Interview [P5]

P = Participant at case study institution

The following conventions are used in transcription of spoken interviews:

[replacement information in square brackets]

[redacted information in grey in square brackets]

[?] = unintelligible missing word(s); immediately following word = unclear[?]

[#] = redacted numerical information

CAPITALS to signify emphasis in speaking

((Extraneous information in double brackets))

Researcher  
OK. Yeah. So, thanks so much for participating in this.

[P5]

You’re welcome.

Researcher

Thank you. Uh just to recap, we're looking at how English is being increasingly USED for academic programs at European universities. So we've been looking at some different places. We started in the Netherlands, because they were quite early implementers of English language programs. And then I was doing, I was looking at Austria, and I've recently moved on to Spain ((laughing)). So we're looking at lots of different systems of governance and organization and cultural context. So it's, it's really exciting. And obviously SPAIN has its own UNIQUE characteristics within the European landscape.

[P5]   
Am I the first one in Spain?

Researcher  
No, you're, I think you're about the 5th, but um I've been interviewing different kind of, you know, people from different faculties or at different, what can I say, like in different parts of the governance structure as WELL, so that I can get different viewpoints from different people. So I THINK you're my first [role] ((laughing)).

[P5]

OK ((laughing)).

Researcher  
So you ARE my first something.

[P5]  
OK ((laughing)).

Researcher  
So yeah, just to warm up a bit, I was wondering, could you tell me something about your role as [role]? So, it's [subject area], isn't it?

[P5]

Yeah, it’s [subject area] School. Yeah, I’m the [role] for six months now. So I am quite, quite new in this position ((laughing)). But I have been also there [role] for [#] years, for some time, and and I was also for [#] years, [role]. And so OK ((laughing)).

Researcher  
Right, right. So yeah, you have a lot of experience. That's brilliant. So I guess looking at the curriculum online, it looked like there was quite a LOT of English at bachelor’s level. So I was, I was wondering if you knew something about HOW that came ABOUT, how was the decision made, OK, we're gonna have these programs in English. Do you know anything about the BACKGROUND to it?

[P5]   
Yeah, uh some years ago the the Rectorate, OK, the Rectoral team wanted to to improve the internationalization of our university, and then besides starting to to make some AGREEMENTS with other European universities, they thought that it would be GOOD for our university to start teaching some degrees in ENGLISH. OK. And also in that time the the regional government of [region] started to internationalise the the the you know the their students, the STUDIES for for boys and girls. OK, before coming to the university, and now there are a lot of schools with BILINGUAL studies. So because those students were going to come to the university, then they thought that it would be good for US to have some space and some degrees in, in English for those students and ALSO maybe for Erasmus students.

Researcher  
Right, right. So um so, yeah, the the regional government um when it made this decision for bilingual programs, do you know if that also had a national agenda or was it kind of autonomous that they made that decision?

[P5]

Yeah, they education in Spain is is governed by REGIONAL governments. OK, each regional government has its OWN decisions and and in this case was the the [region] regional government.

Researcher

OK, and WHAT period of time are we talking about roughly when you say this started to happen in your, I think you must have been one of the earlier ones in, were you some of the earliest ones in [subject area] to start doing English programs or at your university, do you know?

[P5]   
Is sorry I don't understand quite well.

Researcher  
Sorry, um well. What year roughly, I mean WHEN when did this start? So you were talking at that time-

[P5]   
Ah it started in OUR school. OK, in our school, I think [#] years ago. And only one of our degrees, only in the degree in [subject area]. OK, we have [#] more degrees, but ONLY in this one the students can study in English.

Researcher  
Yeah, and that's STILL the case NOW. It's still only one.

[P5]   
Yes, yes, BUT SORRY because the first course for [#] degrees is exactly the SAME. We allow students of the other degrees to join to the group, to the English Group, BUT in the second course they go back to their students with no English teaching, OK. And ONLY the the ones in the degree of [subject area] are the ones that can study almost ALL the subjects in their degrees in English, almost all because the the optional subjects are taught in Spanish because they are common to to ALL the degrees.

Researcher  
Right, right. So that's when you say the FIRST group, do you mean year one of the bachelor's programs for the first year of the Bachelor program, they can join in and then but by year two, they go back to Spanish program. OK, great.

So um so I'm wondering if you can kind of talk me through the the structures or what you need to do, my my impression of your university or perhaps Spanish university education is that the [role] has quite a lot of AUTONOMY like the [role] and the faculty, there's quite a lot of AUTONOMY is that, is that right? Would you say or?

