Avenida Brasil, a book that we used, but it is a book that, despite claiming to be communicative, we still saw many gaps, you know... middle and we asked ourselves what to do in class instead of using it [...] because we knew that students sometimes didn't need that, they needed situations in which they will need to use the language. (Hanna, interview).

¹⁴Written by Emma Eberlein OF Lima, Lutz Rohrmann, Tokiko Ishihara, Cristián González Bergweiler.

In any case, we could perceive, in the face of the reformulations, a critical attitude that involved a conscious choice of materials from the context of action, focusing on the needs of the classes. The adaptation of materials and the constant concern regarding the students' profile (their difficulties, demands, objectives, etc.) as a motor for choosing the strategies to be used are postures that relate to a practice anchored in the reality of the classroom and its subjects. In other words, it is an action in which the teacher has the necessary autonomy to consider, in the teaching and learning process, the teaching context (linguistic, socio-cultural, and political aspects, among others) and to build their theories and practices, which diversify according to the needs that arise (KUMARAVADIVELU, 2001; LEFFA, 2012).

It is worth remembering that the adaptation and creation of teaching materials are of paramount importance for teacher education, as demonstrated by Mozer and Kawachi-Furlan (2019). Through reflection on textbooks available in the courses (potentials, limitations) concerning the context of teaching, learning, and use, the creation and adaptation of materials prepares teachers to go beyond the role of mere passive consumers of these materials, offering them opportunities for them to become more active in this and, consequently, to break with the technicist perspective of the mechanical application, in class, of what is prescribed by the material (MOZER; KAWACHI-FURLAN, 2019).

Throughout 2019, the Portuguese course was offered linked to the Languages without Borders Program (IsF) and, therefore, its target audience consisted of students enrolled at the university. In all these moments, the professors were scholarship interns, undergraduate students in Letters.¹⁵

Bearing in mind the contextual aspects of the case study and considering the research modality adopted, the following item aims to discuss in more depth the intercultural concept adopted in the Nucleus's PLNM course.

The development of the intercultural conception in the Nucleus's PLNM

A relevant aspect about the PLNM course of the Language Center which, according to the former advisor, progressively permeated the themes of the meetings with the interns from 2014 to 2019 was the implementation and development of intercultural thinking (MENDES,

¹⁵Currently, the IsF Portuguese course is no longer offered due to the closure of the Program in 2019 by the MEC. In February 2020, however, the Pré-PEC-G course was inaugurated at Ufes, a preparatory course for Celpe-Bras aimed at foreigners selected by PEC-G to enter Brazilian universities, given that the exam is a pre-requirement for them to be able to attend undergraduate and graduate courses in Brazilian universities. For more information, consult: <http://www.ufes.br/conteudo/ufes-inaugura-curso-preparatorio-para-prova-de-proficiencia-em-portugues>. Access on: 04 Sep. 2020

2011; 2018). For Carla, one of the intern teachers at the time, the construction of the concept of teaching Portuguese as a language-culture is a requirement for the teaching of PLNM, along with the theme of the language in use, in addition to the standard norm of the language. Much discussed and defended in several works by Edleise Mendes (2011; 2015), the concept of language-culture permeates a conception of language beyond the conception of instrumental, because

[...] the language is a symbol, a way of identification, a system of production of individual, social and cultural meanings, a lens through which we see the reality that surrounds us. By structuring our thoughts and actions, it mediates between our experiences and that of the other with whom we interact socially through language, helping us to organize the world around us [...] (MENDES, 2011, p. 143, our translation).

From this conception, the author, in defense of the adoption of the so-called Intercultural Communicative Approach (ACIN) in the teaching of PLNM, discards the idea of culture as something that comes before or after the language, or even as something that contains or is contained in the language. For her, there are no separations between the boundaries of where one begins and the other ends. In language teaching, the culture should not be seen only as a set of contents to be introduced in a juxtaposed way with any others in the linguistic sphere:

[...] Learning a language like Portuguese, for example, would be more than mastering a culture of illustration, but learning to be **socially in Portuguese**, which involves much more than simply mastering linguistic forms and curiosities. cultural information about the target language. (MENDES, 2011, p. 143, author's emphasis, our translation).

