

A periphery inside a semi-periphery: The uneven participation of Brazilian scholars in the international community

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ABSTRACT

The internationalization of academic production has changed the publishing culture in all corners of the world with increasing participation of scholars from semi-peripheral countries in international journals (Belcher, 2007). While there has been growing interest in how multilingual scholars see this internationalization process, little is known about Brazil. To address this gap, a survey was distributed to scholars ($N = 290$) from different research fields in this country. The analysis of the data revealed important disciplinary differences, suggesting the existence of a peripheral group of scholars inside this semi-peripheral country. The scholars from the exact and biological sciences reported that they publish in English much more frequently than Portuguese, and few reported language-related issues. They contested the existence of a nativeness bias, although some perceived prejudice against Latin-American research. Scholars from the humanities and the social sciences publish substantially less in international journals, reporting challenges particularly with language. Overall, the data suggest that international publication has become part of the disciplinary culture in Brazil in the hard sciences while the humanities and the social sciences seem to remain in a peripheral position. This appears to be particularly true for disciplines such as education and language and literature.

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1. Introduction

As English spread as the *lingua franca* of the academic world, so did the discussion of its impact on international publication, especially for those who do not speak English as a first language (Kuteeva & Mauranen, 2014). Scholars around the globe were pressured to accept the dominance of the discourses from the center of academic writing, primarily composed of Anglophone countries and wealthy nations (Solovova, Santos, & Veríssimo, 2018), leaving those who cannot publish in English to academic isolation (Canagarajah, 2002). Despite the centripetal force of English monoculturalism (Hanauer & Englander, 2011), the literature on multilingual academics' perceptions suggests that scholars have ambivalent views towards

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international publication.¹ While some recognize the disadvantages of conforming to linguistic and epistemological conventions from the center (e.g., Burgess, 2017; Ferguson, Pérez-Llantada, & Plo, 2011), others appreciate the opportunity to reach broader audiences (Uzun, 2008) and establish partnerships with multiple scholars (Flowerdew, 2015; Hyland, 2016).

The literature focusing on the “writer’s vantage point” (a term borrowed from Belcher, Serrano, & Yang, 2016), or the research which has surveyed and interviewed multilingual academics all over the world, has helped ERPP (English for Research Publication Purposes) scholars understand how multilingual writers go about publishing internationally. This research area has received contributions from across the globe; however, the reality of many countries is still unknown. Such is the case of countries in Latin America, which have received little attention in the literature on ERPP. To contribute to the understanding of the reality of some academics in this region, a survey questionnaire was developed and distributed to scholars from universities in Brazil. The survey questions were centered on scholars’ perceptions and practices regarding international publication.

2. Multilingual scholars’ practices and perceptions in the semi-periphery

Over the past few years, English has increasingly become the favored language for international publication, sidelining other languages (Hanauer & Englander, 2011). As reported in Curry and Lillis (2018), 87% of Science Citation Index journals, 88% of Social Science Citation Index journals, and 65% of Arts and Humanities Citation Index journals publish primarily or exclusively in English, with important consequences for multilingual scholars. The Englishization of academia has privileged scholars from the center, who have taken up important gate-keeping roles (Tardy, 2004) and whose publications dominate international journals (Curry & Lillis, 2018, pp. 1–22; Man, Weinkauff, Tsang, & Sin, 2004; Salager-Meyer, 2008), despite the increasing participation of international academics (Belcher, 2009; Hyland, 2016).

The divide between those with substantial international participation and those who are isolated is represented in the ERPP literature by three regions: the center, the semi-periphery, and the periphery. The center is composed of Anglophone countries and other affluent nations or regions primarily located in Western Europe, and it dictates the culture of international publishing (Bennett, 2014). Peripheral regions, usually represented by impoverished nations such as Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, 2002), have scarce or zero resources to publish internationally. The semi-periphery has more material resources and incentives to publish than peripheral nations but not as many resources as countries from the center. Fast developing nations such as Brazil and Mexico, as well as Southern and Eastern Europe, belong to this group (Bennett, 2014). Because of their secondary position in the international community, semi-peripheral participation often comes at the cost of accommodating to the center’s epistemologies and conceding to the pressures of academic standardization (Bennett, 2014). Bennett, however, argues that the semi-periphery can potentially bring new perspectives to the center, sanctioning some of its own values and, in the process, reshaping how research is done in the center.

Despite the widespread use of the terms center, semi-periphery, and periphery to refer to specific economic and geographic regions, peripherality can manifest itself in all corners of the world (Canagarajah, 2002). In fact, the literature centered on the so-called semi-periphery shows several differences between wealthier and more equitable nations such as Spain and impoverished and less equitable nations such as Indonesia, as well as differences within these countries. Therefore, the challenges faced by scholars in the semi-periphery cannot be generalized from country to country and from community of practice to community of practice. The literature below further illustrates the diverse reality within and between countries recognized as semi-peripheral.

Overall, the academics from Southern and Eastern Europe perceive challenges concerning international publishing, but most are accepting of English as the academic *lingua franca*. The Spanish scholars in Martín, Rey-Rocha, Burgess, and Moreno (2014), for example, viewed international publication as a window to communicate their work to the world and an opportunity to be promoted in their institutions while the ones in Ferguson et al. (2011) rated their English as advanced and favored the existence of an academic *lingua franca*. Among the challenges, the Spanish scholars in Curry and Lillis (2004) reported being pressured to publish both locally and internationally, whereas the academics in Pérez-Llantada, Plo, and Ferguson (2011) found they had issues with spoken English for conference purposes. Comparable to the Spanish scholars, the Romanian scholars in Muresan and Pérez-Llantada (2014) were confident about their English and published mostly in that language; however, the Romanian scholars in Bardi (2015) felt linguistically disadvantaged when compared to their Anglophone peers. In Turkey, a survey by Uysal (2014) revealed that scholars have managed to increase their participation internationally at the cost of reducing their citation rate. Another strategy to increase international participation was identified in Serbia, where Petrić (2014) found that some editors made Serbian domestic journals international by changing the language of publication to English. Despite the increasing preference for publishing internationally in Europe, a few academics still prioritize local publication as much as international ones, as is the case of the Polish scholars from the social sciences in Duszak and Lewkowicz (2008).

