

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Native-speakerism and English without Borders Program: investigating language ideologies through a language policy

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ABSTRACT

English without Borders (EwB) is a Brazilian government-sponsored Program created to enhance linguistic proficiency of potential candidates for outward mobility. Assuming that language ideologies embody as well as are embodied by language policies, this paper aims at examining the native-speakerism ideology. It draws on texts comprising instances of enactment and interpretations of EwB in addition to evidences posed by decisions arising from its implementation to examine how native-speakerism is positioned through the Program. Building on critical language policy approach, it employs critical discourse analysis resources to investigate how native-speakerism is challenged or reinforced by the agenda implemented by EwB. Evidences point to the overlapping of deconstructing and corroborating perspectives, especially regarding local interpretations posed by the Language Center coordinators whose considerations about the linguistic diversity of English are marked by ambivalent thoughts on the issue. The coexistence of such tensions indicates the pervasive nature of native-speakerism concerning English in Brazil.

KEYWORDS: English without Borders; language policy; internationalization; English language; language ideologies.

Falantes-nativos e o Programa Inglês sem Fronteiras: investigando ideologias linguísticas através de políticas linguísticas

RESUMO

O Inglês sem Fronteiras (IsF) é um programa do governo brasileiro criado para melhorar a proficiência linguística de potenciais candidatos à mobilidade internacional. Considerando que a ideologia linguística incorpora assim como é incorporada por políticas linguísticas, esse artigo tem por objetivo examinar a ideologia do falante-nativo. Essa pesquisa faz uso de textos contendo instâncias de promulgação e interpretações do IsF além de evidências postas por decisões surgindo a partir de implementação do Programa para examinar como falantes nativos são postos através do programa. A partir da abordagem de políticas linguísticas crítica, a análise crítica do discurso é empregada para investigar como falantes nativos são desafiados e reforçados pela agenda implementada no IsF. Evidências, apontam para a sobreposição de perspectivas de desconstrução e corroboração, especialmente considerando interpretações locais postas pelos coordenadores dos núcleos, cujas considerações sobre a diversidade linguística de língua inglesa são marcadas por ideias ambivalentes dessa questão. A coexistência dessas tensões indica a natureza pervasiva de falantes-nativos relativa ao inglês no Brasil.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Inglês sem Fronteiras; políticas linguísticas; internacionalização; língua inglesa; ideologias linguísticas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Broad economic, social, scientific and technological tendencies influenced by globalization – the process responsible for increasingly integrating countries – have affected knowledge production in all societies, especially in higher education (Altbach, 2006). As a consequence of the transformations caused by these contemporary trends, universities worldwide have been attempting to capitalize on the potential benefits associated with globalization.

Traditionally defined as “... the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2004, p. 11), the internationalization of higher education has been increasingly impacting Latin American countries in the last decades. Governments have increased investments in science and technology in order to enhance long-term growth in research output (Balán, 2014).

In Brazil, one of the challenges faced by higher education is how to increase partnerships with universities in other countries. Aware of the state of affairs, Brazil’s Federal government proposed in 2011 an ambitious public-private partnership Program, Science without Borders (SwB)¹, which offered more than one hundred thousand scholarships from 2011-2015, with focus on undergraduate students. One of the main goals of the Program was to enhance education of highly qualified personnel by sending them to excellent foreign institutions. The target areas were those deemed relevant to the country’s development: engineering and other technological areas; hard and natural sciences; health and biomedical sciences; information and communication technologies; aerospace; pharmaceuticals; sustainable agricultural production; oil, gas and coal; renewable energy; biotechnology; nanotechnology and new materials; technology for prevention and mitigation of natural disasters; biodiversity and bioprospecting; marine sciences; minerals; new technologies for constructive engineering; qualification of technical personnel².

Despite all the good intentions of the Program, SwB showed its first potential problems in the beginning of 2012. News released by the Brazilian media highlighted Portugal and Spain as the main destinations chosen by the candidates due to their low proficiency in foreign languages, especially in English. The linguistic demands that surfaced within SwB reinforced the need for language training and on December 18th, 2012 an ancillary Program was launched: English without Borders (EwB).

EwB started to be implemented in the Federal Universities in the beginning of 2013, and aimed at providing training for university students in order to better prepare them for the foreign language tests required mainly by Anglophone institutions. Therefore, a set of three actions was launched: a) proctoring of international language tests for diagnosing students’ proficiency (especially through TOEFL-ITP, as 500,000 units of it were bought); b) distance learning using the platform My English Online; c) classroom courses offered by the newly created Language Centers (LC) at the Federal Universities.

¹ Source <<http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf-eng/home>>.

² Source <<http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf-eng/opportunities-for-individuals-from-abroad>>.

It is important to mention that in November 2014 the Program was renamed as Languages without Borders (LwB) and had its scope redefined in order to include other languages as well as to formally embrace activities aimed at language teachers' education. Nowadays, LwB's webpage³ informs the Program offers French, Italian, Spanish, Japanese and German courses in addition to English. However, considering the scope of this study, the Program is going to be referred by its original name as a way to address the specificities of English language through the LP, mainly because it is still prominent in the governmental initiative.

As it embraces intentions, attitudes and practices related to the use, the acquisition and the status of languages, under the influence of governments' formal acts, as well as reflecting historical and cultural factors – which will undoubtedly play important roles in influencing the relative success of the Program – EwB is defined in this study as a language policy initiative (Grin, 2006; Ricento, 2000, 2006). Assuming that language ideologies embody as well as are embodied by language policies (Ajsic & McGroarty, 2015), this investigation focuses on possibilities of deconstruction and reinforcement of the native-speakerism ideology (Holliday, 2015) in EwB.

We assume that “language ideologies can be identified in both language practices and various management efforts in individual domains” (Ajsic & McGroarty, 2015, p. 182), therefore, the study draws on texts comprising instances of enactment and interpretations of EwB as well as on evidences posed by decisions arising from its implementation to examine how this language policy (LP) positions the native speaker model.

In order to achieve a better understanding about possibilities of reinforcement and deconstruction of native-speakerism ideology in EwB, building on critical language policy approach (Tollefson, 2006), this study employs critical discourse analysis resources (Fairclough, 1995, 2001, 2003) to investigate how the native speaker model is embraced by the agenda carried out by the Program. Evidences point out to the overlapping of deconstructing and corroborating perspectives, especially concerning the local interpretations posed by the Language Centers' coordinators whose considerations about the linguistic diversity of English are marked by ambivalent thoughts on the issue. Despite the deterritorialization of English language⁴ in the contemporaneity (Blommaert, 2010), the coexistence of such tensions indicates the pervasive nature of native-speakerism concerning English language teaching and learning in Brazil.

