

## **Interpreting and Negotiating Language Policy at the Local Level: A Case Study from Catalan-Speaking Spain**

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### **Abstract**

In the Balearic Islands, where two official languages (Spanish and Catalan) co-exist, movements have been made to increase the role of foreign languages (English, in particular) at the expense of the regional minority language, Catalan. This paper presents findings from a case study investigating language policy at an International Baccalaureate (IB) secondary school in the Balearic Islands. Data were gathered through interviews and classroom observations. Findings suggest that, while the school site maintains a degree of autonomy over its language policy, the local, historical, social, political, and ideological context impact on the promotion of Catalan in the classroom. The results also illustrate the complex interaction between the implementation of governmental legislation, oversight of the IB Organization, and the interpretation and negotiation of policymaking by school staff at the classroom level and elsewhere.

**Keywords:** Catalan, International Baccalaureate Organization, language maintenance, language policy, language policies in education

### **Résumé**

Aux îles Baléares, où coexistent deux langues officielles (l'espagnol et le catalan), certains mouvements ont été faits pour accroître le rôle des langues étrangères (anglais en particulier) au détriment de la langue minoritaire régionale, le catalan. Cet article présente des résultats d'une étude de cas qui a examiné la politique linguistique dans un établissement d'enseignement secondaire du Baccalauréat international (BI) aux îles Baléares. Les données ont été recueillies à partir d'entrevues et d'observations en classe. Les résultats suggèrent que, alors que l'école maintient un degré d'autonomie par rapport à sa politique linguistique, le contexte local, historique, social, politique, et idéologique conserve une influence sur la promotion du catalan en classe. Les résultats illustrent également l'interaction complexe entre la mise en œuvre de la législation gouvernementale, la supervision de l'Organisation de BI, et l'interprétation et la négociation de prises de décision par le personnel scolaire au niveau de la classe et ailleurs.

**Mots clés:** Catalan, Organisation du Baccalauréat International, maintien de la langue, politique linguistique, politiques linguistiques en éducation

### **Resumen**

En las Islas Baleares, donde dos idiomas oficiales (español y catalán) coexisten, se han realizado movimientos para incrementar el rol de las lenguas extranjeras (inglés, en particular) a costas del idioma regional minoritario, catalán. Este artículo presenta los resultados de un caso de estudio que investiga las políticas lingüísticas en una escuela secundaria de Bachillerato Internacional (IB en inglés) en las Islas Baleares. Los datos fueron recolectados por medio de entrevistas y observaciones de clases. Los resultados sugieren que, mientras la escuela mantiene un grado de autonomía sobre su política lingüística, los contextos locales, históricos, sociales, políticos, e ideológicos impactan la promoción del catalán en la sala de clases. Los resultados también ilustran la compleja interacción entre la implementación de la legislación gubernamental, el descuido de la organización de bachillerato internacional, y la

interpretación y negociación de la creación de políticas por parte del equipo escolar a nivel de la sala de clase y fuera de ella.

**Palabras clave:** catalán, Organización de Bachillerato Internacional, mantención del idioma, política lingüística, políticas lingüísticas en educación

## Introduction

This article presents findings from one case study that was part of a larger research project in which researchers from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in Washington, DC, investigated the development and implementation of language policy in eight International Baccalaureate (IB) schools around the world. The paper explores how staff at a secondary school in the Balearic Islands, Spain, balance the regional language-in-education policy with the requirements of being an International Baccalaureate school, together with their own beliefs about the importance of Catalan in education. The study site, IES Mar Blau<sup>1</sup> is a state secondary school located in an officially bilingual region in Spain where Spanish (the official national language for all of Spain) and Catalan (the regional minority language of the Balearic Islands) have co-official status, as per the Spanish Constitution. According to the 2011 national census, 84% of the population in the Balearic Islands has some level of knowledge of Catalan (IBESTAT, 2014). The school's language policy aims to protect and promote Catalan, endorse multilingualism and the values of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), and adhere to the regional policies governing education.

The aim of the current paper is to understand how school staff interpret and negotiate language policies in everyday practice. Menken and García suggest that investigation of the negotiation of language education policies in schools around the world can “provide educators with deeper understandings of this process to guide their implementation of language policies in schools and classrooms” (2010, pp. 1-2). This study deals with how the symbolic value assigned to English as a language-of-instruction (LOI) and the way the school responds to the pressure of introducing this language are “indexical of the negotiation of bilingualism as ideology and social practice” (Relaño Pastor, 2015, p. 132). Recent approaches to language policy research reflect an earlier UNESCO resolution regarding the importance of students maintaining a positive identity towards the languages used in their home and community (Wiley, 2008). The current case study fits within this recent thread of language policy, recognising where human rights fit into both the function of top-down language policy development as well as bottom-up implementation, which is seen as dynamic, responsive, and context-specific (Fee et al., 2014).

