

# Multilingual policies and practices of universities in three bilingual regions in Europe

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## *Abstract*

*The interconnection between globalization and multilingualism in the evolution of European societies has become an undeniable fact. On the one hand, there seems to be a greater need for lingua francas that can facilitate understanding among individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and, ultimately, allow them to increase their chances of geographical and socio-economic mobility. On the other hand, in a world that tends to be perceived as increasingly homogeneous, speakers of minority languages may see their identities threatened by the dominance of those lingua francas and stand up for the right to use their languages. This tension is especially felt in the university context.*

*This article discusses some of the tensions and ambiguities related to the management of multilingualism which may arise in bilingual universities in the process of designing and implementing internationalization policies. The study focuses on three universities which are located in the European bilingual regions of Catalonia (University of Lleida), the Basque Country (University of the Basque Country) and Wales (Cardiff University) respectively. The article gives an overview of (i) the sociolinguistic situation of each university and (ii) the main elements of their internationalization policy with an emphasis on its impact on language policy.*

*Keywords:* international university; multilingualism; language policy; lingua franca.

## **1. Introduction: internationalization and multilingualism at university**

European universities are nowadays characterized by, amongst other things and with different outcomes, their strong commitment to the internationalization of their study programmes, research activity and, above all, students, who

increasingly feel the need to study beyond their own national borders. Consequently, universities compete with each other to attract foreign students, as the degree of internationalization is closely linked not only to revenue income, but also to quality indicators when universities are externally evaluated. The existence of English as a *de facto* lingua franca, an excellent asset for Anglophone universities to reach out to the world and attract students, is now seen as an opportunity by non-Anglophone universities in Europe, which tripled the number of English-medium programmes they offered in Europe between 2003 and 2008 (Spencer 2008). At the same time, however, European universities are often perceived by their stakeholders (i.e. funding bodies, students, parents, university faculty and employees, employers and society in general) as social institutions one of whose functions is to protect and promote the language and culture of its local environment. This function may be especially relevant in bilingual contexts in which there is a minority language/culture that is perceived as threatened by the dominance of the majority language/culture.

The process of internationalization of universities involves specific institutional policy developments affecting what Spolsky (2004: 5) suggests are the three components of the language policy of a speech community: (i) language practices, (ii) beliefs about language and language use, and (iii) language intervention, planning or management. While we have begun to address the beliefs component elsewhere from some early results from our project (see Garrett et al., 2012), in this article we are mainly interested in the third component and the extent to which language intervention, planning or management in higher education institutions can be, as Balfour (2007: 37) assumes, “mediated, shaped, and even distorted by the influence of globalization, illuminating the complexity of the national, regional, and global interface”. With this aim in mind, we focus our study on three European universities located in different bilingual regions: Catalonia, the Basque Country and Wales. These three cases can be considered, to a greater or lesser degree, as examples of a political context in which there has been a process of devolution and increasing regional autonomy, with a minority language that is supported by the regional government in an attempt to reverse the language shift to Spanish or English, respectively (Spolsky 2004: 195). In this process of reversing language shift, higher education institutions in these regions have become agents by acknowledging the minority language in their language policy and adopting it in different ways and degrees in their institutional practices. It is in these already highly sensitive sociolinguistic environments that we feel that the impact of internationalization can best be analyzed as developing ‘institutional sites of multilingual policy’, in which language learning and use are more likely to become objects of explicit reflection, and perhaps conflict, alongside the development of particular language policies. We believe that by concentrating on the interaction between these institutional language policies and their corresponding national

and regional socio-political environments it is possible to begin to shed some light upon larger social processes of “multilingualization” in which many European higher institutions are already involved.

The main idea behind the present study is to begin to confront the challenge of developing an analytical framework that would allow us to characterize and compare different universities in terms of their institutional policies in relation to internationalization and multilingualism. Given the differences in terms of available information between the three institutions at the present stage of our research, our main goal with this article is not to compare the degree or intensity with which these policies are developed but rather to begin to explore a series of parameters through which the peculiarities of each university can be made explicit and brought into the analysis in order to explore the interaction between internationalization and multilingualism. Our goal has been inspired by the work of Bolsmann and Miller (2008), who propose an analysis of the different rationales for the recruitment of international students based on “three major strands or traditions”, which they refer to as “academic internationalism”, “economic competition” and “developmental” (see Section 3).

Our specific goals with this article are (i) to describe the sociolinguistic environment of the three universities involved in order to try to establish some preliminary differences and similarities, before attempting a more thorough comparison, and (ii) characterize the internationalization policy of each university in terms of Bolsmann and Miller’s model and also attempt some comparison among the three institutions. In the closing section of the article we summarize the different variables we have taken into account for our analysis and suggest possible future developments.

## **2. The sociolinguistic environment**

### *2.1. The University of Lleida (UdL): Catalan as the unmarked/default language*

The University of Lleida (UdL) is located in the capital city (Lleida) of the westernmost of the four provinces into which Catalonia is divided. The population of the city of Lleida was 138,136 at the end of 2008 (Ajuntament de Lleida 2009), which corresponded to 1.87% of Catalonia’s population (Idescat 2009). The university student body in the academic year 2006–2007 comprised a total of 9,187 students, a figure which represents 3% of the total university student population for Catalonia (Idescat 2009).

In this section we show to what extent the practices and policies of UdL are consistent with those of the sociolinguistic environment in Catalonia. We provide data that support the idea that Catalan constitutes the unmarked choice at

UdL, and that this is consistent with the university's most immediate sociolinguistic environment, but not with the rest of Catalonia. When we compare UdL with one of the metropolitan universities we will see that Catalan and Spanish have a similar presence at the two universities, although Spanish and English seem to be gaining ground more clearly in the metropolitan university. On its website page for international students UdL represents its sociolinguistic environment as one in which Catalan is the unmarked linguistic choice, as a symbol of identity. This is not only consistent with the university environment for the whole of Catalonia and UdL's immediate non-academic environment, but also with the general academic policy documents by which it must abide. However, this unmarked/default nature of Catalan disappears in practice in UdL's official language policy approved in 2008 and we are left without a clear default language. This is consistent with Heller's (2000) view of the recent changes brought about by globalization in that multilingualism is associated with economic advantage and progress. Indeed, we are seeing nowadays how the knowledge of not only wide-spread languages such as English but also of minority languages has an increasing exchange value in the labor and culture markets which tends to facilitate the upward social mobility of multilingual speakers. It is no wonder, therefore, that universities, in their attempt to respond to the professional demands of future graduates, include the development of multilingual skills as an important part of their training programmes.