2. THE STUDY

This investigation follows the Critical Language Policy approach (CLP) which is aligned with the assumptions of Critical Theory, therefore, seeks to distance itself from traditional perspectives (Tollefson, 2006). CLP research fosters social change in contexts of social inequality and oppression by analyzing the processes in which such systems are created and sustained (Ives, 2004). Due to the spread of English language, mainly in the context

³ <<http://isf.mec.gov.br/>>.

⁴ For Blommaert (2010, p. 42) “deterritorialization stands for the perception and attribution of values to language as something which does not belong to one locality but which organizes translocal trajectories and wider spaces.”

of the internationalization of higher education, the focus of this study is on native-speakerism in the context of EwB, aiming to identify how this ideology is challenged or reinforced by the agenda implemented by the Program as a way to reflect on the implications of its unfolding as a LP.

To conceptualize ideology can be a complex task. However, for the purpose of the present study, it is enough to state that ideology is conceived as “the process of sustaining asymmetrical relations of power – that is, the process of maintaining domination” (Thompson, 1984, p. 4). Specifically, as it applies to LP studies, researchers have paid attention to the concept of ideology since it can be a means to analyze the social phenomena linked to language as well as the power relations within the polices (Pan, 2015), which have led to the investigation of language ideologies.

Language ideologies are conceived as “representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world” (Woolard, 1998, p. 3). Regarding native-speakerism ideology, Holliday (2015) states “It is underpinned by naive discourses of English and culture” (p. 26) and it is essentially grounded on the promotion and idealization of the native speaker as a superior model. It is largely spread in the English Language Teaching (ELT) field through:

the importance given to matters such as native-speaker accent, native-speaker teachers, native-like target competence, teaching methods emanating from Western universities, textbooks published by Western publishing houses, research agenda set by Center-based scholars, and professional journals edited and published from Center countries (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 15).

In the investigation of a LP, the vested interests of a given ideology might be recognized both through language practices as well as choices expressed by its enactment. In the case of EwB, the tendency to promote or question the native speaker as a model is scrutinized by some resources offered by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA supports studies that address structural relations – whether they are opaque or transparent – that support the processes of domination, discrimination, power and control that are manifested in social practices, especially through language (Wodak, 2001).

Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of analysis (1992, 1995, 2003) is considered to be a foundational concept in the history of CDA. Through text description (vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and structure), interpretation of discourse practices (force, coherence, intertextuality and interdiscursivity) and explanation of socio-cultural practices (ideology and hegemony), the model relates concepts of Foucault (1977), Gramsci (1988) and Althusser (1971) with the linguistic dimension to analyze discourse in its relation to social structures (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000).

The data used for this investigation is composed by official texts related to its description (i.e. information available on EwB website⁵ or on publications made by the Program management team) as well as texts comprising instances of enactment and interpretations of EwB. The texts are organized in three different spheres. The legal sphere is composed by ordinances published by

⁵ <<http://isf.mec.gov.br/>>.

the Ministry of Education which establish the guidelines for EwB (7 texts). The legal texts are useful for this investigation because they are the product of compromises of a broad policy agenda (Ball, 1994). The journalistic sphere comprises news reports published on three webpages: two Brazilian news websites of national reach (**Folha de São Paulo** with 8 texts and **Estado de São Paulo** with 21 texts) and the official news website of the Ministry of Education (Sala de Imprensa with 16 texts). Journalistic texts seem to be relevant for the purpose of this study since they can be a “useful site for the examination of national and linguistic ideologies” (Freake, 2012, p. 2) as the language used by this kind of publication can influence how people speak, get informed and think (Van Dijk, 1993). The texts from the educational sphere are interviews carried out with coordinators⁶ of 10 Languages Centers where EwB is enacted. The interviews are considered suitable for this investigation as they allow us to explore aspects related to the local interpretations and the meanings constructed as reactions to the political propositions (Ball, 1994). All the texts from the three spheres are originally in Portuguese; then, for the purpose of this paper, the excerpts presented in the analysis consist of translations into English made by myself.

According to Fairclough (2003), there are three types of meanings that are embedded in the elements of the orders of discourse, which compose a network of social practices in relation to their linguistic dimension: the actional meaning is expressed in the genres; the representational meaning conveyed by the discourses; and the identificational meaning is articulated by styles. It is relevant to emphasize that the three different meanings are distinguished for analytical purposes, however they should not be conceived totally separated from one another, since they are dialectically related.

The overlapping of the types of meanings can be observed in the considerations to the intertextual (actional meaning) and interdiscursive (representational meaning) connections in the sets of texts, since “any discursive practice is defined by its relations with others, and draws upon others in complex ways” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 55). The concept of intertextuality proposed by Fairclough (1992) derives from Kristeva’s studies (1986, written in 1966) about Bakhtin’s translinguistic approach (Bakhtin, 1986), from which we learn the notion of “dialogism”, i.e., meaning does not exist in a vacuum, utterances are filled with previous utterances and the result of such overlapping processes carries multiple meanings (Johnson, 2015).

Intertextuality is conceived in two categories: manifest intertextuality (explicit verbatim) and constitutive intertextuality (discursive conventions – interdiscursivity). The first attends largely to the lexico-grammatical features expressed by relations between texts, and the second refers to the connections of discursive formations, concerning orders of discourse, styles and genres (Fairclough, 1992; Johnson, 2015). Such focus can enable us to investigate how “meaning-making is a social activity that is impacted by ideologies and discourses circulating in a particular context” (Johnson, 2015, p. 168).

⁶ The 10 coordinators taking part of the study signed a term of informed consent and assent communicating their will to be identified or not in the complete study. However, due to the limitations of space in the publication, it is unfeasible to provide further details about each coordinator and the contexts they are from. For this reason, in this paper efforts to keep the anonymity of the coordinators are made. The 7 coordinators from whom excerpts of interviews are presented in this paper read the analysis and were encouraged to comment it.

In this study, regarding the representational meaning, the set of data is analyzed mainly focusing on considerations concerning the clause elements: processes (the kinds of verbs), participants (social actors), and circumstances (adverbial phrases). The processes are usually realized by verbs and are categorized in six different types: material processes refer to physical actions in the real world, clauses of doing and happening; mental processes allude cognition, perception and affection; relational processes express relationships of being and having; verbal processes represent the human experience in the form of language; behavioural processes represent outer manifestations of inner workings; and the existential processes embody a phenomenon as existing or happening (Fairclough, 2003; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The social actors are usually the participants in a clause; the ways they are included or excluded depend on the social significance they might characterize in the text. And the circumstances represent the linguistic choices made by the speaker to refer to time, place, purpose, manner, reason and means associated to the processes in a clause (Fairclough, 2003).