In Asia, two places have received some attention in the ERPP literature: Korea and Hong Kong. In both, scholars reported having the structural support to do research while being highly pressured by their institutions to publish in high-impact international journals. The Korean scholars in Lee and Lee’s (2013) and Cho’s (2009) studies, for example, reported dissatisfaction with their university policies which place great importance on publishing in international journals with a high

¹ International publication refers here to English-medium international publication.

impact factor. In Hong Kong, the scholars' situation seems very similar, with Li and Flowerdew (2009) reporting that academics struggle with the demands to publish both locally and internationally.

Unlike Europe, Korea, and Hong Kong, countries like Mexico, Oman, and Indonesia are home to scholars who face more severe issues such as high anxiety and lack of resources. The Mexican scholars in Hanauer and Englander (2011), for example, reported high levels of dissatisfaction and anxiety when they write in English. The Omani scholars in Buckingham (2014) reported having to borrow chunks of language and citations from published research articles to improve their writing and compensate for lack of access to original articles. Some Indonesian scholars in Hamamah (2016) reported having no Internet connection, limited access to international journals, scant support from peers, few networking opportunities within an international community, and scarce language brokerage support from their institutions.

The contrast within and between countries in the so-called semi-periphery is worth noting. While some scholars are concerned about issues with language for conference purposes and how to handle the local and international communities, some scholars still face basic problems such as lack of access to the Internet and international journals. A better understanding of the multiple realities within specific communities in semi-peripheral countries is therefore necessary. This study addresses this gap by comparing the reality of scholars from different disciplinary areas in Brazil.

3. Disciplinary differences

In the ERPP literature, disciplinary differences have been noted as an important factor determining peripherality in academia (Ferguson et al., 2011; Petrić, 2014). The disciplinary culture of major research areas influences productivity (Becher, 1994) and is key to understanding the challenges faced by multilingual scholars (Gnutzmann & Rabe, 2014). The hard sciences (i.e., the exact sciences and most biological sciences) are more competitive, task-oriented, and, as a consequence, scholars are expected to publish with increased frequency. The soft sciences (i.e., most disciplines from the humanities and the social sciences) are more pluralistic and person-oriented, resulting in reduced productivity (Becher, 1994). The market value assigned to multiple fields in the hard sciences also strengthens the publishing disparities between hard and soft sciences. Because the soft sciences receive less funding, they tend to be more peripheral both domestically and internationally. This disciplinary disparity is especially true in (semi-)peripheral nations where inequality, including in academia, is more pronounced (Yuret, 2016).

Research has confirmed the uneven international participation in major disciplinary areas by the so-called semi-peripheral countries. In Serbia, for example, Petrić (2014) found that the hard sciences tend to be mostly internationalized, a fact attributed to more investment and more team research in this area. Ferguson et al. (2011) and Gea-Valor, Rey-Rocha, and Moreno (2014) found that semi-peripheral scholars from the hard sciences are more accepting of academic monolingualism, favoring English over their local languages. Scholars in the soft sciences, on the other hand, publish comparatively less, due primarily to lower funding availability (Ferguson et al., 2011). The difficulty in translating different epistemologies and ideas into another language in the soft sciences, where the reliance on language rather than numbers is greater, has also been pointed out as a contributing factor to the peripheralization of the soft sciences in the (semi-)periphery (Solovova et al., 2018).

4. The situation of English in Brazil

Akin to many developing countries, Brazil faces an increasing influence of English in the academic world. Albeit slow, the internationalization process is “an inevitable trend” not only in terms of international publication (Gimenez & Passoni, 2016, p. 184) but also in the use of English as the medium of instruction (Martinez, 2016). This country has seen an increase in the number of international publications, but in comparison to other countries, it still lags behind (Thomson-Reuters, 2012). According to UNESCO, in 2013 (National Science Foundation, 2016), Brazil produced 2.2% of the sciences publications and 1.4% of the social sciences publications in the world. This is a meager contribution compared to the USA, which contributes 18.8% to the sciences and 35.6% to the social sciences publications.

According to Gimenez and Passoni (2016), the internationalization and Englishization of academia in Brazil started to take off in 2011 with the governmental programs Science without Borders and English without Borders, which fund students to study abroad. Despite the initiative, Finardi (2016) reported that only about 5% of Brazilians speak English fluently. Nonetheless, English is progressively becoming the academic *lingua franca*. Martinez (2016) reported that there has been an increasing number of universities using English as the medium of instruction, some of which have made publication in an international journal a requirement to complete a doctorate (Martinez & Graf, 2016). Additionally, the presence of international journals has increased in the Qualis Ranking of the Brazilian Federal Agency CAPES (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel), a list of journals where Brazilian scholars publish the most, which is then used as a benchmark for future publications.

The adoption of Anglophone English varieties as the medium of instruction and publication contributes to the challenges faced by multilingual scholars in Brazil (Finardi, 2016; Gimenez & Passoni, 2016), who have voiced their frustration at the lack of English training in universities and the dominant Anglophone style required by international journals (Vasconcelos, 2006). Jordão (2015), for example, described her difficulty publishing in international journals as a result of gatekeepers' allegations

that her writing was emotional and, therefore, inappropriate for publication. To the best of our knowledge, there are no studies on the perceptions and practices of Brazilian academics from different geographical regions and academic fields. There have been studies that focused on publishing challenges in specific disciplines such as [Serra, Fiates, and Ferreira \(2008\)](#), who investigated the reasons for article rejections in the field of business; [Cunha et al. \(2014\)](#), who investigated the relationship between graduate students' language proficiency and the quality of their publication productivity in psychiatry, and [Martinez and Graf \(2016\)](#), who investigated the challenges that engineering students face to publish their dissertation. Little is known, however, about the actual publishing practices in multiple research areas. This study addresses this gap and [Curry and Lillis' \(2018\)](#) concern that contexts such as Latin America have been neglected in the research literature on global academic publishing. [Curry and Lillis \(2018, pp. 1–22\)](#) suggest a more even distribution of research in geolinguistic terms, particularly in countries where the pressure to publish in English has been increasing.

This paper reports on a survey study that aimed at understanding the perceptions and practices of Brazilian scholars working in different disciplines. Our main research purpose was to capture the broad disciplinary cultures in what concerns international publication and investigate what it means to be part of the semi-periphery in Latin America. The following research questions guided our study:

1. What are the publication practices of Brazilian scholars by disciplinary fields?
2. What are the challenges that these scholars face when dealing with gatekeepers in international journals?
3. What are the strategies that Brazilian scholars adopt to write manuscripts in English and publish internationally?
4. What would motivate scholars to increase their international publications?

