Interview with [P2]

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  
So yeah, just again to give you a brief overview of our project, we're looking at how English is becoming increasingly USED at European universities for academic programs, other than English related programs. And so we started by looking at the Netherlands and because they were quite early implementers of English language programs, and several of us, we're looking at different places within Europe. So I was looking at Austria and now I've moved on to Spain. I'm still a little bit green behind the ears about Spain ((laughing)).

So I apologize in advance if for some of my questions are a little bit ignorant, because I'm still LEARNING about the Spanish context. Yeah, so I thought maybe just to start up and you could maybe, to WARM up, you could perhaps just tell me a little bit about your role as [role] of [unit] so.

[Redacted identifying information.]

[P2]  
[Redacted identifying information.]

We have around [#] students making doctoral studies at [case study university], so a GOOD AMOUNT of them. And we are also we always struggling with well internationalization. Uh, we internationalize our programs with the so-called cotutelle or cosupervising from different universities, which leads to simultaneous doctoral degrees, and we also do it by fostering that our students make stay, research stays in, in the OTHER universities, so they get specific mention of the so-called international mention in their doctoral diploma. Well, this is some added value that, what else could I tell you? I I believe well everything will appear in the in the rest of the conversation.

Researcher  
Yeah. So um yeah, I was interested because when I looked online and it mentioned international mention, there were certain requirements weren't there, so a stay of a minimum of three months outside Spain, PART of the thesis must be written and defended in one of the usual languages for scientific communication. And then in terms of the EXPERTS, it also talked about people from NON-Spanish higher education institutions.

[P2]  
Yeah, that's right.

Researcher  
Um so I was wondering, does this kind of favor either, say, the ENGLISH language or do you also, does it favor say Latin America, do you have?

[P2]  
I would say we've got a FEW international mentions with Latin America. So the language is not an issue, and for those theses we do not REQUIRE that the thesis is mostly sustained and written in a different language because it's the same the same one, but it's mostly, it's mostly doctoral theses with OTHER European countries or North America.

Researcher  
Umm.

[P2]  
And MOST of them, and I would say in 99%, the the OTHER language is English.

Researcher  
Mm-hmm.

[P2]  
So, so our students go to to academic contexts and where English is a lingua franca, and where they go to labs and so on, and they speak in English, and they write papers in coordination with the people in the host institution, and those papers are drafted in English, and then when they sustain the thesis online or a face to face setting, it's ENGLISH the language which is used for this part of the defense, which needs to be done in another language.

Researcher  
Right, right. So, I mean, it's unlikely that they say would just write the abstract and conclusions in English because the EXPERTS would be likely to be English speakers that they have to DEFEND the thesis too. So you know, it would be the WHOLE package really, wouldn't it?

[P2]  
Yeah, you usually the whole package, yeah. I mean, if if you're going to speak French in your defense, then you will write the abstract and the conclusions in French.

Researcher  
Mm-hmm.

[P2]  
Uh, and that will be because the expert who is going to be in your panel is a French one and what he, he or she does not speak another language but French. But USUALLY it's it's becoming all English.

Researcher  
Yeah, yeah. OK. So, um, where did this IDEA for the international mention come from? You know, is is this your own UNIVERSITY or is this more WIDELY in-?

[P2]  
No, it's not. Well, this comes from the general regulation on doctoral studies for Spain. So there's a there's a DECREE from 12, some from 2011, which regulates doctoral studies. And this royal decree envisages the the, the, the MENTION, the international mention, and it sets the minimum requirement which is which other ones that you have seen transplanted into our internal provisions.

But it's, uh, it's an I mean, it has been SO for many, many years. So when I was doing my OWN PhD, it was not international mention, it was called EUROPEAN mention, but it was the same spirit. So if you meet some requirements, then your thesis get an additional mention and this gives your thesis well some ADDED value. So maybe if you want to apply for a position as a I don't know, young professor, sorry assistant. Then when they count the points, HAVING a European mention or international mention gives you an additional half a point or an additional point, which can be DECISIVE, for instance. So it's, and of course it, well, it's also a [?] of status, especially for a country like ours where internalization is still regarded as something very positive and something desirable.

Researcher  
So do a lot of PhD students DO this, or what would you say roughly in terms of percentage of PhD students do this international mention or previously European mention?