[P5]

Yeah, but in order to teach one degree, you need to send a memory to the government, to the regional government, and the government must say, OK, you can start teaching. AND if you're going to teach some groups in English, you need to TELL them, and they need to, and you need they to agree to APPROVE the the proposition.

Researcher  
OK, so um I'm aware of ANECA, so ANECA is the, ANECA?

[P5]   
ANECA is there the the NATIONAL National Agency, but EACH regional each region has its their own agency. In this case, this case is [region], well [name of regional agency], I don’t remember now the name.

Researcher

So um basically because you I'm wondering, you know, because before I came to Spain, I was looking at Austria, and they didn't have this kind of ANECA body or or like you're saying regional government, they they didn't have. So when they were doing course implementation, it would go within the structure OF the university, whereas in Spain, does this mean as a [ROLE] and with your [role]'s team and your faculty board, you can decide to DRAFT a NEW program and you DON'T need to go upwards to the rectorate? You can go straight to ANECA with the memoria or or whatever.

[P5]   
Yeah, if if you want to teach OFFICIAL degrees, you need to wait for the approval of the [region], the regional agency. But we can also plan to to teach non official courses, not exactly degrees, but courses and and then you will you need also the UNIVERSITY approval. But the most important are the OFFICIAL degrees.

Researcher  
Yeah. So for for the official degrees, you DON'T need approval above the level of the [role]. You go to ANECA and to the regional government. So you don't need to get approval from the rectorate or some other.

[P5]

Ohh yeah, yeah, yeah, of COURSE. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. True. Yeah. You FIRST submit your your memory to the Rectoral team. OK. And then with the, with the Rectoral team mostly CHECKS that you have done the work, well OK, that the memory is CORRECT that you have and included ALL the needed information, and then THEY send the memory to, the proposition to the to the regional agency.

Researcher  
Uh-huh. And do they also send it to ANECA? Or do you send it to ANECA you send it to ANECA?

[P5]   
No ANECA. Uh, NOW the their proposals need only need only the the the OK of the regional agency, not ANECA.

Researcher  
OK. Because other people, some other people had mentioned ANECA, so do they not need to approve-?

[P5]   
If YOU are planning an international degree when there is the there is taught by THIS university and other European universities, THEN you need approval of ANECA. And if you need a national I don't know the word there’s some kind of seal or OK and and national recognition for your degree, THEN you need to submit it to ANECA. But for TEACHING the degree you only need the approval of the regional agency.

Researcher  
OK. It's quite complicated ((laughing)).

[P5]   
Yeah, yeah, I know. I know ((smiling)). And sometimes it is very difficult to to have the the the high level education distributed by regions in Spain is some madness ((shakes head and snorts)).

Researcher  
Yeah. I'm wondering so some of the faculties I've looked at or the the curricula that I've looked at. It looks like there's MORE English language provision at BACHELOR'S level and LESS at masters level. Is that the case, do you think, for example?

[P5]

Yes, yes, we only we only have a an English group in Bachelor level not for master degrees.

Researcher  
What? WHY do you think there is this difference between bachelor’s and master’s?

[P5]   
Well, because for the master’s, we only have ONE group of students, and THEN you have to decide to to teach it in Spanish or in English. And I think that with just one group is better to teach it in English- uh in SPANISH, and also because for master degrees we receive MANY students from Latin America, and then it's better to teach in Spanish.

Researcher  
That's interesting because when I was looking at a university in Austria, it was actually the OPPOSITE way around. So bachelor degrees are have to be in German at that university and then the master’s, that it's becoming MORE and MORE and MORE English. So yeah, so.

[P5]   
Yeah. But, you know, Latin America is very important for Spain, so.

Researcher  
Sure, sure. Yeah. Yeah. But I suppose they don't come, they don't come so much then for BACHELOR’S degrees, or they DO as well, they do as well?

[P5]   
Yes, no, no. Only MOSTLY for master degrees.

Researcher  
Is there, is there a reason for that, why it's mainly master’s degrees?

[P5]   
I think but that because in their countries they can study the bachelor degrees, and and then they they want to to receive a more SPECIALIZED education here in Spain. And THAT'S for with master degrees no, master degrees.

Researcher  
Umm OK. Yeah, that's interesting. I mean, in Austria, obviously they also have a lot of German students coming from Germany. So that, yeah ((laughing)).

OK, so when when I looked at the curriculum, it said there was a B1 language requirement for the for the bachelor’s in in in the [subject area], or was it [subject area]? Sorry, [subject area], is that the one? Yeah. So is that right? So the LEVEL of English that the students have to HAVE on admission to the course is B1?

[P5]   
B1, yes correct.

Researcher  
Yeah. Yeah. So is, is there a reason WHY it's set at B1?

