AKDENIZ UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

INFLUENCE OF THE ERASMUS STUDENT MOBILITY PROGRAMME ON COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS

M.A. THESIS

Ayça ALTAY

Antalya

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ERASMUS ÖĞRENCİ DEĞİŞİM PROGRAMI'NIN ÖĞRENCİLERİN YETERLİK GELİŞİMLERİNE ETKİSİ

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Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Binnur GENÇ İLTER

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Yüksek Lisans Tezinin Adı: Influence of the Erasmus Student Mobility Programme on Competence Development of Students

[Erasmus Öğrenci Değişim Programı'nın Öğrencilerin Yeterlik Gelişimlerine Etkisi]

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ABSTRACT

INFLUENCE OF THE ERASMUS STUDENT MOBILITY PROGRAMME ON COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS

Altay, Ayça

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The Erasmus programme which serves overarching aims of the Bologna Process, is considered one of the most prominent popular student exchange programmes around the world. Although its roots date back to 1987, Turkey's involvement in the programme actualized in 2004, and opened the doors of Europe for Turkish university students who would like to have international education experience. Thanks to its comprehensive sub-programmes that have been continuously developed throughout its history, the Erasmus programme has always remained up-to-date and inexhaustibly aimed to develop individual skills and competences of participants. Of vital importance in implementing this principle, development of the competences of exchange students is commonly considered a substantial goal. Similarly to the Erasmus programme, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), developed by the Council of Europe, is a widely referred tool for the evaluation and assessment of language users' competences in addition to its several other uses.

The purpose of the study is to investigate whether the Erasmus programme has an effect on competence development of the students who participated in the mobility. Competences were grouped into general and communicative language competences in accordance with the CEFR. Data were obtained through two collection instruments. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire consisting of 30 statements, which followed the CEFR-based competence definitions, was applied to 94 students of Akdeniz University who previously participated in the Erasmus programme. In order to support the data of linguistic competence development, a language proficiency test, was applied to 32 students upon their return from the Erasmus mobility. Pre-erasmus language proficiency test scores were obtained from

the International Relations Office of Akdeniz University and statistical comparison of these scores was performed.

The findings of the study revealed that Erasmus programme has a significant impact on developing general and communicative language competences of the students. Particularly significant development of the participants in intercultural awareness was observed. In consideration of the findings of this study, it is suggested that participation of Turkish university students in international mobility programmes should be fully encouraged and supported to the greatest possible extent.

Key words: General Competence, Communicative Language Competence, Competence Development, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, International Exchange Programmes, Erasmus Programme

ÖZET

ERASMUS ÖĞRENCİ DEĞİŞİM PROGRAMI'NIN ÖĞRENCİLERİN YETERLİK GELİŞİMLERİNE ETKİSİ

Altay, Ayça

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Bologna Süreci'nin kapsamlı amaçlarına hizmet eden Erasmus programı, dünya çapında önde gelen, popüler öğrenci değişim programları arasında yer almaktadır. Programın geçmişi 1987'ye kadar uzanmasına rağmen, uluslararası eğitim deneyimi kazanmak isteyen Türk öğrenciler için Avrupa'nın kapıları 2004 yılında Türkiye'nin programa dahil olması ile açılmıştır. Tarihi boyunca sürekli gelişen, kapsamlı alt programları sayesinde, Erasmus programı her zaman güncel kalmış ve programdan yararlananların bireysel beceri ve yeterliklerinin geliştirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu prensibin uygulanmasında büyük önem arz eden değişim öğrencilerinin yeterlik gelişimleri, önemli bir hedef olarak görülmektedir. Erasmus programına benzer şekilde Avrupa Konseyi tarafından geliştirilen Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programı, bir çok kullanım alanının yanı sıra, dil kullanıcılarının yeterliklerinin değerlendirilmesi ve ölçülmesi için sıklıkla başvurulan bir araçtır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Erasmus programının katılan öğrencilerin yeterlik gelişimlerine etkisini incelemektir. Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programı'na göre, yeterlikler, genel ve iletişimsel dil yeterlikleri olarak iki gruba ayrılmıştır. Çalışmanın verileri, iki veri toplama yöntemi kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Daha önce Erasmus programına katılan 94 Akdeniz Üniversitesi öğrencisine Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programı odaklı yeterlik tanımları doğrultusunda, 30 ifadeden oluşan Likert ölçeği anketi uygulanmıştır. Dilbilimsel yeterlik gelişimi verilerini desteklemek için 32 öğrenciye Erasmus hareketliliklerinden döndükten sonra dil yeterlilik testi uygulanmıştır. Erasmus öncesindeki dil yeterlilik testi notları Akdeniz Üniversitesi Uluslararası İlişkiler Ofisi'nden temin edilmiş olup, dil notlarının istatistiksel analizleri yapılmıştır.

Çalışmanın bulguları, Erasmus programının genel ve iletişimsel dil yeterliklerini geliştirmede önemli bir etkisi olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Özellikle, katılımcıların kültürlerarası farkındalıklarında önemli bir gelişim gözlenmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları göz önüne alındığında, Türk üniversite öğrencilerinin uluslararası değişim programlarına katılımları teşvik edilmeli ve desteklenmelidir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Genel Yeterlik, İletişimsel Dil Yeterliği, Yeterlik Gelişimi, Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programı, Uluslararası Değişim Programları, Erasmus Programı

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR   : Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

EHEA   : European Higher Education Area

EU   : European Union

LLP   : Lifelong Learning Programme

Q   : Question

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As education and training are essential to the development of today's knowledge society and economy, European Union (EU) gives great importance to international collaboration in terms of education and labour. In accordance with this, EU aims to set strategies concerning education and training policies at the European level. Bologna Process, revolutionary for cooperation in European higher education, has been put forward to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) throughout Europe aiming to make European Higher Education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and more attractive. In 1998, education ministers of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom signed the Sorbonne Declaration which emphasised the need for creating the European area of higher education. Bologna Process, a voluntary reform in education, was officially started with the Bologna Declaration, signed by 29 countries in 1999. The initial purpose of the Bologna Process was to strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of the European higher education and to enable student mobility and employability through the introduction of a system based on undergraduate and postgraduate studies (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, 2009). Papatsiba (2006, p. 95) defines the Bologna Process as "multi-national reforms and changes currently undertaken by European states, with varying scope and pace, in order to implement the goal of creating a barrier-free EHEA characterized by 'compatibility and comparability' between the higher education systems of signatory states". Today, the Bologna Process is implemented in 48 countries.

The European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) not only enabled people at all stages of their lives to take part in stimulating learning experiences, but also facilitated the student and staff mobility across Europe within the program years of 2007 to 2013. With a budget of nearly €7 billion for 2007 to 2013, the program funded a range of actions including exchanges, study visits and networking activities in the field of education and training. The LLP divided into four sub-programmes, which funded projects at different levels of education and training: Comenius for

schools; Erasmus for higher education; Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training and Grundtvig for adult education (European Commission, 2013). Following the successful implementation of LLP, the European Commission launched an expanded new program "Erasmus+" for education, training, youth and sport for the years of 2014 – 2020. The programme intends to provide oppurtunities for approximately four million Europeans to benefit from the programme.

The Erasmus programme provided the opportunity to over 3 million European students, to study abroad from when it began in 1987 to 2013 (European Commission, 2014a). The programme which involved 3.000 students a year initially, has been reported to grow over 182.000 students-a-year in 2007 (European Union, 2010). The significant growth in number of students involved is a fact, however, it still remains to be debated to which extent the programme fulfills its goals, which are commonly reported to be developing individual skills and competences and enhancing international understanding (Papatsiba, 2005a). In contrary to the vast number of reports about the programme growth in numbers, the data derived from research evaluating the true efficacy of the programme are limited.

The objective evaluation of social-behavioral acquisitions of an individual through an entity necessitates approaches, the validities of which have been documented.

The Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) plays a key role both for the language users / learners and teachers. In addition to its several other uses, the CEFR defines and underlines the importance of the human competences for communication by classifying competences. All of the competences of human beings have an impact on the language user's communication. Within the point of this view, communication is formed by competences, which affect each other one way or another. The CEFR identifies the language user's competences under two main categories: general competences and communicative language competences.

Table 1.1.

The User / Learner's Competences

General Competences	Communicative Language Competences
1. Declarative knowledge (savoir) 1.1. Knowledge of the world 1.2.Sociocultural knowledge 1.3. Intercultural awareness 2. Skills and know-how (savoir-faire) 2.1. Practical skills and know-how 2.2. Intercultural skills and know-how 3. Existential competence (savoir-etre) 4. Ability to learn (savoir-apprendre) 4.1. Language and communication awareness 4.2. General phonetic skills 4.3. Study skills 4.4. Heuristic skills	1. Linguistic competences 2. Sociolinguistic competence 3. Pragmatic competences

(Adapted from the Council of Europe, 2001, p. 101-130)

The main aim of this study is to analyze the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on competence development of students in accordance with the CEFR based evaluation.

1.1. Background of the Study

Erasmus programme is a European Union (EU) education and training programme which aims to promote mobility and to increase the quality of higher education across Europe. For this purpose, the programme promotes the co-operations between higher education institutions in Europe. The partnership and mobility activities are financially supported by the programme (Turkish National Agency, 2010). Today, the Erasmus programme enables roughly 230.000 students to study abroad each year. As it is reported by the European Commission (2010), the annual budget for the programme is in excess of 450 million euros. More than 4.000 universities in 33 countries are the beneficiaries of the programme.

The Erasmus experience is considered to play an important role both in the lives of participants and in the development of higher education in Europe. Maiworm (2001) defines Erasmus as 'the key element' in the internationalization of higher education in Europe. The Erasmus programme serves the overarching aim of the Bologna Process; creating a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and mobility. The Erasmus programme has its own objectives which are essential to the development of EHEA. The programme generally aims to improve the quality and efficiency of higher education and training. The Erasmus experience provides an excellent opportunity for the enrichment in the academic and professional fields and improvement in language learning, intercultural skills, self-reliance and self-awareness.

The Erasmus programme has significantly contributed to development of students' competences, not only in terms of academic studies but also in terms of general life skills. In their study, Teichler and Jahr (2001, p. 447) explain that "The former Erasmus students believed that study abroad was most valuable in contributing to cultural enhancement, personality development and foreign language proficiency". As the programme intends to develop students' competences, it is highly important to evaluate the results.

European Commission is the acting body to analyze the results of the Erasmus Programme and the other European Union Education and Youth Programmes. The European Commission not only collects the reports from the countries that implement the Erasmus programme, but also analyzes and shares the results of these reports. The statistical reports are prepared each year by the National Agencies of the programme countries and submitted to European Commission regularly. National Agencies, founded in the participatory countries for the purpose of coordinating European Union Education and Youth Programme, play a key role on acting as a link between the European Commission and higher education institutions in Europe. As they are the responsible legal authority for promoting, organizing and implementing the Erasmus programme, all higher education institutions have the obligation to annually send a final report to the national agencies of their own countries comprising the statistical data of implementation levels of the Erasmus programme.

These reports include data on the number of the students benefited from the Erasmus programme, the information about the host higher education institution, the duration of the stay, the language of the study, the ECTS credits gained and recognized, and the Erasmus grant that was given to the student for his/her Erasmus mobility period. By means of these final reports collected by the National Agencies, European Commission presents several statistical reports showing the data which are provided by the National Agencies. As the Erasmus programme aims to improve the quality and efficiency of higher education and training, this essential aim of the programme could only be analyzed through qualitative studies based on the students' individual skills and competences. Yet, there is a lack of qualitative reports analyzing the influence of the programme on the competence development of students.