The paper will first provide background on the value and reputation of the IBO network in the field of education, including its orientation towards multilingualism, and how IB programmes and language policies have been implemented in multilingual communities. An overview of the context of the school setting will follow, with a particular focus on the local political landscape that serves as a backdrop to language policy in the region, and how this fits into the larger national and global context. After a review of the methodology, the article will present findings from school interviews and classroom observations with three teachers in the secondary school. The discussion focuses on the extent to which contextual factors of a particular school influence the development and implementation of its language policy, and how the administrators and teachers interpret and negotiate language policy at the school and classroom level. Finally, there will be a discussion of themes that emerged as factors that influenced staff's ability to negotiate and implement a language policy that allowed them to protect and promote Catalan while adhering to the policies of their governing bodies, the regional government and the IBO.

### **The International Baccalaureate Organization and Multilingualism**

The IBO is a non-profit educational organisation with programmes in over 4,500 schools around the world (IBO, 2016). A school must complete an application process that can take between two and three years before it is an authorised IB school (IBO, 2017). As part of its mission, the IBO promotes intercultural perspectives, including multilingualism, and considers students' ability to communicate in a variety of modes in multiple languages as key to achieving this world view (IBO, 2011). In this vein, the IBO requires its schools to develop and implement their own language policies; these should align with the intercultural and multilingual values of the organisation and the linguistic and cultural context of the community in which the school is based.

The larger body of research to which this study is integral, found that great variation existed in the treatment of language and language policies in the eight IB schools that were a part of the study (Fee, Liu, Duggan, Arias, & Wiley, 2014). The other case studies included other multilingual settings, including a French LOI school in Canada; a trilingual English-Spanish-Hebrew private Jewish school in Mexico; and a private English LOI school in India with Hindi and Tegulu as additional LOIs. In some of these cases, the language policies were developed only by top-level administrators, such as principals or IB coordinators in the school, while in other instances the schools incorporated input from the school community.

The report found that different schools' approaches to language policy development and implementation often reflected the ways in which those schools understood language and linguistic issues. The school that is the focus of this paper, IES Mar Blau, is similar to the French LOI school in Canada, in that both schools use a politically-charged minority language as their LOI, as part of an effort to promote and protect the status of a national minority language. In these two cases, the school community has a more heightened awareness of how language is both a tool and a symbol of identity (Fee et al, 2014).

Schools often adopt an IB programme because of the prestige associated with the global curriculum (Bunnell, 2008); the opportunity it affords for teachers to be recognised for outstanding practice and to take on leadership roles (Hallinger & Lee, 2012); and the advantage it offers students for college admissions (Aldana & Mayer, 2014). The image of IB schools has typically been one of elite programmes, with a curriculum designed to cater to high-performing students (Bunnell, 2008).

The IBO network of schools has experienced rapid growth, increasing the number of IB programmes offered by 44.5% between 2011 and 2016 (IBO, 2016). The site of the current study, which adopted the IB's Diploma Program (DP) in school year 2012-13, is part of the most recent growth of the IB programmes.

### **Catalan and Language-in-Education Policies in the Balearic Islands**

The study was carried out in the Balearic Islands in Spain, an autonomous region that has two co-official languages, Spanish and Catalan, as granted by the Spanish Constitution of 1978 and the region's Statute of Autonomy. Although Catalan was a fully standardised language and the principal official language of the Crown of Aragon in the late Middle Ages, it was supplanted by Spanish in following centuries. Catalan enjoyed a period of *renaixença* [rebirth] during the 19<sup>th</sup> century; however, with the military dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923-1929) and Francisco Franco (1939-1975), Catalan, along with the other regional minority languages in Spain, was suppressed (Vila-i-Moreno, 2008). Its use was prohibited in broadcast media, publications, and shop signs; Catalan was also outlawed in education (Strubell, 2011). The language did not regain official status until 1978, and regional governments in Catalan-speaking areas began to assert its standing in language policies and planning (Strubell, 2011). The Spanish Constitution of 1978 names Castilian Spanish as the official language of Spain, but grants "the 'other Spanish languages' official status in their respective autonomous communities" (Plann, 2009: 369). This includes Catalan in Catalonia,

Valencia, and the Balearic Islands; Basque in the Basque Country; and Galician in Galicia (Plann, 2009).