[P2]  
It's it's increasing, it's CONSTANTLY increasing. So maybe 50 years ago it was quite exotic. Now it's it tends to be the RULE in uh in uh in the new cohorts of of doctoral students. It also depends on on the, on the, on the, on the FIELD, on the knowledge field. So if you've got students working in laboratories in the scientific environment, it's quite frequent for them to go to other labs, so well, it's EASY to get the mention.

I am myself a [subject area] professor, so well my younger doctoral students, they are all applying to be or to get the international mention, because they have[?] their their GRANTS and they LIVE from uh from being doctoral students. I have also some different categories of doctoral students. Some are [professionals] and [professionals] and they do not have the time to spend 3 months abroad so they do not option. But this is the [disciplinary area] which is quite specific, and it's not always open to internal- internationalization.

But I would say that if you take this model of doctoral candidate, which is young, which has a scholarship, who envisages 3, 4 years of doctoral studies, I would believe most directors, supervisors would ask that person to to GO international.

Researcher  
Right, right. Is it actually a a precondition of the scholarship to-?

[P2]  
No. No, but if you GET the scholarship, you usually GET extra funding when you want to go abroad.

Researcher  
Oh, I see. OK. I I was curious, um it mentions, sorry I can't seem to find it. Yeah, it says, mentioned minimum stay outside Spain in a prestigious higher education institution. So how is prestigious DEFINED, is that a list of universities, is this-?

[P2]  
It it depends on each field of knowledge. So each doctoral program has its own committee, internal committee to decide on the on, on on on those issues. So when a doctoral student from a [subject area] program, for instance, wants to go ABROAD, he needs to seek permission from the, well from this specific committee for that doctoral program, and they will analyze whether this research period abroad can amount to be a period to be counted to get the mention.

Researcher  
Umm, OK ((nodding)).

[P2]  
So it depends on the on, on, on, on each knowledge, we we do not have a list of GOOD universities or GOOD laboratories or research centers and those who are not there, because it it DEPENDS. Maybe you go to [university name] in France, which is not a VERY relevant one in France, BUT the research group you're going to work with is TOP. The university is not, but the group is TOP. So well of course you can, you can expect to get a mention. And that, we delegate that decision into the into the committees of each doctoral program, who are the ones who better know how things evolve in each area of knowledge.

Researcher  
Right, right. And so I guess that would have also come from this royal DECREE, the mention of prestige?

[P2]  
Yes.

Researcher  
So you don't force it on people, you just keep flexible.

[P2]  
Yes, I I believe it's it's a provision which is rather flexible. I mean prestigious is, means well it has to be relatively KNOWN in the area of knowledge. It's not just, I don't know, [?] unknown university, which nobody knew about until that person went there.

Researcher  
But you don't get caught up on things like world rankings and stuff like that. You don't, you know, you don't necessarily define it on the basis of world rankings, any kind of ranking system or no, OK.

[P2]  
No, not at all ((shaking head)).

Researcher  
So how about the cotutelles? How do how do THEY come about? Is that related to the EU programmes the cotutelles? Are there any INCENTIVES for having them?

[P2]  
Not really. Cotutelle, it's usually the fact that, well, you consider that the the the student has a profile, international the topic has an international profile, and you know someone from ANOTHER institution with whom you can work together well as a cosupervisor.

Researcher  
Right, right.

[P2]  
So there is a mix of PRESTIGE of institution, previous academic knowledge, and well you have a candidate willing to DO something like that, because you know, cotutelle from a bureaucratic point of view is ((puffs out)) quite excruciating. So sometimes you need lots of paper work to be done and students needs to spend a longer period abroad. So they need scholarships, they need funding, and sometimes it's not possible. So well, it's it's NOT so frequent.

Researcher  
Sorry, with cotutelles, am I right in thinking that the student will get a degree from two DIFFERENT universities?

[P2]  
Yes.

Researcher  
And and that's different from a joint degree program?

[P2]

Yes. What I would say, the JOINT degree program would be doctorate programs 3.0. So a cotutelle would be 2.0, meaning well YOU work here in [city] and in [city in France] in and in [same city in France]. And in the end, if you meet all requirements, you will get you will be a doctor in [subject area] in [case study university] AND in [name of university in France]. You will have TWO doctoral diplomas.

If you go to this next step, you will have a single uh doctoral diploma in [subject area] in the in the JOINT program, [case study university] and [university in France]. And this means that well it is an international program PER SE, not YOURSELF working in two programs and coming and uh, back and forth, and well, in the kind of no man's land sometimes. So it means there's a a BIGGER structure behind an ORGANIZED structure behind the program. Because cotutelle is made on a on a single basis on a case on a case per case basis, we we may have FRAMEWORK conventions with other universities but each thesis gets its own cotutelle agreement negotiated separately for EACH doctoral student among universities? That is why it is so sometimes so HEAVY, so burdensome to to carry out from a bureaucratic and administrative point of view.

