Expanding Language Borders in a Bilingual Institution Aiming at Trilingualism

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1 Introduction

Studies in multilingualism have documented that humans can master an array of languages and establish mechanisms to manage a multiplicity of languages in order to accomplish successful communicative events (Cenoz 2010; Cenoz and Genesee 1998; Creese and Martin 2003). Sociolinguists have time and again warned against the idea that whole countries are linguistically homogeneous and have made big efforts to account for language use in language contact and multilingual settings. Nevertheless Blackledge and Creese (2010: 7) point out, with data from the Home Office, that the majority of the population in the UK believe that "monolingualism in English is the natural and desirable state". In the non-English speaking world, however, globalisation has contributed to the valorisation of multilingualism. Following the distinction made by authors like Heller (2000) and House (2003), we could consider that, on the one hand, languages have become commodities through which people can promote themselves culturally, socially and economically. On the other hand, languages are seen as symbols of group identity which need to be preserved in the face of the homogenising force of globalisation. This is precisely the same dilemma with which higher education institutions find themselves, struggling between two aims that are not always compatible: equipping their graduates with the tools to compete in a global world and protecting the linguistic and cultural heritage of the communities to which they must ultimately respond.

This chapter will focus specifically on (i) the analysis of the language policy regarding internationalisation and management of multilingualism at a higher education institution in the setting of Catalonia; and (ii) students' attitudes towards

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internationalisation and multilingualism in that same institution. This study looks into micro language planning, as described by Chua and Baldauf (2011: 939), which "involves a range of contextual factors and actors such as small organisations and schools with each interpreting and carrying out the policies in different ways". Following Spolsky (2004), we consider three main components of the language policy of a social institution like a university: language practices (i.e. the members' choices from their repertoire for specific communicative situations); language beliefs or ideology (i.e. their attitudes towards language(s) and their uses and users); and language intervention (i.e. specific actions undertaken by the institution to maintain or transform the language practices and beliefs of its members).

The Catalan University Context

Catalonia is a historical nation which after the collapse of the Roman Empire developed its own Romance language, Catalan, a sister language to neighbours which have later in history become as powerful and globally widespread as French and Spanish. Later in history, Catalonia became a part of Spain and is currently an autonomous region within Spain. Its language, however, is still alive and used for everyday purposes, both at formal and informal levels, in spite of political efforts in the past to suppress it and assimilate the Catalan people and culture to mainstream Spanish society. For most of the twentieth century, with the exception of some very brief periods, Catalan was not allowed in the public spheres and was even banned from education and other public uses. However, in the last two decades of the twentieth century and stretching up until now, the language policy has been determined by the restoration of democracy in Spain and the decentralisation of the state, which gave the Catalan autonomous government the power to develop its own language planning. This process, according to Spolsky (2004: 195), places Catalan, as well as Basque in Spain and French in Quebec, as "minority languages that have been the focus of mobilisation for territorially defined ethnic groups later granted regional autonomy and thus able to act as government supported majority groups". The present language policy in Catalonia is not intended as a shift to Catalan monolingualism and has openly declared its ultimate goal to be the protection of both Catalan and Spanish, and the promotion of the use of Catalan at all levels of society. The aim is to place Catalan alongside Spanish, guaranteeing through education the complete command of both languages by all children completing their education in Catalonia. To achieve such an ambitious goal, educational authorities have implemented a linguistic immersion programme, inspired by the Canadian model (Huguet 2007; Lambert and Tucker 1972; Vila 1995).

In higher education, universities have adopted their own language policies and regulations. In the 1980s, all Catalan universities were declared bilingual, meaning that both Catalan and Spanish could be used as languages of instruction, with Catalan pre-eminence in all internal administration documents. The language of instruction of each course was chosen by each individual instructor, as all

students were assumed to be competent in both official languages. Additionally, the geographic proximity of Universitat de Lleida (UdL) to the Occitan-speaking community in the Aran Valley (in the North-West corner of Catalonia) prompted the university to include Occitan as one of its languages. Although its presence is very limited, Occitan language and literature are an important component of the B.A. in Catalan and Occitan studies, and some optional Occitan language courses are offered in the primary teacher training degree programme.

The Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions have always had an international component. Back in the Middle Ages, in Europe a few institutions attracted scholars and students from many different countries, and examples of transnational academic mobility can be found in all periods of history (Tanaka 2009). However, globalisation has had a strong impact on how universities are conceived, and has completely altered "the scale and speed of cross-border academic mobility" (Kim 2009: 387), with a trend towards a more competitive and managerial model of governance, which has carried along a lower proportion of fixed-term contracts and a sharp increase in the recruitment of staff who were either born in a different country or have at least been living and working abroad (Kim 2009).