5. The study

A survey questionnaire with open-ended and multiple-choice items was developed to investigate the importance that Brazilian academics give to publishing in English, the frequency with which they publish in that language, and the challenges, strategies, and motivations to publish to an international community. We developed the first draft of our survey questionnaire from [Duszak and Lewkowicz \(2008\)](#). After piloting this version with Brazilian scholars from a major institution in Brazil, we revised the items (see Appendix for the English version). Two Brazilian scholars translated the survey from English to Brazilian Portuguese (hereafter called Portuguese), the language in which the survey was distributed, and judged the appropriateness of the content to that population.

More than 6,000 invitations were sent to faculty members in public and private universities across Brazil using the email addresses listed on their institution websites. The survey was distributed using Qualtrics, a web-based survey tool, and the responses were anonymous. A total of 358 participants initiated the survey, and 290 completed most questions. Because the e-mail addresses were taken from institutional websites, potential respondents may have feared the survey link was a phishing scam, hence the low response rate. Also, a few institutions had firewalls that identified Qualtrics as spam.

In what follows, we provide the descriptive statistics of the quantitative data and key findings from the open-ended questions. We present the results per major scientific area traditionally recognized in Brazil, namely exact sciences, biological sciences, and humanities. The humanities in Brazil encompass disciplines from the arts, humanities, and social sciences; therefore, these three research areas are treated as one in this study. The biological sciences correspond to the natural sciences, including disciplines such as biology, geology, and medicine. The exact sciences include disciplines such as math, physics, and astronomy. The survey followed the traditional disciplinary division in Brazil to ensure that the Brazilian scholars would properly select their fields. We end the analysis by focusing on four disciplines from the humanities, the research area with the most respondents, which allowed us to illustrate differences across disciplines.

6. Results

The majority of the participants² were from the humanities ($N = 121$, 42%), followed by scholars from the exact sciences ($N = 95$, 33%) and biological sciences ($N = 71$, 25%). Most participants worked in public institutions ($N = 214$, 74%) and were male ($N = 174$, 61.7%). The most male-dominated field was the exact sciences ($N = 79$, 79%). The majority had a doctorate or post-doctorate degree ($N = 268$, 96%) and had not studied English abroad ($N = 198$, 71%), with the humanities having the highest percentage of scholars who studied abroad ($N = 40$, 35%).

The first research question concerns the publication practices of scholars in Brazil. To address this question, we asked participants to report the languages they had used to publish, their preferred language for publication, and their number of publications per language. We also asked whether they tried to publish internationally and whether their attempts were successful. The publication profile of the participants revealed interesting and contrastive field differences. Altogether, the majority attempted to publish in English ($N = 221$, 76%), although 50% of the scholars from the humanities ($N = 61$) did not,

² Please note that all survey items were optional, as suggested by the university's ethical panel; therefore, some items have slightly fewer than 290 responses. All raw numbers (i.e., N values) are reported for the reader's reference.

Table 1

Total number of publications per language as reported by respondents.

	Exact Sciences		Arts and Humanities		Biological Sciences	
Portuguese	1025	33.8%	3011	84.5%	1007	36.3%
English	1996	65.8%	368	10.3%	1743	62.7%
French	6	0.2%	41	1.1%	1	0.05%
Spanish	5	0.2%	116	3.3%	24	0.9%
German	0	0%	17	0.5%	1	0.05%
Others	0	0%	10	0.3%	0	0%
Total	3032	100%	3563	100%	2776	100%

compared to 5% of the exact sciences ($N = 5$) and 4% of the biological sciences ($N = 3$). Stark differences were also found in the participants' preferred language for publication. In the biological sciences, most scholars named English as their preferred language ($N = 65$, 93%). The same was true for the exact sciences ($N = 88$, 99%), with no scholars selecting Portuguese. Academics from the humanities, on the other hand, had a more balanced preference. Even though 55% gave preference to English in their responses ($N = 63$), Portuguese also held some importance ($N = 42$, 36%), followed by Spanish ($N = 6$, 5%), French ($N = 3$, 3%), and German ($N = 1$, 1%). These preferences partially match the respondents' self-reported number of publications per language in each of the research fields. As the numbers reported in Table 1 indicate, the exact and biological scientists published more in English than in Portuguese. Scholars from the humanities published primarily in Portuguese, despite the 55% preference for English as the most important language. Overall, Portuguese is still part of the publication culture in all fields, despite the respondents' widespread preference for English.

When asked to justify their choice of English in an open-ended question, most participants reported that what guided their preference was their target audience. English was selected to reach a wider audience and establish a dialogue with the international community ($N = 94$). Reasons for preferring this language also included the fact that English has become the academic *lingua franca* ($N = 67$), being, therefore, an inescapable reality. This inevitability is also evident in the third most recurrent answer: lack of choice ($N = 56$). These responses included comments about English being the only option in their specific disciplines. One respondent, for example, mentioned that in Astronomy there are no journals available in Portuguese. Moreover, as explained by many respondents, publishing in international journals tends to have a higher impact for promotion and funding. The following excerpt addresses some of the main reasons for choosing English as the language of publication:

*Publications in Portuguese are important because we need articles that can be read/discussed in Brazilian educational settings where this language is used by the majority of people. Publications in English favor the researcher/author because the articles can be read/discussed by an international audience... Also, universities and funding agencies favor publications in English. What is at stake, therefore, is the researcher's C.V.*³ (Arts and Humanities, Applied Linguistics)

When asked if their attempts to publish internationally in English had been successful, the majority answered affirmatively ($N = 190$, 86%). Scholars from the humanities, however, were the least successful in their attempts to publish internationally in English, having failed comparatively more ($N = 21$, 35%) than scholars from the exact ($N = 7$, 8%) and biological sciences ($N = 4$, 6%). Not surprisingly, considering the competitiveness to publish in international journals, 85% ($N = 188$) of all respondents reported having an article rejected in the past ten years. An analysis by research area revealed that scholars from the exact sciences had the most rejections ($N = 18$, 20%), followed by those in the humanities ($N = 11$, 18%), and in the biological sciences ($N = 5$, 7%). Scholars from the humanities also reported giving up on publishing their articles internationally more frequently ($N = 13$, 26%) than exact ($N = 7$, 9%) and biological scientists ($N = 3$, 5%). In sum, the publication profile reported above suggests that scholars working in Brazil in the humanities are in a more marginalized position in the international community, contributing much less than the other fields.

