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EMI, international visibility and competitiveness: a corpus-assisted discourse study of Spanish higher education internationalisation plans

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Abstract

One of the main goals of Spanish higher education is the consolidation of an internationalised university system through international visibility, attractiveness, competitiveness, and collaboration. As the literature reports, English plays a relevant role in internationalisation strategies, so this paper examines the relationship between internationalisation and English in institutional documents. Corpus Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis were used to identify language-related strategies and interpret the language beliefs underlying the promotion of English in the Spanish university context. Results showed that the main language-related strategy was EMI because it promotes the international visibility of universities and helps local students improve their foreign language competence. Measures to support bilingual education were found regarding language training and accreditation. Furthermore, the discourses of globalisation, excellence, and employability support the position of English as the international language. Therefore, the introduction of English as another working language in the universities' linguistic repertoire is widely accepted, although institutional support and constant language training measures are considered essential for the success of internationalisation goals.

Keywords

internationalisation, English-medium instruction, Spanish higher education, language beliefs, visibility strategies, document analysis

1. The linguistic internationalisation of higher education

In the context of higher education, internationalisation has appeared as the primary response to globalisation, shaping the universities' ethos, values, and environment for both international collaboration and competition between universities for human resources, funding, and prestige. Internationalisation has been defined and redefined multiple times in the last decades, and perhaps, Knight's (2004) definition of internationalisation as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (11) is the most widely accepted. In a nutshell, the majority of internationalisation strategies rely on cross-border educational programmes, mobility programmes for students and staff, and cross-national cooperation between researchers and institutions to increase the international visibility and impact of their work (de Wit et al. 2015; Knight 2004; Maringe and Fokkett 2010; Sursock 2015).

A core element found in many internationalisation strategies to reach a global audience is the use of English as the international language for scientific communication (Ferguson 2012; Jones 2020; Liddicoat 2016; Linn 2016). The relevance of English in the globalisation process is undeniable since it has favoured scientific collaboration and exchange worldwide. For instance, in the area of research, English is referred to as the language for publication (Corcoran, Englander and Muresan 2019; Lillis and Curry 2010; Plo Alastrué and Pérez-Llantada 2015) and in the area of teaching, as the main vehicular language of instruction (Airey et al. 2017; Coleman 2006; Dimova et al. 2015). Furthermore, European policies have stressed the importance of developing foreign language competence and communication skills for a globalised and plurilingual society where English becomes another language within the linguistic repertoire of speakers (European Commission 2008, 2013; Jones 2020; Soler-Carbonell 2016). As a result of the global situation, universities are aware of the attractiveness of English as an asset to attract international students, recruit international staff, and develop their students' and staff's employability.

Another consequence of the increasing presence of English in non-English speaking universities is the rise of language policy studies focusing on language issues such as how English interacts with local languages or the development of bi/multilingual competence (Liddicoat 2016; Linn 2016). A well-known approach to language policy is represented by Spolsky's framework (2009: 6-7), which consists of three interrelated components: practices, beliefs and management. By language practices, Spolsky refers to the manifestations of written or spoken language used by speech communities. Language beliefs or ideologies are understood as ideas, values or statuses assigned to languages, their varieties and users. Decoding language beliefs is a necessary step to understand the different orientations adopted towards languages, such as the commodification of languages based on economic rationales, the instrumental view that sees language as a resource for communication, or the affective values attached to languages for cultural identification which are seen as a right, among others (House 2003; Soler and García-Balsà 2019; Vessey 2017). Lastly, language management indicates any effort made from the micro (individual) to the macro (nation-state) level to modify any preexisting language practice or belief. Awareness of how these components interrelate with each other is essential for a critical understanding of the universities' linguistic repertoires since language management promotes different language practices depending on the policymakers' language beliefs and objectives.

The object of study of this paper focuses on the analysis of institutional university policies dealing with internationalisation and its relation to languages in the Spanish university system. For doing so, a mixed-methods approach combining Corpus Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was deemed suitable, where the quantitative description of the textual data is complemented with the qualitative analysis to offer more profound insights. The main goal of CL was to retrieve large-scale textual evidence of how internationalisation was textually expressed in top-down documentation. In the case of CDA, it was an appropriate methodology to identify how policymakers' language beliefs are embedded in language management tools, focusing especially on English and its relation to other languages. The focus on top-down documents rather

than bottom-up data intends to contribute to the gap in internationalisation and language policy research fields. Even though it is common to find methodological triangulation to explore attitudes, perceptions and practices, the analysis of the English and internationalisation interrelation in institutional documents tends to be neglected, with the exception of few studies like Lanverns (2018), Soler and García-Balsà (2019) or Stein (2013). Moreover, these studies tend to adopt a case study approach investigating only one or few institutions, whereas this study offers a far-reaching overview of the Spanish university system.

