

Chapter 3

Challenges of Internationalization in Vocational and Technical Education:

Linguistic Diversity and Collaboration in South-South Networks

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Abstract: This chapter critically analyzes the internationalization of Technical and Technological Professional Education (EPT) in Brazil, with an emphasis on South-South cooperation strategies, language mediation, and the production of local knowledge. It is based on documentary analysis and a review of recent literature, discussing trends, challenges, and institutional practices within the Federal Network, as well as the impacts of multilateral policies. It highlights the importance of multilingualism, cognitive justice, and the strengthening of horizontal networks between Brazil, Latin America, and Africa. The study identifies structural challenges and offers recommendations for more equitable and innovative future policies in internationalized education. In light of these premises, the chapter presents the theoretical contribution of Paulo Freire's studies (1987; 1992; 1997) to highlight the Brazilian educational philosopher's contribution to the reflection on internationalization from a Southern perspective.

Keywords: South-South Cooperation; Language Mediation; Cognitive Justice; Critical Internationalization; educational policies.

1 INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of education has become a central focus of institutional agendas and public policies worldwide, intensified by the advance of globalization, knowledge flows, and technological transformations. In the sphere of Technical and Technological Vocational Education (TVE), this process takes on unique contours, as it seeks to balance global demands for innovation and competitiveness with the specific challenges of regional development, inclusion, and social justice (Costa *et al.*, 2024; Cerdeira *et al.*, 2024).

Internally, internationalization trends extend beyond academic mobility, encompassing research networks, curricular internationalization, and linguistic diversity, while simultaneously straining power relations, epistemologies, and institutional policies (Knight, 2004; Stein, 2017). In this context, essential questions arise: how to align global trends with cognitive justice; how linguistic mediation can promote equal participation from the Global South; and how to value the leading role of peripheral institutions in the face of historical asymmetries that still persist?

Regarding this global/local scenario, one must consider how to think about the relationships established between the Global North and the Global South when discussing South-South cooperation and the establishment of Brazil-Africa cooperation policies, as well as among Latin American countries.

From this perspective, the theoretical contribution of Paulo Freire (1987; 1992; 1997) was chosen to reflect on the relationships established between the Global South and the Global North. In other words, has internationalization – as a movement mobilizing students from technological education contexts – represented progress as a public policy for exchange between different countries, or does this mobilization serve only those located in English-speaking countries, within a more colonialist rather than decolonialist framework?

From this perspective, this chapter proposes a critical analysis of internationalization policies and practices in Brazilian TVE, focusing on South-South cooperation, language mediation challenges, and innovative institutional experiences. By integrating current theoretical references, documentary analysis, and practical examples, the chapter offers recommendations for political and institutional improvement, highlighting contributions toward a more just and pluralistic internationalization.

The text, organized into five sections, includes a review of the specialized literature, methodology, results analysis, discussion, and final considerations, with recommendations for the field of public and institutional policies aimed at the internationalization of EPT.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Internationalization: Between Global Agendas and Local Autonomy

The internationalization of education has established itself as a multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond the mere physical mobility of students and faculty, encompassing symbolic, cultural, and political-linguistic aspects that impact institutions and curricula (Knight, 2004; Stein, 2017). In Technical and Technological Vocational Education (TVE), efforts toward global and intercultural practices are growing, evidenced by scientific networks, international cooperation, multilingual materials, and institutional policies that value cultural and epistemic diversity (Cerdeira, Castro & Lauxen, 2024).

The centrality of language in this context is notable: the predominance of English facilitates access to international networks, but it can marginalize local languages and epistemes, hinder the full participation of the Global South and reinforce colonial dynamics of exclusion (Santos, 2007; Ribeiro & Cardoso, 2023). Recognizing linguistic plurality and investing in translation or multilingual production expands epistemic diversity and reduces dependency, promoting horizontal exchanges and cognitive justice, especially when languages such as Portuguese, Spanish, African, and Indigenous languages are valued (Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025; Santos, 2007).