This study aims to analyze the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on competence development of students.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The Erasmus programme is intended to support the main aim of the Bologna Process; creating the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) which is attractive to for both the European and the non-European students. The programme provides for the mobility of the students from one country to other. Therefore, it facilitates the attractiveness of the EHEA. The mission of the programme for EHEA makes the Erasmus programme fundamental issue needed to be discussed in terms of qualitative aspects. Hence, it is safe to claim that the aims of the Erasmus programme are considered to play a fundamental role for the Bologna Process.

Turkey has a growing number of students who participated in the Erasmus programme since its involvement in the programme in 2004. The programme has become an important feature of Turkish higher education. However, studies about the impact of the Erasmus programme remain very limited in number and quality in Turkey, in contrast with other countries which participate in the Erasmus programme.

With the purpose of illuminating the true efficacy of the Erasmus programme in fulfilling its objectives, the problem of this study is based on the research question "What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on competence

development of students?". The study also seeks for the answers to the following sub- problems:

1. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on general competences of students?

2. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on communicative language competences of students?

3. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on linguistic competences of students?

4. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on intercultural awareness of students?

5. Does gender have an effect on competence development?

6. Does the duration of the mobility have an effect on competence development?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

As Erasmus student mobility programme intends to develop students' competences, assessment and development of the competences is a fundamental issue to the programme. The Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) defines language user's competences in two main categories; general competences and communicative language competences. These competences provide a general framework, including all human competences, which affect the communication in one way or another.

General competences and communicative language competences have been chosen in this study, because they cover all competence types, which are essential for language users. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of Erasmus student mobility programme on the competence development of students.

In accordance with the CEFR, general competences include knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness, practical skills, intercultural skills, existential competence, language and communication awareness, general phonetic awareness, study skills and heuristic skills. Communicative language competences

include linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competences.

This study addresses the need for understanding the competence development of students who took part in the Erasmus student mobility programme by looking, specifically, at students' general competences and communicative language competences.

1.4. Hypothesis

In accordance with the aim of the Bologna Process; creating a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and mobility, the Erasmus programme plays a key role in education area. As the Erasmus programme has become an important feature of higher education in Europe, there is a need for analyzing its influence on students who took part in the programme. The main focus of this study is to analyze the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on competence development of students. Therefore it is hypothesized that the Erasmus student mobility programme has an influence on the students' development of the general competences and the communicative language competences.

1.5. Scope of the Study

Erasmus programme has become an important feature of higher education since the programme started in 1987. The European Commission (2011) notes that more than 3 million students have participated in Erasmus since 1987. Unfortunately, most of the reports have concentrated on quantitative data which contain mobility numbers of countries per year. In order to better understand if the programme has a qualitative effect on the competence development of the participants, this study focuses on quantitative data obtained from the analysis of questionnaire responses, pre- and post- language test scores as well as t-tests.

1.6. Limitations

This study has limitations that need to be taken into account when interpreting its findings. The study was limited to the students who participated in Erasmus mobility programme from Akdeniz University, between the years of 2004-2013. Therefore, the results derived from this study cannot be generalized as the questionnaire was applied to 94 students. Additionally, the pre – post tests were administered to a specific group of 32 students. Another limitation of this study is the competences which were analyzed. It should also be noted that the competences analyzed in this study are limited to general and communicative language competences in accordance with the CEFR based evaluation.

Another limitation that needs to be taken into consideration is that its findings are limited with the validity of the information given by Erasmus students, and are affected by a number of factors among which are the truthfulness and proper understanding of the respondents. This limitation was addressed to a certain extent by applying the questionnaire in Turkish, which is the participants' native language.

Of note, the subjective nature of self-assessment tools limits the findings of this study. Every individual has a different level of ability to assess his/her personal acquisitions through a given experience, which limits the questionnaire-borne findings of this study. The communicative language competences however, were evaluated more objectively by comparing pre- and post-Erasmus foreign language scores in a limited number of subjects.

1.7. Definitions

Bologna Process: It is the process of creating the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by making academic degree standards and quality assurance standards more comparable and compatible throughout Europe and is based on cooperation between ministries, higher education institutions, students and staff from 48 participating countries.

Erasmus Programme: It is a European Union (EU) student exchange programme, established in 1987, and the operational framework for the European Commission's initiatives in higher education. The European Commission is the responsible body

for the overall implementation of the Erasmus Programme. The Erasmus programme is managed by the national agencies in the 33 programme countries that can fully take part in all the actions.

Council of Europe: Founded on 5 May 1949 by ten countries, it is the first and most widely based European political organization with its 47 member countries.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: It is a 260-page book which provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks and describes what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1).

Competences: All language users involved in a communicative situation, use their competences which are formed by their previous experience. CEFR separates the competences into two main groups: general competences and communicative language competences.

General Competences: General competences include knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness, practical skills, intercultural skills, existential competence, language and communication awareness, general phonetic awareness, study skills and heuristic skills (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 101-108).

Communicative Language Competences: Communicative language competences include linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competences (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 108-130).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Council of Europe Language Policy

The Council of Europe, initially founded in 1949, is the leading human rights organization of the continental Europe with 47 member states. The Council of Europe acts for freedom in its broadest sense, particularly of expression, of the media and of assembly. It additionally targets equality and promotes protection of minorities. Among its main objectives are to protect the human rights, pluralist democracy and rule of law as well as to promote awareness and encourage the development of Europe's cultural diversity and identity. By means of promoting human rights through international conventions and campaigns, the council also aims to fight corruption, terrorism and to undertake judicial reforms that contribute to human rights (Council of Europe, 2014).

The Language Policy Unit is the division of the Council of Europe that is responsible for designing and implementing initiatives for the development and analysis of language education policies to promote linguistic diversity and plurilingualism. De Cillia (2014) explains that Language Policy Unit provides the significant support for its members to develop their own policies in language education. The unit was formed at the first governmental conference on European cooperation in language teaching in 1957 in Strasbourg with the aim of democratization of language learning, mobility of persons and ideas, and promotion of European heritage of cultural and linguistic diversity. The initial goal of the development of successful communication and intercultural skills was later enriched with more recent projects, which focus on the social and political dimensions of learning to improve coherence and transparency in language and the language education rights of the minorities (Council of Europe, 2010).

Today, the Language Policy Unit carries out intergovernmental co-operation programmes with the European Center for Modern Languages (ECML), which was established by a partial agreement in Graz, Austria in 1994. In today's context, the

main role of this collaboration is described as generating and implementing initiatives for the development of analysis and of language education policies with programmes that cover all languages and address the needs of all member states. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in their Declaration and Programme of Education for Democratic Citizenship of 7 May 1999, at the time of the 50th anniversary of the Council of Europe reaffirmed their vision of building Europe as: "a freer, more tolerant and just society based on solidarity, common values and a cultural heritage enriched by its diversity" (Council of Europe, 1999).

Needless to say, languages are a particularly important component of this heritage and their diversity contributes significantly to the richness of Europe's culture. The achievement of equality of citizenship in multilingual communities indicates the success of democracy in its full sense. Recognizing and acknowledging the critical role of languages in obtaining and maintaining a true democracy, the Council of Europe has identified principles to form the basis of common language education policies in Europe, which aim to promote the notion of plurilingualism. Starkey (2002, p. 9) emphasizes significance of linguistic capacities of human beings as follows; "Although language is sometimes perceived as a marker of difference, the linguistic capacities of human beings are a unifying feature, distinguishing humans from other species and bringing with them an automatic entitlement to human rights". Starkey (2002, p. 12) further defines another important role of languages, which is to provide an interdisciplinary approach to a positive culture of antiracism and quotes: "Whilst language learning by itself does not necessarily reduce or remove prejudices, when accompanied by other well-conceived educational experiences it can be a powerful contributor to a culture of human rights and equity".

As defined below, CEFR (2001) highlights the significance of language in the pursuit of following principles:

> ... the overall aim of the Council of Europe as defined in Recommendations R (82) 18 and R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers: 'to achieve greater unity among its members' and to pursue this aim 'by the adoption of common action in the cultural field'.... three basic principles set down in the preamble to Recommendation R (82) 18 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:

- that the rich heritage of diverse languages and cultures in Europe is a valuable common resource to be protected and developed, and a major educational effort is needed to convert that diversity from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding;

- that it is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination;

- that member states, when adopting or developing national policies in the field of modern language learning and teaching, may achieve greater convergence at the European level by means of appropriate arrangements for ongoing co-operation and co-ordination of policies. (p. 2)

CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4) further explains that in relation to above mentioned goals, the Committee of Ministers emphasized the significance on " ... developing specific fields of action, such as strategies for diversifying and intensifying language learning in order to promote plurilingualism in a pan-European context and ... the value of further developing educational links and exchanges", which also provides the subject to this study.

Above given ideas and goals set by the Council of Europe have been practiced in the form of efforts to develop reference instruments for language teaching, which share common principles. Initially utilizing the so-called communicative language teaching methods by drawing up specific reference tools (Threshold Levels), the Council of Europe then developed an analytical framework for language teaching and a description of common reference levels to enable language competences to be assessed: the purpose of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is to make the language teaching programmes of member states transparent and coherent (Council of Europe, 2011).

2.2. Historical Background of the Erasmus Programme

The Erasmus programme which is an acronym of European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students is the European Union's mobility programme in the field of education and training. The programme was first established in 1987. The Erasmus programme, which is considered as one of the best-known EU-level actions, gave more than 3 million students from Europe the chance to enhance their learning in other European countries since its establishment.

The Erasmus programme took its name from philosopher, theologian and humanist Desiderius Erasmus, one of the Europe's most influential scholars known for being an opponent of dogmatism and who lived in the years of 1466-1536. In the quest of knowledge, Desiderius Erasmus lived and worked in many places in Europe to expand his knowledge. Desiderius Erasmus became a precursor of mobility grants by leaving his fortune to the University of Basel. His name was given to the EU's unique mobility programme, which aims to enrich students' life in the academic knowledge and professional competences.

The initial steps of the establishment of Erasmus programme took both time and effort. After following the first proposal in 1986, the reaction came from Member States which had their own student exchange programmes, while the other Member States were broadly in favor. For the purpose of protesting some Member States' inadequate budget proposals, the European Commission withdrew its proposal in early 1987 after deteriorating student exchanges. With the agreement of the majority of the Member States, the Erasmus programme was launched in June 1987.

At the time when the Erasmus programme officially started in 1987, the European Commission had already supported pilot student exchanges for six years. The pilot student exchanges took place from 1981 to 1986. In the first year of the Erasmus programme, 3.244 students participated to the programme in the academic year of 1987-1988 from 11 participating countries (European Commission, 2014b). Maiworm (2001) describes the Erasmus programme as one of the most visible educational programmes of the late 1980s and early 1990s and states that the establishment of the Erasmus programme is considered as a new phase of internationalization of higher education in Europe.

Since its establishment, the Erasmus Programme has undergone several changes. Feyen and Krzaklewska (2013) point out that the Erasmus programme was originally established as an independent exchange programme. In 1995 the Erasmus programme was incorporated into the Socrates programme together with other education and training programmes. After the incorporation, the spectrum of the activities of the programme was broadened. In 2000, the Socrates programme was replaced by the Socrates II programme. Turkey joined the programme in 2004. Following the Socrates II programme, Lifelong Learning Programme came into force for the period of 2007-2013. As Pepin (2007) explains with the launch of Lifelong Learning Programme, it integrated three existing programmes: Socrates (for education including Erasmus), Leonardo da Vinci (for vocational training) and eLearning. This integration enabled greater coherence between education and training actions. As she explains it was with the launch of the Lisbon Strategy in March 2000 when education played a key milestone role in the European Union's economic and social objectives.