This paper aims to examine how the internationalisation goals of Spanish universities shape the status of English as 'the' international scientific language; and which beliefs are embedded in top-down policies combining CL and CDA methodologies. For doing so, it addresses the following research questions:

- RQ1. What are the most relevant English-related actions found in the internationalisation plans of Spanish universities?
- RQ2. What are the main language beliefs attached to English in language policy documents of Spanish universities? Do they lead to monolingualism or enhance plurilingualism?

2. The national internationalisation and language policy strategies in the Spanish context

Since Spain joined the European Union, it has actively participated in the modernisation and internationalisation of higher education through initiatives like the Erasmus student mobility programme (1990s), the Bologna process (1999 onwards), or the creation of several “International Excellence Campuses” to increase cooperation and international visibility (Rumbley and Howard 2014). Following European supra-national guidelines, the Spanish Ministry of Education approved the national policy framework entitled *Strategy for the Internationalisation of Spanish Universities 2015-2020* (MECD 2014) based on European policies such as the *ET2020* (2009), the *European Higher Education in the world* (2013) and the *External Dimension of the Bologna Process* (2006) (de Wit et al. 2015; SEPIE 2017). The four main objectives of the national internationalisation strategy refer to:

1. consolidation of an internationalised university system
2. visibility and attractiveness
3. international competitiveness of universities
4. cooperation with other regions of the world

The importance of English for the internationalisation of universities has already been highlighted above; yet, in the national internationalisation strategy, English is only mentioned concerning English-medium instruction (EMI) at the bachelor and master's level for international visibility and attractiveness (Action 2.4). Moreover, it is acknowledged at the beginning of the strategy document that a weakness of the Spanish university system is a generally low level of English language proficiency, turning action 2.4 into a considerable challenge. A recent study by Ramos-García and Pavón Vázquez (2018) analysed the EMI situation in Spain, and they reported that “there are 292 bilingual degrees, 39 are fully delivered in English, [...]; 63 double degrees that are bilingual, 17 in English and 4 triple bilingual degrees” (40). The data showed a tentatively growing interest in EMI in the Spanish context, although these numbers are low in comparison to other northern and central European countries, where institutions can offer up to 61% of their programmes in English according to Wächter and Maiworm (2014: 17). In addition to English, the Spanish language is mentioned in the strategy as an asset that can fulfil a two-fold objective: attracting international students and staff and creating alliances and cooperation with Latin

American institutions. These are the sole references to languages in the strategy, which somehow contrasts with the importance given to languages by European education policies and the literature (de Wit et al. 2015; European Commission 2013; Jones 2020; SEPIE 2017).

At the institutional level, the first language-related regulations appeared as a consequence of the rich sociolinguistic Spanish landscape. The revitalisation of local co-official languages (Catalan, Euskera, Galician, Valencian) at universities was the primary reason for the creation of language policy documents in bilingual institutions in the 1990s (Soler and García-Balsà 2019; Villares 2019). With the arrival of English to the tertiary education context, particularly after the turn of the century, Spanish primarily monolingual universities also started to create language policies focusing on second and third language competence as well as English-medium instruction. To offer a homogenous framework to address this linguistic issue of plurilingualism and foreign languages, in 2017 the Spanish Association of Universities released the official document *Política Lingüística para la Internacionalización del Sistema Universitario Español* (Bazo et al. 2017). This document comprises a series of recommendations for universities to consider while they design their own language policy strategy for foreign languages.

The document includes three main sections for accreditation, training and incentive creation for the whole university community, divided into students, teaching staff and administrative staff. Accreditation refers to the acquisition and subsequent certification of an adequate language competence level at the university to participate in different activities such as mobility, bilingual programmes, graduation, or master's enrollment. In fact, since 2010, it has been mandatory in all Spanish universities to require students to certify a B1 or B2 level of a foreign language for graduation (Halbach and Lázaro 2015). The second section refers to training, which provides support and ideas to develop language competence levels necessary for students and staff. For instance, universities may offer general and specific language courses as well as methodological courses to familiarise teachers with the essential concepts of teaching in a foreign language (e.g. teaching strategies, classroom management, intercultural competence). Lastly, the third section addresses the creation of incentives, which are a series of activities to “encourage [students and staff] participation in the actions towards the process of internationalization and in order to reward their efforts” (Ramos-García and Pavón Vázquez 2018: 35) since participating actively in language-related strategies brings some challenges financially, and in terms of effort and time (Pérez-Llantada 2018; Villares 2020).

