

English Language and Academic Career Development in Lusophone Higher Education: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

This systematic review aims to explore the role of English language proficiency in academic career development within Lusophone higher education institutions, highlighting its significance in enhancing employability and academic success. A comprehensive literature review was conducted, analyzing peer-reviewed articles and books on English language use and academic trajectories in Lusophone countries. The review synthesizes findings across various contexts and disciplines. The results indicate that English language proficiency is increasingly viewed as vital for academic advancement and career opportunities in Lusophone higher education. Challenges such as limited access to language resources and varying institutional support were also identified. This review contributes to understanding English as a medium of academic and professional development in Lusophone contexts, providing insights for policymakers and educators to enhance language education strategies that support academic and career growth.

Keywords: English Language, Career Development, Lusophone, Higher Education, Proficiency

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Study

There is a growing trend internationally for academic programs to be taught in English, encompassing a variety of degree courses and short courses at various educational levels (Covele et al., 2024; Joyce, 2023; Yallev et al., 2021). This trend is also evident in Portuguese universities, where a substantial number of degrees and short courses are taught in English



(Bermingham & O'Neill, 2022; Ribeiro & Coelho, 2019). Portuguese colonial history and subsequent economic imperatives have led to several African and Asian Lusophone faculties and polytechnics offering short 'English as a medium of instruction' courses to Lusophone and local students (Cobbinah & Gaisie, 2023; França & Cairns, 2020; Lopes, 2018; Spolsky, 2018).

All over the world, in a multiplicity of contexts, studies are engaged in exploring how a lack of English can create social and academic exclusion (Altbach, 2009; Juvonen et al., 2019; Morley & u.a, 2018). In Portuguese, the discourse shifts from English as a Foreign Language literature that explores whether proficiency affects grades or contribution to class, to one that pays more explicit attention to the power relations associated with English (de Melo & Lima, 2020; Matiso, 2023; Tiago & Constantino Correia, 2021; Windle & Amorim Possas, 2023). Indeed, mastery of a dominant language can have a longer and more permanent effect than just academic results (Curle et al., 2020; Schmid & Yilmaz, 2018).

It is thought that better English means better access to knowledge and perhaps alludes to how attitudes and practices about language may have implications in both study and career opportunities, which is the focus of this paper (Aizawa et al., 2023; Anderson & Lightfoot, 2021; Fang & Baker, 2018; Zainuddin et al., 2019). This paper has as its objectives, firstly, an analysis of the themes represented and secondly, to investigate procedures, limitations, and the main and corroborated findings to benefit a more general perspective and up-to-date knowledge of the English acquisition puzzle on Lusophone academia career paths.

2. Background and Rationale

This systematic review provides an overview of the literature discussing how English language proficiency and access to opportunities for learning English create more or less equal conditions for individuals to develop their academic careers in higher education in societies other than the Anglophone ones, especially within Lusophone (Haidar & Fang, 2019; Rahman & Mehar Singh, 2020; Scetti, 2020; Yasin Turan, 2020). Academically, unequal English proficiency tends to translate into a different standard of internationalized higher education (Brienza, 2024; Lueg, 2018; Ou et al., 2023), and a different level of participation and performance - negatively associated - in international research publications, international conferences, and mobility programs (Aizawa & McKinley, 2020; Bowl, 2018; Diniz de Figueiredo et al., 2021; Dimova, 2020).

In general, compared to students with a good command of English, those who barely know the language or have never studied it face added constraints in their academic activities and career development (Donald et al., 2018; Heng, 2018; Macaro & Han, 2020), such as few possibilities to be involved in research activities with foreign partners, present papers, network, and publish in international journals of high-ranking citation-indexed databases (Abrizah et al., 2019; Aizawa & McKinley, 2020; de Wit & Altbach, 2021). Hence, literature and practice accounts,

demonstrate that students from Lusophone African, Brazil and Portugal universities, where higher education courses are delivered in Portuguese(Langa, 2013; O'Neill & Massini-Cagliari, 2019), who have little language integrated learning education, also face challenges in learning degree-related content and soft skills in English(OLIVEIRA et al., 2020; Pan, 2024).