The current process of internationalisation is happening at different levels, diversely affecting institutions according to their size, country, and emphasis on research and graduate programmes, among other factors. For instance, the impact of internationalisation is not the same in a small Southern European university that prioritises undergraduate programmes attended by local residents as in a major Australian university with a strong emphasis on graduate studies and a high percentage of foreign students and academic staff. Just by looking at the impact of the language of instruction we can establish a trend in the power of the institution in attracting foreign students and academic staff. Horta (2009) analyses different aspects associated with European prominent universities, and observes that the ten top institutions, with the exception of two French universities, use English as a lingua franca. This is obvious for the five institutions that are based in the UK, but the same applies to the other three, based in Switzerland, the Netherlands and Denmark.

The predominant use of English as the lingua franca of globalisation, particularly in transnational academic events, is supported by evidence ranging from the fact that a vast majority of international journals and conferences in most academic fields use English as their default language to the increasing pressure on academic programs worldwide to increase the amount of courses taught in English and ensure that all students graduate with a high proficiency level that will enable them to perform any task at international level.

The impact and implications of English as a lingua franca have been greatly discussed in the last few years, with the appearance of two opposing trends: one that

accepts the current role of English at the international level and attempts to describe and analyse its impact and consequences for language teaching, language policy and language analysis (Graddol 2006; Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2011; Sharifian 2009) and another trend that is overtly critical of the supremacy of English (Phillipson 2003, 2006). There is indeed a debate in applied linguistics over the desirability or not of English enjoying such a dominant position in the international arena, but English is widely recognised in most societies as a necessary language and, in spite of resistance and contestation by some educational policy makers and researchers, most universities and educational authorities in non-English speaking countries have set to the task of promoting the use of English in academic life with the dual goal of enhancing local students' English proficiency and attracting a higher number of international students and scholars. In fact, in many respects, one could simply say that in non-English speaking countries, the internationalisation of higher education has come hand in hand with the Englishisation of academic life. No internationalisation policy outside English-speaking countries can be conceived of without taking language policy into account, including both the local language(s) and the international lingua franca.

For many universities in Europe, internationalisation has become one of their priorities and towards this end they have designed specific policies which are aimed mainly at (i) increasing the mobility of staff and students and (ii) adapting the teaching programmes so that they can fulfil the double goal of being useful to international students and preparing the local students for a global professional market. Internationalisation policies often become intertwined with language policies in non-English-speaking countries, especially in world regions with minority languages, as the issue of language choice for teaching and academic communication becomes more relevant. In spite of works conducted on English-medium instruction in higher education (Coleman 2006), Balfour (2007: 39) acknowledges that "the interface [between internationalisation and language policies] has not to date been much explored let alone understood by HEIs (Higher Education Institutions)." By focusing on Wales and South Africa, Balfour states that policies aiming at developing and promoting indigenous languages in a context of internationalisation can be perceived as problematic or even damaging. Risager (2012) suggests that universities respond to the pressures of internationalisation with three main types of language policies: (i) a monolingual policy of using English more or less exclusively, (ii) a bilingual policy where English is used with the national language, (iii) a trilingual policy where English is used with the national and the regional language. According to the author, the current trend of internationalisation policies is to favour an extended or even exclusive use of English for international purposes, especially in master's and PhD programmes. Also recently, Doiz et al. (2011) looked at instructors' views on the implementation of a multilingual plan to promote English-medium instruction, and reported on some of the challenges and difficulties associated with such a plan.

This chapter will analyse the case of a small Catalan university where Catalan and Spanish coexist as languages of instruction and new policies have been drafted in order to promote the use of English within the institution and increase proficiency

Table 1 Use of languages in the classroom (Universitat de Lleida 2011)

	Catalan (%)	Spanish (%)	English (%)	Other languages (%)
2006–2007	65.4	29.6	4.5	0.5
2007–2008	67.6	28.4	3.4	0.6
2008–2009	67.3	27.9	4.0	0.8
2009–2010	66.8	28.3	4.3	0.6

in this language among the local student population. The university under study is far from being in a top position at an international level. Following Horta's (2009: 389) analogy, we could say that the university is far from playing or even aspiring to play in the "Champion's League" of universities. The University of Lleida (UdL) is a local comprehensive university, with about 8,000 students, most coming from the surrounding area, but it aspires to increase its prominence and visibility at the international level by attracting a higher number of international students and by enabling its graduates to compete in the international labour market.

Internationalisation and Language Policy at the University of Lleida

The process of internationalisation at the University of Lleida, which started with the popularisation of the Erasmus European exchange programme, created a situation that had not been forecast initially; that is, the presence in many courses of foreign students with some competence in Spanish and none in Catalan, and even more strikingly, the presence of students with no competence in any of the two languages. This, together with the realisation of the need for local students to develop their competence in English, prompted the introduction of changes in the language policies of Catalan universities. These changes were also supported by the implementation of economic incentives by the Catalan government, through which universities would receive more funding if they implemented language policies that promoted the use of English and, at the same time, supported the maintenance of Catalan.