In 2014, a new programme called Erasmus+ (also called as Erasmus Plus) started for the years of 2014 – 2020. Erasmus+ programme includes activities for education, training, youth and sport (European Commission, 2014). At every launch of a new programme period, the Erasmus programme became more comprehensive. Although the Erasmus programme has undergone many changes and expanded since its first establishment, the student exchanges are still at the heart of the programme. After completing its first quarter century of establishment in 2012, Erasmus programme is commonly considered as one of the most successful exchange programmes in the world.

2.3. Basic Aspects of the Erasmus Programme

The precursor of the today's Erasmus+ Programme, the Lifelong Learning Programme, ran from 2007-2013, had four main sub-programmes:

Comenius for schools, Erasmus for higher education, Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training and Grundtvig for adult education.

The new implementation period of the Erasmus programme for the years of 2014-2020 is called Erasmus+ Programme. The programme established by the Regulation

no 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of European Union. As stated in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (European Commission, 2015a), Erasmus+ Programme is the integration of European Commission's European programmes which were implemented in the programme period of 2007-2013. In other words, Erasmus+ Programme encompasses the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Youth in Action Programme, the Erasmus Mundus Programme, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink and programmes of cooperation with industrialized countries in higher education field. It combined seven existing EU programmes and introduced sport for the first time.

The Erasmus+ Programme, has three main comprehensive actions defined in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (European Commission, 2015b):

Key Action 1: Mobility of Individuals

Key Action 2: Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices

Key Action 3: Support for Policy Reforms

There are also two separate areas of the programme for Jean Monnet activities and Sport for the programme beneficiaries. Erasmus+ Programme is considered as an integrated programme composed of five main titles.

For the seven years of the programme which will take place in between the years of 2014-2020, the overall indicative budget of the Erasmus+ Programme is 14.7 billion euros.

2.4. Aims of the Erasmus Programme

As declared by the European Commission's (2015b) Erasmus+ Programme Guide, the aims of the Erasmus Programme are; "to support programme countries' efforts to efficiently use the potential of Europe's talent and social assets in a lifelong learning perspective, linking support to formal, non-formal and informal learning throughout the education, training and youth fields". The programme enables cooperation opportunities and the mobility of individuals in higher education. Papatsiba (2005a) stresses that Erasmus programme aims to create a European consciousness by enabling individuals to acquire international competences.

In the light of the aims of the Erasmus Programme in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (European Commission, 2015b), the programme intends to contribute to the achievement of:

- the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, including the headline education target;
- the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), including the corresponding benchmarks;
- the sustainable development of Partner Countries in the field of higher education;
- the overall objectives of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018);
- the objective of developing the European dimension in sport, in particular grassroots sport, in line with the EU work plan for sport;
- the promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union. (p. 9)

Additionally, the sub-programmes of the Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 1, Key Action 2 and Key Action 3 have the specific aims of improving the level of competences and skills, fostering quality improvements and innovation, promoting the emergence and raising the awareness of a European lifelong learning area, enhancing the international dimension of education and training; improving the teaching and learning of languages and promoting the European Union's broad linguistic diversity and intercultural awareness. In this regard, it can be concluded that the programme puts forth the importance of developing competence levels of the individuals who participated in the programme. According to Maiworm (2001, p. 459), Erasmus aims "to increase the number of mobile students within the European Community in order to produce a pool of graduates ... to strengthen the interaction between citizens in Member States, and to consolidate the concept of a People's Europe".

2.5. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Published by the Council of Europe, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (hereafter CEFR) is a descriptive guideline that has been proposed to analyze second language learners' needs, specify second language learning goals, guide the development of second language learning materials and activities and provide methods for the assessment of second language learning outcomes (Little, 2006). The CEFR surely enjoyed a great impact on second language teaching and learning in Europe since its commercial publication in English and French in 2001. What made it so popular in the last decade is the changes in methods of teaching, the nature of the materials used, the description of what is to be learnt and the assessment style used in evaluating the learning outcomes (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002). Despite the fact that its comprehensive use remains limited to a minority of language specialists (Little, 2006), it has been confirmed that a large number of professionals in the Council of Europe's member states are familiar with and routinely utilize the common reference levels of language proficiency (so-called the 'global scale') and self-assessment grid. Moreover, it is rapidly becoming "the standard reference" for teaching and testing languages in Europe (Fulcher, 2004). In its own words, the CEFR is intended to standardize language learning across Europe by providing "a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). It further aims to summarize and embody the knowledge and the skills required in order to be able to use a language effectively.

Furthermore, the CEFR serves as a guide for language learners by describing what to do so as to use a language for communication and what skills and knowledge to develop so as to use language efficiently. It also defines "levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis" (Council of Europe, 2001, p.1).

Although its efficiency in fulfilling the mentioned goals has been subject to several discussions and yet remains controversial, the CEFR undoubtedly serves as a basis for second language teaching and learning in Europe. As previously emphasized by North in 2004, the aim of CEFR "is to encourage those involved in language

teaching to reflect on and, where appropriate, question their current aims and methods". When viewed from this aspect, the efficacy of CEFR in the task undertaken historically can be evaluated more objectively. A brief background of the descriptive scheme that principally targets identification of what a language user has to know in order to be able communicate effectively, and what he or she can be expected to accomplish at different levels of proficiency, provides a better understanding of the fundamentals and the objectives of the CEFR.

2.5.1. A Brief History of the CEFR

Initiated by the Council of Europe, the CEFR is considered an outcome of developments and fundamental changes in language education that dates back to the 1970s and beyond. The Council of Europe's Modern Languages projects were initiated in the 1960s and have become more evident since 1971, the year when an intergovernmental symposium on languages in adult education in collaboration between a large number of language teaching experts in Europe was held in Rüschlikon, Switzerland. The concept of a 'threshold' level first arose in the context of this project (Bung, 1973).

These efforts have led the way to a series of detailed syllabus specifications, at several different language learning levels, namely the Threshold Level (now Level B1 of the CEFR) (Van Ek, 1975) and the Waystage (now Level A2 of the CEFR) and Vantage Levels (Van Ek and Trim, 2001) followed by the publication of Unniveau-seuil (Coste, Courtillon, Ferenczi, Martins-Baltar and Papo, 1976), the French version of the Threshold model.

In 1977 David Wilkins mentioned a possible set of seven 'Council of Europe Levels' for the first time in Ludwigshafen Symposium: (North, 2006) to be used as part of the European unit/credit scheme. 1980 witnessed the establishment of the "Communicative approach" as attitudes towards language learning and assessment began to change. Greater emphasis was placed on productive skills and innovative assessment models (University of Cambridge, 2011).

1990s witnessed formative developments in language teaching including gradual replacement of grammar-translation method with the functional/notional approach and the communicative approach. In 1991, Rüschlikon hosted an intergovernmental

symposium once again which dealt with proficiency levels and their related features. Defining objectives and functions of the theoretical framework that now serves as a theoretical basis for modern language teaching in Europe, the authoring group agreed upon the establishment of 'the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning, Teaching and Assessment'. Following meticulous efforts by the contributors, the first draft of the framework was published in 1996 followed by the second one in 1998. It was translated into 22 other languages: Albanian, Armenian, Basque, Catalan, Croatian, Czech, Finnish, Freudian, Galician, Georgian, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Moldovan, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian (Iekavian version), Spanish, Turkish and Ukrainian. The latest version of the document coincided with the European Year of Languages and was published simultaneously in English and French in 2001 (Kohonen, 2003).

Of all the innovations brought by the CEFR, the communicative approach was by far the most significant and the one that is still regarded as a major breakthrough in language teaching. Following its introduction, the communicative approach which briefly prioritizes the ability of language learners to communicate in the foreign language, eventually led to necessity of analyzing the learners' communicative needs and description of the language they must learn in order to fulfill those needs (Savignon, 2002; Littlewood 2002; Little, 2006). Herein, the CEFR emerged as the result of a need for a common international framework for language teaching and learning, which would facilitate co-operation among educational institutions of European countries. In a recent guide that describes how to use the CEFR more effectively, Cambridge ESOL (2011) asserts that the key objectives of the framework include; providing practitioners with a common ground when dealing with objectives in language teaching and enabling them to assess both the learners' progress and their current practice. What may be even more important, the CEFR aims to provide every individual involved in language teaching and learning with a guide with reference to which he/she can situate and qualify his/her efforts.

Following its publication, the CEFR has given rise to several CEFR-related projects and Reference Level Descriptions for national and regional languages that were widely adopted by the member states looking to achieve greater harmony in the definition of their language policy by means of making arrangements for ongoing collaboration and the harmonization of their language policies (Boldizsar, 2003).

The CEFR is believed to remain relevant and accommodate new innovations in teaching and learning through these developments and their associated outcomes, which add to the evolution of the Framework (University of Cambridge, 2011).

2.5.2. What is the CEFR?

Although there have been several discussions on what CEFR really is, -and also on what it is not- yet it still remains controversial. Today, it can basically be described as a guideline, which proposes a comprehensive theoretical approach to modern language learning and teaching. Commonly utilized by the practitioners to carry out professional tasks regarding language teaching, learning and assessment in a comprehensive, transparent and coherent way (Council of Europe, 2001), the framework seeks to 'stimulate reflection and discussion' on issues including content specifications and methodology (North, 2004). In order to aid language professionals and learners in evaluating progress, the CEFR comprises a series of level descriptors (A, B and C levels, each having two sub-levels) that serve as a self-assessment tool for the language learner. In 2006, Heyworth characterized the CEFR as follows:

> the CEFR attempts to bring together, under a single umbrella, a comprehensive tool for enabling syllabus designers, materials writers, examination bodies, teachers, learners, and others to locate their various types of involvement in modern language teaching in relation an overall, unified and descriptive frame of reference. (p. 181)

In the CEFR, the reference levels that are proposed to define language learners' capabilities in speaking, reading, listening and writing, have been described in six levels: C2 Mastery - C1 Effective Operational Proficiency (Proficient user), B2 Vantage - B1 Threshold (Independent user) A2 Waystage - A1 Breakthrough (Basic user). In addition to these common reference levels, the CEFR also provides a 'Descriptive Scheme' of definitions, categories and examples that may be utilized by the language professionals to better comprehend its objectives. The examples are named 'illustrative descriptors' and are presented as a series of scales with Can Do statements from levels A1 to C2. One can use these scales as a tool for comparing levels of ability as well as for determining progress among foreign language learners.

Table 2.1. summarizes the reference levels described by the CEFR.

Table 2.1.

Language User's Level

A	A1	Breakthrough
Basic	A2	Waystage
B	B1	Threshold
Independent	B2	Vantage
C	C1	Effective Operational Proficiency
Proficient	C2	Mastery

 (Adapted from the Council of Europe, 2001, p. 23)

The CEFR comprises nine chapters and a practical chapter that is called 'Notes for the User'. Chapters 2 to 5 are considered to be the key chapters for most readers. Chapter 2 is an attempt to explain the approach the CEFR takes and proposes a descriptive scheme. This scheme is then followed in Chapters 4 and 5 to provide the reader with a more detailed explanation of these parameters. Chapter 3 introduces the common reference levels while chapters 6 to 9 of the CEFR mainly focus on different aspects of learning, teaching and assessment. Of these, chapter 7 is about 'Tasks and their role in language teaching'. Each chapter includes an initial explanation of concepts to the reader, which is then followed by a structure around which to ask and answer questions relevant to the reader's contexts (University of Cambridge, 2011). The CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) clearly underlines the fact that it is based on a foundation, the aim of which is "not to prescribe or even recommend a particular method, but to present options". Furthermore, it should be noted that these CEFR level descriptors are not objectives or outcomes. Little (2012) described the uses of the CEFR level descriptors as follows:

1 to define a learning target

2 to select and/or develop learning activities and materials

3 to guide the selection and design of assessment tasks.

