Interview with [P9]

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  
Seems to be working. OK. Brilliant. So so good to have you here from, you know, with your expertise in terms of [area]. Um so I I guess I ought to just recap a little bit about the project FIRST. So, we're basically looking at how English is being increasingly used at European universities for academic programs. So we started looking at the Netherlands because they were quite early implementers of English language programs. And we've been looking at some other places. So, I was looking at Austria and now I've turned my attention towards SPAIN ((laughing)). So it's great to have your INPUT ON this. So I just thought maybe to warm up, perhaps you could tell me a little bit about what you DO in the [unit].

[P9]   
[Redacted identifying information.]

Researcher  
OK, brilliant. So um I'm interested. Do you make a distinction, for example, do you have students that you call degree-seeking students who maybe COME to your university for the WHOLE degree program? Or do you focus mainly on kind of EXCHANGE programs or or what is it you focus on?

[P9]   
[Redacted identifying information.]

Researcher  
Right, right. And um why, um so sorry, um some of my questions may be very simple because I don't know the context very well, but um why, why are mobility students so important? Is there any kind of incentive or any, why is this DRIVE to have mobility students?

[P9]   
Well, it it is within the framework of the Erasmus Plus program, mainly. We receive a lot of Erasmus student and it is financed by the European Commission, so we have, yeah. Yeah, the funding is quite HIGH. I would say we are the [#] university in Spain sending and receiving international students. And [redacted identifying information], I think and the the [#] in Europe, I would say, because in Spain, it's a good place to come ((laughing)) for students who are international students in some some way, but well, THEY study in Spanish mainly.

Researcher  
Yeah. OK, right. So um-

[P9]   
I I cannot hear you, [Researcher’s name].

((Disruption to interview due to technical difficulties.))

Researcher  
Yeah. Thanks so much for rejoining me again on another day. Really appreciate it.

[P9]   
No problem ((laughing)).

Researcher  
Yeah, we need to kind of pick up where we left off.

[P9]   
Yes.

Researcher  
Yeah. So I was wondering. Perhaps do you kind of have an overview uh, in your job of English language programs or is that not something that that you are, have to concern yourself with in your in your job. Like so, for example, how MANY there are, have they INCREASED, have they stayed the same? Are they decreasing? Do you have like statistics that you have an overview OF?

[P9]   
Uh, well, not any statistic actually, but I have an overview. Well, all the English programs are dealt within the vice rectorate for for education, but we have contact, we we are in contact with them more or less. So I would say that the number of programs taught in English have INCREASED in the last four years, more or less, I would say. And the number of courses taught in English as well. I don't know the percentage of increase, but yeah for sure. Hmm ((nodding)).

Researcher  
The, so in in your opinion, what, what is the reason for for this increase in your, do you have any ideas?

[P9]   
Hmm well, I think the fact that we are in the European Union and within the Erasmus Plus program uh has helped. Because and now with this new initiative of the [EU body], creating or, well, they intend to create a European ALLIANCES of universities. Uh for them to lead to European universities, so we are clusters of universities, I don't know [#] universities from different countries, and they are creating or establishing um JOINT programs.

Researcher  
Right.

[P9]   
And well, you know the lingua franca of these programs are, is English still? Well they they SAY they are multilingual and so far so on, but I I think English is the lingua franca with this programs. So it it is helping.

Researcher  
Yeah. Yeah. So do you think is that programs like alliances like [name of association] or WHICH alliances, those type of alliances right now?

[P9]   
Yes, yes, yes, for sure. And there are quite a lot now, I don't know [#] I think within the European uh, uh at least, I don't know uh [#] universities more or less are participating in those alliances in DIFFERENT alliances. But there's a uh, a number of Spanish universities participating in these programs. So I think the NUMBER of programs taught in English in Spanish universities is increasing globally.

Researcher  
So, so you mentioned the vice-rectorate for education, um if if I wanted to get statistics on, say, English language PROGRAMS or the NUMBER of international students or the number of international STAFF, who, who would I contact to get those kind of-?

[P9]   
Yeah, the vice rectorate for EDUCATION and the vice-rectorate for STUDENTS as well, because they have the statistics of international students, not mobility students. If you want statistics for MOBILITY students, [redacted identifying information], or even in our web page, you can find them. I can send you the LINK if you want for you to have a look at it.