Research question two explores the challenges Brazilian scholars face when dealing with gatekeepers in international journals. To address this question, we asked participants the reasons their manuscripts got rejected and the difficulties they encounter when trying to publish in English. When asked to select the reasons their articles got rejected (see Figure 1 below), other field differences surfaced. Scholars from the humanities reported language issues as the most critical reason for rejection. For scholars from the exact and biological sciences, however, the most cited reasons were that the article did not meet the expectations of the journals followed by content not being appropriate. The comments added to the "Others" section did not change the trends in the quantitative data.

When participants were asked to detail the comments that referees and editors provided for the rejections in an open-ended question, their answers confirmed the results from the multiple-choice question. Scholars from the exact sciences reported that the most common response from gatekeepers was problems with the content ($N = 21$), especially methodological issues. Other typical responses were that the article was outside the scope of the journal ($N = 21$), had language issues

³ All translations were performed by the authors.

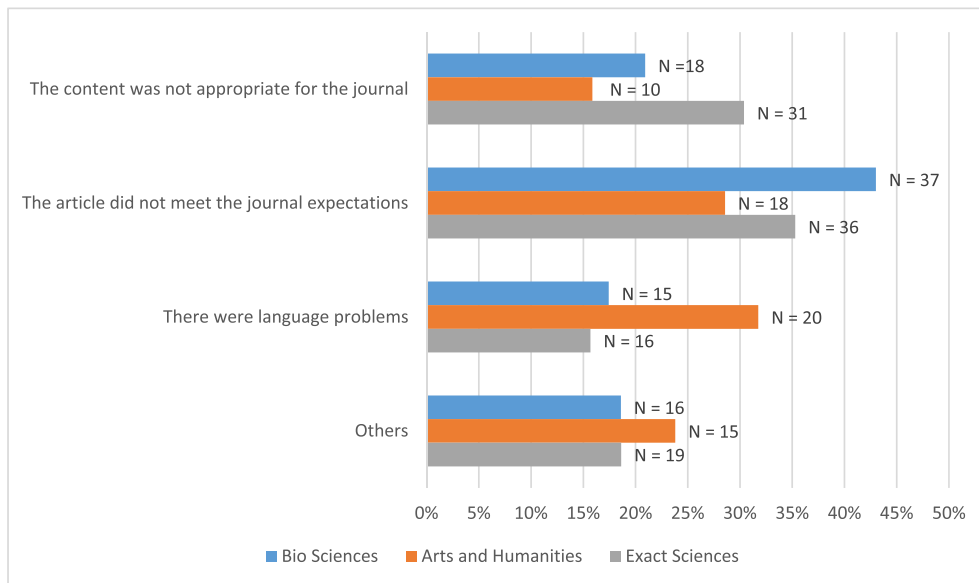


Figure 1. Reasons research articles are rejected.

($N = 10$), or was parochial in content ($N = 3$). Scholars from the biological sciences declared that the most recurrent reason for rejection was papers being outside the scope of the journal ($N = 18$). They also mentioned that reviewers specified that the manuscripts had to be edited for language ($N = 14$), that a high number of submissions prevented acceptance ($N = 12$), and that methodological issues had to be fixed ($N = 11$). Parochialism ($N = 6$) and prejudice towards Latin American work were also mentioned ($N = 2$). Some comments from the respondents suggest that a lack of state-of-the-art equipment might explain some of these rejections:

In general, they [the gatekeepers] mention experiments that could not have been performed in our labs; that is, a technological deficit exists. (Biological Sciences, Medicine)

Because of the pressure we receive to publish in high-ranked journals as per CAPES, we always try to submit the papers to high-ranked journals, but because of the low economic conditions in Brazil and the lack of investment in research, our reality is different [from developed countries]. (Biological Sciences, Physiology)

They [the gatekeepers] do not understand our lack of lab equipment and how it makes it difficult to compete with other countries. (Exact Sciences, Civil Engineering)

The primary reason for rejection among the scholars from the humanities was language-related ($N = 13$). Six of these thirteen scholars stated that language problems prevented the gatekeepers from understanding the content of the paper, compromising publication. Parochialism was the second most cited reason ($N = 10$). These scholars also mentioned that the gatekeepers argued that the article was outside the scope of the journal ($N = 8$) and that there were problems with the content ($N = 7$). A participant explained that language issues can be related to rhetorical complexity in the humanities:

In the humanities (I believe), the difficulty in writing in English is even worse because the texts are longer and not very schematic. (Arts and Humanities, History)

When asked to detail the difficulties they face when trying to publish in English, the scholars from the humanities named lack of funding to pay for literacy brokerage ($N = 6$) and prejudice against work from Brazil ($N = 5$). A category that was unique to this group, even though not extensively mentioned, was differences between Brazilian and Anglophone epistemological practices ($N = 2$). For the scholars from the biological sciences, lack of funding to pay for literacy brokerage was the most cited issue ($N = 9$), followed by a lack of infrastructure to perform state-of-the-art research ($N = 7$). Some of these scholars also mentioned that they perceived prejudice against their work or institution ($N = 5$), and others identified difficulties of achieving effective academic writing ($N = 4$). A few also reported no difficulties ($N = 3$). The scholars from the exact sciences named prejudice against scholars from Brazil and lesser known institutions in Brazil as the most significant barrier ($N = 9$), followed by a perceived lack of fairness or transparency from gatekeepers ($N = 8$), a category that was unique to the exact scientists. They also named having difficulties of achieving effective academic writing ($N = 4$), lack of funding for literacy