Table 2.2 summarizes the contents of the CEFR.

Table 2.2.

Contents of the CEFR

Chapter 1	states the aims, objectives and functions of the CEFR.
Chapter 2	introduces the CEFR's action-oriented approach and its descriptive scheme.
Chapter 3	introduces and summarizes the Common Reference Levels.
Chapter 4	presents categories for describing language user/learner.
Chapter 5	describes the competences on which the language user/learner depends in order to carry out communicative tasks: general competences (declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, 'existential' competence, ability to learn) and communicative language competences.
Chapter 6	is concerned with language learning and teaching.
Chapter 7	examines the role of tasks in language learning and teaching.
Chapter 8	discusses the implications of linguistic diversification for curriculum design.
Chapter 9	is concerned with the ways in which the CEFR can support the assessment of communicative proficiency.
Appendix A	discusses the description of levels of language attainment from a technical perspective.
Appendix B	describes the Swiss research project that developed the illustrative descriptors for the CEFR.
Appendix C	presents DIALANG, an on-line assessment system that uses the scales and descriptors of the CEFR to provide language learners with diagnostic information about their L2 proficiency.
Appendix D	describes the ALTE 'can-do' statements, which were developed, related to ALTE language examinations, and anchored to the CEFR.

(Adapted from Little, 2006, p. 173)

The descriptive scheme of the CEFR is commonly defined as the combination of its vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension of the CEFR describes progression through six levels of communicative proficiency by means of 'can do' descriptors. Whereas the horizontal dimension of the CEFR provides different contexts of teaching and learning, which are described in the descriptive scheme laid

out in Chapter 2. The horizontal dimension of the CEFR is further dealt with in Chapters 4 and 5 of the CEFR as the former covers 'Language use and the language user/learner' while the latter covers 'The user/learner's competences'. These chapters come with illustrative scales that are designed to help differentiate these language activities and competences across the reference levels (University of Cambridge, 2011). Little (2006, p. 168) describes the horizontal dimension of the CEFR as a tool that deals with "the learner's communicative language competences and the strategies that serve as a hinge between these competences (the learner's linguistic resources) and communicative activities (what he or she can do with them)".

2.6. Competences in accordance with the CEFR

The concept of "competence" originates from a wider basis than that of linguistics. Commonly defined as the ability to manifest a certain behavior and to perform a certain activity, a competence can be described for and applied to several aspects of human life. Further characterized as a bundle of cognitively controlled abilities or skills in some particular domain, competence implies both knowledge and the ability and disposition to solve problems in a particular domain. These domains often appear in professional life and disciplines concerned with the professional personality such as sociology, pedagogy, psychology, personnel management for which the role of competences are particularly significant.

Involving different capacities of the individual such as perceptual, productive, cognitive and social capacities, a competence is either partially or fully acquired, which highlights the role of the skills evolved and put to use in interacting with a certain domain. It may be investigated empirically solely by observing performance and if necessary, rendered functional by testing the subject's solution of certain problems (Lehmann, 2007).

Heyworth (2004) emphasizes that CEFR provides "an important set of resources for comprehensive coverage of the different components of competence in language knowledge and use". In the CEFR, a competence is defined as the sum of knowledge, which allows the person to perform certain actions. The amount of knowledge and personal skills are obviously not identical for every single competence of the individual and may vary from one to another. However they all have a part in the

composition of the learner's ability to communicate, therefore are considered as components of communicative competence. It is however advisable to make a clear distinction between competences that are highly linked with linguistic competences, which can be briefly described as the capacity or set of capacities underlying the linguistic activity of the individual, and those that are not directly engaged with language (Council of Europe, 2001). To serve this purpose, the CEFR classifies user/learner's competences into two main categories: general competences and communicative language competences. Table 2.3. summarizes the classification of the user/learner's competences in the CEFR.

Table 2.3.

A General View of CEFR Chapter 5: The User/Learner's Competences

The User/Learner's Competences	
General Competences	Communicative Language Competences

1. Declarative knowledge (savoir)
  1.1 Knowledge of the world
  1.2 Sociocultural knowledge
  1.3 Intercultural awareness
2. Skills and know-how (savoir-fare)
  2.1 Practical skills and know-how
  2.2 Intercultural skills and know-how
3. Existential competence (savoir-etre)
4. Ability to learn (savoir-apprendre)
  4.1 Language and communication awareness
  4.2 General phonetic skills
  4.3 Study skills
  4.4 Heuristic skills
	1. Linguistic competences
	  1.1 Lexical
	  1.2 Grammatical
	  1.3 Semantic
	  1.4 Phonological
	  1.5 Orthographic
	  1.6 Orthoepic
	2. Sociolinguistic competence
	  2.1 Linguistic markers of social relations
	  2.2 Politeness conventions
	  2.3 Expressions of folk wisdom
	  2.4 Register differences
	  2.5 Dialect and accent
	3. Pragmatic competences
	  3.1 Discourse competence
	  3.2 Functional competence
	  3.3 Design competence

2.6.1. General Competences

2.6.1.1. Declarative Knowledge (Savoir)

Declarative knowledge comprises knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness all of which derive from experience (empirical knowledge) and from more formal learning methods such as the academic knowledge. Independently from the method with which it is obtained, knowledge of the society and culture of the community plays a pivotal role in foreign language teaching/learning. The CEFR associates this significant role of "knowledge" in managing a foreign language with its potential to overcome obstacles such as the lack of or distorted previous experience of the learner (Council of Europe, 2001). Understandably, already-acquired knowledge of the world and of the "target community" in which the foreign language is spoken, provides the learner with the opportunity to further cultivate it. Moreover, continuous learning and up-to-date knowledge of values and beliefs and in other regions or countries – such as religious beliefs, taboos, a shared history etc. – are essential to intercultural communication.

Sociocultural knowledge, which may include (but not limited to) the knowledge of features of everyday living, interpersonal relations, values, beliefs and attitudes, body language and social rituals underpins sociocultural competence of the learner that is briefly defined as the entirety of the sociocultural context where a language is located. Furthermore, the process of learning a foreign language necessitates knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation between the "world of origin" and "the world of the target community", which is often regarded as intercultural awareness. Such comparison unmistakably provides the individual with objective knowledge and thorough understanding of how each community appears from the perspective of the other (Council of Europe, 2001) and makes a substantial contribution to his/her intercultural communicative competence that is, "the ability to interact effectively with people of cultures other than one's own" in the viewpoint of Byram (2000, p. 297).

2.6.1.2. Skills and Know-how (Savoir-fare)

Skills and know-how include practical skills and know-how, and intercultural skills and know-how. Possession of developed skills that are required for everyday-life as well as more specialized ones such as the professional skills are of significant importance in adjusting to life in a foreign environment. Being able to remain interactive during the process of learning a language by means of social and leisure skills provides the individual with the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relationship (Council of Europe, 2001). Byram (1997, p. 32-33) states "when persons from different languages and/or countries interact socially, they bring to the situation their knowledge about their own country and that of the others". Often regarded as mainstays of the communicative activity of users/learners, cultural sensitivity and the competence in successfully dealing with intercultural misunderstandings, such as national stereotypes, need to be achieved in order to be able to communicate more effectively in a foreign culture and community.

2.6.1.3. Existential Competence (Savoir-etre)

Existential competence of users/learners markedly depends on personal factors such as attitudes, motivation, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and the personal traits. Described as the sum of all personal characteristics and attitudes in the CEFR, existential competence of a user/learner needs to be taken into consideration in provisions for language learning, teaching and assessment, as it greatly affects language user's/learner's role in communicative acts and his/her ability to learn. Byram (1997, p. 32-33) attributes particular importance to existential competence in language learning and states, "part of the success of such interaction will depend on the establishing and maintenance of human relationships, something which depends on attitudinal factors". Emotional, cognitive and social attitudes are components of savoir-être that are subject to change from one person to another and also within the single person with time and effort. Therefore, it is noteworthy to consider encouraging users to develop and/or display personal features, which are key factors in developing an 'intercultural personality'. Often considered an important educational goal, development of existential competences is an effort that is

significantly culture-related and therefore sensitive for intercultural perceptions and relations.

2.6.1.4. Ability to Learn (Savoir-apprendre)

Ability to learn comprises language and communication awareness, phonetic skills, study skills and heuristic skills. The CEFR broadly describes savoir-apprendre as "the ability to observe and participate in new experiences and to incorporate new knowledge into existing knowledge, modifying the latter where necessary" (Council of Europe, p.106). In an effort to better delineate the notion of ability to learn, Council of Europe (2011, p. 12) also states that it may also be conceived as "knowing how, or being disposed to discover otherness", be it another language, culture, other people or new areas of knowledge. The main reason why ability to learn is of significant importance in language learning is that it may involve many of the previously discussed competences of a person, such as the existential competence, declarative knowledge as well as the skills and know-how. Clearly, acquisition of new knowledge necessitates an accumulation of these competences all of which support the user/learner in different aspects of language learning. The common role of them however, is to provide the user/learner with the ability to cope with challenges during the process of learning a language and to contrive and take advantage of the opportunities.

The way that an individual deals with the unknown may vary according to several determinants, few of which are the context, familiarity level of the culture in which "the unknown" is faced, and a joint impact of past experiences and prevailing circumstances (Council of Europe, 2001). It is surely beyond doubt that the amount of effort put into repetitively performing an act in a somewhat familiar culture would not exceed the one that is put forward whilst doing something for the first time in a new surrounding. Therefore the CEFR recommends considering the diversity of learning experiences of the individual together with individual abilities to learn when selecting strategies for learning purposes.

2.6.2. Communicative Language Competences

The term of communicative competence was initiated by Hymes (1967, 1972) who stated that Chomsky's (1965) notion of competence was limited. Brown (1994, p. 227) indicates that "communicative competence is that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts". In accordance with CEFR, communicative language competence has a number of components, which are; linguistic, socio-linguistic and pragmatic competences. Every single one of these competences involves language-related knowledge and skills. In common, all of them serve in effort to fulfill communicative competences.

2.6.2.1. Linguistic Competences

Language systems comprise complex structures and a common language of a large, sophisticated society is not possible to master in its entirety, the main reason behind it being its continuous evolution due to imperatives of use in communication. Linguistic competence comprises the knowledge and skills related to lexis, grammar, semantics, phonology and syntax and other features of language systems that is defined and reviewed independently of the sociolinguistic competences and the functional use of linguistic resources. In order to be linguistically competent, a user/learner not only needs to possess a substantial range and quality of linguistic knowledge but also should be able to effectively carry out cognitive organization of this knowledge and be able to recall and activate it for use when needed. Such accessibility and organization are directly linked to the environment in which learning is carried out and undoubtedly vary from one person to another (or within the same person) (Council of Europe, 2001).