[P5]   
Hm, I don't really know it's what is useful I think in Spain ((shaking head and laughing)).

Researcher  
No. OK. Are are you aware of any, is there any language POLICY at your university that recommends a certain LEVEL on the European-?

[P5]   
Yeah, that THAT level. Yeah, that's it's, it's the same the same level in all the in all OUR university in all the the the English degrees.

Researcher  
Right, right. Is that some kind of policy that is documented or is it just what people think is the best kind of?

[P5]   
I I think they think they think it’s the best, but I'm I don't know if there is a regulation.

Researcher  
Yeah, yeah, sure. So um do, do you TEACH on this program YOURSELF or? Yeah. So do you feel this is an appropriate level for your program? So the students are able to UNDERSTAND the content-?

[P5]

Yes, it's OK.

Researcher

OK. Yeah. So I was wondering, ONE of the things we're looking at is, you know, GOVERNANCE as well within this, you know the INFLUENCES of of when we have English language courses. So I'm wondering if you're aware of any kind of influences coming from ABOVE, say WITHIN your university or the REGIONAL government level or the NATIONAL level um that might influence whether you decide to start an English language program or not. Are you aware of any kind of influences, say strategies or policies or?

[P5]

Well, just in the university, the university wants to be more international and, BUT the national level, I don't know ((shaking head)).

Researcher  
Right, right. So is the only influence, do you think about internationalization, or are there are OTHER reasons why someone might start a program in English, say. Or is that ONLY to do with international students, for example or?

[P5]   
Um yeah, I think it's more for our SPANISH students that now they have a good level of ENGLISH, and and THEN we want to to allow them to to, to teach their degree in English.

Researcher  
OK, so there.

[P5]   
We we also receive Erasmus students, OK, [?] is strange because the Erasmus program is supposed to to, to send students to one country, to learn the language of that country and so, but when they COME and they see that there is a group in English, say, OK, and they join the the English group instead of trying to to to learn the to learn Spanish, you know the other, but that's OK ((laughs and shrugs shoulders)).

Researcher  
((Laughing)) It's one one reason to avoid Erasmus.

[P5]

((Laughing)) Yeah.

Researcher  
Right. So, so I guess I mean there you you feel there's a demand from the BOTTOM, so that you're meeting a demand of the students who THEMSELVES want to learn in English?

[P5]   
Well, I I must say that the the group, the group that is taught in English uh always have has LESS students than other groups. For example, if if other groups have have [#] students or so, for example, last year I had [#] students only. THIS year I have [#], so this year I have uh significantly more students than last year, but always it’s a most reduced group of students.

Researcher  
Oh, really? OK, so it's not such a BIG demand, but it's something you want to PROVIDE for those students who want to.

[P5]

Yeah, I think the the, the students are still AFRAID of receiving teaching in English, because uh Spanish students always have very shy, and and they they are AFRAID of the of FAILING if they teach in English, they receive their their studies in English, so I think. And I think in this group, we have better students because they were brave enough to join the English group. OK. And I I think it's true because, yeah, I'm teaching one subject in the English group for many years and the the GRADES are much better than in other groups in general. For example, last year from the [#], only two student fail. OK. The other [#], got a very good grades.

Researcher  
So why, why do you think that IS? Is it the the type of students they come from high school and they they they have a HIGHER ability in BOTH subjects, like both in English and also in [subject area]. Or WHY do you think the reason is that it's a BETTER group of students?

[P5]   
Well, our our [subject area] degree has a high a high grade when they finish their previous studies. As you know there is an EXAM for entering the university, and the the grades that can go up to 14, OK, the 14 is the maximum grade. And our students need at least [#]. So their students that THEY had very good grades in the, in the in the test, in the in the exam for entering the university, so they are supposed to be GOOD students, not in [subject area], but in GENERAL. OK. And MANY of the students also have had some of the courses at the United States or other English speaking country. And when they have been one year in an English speaking country, they are CONFIDENT that they can study in English.

Researcher  
Umm, right, right. I'm just wondering because you say the grades are actually HIGHER in the English group, so obviously those grades are FOR their work in [subject area]. So I'm just wondering what the connection is between the language or the TYPE of student AND the actual quality of work IN [subject area].

[P5]

No, I don't think there is a connection, no.

Researcher  
No connection.

[P5]   
I don't, I don't think so.

Researcher  
But, but WHY are they better than the other groups then? Is it the TYPE of student that it encourages to apply? Is it the type of student?

[P5]   
Yeah, I think because they they ASKING for the English group, they show MORE commitment and more interest. OK. And then they are better students because they they are willing to to study the study better than the others, I think, right ((laughing))?