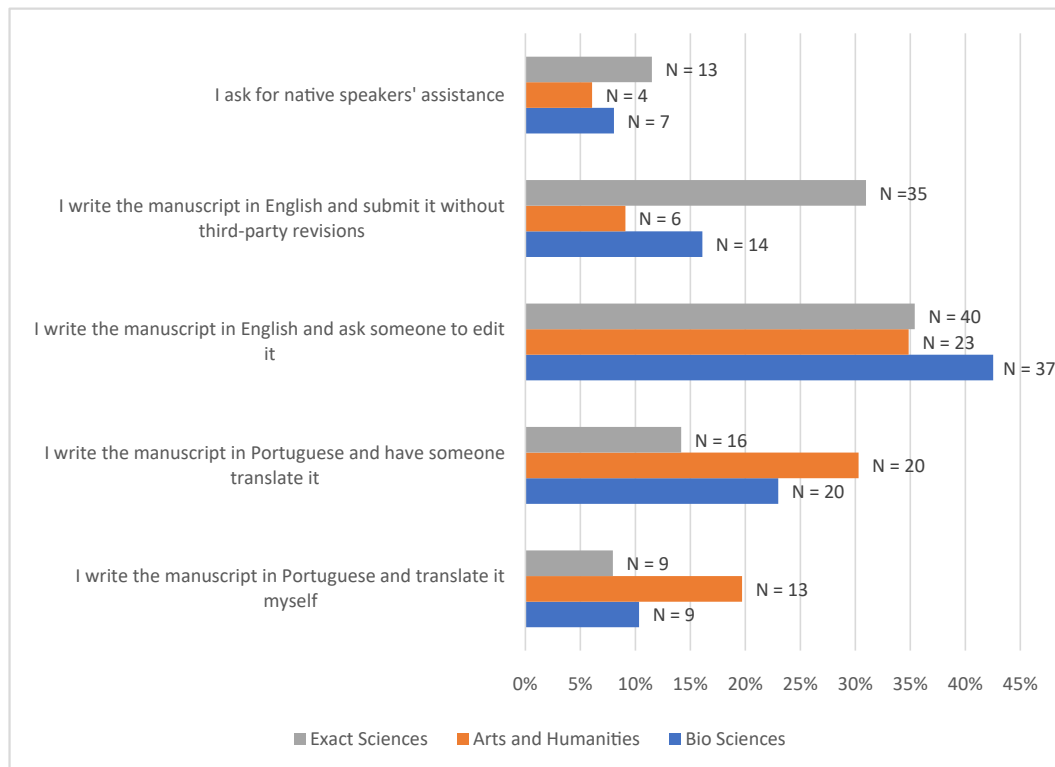


Figure 2. Strategies used to write manuscripts.

brokerage ($N = 3$), and lack of infrastructure ($N = 3$). A few also reported no difficulties ($N = 5$). The excerpts below illustrate these scholars' perception of prejudice and unfairness.

[The major impediment is] prejudice against Brazilian authors. We establish partnerships with Berkeley, Stanford, etc.... and many times the work is performed in Brazil, but we opt to add a researcher from the USA as the first author to facilitate publication. (Exact Sciences, Computer Science)

I don't have problems with the language, but I believe there is a certain "prejudice" [respondent's quotes] towards unknown scholars. Normally I encounter published articles that are simple and with little argumentation being published in important journals, but when we try to publish a manuscript with a good argumentation, we still receive many criticisms and requests to add certain citations [to the manuscript]. (Exact Sciences, Physics)

Research question three concerned the writing process participants undertake to publish internationally. To address this question, we asked participants how they organize their writing in a multiple-choice item (see Figure 2). The primary choice from the three fields was that they prefer to write their manuscript in English and have it edited by a third party. As a second choice, scholars from the humanities and biological sciences prefer to write their manuscript in Portuguese and request translation services, while scholars from the exact sciences choose to write the manuscript in English and submit it without editions. Asking for a native speaker's assistance was not a frequent strategy, but more common among those from the exact sciences. The responses from this multiple-choice question reveal that most scholars from all fields seem to rely on some level of literacy brokerage ($N = 180$, 68%), which extends the publication timeline and incurs costs.

The fourth research question explored motivations to pursue more international publications. To address this question, a multiple-choice item was added to the survey (see Figure 3). Overall, the most selected option besides "Others" was that motivation would be higher if there was more acceptance of Latin American work ($N = 50$). This was the most frequent response in the biological sciences, and the second most frequent response for the other two research areas. It is worth noting that this option was included in the survey because it was a prominent response in the pilot study. In the humanities, the most common response was related to institutional support either in the form of funding or translation and writing services. In the exact sciences, motivation to publish lies elsewhere (i.e., the most frequently selected option was

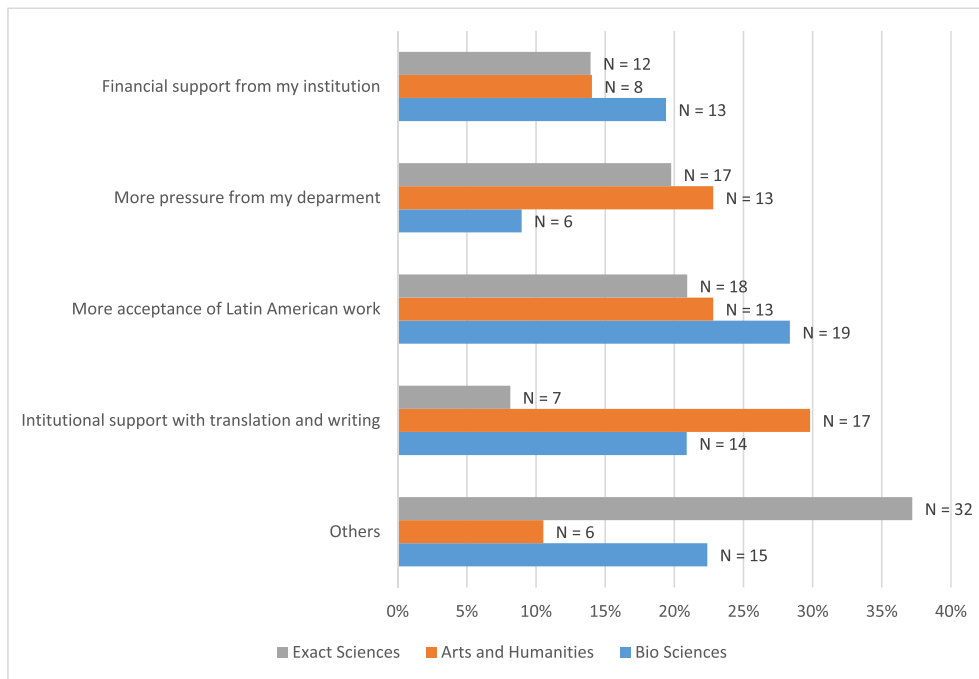


Figure 3. Motivators to publish internationally.