3. Corpus collection and analytical procedures

The first part of the study analysed a corpus of internationalisation strategies from Spanish universities. In the collection process, only the top-down documents related to internationalisation were collected from university websites. An internationalisation plan (IP) was considered to be a document including sections like an introduction, rationale, objectives, lines of action, and indicators. In the case of some universities without an internationalisation plan, the university strategic plan (SP) was downloaded. In SP, internationalisation information appeared either as a concrete section or as a transversal objective. Those universities lacking either an available internationalisation plan or strategic plan were not considered for the analysis. 58 universities were represented in the corpus, which amounts to 69% of all 83 universities comprising the Spanish higher education system (MECD 2016: 5). In total, the corpus consisted of 58 institutional documents, one per university, distributed accordingly: IP documents represented 38% and SP documents represented 61% of the corpus (198,038 running words) (Appendix 1). The majority of documents were in Spanish, with 15% written in Catalan and Galician. Lastly, the collection process was carried out between 2017-2019, and the documents covered the period 2010-2019, with 2015 as the year when most of the corpus documents were published (24%).

Data were examined using corpus linguistics techniques and the software AntConc. V.3.5.9 (Anthony 2020) to retrieve frequencies and concordances from the corpus. A lemma list and stoplist were used to facilitate the retrieval of data. Given the multilingual nature of the documents, the advanced search option of the software was used to search for the concordance lines of *English* in Spanish, Catalan, Galician and English to track all the instances of the word. Results were cleaned, deleting function words and university names, and grouping together words written in different languages but with the same meaning (e.g. *docencia*, *docència*, *teaching*). The 230 concordance lines were analysed to find repetitive linguistic patterns around English, and results were organised into four main categories: education (60%), language proficiency (15%), descriptors (13%), and other English-related strategies (12%).

Once the quantitative results were retrieved, the qualitative analysis focused specifically on the examination of the discourses around English and its relationship to other languages. Due to its informative nature, few traces of language beliefs were identified in internationalisation plans, consequently, a second corpus of language policy documents was collected. The selection criteria relied on two main factors: including universities previously selected in the IP corpus to examine further their discourse, and the gathering of separate language policy documents addressing more than one language (*plan de llengües*). Therefore documents dealing only with the normalisation of co-official languages or the universities' internal legal documents talking about graduation language requirements were discarded from the corpus. In total, 23 documents were considered suitable for the analysis (Appendix 1). 52% of them were written in a co-official language, which could be interpreted as the bilingual universities' commitment towards plurilingualism. Documents dated from 2007 to 2018, with the majority of them published in 2016. The software Atlas.ti V8.4.2 was employed for the close reading and analysis of the data. For doing so, a coding system was designed according to Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework (2003). Traces from Fairclough multi-layered analysis were supported with textual (descriptors, evaluative discourse, modality), discursive (argumentation) and contextual (authorship and location) evidence during the coding process.

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative results

The initial examination of the 30 most frequent lemmas in the corpus pointed at two salient results (Table 1): the importance of actors in policy documents (*students*, *researchers*, *teachers*, *staff*) and the identification of internationalisation-related strategies regarding education (*programme*, *offer*, *degree*, *course*, *teaching*), research, mobility, languages, knowledge transfer, and networks (i.e. associations, collaboration). The other findings in Table 1 can be grouped under a metalinguistic category as the majority are references to the own document (*strategy*, *plan*, *project*), sections within it (*action*, *objective*, *activity*), or the ultimate goal of the policy, which is the implementation and promotion of the document's contents (*development*, *to improve*, *to promote*).

Focusing specifically on *English* and *languages*, the term *language*, which can co-occur with *foreign* (*llengua estrangera*) or the phrase 'language + noun' (e.g. *llengua anglesa*) ranked nº 17. The second reference to languages was found in position nº 56, with English (freq. 130). Thus, language-related initiatives are just one strategy within the internationalisation plans of universities but not the most prominent according to the frequency findings.