The sociolinguistic environment of the area of Catalonia in which UdL is located (which accounts for 5.8% of the entire population of Catalonia), is not representative of the environment in which the majority of the Catalan population lives. In the Lleida area 64.4% of the population consider Catalan their usual language, whereas in the metropolitan area of Barcelona (73.5% of the entire population) Catalan is the usual language for only 27.8% (Idescat 2008). When we look at the use of the different languages in Catalonia along four different age ranges, as shown in Table 1, we see that the lowest percentage of "regular users of Catalan" corresponds to the age segment that is most likely to constitute the bulk of the university student population. The relatively high percentage of "other languages" for the first two age ranges is due to the immigrant population from outside Spain that has arrived in the last 15 years.

Table 1. *Usual language in Catalonia by age range (Idescat 2008)*

Age	Catalan	Spanish	Both	Other
15–29	31.5	44.0	14.4	10.0
30–44	32.7	44.7	12.6	10.1
45–64	35.8	49.0	12.1	2.1
65+	45.0	45.5	7.8	1.3

As for language use within the university context, data from UdL (Universitat de Lleida 2009) show a majority of instructors teaching in Catalan, with a percentage that has increased, at the expense of Spanish, from 53.1% in the academic year 2002–2003 to 67.6% in 2007–2008. In Section 2.4 we compare UdL with the University Pompeu Fabra (UPF), one of the public universities in Barcelona. In this comparison, we see that these two universities show a similar sociolinguistic environment, but, in contrast to UdL, UPF (Universitat Pompeu Fabra 2008) shows a progressive decline in the presence of Catalan.

This sociolinguistic situation is portrayed to international students on the website of the UdL (Universitat de Lleida 2008a) as one in which Catalan and Spanish are official languages: “The two official languages in Catalonia are Catalan and Spanish”. This is a situation which, for Belgian or Swiss students, for instance, might be understood in the way that one can find speakers that do not speak both languages, even though a few lines below on the same page, we can find a ‘reassuring’ statement (at least for students who only know Spanish) that “most Catalan people can speak both Catalan and Spanish”. Catalan is presented as fully integrated in the ordinary life of citizens in Catalonia: “In Catalonia, Catalan is widely used in public life, in mass media, in trade and in business”. On the other hand, according to Idescat (2008), in areas of language use such as, work, shopping, TV, newspapers or talking with neighbors, the percentage of people saying that they use “only Spanish” or “more Spanish than Catalan” was higher than those who responded that they use “only Catalan” or “more Catalan than Spanish”. On the same website for UdL international students, language choice between Catalan and Spanish is represented as a right of the individual, which needs to be respected by the members of the academic community: “Both official languages are respected at the universities in Catalonia. Teaching staff and students have the right to express themselves in the official language that they prefer”.

From the point of view of the language policy, UdL is affected directly by three legal regulations at four different levels: Spanish Constitution (Gobierno de España 1978), Statute of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya 1979, 2006), Law for Catalan Universities (Generalitat de Catalunya 2003), and the Statutes of the University of Lleida (Universitat de Lleida 2003). In the four documents, Catalan and Spanish are presented as co-official in Catalonia. However, whereas the Constitution only mentions “the duty and the right to know” Spanish, in the new Statute of Catalonia (2006) this linguistic duty and right includes both Catalan and Spanish for the citizens of Catalonia. This may be a source of conflict between the two administrations if a citizen of Catalonia, and therefore a citizen of Spain, decides to abide exclusively by the Spanish constitution and ignore the duty to know Catalan included in the Statute of Catalonia.

The three legal texts which regulate the knowledge and use of languages in Catalonia and UdL coincide in presenting Catalan as “its own” and “ordinary” language in the educational domain. Spanish is mentioned explicitly or implicitly (as in the case of the Statutes of UdL) in second place as “also” an official language. In accordance with this, the Law for Catalan Universities obliges all the instructors to know both languages. The Statutes of UdL go a step further by (i) promoting and guaranteeing the use of Catalan (article 4, epigraphs 2, 4) and (ii) extending to students the obligation to know the two languages.

In 2008, UdL made explicit its language policy in the form of a document entitled “Language policy of the UdL: towards a multilingual reality” (Universitat de Lleida, 2008b [authors’ translation of the title]). Even though Catalan continues to be a priority, the document is characterized by an underlying idea of languages (and multilingualism) as commodities (Heller 2000), and as a means for internationalization. This is probably the reason why in some of the sections of the document Catalan and Spanish are mentioned at the same level; thus, students are expected to be fully competent in the two languages and there is no reference to Catalan as the ordinary language of the university. The document takes a very clear step towards an institutional multilingualism based on an initial trilingualism Catalan-Spanish-English to which other languages should be added.

## 2.2. *The University of Basque Country (UBC): on the way to balanced bilingualism*

The University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU in its official Spanish/Basque acronym, although in this article the English UBC acronym will be used) is located in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), one of the 17 autonomous communities that make up Spain (and of which Catalonia is another). The BAC is a bilingual community wherein both Basque and Spanish are co-official languages. It is worth pointing out that Basque is a pre-Indo-European language and stands out as genetically isolated amongst the other two co-official languages in Spain (Catalan and Galician), which are encompassed in the Romance language family.

According to the latest survey undertaken by the Basque Government (2008) in 2006, the BAC has a total population of 2,133,684. As for language competence, 30.1% of Basque citizens are fully bilingual, 18.3% passive bilinguals and 51.5% non-Basque speakers. In the period 1996–2006, there has been a significant increment (5.4%) of fully bilinguals, a rise which relies mainly on the educational system (Lasagabaster and Hajek 2009). The percentage of bilinguals has increased in all age groups below 50, but the highest percentage

of bilinguals is found among people under 35: in fact, 57.5% of the population between 16 and 24 are nowadays fully bilingual.