Researcher  
((laughing)) Because they're making life harder for themselves.

[P5]

I don't know how to say it, but yeah, yeah.

Researcher  
They're making it more DIFFICULT for themselves, so they're they're better.

[P5]   
Yeah, yeah.

Researcher

Are they maybe more AMBITIOUS?

[P5]

Ambitious. Yeah, maybe. Yeah.

Researcher  
Okay, that’s interesting. So for some of the SPANISH elective courses on on the program, it says “although they are instructed in SPANISH, they provide ALL the materials in ENGLISH. The professor can interact with the students IN English, both in the lab and in the tutoring sessions, and the exam is provided and can be answered in English”. So for THIS, it kind of looks like SOME of the Spanish elective courses may be kind of English courses in practice ((laughing)).

[P5]   
Yeah. Umm yeah. EVERYTHING, everything is in English, all the materials, all the exams. So EVERYTHING. And the interaction is, well of course, sometimes if you are out of the class and when students ask you something in Spanish, then sometimes you answer in Spanish. But MOST of the times in English.

Researcher  
But it but it ACTUALLY says this for the SPANISH courses, so the SPANISH elective courses. So the courses they CHOOSE that are in Spanish, it says that although they're in SPANISH, a lot of it might be ENGLISH. So I'm wondering, is there any need to classify them as SPANISH? Is there any reason why they are classified as Spanish programs, like for example you HAVE to have a certain percentage of programs in Spanish? Or are there any kind of regulations, nothing like that?

[P5]

No, no ((shaking head))

Researcher  
Right. OK. And how about there's a one year master program in [subject area], so it says its PREFERABLY instructed in English. So I'm wondering WHY that is the PREFERENCE. So it says PREFERABLY instructed in English. Why is that?

[P5]   
Because I think because it's yeah, because it is a, it's a study that, of SEVERAL universities, OK. In THAT master degree, there are some teachers of MY university or the teachers from the [name of university], other teachers from the [name of university] teachers, and and MAYBE because it’s a inter-university program. Maybe it's better to to do it that way.

Researcher  
Are are the other universities in SPAIN or international for THAT program?

[P5]   
In Spain in Spain, yeah, in [region], [region] in in our region.

Researcher  
So do maybe some of the OTHER universities in [region]'s TEACH in English, which is why?

[P5]   
Yes, yes, I think ALL universities in [region] have English programs that is taught in English.

Researcher  
Right, right. OK. So I mean, like the impression I get from what you're saying and and from looking at the faculty is that there's a, you know, that people are quite open MINDED towards having English PROGRAMS. Are there any kind of voices of RESISTANCE? Are there any people who say no, we should be speaking and sorry teaching in SPANISH.

[P5]   
Yeah, even in my in my TEAM ((laughing)), in my [role] team there are some ones that they say uh we don't NEED to to teach in English, but but MOST of the teachers in the school think that it is GOOD to have a one group that is taught in English.

Researcher  
Right, right. So if you look at the teachers who voice positive opinions towards it, what REASONS do they give for it being a GOOD thing to have English, um in your experience?

[P5]

Hm, maybe because they think that the we are using SOME resources that can be used for opening OTHER degrees, other new DEGREES instead of using the resources for the English degree, the degree taught in English.

Researcher  
Ohh sorry. You mean the ones that DON'T don't want English.

[P5]

Yes, yes.

Researcher

OK. Right right right. So so it's a question of resources mainly?

[P5]   
Yeah. For example, if you teach in the in English, you have LESS classes in other in OTHER subjects, so they they PAY you more if you teach in English than if you teach in the Spanish ones.

Researcher  
OK, so this is seen as NEGATIVE or is seen as POSITIVE?

[P5]   
No. Well, no, no. But SOME teachers may think that that there's a waste of resources and and we can use them for for other things. But but they are few, FEW professors, FEW teachers. OK. So MOST of the teachers THINK that it is good to have the the group in English.

Researcher  
Right, right.

[P5]

And of COURSE, in in this school, most of the teachers CAN teach in English, OK, because they their research is an international research with other international GROUPS, and MOST of the teachers speak English well.

Researcher  
Right, right. Do you think there's a a CONNECTION between, say, researching and publishing English language papers say in international journals and teaching? Or is it not relevant whether?

[P5]   
No, no, not relevant, because almost anyone can decide to join the English group or not. But sometimes it depends on the the load of work they have and any other things OK.

Researcher  
OK. Is there anything I haven't given you the chance to talk about that you would like to talk about? Um perhaps I missed something that's quite important and in relation to this topic.

[P5]   
No, I don't, I don't think so. I don't think so.