Rank	Frequency	Lemma	Rank	Frequency	Lemma
1	1546	University (<i>universidad</i>)	16	270	Degree (<i>grado</i>)
2	1529	International (<i>internacional</i>)	17	256	Language (<i>lengua</i>)
3	806	Internationalisation (<i>internacionalización</i>)	18	230	Teacher (<i>docente</i>)
4	669	Programme (<i>programa</i>)	19	225	Activity (<i>actividad</i>)
5	597	Student (<i>estudiante</i>)	20	222	Course (<i>curso</i>)
6	528	Action (<i>acción</i>)	21	217	Centre (<i>centro</i>)
7	482	Research (<i>investigación</i>)	22	216	Development (<i>desarrollo</i>)
8	472	Strategy (<i>estrategia</i>)	23	213	Process (<i>proceso</i>)
9	440	Mobility (<i>movilidad</i>)	24	199	To Improve (<i>mejorar</i>)
10	362	Plan (<i>plan</i>)	25	191	To Promote (<i>potenciar</i>)
11	340	Project (<i>proyecto</i>)	26	189	Teaching (<i>docencia</i>)
12	315	Offer (<i>oferta</i>)	27	180	Knowledge (<i>conocimiento</i>)
13	298	Researcher (<i>investigador</i>)	28	180	Level (<i>nivel</i>)
14	295	Foreign (<i>extranjero</i>)	29	176	Staff (<i>personal</i>)
15	281	Objective (<i>objetivo</i>)	30	175	Network (<i>red</i>)

Table 1. Top 30 frequencies in the corpus

Moving on to concordances to put the term *English* in context, the most relevant categories in the corpus are education and proficiency, as seen in Table 2.

Category	%	Subcategories based on concordances	
Education	60 %	Teaching (<i>docencia</i>)	<i>abroad, agreements, preference, level, increase, actors, requirements, other languages</i>
		Subject (<i>asignaturas</i>)	<i>requirements, recognition</i>
		Training (<i>formación</i>)	<i>courses, improvement, actors</i>
Proficiency	15 %	Level (<i>nivel</i>)	<i>accreditation, requirements, actors, improvement</i>
		Knowledge (<i>conocimiento</i>)	<i>preference, languages, incentives, improvement</i>
Descriptor	13 %	English described as	<i>communication, science, working language, lingua franca, mother tongue, vehicular language, foreign language</i>
Other strategies	12 %	Visibility (<i>contenidos</i>)	<i>resources, translation, website</i>
		Agreements (<i>acuerdos</i>)	<i>mobility</i>
		Support (<i>apoyo</i>)	<i>international students</i>
		Research (<i>investigación</i>)	<i>PhD thesis</i>

Table 2. Semantic categories based on English concordance results

Regarding education, which accounts for more than half of the concordance results, English-medium instruction is the most frequent strategy to introduce English at the university at the bachelor and master's level. Moreover, it seems that Spanish universities prefer the introduction

of English as a vehicular language in reduced percentages, in other words, only in specific subjects and ECTS credits rather than whole degrees, as shown in concordances 1-4¹.

1. The benefits that students enrolled in bilingual degrees or **English-taught subjects** receive...
2. The implementation of **English-taught subjects** in the different degrees to improve the international projection.
3. To consolidate the available **English-taught subjects** included in the degrees, as well as the specific training offered to international students.
4. To promote the value of the **subjects taught in English** or other languages as tools for the internationalisation at home.

This finding aligns with the low numbers of bilingual EMI degrees reported in Ramos-García and Pavón Vázquez (2018: 40) as well as the reported linguistic challenges faced by Spanish society (MECD 2014). It seems a suitable solution to introduce EMI gradually until both the teaching staff and students are ready to engage fully in bilingual education. Nevertheless, there is an explicit interest in the growing presence of EMI in universities, particularly at the master's level because it expands the universities' educative offer and research specialisation to an international audience. In this way, universities become more attractive and accessible to international students, either for short mobility programmes such as one-year Erasmus students or students who enrol for the whole degrees (concordance line 2 and 3).

The next category, proficiency, coincides with the second section of the national language policy strategy, accreditation. Here results can be divided into those referring to level accreditation and its implications or language competence in general. Firstly, we find a desire to improve the students and staff's proficiency levels in English, as it is the preferred foreign language (concordances 5-9).

5. To promote language competence, **especially in the English language**, among teachers.
6. For the international students, the foreign language teaching programmes offer, **especially in English**, is an incentive to study at our university.
7. To review the plurilingual plan by fostering the foreign language teaching programmes offer, **preferably in English**, and particularly at the master's level.
8. The teaching programmes offer taught in foreign languages, **especially English**.
9. Foreign language offer (**especially in English**) in the new bachelor degrees, and the requirement of the B2 level for graduation.

The importance of accreditation in the corpus corresponds, firstly, with the mandatory language requirement that students need to achieve in order to graduate (B1 or B2 level, see concordance 9). Secondly, the implementation of EMI courses demands language requirements from both the teaching staff and the students to ensure the quality of such courses. Lastly, the administrative staff is also encouraged to participate in language courses as they are the first contact international students and staff have with the institution. Providing a high quality service is essential if the universities want to open internationally. All in all, language requirements often refer to the *certification* of a proficiency level to access certain domains at the university like bilingual degrees enrolment, graduation, or a job vacancy. In fact, the subcategory of language competence is closely related to the training subcategory, which mainly consists of general language courses and support programmes for the local students and staff to improve their language competence.