Since the BAC is an officially bilingual community, both Basque and Spanish are taught throughout all the rungs of the educational ladder. However, the presence of these languages at pre-university education varies depending on the linguistic model (see Lasagabaster 2001; Azurmendi et al. [2008] for further information on this issue). Similarly, Basque is used as means of instruction in all higher education institutions and the three universities located in the BAC lecture in Basque to different degrees (depending on the availability of Basque-speaking teaching staff).

UBC is the only public university in the BAC, as the two remaining universities are privately run (University of Mondragon and Deusto University). It is the biggest in terms of students (over 47,000 in 2008), faculty members (5,081) and administration personnel (1,686), and its important role is underscored by the fact that more than 78% of the students enrolled in tertiary education in the BAC complete their degrees at this university. While lecturing at UBC is performed in Spanish, most of the 31 faculties and colleges distributed over three campuses (Álava, Biscay and Gipuzkoa) offer, in addition, substantial lecturing in Basque. In fact, Basque is a well-established subject and the use of Basque as a medium of instruction is expanding (61% of the compulsory subjects were taught in Basque in 2006, in addition to Spanish). This institution plays a role of paramount importance in the normalization of Basque, as it promotes the *basquization* of its different degrees with a view to providing society with Basque speaking graduates ready to use the language in all social spheres. The UBC website is bilingual in Basque and Spanish, and some sections (those concerning the international relations office) are also available in English.

On 21 June 2007 UBC passed the so-called Language Policy Plan on Basque (University of the Basque Country 2007), wherein the actions aimed at the promotion of Basque for the ensuing five academic years (from 2007–2008 to 2011–2012) were established. The starting point lay in the analysis of the situation of Basque. Table 2 shows the number of bilingual teaching staff depending on the area of knowledge in 2007.

Table 2. *Presence of bilingual teaching staff by field of knowledge (2007)*

Areas of knowledge	Total	Bilingual	%
Experimental sciences	462	145	31.39
Technical degrees	795	225	28.30
Health sciences	221	52	23.53
Social sciences and law	1037	461	44.46
Humanities	430	157	36.51
Total	2945	1040	35.31

The evolution of the status of the Basque language in the last three decades has been outstanding, since the presence of Basque in 1980, when UBC was established in its current structure, was marginal. Nowadays two out of three compulsory subjects are taught in Basque, although there is a remarkable imbalance when the different fields of knowledge are considered. The Language Policy Plan considers that the evolution of the bilingual programmes available in pre-university education requires an increasing number of bilingual faculty members and sets five main objectives concerning the Basque language:

- To augment the number of subjects taught in Basque.
- To increase the percentage of teaching and administration bilingual staff.
- To create teaching materials in Basque.
- To spread its everyday use.
- To strengthen the Basque Service Unit.

According to this Plan, in the 2011–2012 academic year 43% of the faculty members should be Basque-speakers, which means an increase of almost 8 points in just 5 years. One of the big challenges is to ensure a balance in the presence of Basque in the different departments, as there are currently significant differences depending on the areas: the basquization process is rather advanced in humanities and social sciences and law, whereas the pace has been much slower in technical degrees and health sciences (see Table 2).

Therefore, the risk of imposing or privileging the hegemonic language (Spanish in the Basque context), as reported by Balfour (2007) in the case of British and South African universities, does not exist at UBC and the current language policy underpins and fosters the use and presence of Basque.

### 2.3. *Cardiff University: English as the unmarked/default language*

The Welsh sociolinguistic environment needs to be seen in the context of Welsh language decline (there are now virtually no monolingual Welsh speakers), and its revival alongside English. In the 1891 Census, 54% of people in Wales reported using Welsh. This dropped to 21% by 1971, steadied at 19% in 1981 and 1991, and then showed an increase to 21% in 2001. There is a resultant consensus that the number of self-reporting Welsh speakers has begun to increase. This is largely attributed to the introduction of compulsory learning of Welsh in secondary schools to the age of 16. While Welsh previously has been seen as mainly transmitted through families in the ‘heartland’ areas of north west and south west Wales, a shift has occurred; most new Welsh users are young people in the urbanized and relatively Anglicized south east of Wales, where Cardiff is situated.



The current revitalization of Welsh has been generated by several developments since the 1960s (e.g. see May 2000). These include direct action campaigns, during the 1970s in particular, and more recent policy initiatives led by the Welsh Language Board (*Bwrdd Yr Iaith*), which was created under the 1993 Welsh Language Act, and is now part of the devolved Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

The 1993 Welsh Language Act formally strengthened the position of Welsh, establishing a duty for public sector organizations to treat English and Welsh on an equal basis in providing services to the public in Wales. Public sector organizations (e.g. universities, local government services) are required to develop and maintain a “Welsh Language Scheme”, in which they record how they will make provision for the use of Welsh. The Welsh Language Board is required to promote and monitor the use of Welsh. It is important to note, though, that Schemes are seen as enabling rather than prescriptive. The 1993 Act does not make them legally enforceable. There is pressure (by no means unopposed) from some quarters for a new Act, extending to the private sector, giving Welsh “official language” status (neither English nor Welsh has official language status at present), and giving a set of rights for the Welsh language and its speakers (see, for example, *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* 2005).

Cardiff is Wales’s capital, with a population in 2007 of 321,000, equal to 10.8% of Wales’s population (Welsh Assembly Government 2009). It has been, and still is, seen as a heavily Anglicized city. The overall proportion of Welsh speakers in Cardiff is low in relation to Wales as a whole. Nevertheless, the increase noted in the 2001 Census for southeast Wales embraces Cardiff too. In 2001, the number of Welsh speakers in Cardiff was 31,944 (10.9% of its population), compared to 18,071 in 1991 (6.6%), equal to an increase of about 77%. Results for separate Cardiff districts suggest that the Welsh-speaking community in Cardiff is expanding and becoming more widely spread across the city. However, figures for the districts closest to Cardiff University (CU) — e.g. Cathays — are notably below average for the city as a whole. Aitchison and Carter (2004) note that the high student presence in the city-centre areas, which include Cathays, impacts on these results, since a large proportion of students come from outside Wales, adding to the strong dominance of English.