Researcher  
So, so given that there ARE these difficulties, so how is it incentivized? I mean in in what way? Is is it incentivized by your university or or by Spain? Is there some incentive to DO it or and any encouragement?

[P2]  
The the you you mean the the cotutelle?

Researcher  
Yeah, starting with cotutelle. Is there anything?

[P2]  
I would say cotutelle, there is NOT specifically incentivized nor the [?]. But I would say we do not have specific scholarships or grants for cotutelle, I would say, I I'm I am not aware. Maybe private foundations or so on but not the general ones.

And well, it's interesting because students get two diplomas, and sometimes well this open-, this broadens your your sphere of of employability in the future, while you cannot you your doctor according to Spanish provisions for the Spanish WORLD and according to the French provisions for the French system. So you don't have to, I don't know, to submit your diploma to you an equivalent to equivalence process or something like that.

Researcher  
And how about in terms of the international mention? I mean, I know that's by royal decree that you can have these things, but is there any incentive like, does your university incentivize it or does the national government or incentivize it in some way? Do you GAIN from having it other than INDIRECTLY?

[P2]  
Well, I would say indirectly, but this this indirect way I described is the most effective way to DO it. Because it envisages the it it envisages your LIFE after your PhD, which is uh the the important matter. So apart from the honour of the well, the, the, the, the academic CREDIT of having this international mention that shows that you've spent some months outside that that you made specific EFFORT that others haven't done, it's this well BETTER position to compete for when you apply for postdocs, scholarships, or other things like that. That is interesting, I would say. But there isn't, there are no specific programs with the title, let's improve internationalisation and this international mention. I wouldn't say so.

But we like to put that because of course when we have to SHOW ourselves as internationalised universities and we SHOW our statistics and we SHOW the numbers, so it's always something which we try to facilitate.

Researcher  
And who who do you show these things TO? In what, in what way does it benefit you? So is that to the national government?

[P2]  
But I believe I believe it benefits universities from this RANKINGS point of view, which is for quite arbitrary sometimes ((laughing)). But well you need the FIGURES, and I believe it may also be useful if you if universities are well, want to get get extra funding from, I don't know, from a public administrations or public foundations and so on, so also to gather extra funding.

Researcher  
Umm so you would pass on these statistics to your university governance DIRECTLY. And then they they can use it in a certain way.

[P2]  
That's right ((nodding)). And to show to show your program as more attractive when you get programs where most of your students go international. This means well, it's interesting to make your PhD with US. So we try to get BETTER PhD students, which in the end will make better PhD theses, which will get more cited, so which will INCREASE our presence in rankings and and and so on. So it's all this circle.

Researcher  
Is there any kind of in terms of GOVERNANCE, is there anything in particular that um kind of INFLUENCES you towards internationalization?

[P2]  
In what sense?

Researcher

Well, um, well coming, I'm not sure this applies to SPAIN, but in AUSTRIA for example, there were certain steering instruments within the university. So is there any, supposing, I mean, you're talking about a general influence, aren't you? Like you said, that a circle of influence. And sometimes we can see certain influences coming from the bottom upwards or from the top downwards. And I was wondering if you're aware of any influences from the top downwards to start with that would, um encourages you towards this internationalization focus that you're talking about, is there anything concrete?

[P2]  
I believe I believe it is involved in in [case study university], in particular is involved in the [European programme], so this is this is strategic of of building alliances and promoting well going international yes, we have special committees to FOSTER these integration in the alliances and of course giving priority to all projects which lead to internationalization and there's always a special FOCUS, and when it comes to, well, to doctoral studies, it's always the point of promoting international MENTION, promoting cotutelle and we are starting to work on joint doctoral degrees within that framework.

Researcher  
How about from the BOTTOM upwards. Do you have any kind of drive towards English language programs, for example, from the bottom upwards, say from students themselves, or from lecturing staff or people involved?

[P2]  
What I would say, I would say it's MORE frequent that study, that students present their thesis in English.

Researcher  
OK. So it's a kind of choice.

[P2]  
And now directors foster students, stimulate students to write their thesis in English. This, this this is quite frequent, especially in in well in areas of knowledge where this is well, the, the the academic discussion is has moved totally into English.