Such students may take up to two years to achieve a B2 or C1 level of English language proficiency, with economically strong students having part-time tutorials and/or language exchange programs (McQuarrie, 2019; OLIVEIRA et al., 2020), and some of the weaker students simply failing their studies and not recommending their universities to their friends(Lou & Noels, 2020; Pearson, 2022). Thus, inequalities in achieving an adequate level of English language proficiency force educational systems around the world to become more inclusive and connected with the requirements of a globalized, post-colonial order (Afzal, 2019; Ginther & Yan, 2018; Kim, 2019; Willans, 2022).

3. Research Aim and Objectives

The primary aim of this systematic review is to examine relationships between English language proficiency and academic career development in Lusophone higher education. The study centers on the following specific objectives:

For this study, a comprehensive review, categorization, and synthesis of previous studies will be undertaken to explore the relationship between English language use, proficiency, skills development, and academic career development in Lusophone higher education. To ascertain English language proficiency and competency, an evaluation of the effect of English language proficiency and skills on the academic success and career advancement of students and staff in Lusophone countries will be conducted. Although there are inherent benefits and challenges associated with equity and access to higher education, this study will identify and suggest avenues of further empirical inquiry.

To address these objectives, the following research questions are posed: 1. What are the relationships between English language proficiency and career success in academic contexts? (objectives 1.1 and 1.2) 2. If English language proficiency positively relates to academic success, does this represent a benefit or potential advantage to either domestic or international students or staff? (objective 1.3)

4. Methodology

This paper aims to present an update on the worldwide landscape of marketing-related aspects of studying English in higher education. In this case, the focus has been on academic writing and EAP/EAL. Ultimately, the potential gaps in the existing body of research have been identified, or where exigencies exist as a result of technological and social developments that

have taken place since data were collected. In this section, the research approach and design adopted for this study will be explained.

The systematic review represents a rigorous and organized approach to aggregating and synthesizing findings from the available literature on a topic (Gupta et al., 2018; Pollock & Berge, 2018). By following this method, we hope to apply transparent, replicable methods to guarantee findings grounded in the accumulated evidence. By systematically identifying, extracting, and combining data from the literature, we aim to provide a comprehensive overview of research on EAL/EAP and academic writing in Lusophony higher education, to underpin future research initiatives in this regard. We agree that the higher the quality of the systematic review, the higher the quality of the findings will be.

Our approach was qualitative as well as quantitative and relied on documents collected employing a narrative review. It aims to capture the overall state of the art of a given topic at a certain time and focuses explicitly on literature having a more conclusive character. In a two-stage process, the literature was purposively reviewed to identify the articles that would be included in the systematic review.

We adopted a gender-conscious approach by deciding not to filter or analyze studies based on the first authors' gender. We have no exclusion criteria such as the publication venue or year, as of early February 2010. The criteria for including items were their availability in full text and a clear focus on the impact of English proficiency on academic career development in higher education, with a particular focus on the Lusophony context.

4.1. Selection of the Databases and Research Terms

Data search was made on Google Scholar, Scopus and on the University of the Western Cape's Postgraduate Resource Centre to gather a comprehensive dataset for the study.