Concerning the identificational meaning, in this study, attention is given to modality and evaluation. Modality is related to types of exchange and speech functions: epistemic modality expresses the commitment of the speaker to the truth; deontic modality estates necessity or obligation. According to Fairclough (2003), the two kinds of modalities are linked to exchange types and speech functions, respectively: knowledge exchange (statements, assertions, questions and denials); activity exchange (demands and offers). Regarding evaluation, the analysis focuses on evaluative statements implying what is desirable or undesirable according to the speaker (Fairclough, 2003).

Specifically for textual analysis, NVivo 10 software was used to organize the excerpts in which native-speakerism ideology emerged. The use of computer programs for qualitative data analysis has become popular in recent years, especially in the different branches of research that involve language. Software solutions of this nature represent a breakthrough in the management of qualitative data, especially due to the complex computational resources they provide. However, the figure of the researcher remains central to the choices and methodological rigor in the processes of analysis and construction of the synthesis of qualitative studies (MacMillan, 2005).

NVivo 10 allows the researcher to store different samples of texts in sets of files as well as to code the texts in ways the coded data can be easily accessed and linked for the purposes of the analysis. According to Richards (1999, p. 12) "A Node is the container in NVivo for categories and coding. Nodes can represent any categories – concepts, people, abstract ideas, places and any other things that matter to your project.", then, in this study, a node was named "native-speakerism" and used to code the sets of texts. Considering the three spheres, the data comprises 62 texts, from which 32 excerpts were coded as references to native-speakerism, with no distinction between those serving to question and those working as reinforcement of the ideology. As a matter of limitation of space in publications, for this paper we present a sample of 18 excerpts that may well illustrate the findings of the study. The figure below demonstrates how the data used for the study is organized and can be accessed in NVivo.

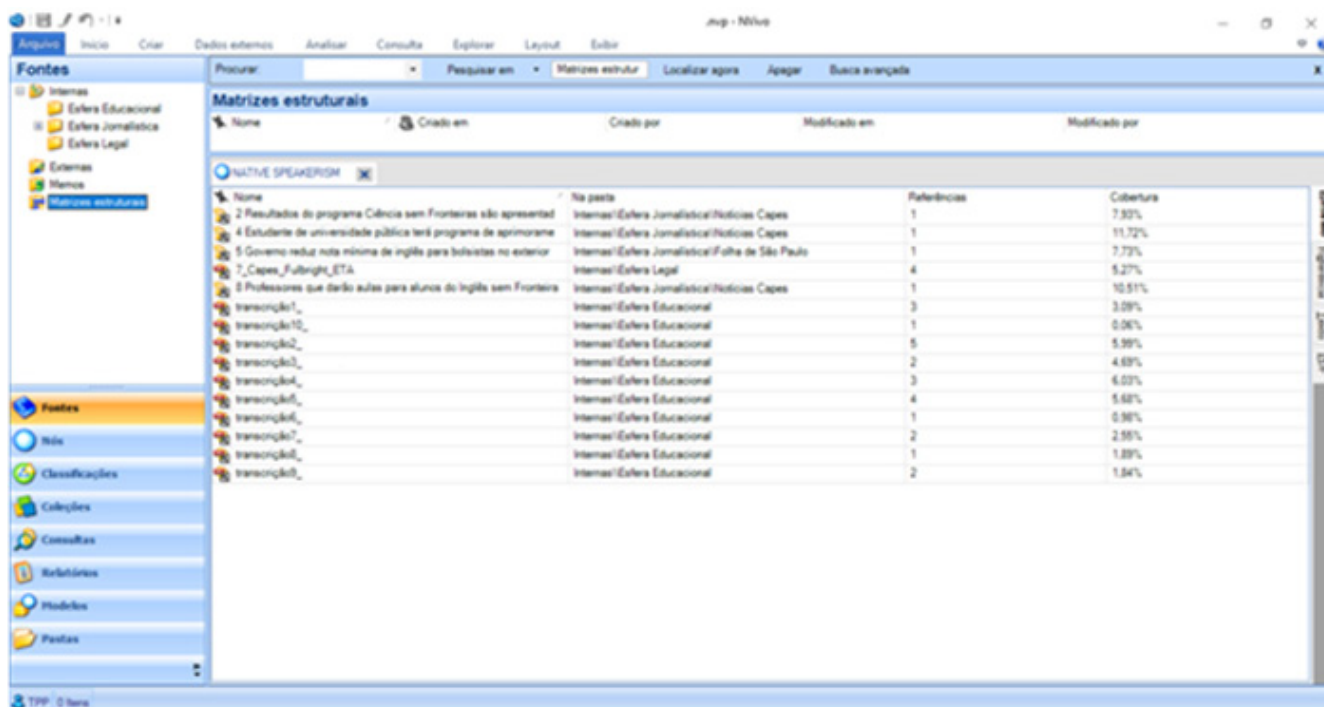


Figure 1: Organization of the data in NVivo10

3. EWB AND NATIVE-SPEAKERISM

Aiming at the diagnostic assessment of Brazilian university students English language proficiency, the first action to be implemented by EwB was the administration of an international language test, being TOEFL-ITP defined as the best option available for the purpose, which culminated in the purchase of 500,000 units of it. According to the Program management team, the choice was made based on some pragmatic justifications. The selected test should be uniform for the whole country and able to classify the students according to their proficiency level; It must be paper-based, as the government would not be able to provide the infrastructure needed for an internet-based version; It was assumed that testing the comprehension skills would be enough to offer the required diagnostic; It should focus on proficiency for academic purposes; and finally it should be acknowledge by the foreign institutions where the candidates would apply for international mobility (Sarmiento; Abreu-e-Lima & Moraes Filho, 2016).

However, such motivations did not consider some ideological implications underlying the choice for TOEFL. The test scale of proficiency is based on the Common European Framework (CEF), which according to EwB's website⁷, indicates “**international parameters** for describing language skills” and that these are important for participation in activities, such as academic life, the labor market or simply tourism, to be developed in “**English-speaking countries.**” In addition, the webpage presents the description of the levels according to CEF, where we can read that:

⁷ Source <<http://isf.mec.gov.br/ingles/pt-br/2014-04-28-18-47-40>>.

