

**PATHS AND CHALLENGES THROUGHOUT THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS
OF THE PORTUGUESE FOR FOREIGNERS AT UFV**

***PERCURSOS E DESAFIOS AO LONGO DO PROCESSO DE CONSOLIDAÇÃO DO
PORTUGUÊS PARA ESTRANGEIROS NA UFV***

***RUTAS Y RETOS A LO LARGO DEL PROCESO DE CONSOLIDACIÓN DEL
PORTUGUÉS PARA EXTRANJEROS EN LA UFV***

Idalena Oliveira CHAVES¹
Glauber HEITOR-SAMPAIO²

ABSTRACT: This article aims to present the historical development of teaching and learning Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFL) at Viçosa Federal University (UFV). To that end, we bring a slight description of some actions implemented at the institution towards its internalization process and how they have partaken in the discussion and strengthening of policy ventures in teacher education since 2015. Based on the recent consolidation of the field and grounded on the legitimation of the pillars categorized as teaching, research, and extension, some points about the state of the Portuguese for foreigners in this scenario are raised, culminating in the exposure of some political actions which point out the need of farther teacher training policies as recently proposed by the Languages Department.

KEYWORDS: Portuguese for foreigners. Education. Research. Extension. Teacher education.

RESUMO: *Este artigo tem por objetivo apresentar o percurso histórico do ensino-aprendizagem do Português como Língua Estrangeira (PLE) na Universidade Federal de Viçosa (UFV). Por conseguinte, propõe-se a descrever brevemente as ações pertinentes ao processo de internacionalização da instituição que têm influído para a discussão e consolidação de iniciativas políticas de formação de professores de PLE desde 2015. A partir da consolidação recente da área, sustentada pelos pilares categorizados neste artigo como ensino, pesquisa e extensão, levantam-se também alguns pontos sobre a situação atual da área no referido cenário, culminando na exposição de ações políticas necessárias para a formação docente, propostas pelo Departamento de Letras da instituição.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Português para estrangeiros. Ensino. Pesquisa. Extensão. Formação de professores.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo presenta el desarrollo histórico de enseñanza-aprendizaje del Portugués Lengua Extranjera (PLE) en la Universidad Federal de Viçosa (UFV). Por lo*

¹ Federal University of Viçosa (UFV), Viçosa – MG – Brazil. Lecturer in the Department of Letters. Doctorate in Letters (UFMG). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2921-6425>. E-mail: idalena@ufv.br

² Federal Institute of Minas Gerais (IFMG), Congonhas – MG – Brazil. Professor at the Department of Languages and Codes. Doctoral candidate in Applied Linguistics (UNICAMP). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3636-7643>. E-mail: glauber.sampaio@ifmg.edu.br

tanto, se describe brevemente las acciones implementadas por la institución hacia su proceso de internalización con el fin de destacar cómo han sido participes de la discusión y fortalecimiento de medidas políticas para la formación de profesores desde 2015. Basándose en la reciente consolidación del campo y potenciando la legitimidad de los pilares categorizados como enseñanza, investigación y extensión universitaria, plantea algunos puntos en lo que respecta al ámbito del portugués para extranjeros en este escenario, incluyendo con la exposición de acciones que señalan la importancia de políticas de formación docente más vigorosas como recientemente expuso por el Departamento de Lenguas de la institución.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Portugués para extranjeros. Educación. Investigación. Extensión universitaria. Formación del profesorado.*

Introduction

Speaking Portuguese nowadays is highly recommended for all those who wish to study or work in Brazil. Portuguese is indisputably an international language and is part of two major political and economic blocs: the European Union (officially declared an international language alongside French, English, and Spanish) and Mercosur, having official language status alongside Spanish.

According to the International Institute of the Portuguese Language (IILP) Blog (2019 [Web], our translation),

[...] our language is one of the 10 most important languages in the world and Brazil is the main reason for the increase in the number of Portuguese students in North American higher education, which grew 10.1 percent between 2009 and 2013 and became the third fastest-growing language in the United States.

This is reflected in the demand for Portuguese courses that have been increasing in recent years in various institutions in Brazil and abroad. According to the ECB Portal³, the “Rede Brasil Cultural⁴, Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' instrument for promoting the Portuguese language and Brazilian culture abroad, serves 9,000 students in 44 countries on five continents, with around 200 teachers”. Through programs such as Readership⁵, internationally renowned universities such as Harvard (United States), Fudan (China), Sorbonne (France), King's College (United Kingdom), and Cologne (Germany), in addition to

³ Available: <http://www.ebc.com.br/noticias/internacional/2015/05/cresce-procura-pelo-ensino-do-portugues-do-brasil-no-mundo>. Access: 08 Mar. 2021.

⁴ Available: <http://redebrasilcultural.itamaraty.gov.br/en/>. Access: 08 Mar. 2021.

⁵ Available: <https://www1.capes.gov.br/bolsas-e-auxilios-internacionais/pais/218-multinacional/10088-programa-leitorado>. Access: 07 Mar. 2021.

several others located on all continents, have promoted language courses and Brazilian culture through government partnerships.

In several countries, such as South Korea, China, Japan, the United States, among others, the presence of a specialist professor in the area of Portuguese teaching is common, integrated into the faculty of the Language Departments of their universities. However, in Brazil, the counterpart of meeting a specific demand of professionals dedicated to language teaching in an immersion context is still recent.