Thus, internationalization demands more than mobility: it requires promoting intercultural dialogue, institutionalizing pluralistic practices, and valuing the knowledge of the Global South. The advancement of this concept depends on critical language policies and the democratization of knowledge flows and legitimacy, which contribute to the construction of truly inclusive and transformative educational processes.

Globally, internationalization reflects the intensification of knowledge and technology flows resulting from globalization, leading institutions – especially those in EFA and higher education – to integrate international dimensions into teaching, research, and management (Costa *et al.*, 2024). Although widely adopted, Knight's (2004) definition has been criticized for overlooking inequalities between the Global North and South (Stein, 2017; Costa *et al.*, 2024). The current challenge is to promote an internationalization that goes beyond mobility, incorporating symbolic and political movements that affect the circulation and legitimization of local knowledge. In addition to mobility, actions such as scientific networks, intergroup cooperation, curricular integration, and the development of global competencies stand out (Cerdeira, Castro, & Lauxen, 2024).

2.2 Internationalization and Educational Policies

The formulation of educational internationalization policies is strongly influenced by multilateral organizations such as Unesco, the OECD, and the World Bank, each with distinct agendas, approaches, and methodologies (Ribeiro & Cardoso, 2023; Unesco, 2019). Unesco adopts a perspective of education as a human right and a public good, promoting inclusion, cultural diversity, and international integration – especially for the Global South – and strengthening institutional capacities without distancing itself from regional contexts (Unesco, 2019). The OECD prioritizes indicators, rankings, and meritocracy, guiding education systems toward competitiveness and alignment with the global market (OECD, 2022; Cerdeira, Castro & Lauxen, 2024), while the World Bank emphasizes productivity, partnerships, and curricular adaptation, targeting transnational markets (Ribeiro & Cardoso, 2023).

In practice, these agendas promote curricular standardization, international recognition of diplomas, and standardized assessments, which facilitate mobility and cooperation but can lead to reduced diversity and the overvaluation of global metrics at the expense of social missions and local epistemologies (Stein, 2017; Santos, 2007). The uncritical adoption of these references can intensify structural dependencies and undermine institutional autonomy in peripheral countries (Ribeiro & Cardoso, 2023; Unesco, 2019). Therefore, it is essential to develop internationalization policies that balance international quality and recognition with the valorization of

local epistemologies, linguistic plurality, and the promotion of cognitive justice (Santos, 2007).

In Brazil, these agendas have driven the expansion of internationalization policies in higher education and within the Federal EPT Network, such as the Science Without Borders and CAPES-PrInt programs, aimed at strengthening cooperation and academic mobility (Costa *et al.*, 2024). Nevertheless, concerns persist regarding the risk of excessive standardization, the subordination of local knowledge, and the widening of asymmetries in relation to the hegemonies of the Global North (Stein, 2017; Santos, 2017).

2.3 Institutional Practices in the Federal Network of Professional and Technological Education

The Federal Network for Professional, Scientific, and Technological Education in Brazil has played a strategic role in advancing educational internationalization, combining a diversity of experiences with the strengthening of cooperation networks, particularly with countries in Latin America and Africa (Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025; Conif, 2023). These initiatives go beyond student mobility, encompassing collaborative research projects, joint curriculum development, the production of multilingual materials, and participation in international forums.

Among the successful practices, the IF Without Borders program stands out, which encourages exchange with Mercosur countries and Portuguese-speaking Africa, as well as the Paths to Internationalization project, the result of cooperation between Federal Institutes in the South and Southeast and Argentine and Uruguayan institutions. These initiatives promote bilingual courses, technical training aligned with regional demands, and alignment with national vocational training frameworks, valuing interculturality and enhancing technology transfer (Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025; Conif, 2023).

In the South-South dimension, partnerships with African technical schools, such as those in Mozambique and Angola, drive projects in areas such as agroecology, renewable energy, and information technology, culminating in binational courses, trilingual materials, and in-person and virtual faculty exchanges (Ribeiro & Cardoso, 2023; Zamilian & Wiedermann, 2025). Integration into global networks, multilingual agreements, and the promotion

of translation and cultural adaptation are also evident, as in the projects of the Federal Institute of Southern Minas Gerais (IFSulminas, 2023).