Researcher  
Oh that would be brilliant, thank you so much. Yeah, it would be GREAT to have some statistics to get an overview. Yeah. Thank you so much.

[P9]   
OK, it would be in, it would be in Spanish, but well, I think it's statistics is not so difficult to, but if you NEED more information, please just let me know, OK.

Researcher  
Yeah, that that's fantastic. If you can send me the link. Do you ALSO have statistics, because you mentioned when we started talking the last time, you mentioned [redacted identifying information] exchange programs with students, but you also mentioned STAFF. So I do have what what kind of STAFF are those international staff? So it's it's an EXCHANGE staff?

[P9]   
EXCHANGE staff, yeah, [redacted identfying information]. I mean, maybe there are international staff as well, academic staff mainly, who are working here as visiting professors or something like that. I can have a look at it as well if you want some information?

Researcher  
That would be fantastic. Thank you so much.

[P9]   
But here it is, mainly through Erasmus Plus program and the [case study university] program. We have our own mobility program as well, funded by the the university, and we have calls for applications for international mobility.

Researcher  
OK. So who who makes those calls? Where do those CALLS come from?

[P9]   
From the vice rectorate for international RELATIONS. It's just for TEACHING.

Researcher  
Right, right. So these staff then, are they part of this Erasmus Plus, does it include STAFF as well, Erasmus plus?

[P9]   
Yeah, Erasmus Plus includes stuff. Yeah, umm outgoing and incoming as WELL. Well, we don't have the numbers of incoming staff because normally they get an invitation from a faculty and with [#] faculties it’s kind of difficult for us to control it because they don't NEED anything else but. Well, we can have a look at the inter-institutional agreements if you want to to have MORE information, more less it is balanced. Yeah, the number of students outgoing and incoming. So for you to have an idea. But we have, yeah, we have numbers of outgoing staff, academic and administrative staff.

Researcher  
Of both, yeah.

[P9]   
Both.

Researcher  
Do you have an incoming administrative staff or is it mainly OUTGOING, both as well?

[P9]   
And both both as well.

Researcher  
Ohh that's interesting.

[P9]

Yeah, we have incoming, yeah, administrative staff and well, we we have we normally well normally it was the this year it has been the first time that we had an international staff week just for administrative staff of different universities from Europe and outside Europe as well, funded within Erasmus Plus program. Yeah, dealing with, I don't know, subjects related to INTERNATIONALIZATION and these kind of things, ADMINISTRATIVE subjects.

Researcher  
So where did this take place? Was that at your university, or was it at an international conference?

[P9]   
At OUR university, yes, more or less a week complete week, receiving STAFF from different universities.

Researcher  
Umm.

[P9]   
And yes, just to to SHARE with practices, this kind of things.

Researcher  
Uh, yeah, yeah. So when you had this international conference of Administrative Staff, was it then in English the uh language?

[P9]   
Yes, it was in English, yeah.

Researcher  
So are are these, uh, quite SMOOTH processes? Or are there any challenges you think that you FACE as administrative staff, for example?

[P9]   
With English, yes ((laughing)). Yes, because we are not prepared. Not ALL the administrative staff can speak English or another language, but mainly English. And well there's trouble when you are receiving students and staff from different universities, you know. Maybe in the [unit], well, we more or less ALL of us can speak a certain level of English, but OUTSIDE here in other administrative departments, it’s not so frequent.

Researcher  
Right, right.

[P9]   
And I think it is a a DIFFICULTY for internationalization.

Researcher  
Did the administrative staff OUTSIDE your department also participate in this event. Or was it just your department?

[P9]   
Some of them, the ones who can speak in English, of course ((laughing)), just to to give some conference or something like that. Yeah. This kind of, yeah, to participate actively, to participate in in this in this week.

Researcher  
Yeah. So it it's just, it's VOLUNTARY basically, whether the faculty had interest in sending its administrative staff.

[P9]   
Yes. Yes.

Researcher  
I'm wondering if you're AWARE that there's any, whether there's any MONITORING of English language programs that goes on from a higher level, for example, from the autonomous community of [region]? Do you have to SHARE your statistics with the autonomous community? Do they MONITOR or review this kind of these statistics?