B1 (general description): (the test taker) is able to deal with many of the situations he/she may encounter when travelling to **English speaking countries**.

B2 (general description): (the test taker) has a certain fluency and spontaneity for interactions with **native speakers** without much effort for communication on both sides.

Apart from initially describing the parameters adopted as international, the subsequent characterizations of how the students are assessed by TOEFL are marked by **relational processes (English-speaking countries, native speakers)** which define both the countries and the speakers with attributes concerning their ownership of English, a dissonant aspect of the global dimension that this language has achieved, since “the very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it.” (Widdowson, 2000, p. 42).

Despite the neutral appeal suggested by the international acknowledgment of TOEFL, not only the description of its levels indicates the centrality of the native speaker in the test. One of the LC coordinators also points out her perception of how the varieties of English are expressed through the test:

EXCERPT 1 – Coordinator 9

Well, the diversity of English within the program? It is quite mentioned, it is quite, as I can say ... acclaimed. And it is highly encouraged that materials, courses and classes privilege this, **but it is up to you how you will do it, there are no specific instructions for you to emphasize varieties other than the typical American in TOEFL ITP**. Because in TOEFL ITP, there is only one listening, if I am not mistaken and I listen to it almost weekly, **there is only the American variety**, maybe there is one or two very short, you can notice the accent that is a foreigner ... But I do not remember now. I believe that all questions are in that variety at least in the listening questions, **you have no other record of pronunciation or accent than the American**, but in the IBT yes.*

* Olha, diversidade do inglês dentro do programa? Ela é bastante mencionada, ela é bastante, como eu posso dizer... aclamada. E se incentiva muito que materiais, cursos e aulas privilegiam isso, **mas aí fica a critério de como você o fará, não há instruções específicas para que você dê ênfase a variedades que não a típica americana do TOEFL ITP**. Porque no TOEFL ITP, só há um listening, se não me engano e eu escuto quase que semanalmente, **só há a vertente americana**, se há uma ou duas bem curtinhas, que você nota o sotaque que é um estrangeiro [...], mas eu não me recordo agora. Eu creio que todas as questões são naquela variedade pelo menos na questão auditiva, **você não tem outro registro de pronúncia ou de sotaque que não o americano**, porém no IBT sim.

In excerpt 1 we can identify how coordinator 9 perceives the emphasis on the North-American variety of English in TOEFL ITP. The relational processes again define the variety and accent present in the test according to their nationality (**American**), which indicates that for the coordinator the native speaker model is emphasised through the test. The recurrence of relational processes defining English language regarding its origin associated to inner circle countries addresses what Kachru (1989) defined in the Three Concentric Circles of English as nations where English is considered to be the native language⁸. Such bindings reflect specific social values attached to them (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003).

⁸ The Three Concentric Circles of English places the speakers of English in three different contexts: in the inner circle (composed by the countries where it is considered the native language); in the outer circle (made up of countries where it is the second language, especially former British and North American colonies) and in the expanding circle (where it is learned as a foreign language).

Another action guided by the decision-making process of the LP is the selection of the distance learning platform, “My English Online”. In excerpt 2 from the news media, Jorge Almeida Guimarães, the president of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), one of the representatives of the Federal government highlights that:

EXCERPT 2 <Internas\Esfera Jornalística\Notícias Capes\15 - Resultados do programa Ciência sem Fronteiras>

The English language teaching free of charge promoted by the Federal Government will happen online and in classrooms. “In the first case, 2 million passwords will be distributed so that students from public universities and those with the highest scores in ENEM⁽¹⁾ in private institutions take a virtual English course by Cengage Learning, **a recognized American school**,” explained Jorge Guimarães.*

⁽¹⁾“National High-School exam” which is the entrance test required for federal universities.

* O ensino de inglês gratuito do Governo Federal ocorrerá de forma online e presencial. “No primeiro caso, serão distribuídas 2 milhões de senhas para que estudantes de universidades públicas e os mais bem pontuados no ENEM nas instituições privadas façam um curso virtual de inglês na Cengage Learning, reconhecida escola norte-americana”, explicou Jorge Guimarães.

Besides demonstrating which kind of providers was selected by EwB as a LP, in the news report the type of information considered important to present the school in charge of the online courses is displayed. First of all, Mr. Guimarães introduces it by a positive **evaluation (recognized)** in order to emphasize it would be a desirable partner for EwB, and then the nationality of the school is mentioned as a relevant aspect for its qualification (**relational process: American**). Such aspects reinforce how belonging to a native speaker country counts as a positive attribute of Cengage.

Another aspect correlated with the partnerships EwB outlined aiming at teaching English is the role played by the North-American Embassy, especially regarding the offer of course materials, as it is described by some of the LC coordinators:

EXCERPT 3 – Coordinator 5

The partnership that the management team from Brasilia has with **the US embassy also allows** the language centers **to have access to didactic material**, English language material that can be used in language center classes.*

* A parceria que o núcleo gestor de Brasília tem com **a embaixada americana também propicia** com que os NucLis **tenha acesso a material didático**, material de língua inglesa que pode ser utilizado nas aulas do NucLi.

EXCERPT 4 – Coordinator 7

So we are still researching about the materials. We have the materials [name] gave us, there are always some that are given to us, end of the year [...] the embassy. **So the embassy has contributed a lot in that sense, the American.***

* Assim, a gente tá pesquisando ainda os materiais. Tem os materiais que o Avram nos deu, sempre tem uns dados, final do ano [...] a embaixada. **Então, a embaixada tem contribuído muito nesse sentido, americana.**

EXCERPT 5 – Coordinator 9

Look, at first, we selected materials that we received from the management team, **from the American embassy**, which were TOEFL-specific books from several publishers, Cambridge, Oxford ... There are some collections that are really focused on the exam.*

* Olha, em princípio a gente selecionou materiais que a gente recebeu do núcleo gestor, **da embaixada americana**, que eram livros específicos para TOEFL de varias editoras, Cambridge, Oxford... Tem algumas coleções que são voltadas para o exame mesmo.

In excerpts 3 and 4 we can see how the US embassy is positioned as an important **social actor** engaged with EwB as the institution plays a provider role in the Program (**behavioural processes: allows, has contributed**). In excerpt 5, the reiterate mention to the origin of the didactic materials distributed to the language centers (**relational process: from the American embassy**) displays how the native-speaker ideology is possibly promoted by EwB, as the choice of coursebooks and publishers would favour the promotion of the North-American variety in the LP.