Despite these achievements, challenges remain: language barriers related to the dominance of English and Spanish; funding constraints; heterogeneity of educational systems, which hinders the mutual recognition of credits and diplomas; and pressure from the productive sector for market-aligned training, often at the expense of the development of intercultural competencies and cognitive justice (Cerqueira, Castro & Lauxen, 2024).

Thus, strengthening the Federal Network's internationalization practices requires addressing these operational limitations through multilingual inclusion policies, stable funding mechanisms, and strategies that simultaneously promote technical excellence, equity, and the appreciation of epistemic diversity, in collaboration with countries of the Global South.

2.4 Curriculum Internationalization and Teacher Training

Curricular and institutional internationalization in the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific, and Technological Education (EPT) has driven significant transformations in academic, educational, and administrative practices. Beyond mobility, there is a growing incorporation of pedagogical innovation, such as curriculum revisions, the production of multilingual materials, and the integration of different epistemologies (Cerqueira, Castro, & Lauxen, 2024).

These initiatives involve, for example, curriculum harmonization efforts, the creation of bilingual courses, the development of teaching materials in various languages, and intercultural workshops, which require institutional adaptations and the strengthening of teacher training. Such practices broaden the scope of the curriculum, facilitate dual-degree and joint certification policies, value linguistic diversity, and promote inclusion, in addition to preparing students for multinational work contexts and multilingual environments (Zamilian & Wiedermann, 2025; Leask, 2015).

It is worth noting that the emancipatory potential of internationalization depends on incorporating peripheral perspectives and respecting local identities, thereby avoiding the mere standardization of globalized knowledge (Freitas, 2019; Cordeiro, 2021). In this regard, language mediation and the development of intercultural competencies are fundamental, as is the

provision of continuing teacher education focused on additional languages and intercultural teaching methodologies (Santos, 2007; Cerqueira, Castro & Lauxen, 2024).

To illustrate these innovative practices, see the details in Tables 1 and 2, which summarize projects and strategies for curricular internationalization implemented in Brazilian EPT.

2.5 Language Mediation and Knowledge Circulation

Language mediation is recognized as a strategic and indispensable dimension of internationalization effectiveness, going beyond the narrow concept of foreign language teaching. It is, in fact, a set of practices that includes translation, negotiation of meanings, cultural adaptation of materials, legitimization of diverse epistemes, and recognition of multiple linguistic identities (Santos, 2017; Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025).

In the context of Technical and Technological Vocational Education, proficiency in English as a lingua franca remains a key requirement for access to and participation in international academic and scientific networks. Although it facilitates communication on a global scale, this dominance often marginalizes national, regional, and indigenous languages, rendering indigenous knowledge invisible and perpetuating patterns of coloniality of knowledge. The risk, as Santos (2017) points out, is that internationalization without critical language policies will reproduce historical asymmetries and exclude peripheral voices from major global agendas.

Given this scenario, institutional policies aimed at internationalization must go beyond instrumental bilingualism. The effective promotion of linguistic plurality involves offering continuing education in translation and intercultural mediation, producing multilingual teaching materials, and encouraging the use and appreciation of local languages in the contexts of teaching, research, and outreach (Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025; Cerqueira, Castro & Lauxen, 2024). These strategies foster the democratization of access to knowledge and strengthen a more horizontal circulation of knowledge, combating processes of subordination and promoting cognitive justice.

Experiences of international cooperation between Brazil, Mozambique, and Angola illustrate the potential of these approaches. Projects developed jointly in these countries combine the creation of bilingual or trilingual

materials, collaborative teacher training, and academic exchange in multiple languages. Such initiatives expand regional agency and affirm the cultural and linguistic identities specific to the Global South, while offering practical models of interculturality and effective inclusion (Ribeiro & Cardoso, 2023).

