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ESP, EMI AND INTERCULTURALITY: HOW INTERNATIONALISED ARE UNIVERSITY CURRICULA IN CATALONIA?

Abstract

This study analyses Internationalisation at Home (IaH) courses across a wide range of bachelor's degrees, from humanities to hard sciences, in public universities in Catalonia, as an in-depth analysis of a South European context. IaH courses selected for analysis included courses (i) on international topics, (ii) taught in English and focusing on content (English-medium Instruction, EMI) and (iii) focusing on language, i.e. English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Results point to a high presence of international content courses, especially in humanities and social sciences, followed by EMI courses, although quantitatively scarce and mainly found in engineering. ESP courses are the least present despite their potential to prepare students for EMI. Reasons that may account for this IaH picture are presented. All in all, it seems that current policies leave language and intercultural competence in the hands of content lecturers, who may not have explicit language and intercultural learning outcomes in mind while it appears that the potential role of ESP as an internationalisation driver may be neglected. This paper thus argues for giving visibility to ESP courses and lecturers in their role for the promotion of curricular internationalisation.

Key words

internationalisation at home, European higher education, intercultural and international competence, English for specific purposes, English-medium instruction.

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