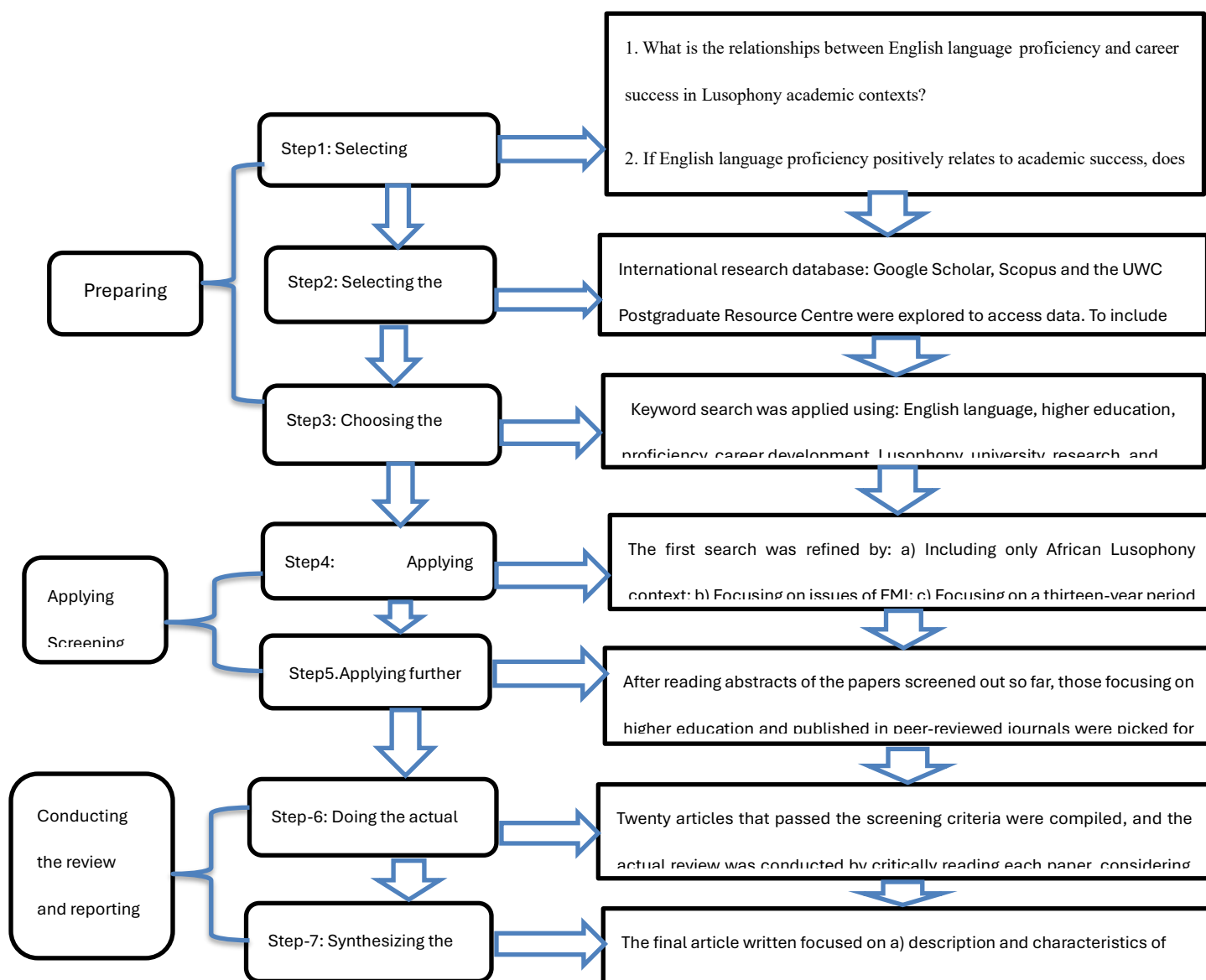


Figure 1. The methodological steps followed in conducting the review, adapted from Yallem et al. (2021).

4.2. Applying Screening Criteria

The articles incorporated in this research were aligned with the review objectives, questions and scope for the final examination based on the criteria that they: a) were conducted in Lusophony African and Europe contexts (that use Portuguese language as a medium of instruction); b) focused on aspects related to the English language; c) were published between 2010 and 2023; d) were published in peer-reviewed journals; e) focused on issues related to higher education; f) were published in the English language; g) focused on issues related to students and scholars' career development.

An entry of the keywords in the databases followed a filtering of the articles that focus on Lusophony in African and European countries (that use the Portuguese language as a medium of instruction) and universities using the analytics recognized by the databases, or after reading the titles and abstracts recognized from the keyword searches. A thirteen-year time span was used to assess the literature since the adoption of English as a medium of instruction for the internationalization of higher education systems, including Lusophone in Africa and Europe, appears to be further noticeable in the past decade, and because the study analyzes comparative current literature. Conclusively, articles from peer-reviewed journals are incorporated into the study to ensure quality in the review.

The selection of literature using the inclusion criteria generated 29 papers that were required for further examination. In the last session of the filtering procedure, eight of the 29 papers were excluded from further examination because to either did not address subjects relating to the English language and career development from a higher education viewpoint or were duplicate studies from other databases. The concluding examination was done after a systematic reading of the 21 articles in agreement with the questions that led the research.

4.3. Search Strategy

Given the broad topic of English language and academic career development, a systematic approach to finding the pertinent literature commenced in August 2024, searching databases in September 2024, and finalizing searches in October 2024. The search terms were refined, with searches from August to October 2024 to ensure a comprehensive list of articles. Four databases were initially chosen for this study: Google Scholar, Scopus, and the University of the Western Cape Postgraduate Resource Centre.