[P9]   
Well, no. Well, we have a TRAINING program at the university. I think there's one I I don't know much about it, but I think there's one for academic staff and and there's another program training program for administrative staff, and English courses are being included for the the administrative staff, because we know that we need it within the the institution. And I think PART of this training program is funded by the Autonomous Community in [region].

Researcher  
OK, alright, alright.

[P9]   
But I'm not sure if they monitor in SOME way this, because, well, you know university in Spain are quite AUTONOMOUS as well, so.

Researcher  
Right, right. Yeah.

[P9]   
They are FUNDED by the autonomous community. There are some overarching you know LEGISLATION, but actually it’s the the UNIVERSITY that decides on it's uh training program for the, it's OWN staff, I mean.

Researcher  
Right right. And how about you know, English language ACADEMIC programs, for example, for STUDENTS? Are you aware that the autonomous community monitors THAT, or it's not? You're not aware of yeah any monitoring that goes on?

[P9]   
No, no, I don't think well. I mean, they have meetings with the rectors of the universities in [region] and I GUESS something is SAID in these meetings, but I'm not sure that they monitor as it should be  
what it is done within the university.

Researcher  
Sure.

[P9]   
It's a PITY, but it is.

Researcher  
No, sorry, I'm not, I'm not suggesting it SHOULD be done ((laughs)). I'm just getting CURIOUS what kind of influence is there might be, you know, on on English language programs, but um like you say, it's quite autonomous then in in YOUR university, yeah.

[P9]   
Yes, but but I think it would be a GOOD idea and I know that they they TALK about it. So something it's in there, but I don't know in if it is enough.

Researcher  
OK, alright, alright.

[P9]   
At to help universities uh to to get INTERNATIONAL as THEY should be. This is what I mean.

Researcher  
OK, right, right. So I mean in terms of the university budget, WHETHER you have English language courses or NOT, or INTERNATIONAL students or NOT, it doesn't AFFECT the budget you get from the autonomous community? Are you aware that it might affect it in some way or not?

[P9]   
Uh no, not NOW. This is what I I I meant that it is not included as a yeah.

Researcher  
Right. OK ((laughing)). Not at the moment, yeah.

[P9]   
Yeah, as a key point to GET FUNDING from the autonomous Community of [region].

Researcher  
OK. Yeah. Sorry, I I I'm just seeing my question, and I think if you've already answered quite a lot of them. So I don't, I don't want to ask you the same thing again.

I'm wondering, so you mentioned that there ARE English language programs for Erasmus students and some of your colleagues that I've talked to at your university um who teach academic programs in English or who have OVERVIEW of of academic programs including English ones they've mentioned that actually. Um, I'm sorry, it's the opposite way around ((laughing)). I think in our PREVIOUS interview you mentioned that the programs catering towards Erasmus students were Spanish academic programs, whereas some of your colleagues have also mentioned that they have English academic programs in their faculties actually FOR Erasmus students. So I'm wondering whether umm you you have any kind of awareness of of whether it kind of tends MORE towards Spanish or MORE towards English, or if you have any insights in into that?

[P9]   
Umm uh, well, the programs in mainly are taught in Spanish. This is the reality. But there are certain faculties that are more ACTIVE ((laughs)) in English. So for example, [faculty], [faculty], I'm not sure if [faculty] or [faculty] there are several in or [faculty] they they have these BILINGUAL degrees as they call it. So they have a degree in SPANISH and another similar, but taught completely in ENGLISH for our OWN students, [case study university] students who want to study in ENGLISH, and the Erasmus Plus students, are admitted to these programs. This is what I said before, that Erasmus Plus is helping us to increase the number of courses or even degrees taught in English because we have a high number of Erasmus students, incoming students coming to [case study university] each year around [#], or more or less. So it's a it's a GOOD number of students, so and then some of them, well not the majority, but an increasing number of incoming Erasmus students want to study in English as well. They it's a, I don't know, a DEMAND they that they have so, and it is in certain faculties not in ALL. But I think at this point ALL the faculties have at least SOME course taught in English with, with is, which is is good no to know.

Researcher  
I'm just, I'm just curious because, you know, obviously you might think, you know, with Erasmus, that students come from another country to SPAIN, maybe they want to do the academic programs in Spanish. Do you think that's still MOST of them or?