In the decades following the adoption of the Spanish Constitution, language policy in the Balearic Islands has been closely tied to the Islands' political situation, which has, in turn, been influenced by both the movement to revitalise Catalan and the Balearic identity and neoliberal policies seen elsewhere in Spain and around the world (Relaño Pastor, 2015). Neoliberalism in this context can be seen as putting a price on something (language) that was previously not viewed or produced as a commodity (Harvey, 2005). As critically examined by Heller, the framing of language as commodity is part of the globalised new economy in late modernity, and one of the areas where "tensions and contradictions of commodifying language" are found is in language teaching (2010, p. 107). Although there is disagreement in whether language can be viewed as a commodity (Holborow, 2015), neoliberal policies in this context refer to "the flow of material and symbolic capital facilitated by the mobility of communities of speakers in a deregulated economic market" that adds "value to English as a global language that is available for public" (Relaño Pastor, 2015: 138). In what began in 1986 as a series of policies that sought to promote Catalan as an LOI, language policies, particularly in the last decade, have fluctuated between emphasising the role of Catalan in the curriculum (centre-leftist governments) and reducing the amount of Catalan in the curriculum (conservative governments). The centre-leftist promotion of Catalan can be seen as consistent with a linguistic rights perspective on the maintenance of minority languages through education (Hornberger 1998), as well as being in line with other efforts to revitalise a minority language through use in education, as has been successful with Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand (May, 1996) and Hebrew in Israel (Spolsky, 1995).

The Language Normalization Act of 1986 dictated that all students in the Balearic Islands should be able to use Catalan and Spanish correctly by the end of compulsory education at 16, granting Catalan an opportunity to regain a formal place in education (Juan-Garau & Salarzar-Noguera, 2014). In 1997, a policy known as the Decree of Minimums was introduced, requiring that a minimum of 50% of the curriculum was delivered in Catalan (Conselleria de Educació, Cultura y Deportes, 1997). The policy was not greatly enforced until 1999 when the Pacte de Progrés, a centre-leftist coalition government, gained power and required that all teachers demonstrate knowledge of Catalan (Arnau & Vila, 2013). In 2011, when the conservative Partido Popular (PP) gained control of the regional government, they repealed the Language Normalization Act and the Decree of Minimums, and in 2013

introduced a new law known as the *Tratamiento Integrado de Lenguas* [Integrated Treatment of Languages] (TIL) (Arnau & Vila, 2013). TIL proposed a trilingual model of education in which the time of instruction would be divided equitably between Spanish, Catalan, and a foreign language, preferably English (Govern de les Illes Balears, 2013). The law describes its objectives as twofold: for students “to acquire command of the two official languages and appropriate competencies in the foreign language of the education plan of the school, preferably English” (Govern de les Illes Balears, 2013).<sup>2</sup> The passage of TIL can be viewed as the PP aligning its policies with its conservative counterparts elsewhere in Spain (in Madrid, for example), and embracing the teaching of English as the promotion of a valuable and marketable skill in the neoliberal job market (Relaño Pastor, 2015).

The law was to be implemented at the start of the 2013-14 school year, but opposition by teachers, school administrators, parents, and students was so strong that strikes delayed the start of the school year by nearly a month (Nichols, 2013). The opposition to TIL stemmed from two main concerns: first, that the emphasis on English would reduce the role of Catalan in schools, therefore also shifting its societal importance as a key local resource; and second, that the schools lacked the human and financial resources to implement such a model effectively (Juan-Garau & Salarzr-Noguera, 2014).

During the time the study was conducted in spring 2014, the state of the new TIL language policy was in flux; however, staff at IES Mar Blau were continuing to follow their school language policy, which still aligned with the Decree of Minimums. In September 2014, the issue of TIL went to the courts, where the Supreme Court of the Balearic Islands nullified the law, on the grounds that the government had not consulted with the University of the Balearic Islands, which is the advisory body on all topics relating to the Catalan language in the Balearic Islands (Manresa, *El Pais*, 2014).