Expanding linguistic mediation, therefore, implies recognizing that the internationalization of education cannot be understood merely as the circulation of people or content, but above all as the circulation of meanings, values, and epistemes. For critical internationalization to occur, it is essential to consolidate policies that guarantee visibility and legitimacy for plural forms of knowledge, foster linguistic and cultural diversity, and ensure that all social groups can be active participants in the production and exchange of knowledge within global networks.

2.6 Critical Perspectives: Challenges and Alternatives for the Global South

South-South cooperation, in the context of the internationalization of Vocational and Technical Education, stands out as a strategic alternative to overcome the historical asymmetries imposed by the hegemony of the Global North in educational dynamics. Unlike models centered on integration with developed countries, cooperation among countries of the South prioritizes horizontal networks based on reciprocity, intercultural dialogue, and the collaborative production of knowledge, providing fairer and more equitable conditions for all participants (Ribeiro & Cardoso, 2023; Zamilian & Wiedermann, 2025).

From this perspective, cognitive justice constitutes a key principle – as highlighted by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) – and implies recognizing the plurality of forms of knowledge, pedagogical practices, languages, and epistemologies. Overcoming the traditional “abyssal line,” which distinguishes legitimate knowledge from that considered marginal, requires creating real spaces for expression and influence for peripheral, vernacular, and indigenous epistemes in international projects. The joint production of teaching materials, the development of multilingual curricula, the exchange of students from diverse social backgrounds, and the design of technical projects tailored to local realities are concrete examples of these approaches (Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025; Ribeiro & Cardoso, 2023).

Such practices allow languages such as Guinean Creole, African Portuguese, or Latin American Indigenous Spanish to be recognized not only as teaching tools but also as bearers of specific cultural values and solutions, broadening horizons and challenging the colonality of knowledge (Cerdeira, Castro & Lauxen, 2024). Through this horizontal exchange, traditionally marginalized forms of knowledge become protagonists of curricular, methodological, and institutional innovations. Thus, South-South cooperation ceases to be compensatory and becomes a driver of educational justice and sustainability, committed to epistemic and linguistic inclusion.

Furthermore, critical perspectives from the Global South, such as those of Santos (2007) and Walter D. Mignolo (2003), emphasize that internationalization becomes truly emancipatory only when grounded in open and pluralistic epistemological policies. The concept of “ecology of knowledge,” advocated by Santos, proposes horizontal dialogue among multiple epistemologies, enabling marginalized forms of knowledge to occupy a legitimate space. Mignolo, in turn, warns against the “coloniality of knowledge” and emphasizes the need for “epistemic disobedience” – that is, the institutional courage to challenge Eurocentrism and create space for new rationalities, languages, and modes of meaning-making (Santos, 2007; Mignolo, 2003).

Recent literature also points out that the pattern of internationalization focused on vertical mobility, the supremacy of English, and global evaluation standards reinforces exclusions and hinders the circulation of knowledge rooted in regional, gender, and class diversity (Stein, 2017; Santos, 2007). In light of this, more horizontal projects – such as cooperation networks between Latin America, Africa, and Portuguese-speaking countries, bilingual scientific events, and multilingual academic production – constitute concrete alternatives for valuing local knowledge, cognitive justice, and the democratization of internationalization (Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025; Ribeiro & Cardoso, 2023).

In short, the commitment to South-South partnerships, the promotion of local languages and epistemes, and the construction of solidarity-based networks for knowledge production represent not only a political alternative but also the possibility of a genuinely inclusive, plural, and transformative internationalization (Santos, 2007; Mignolo, 2003).

3 METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, exploratory, and analytical approach, grounded in a documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources on the internationalization of Technical and Technological Vocational Education (TVE). The objective is to understand the policies, institutional practices, language mediation processes, and dynamics of South-South cooperation in Brazil, with an emphasis on the Federal Network's initiatives and their linkages with Latin America and Africa.