[P9]   
No, there are student who want to to study in OTHER languages, mainly ENGLISH as well. Hmm. Maybe it is not the same with international students, degree seeking students coming to [case study university] because mainly they come from Latin America, or or they CAME ((laughing)), I don't KNOW because now things are changing.

Researcher

Are they?

[P9]

((Nodding)) There are more countries and they want to to practice their English as well. And there's more, you know com- competence in this or competitive COMPETITIVENESS in this ((laughing)), but yeah, but for mobility students from Europe, yes, they they demand courses taught in English as well, yeah.

Researcher  
That's interesting. I'm wondering about if you have any kind of INSIGHT into the role of say, ANECA or [name of agency], what is it [name of agency] [region].

[P9]   
Yeah, yeah, [region].

Researcher  
Yeah, uh do you think, um I'm not sure if your work involves any interactions with these, but do you think they have any ROLE in in English language programs in any WAY, or or not so much?

[P9]   
Well, maybe because, well, the Spanish Government is I don't know, uh, promoting the joint degrees, joint degrees with OTHER European universities. So the number of courses taught or degrees taught in English joint degrees, I think is increasing as well, at national level. And then they are recognized by ANECA or [regional agency].

So in this respect, well. I think, yeah ((nodding)). Could be. There's a a national commitment from the government.

Researcher  
Um do you also, um deal with joint degrees yourself?

[P9]   
Uh, yes within the these European alliances. And this year it's been implemented the first joint degree of bachelor level in [subject area], which is taught in English together with OTHER universities of the alliance, for example. This is innovation, totally innovation, because this is the first um joint degree at BACHELOR level of these characteristics, because, well, at master level, there were these Erasmus Mundus program and OTHER programs, but for bachelor studies, this is the first one, so. And it it has been recognized by the Spanish Government by ANECA.

Researcher  
Right, right, right. So so it received its ACCREDITATION from from ANECA?

[P9]   
Yeah. Yeah, it, yeah, it has been accredited yeah.

Researcher  
Yeah. When I spoke to administrative staff in Austria, at a university I was looking at in Austria, they said that the administrative burden for joint degrees was very HIGH. Um is that YOUR experience or?

[P9]   
Yeah, it's very demanding ((laughing)). Yeah. From the administrative point of view, because we are several countries awarding a degree and the national legislations are DIFFERENT in each country. So the ACCESS of students to the universities, DIFFERENT registration, I don't know the follow UP of the students, it's difficult. These pieces of administrative work are very, very DIFFICULT to put together. Yeah. Hmm.

Researcher  
So is this something that your university is PURSUING or are you more like this, the burdens too high ((laughing))?

[P9]   
((laughing)) No. Yeah. Yeah. And we HAVE participated with the joint Bachelor degree.

Researcher  
Yeah.

[P9]   
It it was very, very, very CHALLENGING really because of this national legislation, different national legislations. Yes.

Researcher  
So are you, do you think these joint programs will INCREASE? ((Technical interruption)) Do you think the joint programs will increase in future?

[P9]   
Yeah, I think they will increase. Yes. We are working in OTHER joint bachelor degree in [subject area] now. And more will come in the future at bachelor level and master level, doctorate PhD level, at ALL levels. So yeah, umm, I think they will increase.

((Technical interruption))

Researcher  
Is there a financial, is there a financial reward? Because when I spoke to um administrative staff in Austria, they said that actually, although they received some money for this, the administrative COSTS are so high that it it it's not really that you're making much of a profit from it.

[P9]   
It's the same. Profit ZERO ((laughing)).

Researcher  
((laughing)) OK.

[P9]   
Yeah, we receive funding from the European Commission, you know, for these projects because they are projects, that's like Erasmus Plus projects of different kinds. And we receive as well um funding from the Spanish Government.

Researcher  
OK. Yeah.

[P9]   
But it it is NOT enough really for us. Maybe you you can HIRE some staff, but not not not much. So we we have what we have to do MORE work, it’s in ADDITION to what you have to do every day. It's not just you don't do THIS and just do THAT. No, you have to do this and do MUCH more as well. So it is not, no, no but well ((shrugs shoulders)).

Researcher  
So obviously money is not an incentive for taking part.

[P9]

No ((shaking head)).

Researcher

Um so what, what IS the incentive, do you think for doing this? In what way does your university BENEFIT from these types of programs?

