

EDITORIAL

## Special Edition on the English without Borders Program

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This special issue of BELT+ focuses on the English without Borders Program (EwB). This Program, which is still quite a novelty, has been revolutionizing the scenario of additional language teaching and learning in higher education institutions in Brazil.

EwB has been developed by the Higher Education Secretariat (Sesu) in partnership with the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) as a response to problems candidates of the early editions of the Science without Borders (SwB) Program<sup>1</sup> encountered regarding a lack of language examination centers and low English proficiency. The SwB required, among other conditions, applicants to take an English proficiency exam in order to be granted the opportunity to study abroad. It was soon found that there were insufficient examination centers in Brazil to handle the many applicants. Thus, in 2013, examination centers for the Test of English as a Foreign Language – Institutional Testing Program (TOEFL ITP) were opened in 63 federal universities throughout the country. Today the Program includes 146 TOEFL ITP and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) examination centers in public higher education institutions around Brazil<sup>2</sup> and has administered roughly 300,000 tests in two years. To deal with the

<sup>1</sup> This is a Brazilian government initiative to grant 100,000 Brazilian university students the opportunity to study abroad at the world's best colleges and universities. The program is a joint effort of the Ministry of Education (MEC) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT) through their respective funding agencies – CAPES and CNPq.

<sup>2</sup> Information from <[http://isf.mec.gov.br/ingles/images/2015/Setembro/IsF\\_CA\\_ListaUniversidades\\_Set2015.pdf](http://isf.mec.gov.br/ingles/images/2015/Setembro/IsF_CA_ListaUniversidades_Set2015.pdf)>. Accessed on Dec. 3rd, 2015.

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low English proficiency issue, the program included the provision of online and face-to-face courses, which are offered in 63 public universities and have had nearly 100,000 enrolments including students, professors, technicians and administrative staff from federal universities since 2014.

It is important to point out that EwB has become independent from SwB and has a much broader role nowadays. In addition to benefiting hundreds of thousands of higher education cohorts through language courses and proficiency tests, the Program is also an unquestionably suitable context for teacher development. This is because the face-to-face classes are taught by undergraduate or graduate English students who work under the supervision of pedagogical coordinators who must be professors specializing in applied linguistics or, preferably, in teacher education. This way, the program has been fostering fruitful discussions regarding classroom methodologies, classroom research, learner language, among other topics, as will become clear in the papers presented in this issue. Contributions include a number of different perspectives on the Program materialized in six articles and one classroom activity.

Thomás Dorigon introduces this edition with his article “O PROGRAMA IDIOMAS SEM FRONTEIRAS ANALISADO A PARTIR DO CICLO DE POLÍTICAS” (*The Program Languages without Borders Analyzed Based on Policy Cycles*). The author analyses the modifications the EwB program has undergone since its inception. Thomas makes use of the announcements of the Language Centers and the Application Centers and the ordinances that institutionalized the program to analyze how the changes are present in the policy texts.

Deise Prina Dutra and Andressa Rodrigues Gomide, with COMPILATION OF A UNIVERSITY LEARNER CORPUS, describe the compilation of a Brazilian university-level learner corpus, CorIsF-Ingês, and illustrate how a frequency analysis can reveal learners’ choices when they perform different written tasks. The corpus is being compiled exclusively with texts from EwB students from many different levels. The authors conclude that the type of task is likely to influence the frequency of nouns, verbs and adjectives learners used.

The next study, THE USE OF THE TEXTBOOK IN THE LANGUAGE WITHOUT BORDERS – ENGLISH PROGRAM, by Ana Paula Seixas Vial and Anamaria Kurtz de Souza Welp, focuses on the use of the textbook in a preparatory course for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) proficiency exam in the EwB Program. The investigation was carried out along the lines of an action research paradigm, in which field notes of 24 classes were taken. Vial and Welp found that all classes relied on some sort of adaptation of the textbook, and the categories of adding and deleting were the most frequently performed during the course.

In “Para além do CONCEITO cotidiano: a concepção de atividades de ensino-aprendizagem com vistas à (re)conceitualização de apresentações acadêmicas” (*Beyond the Everyday Concept: The Conception of Activities of Teaching and Learning with a Focus on (Re)conceptualizing Academic Presentations*), Adriana Kuerten Dellagnelo, Leonardo da Silva and Nara Vieira da Rocha investigate two teachers’ conceptions of teaching and learning activities for an English course focusing on academic presentations. The main aim is to unveil

to what extent this conception has opened room for the (re)conceptualization of academic presentations throughout the course. To this end, they present Vygotsky's notion of concept development so as to untangle the relation between spontaneous and scientific concepts in the teachers' narration of their practice. According to the authors, the participating teachers seemed concerned with the students' subjectivity as well as with the importance of everyday concepts in the construction of the scientific concept of academic presentations.

Camila Haus, in "O ENSINO-APRENDIZAGEM DA PRONÚNCIA NO PROGRAMA INGLÊS SEM FRONTEIRAS (IsF) NA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO PARANÁ (UFPR): Análise da perspectiva dos professores" (*The Teaching-Learning of Pronunciation in the English without Borders (EwB) Program at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR)*) also sets her sights on the Program's teachers. Through a questionnaire, Camila analyzes the beliefs teachers have concerning the teaching of pronunciation. Results reveal that the idea of intelligibility is present in their discourses, possibly showing that the teaching of pronunciation in EwB relies on the concept of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). She extends this by indicating the relevance of the program since it promotes the improvement of English teaching in the country and contributes to the initial education of English teachers.

Larissa Goulart da Silva's contribution is entitled "O USO DE GRADED READERS NO ENSINO DE INGLÊS COMO LÍNGUA ADICIONAL NO PROGRAMA IDIOMAS SEM FRONTEIRAS" (*The Use of Graded Readers in Teaching English as an Additional Language in the Languages without Borders Program*). She discusses the use of graded readers in language classrooms and reports a project carried out with a group of beginner students in one of the participating universities. Silva supports the value of using extensive readings with beginner students suggesting that the practice will build up on their confidence as well as stimulate the learning of vocabulary and cultural aspects.

Shifting to classroom activities, Bruna Passos and Thomas Bazzo present "LEITURA E ESCRITA ACADÊMICA ATRAVÉS DE ABSTRACTS: UMA PROPOSTA DE TAREFA" (*Academic Reading and Writing through Abstracts: A Task Proposal*). They propose a task for the study of academic English, designed for groups with an intermediate proficiency level. The objective is to increase student autonomy concerning abstracts, which are allegedly one of the most common genres in university. The teaching project is centered on the study of a corpus composed of Brazilian papers' abstracts and in the design of guidelines for abstract writing derived from a guidance sheet to analyze this corpus.

We would like to compliment all of the authors who have enriched this journal with their papers. We hope that the issues discussed in their studies stimulate further debates relevant for English language teaching, which can eventually contribute to the improvement and continued advancement of professors and professionals involved in language development.

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