The support given by institutions from The United States to EwB is also identified by the partnership with the Fulbright Commission's "English Teaching Assistants" Program (ETA), as the excerpts below depict:

EXCERPT 6 <Internas\\Esfera Legal\\7_Capes_Fulbright_ETA>

Seeks to select projects of Brazilian Public Higher Education Institutions (IES) for the reception of English language teaching assistants (**US citizen – native speaker**), with the purpose of **contributing to the improvement of the quality of the bachelor's degree and/or teaching degree in Languages, English Language, with the perspective of giving value to the formation and to the social relevance of basic education teaching professionals**.*

* O programa busca selecionar projetos de Instituições Públicas de Ensino Superior (IES) brasileiras para o recebimento de assistentes de ensino de língua inglesa (**cidadão estadunidense – falante nativo**), com intuito **de contribuir para a elevação da qualidade dos cursos de bacharelado e/ou licenciatura em Letras, Língua Inglesa**, na perspectiva de valorizar a formação e a relevância social dos profissionais do magistério da educação básica.

EXCERPT 7 <Internas\\Esfera Legal\\7_Capes_Fulbright_ETA>**Specific goals:**

2.1.3. To promote proposals that contemplate the inclusion of cultural, social and historical contents of the American society in the training of future teachers.*

*** Metas específicas:**

2.1.3. Fomentar propostas que contemplem a inclusão de conteúdos culturais, sociais e históricos da sociedade estadunidense na formação dos futuros docentes.

EXCERPT 8 <Internas\\Esfera Legal\\7_Capes_Fulbright_ETA>**Methodology of the Program:**

The program will support 20 projects up to four years of duration each that contemplate the **insertion of a native speaker, as a teaching assistant**, in bachelor's degree and teaching degree in Languages, English Language.

The teaching assistant – English Teaching Assistant (ETA) – is a native speaker, **an American citizen**, a recent graduate with some background in education and teaching in the classroom.*

*** Metodologia do Programa:**

O programa apoiará 20 projetos cada um com até quatro anos de duração que contemplem a **inserção de um falante nativo, na condição de assistente de ensino**, em cursos de bacharelado e licenciatura de Letras, Língua Inglesa.

O assistente de ensino – English Teaching Assistant (ETA) – é falante nativo, **cidadão estadunidense**, recém-graduado com alguma experiência em ambiente educacional e em ensino em sala de aula.

The ETAs are also highlighted as important social actors in EwB. Mostly described by their nativeness (**relational process: US citizen - native speaker, American citizen**), the assistants play key roles aiming at a better qualification of the language teaching professionals in Brazil (**behavioural processes: contributing to the improvement, giving value**). Interestingly, the ETAs do not need to be language experts to contribute with the enhancement of the profession and their teaching (**relational process: recent graduate with some background in education and teaching in the classroom**). Therefore, it is possible to assume that their model as North-American native speakers is enough to assist English language teaching in Brazil. Besides, the promotion of the quality in the area would take advantage of the dissemination of North-American values (**relational process: cultural, social and historical contents of the American society**).

The participation of the ETAs in EwB seems to be portrayed as benefit in the news media. Excerpt 9 highlights the origins of the assistants as an important trait (**relational processes: US English-language teachers; from different regions of the United States**), as we can notice below:

EXCERPT 9 <Internas\\Esfera Jornalística\\Notícias Capes\\13 - Estudante de universidade pública terá programa de aprimoramento de idioma>

One of those initiatives is the expansion of Capes/Fulbright program called English Teaching Assistantships (ETA). In this module, 200 **US English-language teachers** with teaching experience **from different regions of the United States** are expected to assist the teams of the classroom courses offered in the 59 language centers at the participating federal universities.*

* Uma dessas iniciativas é a expansão do programa Capes/Fulbright, chamado English Teaching Assistantships (ETA). Neste módulo está prevista a vinda de 200 **professores americanos de língua inglesa**, com experiência de ensino, provenientes de **diferentes regiões dos Estados Unidos**, para auxiliar as equipes dos módulos presenciais instaladas nos 59 núcleos de treinamentos nas universidades federais participantes.

The next excerpt demonstrates that the role played by the ETAs implies the global spread of English, that is, the dissemination of their variety, as they are work as agents of this activity (**material processes: expansion of English language in the world**), a task they were thanked for (**verbal process: thanking participants**).

EXCERPT 10 <Internas\\Esfera Jornalística\\Notícias Capes\\9 - Professores que darão aulas para alunos do Inglês sem Fronteiras são recepcionados na Capes>

On Monday, 17, they were in the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes) for a welcome reception with representatives of the Ministry of Education (MEC), Capes, Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Brazil (Fulbright), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) and the United States Embassy. Luis Pedroso, Fulbright Program Assistant, participated in the opening, **thanking participants** for the program and highlighting **the role of ETAs in the expansion of English language in the world**.*

* Nesta segunda-feira, 17, estiveram na Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (Capes) para uma recepção de boas vindas com representantes do Ministério da Educação (MEC), Capes, Comissão para Intercâmbio Educacional entre os Estados Unidos e o Brasil (Fulbright), Ministério das Relações Exteriores (MRE) e Embaixada dos Estados Unidos. Luis Pedroso, assistente de Programas da Fulbright, participou da abertura **agradecendo a participação** no programa e ressaltando **o papel dos ETAs na expansão da língua inglesa no mundo**.

Analysing the texts that represent choices and interpretations about EwB, we could identify how native-speakerism permeates the LP in ways the native speaker model is potentially valued and promoted.

4. CHALLENGING AND REINFORCING NATIVE-SPEAKERISM

From the three sets of texts analyzed for this study, the educational sphere posed as a very useful tool to understand the local enactments of EwB as the interviews could engage the Language Center coordinators in the meaning-making of how the Program is put into practice in their specific contexts. It is relevant to state that all the 10 coordinators are English language professors who hold a Phd (7 of them) or a MA (3 of them), therefore, are language experts that are locally building EwB as a language policy.

In an overview, native-speakerism can be identified through the interviews in a spectrum which registers evidences of celebration of the nativeness (or any connection with it); acknowledgment of the influence played by native speaker models; and the drive for deconstructing the idealisation of native-centered standards.

The appreciation of the native speaker and the importance given to associations with the model it could represent can be identified when coordinator 2 was asked to describe the staff of his LC.