The Google Scholar and Scopus databases were selected based on their significant available digital materials about the topic under analysis. While the University of the Western Cape's Postgraduate Resource Centre database was included to ensure that the researchers explored the physical resources available at this centre, including the library, where they spend almost eight hours a day for professional and academic reasons. Additional databases were included as additional sources for the publication lists. The search strategy used a combination of Medical Subject Headings terms and free-text words.

The specific search strategy for each database is presented in detail in the form of search terms, which are broken into three parts. The search strategy included a combination of controlled vocabulary and free-text terms relating to the following lines of inquiry: English language capability, Lusophony, graduate students, and academic progress.

4.4. Search Process

The search process was systematic and consisted of two parts. The first part resulted in this detailed search strategy, using the search terms as headings, which was then applied individually and specifically to each of the seven databases. This specific process was repeated in a second, complementary phase, to ensure that all relevant literature was collated. This phase involved a thorough search of the publication lists of the research outputs contained in three databases of databases that were searched, and the repository portals using the aforementioned search strategy. Geographical location was not restricted in the search, but was later determined by the selected languages.

Two of the chosen resources yielded no results. Brazilian studies form a part of this scoping review; they are both in the search strategy and within the text; Brazilian universities were part of a mentoring and training project linked to the same research study. The strategy presented below shows a final number of items; these numbers have been included for clarity and transparency of the systematic process, and it is important to note that this is different from other documentation processes, which document the numbers before a data cleaning process. This was a deliberate choice, given the role of the authors as researchers and academics desiring to annotate the conversation in the literature in English language standards. Therefore, the final library did not need a data cleaning process, as it was fully comprised of impactful works.

4.5. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The records were retrieved from two different online databases and one physical database. Searches in Portuguese universities and polytechnics' repositories were also performed. Several 21 International articles were searched that include research from Lusophony in Africa and Europe that is available in international journal databases. Lastly, the keywords 'English language', 'higher education', 'proficiency', 'career development', 'Lusophony', 'research', and 'university', which are drawn from the aims of this article, were cast off to handle the examination. Functions as the "Filter" of geographical area and in the second set of keywords. Article title, abstract, keywords, and full text have been searched for matches.

We considered the following inclusion criteria for studies in our review: (1) studies published between 2010 and 2024; (2) empirical and/or conceptual studies; (3) studies with a clear purpose and pattern from which to identify the effectiveness of the studies concerning the recent status of the English proficiency required by the work context for Lusophony professionals and top decision-makers of governmental organizations in Africa and Central America; and (4) studies directly or indirectly related to English language proficiency in one or more associations to the official language of the PALOP or the CPLP. Additionally, using the same principles of the exclusion criteria already mentioned, we considered the

completeness, accuracy, and, of course, the relevance of the study's research design with a clear, well-identified aim and the adequacy of its purpose and method.

The literature in the immunization field outside the special context of Lusophony was disregarded and neglected for inclusion in this study. Since there was a vast number of records retrieved and, after checking, many were duplicated records published in different sources in different years that were not classified as strongly essential (the same article authors, or two and so on hardly referred in other studies), they were, therefore, disregarded from the study. The thoroughness of these steps was crucial and fundamental since one of the significant points of methodological rigor and pertinence of the scientific evidence sought and collected for this review process is based on not taking into interaction any data, phenomenal resource, research project, taxon, and species, not systematic or dialogue incoherent and intellectual lucubration with any article. The main goal behind this approach is the elimination of possible interpretations so that the reviewed synthesis is interpreted as an authentic and enriching article.

5. Literature Review

The systematic review of the literature was grounded in in-depth discussions engaged by published studies in scientific journals and indexed repositories that address academic language education. We then focused our attention on three pivotal research studies in language education. The following section examines the challenges and pedagogy of teaching English as an additional language (EAL) in Lusophone countries. Studies and current policies in the education systems of Lusophony are reviewed, as they are the countries that produce the most graduates in Portuguese language and literature, and which were the geographical focus of the research we reviewed and addressed.

Pedagogical approaches, principles of practice, and background research adopted by these three countries' education departments are outlined in this section. The section explores language proficiency assessments in higher education and pivotal research on the needs of Lusophony students that inform the design of Lusophony University language proficiency tests. Finally, research on how language is linked to cognitive and broader social inequalities and its impact on student performance is examined.