Lexical competence, which comprises knowledge of and ability to use the vocabulary of a language, consists of lexical and grammatical elements and shares common grounds with sociolinguistics competence. They both involve expressions and relations which depend on many factors, such as status, closeness of relation or register of discourse (Piccardo, Berchoud, Cignatta, Mentz, and Pamula, 2011), whereas the grammatical competence is defined as "the ability to understand and

express meaning by producing and recognizing well-formed phrases and sentences" (Council of Europe, p. 113). Semantic competence of an individual implies his/her ability to comprehend and utilize the relation of words to general context and interlexical relations. Phonological competence refers to the ability to recognize and produce the distinctive meaningful sounds of a language that is closely related to orthographic competence, which is described as the ability to properly interpret and utilize the writing system that is integral to proficient reading and writing. Orthoepic competence deals with the correct pronunciation of words and may necessitate sufficiency in several key factors, which include knowledge of spelling conventions, implication of written forms, and ability to resolve ambiguity in the light of the context.

2.6.2.2. Sociolinguistic Competence

In the broadest sense, sociolinguistic competence is described as the ability to interpret the social meaning of the choice of linguistic varieties and to use language with the appropriate social meaning for communication purposes. It includes both verbal and non-verbal communication. As characterized in the CEFR, it mainly refers to the sociocultural conditions of language use, which is a sum of knowledge and skills involved in using language functionally in a social context. Canale and Swain (1980, p. 30) describe the significance of sociolinguistic competences and point out to the way leading to it as "knowledge of these (sociolinguistic) rules will be crucial in interpreting utterances for social meaning, particularly when there is low level of transparency between the literal meaning of an utterance and speaker's intention".

Second language learners, on the other hand, must learn how to produce and understand language in different sociolinguistic contexts, taking into consideration such factors as the status of participants, the purposes of interactions, and the norms or conventions of interactions (Freeman and Freeman, 2004).

A language cannot be dissociated from the community and the culture it is situated and, therefore, is a social phenomenon the use of which requires sensitivity to social norms and customs. This is why sociolinguistic appropriateness often includes the word "awareness" (Piccardo et. al., 2011). Language users need to be aware of social

conventions such as rules of politeness and determinant norms of relations between generations, sexes, classes and social groups in their own community and the target community. In addition, sociolinguistic competence calls for utilization of such awareness in a communicatively appropriate way. Pan (2016) highlights the significance of sociolinguistic competence within communicative language competences by pointing out to the understanding that grammatical competence alone cannot constitute communicative competence, the successful achievement of which goes beyond grammatical rules and contextualized appropriateness. Therefore, users/learners of a language must be encouraged or taught to develop sociolinguistic competence by means of studying culture and cross-cultural differences so that they can comprehend and interiorize the target culture and eventually become competent communicators in a once foreign environment.

2.6.2.3. Pragmatic Competences

If translated literally, pragmatic means related to action, and action can be defined as "intentional behaviour" (Sickinger and Schneider, 2014). In her initial definition of 'pragmatic competence' in 1983, Thomas (1983) speaks of two types of competence, which combine into a speaker's "linguistic competence". She asserts that a speaker's overall language competence comprises two complementary components, or "sub-competences" that are now called "grammatical competence ('abstract' or decontextualized knowledge of intonation, phonology, syntax, semantics, etc.) and pragmatic competence (the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context)" (Thomas, 1983, p. 92).

According to the CEFR, pragmatic competences deal with the functional use of linguistic resources (carrying out language functions, speech acts) using scenarios or predetermined scripts of interactional exchanges. Three main components of pragmatic competences of a language user/learner are accentuated in the CEFR: 'Discourse competence' refers to the ability of user/learner to arrange sentences in an effective way to produce coherent use of language, 'Functional competence' deals with the use of spoken discourse and written texts in communication for certain functional goals in terms of macro functions and micro functions and 'Design function' refers to sequenced messages according to interactional and transactional

schemata (Council of Europe, 2011, p. 123-129). The CEFR attributes major importance to the role of pragmatic competences, a view that is similar to that of Sickinger and Schneider who recently defined pragmatic competence as the "ability to use linguistic means for achieving particular communicative goals" and emphasized that "pragmatic competence is of special importance in language learning, as low competence in this area can be a critical source of miscommunication and, specifically, of intercultural misunderstandings". Fraser (2010) similarly calls attention to the significance of pragmatic competence in achieving communicative goals:

> … as critical as this ability is for communication success, it (pragmatic competence) is often not given the emphasis it deserves in the teaching of a second language, with the result that second-language speakers, who lack pragmatic competence, may produce grammatically flawless speech that nonetheless fails to achieve its communicative aims. (p. 15)

Pragmatic competence is 'the ability to use language appropriately in a social context' which is a major component of effective communication in a second language. Despite its significance, developing pragmatic competence may not be truly valued and be overlooked in classrooms. It should however be kept in mind that pragmatic competence of a language user/learner is actually the skill which native speakers subconsciously use to define a non-native speaker as a successful communicator (Taguchi, 2009).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The Council of Europe's competence definitions are fundamental for defining the development of language users. They provide a common basis for analyzing the qualitative effect of the Erasmus programme. Thus, the initial step of this study was to review the literature about the competences in accordance with the CEFR. The second step of the study was to develop a questionnaire in accordance with the CEFR based evaluation. The questionnaire was administered to the selected focus group.

As the second phase of the study, the results of the English language proficiency test, which was administered to all of the students who applied to participate in the Erasmus programme, was taken as the pre-test data for the students who voluntarily participated in the study. The same language test was administered to the same group of students as the post-test after they participated in the mobility programme in order to evaluate the development of their linguistic competences. As the last step, a t-test was administered in order to record the differences between their linguistic competences before and after they participated in the programme.

To sum up, this study is based on quantitative data collection. The quantitative data were collected through the analyses of the questionnaire responses and the results of the t-tests of the pre-post tests.

3.2. Research Question

This study attempts to find an answer to the question of whether the Erasmus student mobility programme has an effect on competence development of students. The main research question and the sub-problems are used as the framework for the interpretation of the findings. Aiming at discovering students' opinions on competence development, the study addresses the following sub-problems:

1. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on general competences of students?

2. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on communicative language competences of students?

3. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on linguistic competences of students?

4. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on intercultural awareness of students?

5. Does gender have an effect on competence development?

6. Does the duration of the mobility have an effect on competence development?

3.3. Research Design

In accordance with the aim of the study to present the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on competence development of students, the following procedure was followed step by step:

1. A related literature research was conducted.

2. The Erasmus students at Akdeniz University who participated in the Erasmus mobility programme between the years of 2005-2013 were determined from the records of the International Relations Office at the Rectorate of Akdeniz University.

3. A questionnaire was developed based on some standard questionnaires with some minor changes in order to avoid the risk of affecting the validity and reliability.

4. The questionnaire was finalized through expert opinion.

5. Akdeniz University International Relations Office sent an e-mail including the questionnaire to the intended participants who are the students participated in the Erasmus programme.

6. The responses from the focus group were analyzed through SPSS statistical programme.

7. The results of the language proficiency test of the students, which provided the required data for pre-test, were taken from the International Relations Office.

The test had been administered to the students before they participated in the mobility programme.

8. The same language test was administered to the same group of students after they turned back to their home university as the post-test and a t-test was administered in order to record the differences between their linguistic competences before and after they participated in the programme.

9. The study was finalized.

3.4. Participants of the Study

The population of this study was Akdeniz University students who participated in the Erasmus programme in different universities of Europe. The study was conducted among 94 students. The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 34. Table 3.1. displays the gender and age distribution of the participants. As shown in Table 3.1., 50 of the participants who took part in the study were females and the remaining 44 of them were males.

The students who participated in the study had varying demographic features outlined in following graphs and tables. The collected demographic data of the participants included information of age, gender, faculty and the department enrolled, country visited and duration of the mobility. The aim of collecting demographic data was to analyze the effect of independent variables on the dependent variables. The independent variables were those, which were hypothesized to affect students' competence development. Graph 3.1. illustrates the age distribution of the participants.

Table 3.1.

Gender and Age Distribution of the Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Age Mean ± Sd (min-max)
Female	50	53.2	24.9 ± 3.3 (20-33)
Male	44	46.8	24.5 ± 3.6 (20-34)
Total	94	100.0	24.8 ± 3.4 (20-34)
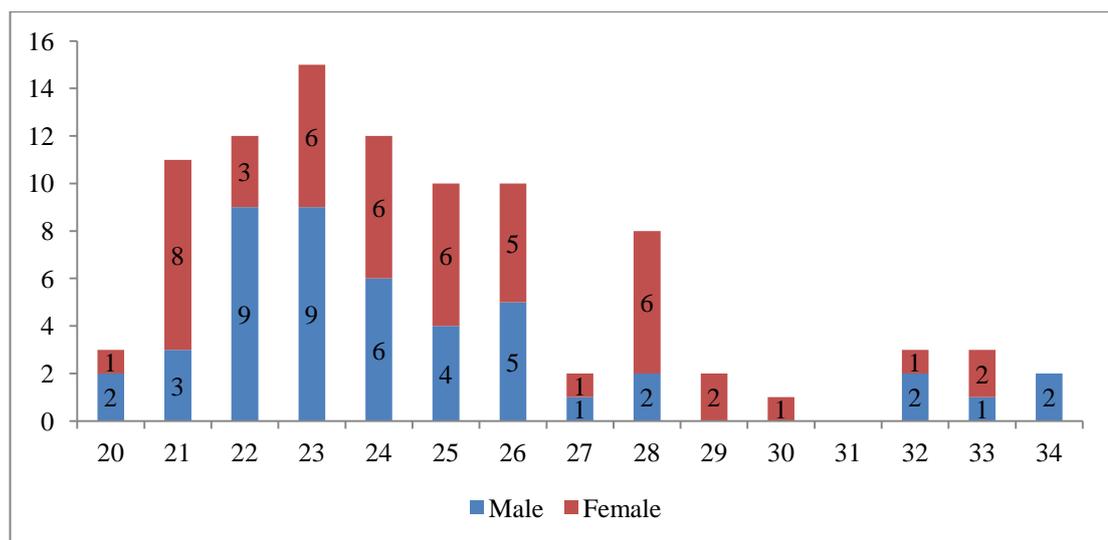
Graph 3.1.

Age Distribution of the Participants

Demographics of the participants of the study with regard to their faculties and departments are outlined in Table 3.2. and Table 3.3.

Table 3.2.

Distribution of the Participants with regard to the Faculty Enrolled

	Frequency	Percent
Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	28	29.8
Faculty of Engineering	13	13.8
Faculty of Tourism	12	12.7
Faculty of Agriculture	11	11.7
Faculty of Education	11	11.7
Faculty of Letters	5	5.3
Institute of Social Sciences	4	4.3
Faculty of Fine Arts	3	3.2
Alanya Faculty of Business	3	3.2
Faculty of Medicine	2	2.1
Faculty of Communication	1	1.1
School of Physical Education and Sports	1	1.1
Total	94	100.0

Table 3.3.