And nobody writes any longer in German or in Spanish or in French, because EVERYBODY all around the world writes in English. So maybe I don't know, economics, sociology, anthropology, or physics and mathematics. It's quite frequent to see more and more theses being drafted and sustained in in English, even in out university. But we we have a neutral approach to that. We do not encourage, you know, well, we ENCOURAGE it, in the sense that we do not discourage it, but we leave it to the consideration of supervisors and, well, internal committees of each doctoral program whether this makes sense or not. And of course, if the student wants to write, write the thesis in English or he doesn't.

But for instance we do not HAVE a, it would be a pretty good idea, but we don't, we don't have the BUDGET, we do not HAVE, for instance, a [unit] which could double check how correctly the theses are drafted or which would provide support when or when WRITING in English. We HAVE some English courses, and we have some in THIS doctoral training that I told you about, there are some courses which are which have the aim to to INCENTIVIZE students to write in English and to PRESENT in English. But of course, uh, it is this training activities for students. It's not a a translator or an or an English proficient civil servant, working together with the students, it's MORE general.

But yes, I mean there are more and MORE little lights that are going on in this in this FIRST level, which which are constantly leading to to internationalization. And this is made visible by by the use of English.

Researcher  
And so you mentioned, sorry, you said that people don't feel pressured to do it. So like um staff, did I correct understand you correctly, you said that they don't feel FORCED to make it in English for the students, or like the supervisors you don't feel they feel under no.

[P2]  
No, MAYBE. I mean that's not, that's not a general policy of the university MAYBE uh, maybe you've got a Professor X [subject area] school. He's very renowned. He's a very good PhD supervisor, and he EXPECTS his students to write a PhD in English. OK. You well, if you want to WORK with him, you KNOW you'll have to work in English.

Otherwise, maybe it is you to have, who needs to ask to your professor MAY I write my thesis in English? Would that be correct for you? And that that would be also an option? I would say I have MYSELF a PhD student writing the thesis in English.

Researcher  
Yeah.

[P2]  
But only only ONE and I believe in my [subject area] school. It's rather exceptional.

Researcher  
Yeah, yeah.

[P2]  
It also has to it it, it also has to see[?] with the fact that maybe doctoral candidates do not feel as proficient in English as they believe they need to BE to write the thesis in English.

Researcher  
Yeah.

[P2]  
I believe there's a point in this also.

Researcher  
And also how about the subject area, I mean because the [subject area] can be very specific to Spain as well.

[P2]  
It depends on the topic, yes. It depends on the topic.

Researcher  
Yeah. But you don't have any concern, for example, that as things IF things become increasingly more English, that's when people are DOING these subjects in Spanish, it might become a kind of second class subject if the English, do you?

[P2]  
Yes, and that's that's what happening in ALL topics which ARE rather I would say independent from from the country, from the from the place which are general, and that applies specifically well to many health, health, science and sometimes so and traditional science. English is being MORE and more used.

Researcher  
Umm.

[P2]  
And it also depends on well the interest of the of the PhD candidate. Some of them well do not envisage to have an international career afterwards.

Researcher  
Yeah.

[P2]  
There's a lot of there's a there's a mixture of what the candidate WANTS, the director, the supervisor EXPECTS, the TOPIC. But I believe it it would be very difficult for a university like ours to move into English for for, for theses, because, well, it depends on the on the KNOWLEDGE field. And I you cannot make a thesis on Spanish literature ((laughing)) in in English, if you don't WANT to, and you also have to be reminded that this, I believe this has a lot to do with Spain and Spanish. We have a a very broad gate open to South America.

And there's lots of scientific inter- academic exchange with South America, and their language is Spanish; it's not English. So depending on the TOPIC, if you want to to internationalize towards Latin America, you don't GO to English. I mean, because internet- internationalization for us is ALSO South America. And then, well, our ASSET is our common language.

Researcher  
Do you think I mean, Spain has quite a particular situation perhaps and that differs to some other countries in Europe in terms that, you know, people like yourself, you know, on permanent contracts um, you know, established in their careers who are who have doctoral students, you have civil servants status, don't you? Is that right?

[P2]  
Sorry, I I sometimes your voice comes and go.

Researcher  
Sorry you you have civil servants status, don't you? So it's an established academic such as yourself with PhD students, you have civil servant status. Do you think there's an kind of strengthens the independence perhaps to DO things in Spanish and not to have to feel you HAVE to do them in English?