The systematic review of the original, peer-reviewed literature from scientific journals provides a basis for the intellectual context and content of the paper. Key journals in language and education settings were consulted to ascertain the scholarly and practical challenges educators discuss, as well as the gaps in the literature. A literature search was conducted in scientific journals using 'Lusophone' as the key term. We then filtered out search findings on language proficiency tests and corpus applications or representations. More scientific journal databases and search terms were not used, given the scope of this article.

5.1. English Language Proficiency in Higher Education

As one of the main mediums of communication, English has been increasingly adopted as a language of instruction in higher education, prompting the emergence of such terms as English-medium instruction and English as a Medium of Instruction (Aizawa & Rose, 2019; Fang, 2018; Galloway et al., 2020; Macaro et al., 2018). These are considered an empowerment tool for those academic or qualifying tracks that are part of the globalized knowledge communities and market (Lin & Yang, 2020; Rose et al., 2022; Song, 2021; S. K. Pestsov, 2021).

An increasing number of students from countries where English is spoken as a foreign language now seek higher education degrees, especially postgraduate degrees at the master's or doctoral levels, in countries of Anglophone cultural tradition (Calikoglu, 2018; Hajar & Mhamed, 2021; Litovchenko & Shmeleva, 2020; Xiuwen Zhai & Abu Bakar Razali, 2022). These degrees aim to equip them for the knowledge marketplace or for academic career development internationally, outside their own Lusophone and Francophone contexts (França et al., 2018; Makola & Mulaudzi, 2024; Ndaipa, 2024; Roshid & Le Ha, 2023). As English not only proves to be important and strategic as a global communicative language but also signifies access and empowerment, learners are thrust into the race for Englishing from an early age in secondary and tertiary education systems (Redouane LEHIANE & Hafida El AMRANI, 2024; Le Ha, 2018; Macías & Mosquera-Pérez, 2024; Sah, 2019; Takino, 2020).

The pursuit of English language proficiency among the two quality-determined or specified pathways, aiming at either international further academic qualification or the job market, is most of the time mediated or facilitated by the formal education systems and information and communication technologies within the provision of various educational avenues of curriculum and extracurricular activities that are related to teaching methodologies and resources featured, such as formal urban schools as opposed to informal ones, English as a foreign language or as a second language, rote or drill learning, readings and writings, communicative approach, and multimedia or computer-assisted language learning (Block & Moncada-Comas, 2022; Garrido & Codó, 2017; Obaidul Hamid, 2010).

Students are differentially positioned concerning resources and competencies for language proficiency and performance as learners and users of the globally recognized and universally sanctioned commodity or brand: English (Cao & Meng, 2020; Gallagher et al., 2020; Kedzierski, 2016). This means that students are either prepared or ill-prepared for the crucial race in contestation—in education, in occupation, on the market, and otherwise (Nushi & Razdar, 2021; Rowan et al., 2021; Wu, 2019). Some are progressively groomed from an early start or nurture as globally competent and confident learners who easily make transitions to comprehensive English fluency as a proficient second or foreign language (Barbara Krawczyk, 2018; Harisur Rahman et al., 2024; Nwamaka, 2022). Others are socially caged in the local limited language exposure, which is lacking in the predispositions related to cognitive and

socio-cultural factors associated with English language competency, including adequate tools, texts, materials, and communicative language competence (East, 2019; Lee & Winke, 2018; Nguyen, 2020; Rafatbakhsh & Ahmadi, 2019; Tajino, 2016).

6. Findings and Discussion

In our previous section, we outlined the evolution of our research process in general and discussed the practicalities of how our systematic review is conducted. We now move on to the discussion stage, where there are two research aims. The first is to provide an overview of our findings and link these to our objectives from the beginning of the project. The second is to interpret the collected evidence to build a consistent picture of the field and its potential impacts on one of our research questions: whether language proficiency can influence educational and professional development.

6.1. Findings

The search that we performed returned a total of fifteen articles from the databases we had chosen. Based on the abstracts of these articles, we rejected three: two were rejected for not being relevant to our purposes, and one was rejected for the unsuitability of its timing. A further three papers were included after we screened their full texts. Two out of these were recommended for inclusion through the snowballing of references as well. As a result, four publications from the included list were from the final search results. The content of the remaining thirteen publications was mostly useful when it came to discussing certain aspects of the phenomenon, albeit not directly related to their purpose. The literature that we found identified a series of concerns and solutions with which the possible answer to our research question can find resonance. One of the concerns was that the quality of the written and spoken English of the students in the studies seemed to make it difficult for them to further their academic development. Most of these students also associated employability with their level of English.