[P9]   
Well for internationalization, I mean I think well we are a public university and you know we are not, we are not-for-profit here. We are working just for PEOPLE, and well we can OFFER to our students um good education, and well, I I think in a way it it is not direct profit but uh you have ACCESS to more funding maybe or other kind of um AWARDS or something like that that you can you can take ADVANTAGE of in other ways, in the RANKINGS, for example. But it is not um uh for money? No.

Researcher  
So there's no direct like-

[P9]   
NO, there’s no direct funding, no.

Researcher  
Um do you think, um so when you say you can maybe ACCESS funding, do you mean like for RESEARCH grants or something or?

[P9]   
Mm-hmm. Yes, you have the opportunity to meet, yeah, staff from different universities. So, you know, there are networks that are CREATED and these kind of things that improve the internationalization level of ALL institutions.

Researcher  
Right, right.

[P9]   
And maybe in the future, I don’t know, because well, we are several universities from different countries, there are public universities, private universities and maybe in the FUTURE ((shrugs shoulders)) some PROFIT can can be there, but NOT now, not at the moment.

Researcher  
Do you feel that um among the the staff that you work with and um academic teaching and administrative, do you think do you feel that there's a a commitment towards internationalization,   
um or do you feel there's also resistance towards this? What, what's your experience?

[P9]   
Well, at academic staff level, I think yeah. There's a TOTAL commitment to internationalization. For administrative staff, NOT so much. Maybe the people here staff here in the [unit] or the research department or departments that are more OPEN to the world. YES, they they are aware of the importance of the internationalization, but in OTHER departments, no, no. We have as a training course as a training course for administrative staff uh, we have an internationalization course as well. Just to spread the NEWS among administrative staff for them to be aware of the importance and that this is transversal totally transversal, it's not JUST for international relations, but it is for ALL the university. And yeah it will take time but well, bit by bit, I think. We will be ABLE to to to get them aware of this.

Researcher  
So um how do you kind of envision this kind of um, panning out in the future, like in the SHORT term future or the LONGER term future? And do you have any kind of idea of what the TREND is at your university in relation to English language programs or internationalization. What what are YOUR thoughts personally on it?

[P9]   
Well um ((laughing)) you know that we have our democratic system ((laughing)) for and we have it four years, we have elections, a new rector is uh selected or elected by all the university community. So it depends on the governing body that we have. But I think international internationalization is very, very important and it will be more and more important in the future, and multilingualism as well, and I think English keeps on being the lingua franca for ALL the courses. SPANISH is very important for us, but English as well. So Spanish and English, I I would say they will be the two main languages of teaching at the [case study university] in the future, and English more and more each time, other languages as well, French, German, Italian, but not so much.

Researcher  
Hmhm. And do you envision any PROBLEMS with this, or do you see it entirely positively? Or are there some kind of challenges? What, what do YOU think?

[P9]   
Yeah, the challenges mainly with administrative staff.

Researcher  
OK.

[P9]   
Yes, yes, because well the level of English uh that we have is not so high and we are not MANY of us being able to speak another language apart from Spanish. So this is a challenge because we are public servants. It's not just that I hire this person because uh she or he has the the profile that we we need. That is just a public access through an exam they you don't need to to to know a language. So this is a problem, so I don't know what's going to happen with this, but well I think bit by bit this things, these things will will change.

Researcher  
Hmhm, so do you think perhaps in future they might require you to also have English in the EXAM to become a public servant?

[P9]   
Yes, yes, it is possible. Yeah ((nodding)).

Researcher  
Okay, it's been really, really interesting talking to you. Thank you so much, and again for having a second go at it. Thankfully, the technology has been fine this time around ((laughing)).

[P9]   
Yes ((laughing)).

Researcher  
It was there anything um I didn't give you a chance to talk about that you think is relevant? Perhaps I didn't ask you something.

[P9]   
It will be interesting to see what happens. And I will send you the links with the information, and please tell me if you need something specific.

Researcher

That would be brilliant. Thanks so much. Perhaps at a later stage when I’m writing something up and I might need to check something, if you’re available, I might check with you if there is any additional information that might help to understand the context better.

[P9]

No problem. It would be a pleasure, [Researcher’s name].

Researcher  
Well, thanks so much again.

[P9]   
Thank you, [Researcher’s name]. The same to you.

Researcher  
OK, by then, bye.

[P9]   
Bye bye bye.