[P2]  
Well, that's the issue always with civil servants status. What you do once you get the position, uh you just rest and not struggle too much to be better and to get a and to get a broader reach to research OR you are ambitious. And of course you do not need to show English proficiency to be a professor in Spain, as such.

You need to show a very good CV and and so on. Depending on the on the on the field, English comes by itself or it doesn't. Probably if you want to be a professor, I don't know in in medical science, you will be evaluated by the quality of your papers and your articles. And they will be much more valuable and they will be much better assessed if they're published in journals which are in the in Q1 in the this year and so on. And those are English language journals. So indirectly your career sometimes depend on the degree of your internationalization and your using of ENGLISH as a as a researcher.

But as such, there is no a there is not a prerequisite you have to speak another language apart from Spanish, and there's a prerequisite you need to speak SPANISH to be a professor at Spanish University. But this is also a question.

Researcher  
And um, am I right in thinking you you submit your work for evaluation every six years, but that's VOLUNTARY. Is that to ANECA or to a branch of ANECA?

[P2]

Yes.

Researcher

So it's not actually a requirement, but if you want to be promoted, you would WANT to do that.

[P2]  
Yes.

Researcher  
And then.

[P2]  
Yes, if you don't, if you if you don't get those six research years sexenio, these six year research periods are granted by ANECA, you won't be regarded as a SERIOUS researcher.

Researcher  
Yeah. And so then it would be positively evaluated, for example, if you were publishing in English language journals because they're international journals.

[P2]  
You can expect an easier evaluation if your publications are INTERNATIONAL.

Researcher  
And that might help you.

[P2]  
I mean in the good sense of international in well in, in well established journals. I would not say predatory journals and so on. Maybe they do not get those impact references and so on, but yes.

Researcher  
And then if you wanted to be considered.

Yeah.

[P2]  
So you see, it's all, it's all, it's all INDIRECT. It's, it's it, it all works in indirect ways.

Researcher  
Yeah, yeah. And if you wanted to be considered for promotion within your department within your faculty, then the evaluation from ANECA can be used in your favor?

[P2]  
Yes. And it make it can make the point. But I I say, if you're a specialist on the medieval Spanish literature, well, I don't know. Maybe it is secondary or maybe not, depending on, that's it’s all it it always depends on the field.

Researcher  
Yeah. Are there incentives for you locally or or with this within Spain to GET prestige for subjects that are in Spanish like say, [subject area] or like you say, medieval Spanish literature that you can apply for funding um within Spain to get special awards that kind of compensate for perhaps the prestige going to English language areas. Is there any attempt to counterbalance that within Spain?

[P2]  
I would say there is not as a a clear policy on that which is reflected in any regulation or any active way of doing things in universities. I believe it comes per se depending on the areas and so on.

Researcher  
Umm. But if you're if you're for example, researching something to do with [subject area relevant to Spain] and you could also apply, say, for some funds from the Spanish Government that some competitive funds and-

[P2]  
We we, we, we, we, we, we we applied very frequently for funding from the government for OUR research project, and of course the level of internationalization of our projects is always a PLUS when we are when we are asking for funding.

Researcher  
Oh really OK, even for Spanish specific subject areas.

[P2]  
But obviously if if your topic is too too Spanish, you'll have to find a way to make it COMPARATIVE, so you take the international branch, or you just simply have to specify well this is not easy to internationalize, but it's worth funding because of the impact it may have on SPANISH society PER SE so well. Yeah, there's always a way. But the LEVEL of internationalisation is always a, a a box in the checklist when, when PRESENTING research projects for funding to public agencies.

Researcher  
Right, right. So when I looked at your doctoral program prospectus, um it was in English, but the the language of instruction wasn't actually mentioned in the prospectus itself. So I was wondering, is there any reason for that?

[P2]  
Well, when we come to to, to doctoral programs, I would say, there are, well, we we do not, we do not have a in master’s degree or bachelor degrees, we do not have lessons and courses as such.

Researcher  
Yeah.

[P2]  
It's ALL about writing your thesis, attending to some uh, methodology, methodological and transversal training, and MOST of these activities are in Spanish, but as we do not offer a close program with those and those topics and subjects, we did not feel the need to specify the language, but it is Spanish NORMALLY.

Researcher  
Normally it’s Spanish, yeah.

[P2]  
And when it is not, it is it is announced so that students know they are expected to use Span-, uh ENGLISH or whatever other language if the case may be, but it's ALWAYS English.