As it can be appreciated in Table 1, despite the possible incentives and the possible 'pressure' from the international students to offer more courses in Spanish or English, the linguistic profile of the University of Lleida in terms of the medium of instruction remained relatively stable between 2006 and 2010, with a strong dominance of Catalan, Spanish trailing clearly behind, and English still having a very minor role.

Although the presence of English is still quite limited within the general academic programmes of the university, the schools are beginning to include courses in which English is the medium of instruction. This is a relatively new development in Spanish universities and for many students it represents an expansion of the

language borders which have traditionally been drawn at the university, with Catalan and Spanish as the only two possible languages of instruction. Likewise, for many international students, following a course in Spanish means that they have moved beyond their linguistic comfort zone in order to meet the new communicative needs, a situation that takes a further turn with the presence of Catalan as the predominant medium of instruction at UdL. This is precisely what we aim to explore in this chapter: the extent to which English, for local students, and Catalan and Spanish, for international students at UdL, represent a new challenge in their academic experience and how they react to this challenge. Ultimately, our goal is to assess the impact of a language policy, such as the one at UdL, which promotes multilingualism as a means of internationalisation. We intend to look at the critical role played by local phenomena in the management of a multilingual organisation (Chua and Baldauf 2011).

After this introduction, the chapter includes four main sections. In Sect. 2, we present information on the data that we analyse and the methodology we have followed for their collection. Section 3 consists of an analysis of the main features of internationalisation and language policies of UdL as they have been articulated in the form of official documents. In the two following sections, we analyse the views of international and local students, respectively, in connection with the new language(s) they encounter in their classes as the result of the implementation of a particular language policy promoted by the university.

2 Data and Methodology

The data on which we base our study is part of a larger project on the relationship between internationalisation and multilingualism in three European universities located in bilingual territories: Catalonia, the Basque Country and Wales. The first set of data that we analyse in this chapter consists of three white papers, through which the University of Lleida makes explicit the main aspects of its internationalisation, teaching and language policies, and a fourth document in which the university establishes the requirements that degree programmes must fulfil in order to certify the competence of their graduates in a third language. All of these documents were produced by the University of Lleida between 2006 and 2010.

The second set of data includes three focus group sessions led by two researchers. The sessions took place during the months of May and June 2009. One of these sessions was held with four international students (two males and two females) who were taking part in different exchange/mobility programmes. They came from China, Mexico, the US and the Czech Republic, and were following courses in different schools (Arts, Architecture, Agricultural Engineering and Business); we will refer to them as 'the International group'. The participating students volunteered after a general call launched, at our request, by the International Relations Office. When the session was held, all of the students had spent between

one and two terms at UdL. The session was held mainly in Spanish, although students were also told that they could speak in English if they wished. They discussed freely and extensively on the issues proposed by the researchers as well as on those raised by themselves during the discussion.

The other two sessions were organised with two different groups of local students and with the participation of two researchers. In one group, students were in their last year of the Business Management and Administration degree (from now on we will refer to this group as 'the Business group'), and the other included students at the School of Agricultural Engineering (to be referred to as 'the Engineering group'). In both groups, students were selected because they had taken at least one content course taught in English. The four students (two males and two females) that constituted the 'Business group' had attended an optional course offered by a group of instructors, each dealing with their own area of expertise. The course had been created to respond to the call by the university to increase the number of English-medium courses (EMCs) offered to local students in order to improve their English skills, but it was also open to incoming Erasmus students, and so it was useful for those international students who had trouble following Catalan and Spanish courses. This course was offered as optional, and it was designed as a general overview of previously studied contents in accounting. The Engineering group consisted of three male students who also had some experience with English-medium teaching. As we will see below in the analysis of these sessions, it is important to mention that two of the students had taken a course in food processing and technology, which had been designed and implemented by a content instructor and a language teaching specialist, whom we are labelling here as 'the language coach'. The two had jointly planned all the activities and materials to be used in class (see Cots and Clemente 2006, 2011, for a detailed account of how this course was planned and implemented). In both the Business and the Engineering groups, students were invited personally by the researchers thanks to the collaboration of their lecturers. Although researchers and students were all Catalan-Spanish bilinguals, the two sessions were held in Catalan.

The development of the focus group sessions was organised following Krueger and Casey's (2000) guidelines, and it was broadly structured around the following questions that the researchers had considered relevant to discuss, allowing the participants to move beyond them and expand on any related topic of their choice:

1. What language(s) do you use most frequently?
2. What language have you studied formally?
3. How did you come to the realisation that globalisation had arrived at the university?
4. How do you think that multilingualism affects this university?
5. How do you react to the situation in which a lecturer or a member of the administrative staff addresses an international student in Catalan?
6. What do you think about introducing English-medium teaching in this university?
7. What positive and negative aspects do you find in a multilingual university?