3.1 Data Selection and Analysis

The selection was based on official documents (MEC/Conif) and scientific articles (2019–2026) that explicitly addressed TVET and South-South cooperation. The analysis considered only materials with identifiable authorship and confirmed relevance to the topic, excluding documents without authorship, without a date, or without clear relevance.

The categorization included: internationalization guidelines in Brazilian EFA; mobility practices and curriculum internationalization; language mediation strategies; experiences of South-South cooperation; and the main limitations and challenges. Content analysis was used to identify trends, similarities, and gaps in the documents, employing inductive categorization.

The robustness of the results was ensured by triangulation among official documents, institutional reports, and recent scientific literature. Notable limitations include reliance on public sources and the non-exhaustive nature of the sample. No personal data was collected, nor was ethical approval required, as the entire analysis was based on properly cited public and academic sources.

4 DISCUSSION

In this section, the aim is to reflect on how internationalization has been taking hold in Professional and Technological Education, particularly in Brazil, and on the extent to which it is grounded in a humanized and transformative education. In Brazil, the internationalization of Professional

and Technological Education (PTE) has, in recent years, sought to respond to both the demands of multilateral organizations and local needs and contexts. In the “Activity Report of the Chamber of International Relations of the Federal Network,” Conif acknowledges this tension, stating that “despite alignment with global guidelines, institutions within the Federal Network need to develop their own internationalization policies, taking into account their specificities and regional challenges.” (Conif, 2023, p. 7)

Regarding the role of the State, the National Education Plan includes, among its strategies, the promotion of international experiences, but emphasizes the importance of collaboration with partners from the Global South. From this perspective, the MEC document already addresses this issue by stating: “To foster international educational cooperation with countries of the Global South, especially in the technical-scientific and training spheres, promoting reciprocal exchanges and respect for cultural diversity.” (MEC, 2022, p. 42)

The OECD, in its report “Internationalization and Global Engagement in Higher Education” (2022), highlights a significant contrast:

While central countries tend to structure internationalization based on attracting talent and competitiveness, emerging countries, such as Brazil and some African nations, prioritize inclusion, institutional development, and the strengthening of regional networks. (OECD, 2022, p. 19)

In the African context, the Unesco report Roadmap to 2030: Education for Sustainable Development (2019) underscores the need to: “Promote South-South partnerships, strengthen community-based technical training, and value African languages and Portuguese as tools for intercultural mediation.” (Unesco, 2019, p. 55)

In practice, Brazil–Africa cooperation projects have shown both successes and obstacles. A joint report by the Federal Institute of Bahia and the Higher Polytechnic Institute of Mozambique states that:

The exchange between Brazilian and Mozambican students and teachers in agroecology courses facilitated the development of contextualized methodologies and the sharing of field challenges in Portuguese and local languages. (IF Baiano, 2023, p. 14)

From this perspective, one can draw a connection to a category found in Paulo Freire's **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** (1987), namely, the "unprecedented-viable." In this category, it is believed that all faith in the possible dream and in utopia will come to fruition as long as history unfolds – that is, the hope for realization inherent in Freirean thought. This corroborates the various forms of engagement and cooperation among the countries of the Global South. The "unprecedented-viable" is the attempt to overcome the limits of the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. For Freire, human beings, as conscious beings, are aware of the barriers and obstacles present in personal and social life. According to the Brazilian philosopher of education, these are called "limit situations." These "limit situations" refer to the existence of those who, directly or indirectly, "serve" the dominant class and those who "resist" and "hold back" things – the oppressed.

The former sees the problematic issues obscured by the "limit situations," hence they consider them historical determinants and believe there is nothing to be done but adapt to them. The latter, when they clearly perceive that society's challenging issues are not obscured by "limiting situations" and become a "perceived-highlighted" reality, feel compelled to act and discover the "unprecedented-viable." The second group is those who feel a duty to break through this barrier of "extreme situations" to resolve, through thoughtful action, these obstacles to the freedom of the oppressed and to cross the "boundary between being and being-more," so long dreamed of by Freire. This, of course, represents the political will of all those who, *like* him and *alongside* him, have been working for the liberation of men and women, regardless of race, religion, gender, and class. (Freire, 1992, pp. 106–107)¹.