Distribution of the Participants with regard to the Department Enrolled

Department	Frequency	Percent
Business Administration	13	13.9
English Language Teaching	11	11.7
Hospitality Management	8	8.3
International Relations	8	8.3
Food Engineering	7	7.5
Agricultural Engineering	5	5.2
Economics	5	5.2
Electrical and Electronics Engineering	4	4.3
Travel Management	4	4.3
Ancient Languages and Cultures	3	3.2
Tourism Management	3	3.2
Medicine	2	2.1
Plant Protection	2	2.1
Private Law	2	2.1
Public Administration	2	2.1
Agricultural Structures and Irrigation	1	1.1
Ceramics	1	1.1
Civil Engineering	1	1.1
Euromaster	1	1.1
Field Crops	1	1.1
Geology Engineering	1	1.1
Gerontology	1	1.1
Horticulture	1	1.1
Interior Architecture	1	1.1
Master	1	1.1
Landscape Architecture	1	1.1
Photography	1	1.1
Physical Education and Sports Teaching	1	1.1
Public Relations	1	1.1
Sociology	1	1.1
Total	94	100.0

The distribution of the participants with regard to countries in which the students participated in Erasmus programme is outlined in Graph 3.2. As it is shown, 27 of 94 participants attended universities in Germany, while Switzerland, Finland and Sweden were the least visited countries.
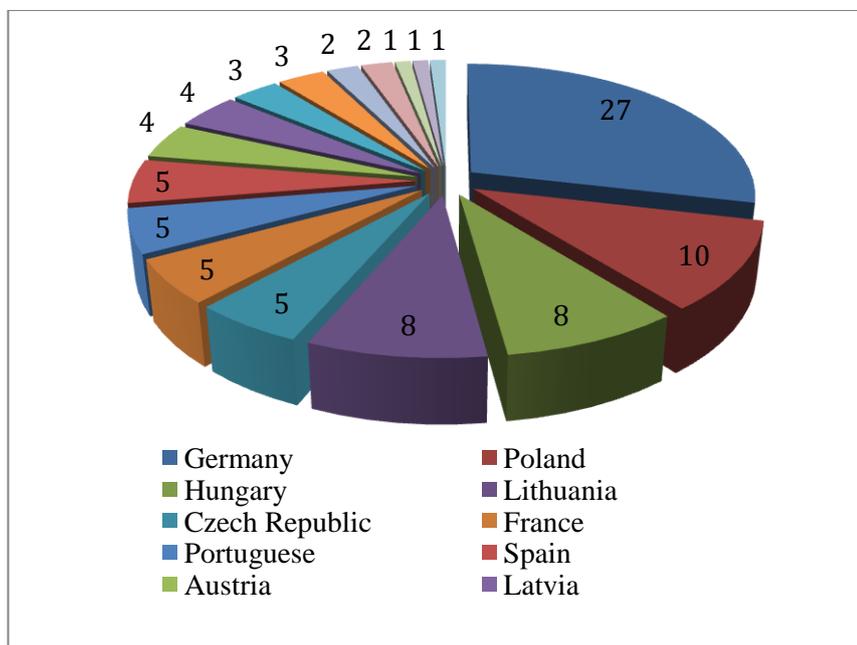
Graph 3.2.

Distribution of the Participants with regard to Countries

As shown in Table 3.4., 60 students participated in the Erasmus programme for one semester and 34 students participated in the programme for two semesters.

Table 3.4.

Mobility Duration of the Erasmus Students

Duration	Frequency	Percent
One semester	60	63.8
Two semesters	34	36.2
Total	94	100.0

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

In order to collect data for the study, quantitative data collection instruments were used. The main data collection instrument in the study was the questionnaire, (see Appendix 1) which was developed in accordance with the competences defined in the CEFR and administered to the students after their participation in the Erasmus programme. The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher and its adequacy was confirmed with an analysis performed by the thesis supervisor. After confirmation of the thesis supervisor, the questionnaire was finalized through expert opinion. The questionnaire included two main parts. The first part was designed to obtain personal information of the participants. It consisted of seven questions. The second part of the questionnaire aimed to determine the impact of the Erasmus Student Mobility Programme on participants' general and communicative competence levels after their participation in the programme. They were asked about their opinions concerning the competence development by taking their status before and after participation into consideration. The second part of the questionnaire comprised 30 statements based on Likert scale items.

The participants of the research rated their level of agreement by using a five-point likert scale agree/disagree statements (i.e., 1 for Strongly Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Neutral, 4 for Agree, 5 for Strongly Agree) about competences. Statistical analysis (Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha) was conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaire. An estimate of the internal consistency of the questionnaire yielded a coefficient alpha of .96, higher than 0.70, which indicates an acceptable level of internal consistency (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

Table 3.5. illustrates a general view of the domains included in the questionnaire and matching CEFR-borne competences in which development of participants were questioned.

Table 3.5.

The Contents of the Questionnaire

1. general knowledge level about the world	general competences
2. knowledge level about everyday living	general competences
3. knowledge level about living standards	general competences
4. knowledge level about interpersonal relations	general competences
5. knowledge level about sociocultural values	general competences
6. values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to foreign countries, different cultures and sense of humour	general competences
7. knowledge level about body language	general competences
8. knowledge level about ritual behaviours of the society	general competences
9. ability to understand different cultures	general competences intercultural awareness
10.intercultural awareness level	general competences intercultural awareness
11. intercultural ability level	general competences intercultural awareness
12. ability level regarding daily life	general competences
13. vocational skills	general competences
14. interest and skills in leisure time activities	general competences
15. interest level in new experiences, new people, societies and cultures	general competences
16. knowledge level about ethical and moral values	general competences
17. religious, ideological and philosophical knowledge levels	general competences
18. ability to learn a foreign language	general competences
19. phonetic awareness	general competences
20. study skills in learning situation	general competences
21. lexical knowledge level in my foreign language	communicative language competences linguistic competences
22. grammatical knowledge level in my foreign language	communicative language competences linguistic competences
23. semantic knowledge level in my foreign language	communicative language competences linguistic competences
24. phonological knowledge level in my foreign language	communicative language competences linguistic competences
25. orthographic knowledge level in my foreign language	communicative language competences linguistic competences
26. sociolinguistic knowledge level in my foreign language	communicative language competences
27. functional usage knowledge of my foreign language	communicative language competences
28. communicative competence regarding travelling	communicative language competences
29. interest and willingness in living abroad and using a foreign language for vocational needs	communicative language competences
30. competence of reaching and using knowledge in a different educational culture setting	communicative language competences

The second data collection instrument of the research was the English language proficiency test. The test was not prepared by the researcher. In order to analyze the linguistic competence development of the students, the language proficiency test scores of 32 participants who were voluntarily participated in the research, were obtained from Akdeniz University International Relations Office. With the help of the International Relations Office, the responsible administrative unit for coordinating the Erasmus programme, the researcher administered the same language proficiency test to 32 participants. Ninety minutes of time, which was the same as when the participants took the test before they participated in the Erasmus programme, allowed for the test takers. The results of the teacher-made language proficiency test are limited to the test prepared by the School of Foreign Languages. Owing to the fact that the International Relations Office does not publish the Erasmus Language Proficiency Test, the used test could not be given in the research.

The data gathered subjected to a number of statistical analysis in order to explore, describe and interpret results from entire sample as well as to determine the significant differences between students' competences. The data were coded and prepared for analysis using the statistical analysis software SPSS 20.0. Methodology and statistical tests used to answer the research question and sub-problems are given in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6.

Data Analysis

	Methodology	Data Analysis
Sub-problem 1	Questionnaire	Descriptive statistics
Sub-problem 2	Questionnaire	Descriptive statistics
Sub-problem 3	Questionnaire, Pre-test,Post-test	Descriptive statistics Paired Sample t-test
Sub-problem 4	Questionnaire	Descriptive statistics,
Sub-problem 5	Questionnaire, Pre-test,Post-test	Independent Samples t-test
Sub-problem 6	Questionnaire, Pre-test,Post-test	Independent Samples t-test

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Data Analysis

In parallel with the aim of the research, a questionnaire and language proficiency test results are outlined in detail in the following tables and graphs. In order to ascertain the results of the research question and sub-problems, a quantitative analysis of the questionnaire was reported. Opinions of the students about their competence development as well as the relationship of these opinions with gender and duration are reported in detail.

Secondly, the results of the language proficiency test, which was administered as pre-test and post-test, are presented in tables.

4.1.1 The Quantitative Data Analysis of the Questionnaire

In order to find out the opinions of the students about their competence development, the questionnaire was prepared by the researcher. Ninety-four students whose demographic features are shown in above Chapter, participated in the study. A five-point Likert scale ranging from one to five was administered to students. Findings of the questionnaire are outlined below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.

Results of the Questionnaire

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1.my general knowledge level about the world has increased.	6	6.4	1	1.1	0	0	31	33.0	**56**	**59.6**
2.my knowledge level about everyday living has increased.	4	4.3	5	5.3	2	2.1	38	40.4	**45**	**47.9**
3.my knowledge level about living standards has increased.	6	6.4	1	1.1	1	1.1	30	31.9	**56**	**59.6**
4.my knowledge level about interpersonal relations has increased.	5	5.3	4	4.3	4	4.3	38	40.4	**43**	**45.7**
5.my knowledge level about sociocultural values has increased.	5	5.3	0	0	3	3.2	**47**	**50.0**	39	41.5
6.my values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to foreign countries, different cultures and sense of humour have developed.	3	3.2	4	4.3	1	1.1	33	35.1	**53**	**56.4**
7.my knowledge level about body language has increased.	2	2.1	5	5.3	16	17.0	**45**	**47.9**	26	27.7
8.my knowledge level about ritual behaviour of the society has increased.	5	5.3	4	4.3	6	6.4	36	38.3	**43**	**45.7**
9.my ability to understand different cultures has developed.	5	5.3	1	1.1	0	0	34	36.2	**54**	**57.4**
10.my intercultural awareness level has increased.	5	5.3	2	2.1	1	1.1	28	29.8	**58**	**61.7**
11.my intercultural ability level has increased.	4	4.3	2	2.1	2	2.1	26	27.7	**60**	**63.8**
12.my ability level regarding daily life has developed.	3	3.2	3	3.2	19	20.2	**41**	**43.6**	28	29.8
13.my vocational skills have developed.	3	3.2	17	18.1	24	25.5	**30**	**31.9**	20	21.3
14.my interest and skills in leisure time activities has developed.	5	5.3	12	12.8	25	26.6	**33**	**35.1**	19	20.2
15.my interest level in new experiences, new people, societies and cultures has increased.	8	8.5	0	0	5	5.3	33	35.1	**48**	**51.1**
16.my knowledge level about ethical and moral values has increased.	6	6.4	7	7.4	11	11.7	**44**	**46.8**	26	27.7
17.my religious, ideological and philosophical knowledge levels have increased.	7	7.4	5	5.3	21	22.3	**41**	**43.6**	20	21.3
18.my ability to learn a foreign language has developed.	6	6.4	9	9.6	5	5.3	26	27.7	**48**	**51.1**
19.my phonetic awareness has increased.	6	6.4	11	11.7	22	23.4	**30**	**31.9**	25	26.6
20.my study skills in learning situation have developed.	1	1.1	11	11.7	17	18.1	**40**	**42.6**	25	26.6

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Table 4.1.

Results of the Questionnaire

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
21.my lexical knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	4	4.3	5	5.3	7	7.4	29	30.9	**49**	**50.1**
22.my grammatical knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	5	5.3	15	16.0	11	11.7	26	27.7	**37**	**39.4**
23.my semantic knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	6	6.4	4	4.3	7	7.4	23	24.5	**54**	**57.4**
24.my phonological knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	5	5.3	8	8.5	7	7.4	**37**	**39.4**	37	39.4
25.my orthographic knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	3	3.2	15	16.0	7	7.4	34	36.2	**35**	**37.2**
26.my sociolinguistic knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	7	7.4	5	5.3	7	7.4	31	33.0	**44**	**46.8**
27.my functional usage knowledge of my foreign language has increased.	5	5.3	5	5.3	5	5.3	33	35.1	**46**	**48.9**
28.my communicative competence regarding travelling has increased.	5	5.3	3	3.2	2	2.1	19	20.2	**65**	**69.1**
29.my interest and willingness in living abroad and using a foreign language for vocational needs have increased.	4	4.3	6	6.4	6	6.4	23	24.5	**55**	**58.5**
30.my competence of reaching and using knowledge in a different educational culture setting has increased.	5	5.3	5	5.3	6	6.4	28	29.8	**50**	**53.2**

As can be seen in Table 4.1., more than half of the students (59.6%) strongly agreed that their general knowledge level about the world has increased, while 33.0% of the students agreed with the first statement. A small number of the students (6.4%) strongly disagreed about the statement. None of the students were uncertain about the idea. It may be concluded that the majority (92.6%) of the students believed that their general knowledge about the world has increased.