Other relevant strategies employing English for internationalisation attempt to increase the international visibility of institutions. For instance, the findings refer to the translation of websites and promotional resources, the creation of mobility agreements in English-speaking and non-

¹ Concordances and extracts have been translated into English by the author.

English speaking universities, the writing of doctoral thesis in English for the international doctorate, or the support services for international students (concordances 10-17).

10. To develop **alliances** with other **English**-foreign universities for the creation of double degrees at the undergraduate and graduate level.
11. The **mentorship** programme and to offer **support** in **English** for the international students.
12. ... including **information in English** about our degrees.
13. To develop **promotional materials in English** (leaflets, videos, etc.)
14. To create **promotional materials** of the UEx in **English** and Portuguese.
15. To consolidate the availability of institutional information on the UB's **website** at least in Catalan, Spanish and **English**.
16. The creation of an **English website** adapted to the international audience.
17. **PhD thesis published in English** and with the European mention.

Finally, the descriptor category offers remarkable insights into the values and functions of English. The values seen in the description of English as the 'language of communication', the 'language of science', or the 'lingua franca' suggest that its international status is acknowledged and accepted by the institutions. The functions are expressed in phrases such as 'working language', which is related to research activities (concordance 21), and 'vehicular language', which tends to be used in the teaching area (concordances 18-21).

18. ...in master's degrees, where **English** is gradually consolidating as the only **working language** or coexists with Catalan and Spanish.
19. The training of teachers in the use of **English as the vehicular language** for teaching.
20. The introduction of **English as the co-vehicular language**, and even as the vehicular language in some teaching programmes, in a plurilingual context.
21. The use of **English** as a third **vehicular language and working language**, particularly in the areas of reseach and postgraduate studies (the master's and doctoral level).

4.2. Qualitative results

The qualitative analysis offered additional insights from what has been reported in the previous section, particularly in connection with the descriptor category. A main finding suggests that English is seen as the international language for communication due to the identification of several discourses justifying its global hegemonic position mainly based on the instrumental view of languages related to globalisation and market-based societies with an added value for employment (extracts 1, 2).

1 **English** has become the **lingua franca of the international academic community**. It is used often as an effective **working language at the university and other professional settings**. For this reason, it is a key asset for the academic development of our students. Therefore, it is necessary to **make official the status of English as lingua franca**. (Plan de lenguas de la UAB 2016-2020)

2 The **globalisation of professional areas demands** a series of specific competencies with a holistic, creative and innovative approach. Universities, therefore, are becoming aware of the fact that their students should have not only specialised knowledge of their fields (scientific, technical, social, etc.), but also acquire transversal skills, such as **multilingual communicative competence and intercultural competence that can enormously improve their academic and professional profile**. (Plan para la internacionalización lingüística de la Universidad de Salamanca 2016)

The introduction of English at the university is legitimised through external factors such as global changes and policy decisions (extract 1) that stress the benefits of internationalisation to reach the

strategic institutional goals. English as the *de facto* language of internationalisation is also described as a necessary resource exploited by universities for visibility, competitiveness and excellence (Elliot et al. 2018; Liddicoat 2016; Soler and García-Blasà 2019). These beliefs are recurrently found in the arguments of institutional documents that support the introduction of English-related strategies for teaching and research, aiming at improving the university's international attractiveness and its members' competitiveness for the professional market (extracts 2, 3, 4).

3 The university **recognises this status and acknowledges** that **English** language competence, English-medium instruction and its role as the scientific language **turns the UGR into an attractive option for** students, teachers, and international researchers. Simultaneously, the English language competence of our alumni **reinforces their competitiveness in the national and international labour market**. (Política lingüística 2017 Universidad de Granada)

4 ...to establish the English language status as a working language to regulate its use in **academic activities** (teaching, exams, bibliography...), **research** (thesis, conference presentations, reports...), **administrative tasks** (study plans, certificates and other academic documentation, international agreements...) and in the **international projection** (dissemination materials, publications, agreements, exhibitions...) of the university. (Pla D'acció Pel Multilingüisme A La Universitat Pompeu Fabra 2007)

Connected to the discourse of excellence, English can be considered as a quality benchmark too. For instance, take extract 5, which describes the requirements needed by candidates to access specific teaching and research positions at the university. The language and career-related requirements include aspects such as teaching experience, mobility records, or language accreditation that limit the recruitment opportunities to only those candidates who are closer to the internationalisation experience, as understood by policymakers.