As a Welsh public institution, CU complies with the 1993 Welsh Language Act, developing and maintaining its Welsh Language Scheme. The current draft document sets out actions required for the implementation and development of Welsh language provision across a range of domains of Welsh language use. These include communications with the public, translation services, recruiting Welsh-speaking staff, expanding Welsh provision for students, and CU’s public face (e.g. web site and official notices).

In the academic year 2008–2009, CU had approximately 27,000 students. The total number of students enrolled in Welsh higher education institutions in

2007–2008 was approximately 125,500 (Statistical Bulletin 2009). CU is the largest of the Welsh institutions. There are about 430 European exchange students at CU, and about 2,700 students from overseas. So these account for about 11.5% of the student total, and, like most of the other 88.5% of CU students, they come to study through the medium of English.

The presence of the Welsh language is arguably somewhat backgrounded in CU. For example, in terms of its own internal planning, there is only one mention of the Welsh language in the University's Strategic Plan 2006–2011, declaring support for “. . . the use of the Welsh language in the University in accordance with its Welsh Language Scheme . . .” (Cardiff University 2006: section 9.7). In terms of prospective students browsing the CU website, mention of the Welsh language is hard to find (outside the pages of the School of Welsh and the Welsh for Adults Centre). Four levels down from CU's home page, one reaches a page on “Welsh language information” (Cardiff University 2008a). Here, visitors are re-assured that: “everybody in Wales speaks English and all your lectures, seminars and coursework will be conducted through the medium of English. You will not be expected to have any knowledge of or learn Welsh (unless you want to)”.

Welsh is arguably marginalized or exoticized as “an important part of the heritage of Wales”, spoken by about 20% of the population, and “more common in rural areas outside of Cardiff. Some places you may see/hear Welsh include road signs and on some television programmes” (Cardiff University 2008a).

Thus CU's broader bilingual context is one where Welsh has significant institutional support at governmental and some grassroots levels, but English dominates both within the wider context of Wales and Cardiff. As Balfour (2007) notes, it is the hegemonic language — English — which is the default language within CU.

#### 2.4. *Differences and similarities*

The three contexts and universities considered in this study share some similarities, but also reflect remarkable differences. In the three cases the minority language (whether it be Basque, Catalan or Welsh) plays a role both in the social and university spheres, although to significantly different degrees. Thus, a continuum could be distinguished in which UdL would represent the strongest position for the local language, whereas CU would be closer to a luke-warm response to Welsh, and more driven towards the majority language extreme. UBC would be located in between and, although currently closer to the majority extreme, it would be making headway to balance the presence of its two official languages. As a result of this, the three universities are characterized as

follows: UdL has Catalan as the default language, UBC is on the way to balanced bilingualism and at CU English is the unmarked language.

These diverse higher-education-language portraits emerge from the peculiarities of the three different sociolinguistic contexts. Whereas three out of four citizens can speak Catalan in Catalonia, this percentage goes down to 30% in the case of Basque and to an even lower 21% for Welsh. Similarly, whereas in the Welsh context there has been a steady Welsh language decline in the twentieth century which just seems to have started a recovery process, there are currently more Catalan and Basque speakers than ever before in history. School has been the main factor in the language normalization process of the former, as Catalan is currently the universal language of instruction at pre-university level in Catalonia, whereas bilingual programmes in which Basque is the means of instruction are currently more popular than the Spanish-medium programme in the BAC. In Wales, the introduction of compulsory teaching of Welsh at school has also happened to be crucial when it comes to the increase of Welsh speakers, but the situation is not as buoyant as that of the two Spanish bilingual communities. Therefore, the sociolinguistic situation has a clear impact on each of the three universities (cf. Mortensen and Haberland, this issue).

An important difference between UdL and UBC has to do with the use of the local language as means of instruction. Whereas in the case of the former, the use of Catalan to teach a subject means that the subject concerned is only taught in that language, this is not the case in UBC. As a matter of fact, on the vast majority of occasions those subjects taught in Basque in UBC run parallel to Spanish groups, especially if they are compulsory subjects. Two main reasons would help explain this. Firstly, Catalan is typologically very close to Spanish and this facilitates students' understanding, whereas this is not the case of Basque, as stated above. Secondly, Catalan has been the language of instruction of the vast majority of UdL students, whereas those who had Basque-medium instruction at pre-university education represent less than half of the first year UBC students.

The language situation of UdL deserves further attention, as it could be stated that the minority language, Catalan, has become the majority language in higher education, a reflection of the general sociolinguistic picture for Catalonia as a whole. However, there are also differences in this bilingual community depending on the context. In UdL there has been a continuous increment of the percentage of subjects taught through Catalan (up to 67.6% in the 2007–2008 academic year), whereas in the University Pompeu Fabra (UPF), one of the public universities in the Barcelona metropolitan area, the trend is just the opposite. In the latter university, the presence of Catalan has consistently decreased from 70.7% in 2002/03 to 61.6% in 2007/08, whereas the presence of both Spanish (from 26.7% to 32.6%) and English (from 2.4% to 5.6%) has increased. Hence, it can be concluded that the language situation in UdL is not

necessarily representative of that of the remaining Catalan universities. In fact, Lleida presents the second highest percentage (64.4%) of population that considers Catalan as their usual language of communication, whereas this percentage nosedives to 27.8% in the Barcelona Metropolitan area. In a similar vein, Cardiff, as has been noted, is a highly Anglicized part of Wales, and students at other universities in Wales, such as Bangor or Aberystwyth, are likely to experience Welsh more in their environments, within and outside their universities.

As pointed out above, the ever-increasing presence of international languages (Spanish and English) is closely related to the value attached to multilingualism in a context in which internationalization has become a key issue in higher education, not only in Europe, but all over the world. The concept of multilingualism is embedded in the official policy of the European institutions and, similarly, the so-called Bologna process promises to harmonize higher education while providing for linguistic diversity. In this context, the language policy implemented in higher education in small states and European bilingual regions is undoubtedly worth examining.

Multilingualism has become a great challenge for bilingual tertiary education institutions, which is the reason why the following section will be focused on the internationalization process and the role attached to multilingualism in the three universities under analysis.