Although there have already been initiatives to teach Portuguese to foreigners in the country since the 1950s, as Almeida Filho (2012) points out when citing a didactic manual on teaching Portuguese to foreigners, created by professor Mercedes Marchand, in Rio Grande do Sul in 1957, there was no scientific reference to any Brazilian effort or legitimacy in terms of research and production of teaching methods and materials for teaching Portuguese to such an audience. The flourishing of studies and publications, and the growth of specialized courses, notably in the United States, grew significantly in the 60s and 70s (ALMEIDA FILHO, 1992). At the same time, Brazilian universities began a chain of attempts to institutionalize courses for foreigners in university environments, as well as the implementation of specializations for professors in the area, which until then had been completely null, especially in terms of training at the postgraduate level. As Almeida Filho (1992) points out, it is not easy to precisely define the pioneering spirit of Brazilian universities in the implementation of Portuguese courses for foreigners (hereinafter, PLE). However, concerning the development of research and teacher training in the area, the State University of Campinas (Unicamp) has stood out since 1976.

However, this awakening in Brazil only occurred in the 1980s, when the first nationally produced textbooks began to appear. It was only after the 1990s that Brazilian universities started the PLE teaching movement. Among them, the Federals of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Minas Gerais (UFMG), Santa Catarina (UFSC), Juiz de Fora (UFJF), the University of São Paulo (USP), Brasília (UnB), the State of Campinas (Unicamp), the Catholics of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), and Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS), with only Unicamp, UFRJ and UnB offered regular and cataloged courses with professors/researchers fully integrated into the teaching career (ALMEIDA FILHO, 1992). The PLE courses were offered in the form of university extension,⁶ and the Portuguese for

⁶See Diniz and Dell'isola (2020).

Foreigners Program (PPE) by Professor Margarete Schlatter, at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), both in 1993.

Following the flow of international migration to Brazil and the needs of teaching the national language to foreigners, the Federal University of Viçosa (UFV) also provided initiatives and proposals for the teaching of PLE, as described below.

A very brief history of the internationalization process at UFV

Mobility in the educational field is not a recent process and dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries with the so-called “Grand Tour”⁷, in which young European aristocracy traveled accompanied by a private teacher to visit the classical world to seek knowledge and learn languages. What was once given to the elites was gradually democratizing itself. In the 1990s, with the signing of the Bologna Declaration⁸ (BASTOS, 2008), mobility has intensified in European universities, unifying higher education.

Discussions on international mobility and internationalization of Brazilian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)⁹ companies only emerge ten years later concerning the European context and are part of the political context of the first decade of the 2000s. From then on, the programs to support research and the exchange of knowledge began to be expanded, with great collaborators national development agencies in cooperation with foreign organizations. In 2009, for example, around 2,000 scholarships from Capes and CNPq were intended for foreigners through the Postgraduate (PEC-PG) and graduation (PEC-G) programs¹⁰. There was, then, the expansion of research project concessions by cooperatives and international associations involving consultancies for foreign universities and other institutions, as reported in Morosini (2006). According to CNPq data¹¹, today there are 59 participating countries in the PEC-G, being 25 from Africa, 25 from the Americas and 9 from

⁷See Bertrand (2013).

⁸The Bologna Declaration is a joint document signed by the Ministers of Education from 29 European countries, gathered in the Italian city of Bologna in 1999. Available: http://www.magna-charta.org/resources/files/BOLOGNA_DECLARATION.pdf. Access: 16 Mar. 2021.

⁹Bartell (2003), quoted by Morosini (2006), “conceptualizes Internationalization as international exchanges related to education and Globalization as an advanced stage in the process that involves internationalization” (p. 115).

¹⁰PEC-G (Graduate Student-Agreement Program) and PEC-PG (Graduate Student-Agreement Program) are cooperation activities between Brazil and developing countries, whose objective is the training of human resources, to enable citizens of those countries with which Brazil has educational or cultural agreements to carry out university studies at Brazilian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) participating in the agreement. For additional information about programs. Available: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/pec-g?ativo=531>. Accessed: 07 Dec. 2015.

¹¹Available: <http://www.dce.mre.gov.br/PEC/G/historico/introducao.php>. Access: 08 Mar. 2021.

Asia, among which the UFV stood out as a host by welcoming mobility students from African countries and Hispanic-American universities.

In this scenario, the Portuguese language becomes part of this process, forming the agenda of discussions related to political actions implemented in all areas of knowledge. In a macro perspective, Brazilian institutions are faced with the intense movement of visiting professors and international students with agreements, with actions such as the certification of proficiency in Portuguese (CELPE-Bras) and the creation of programs such as Science Without Borders, in 2011 and Languages Without Borders (ISF) the following year. The UFV also followed these flows and displacements.

Therefore, international cooperation and academic mobility are fundamental processes that support and accompany the long history of development and institutionalization of the UFV. Since its inception, the institution has received, enabled, and executed multiple projects, the result of international agreements through which it is possible to consider that its internationalization process began in parallel with its idealization.