When comparing different contexts, it is evident that Brazilian institutions and their African and Latin American partners make the most progress when: (1) they develop materials in more than one language and value local knowledge. (2) They build horizontal networks focused on common regional challenges (such as agroecology, renewable energy, public health, etc.). (3) They move beyond models mechanically imported from global centers, creating their own assessment and student recognition tools (Conif, 2023; Unesco, 2019; IF Baiano, 2023).

Furthermore, "critical situations" may arise as challenges persist, as already highlighted in reports and specialized literature: budgetary vulnerability, infrastructure disparities, variability in institutional policies, and the low institutionalization of language mediation as a formal policy. These are challenges that, according to Costa *et al.* (2024, p. 5), "must be the focus of long-term national and binational projects, with agreed-upon goals involving governance, funding, and international recognition." This refers to Freire's "unprecedented-viable."

The "unprecedented-viable" is, in reality, something unprecedented, not yet clearly known or experienced, but dreamed of, and when it becomes a "distinct perception" for those who think utopically, they then know that the problem is no longer a dream, that it can become reality. (Freire, 1992, p.107)

From this perspective, Santos (2007) and Stein (2017) argue that internationalization without epistemic justice tends to reproduce scientific Eurocentrism. For Santos (2007, p.74), "internationalization must be conceived as an ecology of knowledge, open to multiple epistemologies, lest it continue to reinforce the chasm between centers and peripheries." In this vein, Stein (2017, p. 319) acknowledges, in conducting studies of this scope, that "internationalization projects that ignore the dynamics of the Global South often perpetuate asymmetries and exclusions, even when apparently motivated by cooperation."

In Brazil, the IFSulminas report (2023, p. 20) illustrates the dilemma: "Despite achievements in international mobility, there is still low participation by faculty members fluent in languages other than English, which limits the scope and depth of South-South cooperation."

The Latin American experience reveals that internationalization initiatives such as the offering of joint and bilingual courses not only expand regional integration but also help overcome historical obstacles to technical communication, as highlighted in the RIETSS report: "The implementation of joint courses in Spanish and Portuguese between Brazil, Uruguay, and Mexico demonstrated gains in regional integration and the overcoming of historical obstacles to technical communication" (Rietss, 2023, p. 23).

¹ This passage refers to the book **Pedagogy of Hope** in the notes at the end of the work.

To systematically illustrate these innovative practices of curricular internationalization and South-South cooperation, three tables are presented below, which exemplify cases, impacts, and challenges observed in the Brazilian Federal Network, in Latin America, and in partnerships with Portuguese-speaking African countries (Tables 1, 2 and 3).

Analysis of the tables shows that internationalization practices at Brazilian Federal Institutes and among Latin American and African partners go beyond physical mobility, encompassing joint knowledge production, multilingual educational materials, and contextualized curriculum adaptation. The greatest challenges relate to overcoming language barriers, recognizing equivalencies, and ensuring the institutional and financial sustainability of projects. Such initiatives underscore the centrality of language mediation and multilingualism for an internationalization that values epistemes from the Global South, reinforces regional identities, and promotes cognitive justice (Santos, 2007; Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025).

Furthermore, the analysis of the cases presented highlights significant progress in consolidating internationalized practices within the Federal Network and at partner institutions in Latin America and Africa. The expansion of collaboration networks, the development of bilingual and trilingual curricula, the promotion of mobility, and the encouragement of joint production of multilingual teaching materials confirm an evolution beyond the traditional model centered on mobility to countries in the Global North (Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025; Ribeiro and Cardoso, 2023).

However, substantial challenges persist, including language barriers, discontinuity in institutional policies, difficulties with credit recognition, and limited financial resources. The reliance on English undermines appreciation for local languages and regional epistemes, potentially reinforcing colonial dynamics and reproducing power asymmetries (Santos, 2007; Stein, 2017).