### **3. Internationalization policy and multilingualism**

This section will focus on the internationalization policy deployed by each of the three universities, paying special heed to the different actions undertaken and their possible impact on the presence of foreign languages and mobility programmes. Similarly, we will consider the different traditions present in the recruitment of international students identified by Bolsmann and Miller (2008: 79–80), who distinguish three major strands or types of higher education discourse:

- The *Republic of Letters/Science discourse*, also labeled *Academic Internationalism*: it represents the oldest ideal where universities are centers of learning, research and scholarship aimed at recruiting students and scholars irrespective of their origin and with a view to obtaining reciprocal benefit and improving future international understanding.
- The *Economic Competition discourse*: the university is viewed as a means to enhance the economic growth and competitiveness of regions or nation-states; therefore, it is assessed in terms of its capacity to generate income through the provision of research and educational services. Student recruitment is observed as a source of revenue, which leads to increased competi-

tion between institutions to attract the highest number of students, especially full-fee paying foreign students.

- The *Developmental discourse*: this takes place when education and training are provided for colonies abroad and has “elements of a religious missionary or more general civilising mission”. According to Bolsmann and Miller, from 1945 on this type of internationalization discourse has been conceptualized as “developmental help for the underdeveloped countries” (2008: 80).

In our analysis we will focus on how these three strands are reflected in the three higher education contexts under scrutiny and how they affect the respective internationalization policies. We believe the identification of the rationale underlying the internationalization policy of a university can be a solid starting point for the analysis of how it is implemented and its impact on other policy developments such as language policy. Bolsmann and Miller’s approach to the analysis of internationalization policy as discourse offers us the possibility to explore how certain discourses become more or less hegemonic, the degree to which they can penetrate into the different sectors of the academic community, and the adaptation of these discourses to and how these discourses interact with the dominant national or regional discourses.

### 3.1. *UdL: on the way towards an economic competition discourse*

According to the annual report of UdL for the academic year 2007–2008 (Universitat de Lleida 2008c) there were 216 international students (understood as non-Spain domiciled students) registered in the different disciplines. This figure represents 2.8% of the student body. International students at UdL mainly belong to two mobility programmes: Erasmus (61% in 2007–2008) and bilateral agreements between UdL and specific non-EU universities (39% in 2007–2008). A survey carried out by the Office for International Relations in the same academic year with 55.5% of the international students tells us that 52% of them took Catalan language courses and 48% registered in Spanish language courses. We should say, however, that 63.5% of those students who did not take Spanish courses came from Latin American countries and therefore had Spanish as their L1. To the question of why they registered for language courses, Spanish seems to respond more to “personal interest and usefulness” (88.2% of students registered in Spanish courses vs. 60% of students registered in Catalan courses). On the other hand, there is a clearly higher percentage of students who take Catalan language courses because it is necessary in UdL’s environment: “relate with people” (7.8% Spanish vs. 23.6% Catalan), and “follow courses” (3.9% Spanish vs. 16.3% Catalan).

International student recruitment is one of the main elements of UdL's Internationalization Programme (IP henceforth), which was approved in September 2006 (Universitat de Lleida 2006a). In the introduction, this document acknowledges that UdL's internationalization policy until then has focused mainly on improving teaching and research and on staff and student mobility. This is what we could define as an emphasis on "academic internationalism". However, the document goes on to suggest, there is a third focus of internationalization which UdL is only beginning to implement, and that is to see it as a means to increase the income of the institution. This can be achieved in two main ways: (i) one of the variables for state funding is the degree of internationalization of the university; (ii) internationalization promotes the presence of full-fee paying students. We can see here how the economic competition discourse is already present in an explicit way as an orientation of the internationalization policy (Universitat de Lleida 2006a: 3–4).

The economic competition discourse is also present in the justification of the need for an IP (Universitat de Lleida 2006a: 5). Internationalization is connected with one of the main goals contemplated in UdL's Strategic Plan (Universitat de Lleida 2006b), as a means to increase its capacity for research and innovation in order to improve "the competitiveness of [local or regional] companies, the localization of new high-tech productive activities and the development of innovative company strategies". The wording of UdL's goal including such concepts as *competitiveness* and *productivity* can be linked with the new "entrepreneurial university model" favored in the Strategic Plan (Universitat de Lleida 2006b: 27–28), and according to which "universities have to be capable of developing their international (global) vision of action". We can conclude therefore that UdL has already incorporated in its policy Bolsmann and Miller's (2008) discourse of "economic competition", in which internationalization is presented as a means to transform UdL into an institution that can compete in the global market of research and education.

As has been suggested above, multilingualism has a very important role in the development of UdL's IP. Indeed, one of the justifications for the programme is a report by an international team of experts in 2005 which emphasized the general low skills in foreign languages of the different sectors of the academic community (Universitat de Lleida 2006a: 6). However, the IP is in certain cases somewhat ambiguous about the nature of the multilingualism that is favored. Thus, in the goal of attracting more students, there appear two actions involving language policy: (i) make all academic and administrative information available in English, and (ii) promote teaching in "other widespread languages" in those disciplines that are more likely to attract foreign students. In contrast, within the goal involving the improvement in the quality of research, English is clearly identified as the language required: "identify and translate into English the necessary information connected with research to

make it accessible via the Internet". The third goal is perhaps the one in which we find the most ambiguous definition of the multilingualism expected of the members of the academic community, since the recommendation is to "increase the linguistic competences". This ambiguity stems, in the first place, from the fact that in a bilingual context such as UdL, "linguistic competences" may refer to the communicative skills in one of the two co-official languages, Catalan or Spanish. In the second place, if "linguistic competences" involves learning other languages, it is not clear which.

The ambiguous nature of the multilingualism proposed in UdL's Internationalization Plan of 2006 may be interpreted as the result of a true interest in languages in general, but it is also possible to see it as a phenomenon associated with speakers of minority languages that Baker (1992) defined as "bunker attitude", which involves the perception of widely spoken languages like English or Spanish as "language predators" and the need to adopt a defensive attitude against them in order to protect either the minority language (see also Lasagabaster 2005) or, in this case, another possible "third language" such as French, which had been the dominant foreign language in Spain until the early 1970s. Nevertheless, we see that two years after the Plan was approved, in 2008, this ambiguity disappeared in the language policy document approved by UdL (2008b) by clearly defining the main goal of the institutional language policy in terms of a solid trilingualism Catalan-Spanish-English.