Derived from former Escola Superior de Agricultura e Veterinária (ESAV), inaugurated in 1926 and designed along the lines of the Landgrant Colleges, agricultural colleges created in the United States at the end of the 19th century (RIBEIRO, 2009), the UFV was federalized in 1969 after a period in solid development as a Rural University of the State of Minas Gerais (UREMG, 1948-1969). Early on, its operation relied on bilateral cooperation between Brazil and the United States, specifically through the direction of Peter Henry Rolfs, an American professor hired at the time according to an agreement established between the government of the state of Minas Gerais and the United States (RIBEIRO, 2006). According to Baêta (2016), more than half of the institution's faculty in the 1930s was composed of professors from the United States, Germany, Russia, and Denmark.

Although the institution had political problems during its early years, its transformation into UREMG, in 1948, coincided with the technical assistance agreement signed between the Minas Gerais government and the American International Association for Economic and Social Development (AIA). The initiative was later guaranteed by the cooperation of Purdue University in a consolidated agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and the US Embassy through the Institute of Inter-American Affairs (IIAA), considered a precursor of the internationalization of higher education in the state of Minas Gerais (RIBEIRO, 2009).

The actions of international cooperation, as well as the ideology of technical cooperation in the field of agrarian production that impelled its creation, stimulated the

exchange of professors and, a posteriori, of foreign researchers and students, these movements can be considered part of the driving forces that leveraged the opening of the organization to the constant expansion of technical-educational and cultural collaboration activities between professors, researchers, and students in the international sphere. These movements inevitably placed the UFV on the list of contemporary discussions on the internationalization of Brazilian IES.

Currently, the university has several contracts, agreements, and agreements signed with embassies of multiple countries in more than one hundred universities abroad. Students from various nations can undertake academic internships and enter undergraduate or postgraduate courses. This contingent of international students and researchers is described by Baêta when he indicates that

UFV [is] among the five universities with the highest percentage of foreign students in the country and, among the Brazilian IFES, it is the second with a total of 3% against 4% at UFSC. In proportional terms, it has triple the number of foreign students when compared to the largest IFES in Minas Gerais, UFMG, according to data from Times High Education (2016). In these indicators, there is a 4% to 5% foreign student presence among the state universities of São Paulo, USP, UNESP, and UNICAMP, considered as references in the country in international rankings, but far from German and Dutch universities, with an average of 20%, and from Canadian universities. and Americans, with up to 50% of foreign students (BAÊTA, 2016, p. 222, our translation).

The contingent of students in academic mobility at the institution continues to be significant. According to data from the DRI/UFV Annual Report¹², in 2019 the institution received more than 300 international students, allocated to various undergraduate and graduate programs in its 38 departments linked to four Science Centers (Agrarian-CCA; Biological, and Health-CCB; Exact and Technological-CCE; and Humanities, Letters, and Arts-CCH). With the exception of visiting professors at the institution, out of a total of 940 permanent professors, 27 are foreigners, which corresponds to 2.53% of the faculty, distributed according to the table below:

¹² Available at: <https://www.dri.ufv.br/wp-content/uploads/Relat%C3%B3rio-2019.pdf>. Access on: 15 Apr. 2020

Table 1 – Presence of foreign professors at UFV

PARENTS	CENTER	No. BY DEPARTMENT	TOTAL
Argentina	CCB/CCH	02	02
Colombia	CCA/CCE/CCH	02/02/01	05
Cuba	CCE	01	01
Spain	CCH	01	01
U.S	CCE	01	01
India	CCE	01	01
Will	CAF/CCE	01/01	02
Norway	CCA	01	01
Paraguay	CCE	01	01
Peru	CCE/CAF	02/06	08
Uruguay	CCH	01	01
naturalized	CCB/CCE	02/01	03
TOTAL 27			

Source: Authors' collection

Although the partnerships between Brazil and the United States initiated international relations at the institution, mainly based on North America's strategic objective of consolidating its economic hegemony in the global south in the post-war period, the UFV established, over the years, important agreements with other neighboring countries.

With the formation of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) in 1991, the panorama of migratory flow to Brazil changed. The member countries of the bloc included discussions on a series of issues on the agenda, among which education stood out, an aspect of wide relevance for the strengthening of relations between the member countries of the community (FULQUET, 2006). As Fulquet points out, the debate about the internationalization of higher education was already heated while the project named Educational Sector of MERCOSUR (SEM) sought to “establish itself as an instrument for building new spaces for economic, political, and cultural development” (FULQUET, 2006, p. 8) to create their regional identity.

From then on, there was a growing interest in learning Portuguese by students from several Latin American countries who began to perceive Brazil as a possibility of access to higher education. These data are relevant to systematize the path taken by international academic mobility in the UFV scenario and as such a factor stimulated the creation of the area of Portuguese for foreigners, as discussed below.

The historic process of consolidation of the PLE/UFV area

In the institutional context dealt with in this article, the International and Interinstitutional Relations Board (DRI-UFV), existing since the 70s under the seal of International Advisory and Partnerships, was promoted to the board in 2010, contributed enormously to the processes of internationalization and institutionalization of the PLE area, which does not mean that the institution did not already have Portuguese course offerings for exchange students, which we will categorize below into specific internships and purposes.