8. Which should be the main language(s) of communication in this university?
9. What do you think about your personal experience with English-medium teaching? (only for local students)
10. (Only for local students) How would you rate (1 very negative; 5 very positive) the following aspects of your experience as a student in a course taught in English? (i) Degree of understanding of the contents; (ii) level of expression: class participation, written work, exams, etc.; (iii) language benefits; (iv) academic mobility; (v) labour market; (vi) language competence of the lecturer(s); (vii) academic level of the contents compared with other courses taught in L1.
11. (Only for international students) How would you rate (1 very negative; 5 very positive) the following aspects of UdL? (i) Presence of Catalan, Spanish and English; (ii) multilingual competence of academic staff; (iii) multilingual competence of administrative staff; (iv) degree of internationalisation of UdL.
12. What is for you a 'multilingual university'?
13. How do you see the UdL in connection with internationalisation?

3 Language Planning

Our aim in this section is to examine a series of documents produced by the University of Lleida in order to explore how the institution defines its present and future multilingual profile. We will examine four documents issued by the university. In our analysis we will follow the same chronological order in which they were issued:

1. Internationalisation programme of UdL (Universitat de Lleida 2006)
2. Teaching policy plan of UdL (Universitat de Lleida 2007)
3. Language policy of UdL: Towards a multilingual reality (Universitat de Lleida 2008)
4. Regulations for the accreditation of a third language in degree programmes (Universitat de Lleida 2010)

The aim of the document *Internationalisation programme of UdL* (Universitat de Lleida 2006) is to set out the main guidelines that the institution needs to follow in order to increase its degree of internationalisation. In these guidelines, languages play an important role, since 6 out of a total of 17 goals involve specific language policy actions. Basically, in these six goals the UdL aims at (i) increasing the "language skills" of the academic and administrative staff as well as the students as a requirement for increasing international mobility, (ii) making available "in English" all information related to the teaching and research activities of the university, and (iii) increasing the number of courses taught in "widely-spoken languages" in order to be able to attract international students. With the presence of these language-related goals, the institution seems to acknowledge that it has a deficit in connection with the students and staff's knowledge of languages. However, the document

is ambiguous with regard to what languages should be part of the multilingual repertoire of the institution. Thus, while it often refers to language training needs of the members of the academic community and the importance of introducing courses in "widely-spoken languages", English is only mentioned in reference to written information. When referring to the language training needs of the members of the academic community, English is never mentioned. Furthermore, in a bilingual community with a minority and a majority language, the expression "language skills" is ambiguous as it could very easily be interpreted as referring to competence in the two languages rather than a foreign language.

The *Teaching policy plan of the UdL* (Universitat de Lleida 2007) refers to the language policy of the institution twice. First, two of the three strategic competences that should be included in all degree programmes are defined as: (i) correct spoken and written expression in Catalan or Spanish, and (ii) knowledge of a foreign language. The second reference to the language policy appears in the section on "Internationalisation", where the institution commits to increasing the use of English as a medium of instruction.

The white paper *Language planning policy of UdL: Towards a multilingual reality* (Universitat de Lleida 2008) is where the institution made its language policy explicit for the first time. Here, multilingualism is presented as a corporate strategy for the survival and expansion of the university and as a necessary step in the processes of European academic convergence and the general globalisation of higher education. The document makes reference to a wide range of languages that should form part of the multilingual repertoire of the institution, and the inclusion of each language is justified in different terms:

– Catalan: protect and extend its use.
– Occitan: promote its study (no mention of use).
– Spanish: correctness in academic and professional usage.
– English: make it a language of academic work, including teaching and research.
– Other languages:

   (a) French, German, Italian, Portuguese: preserve their use based on their academic/professional tradition.
   (b) Chinese, German: promote their use due to present economic and professional interest.

One idea that permeates the document is that establishing a multilingual university is not an easy enterprise and that the goal of multilingualism must therefore be approached as a gradual process. For this reason the new multilingual profile contemplates different stages. In the first stage of the process the aim is receptive trilingualism (i.e. staff and students can understand Catalan, Spanish and English). In the second stage, the aim is productive trilingualism (i.e. staff and students can write and speak in any of the three languages).

Multilingualism is also presented as creating uncertainty among the members of the community in terms of rights and duties to use a specific language. Therefore, it becomes necessary to establish some regulation organising language use in particular settings. This regulation is summarised under the "principle of language

safety", whereby each course must have one 'official' language, which must be clearly announced on the course list. The Language Service of UdL is placed in charge of supervising that the principle is being observed in the different schools of the university. Since each course must have one 'official' language, institutional multilingualism can be seen as the sum of officially monolingual settings. The principle of language safety distinguishes between the 'official' language of the course and other, 'unofficial', languages which can be used by instructors and students in one-to-one conversations inside or outside the classroom.