### 3.2. *UBC: an academic discourse with traces of developmental and increasingly economic discourse*

One of the main objectives of the UBC is to foster its internationalization process. Different courses of action have been taken, but two stand out from the rest: the boost of international mobility programmes and the implementation of the *Multilingualism Plan*. Although different undertakings have been implemented to bolster internationalization in all UBC spheres, space constraints and this section's focus on internationalization and multilingualism lead us to heed just these two actions.

As for the first course of action, both the Strategic Plan (2007–2010) and the Statutes of UBC (article 124b; 12 January 2004) state that, in order to achieve the total integration in the European Higher Education Area, students', research and teaching staff's, and administration professionals' mobility should be fostered. This objective would be in accordance with the discourse of academic internationalization. In fact, there are currently four mobility programmes in which all the UBC stakeholders can take part, one at the Spanish national level (the Sicué-Séneca programme) and three international exchange programmes:

- The LLP (Lifelong Learning Programme)-Erasmus programme: the best-known European exchange programme within the area of European inter-university cooperation.
- The UBC-LA programme: aimed to foster cooperation and exchange with Latin American universities.
- The “Other Destinations” programme: its objective is to establish relationships with those international universities excluded from the two aforementioned programmes due to geographical reasons. It includes universities from Eastern Europe, North America, Oceania, Asia and Africa.

The philosophy underlying all these international programmes is based on the LLP-Erasmus exchange programme. Hence, the students participating in the exchanges are exempt from paying to the host institution any tuition and regular academic fees, as the objective is not the generation of revenue, but rather that these exchanges contribute to academic excellence and to diversity on the three UBC campuses, while their presence helps to improve indicators of international status by increasing the numbers of international students.

The UBC also has a Development Cooperation Office to foster cooperation with developing countries through awareness-raising, teaching and development activities. This office supports researchers and organizes a mobility programme, which allows UBC students to undertake their practical training in projects carried out by NGOs in developing Latin American and African countries. Once completed, these experiences become integrated into the students’ academic training. The purpose is to respond to the university’s mission to train professionals who are aware of inequalities in our world. Likewise, UBC offers twelve PhD programmes in a variety of academic disciplines at several Latin American universities. These initiatives are the result of the joint efforts of the partner universities, both national and regional authorities of the relevant countries, and UBC. The objective is to boost research in the partner universities, while UBC’s teaching staff benefit from this international experience and the participants’ registration fees make up for the expenses of the implementation of the programme (the programmes do not generate additional income).

In the following lines reference will only be made to UBC students’ exchanges, as this is the best present-day indicator of mobility. Table 3 clearly shows that the Erasmus programme is by far the most popular one, whereas the

Table 3. *Participation of UBC students in international mobility programmes, 2007–2008*

	LLP- Erasmus	Latin America	Other destinations	Development cooperation
Number of participants	630	58	26	77



figures of the other most recent exchange programmes (all of them having been implemented in the last five years) lag quite behind.

The second course of action revolves around the *Multilingualism Plan* (Plan de plurilingüismo/Eleaniztasun plana). Within the framework of the European Higher Education Area and, in consonance with the European Commission's action plan 2004–2006 for promoting language learning and diversity, UBC has been working on the design and implementation of this plan, whose objective is to boost the use of foreign languages as a means of instruction. This plan should encourage students and faculty members to participate in international mobility programmes, while it should also help to attract foreign students.

The plan was first implemented in the 2005–2006 academic year and only 16 subjects taught in English were initially offered. However, since its inception the figures have steadily increased, as confirmed by the 92 subjects taught in 15 different degrees during the 2008–2009 academic year. Through this plan undergraduates are given the possibility of joining optional or compulsory subjects in foreign languages, subjects which run parallel to the groups taught in Basque and/or Spanish. Nevertheless, it has to be stated that (except for four subjects taught in French) English reigns supreme in this programme, as it has become the overwhelmingly main foreign language in the Basque educational system and, in the vast majority of cases, the only one in which students feel — more or less — confident.

After having analyzed the main features of the internationalization policy at UBC, and with Bolsmann and Miller's classification in mind, it can be concluded that UBC would be encompassed mainly in the Republic of Letters/ Science discourse, as the main objective is to boost the exchanges of both students, teaching and professional staff. Similarly, there are also traces of developmental discourse, which is mainly embodied in the Development Cooperation Office. Finally, it has to be said that there is a certain element of economic discourse, but it is just starting to surface.

### 3.3. *Cardiff University: a predominant discourse of economic competition*

In terms of our discussion of multilingualism, Cardiff is essentially an English-medium university. Balfour (2007) notes that Welsh “must compete with English for space, and that space is already ‘occupied’ rather than ‘vacant’ space to be contested by two equally well-developed competitors” (2007: 38), and maintains that, despite the Welsh Language Scheme, the use of Welsh has not grown significantly at CU (Balfour 2007: 40). Arguably, this aligns with Footit's (2005) conclusion that for UK universities generally, “to engage with the wider world” emphasizes the development of internationalization alongside decreasing interest in foreign language teaching and learning.

There are primarily two categories of “non-UK” students at CU: European exchange students, who pay no fees, and fee-paying overseas and EU students who are registered for CU degrees. Some Schools also have their own schemes with other universities independent of Erasmus. The Business School, for example, through its own Japanese Studies Centre, has a number of growing exchange agreements with universities in Japan for its joint honours with Japanese degrees. But overall, non-Erasmus exchange schemes are judged as relatively few and small-scale. In 2007–2008, there were 428 Erasmus students following studies at CU, and 240 CU students studying through Erasmus abroad (making CU one of the largest UK participants in Erasmus). Many of these 240 were undergraduates on language degrees who have anyway traditionally pursued one year of their studies abroad. The Erasmus programme is generally seen in terms of the discourse of Academic Internationalism, providing opportunities for CU students abroad, and also enriching the learning and living environment of students at CU. To illustrate, the following is taken from the CU Erasmus web page:

Spending a year abroad is a great opportunity to make the most of your academic career whilst immersing yourself in a culture quite different from your own. It provides an alternative perspective on your chosen subject and opens up brand new avenues of academic thought. However, it is more than an outstanding academic experience. It’s also about your own self-development; it’s about growing in confidence and making life-long friends from all over the world.” (Cardiff University 2008b)

Links are also seen as bringing potential research benefits for staff. Therefore, despite the non-fee nature of Erasmus, not participating in Erasmus could be seen as incurring considerable costs, not only to the non-pursuit of exchange ideals, but also to relations and research links with other universities, teaching exchanges, and to language degrees requiring a year of study abroad. Nevertheless, the net deficit in the exchange (i.e. more incoming students than outgoing), with no resource compensation, does cause concern at times, and Schools are empowered to cap numbers of incoming students.