Researcher  
Is this announcement by law, it has to be done by law or is it? Is it by law that you have to announce English language? Is it legal requirement to announce if it's not in Spanish?

[P2]  
Probably, I don't know, although I I don't know if there's a specific provision, but it is EXPECTED to announce when, when you report from the, from the ordinary rule.

Researcher  
Right, right.

[P2]  
I'm not sure it would be, whether there's a provision forcing us to to announce things in English, probably yes.

Researcher  
I find it, I find it interesting, um sorry, I know you're the [role] of the [unit], but I find it interesting that in Spain you also have a lot of well at YOUR university, you have English language programs that bachelor’s level and um perhaps less at masters level, is that right? Or do you have about maybe the same amount?

[P2]  
I'm not sure whether there are master programs taught in English.

Researcher  
Right. So.

[P2]  
I I'm I I'm not sure I this is not ((laughing)).

Researcher  
OK, so don't worry I-

[P2]  
Ohh I'd have enough with my with doctoral students.

Researcher  
Yeah. No, sorry. I I'm just curious because in in the the university I was looking at at Austria they didn't do English language BACHELOR'S programs, um so this was very much very much the DOMAIN of of GERMAN, you know the bachelor's programs, whereas at your university, you DO have English language bachelor programs. So I was wondering, do you know the reason why there would be English language programs that bachelor level at your university?

[P2]  
Well, because they they the social perception that things in English have an added value.

Researcher  
Mm-hmm.

[P2]  
I would say so.

Researcher  
Yeah.

[P2]  
So this means you do not ONLY have learned about economics, it also means you are able to express yourself very proficiently in the economic domain, and that you take part of the global conversation on economics, and not just a domestic one. It's a question of PRESTIGE and also of what you want to do afterwards.

So well, you we have students that they KNOW they want to have a career abroad, and they want to to move AWAY. They just have don't have the well the resources to to to study ABROAD, but they well they believe this opens more gates more doors in the future, I would say that's that's the that's the reason.

Researcher  
When you, when you when you START a PhD student and you mentioned it's not really so much that you follow a defined program for a PhD level, but you need to get approval from ANECA when you have a new kind of-

[P2]

Doctoral program, yes. Yes, so you need, I mean you cannot just LAUNCH a doctoral program as such, because you want to, you have a proposal you submit it to ANECA and ANECA makes an assessment whether it is credible or not, it has a scientific quality or not and you have to show whether the professor that are integrated in the program, the activities you suggest for the training of students. But those activities are are NOT official courses uh, which may be measured in ECTS, for instance. Yeah, there are specific [?] activities and they are DIFFERENT from one program to the other. And ANECA has to verify that it doesn't see that it is a SERIOUS program.

And of course ANECA assesses positively the level of internationalization of the programs, and it gives always good marks to programs which show a believable level of internationalization.

Researcher  
So what does that mean, give good marks? Does that mean how much funding you get or?

[P2]  
Well, this means that it's easier for you to get the approval and to get subsequent positive evaluations to continue to go on with the program. SO far, ANECA or the ministry is not FUNDING doctoral programs. It's all, it ALL depends on well internal decisions of universities.

But of COURSE it's always the same with the evaluation. We and we all think that at SOME point, maybe it is relevant, so when that moment comes, we want to get the best, well, the best marks or the OR the best evaluations and also for our self satisfaction, we prefer to have excellent programs than just good programs are acceptable programs, and that's why we do it, because we we we want to be to be excellent in in what we do.

Researcher  
Could you also mention medium, that they you know English as a possibility when you submit your proposal to ANECA for a program? Does it also mention the language, specify the language?

[P2]  
From well I I did not understand your other point. When we present, when we submit ANECA we we we can well we can include in our proposal that we will encourage theses to be defended in English, we will encourage students to to make research periods ABROAD. But it's always complicated because when you offer something, then you need to show that you've done it. So you can say, well, all all our students will need to have an international mention. Good. But what happens in the end if not ALL are able to do it because they all they do not ALL find the time of the funding to spend six months abroad. So we're always struggling with feasibility and desirability when we when we DESIGN our programs.

Researcher  
I guess I guess I'm kind of asking whether English can be used as CURRENCY to as a symbol of internationalization and whether that might be favourably evaluated by ANECA.

[P2]  
YES, but when it makes sense.

Researcher

Within the context, yeah.

[P2]

((Nodding)).

Researcher

Does ANECA actually publish the criteria of evaluation?

[P2]  
Yes, well.

Researcher  
They let you know.