PLE/UFV pre-consolidation development stage

On the subject of teaching PLE at UFV, Baêta (2016) points out that there were no records at the institution before 2005 of Portuguese courses for foreigners, and the regular offer only started from then on. According to reports presented in his doctoral thesis (op. cit. p. 247), learning Portuguese officially seemed to have no relevance at that time for the diplomatic context of the institution. The foreigners who arrived there, “turned around”, learned informally or communicated with the help of interpreters, as the key was to integrate them diplomatically so that they had a good reception and stay at the university and in the city. However, a type of informal teaching emerged, in which teachers helped foreign students and promoted a Tandem system.¹³, an autonomous foreign language learning method based on a linguistic exchange between native speakers of the two languages, interested in learning the language of the pair. As Santos (2009) states, “participation in a tandem does not require previous training as a teacher of the language to be taught: the simple fact of being its user (native or competent) is enough [...]” (SANTOS, 2009, p. 149, our translation).

Gradually, classes began to be taught by professors from the Department of Letters and, mainly, from 2005, by trainees from CELIN (Extension Course in English Language), students of the degree in Portuguese-English Letters in their final years of the course. In particular, the offer was made by undergraduates in Letters who returned from an academic exchange in the United States promoted by the Capes-Fipse agreement (Program of Consortiums in Higher Education between Brazil and the United States). At the time, PLE classes were strictly aimed at US exchange students participating in the aforementioned agreement. The course was carried out intensively and annually (summer courses during January and February), preceding the beginning of the academic calendar, to provide to the

¹³ Available: https://www.unibe.ch/studies/degree_programs/language_courses/aes/tandem/index_eng.html. Accessed: 16 Feb. 2021.

students the language practice, so they could join graduation subjects for one or two semesters.

The courses were planned so that the student who had just arrived in the city would have full immersion in the language and culture. Each course was offered by three teachers in training (interns) and divided between skills (one of them worked with conversation practice, another with reading and writing, and another, is focused on aspects of language structure). It is worth mentioning that the interns did not have any type of specific training for teaching PLE and all the material developed for the course, as well as the methodologies used, departed from their conceptions, approaches, and methodologies based on their experiences with teaching English to Brazilians.

This configuration remained until 2011, when, after offering the summer course, a monitor, a student of the Postgraduate Program in Letters/Literary Studies, was selected to offer a 40-hour course throughout the semester. The course did not achieve the expected objectives and such failure is attributed to the fact that the monitor's training was strictly in Portuguese Mother Language (PLM) with a focus on teaching literature. Furthermore, he did not obtain any specific initial instruction to act in the new context.

In the second half of 2011, the course of the PLE changed significantly with the contribution of a temporary professor in the area of Modern Foreign Languages who was responsible for offering a course, not only to US students but also to exchange students from other programs that interested in the language.

In the meantime, the search for a proposal to consolidate an international cooperation policy that would overcome the challenge identified by the DRI as an “internal imbalance of international insertion”¹⁴, encouraged the Board to establish objectives for the establishment of an institutionalized and organized PLE teaching area. The focus, therefore, was to meet the challenge of international insertion of exchange students in sectors where knowledge of the Portuguese language was essential to meet the requirement of some agreements that demanded, in return, the offer of language classes to newly arrived students.

¹⁴The “internal imbalance of international insertion” was pointed out in a project developed in 2012/2013 with the support of the FAPEMIG Public Notice 14/2011, aimed at Supporting the Creation or Consolidation of International Advisory Services. In the project, one of the objectives of the proposal was to promote adequate and continuous teaching of the Portuguese language (intensive courses and semester courses) for the largest number of foreign students in the institution. This objective was presented as one of the factors that would allow the correction between the local “unbalance of academic exchange” with its international partners and, consequently, would provide opportunities for the participation of more UFV students in exchange projects and intercultural actions.

With the state support of FAPEMIG's Public Notice 14/2011¹⁵ aimed at the “Consolidation of the UFV’s International Cooperation Policy”, PLE teaching activities began to be offered not only as intensive summer courses but also as 60-hour elective courses, under codes LET 483 – Special Topics/ Portuguese for Foreigners I and LET 484 – Special Topics IV/ Portuguese for Foreigners II. The subjects were offered by a professor selected by the aforementioned public notice (co-author of this article) and reached students of different nationalities, among which we had American, German, French, Dutch, Italian, and, especially, Latin American students from countries such as Peru, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Colombia. The latter, as they are from master's and doctoral programs and have extended stays, were those who studied the “Portuguese for Foreigners II” discipline.

In addition to teaching activities, students participated in trips, extracurricular activities and local events promoted by them and assisted by department professors, such as the “Cultural Kaleidoscope” (SILVA, 2019). In addition, a course focused on training to solve tasks along the lines of the Celpe-Bras exam was offered to Spanish-speaking students who would take the exam at the time. The notice was in force for nineteen months from July 2012.

After the conclusion of the aforementioned project, it was urgent to request a specific vacancy to hire a PLE teacher for the effective staff of the institution. On the initiative of the DRI in conjunction with the Department of Letters (DLA), a competition was held for PLE teachers and this gave an institutional character to the teaching of Portuguese as a foreign language, starting in 2013. UFV then started to do part of the panel of the 10 federal universities in the country that obtained a teaching position for the PLE area (ALMEIDA; JÚDICE, 2016).