The second statement is concerned with the knowledge level about everyday living. While 47.9% of the students strongly agreed with the statement, 4.3% strongly disagreed with it. High rate of the students' agreement (88.3%) with the statement may reveal that the Erasmus programme has an effect on the knowledge of the everyday living.

A significant number of students (59.6%) strongly agreed that their knowledge level about living standards has increased. Furthermore, 31.9% of the students agreed with the statement. Only 7.5% disagreed with the statement while 1.1% were uncertain.

As seen in statement 4, 86.1% of the students agreed that their knowledge level about interpersonal relations has increased. A small number of students (9.6%) disagreed with the statement.

Statement 5 is concerned with the knowledge level about sociocultural values. Half of the students (50.0%) agreed that the Erasmus programme has increased their knowledge level about the sociocultural values. Similarly, 41.5% of the students strongly agreed with the idea while only 5.3% of them were strongly disagreed. None of the participants were disagreed, and only 3.2% of them remained uncertain.

Regarding statement 6, more than half of the students (56.4%) stated that they are strongly agreed that their values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to foreign countries, different cultures and sense of humour have developed. Similarly, 35.1% of them agreed with the statement. On the other hand, 7.5% of the students disagreed.

Statement 7, which is concerned with the increase about the knowledge level of body language, received 47.9% agreement and 17.0% uncertainty from students. A small group of students (7.4%) stated their disagreement about the statement.

As seen in statement 8, the majority of the students (45.7%) strongly agreed that their knowledge level about the ritual behaviors (celebrations, birth, marriage, death, religious ceremonies) of the society has increased. Besides, 38.3% of the students agreed and only 5.3% of them strongly disagreed.

As seen in statement 9, more than half of the students (57.4%) strongly agreed that their ability to understand different cultures has developed, and 36.2% of them agreed with the statement. Owing to the fact that none of the participants were uncertain about the statement, it can be concluded that all of the participants have an idea about the ability to understand different cultures thanks to the Erasmus programme.

Regarding the statement 10, more than half of the students (61.7%) similarly strongly agreed that their intercultural awareness has increased. Furthermore, 29.8% of them agreed with the statement. The statement received 7.4% disagreement and only 1.1% uncertainty.

Statement 11 is concerned with the increase of intercultural ability level which provides the information with regard to understand the similarities and distinctive differences between one's own culture and the foreign culture. The majority of the students (63.8%) strongly agreed that their intercultural ability level increased and 27.7% of them also agreed with the statement. Only 6.4% of the students' disagreement showed that the Erasmus programme has a positive effect on intercultural ability.

Depending on the results of statement 12, 43.6% of the students agreed that their ability regarding daily life has developed. However, 20.2% of them were uncertain about the statement. Furthermore, 6.4% of them stated their disagreement.

As for statement 13, one fourth of all students (25.5%) who participated in the study remained neutral about the development of their vocational skills as a result of their Erasmus experience. More than half of them (53.2%) agreed with the statement. However, 21.3% of them reported their disagreement.

Similarly, more than one fourth of all students (26.6%) remained neutral about the statement 14, which includes the development of interest and skills in leisure time activities. More than half them (55.3%) agreed and 18.1% of them disagreed with the statement.

A significant percentage of the students (86.2%) stated that they agreed with the statement 15 and thought that their interest level in new experiences, new people, societies and cultures increased. While %8.5 of them strongly disagreed, 5.3% of them were uncertain.

Statement 16 received 74.5% agreement and 13.8% disagreement. Only 11.7% of them remained neutral on the issue of the increase of knowledge level about ethical and moral values.

Students' responses to statement 17 "my religious, ideological and philosophical knowledge levels have increased" received 64.9% agreement. However, 22.3% of them were not certain about whether their religious knowledge level has increased.

In statement 18, more than half of the students (51.1%) strongly agreed that their ability to learn language has developed after their Erasmus experience. Only a small number of the students strongly disagreed (6.4%) or disagreed (9.6%) with this statement.

Regarding statement 19, 58.5% of the students believed that their phonetic awareness and ability to distinguish and produce unfamiliar sounds have increased. On the other hand, 18.1% of them reported their disagreement. Almost one fourth of the students (23.4%) were neutral.

As for statement 20, 42.6 % of the students think that their study skills in learning situation have developed. Besides, 26.6% of them strongly agreed with the statement. However, 18.1% of the students stated their uncertainty. The statement received 12.8% disagreement.

Statement 21 was about the lexical knowledge level in foreign language. Half of all the students (50.1%) strongly agreed that Erasmus experience has increased their lexical knowledge level in foreign language. In addition, 30.9% of them agreed with the statement, while 9.6% were in disagreement. Only a small number of students (7.4%) were neutral.

Statement 22, concerned with the grammatical knowledge level in foreign language, received 67.1% agreement and 21.3% disagreement.

More than half of the students (57.4%) who participated in the research strongly agreed that their semantic knowledge level in their foreign language has increased. Moreover, 24.5% of them also agreed with the statement. Only 6.4% of them strongly disagreed and 4.3% of them also disagreed.

The results of the statement 24 display that the same percentage of students (39.4%) strongly agreed and agreed that their phonological knowledge level in their foreign language has increased. While 8.5% of them were in disagreement, 5.3% of them strongly believed their phonological knowledge level has not increased.

Regarding statement 25, 37.2% of the students strongly agreed that their orthographic knowledge (written language usage) level has increased. In addition, 36.2% of them also agreed. On the other hand, 16.0% of them stated their disagreement while 7.4% were neutral.

Nearly half of all the students (46.8%) strongly agreed that their sociolinguistic knowledge level in foreign language has increased. Additionally, 33.0% of them also agreed with the statement 26. However, 12.7% of them stated their disagreement with the statement.

Almost half of the students (48.9%) strongly agreed with the statement 27 and 35.1% of them agreed with the statement about their functional usage knowledge. The percentage of students who strongly disagreed, disagreed and neutral is the same (5.3%).

As for the statement 28, majority of the students 69.1% strongly agreed that their communicative competence regarding travelling has increased after their participation in the Erasmus programme. In addition to this, 20.2% of them also agreed with the statement. Only 8.5% of them reported their disagreement while 2.1% stated their uncertainty.

More than half of the students (58.5%) strongly agreed that their interest and willingness in living abroad and using a foreign language for vocational needs have increased. Similarly, 24.5% of them also agreed.

As for the final statement in Table 4.1., more than half of the students (53.2%) strongly agreed that their competence of reaching and using knowledge in a different educational culture setting has increased. In addition, 29.8% of them also agreed with the same statement. The same number of students (5.3%) strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement, while 6.4% were neutral.

Graph 4.1. illustrates the overall evaluation of answers.
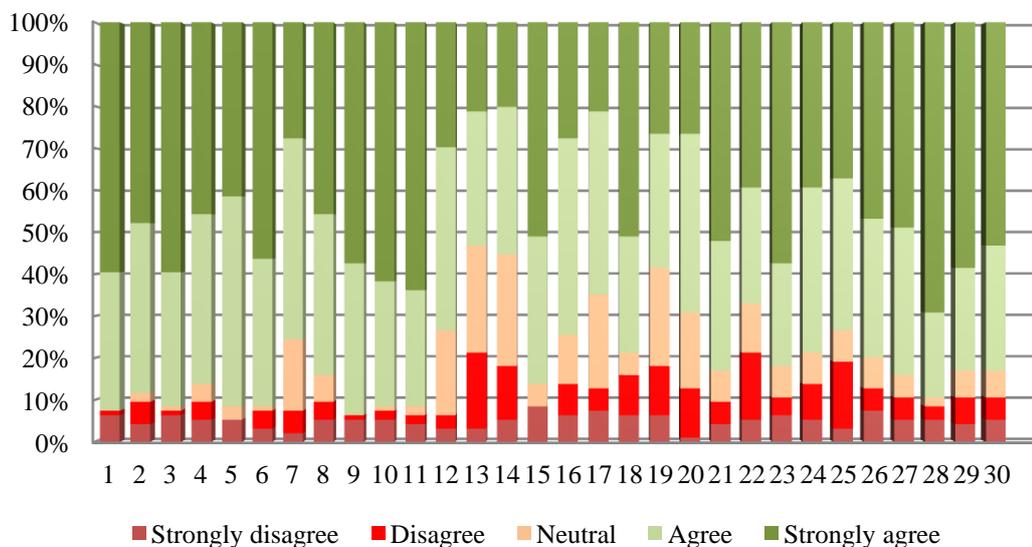
Graph 4.1.

Overall Evaluation of Answers

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To reveal whether there were significant differences in competence development with regard to gender, relationship of the opinions with gender is presented in Table 4.2.

Although there were similar responses of males and females, females and males had significant differences on five of 30 items on "Influence of the Erasmus Student Mobility Programme on Competence Development of Students Questionnaire" scale. Females had significantly higher level of agreement on items (Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25 and Q26) related to the development of linguistic competence, illustrated in Table 4.3 (p< .05).

To measure whether there were significant differences in competence development with regard to the duration of the mobility, results of duration and opinions were presented in Table 4.4. and Table 4.5.

In accordance with the results of the t-test, there was no statistically significant difference between two groups with respect to the duration (one semester or two semesters) of the mobility (p> .05).

Table 4.2.

The Findings of the Questionnaire with regard to Gender

Gender	Female						Male					
Question	Strongly disagreed + disagreed		Neutral		Strongly agreed + agreed		Strongly disagreed + disagreed		Neutral		Strongly agreed + agreed	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Q1	3	3.2	0	.0	47	50.0	4	4.3	0	.0	40	42.6
Q2	3	3.2	2	2.1	45	47.9	6	6.4	0	.0	38	40.4
Q3	2	2.1	1	1.1	47	50.0	5	5.3	0	.0	39	41.5
Q4	3	3.2	2	2.1	45	47.9	6	6.4	2	2.1	36	38.3
Q5	1	1.1	1	1.1	48	51.1	4	4.3	2	2.2	38	40.4
Q6	2	2.1	0	.0	48	51.1	5	5.3	1	1.1	38	40.4
Q7	2	2.1	8	8.5	40	42.6	5	5.3	8	8.5	31	33.0
Q8	4	4.3	4	4.3	42	44.7	5	5.3	2	2.1	37	39.4
Q9	2	2.1	0	.0	48	51.1	4	4.3	0	.0	40	42.6
Q10	2	2.1	0	.0	48	51.1	5	5.3	1	1.1	38	40.4
Q11	2	2.1	0	.0	48	51.1	4	4.3	2	2.1	38	40.4
Q12	1	1.1	8	8.5	41	43.6	5	5.3	11	11.7	28	29.8
Q13	8	8.5	12	12.8	30	31.9	12	12.8	12	12.8	20	21.3
Q14	8	8.5	17	18.1	25	26.6	9	9.6	8	8.5	27	28.7
Q15	3	3.1	0	.0	47	50.0	5	5.3	5	5.3	34	36.2
Q16	6	6.4	6	6.4	38	40.4	7	7.4	5	5.3	32	34.0
Q17	2	2.1	14	14.9	34	36.2	10	10.6	7	7.4	27	28.7
Q18	5	5.3	2	2.1	43	45.7	10	10.6	3	3.2	31	33.0
Q19	8	8.5	10	10.6	32	34.0	9	9.6	12	12.8	23	24.5
Q20	6	6.4	9	9.6	35	37.2	6	6.4	8	8.5	30	31.9
Q21	2	2.1	3	3.2	45	47.9	7	7.4	4	4.3	33	35.1
Q22	7	7.4	6	6.4	37	39.4	13	13.8	5	5.3	26	27.7
Q23	2	2.1	2	2.1	46	48.9	8	8.5	5	5.3	31	33.0
Q24	4	4.3	1	1.1	45	47.9	9	9.6	6	6.4	29	30.9
Q25	6	6.4	3	3.2	41	43.6	12	12.8	4	4.3	28	29.8
Q26	3	3.2	2	2.1	45	47.9	9	9.6	5	5.3	30	31.9
Q27	3	3.2	1	1.1	46	48.9	7	7.4	4	4.3	33	35.1
Q28	2	2.1	1	1.1	47	50.0	6	6.4	1	1.1	37	39.4
Q29	3	3.2	3	3.2	44	46.8	7	7.4	3	3.2	34	36.2
Q30	5	5.3	2	2.1	43	45.7	5	5.3	4	4.3	35	37.2

Table 4.3.