Finally, from the point of view of management and administration, the new language policy document recommends what we consider a policy of 'parallel multilingualism', according to which all the documents related to academic matters will have to be in three languages (Catalan, Spanish and English). This is different from the 'heteroglossic multilingualism' (Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes 2011) that is proposed for teaching, in which students are required to take courses in different languages, thereby ensuring their effective exposure to multiple languages.

In a subsequent development of the 2008 white paper on language policy, in July 2010 UdL issued a *Regulation for the accreditation of a third language in degree programmes* (Universitat de Lleida 2010) in which English was no longer the 'obligatory' third language. Instead, four possible languages were mentioned: English, French, German, and Italian. According to these regulations, a student graduating in a course degree programme at UdL must prove that she has an intermediate knowledge in a third language, corresponding to B1 of the Common European Framework for languages (CEFR).

Taking into account the four policy documents discussed above, we can begin to draw a profile of UdL in connection with its stance towards what the institution considers one of the strategies for its survival: effecting the transition from bilingualism to multilingualism. Perhaps the most salient aspect is the tension in connection with the nature of the multilingualism proposed, which on certain occasions considers English as the preferred third language, alongside Catalan and Spanish, and on other occasions includes several languages without establishing a clear priority. It is difficult to say whether this ambiguity is the result of a true will by the institution to promote multilingualism or of a certain disregard or resistance on the part of particular policy makers who may not agree with the idea of a dominant lingua franca in academia. The situation is rather paradoxical if we consider that for practically the whole of the local student body, English is clearly their third language. However, we should not forget that, since English in Spain was not introduced as a foreign language in schools until the late 1960s and early 1970s, some of the members of staff with decision-making power may not be competent in this language.

In the four documents examined, there is a more or less explicit acknowledgement that at present the university cannot be considered multilingual and that it needs to make an effort in order to train the members of the academic community in foreign languages as a means of its true internationalisation, which is considered a key strategy for its survival. The two main actions that the university sees as instrumental to overcoming this 'problem' are addressed to the students, who, on

the other hand, may see them as impositions rather than facilitation measures: the introduction of courses taught in a foreign language and the need to reach an intermediate level in a third language in order to graduate.

Finally, the institution seems to be in favour of a 'progressive', 'regulated' multilingualism. Catalan + Spanish + foreign language trilingualism is never presented as the final stage but as the initial stage of a path towards the promotion of other languages. At the same time, this multilingualism must abide by the 'principle of language safety' which imposes the use of one 'official' language in each course, thereby presenting multilingualism as an aggregate of monolingualisms in different settings.

4   International Students

The aim of this section is to present and discuss the ideas put forward by the International group. We shall focus mainly on their construct of an ideal multilingual university and on the positive and negative views they express about their experience at UdL.

When asked directly about what an ideal multilingual university should look like, the international students relied on their expectations and experience to try to conceptualise such a construct. An idea that pervaded the discussion was the need for interaction among local and international students. The participants often complained about the lack of interaction with local students, and repeatedly focused on the importance of the 'locals' opening up and adapting to the global/international culture which they felt was personified by international visitors. "What is needed is that local people open up a little more to the international culture", one student said.[1]

As far as use of languages is concerned, the participants focused on the three main languages of the context: Catalan, Spanish and English. From an experiential point of view, they regarded the university environment as multilingual, where interactions could take place in two or more languages; that is, each speaker using his/her preferred language among those understood by their interlocutors. However, when they came to examples based on their personal experience, they only mentioned Spanish and English as the languages of interaction, thereby showing the value of both languages, rather than Catalan, as lingua francas in this specific context. In connection with strictly academic issues, they claimed that information relevant to students should be available in the three languages of the community and that a wider range of courses should be taught in different languages. Nevertheless, it became clear later in the discussion that their main complaint was that the university was offering too many courses in Catalan and not enough in Spanish, preferably, and

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[1]For the sake of convenience, this and subsequent extracts from the discussion sessions are all presented in English regardless of the language in which they were originally stated: Catalan, Spanish or English.

English. It seems, thus, that one of the reasons for choosing UdL was to improve their competence in Spanish, as they expected to be able to use this language extensively while at UdL. Finally, they all agreed with the statement uttered by one of the participants who considered the English language a must in a multilingual university: "I'm used to English being the international language and if English is not spoken, for me it's not multilingual". The following subsections will report on the positive and negative views the international students had constructed after their multilingual experience at UdL.

The Bright Side of the Multilingual Experience at UdL

The positive view of the international students' multilingual experience at UdL was focused more on life and interpersonal communication than on languages. They discussed extensively the fact that they experienced new situations which were beyond their control and which led them to learn a great deal about themselves and to evolve from the point of view of their communication skills. They also praised the opportunity to appreciate different cultures and to learn or become acquainted with other languages (whether local or not). As a consequence of those experiences, they all acknowledged having acquired new communication skills that are useful in any setting and undeniably important in a multicultural environment. They specifically mentioned being able to reach a compromise on using an international code and a great deal of body language: "we're all in a kind of situation where we all understand what everyone else is going through at the same point, so, although we come from different cultures, now we're able to figure out some sort of a middle road"; "we look for a compromise with some international words and our legs and hands".