Overall, however, exchange programmes are dwarfed by the numbers of fee-paying overseas (i.e. non-EU) students, who numbered about 2,700 in 2007–2008, or about 10% of CU’s total student population. Bolsmann and Miller (2008) note that, unlike UK/EU students (whose costs are publicly subsidized and so whose numbers are capped), overseas student numbers and fees are “practically unregulated by UK funding bodies” (2008: 84), and they quote an interviewee from their data: “on overseas students we make a profit, on undergraduate home and EU students we make a loss” (Bolsmann and Miller 2008: 86).

Insofar as non-UK students represent internationalization in CU, it is an uneven process, both in terms of the students’ countries of origin and their

Table 4. *Overseas students in 2008–2009: top ten countries*

China	608
India	486
Malaysia	317
Pakistan	154
Nigeria	116
Kenya	90
Hong Kong	87
Saudi Arabia	82
Canada	67
USA	53

Table 5. *Concentrations of the 2,734 overseas students in eight Schools in 2008–2009*

Business	1075
Engineering	341
Law	238
Medicine	193
Journalism	142
Pharmacy	87
Optometry	73
City Planning	73

disciplines. No figures are available regarding countries and universities of origin of Erasmus students, but Table 4 shows the ten countries of origin of the highest numbers of overseas students. Over half of the overseas students come from three countries: China, India, and Malaysia.

Table 5 shows the eight Schools with the highest concentrations of overseas students. Cardiff Business School and the School of Engineering alone account for half of the total.

Bolsmann and Miller's findings, obtained through interviews with senior academic managers and senior personnel in university international offices in several English universities, are very much reflected in the CU environment too when it comes to overseas students (though we ourselves have no such formal interview data to report here). Developmental discourse features little. Proportionately, especially with the high costs of overseas student fees, this sort of provision has decreased over the years (Bolsmann and Miller 2008: 85). The discourse of academic internationalism is certainly present in terms of the contribution of overseas students to the academic community, and their role in cultural diversity and exchange. Although the marketing discourse aimed at attracting students to CU inevitably, as in all UK universities, is characterized by hyperbole and appeals to uniqueness, academic internationalism also has a strong presence there. (In the marketing context, emphasizing the

economic benefits to CU — the economic competition discourse — is hardly likely to be effective in recruiting students.) But in the internal administrative domains, the economic competition discourse features strongly. Present space constraints do not allow detailed representation of this. But, to illustrate, in the section on “Learning, Teaching and Assessment” in the CU Strategic Plan for 2006–2011, section 7.4 (“Characteristics of Critical Success”) is found:

The University is successful in attracting and recruiting high caliber students and the student population is *stable* in terms of home/EU undergraduates and *growing* and vibrant in terms of postgraduates in the international market. Cardiff University (2006: section 7.4; authors’ italics)

This is followed in section 7.5 (“Key Priority Areas”) by:

The University will . . . build on its track record in international recruitment, continuing to increase international student numbers and achieving real terms growth in revenue of at least 10% on 2005/06 levels by 2010. Cardiff University (2006: section 7.5)

As Bolsmann and Miller found for universities in England, *economic competition* is undoubtedly the more dominant discourse overall.

### 3.4. *The three contexts compared*

The marked contrasts amongst these three institutions illustrate the long-standing reminder that bilingual contexts differ considerably (e.g. Baker 1988). In relation to issues around multilingualism, both UdL and UBC have designed a policy for “multilingualism”, but implementation is still at very early stages. The introduction and expansion of provision with English as the vehicular language seems to be a priority in both institutions (see Doiz et al. forthcoming; Cots, forthcoming). As yet, this is less clear in UBC’s Multilingualism Plan (as both English, French and German are mentioned in the Plan, although English has become *de facto* overwhelmingly dominant), but is explicitly formulated in UdL’s policy documentation in terms of English as the third language. CU’s situation is different again, in that English is the language throughout the university in terms of delivering courses, with few exceptions. Degree modules within the School of Welsh are run in Welsh, and there is a smattering of uneven provision in Schools that are able to offer tutorials, for example, in Welsh. And there are courses for Welsh language learners. Beyond that, other languages, such as European languages and Japanese are offered as part of language degrees, or joint honours degrees with a language. However, the fact

that the current lingua franca is the main language at CU seems to foster an *English is enough* language policy.

Regarding the three discourses, these can and do of course often occur alongside each other within an institution, and they can be said to reflect the discursive resources available in pursuit of different discourse goals. With no direct economic benefits arising from exchange programmes in terms of immediate student fee income, it is understandable that the economic competition discourse will be less prominent, and so institutions pursuing such programmes present their internationalization in terms of academic internationalism. This is how the discourse at UBC is best characterized and explained. It would seem that its funding flow affords some insulation against the global marketplace in this regard, perhaps in part because it is the public and dominant university within the Basque Country. However, there is an ever-increasing institutional focus on attracting foreign students, especially at the graduate level. This is a rather recent trend and shows that not even publicly funded universities are impervious to the need to increase income revenue by attracting both national and international students, although quality indicators (amongst which internationalization ranks high) should also be considered. Nevertheless, tuition fees remain publicly-subsidized even for foreign students, which means that they are heavily subsidized by the Basque Government and are therefore a far cry from the traditionally much higher fees of Anglo universities. At CU there is less data about the origin of the students enrolled in the Erasmus programme compared to the detailed information in the case of international fee-paying students, and this seems to be a very clear indication of this difference.