[P2]  
They, they, they, they, they write GUIDES, very LONG and complicated and sometimes obscure guides, but ((laughing)). Well, well you know it it ALL belongs to that part of academic life, which we don't, we do not like too much with this, well, drafting proposals and imagining the future and and so on, and on the basis of criteria that will be changing. But yes, the criteria are tend to be rather well, not clear. Yes, clear. We do not know the exact weight of each criterion, but they show what was positively assessed and what is not, this is important. So they always value positively, you know, professors with lots of six year periods.

Researcher  
Mm-hmm.

[P2]  
We were discussing previously, so if you have a those periods, you are a a a good ASSET for a program. And of course, if you are able to provide a network of universities and labs outside Spain and you show it in your in, in, in, in the proposal, then your proposal will be more interesting. So it's a kind of a constant feedback process that's happening with internationalization and of course with English as a tool for internationalization in most in most knowledge fields.

Researcher  
Are are these, do you know if these documents, these guides are confidential?

[P2]  
I would say they’re PUBLISHED, yeah, the the, the, the ANECA guides on on how to assess the programs, I believe they they they should be published on the website. Yes. I don't believe they're confidential. I mean, confidential should be the assessment for each university but not the the general guidelines they set for new programs. Each time ANECA changed the the guide, everybody goes crazy because they were used to drafting papers according to [?], and now it's changing.

Researcher  
Right, right. So I should be able to get hold of the guides if I go online to them.

Yeah.

[P2]  
YES, I believe so.

Researcher  
OK. That’d be useful.

Um, sorry, I know I'm taking up your time. But because you're from [subject area], I was wondering, do you mind if I ask you a question about [subject area], [unit] ((laughing)).

[P2]  
Yes, if I can answer I, I will give you an answer ((laughing)).

Researcher  
No, sorry, I meant when I looked at the faculty of [subject area], I saw that they are courses for 2022 to 2023 said that there is NO English language provision, not, not necessarily about doctoral studies. But when I saw the document from 2019 to 2020, it showed that there WAS English language provision. So it listed [#] courses. So is it the case that you've gone from having [#] to having none ((laughing))? Or or is it just the document?

[P2]  
So it it it is, it's a well, it has been an internal battle inside the faculty because, but the the new, well, the the Dean’s team did not like topics to be taught in English.

Researcher  
Uh-huh.

[P2]  
So they decided they would, so they would SUPPRESS them.

Researcher  
OK.

[P2]  
So this is the first YEAR where do not have a well we do not have courses taught in English, which is something LOTS of us regret, and which has been a question of a internal battle in our [subject area] school. So it's a political question.

Researcher  
OK, alright. Do you feel FREE to talk about um what reasons they have for rejecting the English language or ((laughing))?

[P2]  
We we really did NOT understand the reason WHY. It in the at the beginning it was just a question of availability of professors feeling themselves sufficiently proficient to to give a course in English. And the were in areas of [subject area] where no one presented himself or herself to be a well to to to, to teach the the course in English. But if you mentioned there was [#] topics because the the were [#] courses taught in English.

So in the, it started and bit by bit ALL departments and ALL areas ending ended offering courses in English. There WAS a discussion whether this teaching in English should be recognized as being a as covering more burden or more service than teaching in Spanish.

So ohh, I'm teaching in English this semester. This means that instead of having to teach two groups, I teach just one, but I do it in English and this MAY have created some jealousies.

But not so, I I don't know. I believe it it's just a, a personal obsession of the [role] and a couple of persons in his team. It was not in the in the election program that they would suppress the the the English language courses. It was not in the discussion, but in the end they, well, they, they, they, they insisted in doing that. And MANY of us are against that. And we believe it's not consistent with the policy of the university to go international, so I believe in the future ((laughs)), we can reverse the situation and get back to the point where courses were taught and offered in English.

Researcher  
Um. How often does the [role] team change?

[P2]  
Every four years.

Researcher  
OK, so it could change it back again.

[P2]  
Yes ((smiling)). It could change back.

Researcher  
Spain’s interesting because it's SO decentralized, and there's so much autonomy within autonomy within autonomy, and it can work EITHER way in favor of English language or AGAINST the English language kind of so.

[P2]  
That's right.

Researcher  
It's difficult to kind of build up a bigger picture, isn't it, because it's so decentralized. Yeah.