In June of the same year, the vacancy was filled¹⁶ while in August the institution already had a PLE teacher on the permanent staff. For one year (2013-2014), the subjects LET 483 and LET 484 remained, in addition to the offer of an intensive extension course in “Portuguese Language and Brazilian Culture for Foreigners”. It is clear, therefore, the maintenance of the same actions developed previously. However, in the second half of 2014, with the request for dismissal of the civil servant then in office, two undergraduate monitors and one from the graduate program in letters were selected to work in the disciplines in a palliative way until the next professor was hired, who would take place in the first half of 2015. With a greater perspective of continuity, we consider this to be the period in which the

¹⁵The Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais, linked to the State Department of Science, Technology and Education of the State Government, is the only agency for promoting scientific and technological development in Minas Gerais.

¹⁶Process 014088/2012/UFV, available in the Official Gazette of April 9, 2013.

PLE/UFV was consolidated as an area. Next, we will describe the basic education proposals that are based on the purposes of the basic education pillars are based on the purpose of the fundamental education pillars, leading them to use the training effect as well as the teaching education.

Consolidation stages and their pillars

The consolidation of the PLE/UFV is finally perceived from the departmental actions implemented in the last six years and are based on changes in terms of teaching provision, research development and the implementation of extension projects. From then on, in 2015, the university became an applicator of the proficiency exam in Portuguese as a foreign language (Celpe-Bras). All these initiatives support the institution's internal internationalization process. These pillars on which the area has solidified, however, are difficult to segment, as they communicate and complement each other in various ways, as will be noticeable in the descriptions below. However, just for the sake of distinguishing activities, we will try to categorize them.

The Teaching Pillar

As of the first semester of 2015, the PLE courses were offered as semester courses of 60 hours and had the same configurations practiced since 2013. This configuration, however, changed in the following year, with the creation of disciplines that understood the specific needs for meeting particular groups of students, under the initiative of one of the authors of this article. Initially, the classes were homogenized and did not take taking into account the differences in the level of difficulties presented by students who speak typologically close languages (Portuguese-Spanish) and those who speak distant languages, such as Asians, for example, especially concerning pronunciation, comprehension, and vocabulary, as ongoing studies at UFV¹⁷. Another issue, which was put up for discussion and served as a guide for the changes made, took into account the purposes of language learning by students who would be at the university only for international mobility programs.¹⁸at the undergraduate level and, also, focusing on the purposes and needs of students linked to graduate programs. As a result,

¹⁷The scientific initiation research entitled “Identifying the strategies of expression of temporality in PLE in beginner learners”, guided by Prof. Dr. Aparecida Araújo, points to this phenomenon.

¹⁸International mobility is a program to receive and/or send students to/from various countries to foster internationalization and promote exchange opportunities abroad, sharing experiences and knowledge among foreign students.

the disciplines LET 204 (which serves undergraduate academic mobility students) and LET 604 (for graduate students) were created.

In this way, language teaching for students on international mobility has a unique configuration that prioritizes basic understanding and communication. A distinct and contextualized methodology must be provided, as they are immersed in the language and culture, but for a very short time, usually only for one semester. However, for graduate students, who stay between 2 and 5 years at the university, in addition to the need for understanding and communication, they need to develop reading and text production skills. Each subject is divided into a theoretical part, which prioritizes the formal aspects of the language, in the oral and written modalities, and a practical part, which emphasizes conversation, and oral comprehension. Practical activities focus on audiovisual aspects such as music, videos, Brazilian films, and also the development of orality, through oral presentations, given by the students at the end of each semester. In the case of graduate students, the focus is on reading articles, interpreting texts, oral and written production, and preparing for the examination of proficiency in Portuguese as a foreign language, to obtain the Certificate of Proficiency in the Portuguese Language for Foreigners (Celpe-Bras).

The Extension Pillar

Although some specific extension courses focused on PLE had already been carried out at the institutional level, it was only from 2015 that the area was officially inserted into the university's extension activities. Such insertion was made possible through the creation of the extension project named “Extension Course in Portuguese Language for Foreigners” (CELIPE)¹⁹, designed and coordinated by Prof. Dr. Idalena Oliveira Chaves and developed by collaborating professors from the Department of Letters. The project, in progress for six years, aims to offer Portuguese courses to the students' families (children and spouses), as they cannot take the regular subjects as they are not officially linked to the university. In addition to PLE courses, Portuguese as an additional language for the deaf and Portuguese as a foreign language for children are also offered. The project also aims, in addition to teaching activities, to contribute to the training and teaching practice of students of the Licentiate of Letters course, in addition to functioning as a fertile locus for the development of research in Portuguese as a Foreign/Additional Language at the institution.

¹⁹ Available: <https://www.celipe.ufv.br/>. Access: 10 July 2021.

Another project developed during the process of solidifying the area started in 2016, focuses on the teaching of Portuguese as a Language of Heritage (PLH), for which an educational portal was produced²⁰ so that Brazilian children, living abroad, and the children of foreign students enrolled in regular schools in the city, could learn/develop their skills in Portuguese with linguistic and musical activities.

Finally, we also mention the Procultura Project, whose focus is on literary literacy and is intended to develop the reading and speaking skills of foreign graduate students who speak Spanish, carrying out reading interventions with elementary school students in public schools. de Viçosa, in partnership with the Licenciature Course in Spanish of the Department of Letters at UFV.