## **Methodology**

The current study was part of a larger body of work investigating language policy in IBO schools. The research questions in this paper focus on how contextual factors of a particular school might influence the development and implementation of its language policy, and how the administrators and teachers interpret and negotiate language policy at the school and classroom level.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

The research team used a multisite case study approach (Yin, 2003) to explore the development and implementation of language policy at the eight schools. The data from this case study were collected in April 2014 during a two-day visit to the high school in Spain. Five interviews were carried out, and a total of 153 minutes of recorded interviews was collected. Three teachers were interviewed, as well as two school administrators. The visit also included classroom observations of one class period for each of the three teachers interviewed, totalling 135 minutes of observation time. The interview and observations were guided by protocols developed by the research team and informed by Kvale (1996), as well as Hymes (1980). Protocols were developed to capture the classroom setting, including the class period and time of class; the topic of the lesson; the classroom seating arrangements; the student population in terms of number, ethnicities and language backgrounds; language used for instruction and communication by the teacher; whether and how the teacher encourages the use of languages other than the primary LOI in the classroom; languages used by students in the classroom; and non-verbal behaviour by the teacher or students. Following Kvale's framework, interviews were conducted as conversations, with the structure and purpose defined and controlled by the researcher (1996). Interviews were recorded with a digital audio recorder and were saved to a computer and a USB drive.

The interview and observation data were examined using content analysis, which provides "a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278; see also Kvale, 1996). Since data collection and analysis is inevitably a selective process (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the data were theme-categorised primarily based on the research questions.

### *School Characteristics*

In the 2013-14 school year, IES Mar Blau had over 700 students and was preparing to graduate its first class of IB Diploma Program (DP) students. At the time of the study, there were 21 students in year one of the DP and 18 students in year two.

### *Participants*

The three main participants were content area teachers at the school: an English teacher, a physics teacher, and a Catalan teacher. Additionally, two school administrators were interviewed. The teachers observed in the study were chosen because they taught subjects included in the IB DP programme and their classes included the use of the three LOIs of the

school and the DP programme. The three classes included an English class, a Physics class, and a Catalan literature class.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Language Policy at Mar Blau*

Mar Blau first adopted a language policy in the early 1990s that was designed to protect and promote Catalan. The language policy was then re-evaluated and revised in order to meet the requirements of the IBO when the school joined the IB network in 2012.

Mar Blau's version of the language policy revised for inclusion in the IB programme echoes the protection and promotion of Catalan in the language policy document written in the early 1990s. The written policy document allows for the school's unique context and addresses the local government policies, the community's language profile, the students' language profiles, and the role of Catalan as a minority language in the region. The language philosophies on which the document is based call for a culture of dialogue to contribute to a more peaceful world and a commitment to the culture and languages of the region, as well as a commitment to the integration of newly-arrived individuals. The principle objective of the language policy is that all students will be competent in both official languages of the region, Catalan and Spanish, a position in line with the Language Normalization Act of 1986, as well as the Decree of Minimums. A secondary objective is that the school will aim to produce students who are competently trilingual in Catalan, Spanish and either English or French.

In terms of the organisation of languages, the language policy dictates that Catalan is the medium of instruction in the school and that English and French are considered foreign languages. The policy states that the subject of Catalan will always be taught in Catalan, and, similarly, the subject of Spanish will always be taught in Spanish. Foreign languages are ideally to be taught in the foreign language, but when that is not possible, the LOI of the school is to be used. The rest of the subjects are to be given in either Catalan or Spanish, depending in part on the requirements of the *Consejería de Educación* [Department of Education] for secondary education. The exception is the subject of technology, which is to be taught in English, in a content and language integrated learning (CLIL) model in the 2nd and 3rd years of obligatory secondary education (the four years that precede Baccalaureate study).

As per the language policy, all formal documents of the school are written in Catalan, except for documents that are presented to bodies outside of the bilingual region, which are to be written in Catalan and Spanish or in English or French. The school website is written



entirely in Catalan, as is the menu in the school cafeteria. The language policy is posted on the school's website in Catalan, and a version in Spanish also exists. All of the signs in the hallways of Mar Blau indicating directions, offices, and rules are also written in Catalan.

#### *Language Policy Implementation in the Classroom*

Data collected from the interviews and classroom observations shed some light on the practices of teachers in the classroom. The English teacher described her implementation of the language policy by saying that she uses English 100% inside and outside of the classroom for interacting with students. Observation of her class supported this assertion, as the teacher never used Catalan or Spanish in the classroom. The teacher explained definitions of words in English; she used gestures and drawings on the board to reinforce meaning, gave examples that were relevant to the students to illustrate the meaning of phrases and idioms, and did not provide translations in Catalan or Spanish. Students often spoke to one another in side conversations in Catalan or Spanish to confirm their comprehension.