It is also worth noting the importance of South-South cooperation, which has been paving the way for horizontal internationalization guided by cognitive justice, mutuality, and respect for epistemic plurality. Projects such as those developed between Brazilian higher education institutions and African and Latin American institutions demonstrate the potential for building supportive, innovative, and more equitable networks.

Table 1 – Examples of Internationalization in the Brazilian Federal Network

Case / Program	Description	Impacts	Challenges and Observations	Source
“IF Without Borders” (Federal Network)	Student and faculty mobility program with a special focus on Ibero-American and African countries, promoting internships, technical missions, and language courses.	Expansion of networks; interculturality; encouragement of Spanish/English language learning and engagement with Latin American and African cultures.	Language barriers; funding; need for curriculum adaptation; mutual recognition of credits.	Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025; Conif, 2023
“Paths to Internationalization” Program – Southern/Southeastern Federal Institutes	Creation of bilingual courses (Portuguese-Spanish); co-authoring of materials; projects in partnership with the Federal Institutes of Argentina and Uruguay.	Faculty engagement; production of teaching materials; development of multilingual competencies; cultural exchange.	Adaptation of methodologies; assessment of multilingual learning.	Zamilian And Wiedermann, 2025
Brazil-Mozambique-Angola Project	Partnerships for technical courses in Agriculture and Computer Science, involving MOOCs, co-supervision, virtual faculty exchanges, and the production of materials in Portuguese, English, and African languages.	Exchange of technical knowledge and teaching practices; promotion of African Portuguese and the Angolan and Mozambican languages; strengthening of South-South cooperation.	Limitations of technological infrastructure in African countries; regulatory differences.	Ribeiro; Cardoso, 2023; Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Table 2 – Cases from Latin America and South-South Cooperation

Institution / Program	Description	Impacts	Challenges	Source
Latin American Network for Technical Education (RIETSS)	Alliance between technical education institutions in Brazil, CETIS in Mexico, SENATI in Peru, UTU in Uruguay, and others, featuring teacher and student exchanges, the production of trilingual online courses (Spanish-Portuguese-French), and the organization of regional forums.	Technology sharing; regional integration; promotion of linguistic diversity; strengthening of public technical education.	Curriculum equivalence; scholarship funding; project continuity following management changes.	Cerdeira; Castro; Lauxen, 2024
Mercovet Program (Brazil–Argentina–Uruguay–Paraguay)	Curriculum harmonization in agricultural vocational education; technical missions; trilingual translation of manuals and laboratory protocols.	Improved employability; mutual recognition; circulation of technical knowledge.	Need for continuing education for teachers in technical multilingualism.	Conif, 2023; Ifsulminas, 2023
Paulo Freire Program (MEC–OAS)	Mobility grants for future elementary and secondary school teachers from Latin America and the Caribbean at Brazilian universities, with supervised internships in public schools and training activities in Portuguese and Spanish.	Exchange of teaching practices; reduction of language barriers; interculturality in teacher training.	Sustainability of funding and recognition of the internship.	Costa <i>et al.</i> , 2024

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Table 3 – Africa: Brazil–Portuguese-speaking Africa Partnerships

Project / Partnership	Description	Impacts	Challenges	Source
Cooperation between IFs and Polytechnic Institutes in Mozambique/Angola	Binational technical courses (in the fields of energy and technology), with online components and mobility, trilingual instruction, and the joint production of bilingual textbooks and teaching kits.	Curricular alignment; international teacher training; technological adaptation.	Alignment of academic calendars; mobility and translation costs.	Ribeiro; Cardoso, 2023
Knowledge and Territory Network Project	Partnership between higher education institutions in the Northeast and technical schools in Guinea-Bissau for projects in agroecology and renewable energy, including translation and adaptation of materials into Portuguese, Creole, and French.	Transfer of local knowledge; inclusion of African languages; sustainable development.	Technological and logistical barriers.	Zamilian And Wiedermann, 2025

Source: Prepared by the authors.