The Research Pillar

Concerning scientific production in the area of PLE, the university, through the Department of Letters, has promoted the development of research projects ranging from scientific initiation works (CI) to master's dissertations. Such studies cover topics such as culture, intercultural communication, students' conceptions and beliefs, needs analysis, assessment, use of technologies, teaching Portuguese as a heritage language, among others, as described in the table below:

Table 2 -Research completed in the PLE area at UFV

Year	Author. Title / (Type of Production)	Advisor
2011	Glauber Heitor Sampaio. Portuguese as a Foreign Language: a study of the relationships between experiences, beliefs and motivations / (Monograph)	Ana Maria Ferreira Barcelos
2015	Glauber Heitor Sampaio. The negotiation of belonging categories in intercultural interaction in the Portuguese as a Foreign Language classroom / (Master's Thesis)	Wania Terezinha Ladeira
2016	Marina by Paulo Nascimento. Beliefs of Spanish-speaking students about proficiency in Brazilian Portuguese as a foreign language in a preparatory course for the CELPE-Bras / (TCC) exam	Glauber Heitor Sampaio
2016	Tamires de Castro Ferreira. The profile of foreign students at UFV: introductory study / (IC)	Idalena Oliveira Chaves
2017	Mateus Lopes de Souza. Profile of foreign students at UFV: creation of an online intercultural Portuguese course for foreigners / (IC)	Idalena Oliveira Chaves
2017	Luana Rodrigues. Culture and Teaching of Portuguese as a Foreign Language: Reflections on Teacher Training as Cultural Mediators / (TCC)	Glauber Heitor Sampaio
2018	Matthew Figueira. Analysis of the Needs of German-Speaking Students / (TCC)	Idalena Oliveira Chaves
2018	Tamires de Castro Ferreira. Profile of foreign students at UFV: introductory study for the development of an educational portal for teaching Portuguese / (TCC)	Idalena Oliveira Chaves
2018	Mateus Lopes de Souza. Analysis of the Needs of German-Speaking Students /	Idalena Oliveira

²⁰ Available: <https://www.tremelenguaplh.ufv.br/>. Access: 10 July 2021.

	(TCC)	Chaves
2018	Matheus Pereira Figueira de Oliveira. Analysis of the interference of the mother tongue in the orthographic writing of Spanish speakers in the written test of the Celpe-bras / (TCC) exam	Idalena Oliveira Chaves
2019	Ramone Maria da Costa e Silva. Brazilian popular music (MPB) as a support to work on interculturality in Portuguese classes for foreigners (PLE) / (TCC)	Idalena Oliveira Chaves
2019	Paloma by Paula Fagundes. Around the world in several stories: a proposal for Literary Literacy for foreign students / (TCC)	Idalena Oliveira Chaves
2019	Erica Fernandes Borges. From the language of origin to the language of inheritance: the maintenance of Spanish by Spanish-speakers in the Zona da Mata Mineira / (Master's Dissertation)	Idalena Oliveira Chaves
2020	Caroline Campos Fraga. The use of digital media for the development of orality in Portuguese for Foreigners / (IC)	Idalena Oliveira Chaves
2020	Flavia Rodrigues de Souza. Language, culture and migration: linguistic and cultural development of children from international migrant families in Viçosa, Minas Gerais / (Master's Thesis)	Michelle Nave Valadão
2021	Mariana Alves Abrantes. Portuguese every day: Using the YouTube platform to teach Portuguese as a Foreign Language / (TCC)	Idalena Oliveira Chaves

Source: Authors' collection

Based on the works listed, the growing production indicates that the development of the area has been carried out intensely and has contributed to the discussions in PLE. In terms of research carried out from 2015 onwards, in addition to those listed above, the creation of the research group “Gruppelhe - Research Group in Portuguese, Foreign Language and Heritage Languages” (CNPQ) stands out, which seeks to contribute to studies and research on the specific theme in Brazil and abroad. In addition to this, the institutional project entitled “The internationalization of the Portuguese language at UFV: the creation of a pedagogical portal for teaching and learning Brazilian Portuguese as a Foreign Language and Language of Heritage (PBLH)” is being developed.

In addition to the actions already mentioned, the research designated as the “Profile of foreign students at UFV: an introductory study for the development of an educational portal for teaching Portuguese” stands out, which, as its title indicates, seeks to outline the profile of foreign students at UFV, from which he has guided the creation of an educational portal for PLE teaching at the institution, and b) the teaching project “The production of an online course for teaching and learning Brazilian Portuguese for foreigners residents abroad”, which is developed from the perspective of understanding the linguistic demands of learning Portuguese by students in the pre-exchange preparation phase and already presents results in the implementation of the channel “Português Todo Dia”, available on Youtube²¹, which also contributes to the autonomous learning of PLE.

All the pillars outlined so far support and converge, greatly, for the realization of the last pillar to be described, the training of teachers.

²¹ Available: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2feXRNHa7Wxj4DLEYgAr2g>. Access: 20 May 2021.

The Teacher Training Pillar and its challenges

The DLA/UFV trains teachers in four different qualifications: Portuguese, English, French, Spanish, and their respective literatures. Although there is no qualification aimed at training teachers for teaching PLE, in 2016 the discipline called “Teaching Portuguese as a foreign language” (LET 304) was created to meet this demand. The discipline, offered in the first semester of each year, has contributed to creating a team interested in developing different teaching, research and extension projects.