Similarly, the Catalan teacher taught the subject of Catalan exclusively in Catalan. During the class that was observed, students responded to questions and prompts in Catalan and all the writing on the chalkboard was in Catalan. As in the English class, side conversations between students were in both Catalan and Spanish.

The physics teacher described her implementation of the policy as being "intuitive." She understood that the main LOI is Catalan, but that her students would be taking exams (and therefore completing coursework) in Spanish, and she could also include English where she felt it was appropriate. She decided the class textbook would be in English because although the main LOI is still Catalan, she felt that having additional materials and the textbook in English improved the students' English, as well as their cognitive ability to switch between languages, and also prepared them to study physics anywhere in the world. The observation of her classroom supported her description of a trilingual environment. The teacher mainly, but not exclusively, delivered the class in Catalan. She used some materials from a website in English which was projected on the board so the vocabulary was visually present to students in English. Students also had worksheets written in Spanish, though Spanish was rarely spoken during the lesson.

#### *Interpretation and Negotiation of Language Policy*

On a very basic level, the Catalan teacher noted that that the school's language policy has always been closely linked to regional education policies. She felt the school has always

reacted to and adopted policies implemented by the regional government. Further data analysis revealed a major theme associated with views held by teachers and administrators: that the current regional policy, the TIL, was a top-down imposition of a government with little consideration for what is best for education or the practical implications of shifts in language planning and policy. Administrator B of Mar Blau expressed the following sentiments about the TIL:

From this year, the students that have begun obligatory secondary school have to take classes in Catalan, Spanish, and English. *But it isn't working. Well, that is the rule, but the reality is that, above all in English, it isn't possible ...* Those are the developments, let's call them, but we are waiting. Imagine that! Here we are in April and *we are waiting, we don't know what will happen next year.* (Emphasis added.)

The physics teacher mentioned feeling as though they were waiting on the government's directive as well, "The new law obliges us to teach something like 33, 33, 33% like English, Catalan, and Spanish. Although it's very controversial, so now we're in the middle of nowhere, somewhere in between the two places." Likewise, the Catalan teacher commented, "[W]e are at an impasse with the government's policy and we don't know very well which way they are going to direct us."

The English teacher also described the government's power in shaping the role of languages in education. She described it as the government trying to "*force Catalan out of it ... they wanted to force schools to teach in, directly, three languages ... So 33% each in Catalan, Spanish and English.*" (Emphasis added.)

Although the reaction of these staff members mainly addressed the imposition of the policy as a top-down directive that they considered ill-informed in terms of effective implementation, there was also the sense that teachers were asserting further opposition based on ideological<sup>3</sup> concerns related to the reduced emphasis on Catalan and increased emphasis on both Spanish and English. This sentiment was highlighted by the Catalan teacher when she remarked, "the new government doesn't favour teaching in Catalan. Their new plan is to promote trilingualism in English/Spanish/Catalan as if the three are equally integrated in society, which is not the case. This social balance is not reflected at all in society."

A second theme that emerged, concerned the role of the IBO policies, primarily the fact that the IB exams were required to be taken in Spanish, even though Catalan is the LOI of the school. The staff appeared to have accepted the exams in Spanish as a trade-off for being an IB school, and more importantly, being an IB school that uses a minority language as its primary LOI. Administrator A described the tension between having to take the exams in

Spanish and the desire to use Catalan by noting, “We have tried, despite having to do the external exams in Spanish, we have tried all the while to continue protecting and promoting Catalan.” She also described the decision to become an IB school, as an opportunity for the school to promote Catalan on a larger scale: “When we thought about applying to the IB, we did it precisely because we knew there was a large respect for minority languages, at least in Europe if not in the rest of the world.” Administrator B similarly remarked on their decision to use Catalan as the main LOI in the IB programme, “Mar Blau chose Catalan as main language of school and as the language of the IB programme as part of the recuperation process, and to give Catalan prestige on an international scale.”

## Discussion

The study suggests that, while the staff feel they must balance the obligations associated with the regional government’s language-in-education policy and the ideals of the IBO framework, they also exercise agency regarding language choices and use in the classroom. The physics teacher expressed this sentiment the strongest when she described her language use in the classroom as “intuitive”— by acknowledging that provided she followed some basic rules (primary LOI is Catalan, exam is in Spanish), she felt free to use Catalan, Spanish, and English in her classroom flexibly.