5 CONCLUSION

The internationalization of Technical and Technological Professional Education in Brazil, analyzed through institutional documents and experiences in South-South cooperation networks, highlights the maturation of national educational policies. The move beyond traditional academic mobility and the adoption of practices that value the production of materials in multiple languages and the integration of interculturality into the curriculum reflect the pursuit of a critical, inclusive, and emancipatory internationalization (Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025; Conif, 2023; Costa *et al.*, 2024).

This landscape demonstrates that internationalization in EFA goes beyond academic and scientific gains, becoming a central tool for promoting cognitive justice and epistemic diversity, as well as repositioning Brazilian institutions on the global stage (Santos, 2007; Stein, 2017). However, significant challenges remain, including insufficient funding, the lack of policies for multilingual teacher training, difficulties in recognizing credits across partner countries, and the limited institutionalization of language mediation (IFSulminas, 2023; IF Baiano, 2023; OECD, 2022).

Progress in public and institutional policies can strengthen South-South cooperation networks, encourage the use and appreciation of multiple languages, and prioritize local and regional knowledge. It is equally essential to improve mobility and academic recognition instruments, invest in intercultural and multilingual teacher training, and implement continuous monitoring of these actions (Costa *et al.*, 2024; Cerdeira, Castro & Lauxen, 2024). In fact, “limit situations” (Freire, 1987) correspond to the impacts resulting from multilateral organizations.

From this perspective, one must consider the possibility of future policies that prioritize:

1. **Promotion of institutional plurilingualism:** Developing and funding policies that foster the teaching and learning of diverse foreign languages – not just English – and value Portuguese, Spanish, and African and Indigenous languages in academic activities. This promotes not only inclusion but also the strengthening of regional ties and the recognition of local knowledge (Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025; Ribeiro and Cardoso, 2023).

2. **Strengthening and institutionalizing South-South cooperation:** Expand permanent programs and networks that enable consistent exchange between Brazil, Latin America, and Africa, with stable funding, academic recognition, and collaborative agendas aligned with common development challenges (Cerdeira; Castro; Lauxen, 2024).
3. **Enhancing teacher training for critical internationalization:** Investing in ongoing professional development for teachers to work in multicultural and multilingual environments, in training in intercultural mediation and collaborative methodologies, prioritizing the teacher’s role as an agent of curricular internationalization (Leask, 2015; Zamilian and Wiedermann, 2025).
4. **Curricular flexibility and recognition:** Propose greater flexibility in curricular structures, establishing agile mechanisms for credit recognition, joint certifications, and integrated research/teaching projects, especially in bilateral or multinational agreements (Conif, 2023).
5. **Inclusion of language mediation in internationalization policy:** Institutionally recognize the work of translation, cultural adaptation, and mediation of teaching/assessment materials, providing for remuneration, academic recognition, and a formal role in internationalization projects (Santos, 2007).
6. **Continuous monitoring and participatory evaluation:** Implement multi-stakeholder evaluation and monitoring systems, involving students, faculty, and foreign partners, to collect feedback for reorienting public policies and refining projects in accordance with the realities of the institutions and networks involved (Costa *et al.*, 2024).
7. **Promotion of cognitive justice and local knowledge production:** Encourage projects that promote the circulation of localized epistemes, recognizing the plurality of knowledge and combating coloniality in scientific production, including support for multilingual and open-access publications (Santos, 2007).

Thus, the consolidation of a more equitable and innovative internationalization depends on decision-making grounded in the pluralism

of voices, the search for creative solutions, and collaborative governance. This refers to the “Freirean feasible-unprecedented.” As previously emphasized, the “feasible-unprecedented” is the attempt to overcome the limits of the oppressor-oppressed relationship. To this end, the “unprecedented-viable” will materialize to the extent that there is greater engagement and cooperation among the countries of the Global South. This path is fundamental for EFA to contribute effectively to sustainable development and the democratization of knowledge, both in Brazil and in other contexts of the Global South.

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