“others”). Unfortunately, the text box next to the option “others” was not activated; therefore, no qualitative data for this response was collected.

The scholars who responded that they had never published internationally were directed to an open-ended question which asked them to name the reasons why they lacked international publications. The majority of the responses were from the humanities ($N = 57$, 85%), reinforcing the peripheral position of this research area in the international community. The majority of these respondents claimed that lack of funding is the primary reason for not publishing internationally ($N = 27$), which was associated with publication and translation costs, followed by lack of English knowledge ($N = 15$). The third most recurrent theme was lack of interest ($N = 13$).

We also would like to add that a few respondents challenged the idea that language is an issue for Brazilians who try to publish internationally, as expressed in the following excerpts by biological scientists:

After observing my peers' experiences and my own, and after having worked as an editor and reviewer for international journals in my field, I have never seen a Brazilian paper being rejected because of language, even if it was poorly written. If the data were interesting and reliable, the authors usually have a chance to correct language issues after submission. (Biological Sciences, Immunology and Virology)

This survey was designed for those who cannot publish or have a lot of difficulty publishing in English and international journals. This is NOT [respondent's emphasis] the situation for the majority of Brazilian scientists, even novices. (Biological Sciences, Biology)

These comments reveal that language problems are indeed not the only issue faced by Brazilian scholars; however, language obstacles might arise not due to a lack of proficiency, but to the effort and time spent on revising, editing, and finding the appropriate style and epistemology for the target community, as suggested by this respondent:

It is not about not knowing academic writing [in English], but to adapt to the construction of a text in another language, which demands more effort and time with revisions. (Biological Sciences, Nursing)

To investigate whether there would be differences within a major scientific field, we selected the four disciplines with the most respondents to analyze more closely. Those disciplines were all in the humanities: business administration ($N = 11$), communication ($N = 10$), language and literature ($N = 11$), and education ($N = 21$). Among these, we noticed a continuum of international participation from more peripheral to less peripheral. Unsurprisingly, the discipline that appears to be less peripheral is business administration. Most of the respondents from this discipline prefer English over

Portuguese (90%), 60% tried to publish internationally, and most persisted in publishing manuscripts (83%) even when initial reviews were discouraging. In communication, the preference for English and Portuguese was equally divided, and half of the participants tried to publish internationally. Likewise, in language and literature, half of the participants reported preferring English over other languages, but only 40% tried to publish internationally in English, even though 60% had studied English abroad. Participants in this discipline named a range of other preferred languages, which might reflect the range of languages studied in language and literature. In education, the majority of participants named Portuguese as the preferred language for publication (58%) and only 42% tried to publish internationally. Also, half of these participants reported giving up on publishing a manuscript internationally after a negative review. Interestingly, 74% of these scholars reported having studied English abroad. The most cited reason for article rejection in this discipline was parochialism, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

The comments [by reviewers] referred to the fact that the [research] questions were local and that they were not relevant to an international community. I did not agree with the comments because there is a relationship between the local-regional-global knowledge which is important for the advancement of science. (Arts and Humanities, Education and Law)

Two participants reported the lack of epistemological freedom as a reason for not publishing internationally in education. Another participant added a comment about the importance of publishing in multiple languages for the purpose of decolonizing the sciences:

I think international publication is relevant and necessary, but I believe that English is not the only language to be privileged Portuguese is also important for work focusing on Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. I think it is important to decolonize science, and the language is one way to do it. (Humanities, Psychology and Education)

Due to the small samples, generalizations cannot be drawn from this discipline-based analysis; however, this small exploration allowed us to see that, within the humanities, disciplines experience different realities.

7. Discussion

Research on ERPP has suffered from uneven distribution of attention in geolinguistic terms (Curry & Lillis, 2018, pp. 1–22). Specifically, countries in Latin America and Africa have been overlooked in the research literature on global academic publishing. Our study aimed at addressing this gap by reporting on a survey answered by scholars in a semi-peripheral country in Latin America: Brazil. In what follows, we discuss each of the three major disciplinary fields in Brazil: the humanities, which includes disciplines from the arts, humanities, and social sciences, the exact sciences, and the biological sciences, highlighting main findings for each research question: publishing practices, challenges, strategies, and motivations to publish internationally.

Our data indicate that scholars from the exact sciences have the most publications in English, despite reporting more rejections than scholars from the other two research areas. They also reported facing fewer challenges, linguistic and otherwise, although issues with methodology and content were frequently mentioned. Among their publishing strategies, they seem to rely on their linguistic resources and to persist with their publications in face of negative reviews. As for these scholars' perceived motivations, an error in the survey setup prevented us from further investigating this topic. Overall, publications in international journals are highly preferred and have become integral to this research area. As reported in other ERPP studies, the hard sciences (which encompasses the exact sciences and most biological sciences in Brazilian academia) are the ones that are mostly internationalized (Petrić, 2014). Semi-peripheral scholars from the hard sciences are also more accepting of academic monolingualism, and they perceive fewer disadvantages (Ferguson et al., 2011). This trend is confirmed by our data.

Scholars from the field of biological sciences also seem to have substantial experience of international participation, but they reported more challenges, especially a perceived prejudice against Latin American work and bias in the reviewing process. Among their strategies, reliance on literacy brokerage is noteworthy. They also reported that wider acceptance of Latin American work would motivate them to seek more international publications. Other studies have revealed that many scholars believe they are disadvantaged when compared with Anglophone scholars (e.g., Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008; Ferguson et al., 2011; Hanauer & Englander, 2011), or that there is a reviewer bias towards non-Anglophone papers (Buckingham, 2014; Uzuner, 2008). There is some evidence that such a bias may exist: in an analysis of publications in the medical journal *Stroke*, Saposnik, Ovbiagele, Raptis, Fisher, and Johnston (2014) found more acceptance of research performed in Anglophone countries between 2004 and 2011; and Okike, Kocher, Mehlman, Heckman, and Bhandari (2008) found that there was more acceptance of American and Canadian authors in another medical journal. Alternatively, or in addition to the issue of possible reviewer bias, there is also the issue of resources: because the disciplinary culture of the biological sciences involves more investment in equipment and labs (Becher, 1994), it seems reasonable to assume that biological scientists in Brazil need more funding for equipment to conduct research that meets the threshold for acceptable standards to permit publication in international journals. In fact, some participants reported a lack of infrastructure, such as lab equipment, to

carry out studies and recurrently named lack of funding as an impediment to doing research. As argued by [Curry and Lillis \(2018, pp. 1–22\)](#), the physical expenditure to conduct research is often ignored in policy discussions despite its central role in knowledge creation.