When it came to the positive aspects directly related to their experience with multilingual communication at the university, they commented on the positive qualities of local people, whom they described as nice, good-humoured and helpful. They also praised the fact that occasionally they had come across some locals, usually instructors, who knew a great deal about their own culture. Some informants even acknowledged having learnt something about their own culture from those instructors. In relation to classmates, they mentioned that whenever someone had managed to make local friends, these were always students who had taken part in mobility programmes before.

The Dark Side of the Multilingual Experience at UdL

The negative aspects discussed by the International group usually centred on their academic experience and, more specifically, on the use of Catalan, whether for academic purposes or for interpersonal communication.

One of the negative aspects is related to the initial steps of the students' multilingual experience. The students complained about an issue which is already

tackled in UdL's white paper on language policy (Universitat de Lleida 2008), namely the lack of precise information about the use of languages available on the university website. As an example, the international students mentioned that they had found a list with the names of all courses offered at UdL written in English. This led some of them to believe that the courses were all taught in English. When they arrived, they realised that this was not the case.

Another shared complaint was that of a certain mismatch between expectations about the presence of Catalan in society and the situation they found, as they did not expect Catalan to have such a large presence in public spaces. This mismatch also included other issues related to the use of a lingua franca, such as an instructor's weak command of English together with a strong non-native accent: "in my opinion, the instructor doesn't speak English very well and has a very strong Spanish accent".

Also in relation to those initial steps, the international students complained of a lack of appropriate guidance, even empathy, during the adaptation period. For instance, those students who had been at UdL since the very beginning of the academic year acknowledged that a special theatre play that was performed in a welcoming party organised by the institution was incomprehensible to them despite the fact that the play had bits in English. Moreover they complained about the low level of commitment of some of the local students who had volunteered to act as 'language partners' for international students.

Other negative views of the international students' multilingual experience within the academic environment had to do with a sense of frustration caused by the extensive use of Catalan. The strongest complaint was about Catalan being used as a language of instruction and the power-politeness tensions this circumstance occasionally brought about. For example, students explained that instructors often told them to ask for help whenever they did not understand something, and acknowledged that they never asked questions because they would have constantly interrupted the class. The students also focused on the difficulty of achieving academic success in a language they did not master, and so they openly conveyed the idea that the passive knowledge of Catalan acquired during their stay was enough to move around the city, but not to fulfil academic requirements.

In sum, the International focus group shows us that the students had undergone an experience that could be qualified as international and even as multilingual, but that the institution should make more efforts towards multilingualism. The participants in the discussion focused on the general unavailability of precise institutional information about the use of languages. They also hinted at the lack of linguistic training and intercultural communication skills among some administrative and teaching staff. This negative perception contrasts with the overall positive intercultural and multilingual experience of spending one or two semesters as international students at UdL. Finally, in connection with their views on the role of the three institutional languages, Spanish seemed to attract international students towards the institution and to play an important role as a lingua franca, English had the unquestionable role of being the international language *per se*, whereas Catalan was perceived as a hindrance for their academic attainment.

5   Local Students

The outcomes of the two focus group sessions with local students who had attended at least one English-medium course were rather diverse, but we have structured them by arranging their contributions around the three most prominent themes in the conversations: language issues, methodology issues and the impact of language policy on students.

Language Issues

When asked directly about the reasons why they had chosen a course taught in English, all the students in 'the Engineering group' recalled that they were motivated by the presence of English, and the opportunity to improve their command of this language, which they felt was a much needed but still neglected area in their training for their future professional life. This is clearly seen in one student's emphatic line: "it's about time to begin dealing with English". This is an idea that is complemented by another student's remark that taking that course was an opportunity to get "free English tuition", as opposed to the more standard way of learning English by attending expensive private language schools. Thus, those students react positively to one of the outcomes of the institutionally promoted language policy.

In the course of the discussion of their experience with English-medium courses (EMCs), the students stated that classroom oral interaction was conducted 100 % in English, although two different ways of managing languages were identified in the two EMCs attended by the students. In one of the courses, instructor and students interacted in English, materials were written in English, and learning outcomes (such as essays, presentations and final exam) were also in English. This course had been jointly planned by the content instructor and a language coach who was an expert on TEFL methodology. The other course made use of both English and Catalan in a more or less systematic way: the instructor spoke in English all the time, but the materials he used were written in Catalan. Furthermore, the students were required to keep their 'laboratory notebook' in English, but were allowed to take the final exam in Catalan.