EXCERPT 11 – Coordinator 2

(...) As our LC is very small, we only have two teachers (scholarship holders). We have an employee of the campus who is a specialist in educational matters and has a background in English Language, she graduated right here in [city] in English-Portuguese Languages degree. And she speaks English, she has already been in an exchange program, **she has already lived in the United States**. And we made a selection process, we released a simplified edict to select those candidates. (...)*

* (...) Como o nosso NuLui é bem pequeno, a gente só tem dois professores bolsistas. A gente tem uma funcionária da própria Universidade que é uma técnica em assuntos educacionais e que tem formação em letras inglês, ela se graduou aqui [cidade] mesmo em letras inglês-português. E ela fala inglês, já fez intercâmbio também, **já morou nos Estados Unidos**. E a gente fez um concurso, a gente abriu um edital simplificado pra selecionar esses candidatos. (...)

To introduce one of the English language teachers, coordinator 2 thought to be important to mention that besides having a degree in languages, she had experience abroad (**material process: she has already lived in the United States**). This kind of information indicates that being in the US, that is, learning English with native speakers, is a sort of credential worth to be mentioned. Coordinator 2 highlights this characteristic again when asked about the language diversity in the classes taught at his LC:

EXCERPT 12 – Coordinator 2

(...) [Name 1], who is one of the teachers, **she lived in the United States**, she lived more to the North and [Name 2] **went to the southern states**. So accent, accent, I think they [the students] notice some difference. For now that's it, because we do not have it yet ... we also think about developing a culture-oriented course, especially for the Anglophone culture, from where, where they are going to, where the students are going. But for now, what we value from linguistic diversity is the English that the girls speak. **Of course it's a "Brazilian English"**, ...

but it tends to be more Texan, or more from Minnesota, or higher up from Missouri. More or less so. That's what we value from diversity is the English of the teachers. For now we are offering an academic writing and reading course. (...)*

* (...)a [Nome 1] que é uma das professoras, **ela morou nos Estados Unidos**, ela morou mais pro norte e a [Nome 2] **foi mais pros estados do sul**. Então de sotaque, de accent, acho que eles percebem alguma diferença. Por enquanto é isso, porque a gente ainda não tem... a gente pensa também em desenvolver um curso voltado pra cultura, principalmente pra cultura anglófona, de onde, pra onde eles estão indo, onde os alunos estão indo. Mas por enquanto, o que a gente preza de diversidade linguística é o inglês que as meninas falam. **Claro que é um Brazilian English, mas tendendo a ser mais texano, ou mais aí de Minnesota, ou mais pra cima Missouri**. Então, assim, é mais ou menos isso. O que a gente preza de diversidade é o inglês das professoras. Por enquanto a gente tá tendo o curso de escrita acadêmica e leitura. (...)

Despite the initial emphasis coordinator 2 seems to attribute to the teachers' experience living in the United States (**material processes: she lived in the United States, went to the southern states**), the central role played by the native speaker model is challenged when he strongly states (**epistemic modality: of course**) the connection between their proficiency in English to the country they are originally from (**relational process: Brazilian English**). Such considerations acknowledge that intercultural experiences – such as learning English in the USA – might have contributed to the teachers' trajectories as speakers and professionals. That is, aspects related to their nationality are not necessarily replaced or eliminated by the influences they had abroad, they are presented as overlapping features⁹.

When questioned about future expectations regarding the Program, which gradually is adding different languages to it expansion as Languages without Borders, Coordinator 3 expresses his wish to hire native speakers as teachers for the LC.

EXCERPT 13 – Coordenador 3

(...) I hope that the Program expands more and more, we expect it can offer as many languages as possible and that it spreads to Brazil as a whole. I hope it not to be tied to universities that have Languages undergraduate courses. (...) **If I could hire a teacher who does not have a language degree, I have ... Here in my region we have Americans living who are graduated in the United States, but they do not have a degree in Languages, but they have a second language and know the language well and have been teaching**, there are even teachers who could teach at the LC and do not have a degree in Languages. So here, for example, I felt a little impaired by not being able to hire someone who does not hold a degree in Languages. (...)*

* (...)Eu espero que o programa se amplie cada vez mais, a expectativa nossa é essa, que ele possa atender o maior número de línguas possível e que se espalhe também para o Brasil inteiro. Que não fique algo muito amarrado a universidades que tem Letras. (...) **Se eu pudesse contratar um professor que não é licenciando em Letras, eu tenho... Aqui na região têm americanos morando que são formados nos Estados Unidos, mas não são formados em Letras, mas que tem uma segunda língua e conhecem bem o idioma e vem dando aula inclusive tem até professor**, que poderiam dar aula no NucLi e não tem a graduação em letras. Então aqui, por exemplo, eu me senti um pouco prejudicado por não poder contratar alguém que não seja licenciando em Letras. (...)

As one of the main goals of EwB is to improve English language teachers' qualification, it only hires Languages undergrads or professionals who already have this degree. Coordinator 3 explains his wish due to the lack of professionals holding a degree in his region, so being able to hire the

⁹ Coordinator 2 collaborated as a critical reader and contributed specifically with the analysis of this excerpt.

North-Americans living in the city would be a possible solution. The native speakers are considered suitable for the teaching positions based on what they know (**mental process: know the language well**) and what they do (**material process: have been teaching**), despite their lack of specific professional qualifications (**relational process: they do not have a degree in Languages**). Coordinator 3 only alludes to the possibility of crossing out the Language degree as requirement in case the applicant is a native speaker.

Recognizing the knowledge of the native speakers regarding English language as valid seems to be another aspect to pose their nativeness as something appreciated in EwB. It can be noticed when Coordinator 4 explains the kind of participation ETAs have at her LC.

EXCERPT 14 – Coordinator 4

(...) We always told them to participate, **but not only to go there and say: “Hi, I’m American”, right?! No**. Teachers said they were working and asked them to do some activity, something related to the classroom. So they did it and it worked great, the teachers liked it, because we have some courses, for example, **a course of pronunciation**, a course that is about Contemporary Topics, that they debate the topics that are in the media / They have a lot to contribute with this, because it has this **cultural part that they can help**, explain, right? So they helped with that part in the classroom, what else? Ah, **revising the material**. As we started to produce our own course material, **they helped a lot with the linguistic revision**, publicising / I think that three or four times in four offers, they visited several classrooms on campus. (...)*

* A gente sempre marcava pra elas participarem, **mas não só pra ir lá e falar: “Oi, sou americana.”, né?! Não**. Os professores falavam que eles estavam trabalhando e pediam pra elas fazerem alguma atividade, alguma coisa relacionada com a sala de aula. Então, elas fizeram isso e funcionou bastante, os professores gostaram, porque tem alguns cursos, por exemplo, curso de pronúncia, tem um curso que é de Tópicos Contemporâneos, que eles debatem os tópicos que estão na mídia / Elas têm muito a contribuir com isso, porque tem essa **parte cultural que elas podem ajudar**, podem explicar, né? Então elas ajudaram com essa parte em sala de aula, o que mais? Ah, **revisão de material**. Como a gente começou a produzir o nosso próprio material, **elas ajudaram bastante com a revisão linguística**, divulgação no / acho que três ou quatro vezes em quatro ofertas, elas visitaram várias salas de aula no campus.