6.2. Impact of English Language Proficiency on Academic Career Development

Besides providing a better quality of teaching, a good proficiency in English is crucial for a successful academic course (Rose et al., 2020; Wilson, 2016). It allows students and academics to navigate between several countries and academic environments while acquiring international qualifications (de Wit & Altbach, 2021; H. J. Kim, 2020). Access to English is also important in the job market, where the global trend is for more qualified professionals (Galloway et al., 2020; Zainuddin et al., 2019b), and students who combine national degrees with exchange based on the language (Baker, 2016; (Shao & Rose, 2024). This is especially needed in the STEM area, in which a growing number of job offers demand a qualification in research or

technical literature consumption in English (Grigoleit-Richter, 2017; Holmes et al., 2018; Takeuchi et al., 2020). In that sense, success stories indicate that proficient English students usually get job opportunities to be the "frontier people" with English-proficient market professionals, reporting and guiding in tandem with the advances of the biomedical complex (Damari et al., 2017; Doan & Hamid, 2021; Ting et al., 2017).

Success stories of research training program students (almost all of whom work in public health services in São Paulo, Brazil) attest that donor international institutions, as well as international community interlocutors in longer-term postgraduate scholarships, seek students with prior demonstration of English education-based test proficiency as per target job/academic preferences (do Amaral et al., 2022; Cavalcante et al., 2018; Warde & Rocha, 2022). Usually converts already demanded funding from ad hoc and multicentric study sponsors into job offers for the students, besides enhancing the autonomy of the young adults that achieve their international or transnational mobility in educational episodes (Ahmad, 2019; Iorio & Pereira, 2018; Lowe & Kent, 2019; Shahjahan et al., 2023). In our experience, a minimum C2 level has been achieved by most of our students after cost-financed courses in English (Iorio & Pereira, 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2019). Yet, the difficulty in the English language is a challenge, especially because there are a few countries, such as Portugal and its colonies, where there are few official languages and it is more difficult to translate titles, abstracts, and summaries of academic or professional works for wider dissemination of the research (Covele, 2022; Curry & Lillis, 2024; Santos & da Silva, 2016).

7. Overview of Articles Reviewed

The articles included in the ultimate examination were published in 19 journals, of which (n = 18) focus on English language dominance educational research. (n=6) articles addressed the issue of career development in higher education. (n=2) of the articles were published in journals specializing in higher education studies. This result supports Yallew et al.'s (2021) reflection that critical and particularly sociological viewpoints are limited in the majority of higher education journals, and such is the sociolinguistics field, these studies are published in expert journals of each field. The mainstream of the type of articles reviewed (n =21) were identified as empirical studies (see Tom-Lawyer, O., & Thomas, M.2019; Peters, R.W.2016; Ribeiro, M. del C. A., & Coelho, M.2019; MacPherson, R.2011; Warde, M.J.&RochaA.C.S.M.2022; Spolsky, B.2018; Scetti, F.2020; Santos, J.,&da silva 2016; O'Neill, P., & Massini-Cagliari, G. 2019; Fernandes, J.2029; Cavalcante, I.M. 2018; do Amaral, C. C. B. 2022; França, T., Alves, E., & Padilla, B. 2018; França, T.,&Cairns, D.2020; Ioro, J.&Perreira, S.2018; Langa, P.V.2013; Lopes, A.2018; Matias, A.R.M.2024; Ndaipa, C.2024; Covele, R.P.M.2022).

A systematic review study was employed to explore more about studies on the issue of the English language and career development in African higher education (see Covele et al.2024). In summary, 30 authors (an average of 1.30 for each article) were identified. Most of the study (57%) was from Lusophony African perspectives and affiliated with African universities. Hence, the study revealed that 24% of Brazilian-based studies contexts were affiliated with non-African universities, and finally, 19% of the studies were addressed in a Portugal higher education context. 67% of the authors were affiliated with departments and faculties of education in their universities, 19% were affiliated with departments of language, literature, linguistics, and culture, and 14% were affiliated to the department of sociology.