[P2]  
((Nodding head and smiling)) I mean REGIONS are decentralized, within each region each university is is decentralized, and in many universities, especially in big ones like ours, faculties are also ((laughing)) rather decentralized. So this policy, which is being followed in the [subject area] school probably is not being followed in the I don't know [subject area] school or in the Faculty of [subject area]. I don't know what they might be doing in this regard.

Researcher  
But it DOES suggest that a faculty um the FUNDING that a faculty gets isn't in any way influenced by whether it's in English or not.

[P2]  
Well we TRY to make it relevant, because I I I, in the END if teaching in English is considered more expensive in the sense well one professor discharges his uh burden to teach with less hours, this means, you can ask the Rectorate to if you have the funding to HIRE another teacher, another professor. So in the end, the MORE you teach in English, the MORE professors you could have. So in the end it HAS a point.

But I believe it was not the discussion at that time. I believe it was more a rather more parochial discussion, which is uh a little ashaming from my perspective.

Researcher  
Yeah, it's very, from the OUTSIDE, it's very hard to kind of get a grip on, you know how how it works because, yeah.

Um when I I looked at the [unit], uh, there's some authorization by the Ministry of Education in [year]. And it said that, um, provisions and agreements of the governing bodies of [case study university]. Oh, no, sorry, that's [year]. The DOCUMENT was produced in [year], and the [unit] was approved in [year]? Is that right? Something like that?

[P2]  
Okay ((making facial expression of uncertainty))

Researcher  
And then, yeah, in that article paragraph [#], it says that you are supposed to facilitate the national and international mobility of doctoral students and directors and tutors involved in their teaching. [Redacted identifying information]

[P2]  
As a program well, we have financial limitations, but we have such a program. This is the second year to well, small grants for students’ mobility to attend to conferences or to make short research periods abroad.

Researcher  
Yeah.

[P2]  
For directors, supervisors, there's a well established Erasmus program which we use very frequently and we we have not feel we have not felt the need to to change things from the point of view of professors, but from the view of students, THOSE who have good scholarships, they can, they can TRAVEL, but those who do not, and there are many of them, we have established a specific program for that. And of course the issue with the program is that we would like to have more money to SHARE than the one we have. But this is the [#] edition. We've done it and it's been very successful, and we are HELPING many students to go abroad.

Researcher  
Um, so that you've got a grant also, first stay at home students who aren't mobile.

[P2]  
Yes.

Researcher  
Does that come from Spain? Is that an EU grant or?

[P2]  
No, no. It's a [case study university] [unit] grant ((laughing)).

Researcher  
Oh I see. Right, right. OK.

[P2]  
So PART of our budget, we are using it to to sustain the program.

Researcher  
Umm OK.

[P2]

Yeah, there are other programs and national programs for students, especially for those who already got scholarships, but we have added THIS one. So the more we have the the BIGGER the the outreach would be.

Researcher  
And if you get these grants within Spain, do you also get grants from the EU? Do you also get grants from the EU?

[P2]  
Yeah, SOME doctoral students get Erasmus scholarships also for for the doctoral periods, so it it goes in addition to other programs. And there's of course a myriad of programs, and it depends on the on the field and well there's lots of possibilities, but well, this is another one that shows a compromise with this idea of mobility and international internationalization.

Researcher  
Yeah. So, does your [unit] get evaluated?

[P2]  
As such, no. Not yet. ANECA has not yet a program to evaluate schools as such, not [subject area] schools, and not faculties, and not yet [units], but it will COME, I believe.

Researcher  
OK. And how about your university? Does uh WITHIN your university, do THEY evaluate the [unit]?

[P2]  
NO, there is not an established program to to to make the evaluation. They do not evaluate faculties as such, I believe either.

And no, the [unit] is not, I mean, it's rather it's a it's rather new. Well, our [unit] is still new and it's still starting to to work, I believe, we we're not so so so an established institution, but well, we're trying to to make our best to fulfill our our competences, our our functions.

Researcher  
Sorry, I realize I've I've taken you to the end of our almost to the end of our one hour slot. Is there something I didn't give you the chance to talk about? Is there anything you want to mention? Maybe I missed something important for you.

[P2]  
No, I believe it ALL in in one way or the other, it all appeared during the conversation, [Researcher’s name]. Yes, I believe.

Researcher  
Thanks so much. Sorry I realized I asked a lot of questions, but it's really helpful for us so.

[P2]  
No, that's your job. No worries ((laughing)).

Researcher  
Thank you so much again.

[P2]

OK. Good luck.

Researcher  
OK. Well, thanks so much for your time again. Thank you. Bye.