Coordinator 4 highlights that the assistance ETAs could provide was beyond displaying their nativeness (**verbal process: but not only to go there and say: “Hi, I’m American”, right?! No**). However, irrespective of the fact that they might not be actually language experts (coincidentally, some of the ETAs could be, but it is not a requirement, as we have already mentioned), they were considered able to contribute at the LC (**material process: they can help**) mostly with tasks which essentially required their experience as native speakers, in terms of language (**a course of pronunciation, linguistic revision**) and background knowledge of the American society (**cultural part**).

Despite the fact that the presence of ETAs at the LC could create possibilities to demystify the model represented by native speakers, ambiguously, they still seem to hold some authority to say what is right or wrong.

EXCERPT 15 – Coordinator 1

Furthermore ETAs come to help us in this sense, because we have the idea that the **native speaker is something unattainable**, that when we to talk to them, **maybe they will correct us**, [...] At least the ones we have here are very flexible and they have a great respect, **they are very impressed with the level of English: “Wow, the students”** ... We say: “Oh gosh, **correct us, say something** that you are thinking”. “**No, it’s perfect.**” They rarely interfere in ...

this relationship because they are so... **it is a sign that we are well**, that we are achieving our goal of communicating.*

* Inclusive os ETAs vêm pra nos ajudar nesse sentido, porque a gente tem aquela ideia de que o **falante nativo é algo inatingível**, que quando a gente vai conversar com ele, **talvez eles vão ficar no corrigindo, nos** [...] Pelo menos os que a gente tem são muito flexíveis e eles tem grande respeito, **eles ficam muito impressionados com o nível de inglês: "Nossa, os alunos"**... A gente fica: "Poxa vida, **nos corrijam, falam alguma coisa** que vocês estão achando". "**No, It's perfect**". Eles raramente interferem nessa relação por serem tão assim, **é sinal que a gente tá bem**, que a gente tá conseguindo atingir nosso objetivo que é se comunicar.

Coordinator 1 challenges the idea that the native speakers could be seen as ideal models (**evaluative statement: the native speaker is something unattainable**), and that expectations towards them could be redefined by the interaction with ETAs (**behavioural process: maybe they will correct us**). However, it seems that those expectations are still there as the **demands** directed to the ETAs, as exemplified (**correct us, say something**), are insisting on their appreciation of what is considered the adequate use of English. Then, their positive evaluation (**verbal process: "No, it's perfect"**) represents a kind of approval needed at the LC (it is a sign that **we are well**).

The ambivalences towards native-speakerism at EwB shift to propositions of deconstruction when the coordinators are questioned if/how the diversity of English language would be considered in the classes taught at their LCs. Some of the coordinators seem to acknowledge the emphasis on Inner Circle varieties and discursively challenge such predominance.

EXCERPT 16 – Coordinator 1

This is exhaustively spoken and worked on in our Languages undergraduate course. To give you an overview, our English 7 (class) is with [name of well-known applied linguist] right? And we deal with it from the first day of school they come in. I'm telling you this in Languages undergraduate course. As they are our students, at our LC it's a natural theme. **Not to privilege a single ... make that necessary relationship between nation x language**. Now, **of course, we are all influenced by American culture, I am American**. All of our culture, that we expose ourselves on a daily basis ... all of it, 90% I'd say it's American. We even have to work hard to get a Chimamanda, a Chimamanda video to break ... but that's a constant issue.*

* Isso é exaustivamente falado e trabalhado no nosso curso de Letras. Pra você ter uma ideia, o nosso Inglês 7 é com o [nome de um renomado linguista aplicado] né? E nós batemos isso desde o primeiro dia de aula que eles entram. Eu to falando isso no curso de Letras. Como eles são nossos alunos de Letras, isso no NuLi é uma coisa natural. **De não privilegiar um único... fazer essa relação necessária de nação x língua**. Agora é **claro que ali todos somos influenciados pela cultura norte-americana, eu inclusive sou americana**. Toda a nossa cultura, que a gente se expõe no dia a dia... toda não, 90% eu diria que é norte-americana. A gente até tem que se esforçar pra pegar e trazer uma Chimamanda, um vídeo da Chimamanda pra quebrar... mas assim, isso é pauta constante.

Coordinator 1 indicates this theme is emphatically addressed at the undergraduate course (**circumstance: exhaustively**). By using formal nomination¹⁰, the coordinator cites the name of a renowned applied linguist who is a professor at her university (To give you an idea, **our English 7 is with [well-known applied linguist]**) as a relevant social actor engaged

¹⁰ According to van Leeuwen (2008, p. 41) "Nomination is typically realized by proper nouns, which can be formal (surname only, with or without honorifics), semiformal (given name and surname, as with "Dwight Harris" in 2.40), or informal (given name only, as with Beverley, in 2.40)". The inclusion of a social actor by its formal name can express the relevance of the social bindings of the named participant in the specific communicative event.

in the teachers' education practices taking place at her context. Such an argument reinforces that at the LC the teachers are indeed aware of discussions concerning the deterritorialization of English (**mental process: not privileging a single ... making that necessary** relationship of nation x language). However, Coordinator 1 does not deny that the native-speakerism ideology both in teachers' education and in EwB English teaching is still very pervasive. It is displayed by the emphasis put on the situation (**epistemic modality: of course**) and the use of a symbolic percentage to indicate how much the culture of the United States is present (**90% I would say that it is North-American**), suggesting a hegemonic universalization of this representation (Fairclough, 2003). The attempts to use Anglophone cultural references that come from other countries seem to be a great commitment (**behavioural process: work hard** to get a Chimamanda¹¹) aiming at a rupture with hegemonic models from the Inner Circle, but they seem to happen as an exception.

It is particularly interesting to highlight that Coordinator 1 identifies herself as American in excerpt 16 (**relational process: I am American**). On her comments to this paper, Coordinator 1 told that although she has lived much of her life in Brazil, she was actually born in the USA. Such aspects emphasize the fluidity of nationalities and languages in the contemporary times¹².

Coordinator 4 also acknowledges the centrality of native speakers' models identified by the value students give to ETAs at the LC, nevertheless she emphasizes it might be questioned mainly due to the demands posed by the internationalization of higher education.