Eleven articles (52%) have single authors, while six (29%) have two authors. Only four articles have more than two authors, covering 19%. The lead of articles with single authorship could be associated with the fact that collective research in humanities and social sciences is comparatively less common if compared to fields such as medicine and the natural sciences discipline groups (Yallem et al. 2021).

Fourteen percent of the publications (n = 3) came from Mozambique (see Covele, R.P.M. 2022; Langa, P.V.2013; Ndaipa, C. 2024). Six other publications across the world accounted for 28,6% of the articles that investigated issues raised on the English language proficiency for career construction in Lusophony contexts from different locations (see Covele et al.2024; Lopes, A.2018; Santos, J.,&da silva 2016; Spolsky, B.2018; França, T.2018; Matias, A.R.M.2024). Hence, five articles focused on Brazil (see Cavalcante, I.M. 2018; do Amaral, C. C. B. 2022; Ioro, Perreira, S.2018; Warde, M.J.&RochaA.C.S.M.2022; O'Neill, P., & Massini-Cagliari, G. 2019), which covered 23,8%. Portugal contributed nineteen percent of the publications (n=4), (see Scotti, F.2020; Ribeiro, M. del C. A., & Coelho, M.2019; França, T., Alves, E., & Padilla, B. 2018; Fernandes, J.2029). Finally, a few contributions from Angola (see Peters, R.W. 2016); East Timor (see MacPherson, R.2011), and Guinea-Bissau (see Tom-Lawyer, O., & Thomas, M.2019), covering 4,8% for each.

8. Conclusions and Future Directions

This systematic review has discussed the main terms related to Lusophony, more significantly connected to the context of Portuguese-speaking Africa, attracted through language policies (Macpherson, 2011; Peters, 2016; Tom-Lawyer & Thomas, 2019). Building on this terminology, we systematized the notion of the drivers of student academic success, such as reasoning skills, resilience, adaptability, and an international focus, which are significantly connected with proficiency in English as an academic language.

We interpreted English language proficiency as a consequence of early foreign language learning and defined the hidden curriculum included in the syllabus of different disciplines that contribute to better preparing students for their future professional careers. To take advantage

of English as the key to academic progression, it is essential to treat learning not only for the sake of learning but also as future necessary tools to be learned as an integrated part of the content addressed, requiring interpersonal, cognitive, epistemological, and sociocultural skills.

Our review indicated that there is still a lack of systematicity in addressing issues related to access to higher education. It has clearly shown that there is an association between issues such as international migration and bilingualism and/or translanguaging resulting from the policies of using Portuguese, which are still present in the access to different cycles of education in the four PALOPs and secretariats of the CPLP, and the lack of higher education adjusted to the demands of the international employment market (Lima Becker et al., 2022; Matias, 2024).

In this sense, it has shown that bridging the gap between the formal labor market and English makes higher education in English an effective educational tool to enable the underprivileged to have adequate qualifications, especially training with digital literacy and computational prowess, to know how to think, live with empathetic convergence, and at the level of interdependence, in our opinion, how to acquiesce to live. It is expected that these reflections inspire other authors to critically understand the problems posed in the papers presented at RECAPes at the level of CPLP and Lusophony (Duarte, 2020; Fernandes, 2019).

More concretely, given what is presented in this review, we consider that research characterizing students in terms of approaches and study practices that lead them to master academic languages, whether Portuguese or not, and the development of professional skills from differences in classroom practices (differences that need not be discriminatory) can provide evidence for upgrading curricula and support systems, as called for at the end of the review. In this sense, based on the still scattered evidence presented in this review, some questions can be put forward for the development of future empirical research topics, among others, for qualitative research, experimental, and non-experimental causal-purpose studies.

9. Practical Implications

The practical implication of this study is that promoting English language proficiency and competence should be the focus of institutional policy, as this enhances internationalization, career progression among academics, fosters collaboration, and improves institutional global presence. Improving access to quality education through a multi-lingual approach, including English language as a medium of teaching and learning, offers students and staff a means for self-development strategy.

Institutions could be intentional in subscribing to scholarly resources that are exclusively in the English language and provide incentives for manuscript publications in such journals. Sponsorship of international conferences, symposiums, seminars, and volunteering to host international or regional conferences, encouraging mobility exchanges, and exploring funding opportunities that are specifically focused on the English language are other practical

implications of enhancing English language proficiency and competency. Conclusively, adopting a proactive and strategic approach that encourages English Language proficiency and competency cannot be overstated.

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