In both cases, students perceived the course as an opportunity for learning English, but they did not expect a very high level of English proficiency from instructors, as it was clear to them that the instructors were experts in the content of the course but not necessarily expert English users. In fact, the instructors were not considered models for language use, and students appeared not to mind their language weaknesses. However, at some point in the discussion, the students wished for increased academic mobility in the future, which would allow for visiting foreign instructors teaching courses in English. The implicit assumption here is that local instructors do not speak good English whereas foreign instructors would provide a much better model for them to learn the language. For the students, the

course represented a substitute for regular language instruction or an opportunity for language practice, even though the instructor was clearly not identified as a model and students appeared to be very tolerant of the instructors' language errors. This may be due to the fact that students did not aim at accuracy as one of their learning goals, and instead aimed at developing fluency. For this purpose they needed to improve their own communicative skills and their capacity to create and interpret meaning. The students perceived their English to be not good enough and in need of improvement, but they appeared confident that they would be able to improve it just by using it, without the help of an external language expert.

Classroom Methodology Issues

As the students reflected on their experience with English-medium instruction at UdL, they expressed some thoughts on the methodology of language teaching and learning. As mentioned above, the students in our focus groups were from two different degree programmes (Business Administration and Agricultural Engineering) and therefore each group had attended the EMC offered at their own programme. The Engineering students who had participated in the EMC which had been collaboratively planned by the content instructor and the language coach were very positive about English-medium instruction, as for them this was the ideal methodology for language learning, and they made explicit reference to the virtues of the activity-based and learner-centred methodology used in the course: "You could see it was a very well-planned course. It was not just a bunch of photocopies. The instructor had devoted quite a lot of time to it".

Students in 'the Business group' did not show the same appreciation for the methodology used in their course. These students had attended the EMC in which the instructors had not had any specific support for preparing the materials and the class activities. They had probably relied on the idea that teaching an EMC consisted mainly of switching the language used by the instructor in class with no further provision to adapt materials and class-activities to the needs of non-native speaking students. At one point in the discussion, they observed that English-medium instruction was communicative as opposed to ESP courses taken at the university, which were more strongly associated with grammar teaching: "a course like the one we took on accounting in English is different from English courses where we do grammar. In the accounting class, errors do not bring your grades down".

In spite of their overall satisfaction with their courses in English, one concern that appeared in the discussion was how the language choice affected the contents offered during the course. This was an idea expressed by 'the Engineering group', as they were left with the feeling that had the course been in Catalan, they would have been able to delve more deeply into its contents. This statement was not intended as a complaint but rather as an acceptance of the fact that EMCs necessarily would offer a reduced version of the syllabus, as they would not be able to cover as much content as courses in Catalan or Spanish. A few days after the discussion

session, the authors met with one of the content instructors and asked him about this particular aspect. He was adamant in claiming that depth of content treatment had not been reduced at all. He emphasised that the syllabus had been adapted, and that he had taken out two units from the *original* programme, but he claimed that the course was stronger from a pedagogical point of view and the different units were dealt with as exhaustively as they would have been in the students' L1. His words confirmed the idea expressed by the students that some adaptations had to be made to the contents of the course, rather than just switching into English, but at the same time confirmed that the overall quality of the course could be preserved in spite of the lesser competence in English of both the instructor and the students.

Impact of Language Policy on Students

In the course of the focus group sessions, students reflected on the impact of the university's policy of trilingualism – including the promotion of EMCs – on themselves and on the institution at large. We must bear in mind that EMCs are not compulsory for any students at UdL, and that only those who choose to take one of these courses on a voluntary basis actually experience instruction in English (other than English language instruction, which is obligatory in some degrees but not in others). The students participating in this study all had some experience with English-medium instruction and, therefore, were not representative of the overall student body, which would probably be more critical of any policy attempting to increase the presence of English in the academic context. Thus, it was not surprising to see a positive attitude towards this initiative. The students stated that offering courses in English was good for the promotion of institutional multilingualism and the internationalisation of the university. However, they only envisioned the possibility of what we have above referred to as 'parallel multilingualism'. By this, we refer to the organisation of academic itineraries in different languages, giving students the option to choose the language in which their classes will be conducted. In other words, students did not consider a teaching itinerary in which they were forced to take courses in different languages (i.e., Catalan, Spanish and English) or in which some courses included a multilingual component, whereby some parts of the course were conducted in one language and some others in a different language. Instead, their vision of a multilingual and internationalised university meant that the university should offer parallel itineraries in different languages and students could choose the one that suited them best.

More important to us, however, is what students said about the impact of English-medium instruction on themselves. One would expect to observe a strong bond between local and international students on campus, and especially with those attending the same EMC, but the two groups did not socialise much. The local students argued that this was due to the Erasmus students' low level of social integration with local people: "I was a language exchange volunteer and we met only

once. If they are not interested, they don't come after you"; "They don't integrate". At this point, it is worth remembering that the International group also blamed local students for this lack of social interaction.