5 In all the available teaching positions, the **candidates' certification of their English language competence is considered a merit**. [...] The doctoral thesis viva carried out in English. One-year research stays at a university where English is used as a working language. Teaching in English at the university level for one academic year. Accreditation of C1 level or higher of English according to the CEFR. (Pla de llengües de la Universitat de Barcelona 2013-2015)

Another emerging implication derived from the textual analysis refers to the relationship between English and other foreign languages that tends to situate English at the top of the foreign language hierarchy. The division is established with textual techniques such as pre-modifying adverbs that highlight its relevance and favourable attitude towards it (*'preferably'*, *'fundamentally'*) and that it tends to appear as the phrases *'English and other foreign languages'* or *'English or other foreign languages'*. However, it is worth noting that on many occasions, the noun phrase 'foreign languages' is used as a synonym of English too. The literature states that some universities attempt to go beyond the direct association of English with internationalisation and advocate for a multilingual internationalised university, acknowledging the importance of other foreign languages for internationalisation (Dafouz 2021: 34; Soler-Carbonell and Gallego-Balsà 2016). By using the general noun phrase 'foreign languages' rather than English, policymakers give more freedom for language choice and multilingualism (extracts 6, 7).

6 The university should continue with the policy of **translating different text types and information into different foreign languages**, making the UGR's **commitment with plurilingualism and internationalisation** visible. (Política lingüística 2017 Universidad de Granada)

7 Although the role of English as the lingua franca of the international academic community in the university's internationalisation policy is undeniable, **French** also has an **important role as a result of geographical proximity and tradition**. Moreover, **French, German, and Italian, among other languages, are strategic languages in specific fields of knowledge and professional settings**. (Plan de lenguas de la UAB 2016-2020)

As far as the relationship between English and local languages is concerned, it seems they hold equal positions. It can be assumed that English coexists for similar functions with Spanish and the co-official languages of the universities located in bilingual regions (Catalan, Euskera, Valencian, Galician), particularly regarding teaching and information access. For instance, when English has the same status as other languages, it is marked with conjunctive and disjunctive coordinators (*'Spanish and English', 'Catalan or English'*). This situation is observed when English appears alongside Spanish since both languages are considered international languages and can reach wider audiences fulfilling similar purposes, as seen in extract 8, where it is mandatory to offer information in both Spanish and English. Additionally, it implicitly gives the option to include other languages depending on the target audience when it uses 'at least'.

8 University services in other languages: [...] Relevant information about the university and its services **should be available in Spanish and English** for the benefit of the students and staff. Information regarding internal regulation affecting students and staff, as well as their basic rights, **should be available at least in both languages**. (Política lingüística 2017 Universidad de Granada)

Instances of English having a lower status than other languages are found particularly in relation to the co-official languages. This lower position in the university language hierarchy, especially in bilingual universities, may be a consequence of the competition between the different languages to become the language of instruction in education since both the local language and English compete against Spanish as the traditionally main language of instruction. This finding aligns with one of the main objectives of language policy documents in bilingual regions, which refers to the promotion of the local language as the academic language instead of Spanish for research, teaching, and administrative tasks at universities (Elliot et al. 2018). With the arrival of English, the co-official languages compete against two international languages, Spanish and English; therefore, the decision to promote the local language can be found at the textual level, marked with possibility markers (*'the possibility of using English', 'when appropriate'*), or placing the co-official language in the first place when several languages are enumerated (*'Catalan and English', 'Valencian, English and other languages'*). Another example can be found with regards to accreditation: co-official language accreditation is also required for the staff and students, who should have a C1 level in opposition to the required B1-B2 English level (*'Accreditation of **C1 level of Valencian** is required in addition/as an alternative to the **B2 level of English** for job promotion'* [...] *'mandatory accreditation of **B1 level of English** and **C1 level of Valencian** for enrollment'* (Pla pluriennal de multilingüisme 2018, Universitat Jaume I)). These findings show that despite the widely accepted instrumental value of English, some universities are still cautious to a certain extent about the introduction of English to protect their local identity.