UdL's position is different, however. Although it also has a substantial exchange programme, it is a relatively small university within Catalonia, and therefore finds itself in a position where it needs to compete for students, including fee-paying students from other countries. Hence its discourse leans more towards that of economic competition. It is worth mentioning, however, that the Spanish Ministry of Education establishes the set price of both undergraduate and graduate courses for Spanish public universities. Cardiff's situation is different again. It is the largest of the universities in Wales, but the funding of UK universities works differently, and a major opportunity for increasing funding for the maintenance and development of university provision and activities is through competing in the international market for increased numbers of fee-paying overseas students. Hence there is pressure to do so. There is a potential qualification to make here, though. An informant in Footit (2005: 26) suggests that: "For a long time it [internationalization] was just about money, but more and more universities are beginning to think about it in terms of the benefits for the community. . . ." Nevertheless, overall, it is reasonable to extend to Cardiff Bolsmann and Miller's conclusion that the dominant discourse is one of economic competition.

#### 4. Conclusion

While Sklair (1999) has reasonably maintained that globalization and internationalization are often best seen as separate concepts, many of the aspects of internationalization that we consider here in the higher educational context are arguably nevertheless linked in varying degrees to the growing neo-liberal agenda associated with globalization. The impacts of globalization are famously uneven (Held et al. 1999), are perceived differently in different cultural contexts (e.g. Garrett et al. 2006; Garrett, 2010), and are negotiated differently in different national spheres (Crofts-Wiley 2004: 87). Here, through their responses to the need for increased internationalization under different local conditions, we see three institutions taking different directions as they shape their development. Although the different local conditions and the different funding bases feed into these varying processes, language seems to place itself up as a definitive factor to be taken into account. English has become the lingua franca in many diverse fields, but it undoubtedly reigns supreme in tertiary education. Despite the European Union's effort to boost language diversity, the analysis of these three different higher education contexts depicts a very clear linguistic picture in which English becomes an invaluable asset when it comes to internationalization. In this respect, CU is in a very advantageous position. The role of the community language(s) cannot be ignored either, and universities such as UBC and UdL, with very explicit agendas to promote the minority language, may be forced to invest many more resources than CU (e.g. promotion, language training, policy development) into an internationalization process involving a multilingual situation including "languages of identity" and "languages of communication" (House 2003) and in which tensions can easily arise depending on the priority of the different stakeholders of the university.

We believe that in this article we have begun to show how the "complexity of the national, regional and global interface" (Balfour 2007: 37) needs to be taken into account in order to explain internationalization and language policy developments of higher education institutions and that internationalization and language policies are inevitably connected. There seem to be different motivating causes that are driving UBC, UdL and CU to be engaging with the international education market necessities. Their dominant discourse may be similar, but they may be taking the economic competition route for different reasons. At the same time, their explicit or hidden agendas in relation to language policy must be explained in relation to aspects such as the specific nature of their sociolinguistic environment, the socio-political situation and/or the academic tradition.

Scott (2000) notes that modern universities are basically national institutions and were created to address national issues. Indeed, basic funding policies for most universities are at present determined nationally and the majority

of research councils providing research funding are national. Yet, it seems clear that universities generally share some fundamental common purposes. Altbach (2004) notes that universities have always worked, in various ways, within a global context. They are “by nature international in their outlook” (Bolsmann and Miller 2008: 79). Whatever their dominant discourses are, universities for the most part have common and mutually reinforcing goals that anchor their activities, e.g. attracting sufficient students and staff, of as high quality as possible, establishing a strong reputation within and beyond their own borders, providing the best facilities and provision that they can, and generating work that has an impact in valuable fields of activity (the community, economy, industry, people’s welfare and life quality, knowledge, etc.). These are the sorts of goals and motivations that surface in all three discourses, and each of the three discourse types represents alternative or additional avenues for the achievement of these goals. These “anchors” take the role of rhetorical references for arguing any or all three of these directions, i.e. academic internationalism can work towards these goals, as can developmental discourse, as can economic competition. What is left, then, may be the local conditions, policies and priorities that influence (or determine) which of these routes they may need to follow: e.g. Thatcher’s funding reforms pushed UK universities down the route towards recruiting as many overseas students as possible, making higher education a much more marketed commodity. Thus, it may be necessary to interrogate ourselves further about a wide range of issues that go from particular aspects such as the funding structure of the universities, or language competences of the faculty or employees, to more general issues like the dominant ideology of the university’s stakeholders or the socio-political structure of the region.

The process of internationalization of the universities has an inevitable impact on their language policy developments. In the case of CU, its success in attracting international students (many of them full-fee paying, who rely on their competence in English and do not go to Wales to study Welsh or learn through it) may not contribute to overcoming the somewhat backgrounded presence of Welsh, despite the explicit agenda set up in the 1993 Welsh Language Act. The presence of Welsh, in co-existence with such a widespread lingua franca like English, may easily be relegated to a testimonial role. The situation is not all that different in the case of UBC and UdL as regards the co-existence of Basque or Catalan with another lingua franca such as Spanish, one of the top three most widely spoken languages in the world and increasingly popular. Many international students go to these universities because they rely on their knowledge of Spanish or in the hope that they will be able to learn or improve their skills in that increasingly popular language. From this point of view, the presence of the minority language, inside and outside the university, may just go largely unnoticed or even be seen as an obstacle to their goal.

We can certainly say that the notion of “international university” is problematic, especially if we bear in mind, as Altbach (2004) argues, that in many ways universities have always been international. However, we might say that a feature of late-modernity is that there are *internationalizing processes* going on in universities. CU’s successful long experience in internationalization (like that of many universities in the UK) would appear to have moved away to a large extent from the developmental mode of internationalizing, with academic internationalism and economic competition emerging as more salient phases. The fact that UBC and UdL (together with most universities in Spain) have only recently become interested in internationalization makes them locate their discourse directly between the hegemonic discourses of academic internationalism and economic competition. The difference between the two universities and the dominance of one type of discourse or the other could be explained in terms of the regional circumstances such as capacity of the institution to compete in the regional market or their access to public funding.

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