One of the main factors that contributes to the staff’s negotiation of language policy is their strong belief in the important role of Catalan in education. The school’s language policy document lists proficiency in Catalan, as well as Spanish, as its primary objective. In the interviews, staff discussed the significance of Catalan in the community, and the importance of using it in education as a means of promoting maintenance and giving prestige. Although none of the staff identified it explicitly, their ideological position on the use of Catalan is consistent with a linguistic rights perspective on the maintenance of minority languages through education. According to Hornberger (1998), in successful cases of language revitalisation or reversal of language shift, it is crucial that the native language is valued by the community. Similarly, Eisenlohr highlights the importance of a link between “what is identified as a language to be revitalized and desirable notions of community and identity, often conceived in ethnic terms in a politics of recognition” as “vitaly important to the creation of these movements of language activism geared toward language renewal and language shift reversal” (2004, p. 22). The school community of Mar Blau both values the minority Catalan language, and sees it as part of the Balearic identity.

Another theme that emerged as a driver of the staff's negotiation of language policy is their respect for all languages, and a desire to be inclusive of all language and all people. The physics teacher explained how the technology CLIL class taught in English had evolved to make the opportunities for language learning available to all students by noting, "When we starting teaching in English to 13 year olds, we were supposed to choose the best students and we did that for a few years, and then we decided it was better to have an all-inclusive thing." Describing the process of adapting the school's language policy for the IB programme, the English teacher commented, "we talked with all the language departments to make sure that all languages are respected, which is one of the keystones of the school ... The goal of the European Sections has been to help students use English in real-life situations ... at no time was it meant to exclude either Catalan or Spanish." When discussing the opportunities that the school has attempted to provide to both students and staff for learning English, the English teacher added, "this is not English taking over a school." The staff have tried to balance the desire to give students opportunities to use and learn English in practical settings, with the commitment to maintaining Catalan as the primary LOI at the school. This has been done through a number of initiatives and opportunities for learning and improving English outside class time. The school serves as an examination centre for a certification of English language proficiency where students and teachers can prepare for the exams and can get an accredited diploma. They also have a programme with the local *Escuela Oficial de Idiomas* (EOI) [Official Language School], which allows students to earn a diploma reflecting their foreign language competency from the EOI. Students also have opportunities to participate in exchange programmes with students in English-speaking countries.

The teachers' perception of the open-mindedness of the school and support of the administration was another theme that emerged. Teachers felt they had some autonomy in implementing policy and proposing opportunities to enhance language learning at the school. For example, the English teacher described the getting approval for becoming an examination centre for English language proficiency exams: "we immediately decided 'oh this is the thing for us' [...] We came to our headmaster and said 'we want to do this, please let us do this.' And he said yes." She noted that hosting the examination centre is "a lot of work, but he's [the headmaster] always said yes. So I guess I would say that the fact that the school is open-minded about this, meant that implementing a language policy for the IB was very easy." The Catalan teacher mentioned the support of administration as a factor for her participation as a teacher in the IB programme: "The principal is important. I signed up for IB because I knew it

had the support of the principal.”

## Conclusion

The staff at Mar Blau negotiate and appropriate policy by maintaining a strong belief in the value of their regional minority language, embracing the values of the IBO, and recognising the limitations that regional education policies impose on their decisions. For as long as the regional government in the Balearic Islands continues to change power between parties, the staff at Mar Blau will need to continue the negotiation – finding ways to continue to include Catalan in the curriculum and as a core part of the school’s identity regardless of whether the regional education policies *de jour* emphasise Catalan or English.

In 2015, the centre-left PSOE regained control of the regional government and affirmed their stance on promoting the role of Catalan in education and denouncing the PP’s prior platform of trilingual education (Manresa, 2015). However, as the general political direction of Spain remains unclear after three indecisive elections in 2015 and 2016, it seems as though the fluctuation between conservative and centre-left parties in the Balearic Islands might be expected to continue in the near future. Although there may be restraints in the form of regional governmental policies in future, the staff at Mar Blau, and the Balearic community at large, have displayed a commitment to protect and promote their minority language. Catalan will thus continue to have a central role in education through the school’s language policy and through its involvement with the IBO, even as emphasis on English as a foreign language becomes ever more dominant in education policymaking within the nation-state of Spain and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms have been used and interviewees anonymised.

<sup>2</sup> All translations are by the author.

<sup>3</sup> Ideological is used here following the IBO's definition of language ideology, taken from Hornberger and McKay, who see language ideologies as the "understandings, beliefs and expectations that influence all choices made by language users" (2010, p. 28).

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