5. Discussion

Internationalisation at Spanish universities is a multifaceted process that spreads in the areas of mobility, research, teaching and collaboration, and addresses its strategies at students, teachers, and administrative staff. Regarding the first research question, language-related strategies are present in internationalisation plans, and in particular, as regards teaching where most strategies were found. Explicit references to English appear in relation to English-medium instruction and language accreditation with the two-fold objective of promoting the international attractiveness of Spanish universities and improving the local students' foreign language competence (Coleman 2006; Jones 2020; Lanvers 2018). Moreover, EMI courses help students learn specialised language knowledge relevant to their academic and professional careers. According to the quantitative analysis, Spanish universities aim at offering a certain number of English-taught subjects rather than fully bilingual degrees, which may be the result of the low levels of bilingual programmes (Soler-Carbonell 2016; Ramos-García and Pavón Vázquez 2018). A gradual introduction of subjects seems to be a more suitable solution than the implementation of fully

bilingual degrees in a country with a poor tradition in EMI education and generally low foreign language competence.

In order to face some of the potential challenges of the linguistic internationalisation of the Spanish teaching programmes, a series of actions are carried out which coincide in their majority with the recommendations suggested by Bazo et al. (2017) regarding accreditation, training, and incentive creation. These challenges refer mainly to the acquisition of higher levels of English proficiency and the creation of new EMI courses. On the one hand, universities set language requirements that stakeholders must face, so institutions create resources and support services to help stakeholders, generally, in the form of courses targeting the different stakeholders' needs (students, teachers, administrative staff) regarding accreditation. For instance, teaching in a foreign language is challenging when teachers are not well prepared methodologically or have sufficient language competence therefore courses addressing this need are created by experts and institutions. Similarly, students need to certify a certain language level to be accepted into some bilingual programme or master's programmes, so general language courses are available as well as different accreditation tools. All in all, as Dafouz (2021) concludes, there needs to be a coordination between the institution and the creation of resources and training opportunities for the success of EMI courses in Spanish universities.

Another emergent theme from the study refers to the use of English for international visibility and attractiveness, where EMI courses are created to attract international students, especially at the master's level. However, other frequent strategies boosting the international visibility of institutions consist of translating websites and institutional information into English to grant the international audience access to relevant information. This finding coincides with some descriptions of English as the international language of communication and the language of science. Its status as an international language is valued by institutions and policymakers for information access, mostly regarding teaching or mobility programmes. Regarding research, which is a key aspect of internationalisation, few references were found during the analysis, perhaps as a result of independent research policy documents, although in comprehensive internationalisation a transversal perspective of internationalisation in all areas should be found at the document level (de Wit et al. 2015).

Regarding the second research question, the status held by English is supported by certain language beliefs found in the document analysis. Given that, English is closely related to the discourse of globalisation, excellence, and market-based societies because of its instrumental value and resource view (Soler and García-Balsà 2019). These discourses based on external factors are used to legitimise the introduction of English-related strategies to increase the international visibility of institutions, attract international students with mobility programmes, and develop the local students' English language competence, as seen in the quantitative analysis. The discourse of globalisation has changed the linguistic landscape positioning English at the top of the (foreign) language hierarchy and giving it the status of the international language for scientific communication that stresses its instrumental value. It is described as the essential resource to succeed in the international arena, either in research or education. Considering the excellence discourse attached to English, it is connected to the national objectives of increasing universities' international recognition and employability (MECD 2014). The visible consequences of this discourse are observed in the language repertoires promoted by universities aiming to combine local and foreign languages for job promotion among their employees and hiring of future candidates. Lastly, in the case of market-based discourses, employability is key in the promotion of language competence. Jones (2020) and European policies (European Commission 2013) advocate for a society moving towards multilingualism, where the workplace will reflect these social changes. From this situation emerges the universities' responsibility for training and equipping their students and staff to succeed in the professional world, consequently, updating the set of skills and knowledge offered.

Resulting from the above-mentioned discourses, it can be said that there is a general interest in introducing English as another working language at Spanish universities to work together with the local languages as an additional asset. However, the findings point at some universities making an implicit connection between English and internationalisation goals, preferring the use of the umbrella term 'foreign languages' rather than English although the analysis suggests that the generic phrase and strategies related to foreign languages ultimately refer to English. On other occasions, though, some universities try to overcome the linguistic dominance of English and expand the linguistic repertoire of the university. This situation is particularly frequent in bilingual universities and big-sized universities with a long tradition of receiving international students who have an already-established bilingual tradition. For them, the local languages and English are part of the potential languages that could be used at the university, but it is not limited to those languages, at least in some strategic areas like websites' contents, education, and mobility services. In other words, rather than having a sole Spanish-English or Catalan-English environment, these universities opt for pursuing linguistic diversity depending on their interests as also reported by Dafouz (2021), Elliot et al. (2018), and Soler and Gallego-Bàlsas (2019).