Scholars in the humanities are the ones who have the least developed culture of publishing internationally in English. This finding is in line with studies in ERPP that have found lower participation in the international community among scholars from the social sciences and humanities (e.g., [Petrić, 2014](#); [Uysal, 2014](#)). Even though most named English as the most important language for publication and had the chance to study abroad more frequently than academics from the other fields, they attempted to publish internationally less frequently and published significantly more in Portuguese. The vast majority of scholars who reported that they had never published internationally were from this field, attributing this fact to lack of funding and English knowledge. Unsurprisingly, as a strategy to publish internationally, they rely on literacy brokerage. When detailing their challenges, they mostly reported issues with language, which were attributed to the linguistic, rhetorical, and stylistic demands of writing papers in their disciplines. Motivation to publish more, according to the respondents, was primarily dependent on access to funding for literacy brokerage, a finding which reinforces the linguistic deficit and the need of linguistic support in this field. Overall, it seems that these scholars are more isolated from the international community, forming a periphery within Brazilian academia, and needing more support than scholars from the other two fields. This finding supports [Canagarajah's \(2002\)](#) claim that peripherality can manifest everywhere; therefore, peripherality can be better understood when specific communities of practice are investigated, such as disciplinary communities.

Our analysis of four disciplines in the humanities also revealed that some disciplines are more peripheral than others. Business administration, for example, seems less peripheral than education and language and literature. This might be due to the market value of business administration, which has better adapted to the globalization of academic knowledge ([Bennett, 2014](#)). Education, on the other hand, seems a more peripheral discipline (i.e., respondents reported fewer international publications in English) whose scholars perceive that they are disadvantaged by issues associated with parochialism and resistance to the acceptance of multiple epistemologies on the part of the center. According to UNESCO ([National Science Foundation, 2016](#)), in 2013, the USA alone was responsible for 35.6% of the world's social science publications. In general, the UNESCO report reveals that the social sciences are much more Anglophone and West European-dominated than the other sciences. The lower contribution of semi-peripheral and peripheral countries has been partially attributed to the linguistic demands of writing in the social sciences ([Hamamah, 2016](#)), the parochialization or the 'marginalization' of the local ([Bennett, 2014](#)), and the narrow acceptance of multiple epistemologies ([Bennett, 2014](#); [Jordão, 2015](#)). It is worth pointing out that this peripheral position was not always portrayed as negative by scholars from the humanities. Some reported that lack of interest and pressure from their departments discouraged them from publishing internationally. This means that the globalization of academic knowledge and the pressure to publish internationally are less of a reality for some Brazilian scholars. While this lack of pressure can be seen as something to be welcomed, the dominance of Anglophone and European research in international journals restricts what we know about different contexts and epistemologies in the humanities.

The decentralization of the social sciences is as much an international as it is a local issue. Local initiatives can be taken to improve writers' awareness of the different epistemologies and linguistic conventions of the center. At the international level, gatekeepers could be more accepting of non-Anglophone epistemological traditions and linguistic conventions, as suggested by many scholars (e.g., [Bennett, 2014](#); [Curry & Lillis, 2018, pp. 1–22](#); [Finardi, 2016](#)). Parochialism, we believe, can also be dealt with internationally. As one participant suggested, in the social sciences, research is grounded in the local context; therefore, foregrounding and only publishing research coming primarily from the USA and Western European countries is not justifiable on the basis of being less parochial. Research in the semi-periphery can also be more relevant to other semi-peripheral countries than research emerging from the center. Hence, we believe that international gatekeepers of social science journals could be more accepting of non-center local-based research.

This survey also revealed some perceived reservations towards gatekeepers' decisions in all fields. When participants were asked what would motivate them to publish more internationally, the most recurrent response for all fields was more acceptance of Latin American work. A perceived prejudice from gatekeepers was also named as one of the most common impediments to publication, as well as a lack of fairness throughout the review process. This finding is not new in the ERPP literature (e.g., [Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008](#); [Ferguson et al., 2011](#); [Hanauer & Englander, 2011](#)), but it was particularly prevalent in the responses to many questions in our survey. Even though the survey is based exclusively on participants' perceptions, we cannot ignore the fact that semi-peripheral scholars do not have the same access to material and linguistic resources to conduct research as scholars from the center. This situation can lower the quality of submissions, linguistically and otherwise, and affect the reviewers' judgment ([Curry & Lillis, 2018, pp. 1–22](#); [Politzer-Ahles, Holliday, Giralamo, Spsychalska, & Berkson, 2016](#)). We also hypothesize that this perceived prejudice may be a result of a post-colonial suspicion or resentment towards former colonizers. Whether this perceived prejudice and bias result from actual reviewer bias or not, a question that remains is whether manuscripts from the (semi-)periphery deserve to be reviewed more sympathetically by international journal gatekeepers.

Another interesting result of the survey is that the majority of respondents named English over Portuguese as the preferred language for publication. This finding is particularly noteworthy considering that critical perspectives are strong in Brazilian academia, especially in the humanities (Finardi, 2016; Gimenez & Passoni, 2016). This acceptance of the status of English in non-center academic contexts has been reported by other scholars (e.g., Buckingham, 2014; Muresan & Pérez-Llantada, 2014). Lee and Lee (2013) argue that scholars have gotten used to the neoliberal principle that they have to publish in English so as not to perish, without questioning the additional expenditure and intellectual loss that the internationalization and Englishization of academia may entail. Alternatives such as internationalizing local journals have been proposed to counter this centerism (Cárdenas & Rainey, 2018). Corcoran (2018) suggested that scholars be trained in a critical approach to ERPP, not only learning to analyze the conventions adopted in international journals but also becoming aware of local practices and their position in the international community. This training can allow scholars to critically choose between contesting, accepting, or simply working the system in a way that makes both acceptance and contestation possible (Burgess, 2017).