Researcher  
Can I ask um a question again, coming back to the fact you're a [ROLE], so um, you know, about the GOVERNANCE aspect. There's another faculty, for example, where I know that the [role] and the [role]'s team kind of, that the faculty boards had to VOTE about whether to have English language courses or not. Um did you, did you DO something similar in your faculty or?

[P5]   
Not now, when when we plan to to start teaching in English, of COURSE, the the the Junta de Facultad that is with [#] teachers, more or less, had to decide that to say to to say, OK, let's go and yeah.

Researcher  
Right, right. So.

[P5]   
Not not the the the [role] can't decided by himself or herself.

Researcher  
And the [role]s, are they allowed to vote or not?

[P5]

Yes, yes, yes.

Researcher  
The [role]s, they can vote, but not the [role], not the [role]?

[P5]

Yeah. No, NO. All all, we are ALL in the Junta, in the Junta de Facultad, so.

Researcher  
Uh, so YOU can vote TOO, but it has to go to the whole the whole group of people, right right.

Researcher  
Um have you got any INTENTION of EXPANDING English or are you happy with this one course for now?

[P5]   
No, not NOW. Not now. I think that now we are happy with JUST one group.

Researcher

It that because of the number of STUDENTS or is there a reason WHY you're deciding, OK, it's fine the way it is NOW.

[P5]   
Because NOW it's it's difficult for us to get MORE teachers, OK. And they, ALL the teachers now, they have a very high workload, and then this is NOT really the time. We need to ask for MORE teachers for our faculty, for our school, and then MAYBE. But I think people prefer to try to open more master degrees, OTHER master degrees and, you know, master degrees have one group and then the that group is in Spanish group, no? So we are more interested now in opening NEW master degrees, OK, then other groups in English in our master degrees or or or bachelor degrees so. We have, we need MORE resources in order to be able to DECIDE to go on to, to to start OTHER degrees with groups in English.

Researcher  
And if if you DO decide or ASK for resources for NEW masters programs, would those being probably in SPANISH then, or would you have some decide to do some English? What do you think?

[P5]   
SPANISH I think well, when maybe there's one thing that I can they can tell about this, is that NOW we have some alliances with other universities in Europe. You know [name of European alliance]. Do you know [name of European alliance]? So NOW the university is planning um international degrees. And then MAYBE we participate in those international degrees, for example, they are planning one in [subject area] and then maybe some or our teachers of our teachers WILL participate in that in those international degrees.

Researcher  
Right, right.

[P5]

THAT would be possible, but NEW degrees in English now is, I think it is is difficult, it's I DON'T think so.

Researcher  
So the the people and the teaching staff, the academics, researchers in your faculty, there's no kind of PRESSURE for them to, you know PUBLISH in English or or TEACH in English or anything like that?

[P5]   
Publish, publish in English, of COURSE. Yeah, yeah, everybody publishes in or participates in international congress and and international publication, no? So the RESEARCH is mostly done in English. OK. But the studies, they are they are not, they have not PRESSURE for participating in English, that is.

Researcher  
Right, right. And and where I mean where where does this PRESSURE to publish in English come from? Is it for example, I mean is this sometimes connected to the review PROCESS? So for example ANECA has a six year research review period?

[P5]

In order to get the sexenios, what is the, it's six years, they submit their their work or to the ANECA and then they got sexenio that is more money for them in their in their their monthly PAYMENT, OK, in their salaries. OK. So in English, publications are important for THEM to to get the the approval of the ANECA for the six year period and get a a little more money every month, OK ((laughing)). And they are aware that now uh nowadays RESEARCH is made in English mainly, OK, so it's very, very they KNOW that they MUST publish their research results in in English, OK, in English publications in English congresses and and so on.

Researcher  
Yeah, yeah. And I mean, when ANECA evaluates their work, um I mean does, do you think they language matters? Is it just because it's an international publication and so maybe it has a higher impact factor or yeah.

[P5]   
Yes, not, not because of the language but but international works, and then of course they are indexed.

Researcher  
OK. OK. Thank you so much. You given me so much to think about ((laughing)).

[P5]   
You’re welcome. I hope it will be useful for you ((laughing)).

Researcher  
Definitely, definitely. It's so good. Like I said, you're my first [role], so ((laughing)).

[P5]   
OK ((laughing)).

Researcher  
I I think I think you might be my ONLY one. I'm not sure I have to have another look. But yeah, no, this is so, so helpful um and also so great to get a perspective from your faculty, from [subject area] in addition to the other things. So thank you so much again for your TIME for taking the time to do this with us.

[P5]   
OK. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. OK. Bye bye.

Researcher  
OK, bye then. Bye.