Therefore, the author takes the position of naming, as “language-culture”, the target language of the teaching and learning processes and/or the language that mediates different cultures. Language-culture would then be a “social and symbolic phenomenon of construction of the reality that surrounds us, [...] a way of building our thoughts and structuring our actions and experiences and sharing with others” (MENDES, 2011, p. 143-144, our translation). This system involves, in addition to formal structural issues and the organization of these structures, “a set of ideas and assumptions about one of the most important dimensions of human life – the cultural dimension.” (MENDES, 2015, p. 204, our translation). In other words, learning a language like Portuguese implies learning the verbal or non-verbal sociocultural linguistic codes that surround it, as well as what we need to do to act in this language and culture, since, according to Mendes (2011, p. 144, our translation), “[...] a

language dimension, [...], and specifically the Portuguese, is the ideal place for interaction, the own instance in which we can produce meanings to the world, and the others”.

Although at the beginning of his work as a PLNM advisor at the institution, there was already, among the team and in the classes, concern, and respect for the culture of foreign students, the former advisor defines it as a “natural concern”, without a “theory behind it”, that is, unconsciously. It was in 2014 and 2015, based on studies with professor Regina Egypt, a former student of professor Edleise Mendes at the Federal University of Bahia, and on the subject that the team came to know, in fact, the intercultural approach and the use it “efficiently” (João, interview).

The course then sought to adopt the ACIN¹⁶(MENDES, 2011; 2015; 2018) and, in addition to joint studies, the interns received feedback from the advisor to reflect on the attitudes towards the students' culture:

as we watched [the class], we gave feedback: “Oh, you could have done that part”; “This here is nice”; [...] “Look, be careful what you say” – here comes our concern [of speech] also with the foreigner. So, we realized when we started to understand interculturality and realize the differences [...] in the ways of learning in each [culture]. From the East and West, for example [...] (João, interview).

The interviewee also mentions that the challenge increased as the Nucleus received students from the most diverse backgrounds. Therefore, the team made an effort to train itself to build, together with the students, perceptions about stereotypes and prejudices, including about Brazil.

The complexity of this context of high cultural diversity is one of the characterizations made by Mendes (2018) of the current world scenario and, therefore, of classrooms – as, in general, are those of PLNM. The author, then, defends teacher initial education that prepares the teacher to work in multilingual contexts that focus on teaching Portuguese as a language of mediation and inclusion. For this, it is necessary to establish a dialogue between cultures to mitigate problematic issues such as those reported by the interviewee.

¹⁶This process of “conscious adoption” of ACIN by the PLNM of the Nucleus, reported by João, leads us to the discussion of the inseparability between theory and practice described by Souza (2001) because, from the association of practice with theoretical studies, actions become they resignified and took on a dimension of reflective practice.

Final considerations

This article aimed to discuss the main historical landmarks of the PLNМ at the Federal University of Espírito Santo. Based on this survey, we observed the importance of the Department of Languages and Letters and the Language Center in promoting actions aimed at PLNМ, from 1990 to 2019, especially about the offer of courses to the academic community and the external community.

The course proposal underwent significant changes, both in the organization (hours, target audience, etc.) and in the design of language(s) and teaching, having started with a more structural perspective of language that influenced the choice of books didactics, and reaching teaching and learning practices based on the concept of language-culture (MENDES, 2011; 2015; 2018), which led to the development of the course and the selection and use of teaching materials with a focus on the intercultural vision. We also observed special attention to teacher initial education in this process, with DLL initiatives through the offer of optional subjects and NL proposals aimed at preparing trainee teachers before and during their work as PLNМ teachers.

We are aware that other actions are being developed at the university. However, due to DLL and NL's representativeness in this field and the limited space in this article, we focus on proposals from these contexts. We believe that understanding this history of PLNМ at Ufes is essential so that we can demand policies that are not restricted to the provision of language courses, but that includes teacher initial formation, and the development of language policies aimed at institutionalizing PLNМ at the university. We hope that, through this article, the PLNМ of Ufes will be the subject of greater dissemination in the area, as well as that this work will serve as subsidies for future research that addresses the PLNМ in Espírito Santo and other universities.

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