To this day, we still find a common scenario in which lay people are invited to offer PLE courses. Teachers of other languages or even Portuguese Mother Language teach these courses regularly. Abroad, by the way, Brazilians are still in charge of teaching without any training, just because they are natives. Teaching one's mother tongue to a foreigner differs from teaching it as a mother tongue to a native. So, what is it like to be a Portuguese teacher for foreigners? What is the difference between teaching Portuguese as a mother tongue and teaching Portuguese as a foreign language?

According to Nóbrega (2010), the differences already begin in the situations of acquisition and learning. For the author, the acquisition of the mother tongue happens naturally and faster, driven by the desire to communicate, while a foreign language, learned in a formal situation and for a specific need, ends up being less natural, leading the learner to infer rules for the target language by comparing structures of their mother tongue. Another divergent point concerns the cultural repertoire of the learner, considering that “at LM we are literally at home. Inserted in the culture and the subtlety of its imperatives, we are innate connoisseurs of what is approved and what is rejected” (NOBREGA, 2010, p. 7, our translation), which makes the foreign language learner, in a way, compare these aspects and have problems adapting to the new culture or even rejecting it. Facing changes and the difficulties of adapting to a new language, a new job, a lifestyle and one's own culture is not simple. This is what mobilizes specific training, with the production of teaching materials to meet the imperatives of foreign students, especially when involving intercultural interaction relationships.

The training of Portuguese teachers in the non-mother language modality, although growing, is still incipient in the country. The Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) and the University of Brasília (UNB) are pioneers in this training. Recently, two universities with this international profile were created. The first, the Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA), aims to train graduates in Letters - Spanish and Portuguese as Foreign

Languages, whose proposal focuses on training professionals to work both in basic education and in free courses, in educational institutions. from Brazil and other Latin American countries. The second, University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (UNILAB), established in 2010 in Ceará, proposes

[...] ministrar ensino superior, desenvolver pesquisas nas diversas áreas de conhecimento e promover a extensão universitária, tendo como missão institucional específica formar recursos humanos para contribuir com a integração entre o Brasil e os demais países membros da Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa - CPLP, especialmente os países africanos, bem como promover o desenvolvimento regional e o intercâmbio cultural, científico e educacional (UNILAB, 2010[Web], our translation).²²

Additionally, between 2013 and 2015, courses were created for the “Licentiate in Letters: Libras/Portuguese Language as a Second Language” at the Federal University of Acre (UFAC) and the qualification in “Portuguese as a Second Language and Foreign Language” at the State University of Campinas. (UNICAMP). Since 2006, the subjects Teaching Portuguese as a Second Language/Foreign Language and Research in Portuguese as a Second Language/Foreign Language, taught at the Institute for Language Studies (IEL- Unicamp), already foreshadowing the possibility of creating a specific degree, possible to 2015, as an alternative for students of Letters of this university to expand their training. There is also the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Goiás, in Goiânia (IFG)²³ which, in the course for training teachers of Letters, presents a differential with disciplines aimed at teaching Portuguese to foreigners, as well as at UFV, as already evidenced.

Some Brazilian institutions offer specific training to work in this area in Lato Sensu postgraduate courses, such as the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) and the course for Training Teachers of Portuguese for Foreigners of the Continuing Education program at PUC-Rio. In many of the federal universities, subjects are already offered in undergraduate and graduate courses for teacher training, as seen in Marques and Schoffen. However, as the authors state:

[...] it is essential that the government and universities recognize the increasing importance of the area, open up more space for professors specialized in PLA, and invest in the inclusion of subjects focused on the training of PLA teachers in the curricula of the courses of Letters, in addition to encouraging the opening of more degree courses in PLA (MARQUES; SCHOFFEN, 2020, p. 409, our translation).

²²Sobre a criação da Unilab. Disponível em: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2007-2010/2010/Lei/L12289.htm. Acesso em: 10 out. 2018.

²³ Available at: <https://cursos.ifg.edu.br/info/lic/lic-letras/CP-GOIANIA>. Accessed on: 20 May 2019.

Even with these possibilities being promoted, the PLE teacher still faces some challenges, such as the limited availability of didactic materials that help them in the different contexts of action, as well as research that discusses the didactic doing itself in this very specific scenario and marked by needs, often odd. Although there is a considerable number of textbooks on the market (as listed on the Iel-Unicamp²⁴), it is still difficult to adapt the material to contextual, local learning situations that meet the realities of certain groups. Although the books contemplate socio-communicative situations experienced in Brazil, in general, they tend to represent the geographical region of origin of these authors, giving the dialogues and texts distinct discursive marks that, not always, describe the uses of the language spoken in certain places and their regionalisms, in addition to of methodologies, approaches and specific needs of teaching groups. This requires an adaptation and a process of training teachers who know how to deal with, and present in a reflective and informed way the variants that, for obvious reasons, cannot be fully covered in a textbook. In this way, such adequacy becomes one of the challenges for the teacher in training or even in service.