The use of English was not a barrier for communication, but some unspecified social or interactional barriers appeared to exist between local and international students, in spite of all local students in our focus group sessions either having already had some experience of studying abroad or planning to have it. In fact, local students seemed to associate the term 'international' with stays abroad. Being Erasmus students themselves was perceived to be an experience of internationalisation, whereas sharing the local environment with foreign students was not. They did not seem to view the EMC they had taken as a true experience of internationalisation. In other words, they did not see their experience at home as an opportunity to expand their own mental borders, which could only open to new territories when they were physically displaced into a different campus in a foreign country.

6   Conclusions

We conclude this chapter by pointing out some of the main findings in our tridimensional research combining the analysis of language policy with the views of international and local students regarding the language challenges experienced in the context of internationalisation at a small Catalan university.

First, Catalan appears to be perceived as an obstacle for the academic interests of international students. They are surprised that it is so widely used in classes and that instructors do not speak English more fluently. They would prefer not to have to expand their linguistic repertoire towards Catalan, and they would like to have more preliminary information on which courses are offered in Catalan so that they could avoid encountering this language in class. Therefore, they do not appear to be appreciative of institutional efforts inviting them to incorporate a new language (i.e. Catalan) into their linguistic repertoire.

International students clearly refuse to embrace Catalan as the situated lingua franca between local and international students or between themselves. Instead, they choose either English or Spanish. In fact, international students complain that they would like to have more opportunities to use Spanish at the university, as developing Spanish proficiency was one of the reasons why they chose a university located in Spain.

Local students, on the other hand, complain that they have little or no contact with international students and, therefore, cannot practice much English with them. Their vision is that Erasmus students are not willing to start new relationships with local students, as they claim that international students "don't come after you" and "they don't integrate". Although some of these students have already been exchange students in a European university, they seem to ignore the difficulty of integrating into a new social environment and somehow expect international students to take all the steps leading to their integration into the local network.

They did not appear – at any moment during the group discussions – to take on any responsibility for their lack of interaction with the community of international students at UdL. As one student explained "I was a volunteer (. . .) I was assigned two groups (of international students) . . . if you send them an email, you tell them *ok, if you need anything ask me, and so on*". What is most striking here is that international students also complain about lack of support by so-called 'language partners' during the first weeks of their stay at UdL.

It is also rather clear from the data that although the institution does not specify what language should be promoted together with the two already existing languages, both international and local students clearly identify English as the necessary language in order to transform the university into a multilingual one.

The institution's multilingual policy, through the principle of language safety, envisions that languages are kept separate in class. However, from the discussions with the focus groups, we can infer that heteroglossic multilingualism could constitute an alternative to the parallel multilingualism that seems to be effectively promoted by the university, in which different courses are identified with one specific language.

English-medium courses additionally are seen by the local students as an opportunity to practise the language, and they do not seem to be very concerned about the model of English used in class or the accent of the instructor. This point of view should help instructors feel relaxed about their own language competence and hopefully concentrate on methodological aspects derived from the difficulty of teaching a content course in a language in which students are not as proficient as in their mother tongue. The impact of English-medium instruction on course contents is acknowledged by students, who assume that the course cannot reach the same levels of depth as if it had been taught in a local language. This observation is not shared by one of the instructors, who went a long way towards adapting the course syllabus from a methodological point of view. According to this instructor, rather than the depth of treatment of the different topics, what has diminished is the number of units of the course. However, he claims, this is not the result of using a different language but a new, more learner-centred teaching methodology, in which the students are given more opportunities to work autonomously in class and participate actively.

The university does not seem to acknowledge the methodological implications of switching to English as the medium of instruction. There is not a single institutional document that in any way refers to any methodological changes being required by changing the language of instruction from Catalan or Spanish to English. In our view, such a document should emphasise the need to adapt course syllabi and materials in a way that facilitates comprehension and construction of knowledge by students. More specifically, it should give indications to teachers on: (i) how to adapt oral and written input in order to make it more comprehensible; (ii) how to integrate content and form so that the class becomes not just a place for the transmission of concepts but also a place for the negotiation of meaning (Long 1983); (iii) how to give opportunities for learners to speak and produce oral and written language, both spontaneous and planned; and (iv) how to promote the

use of learning and communication strategies by students. We think that all these are necessary elements to ensure a successful implementation of English-medium courses in a university where not all students have a high level of competence in English.

All in all, expanding language borders does not appear to be an easy task. Resistance may appear at all levels, from policy-makers to instructors and students. In this chapter we have attempted to show the impact of language policy on students, both local and international, and by doing so we hope to provide elements for reflection on and deeper understanding of micro language planning in the current context of globalisation and internationalisation of universities worldwide.

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