EXCERPT 17 – Coordinator 4

I think this is an issue that is being changed too, right? Because if we even think about internationalization, we are **thinking not only English spoken by Americans and Brits**, right? So, we have to think of **English spoken by Brazilians, Indians, Chinese ...** Even to get a little bit rid of the idea of a native speaker that sometimes the students have. They still have it very strong, so much that **they "Wow!" greatly value the ETAs simply because they are native**. But, I think that with some classes, some activities focused on it, we can at least, maybe, not change, I do not think anyone can change how they think about anyone. But, the idea, really, **is to make them think about what it is**. But what is a native speaker, is it the American? Is it the English? Is it the Australian? Only. So can't a Chinese be a native speaker? Why not? So, I think that we still have a little, I cannot tell you that, "wow, all courses have this focus", no, but, we try to bring it mainly because the teachers already have this idea of a little broader understanding about linguistic diversity.*

* Eu acho que isso é uma questão que tá sendo mudada também, né? Porque se a gente pensar até na internacionalização, a gente tá **pensando não só inglês falado por americanos e britânicos**, né? Então, a gente tem que pensar no **inglês falado por brasileiros, por indianos, por chineses (...)** Até pra tirar um pouco essa ideia de falante nativo que às vezes os alunos têm. Eles ainda têm muito forte, tanto que **eles, "nossa!" valorizam muito as ETAs, simplesmente, pelo fato de serem nativas**. Mas, eu acho que com algumas aulas, algumas atividades focadas nisso a gente consegue pelo menos, talvez, não mudar, acho que ninguém consegue como mudar a concepção de ninguém. Mas, a ideia, realmente, **é fazer com que eles possam refletir sobre o que é isso mesmo**. Mas, o que é um falante nativo, é o americano? É o inglês? É o australiano? Só. Então, o chinês não pode ser falante nativo? Como não? Então, acho que isso a gente tem ainda pouco, não posso te falar que, "nossa, todos os cursos têm esse foco", não, mas, a gente procura trazer, principalmente, porque os professores já têm essa ideia um pouco mais abrangente sobre a variedade linguística.

¹¹Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a young Nigerian writer.

¹²Coordinator 1 collaborated as a critical reader and contributed specifically with the analysis of this excerpt.

The internationalization of higher education is described by coordinator 4 as a process which will make it possible to students to engage with people from diverse places by communicating in English. Then, the language is going to be defined by who is speaking it, not only by native speakers, but also by people from various places (**relational process: English spoken by Brazilians, Indians, Chinese**). Coordinator 4 recognizes the pervasiveness of native-speakerism when highlights the value students at the LC give to ETAs due to their origin (**relational process: simply because they are native**). Then, she takes the responsibility the LC has concerning the linguistic diversity of English, that is, it should work on encouraging students to reflect on the issue (**mental process: to make them think** about what it is).

In the excerpt below, coordinator 9 also emphasizes the relationship between the linguistic diversity of English and the internationalization process. Her accounts challenge native-speakerism as she considers English an academic lingua franca, in agreement with the comments made by coordinator 4.

EXCERPT 18 – Coordinator 9

(...) Then the ITP, it trains you for a variety, which in a way impoverishes the training for the reception that this student will have in his exchange program. **He's going to get along with people from all over the world. He's not going to talk to Americans. Sometimes his teacher is Indian there, what is he going to do? So what we do** in our [...] in relation to this, there are specific classes with mainly oral skills courses, that this teacher I told you who is working with us, [Name] he is very engaged in planning these activities (...)*

* (...) Então o ITP, ele treina para uma variedade, que de certa forma empobrece o treinamento para a recepção que esse aluno vai ter no seu intercâmbio. **Ele vai conviver com gente do mundo todo ele não vai falar só com americanos. Às vezes o professor dele é indiano lá, como é que ele vai fazer? Ai o que a gente faz** no nosso [...] em relação a isso são aulas específicas dentro dos cursos principalmente de habilidades orais, que esse professor que eu te falei que está trabalhando com a gente, [nome], ele desempenha bastante no planejamento dessas atividades. (...)

Excerpt 18 reveals local interpretations have the potential to challenge the native-speakerism ideology that seems to underlie the choices made by the EwB Program. The recognition that the students might interact with non-native speakers or with speakers of other varieties of English may open up possibilities for planned actions (**material process: So what do we do...**).

The varying degrees in which coordinators adhere to the idea that US-originated expertise or materials are sufficient to prepare learners to use English in international academic circles highlight the LP's dynamic nature. In this sense, there seems to be a growing recognition that a lingua franca perspective (Jenkins, 2014) may need to be introduced to counterbalance the potential influence of native-speakerism.

5. FINAL REMARKS

This study addressed how the native-speakerism ideology may be uncovered by an analysis of the decisions made within the EwB Program management. It does not imply that these decisions were explicitly targeting the reinforcement of this trend in English language teaching. However, willingly or not, they convey a pervasive belief in American English as a model for

internationalization processes, represented by the adoption of TOEFL ITP as the proficiency assessment tool, by the welcoming of young Americans to help in the cultural adaptation of academic life abroad and by the offer of an online course produced within the same framework.

As it would be expected, such beliefs may be reinforced or challenged in local interpretations as language experts coordinate the efforts to teach English on-site. The local realities unfold with varying degrees of acceptance that exposure to American English only will be enough to prepare language learners to cope successfully with the demands of study abroad initiatives. Such practices put light on the implications of EwB concerning English language teachers' education in Brazil, especially regarding aspects related to teachers' identity (Jordão, 2016).

Although the number of coordinators interviewed for this study was small¹³ and not necessarily representative of all the possible ways in which the LP is being enacted, the qualitative data suggests that a lingua franca perspective may be considered, in a way languages could be conceived in a scenario of multilingual communication, being English available "as a contact language of choice" (Jenkins, 2015, p. 73). If it was true that in the early stages of the Program the main goal was to prepare academics to deal with the demands of studying in the United States (the major destination), the changes in the political realm call for changes in policy. Now that the Program is reconceptualised to relate to internationalization of higher education in general, it seems desirable to rethink those policy decisions or, at least, encourage the kind of local interpretation that opens up to the diversity of English. Native-speakerism may be more easily challenged, and this is something that will require a great deal of learning about the role of English in gatekeeping and democratization of knowledge.

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¹³There are 63 Language Centers at Federal Universities spread all over the five regions of Brazil. Source <<http://isf.mec.gov.br/ingles/pt-br/curso-presencial>>.

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