In sum, it seems that, despite the challenges, publishing internationally is becoming part of the disciplinary culture in Brazil, particularly for scholars from the exact and biological sciences. However, these scholars still need more access to funding to improve their international participation. The investment should be linguistic and otherwise. As stated by Hyland (2016), “the disadvantages of physical, scholarly, and financial isolation may be greater than those of language” (p. 64). Indeed, we believe that a lack of sustained financial support from the government and private initiatives is one of the major impediments to more research development in (semi-)peripheral countries. However, the possibility of linguistic disadvantage cannot be disregarded as a relevant problem for scholars. Even though most scholars from the biological and exact sciences did not name language as a barrier to publication, almost 68% of the participants rely on some form of literacy brokerage, which may include pricey translations and editing services. Research shows that Brazil lags behind in language proficiency compared to developed or fast developing countries (Finardi, 2016), which partially explains the need for access to literacy brokers. This reliance can slow down the publication process significantly, negatively affecting productivity (Politzer-Ahles et al., 2016). Additionally, as argued by Cadman (2017), Lillis and Curry (2015), and some respondents, the boundaries between language and content are blurry, with language affecting how content is presented. Therefore, we need to recognize linguistic needs as part of what it means to be semi-peripheral (Bennett, 2014). With more linguistic knowledge, scholars might be better equipped to argue for less favored epistemologies, show how local research might be relevant to the international community, and more effectively handle the requests for revisions from reviewers and editors. This is particularly relevant for scholars in the humanities, who need more tools to persuade international gatekeepers of the value of their work.

8. Conclusion

The present study suggests that publishing internationally has increasingly become part of the disciplinary culture in all fields in Brazil, especially in the exact and biological sciences. Scholars from the humanities (the arts, humanities and social sciences in Brazil) face more challenges when publishing internationally, although most are accepting of English as the academic *lingua franca*. Findings showed that some disciplines are more peripheral than others. Education scholars, for example, claimed that their international participation is hampered by insufficient linguistic knowledge, parochialism, and rejection of diverse epistemologies by the center. Language was not the dominant barrier for many respondents in the hard sciences, but other issues such as prejudice from gatekeepers were mentioned.

We argue that insufficient financial support for research is a significant deterrent to international participation. However, we also believe that linguistic barriers can prevent some from publishing, as well as affect scholars' productivity. It seems, based on our data and the fact that Brazil lags behind in English proficiency (Finardi, 2016), that scholars rely largely on literacy brokers, which may incur costs and slow down the publication process. Therefore, we argue that linguistic support is still an essential component of publishing in Brazil. Finally, we argue that gatekeepers could be more accepting of multiple epistemologies and local-based research to reduce the significant dominance of publications coming from the United States and West European countries in the humanities and social sciences.

The limitations of this study also have to be considered. First, a survey is a limited method in itself that restricts the participants' responses. Also, the study might suffer from volunteer bias. We further recognize that more disciplines should have been considered. Most importantly, our study explored participants' perceptions, which may not always reflect reality. Despite the limitations, this analysis shows trends that should inform governmental and institutional policies, while providing valuable information for gatekeepers from international journals to consider.

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Appendix

1. What is your research field?
 - a. Exact Sciences
 - b. Biological Sciences
 - c. Humanities

Please specify your discipline (e.g., Biology, Mathematics): _____

2. Please select the type of university you work for:
 - a. Private
 - b. Public
3. Have you written any scholarly publications (books, book chapters, journal articles, etc.) in the last 10 years? YES NO
4. Please indicate the number of publications you have had in each of the following languages in the last 10 years:
 - a. Portuguese ____
 - b. English ____
 - c. Spanish ____
 - d. French ____
 - e. German ____
 - f. Others ____
5. Of the languages that you have published in, which do you consider the most important for publication?

Why did you select this language?

6. In the last 10 years, have you attempted to publish in any international English-medium journal? YES NO

If yes, have you been successful? YES NO

7. In the last 10 years, have you had a manuscript rejected by an international English-medium journal? YES NO

If yes, which of the options below best explains the rejection?

- a. The content was not appropriate for the journal _____
- b. Your manuscript did not meet the journal specifications _____
- c. There were language problems in your manuscript _____
- d. Others: _____

8. What were the reviewers' main comments? Did you agree with the comments?

9. Did you revise your manuscript based on the reviews or did you try to submit the unrevised manuscript to a different journal (international or national)? If you revised your manuscript, what changes did you make?

10. What difficulties do you encounter when trying to publish in English? (Check as many options as appropriate)

- a. ☐ low language proficiency
- b. ☐ lack of familiarity with academic English
- c. ☐ lack of material resources
- d. ☐ lack of access to the most recent research in my field
- e. ☐ difficulty communicating with editors and reviewers
- f. ☐ difficulty interpreting comments and suggestions made by reviewers and editors
- g. ☐ others, please specify _____

11. When you write for an English-medium journal how do you go about writing the English text? (Please check the MOST appropriate).

- a. ☐ I write the text in Portuguese and translate it myself.
- b. ☐ I write the text in Portuguese and have someone else translate it.
- c. ☐ I write the text in English and have someone check it for language before submission.
- d. ☐ I write the text in English and submit it without help.
- e. ☐ I rely on native speaker's assistance.

12. What would motivate you to publish more in English?

- a. Financial support from my institution
- b. Translation and editing services provided by my institution
- c. More acceptance of Latin work by international journals
- d. More pressure from my department to publish internationally
- e. Others: _____

13. What would motivate you to publish more in English for an international audience?

14. Please add any further comments you might have:

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER ATTEMPTED TO PUBLISH IN INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS:

15. Could you share some of the reasons why you do not attempt to publish internationally (e.g. lack of funding, lack of interest)? _____

Background Information

1. Please indicate your age ____.
2. Please indicate the gender you identify with: ____ Male ____ Female
3. Please indicate your highest degree obtained:
 - a. ____ Master's degree
 - b. ____ PhD
 - c. ____ Post-doctorate
 - d. ____ Other (please specify) _____
4. Is Brazilian Portuguese your first language (mother tongue)? YES NO
5. Have you ever attended an English-medium college or university? YES NO
 - a. If yes, please list the name of the university and the country _____
 - b. When and how long did you study in an English-medium institution? _____

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