6. Concluding remarks

This study has sought to understand better the relationship between English and internationalisation from an institutional perspective in Spanish higher education. It has shown that English is recognised as another working language, especially in the area of teaching for international visibility and competitiveness. Among the different language-related strategies found in the study, EMI is the most significant action that supports internationalisation goals and policymakers' language beliefs. Although the findings are limited by the accessibility and availability of the corpus documents, the study's methodological design provides a comprehensive analysis of the current policies implemented at universities as well as the presence of potential challenges in terms of policymaking, identification of specific language needs, and creation of linguistic support measures. Further research might explore the effectiveness of such support measures, the actions developed to increase the number of bilingual degrees, or a revision of policy contents with the purpose of granting comprehensive internationalisation experiences to all the university community.

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Appendix 1. Corpus documents

UNIVERSITY	INTERNATIONALISATION PLANS			LANGUAGE POLICY	
	YEAR	CONTENT	LANGUAGE	YEAR	LANGUAGE
Universidad CEU Cardenal Herrera	2015	section	Spanish		
Universidad Pontificia Comillas	2015	all document	Spanish		
Universidad de Deusto	2018	all document	Spanish		
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona	2013	transversal	Spanish	2016	Spanish
Universidad de Alcalá	2014	section	Spanish		
Universidad de Almería	2016	section	Spanish	2016	Spanish
Universidad de Alicante	2014	section	Spanish	2016	Spanish
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid	2017	section	Spanish		
Universitat de Barcelona	2012	section	Spanish	2013	Catalan
Universidad de Burgos	2010	section	Spanish		
Universidad de Cantabria	2019	section	Spanish	2018	Spanish
Universidad de Cádiz	2015	transversal	Spanish		
Universidad de Cartagena	2014	section	Spanish		
Universidad Complutense de Madrid	2015	section	Spanish		
Universidad Carlos III	2016	transversal	Spanish		
Universidad de Córdoba	2016	section	Spanish	2014	Spanish
Universidade da Coruña	2013	section	Galician		
Universitat de Girona	2017	all document	Spanish	2010	Catalan
Universidad a Distancia de Madrid	2017	all document	Spanish		
Universitat de Lleida	2016	all document	Catalan	2013	Catalan
Universidad de Extremadura	2014	section	Spanish		
Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria	2015	section	Spanish		
Universidad de Granada	2017	all document	Spanish	2017	Spanish
Universidad de Huelva	2015	all document	Spanish		
Universitat de les Illes Balears	2017	all document	Catalan	2017	Catalan
Universidad internacional de Cataluña	2015	section	Spanish		
Universidad de Jaén	2015	section	Spanish		
Universitat Jaume I	2015	all document	Spanish	2018	Catalan
Universidad de León	2012	section	Spanish		
Universidad de La Laguna	2018	transversal	Spanish	2016	Spanish
Universidad de Málaga	2013	section	Spanish	2012	Spanish
Universidad Miguel Hernández	2016	section	Spanish		
Universidad de Murcia	2017	section	Spanish		
Universidad Nebrija	2016	section	Spanish		
Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia	2019	section	Spanish		
Universidad internacional de Andalucía	2010	section	Spanish		
Universtat Oberta de Catalunya	2014	section	Spanish	2015	Catalan
Universidad de Oviedo	2018	all document	Spanish		
Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya	2017	all document	Spanish	2010	Catalan

Universitat Pompeu Fabra	2015	section	Catalan	2007	Catalan
Universidad politécnica de Madrid	2010	transversal	Spanish		
Universidad Pública de Navarra	2016	section	Spanish		
Universidad Pablo Olivade Sevilla	2018	section	Spanish		
Universidad del País Vasco	2012	all document	Spanish	2018	Spanish
Universitat Politècnica de Valencia	2015	transversal	Spanish		
Universidad de la Rioja	2015	all document	Spanish		
Universidad Rey Juan Carlos	2014	section	Spanish		
Universitat Ramon Llull	2015	all document	Spanish		
Universitat Rovira i Virgili	2014	all document	Spanish	2015	Catalan
Universidad de Sevilla	2015	all document	Spanish	2009	Spanish
Universidad de Salamanca	2013	section	Spanish	2016	Spanish
Universidade de Santiago de Compostela	2017	all document	Galician		
Universidad San Jorge	2017	all document	Spanish		
Universitat de València	2016	transversal	Catalan	2014	Catalan
Universidad de Valladolid	2017	all document	Spanish		
Universidade de Vigo	2016	all document	Catalan	2016	Galician
Universitat de Vic	2011	section	Catalan	2011	Catalan
Universidad de Zaragoza	2016	section	Spanish		