Another great challenge for the teacher is to mobilize the knowledge of students who live in a context of linguistic and cultural immersion and transit between the university environment and the local community, as in the city of Viçosa, Minas Gerais. What the foreigner learns from the community becomes classroom content. To work with foreigners in this context, it is essential that the teacher values their own culture and respects the culture of the other, a challenge that is directly linked to the hard work of training and intercultural sensitivity of the teacher. For Leffa, teacher education is an “extremely complex task, difficult to complete in an undergraduate course, as it involves linguistic and political aspects of human nature, which cannot be acquired in 3,4 years” (LEFFA, 2008, p. 335). We agree with the author regarding this immense difficulty of training foreign language teachers in an undergraduate course with the skills to deal with the linguistic aspects of the language, committed to teaching and, still, competent in the management of interculturality and technologies. that have become more and more commonplace in the work of the teacher. It is known that in regular Languages courses, with their specificities, it is not an easy task to bear the commitment of preparing teachers who are reflective and play their roles in an informed manner for this new demand, which points to the expansion of the training time, presenting the option to expand the degree to Portuguese as a second language, as was done at Unicamp in 2015, as a possible solution to this challenge.

²⁴ Available: <https://www2.iel.unicamp.br/matilde/materiais-didaticos/>. Access: 20 May 2019.

In this sense, it becomes imperative to debate and put on the agenda the training of teachers for the present, which, increasingly, becomes complex and mobile, given the demand for teachers to work specifically in this area, the requirement of training, and the lack of it to contemplate the plural teaching contexts for the learning of Portuguese as a foreign language. To educate Portuguese teachers for foreigners, it is, therefore, necessary to develop cultural sensitivity in them, promote opportunities for reflection on their otherness, understanding it without ethnocentric judgments and comparisons (NIEDERAUER, 2010), in addition to explaining teaching as a complex task that demands increasingly new proposals that include the use of technologies and take into account the contextual (and cultural) needs of learners. It is also necessary to know the language in focus to answer linguistic and sociocultural questions that are brought to the classroom environment, coming from the speech community to which the foreigner starts to interact. According to what has been explained so far, we believe that the pillars presented have contributed not only to the consolidation of the area in the described context but also to a theoretical-practical training that will convert into improvements in the process of professionalization of the teacher in the sense of minimizing the challenges they will face in their future professional practice. Therefore, in addition to the pillars, we recognize the importance of political actions that can converge and boost teacher training, as we will point out below.

Political training actions at UFV and its next steps

All the questions mentioned in the previous sections were present in the discussions held at an event on teaching and research in Portuguese as a Foreign Language/Additional Language²⁵ carried out at the UFV. It was inferred, then, the need for a degree in PLE²⁶.

The idea was to propose a more specific training course, with the content selection that could cover linguistic aspects, culture, literature, history, and society issues, in addition to embracing methodologies and technologies that can be directed to the student who speaks a language other than Portuguese. Discussions, in progress, have been taking shape with the establishment of language policies at the university. In 2018, the Letters Department presented a proposal for the drafting of a resolution for the UFV Language Policy. The teaching, research, and extension council approved the document that was signed by the

²⁵ Available: <http://ampplie.com.br/evento/i-emepple-pla>. Access: 20 May 2019.

²⁶ We emphasize the situation of the deaf, who, from a bilingual perspective, have Portuguese as a second language. It is not within the scope of this article to enter this discussion, however, as it is part of the resolution of the university's language policy, it is imperative to mention this demand.

rectory, contained in its art. 4, paragraph V, “[...] to favor teaching and learning actions of different languages at UFV,²⁷.

From this perspective, training in Portuguese as an “additional language” would be more appropriate, given that, according to Schlatter and Garcez (2009), the term “Língua Adicional” (LA) is more comprehensive, since in the oral and writing “adding” another language in the user’s linguistic repertoire makes it possible to insert them into the social practices in which they already participate. In this way, the teaching of Portuguese to the deaf and speakers of other languages is contemplated.

Final considerations

In this text, we sought to expose some points related to the process of internationalization of universities and the situation of the PLE area at the Federal University of Viçosa, culminating in the announcement of the approval of the language policy resolution approved at the university in question. This is an important step to guide the appropriate actions for teachers in training in contemporary times.

Specifically, we trace the course of the teaching and learning area of Portuguese as a Foreign Language at the Federal University of Viçosa, presenting the initiatives and policies for teacher training in PLE that have been discussed and implemented in the Department of Letters under the pillars on which this path has been based. As an essentially international university, the UFV has offered a favorable space for the implementation of research and political actions aimed at the training of future teachers, which makes it a promoter of training actions in the context of teaching and learning that has brought its students closer to a perspective that allows them to deal with cultural heterogeneity or, according to Welsch (1999), transculturality. This definition, which emerges in language studies, is quite relevant to face the context we are experiencing concerning foreign students who enter our universities and immigrants who enter our country, having as a driving force the identification of needs, the use of technologies, and teacher training for the recognition and effectiveness of such points of convergence.

Therefore, we have envisioned the adoption of teaching, research, and extension practices that, within multiple and cross-cultural approaches, can (and should) be used for the elaboration of a curriculum suited to the needs of teacher training that, potentially, will be

²⁷Resolution 09/2018. Available: <http://www.soc.ufv.br/wp-content/uploads/09-18.pdf>. Access: 15 July 2021.

able to expand the perspectives of teachers to work with diversity in different classrooms and contexts of teaching Portuguese for foreigners.

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