T-test Results of the Questionnaire with regard to Gender

Q	Means (female vs. male)	t	df	p*
Q1	4.42 vs.4.34	.367	92	.715
Q2	4.32 vs.4.11	.971	92	.334
Q3	4.52 vs.4.20	1.466	92	.146
Q4	4.26 vs.4.07	.871	92	.386
Q5	4.38 vs.4.05	1.739	92	.085
Q6	4.46 vs.4.27	.953	92	.343
Q7	4.02 vs.3.84	.936	92	.352
Q8	4.20 vs.4.09	.488	92	.627
Q9	4.48 vs.4.30	.915	92	.363
Q10	4.54 vs.4.25	1.383	92	.170
Q11	4.60 vs.4.27	1.650	92	.102
Q12	4.10 vs.3.75	1.785	92	.077
Q13	3.62 vs.3.36	1.114	92	.268
Q14	3.48 vs.3.57	-.381	92	.704
Q15	4.32 vs.4.07	1.068	92	.288
Q16	3.88 vs.3.75	.561	92	.576
Q17	3.84 vs.3.45	1.708	92	.091
Q18	4.28 vs.3.84	1.735	92	.086
Q19	3.68 vs.3.52	.640	92	.523
Q20	3.86 vs.3.77	.423	92	.673
Q21	4.42 vs.3.98	1.963	92	.054
Q22	**4.06 vs.3.50**	**2.146**	**80.118**	**.035**
Q23	**4.52 vs.3.89**	**2.623**	**63.596**	**.011**
Q24	**4.24 vs.3.70**	**2.472**	**80.818**	**.016**
Q25	**4.16 vs.3.57**	**2.472**	**80.818**	**.016**
Q26	**4.30 vs.3.80**	**2.013**	**69.662**	**.048**
Q27	4.36 vs.3.95	1.799	92	.075
Q28	4.62 vs.4.25	1.700	92	.093
Q29	4.46 vs.4.05	1.831	92	.070
Q30	4.34 vs.4.05	1.274	92	.206

*Significant if p < .05

Table 4.4.

The Findings of the Questionnaire with regard to Duration

Duration	One semester						Two semesters					
Question	Strongly disagreed + disagreed		Neutral		Strongly agreed + agreed		Strongly disagreed + disagreed		Neutral		Strongly agreed + agreed	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Q1	4	4.3	0	.0	56	59.6	3	3.1	0	.0	31	33.0
Q2	5	5.3	2	2.1	53	56.4	4	4.3	0	.0	30	31.9
Q3	3	3.2	1	1.1	56	59.6	4	4.3	0	.0	30	31.9
Q4	4	4.3	3	3.2	53	56.4	5	5.3	1	1.1	28	29.8
Q5	1	1.1	3	3.2	56	59.6	4	4.3	0	.0	30	31.9
Q6	2	2.1	1	1.1	57	60.6	5	5.3	0	.0	29	30.9
Q7	3	3.2	12	12.8	45	47.9	4	4.3	4	4.3	26	27.7
Q8	4	4.3	3	3.2	53	56.4	5	5.3	3	3.2	26	27.7
Q9	3	3.2	0	.0	57	60.6	3	3.2	0	.0	31	33.0
Q10	3	3.2	0	.0	57	60.6	4	4.3	1	1.1	29	30.9
Q11	3	3.2	0	.0	57	60.6	3	3.2	2	2.1	29	30.9
Q12	3	3.2	10	10.6	47	50.0	3	3.2	9	9.6	22	23.4
Q13	14	14.9	14	14.9	32	34.0	6	6.4	10	10.6	18	19.1
Q14	11	11.7	19	20.2	30	31.9	6	6.4	6	6.4	22	23.4
Q15	3	3.2	3	3.2	54	57.4	5	5.3	2	2.1	27	28.7
Q16	5	5.3	9	9.6	46	48.9	8	8.5	2	2.1	24	25.5
Q17	4	4.3	12	12.8	44	46.8	8	8.5	9	9.6	17	18.1
Q18	6	6.4	1	1.1	53	56.4	9	9.6	4	4.3	21	22.3
Q19	10	10.6	16	17.0	34	36.2	7	7.4	6	6.4	21	22.3
Q20	8	8.5	8	8.5	44	46.8	4	4.3	9	9.6	21	22.3
Q21	3	3.2	5	5.3	52	55.3	6	6.4	2	2.1	26	27.7
Q22	10	10.6	7	7.4	43	45.7	10	10.6	4	4.3	20	21.3
Q23	4	4.3	5	5.3	51	54.3	6	6.4	2	2.1	26	27.7
Q24	7	7.4	4	4.3	49	52.1	6	6.4	3	3.2	25	26.6
Q25	12	12.8	4	4.3	44	46.8	6	6.4	3	3.2	25	26.6
Q26	7	7.2	5	5.3	48	51.1	5	5.3	2	2.1	27	28.7
Q27	5	5.3	5	5.3	50	53.2	5	5.3	0	.0	29	30.9
Q28	5	5.3	2	2.1	53	56.4	3	3.2	0	.0	31	33.0
Q29	6	6.4	6	6.4	48	51.1	4	4.3	0	.0	30	31.9
Q30	5	5.3	5	5.3	50	53.2	5	5.3	1	1.1	28	29.8

Table 4.5.

T-test Results of the Questionnaire with regard to Duration

Q	Means (one vs. two semesters)	t	df	p*
Q1	4.45 vs.4.26	.830	92	.409
Q2	4.23 vs.4.21	.124	92	.902
Q3	4.42 vs.4.29	.543	92	.588
Q4	4.23 vs.4.06	.762	92	.448
Q5	4.27 vs.4.15	.590	92	.557
Q6	4.48 vs.4.18	1.515	92	.133
Q7	3.98 vs.3.85	.654	92	.514
Q8	4.27 vs.3.94	1.415	92	.160
Q9	4.40 vs.4.38	.084	92	.933
Q10	4.52 vs.4.21	1.428	92	.157
Q11	4.53 vs.4.29	1.153	92	.252
Q12	4.03 vs.3.76	1.309	92	.194
Q13	3.48 vs.3.53	-.192	92	.848
Q14	3.42 vs.3.72	-1.212	92	.229
Q15	4.35 vs.3.94	1.685	92	.095
Q16	3.95 vs.3.59	1.520	92	.132
Q17	3.8 vs.3.38	1.859	92	.066
Q18	4.28 vs.3.71	2.219	92	.029
Q19	3.65 vs.3.53	.472	92	.638
Q20	3.87 vs.3.74	.614	92	.541
Q21	4.35 vs.3.97	1.657	92	.101
Q22	3.93 vs.3.56	1.384	92	.170
Q23	4.33 vs.4.03	1.218	92	.226
Q24	4.05 vs.3.88	.683	92	.496
Q25	3.88 vs.3.88	.004	92	.997
Q26	4.10 vs.4.00	.387	92	.700
Q27	4.20 vs.4.12	.346	92	.730
Q28	4.47 vs.4.41	.239	92	.811
Q29	4.23 vs.4.32	-.377	92	.707
Q30	4.27 vs.4.09	.739	92	.462

*p > .05

In order to find an answer to the research question regarding the influence of the Erasmus programme on competence development in general, total score analysis was used. The total score of a statement was calculated by scoring participant's answer as strongly disagree being the lowest (1), and strongly agree being the highest (5), and adding up scores for given statements.

By adding all of the answers of each student to 30 items, total score was calculated. The lowest score is 36.00 and the highest score is 150.00. Mean is 122.5 and standard deviation is 23.5. For the total scores with regard to gender and duration, a statistically significant difference was not found as it is presented in Table 4.6. and Table 4.7. (p > .05).

Table 4.6.

Total Score Results with regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
Female	50	126.7	16.6	1.843	66.693	.070
Male	44	117.6	28.9			

* p > .05

Table 4.7.

Total Score Results with regard to Duration

Duration	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
One semester	60	124.5	18.5	.955	47.097	.345
Two semesters	34	118.9	30.4			

* p > .05

4.1.2. The Quantitative Data Analysis of the Language Proficiency Test

The findings were obtained through language proficiency test, which was administered to test the students' level of English language before and after they participated in the mobility programme. Pre-test scores of the participants' language proficiency test were taken from the International Relations Office. The researcheradministered the same English language proficiency test, consists of 40 questions to 32 students after their mobility. In order to analyze the linguistic

competence development of the students, the pre-test and post-test scores were compared. The demographic data of 32 participants who took the language proficiency test are outlined in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8.

Demographic Data of the Subjects Participated in the Pre-test – Post-test

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	16	50.0
	Male	16	50.0
Department of	English Language Teaching	11	34.4
	Agricultural Engineering	5	15.6
	Travel Management	4	12.5
	International Relations	3	9.4
	Business Administration	2	6.3
	Medicine	2	6.3
	Economics	1	3.1
	Food Engineering	1	3.1
	Interior Architecture	1	3.1
	Landscape Architecture	1	3.1
	Sociology	1	3.1

Descriptive statistics of the participants' pre-test and post-test scores are outlined in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9.

Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Test	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
Pre-test	32	62.00	98.00	86.22	9.29	-1.157	47.097	.345
Post-test	32	68.00	99.00	87.59	9.77			

* p> .05

To analyze the development of linguistic competence of the students, pre-test and post-test scores were compared through "paired-sample t-test" and the results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores (Table 4.9) (p>.05).

To reveal whether there was a significant difference in language proficiency test with regard to gender the scores of males and females were analyzed. While there was no significant difference (p> .05) between pre-test scores of male and female students as shown in Table 4.10, it is reported that males had significantly (p< .05) higher scores on post-test than females (Table 4.11).

Table 4.10.

Pre-test Results with regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
Male	16	87.94	7.22	1.048	25.973	.304
Female	16	84.50	10.95			

* p> .05

Table 4.11.

Post-test Results with regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
Male	16	91.94	6.35	2.772	24.251	.011
Female	16	83.25	10.81			

* p< .05

Table 4.12. represents the pre-test and post-test results of the students in accordance with their department enrolled.

Table 4.12.

Pre-test, Post-test Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Departments

Departments	N	Pre-test Mean	Sd	Post-test Mean	Sd
English Language Teaching	11	94.55	3.01	96.36	1.91
Agricultural Engineering	5	77.60	10.64	78.40	9.63
Travel Management	4	77.75	3.69	77.25	8.54
International Relations	3	82.00	2.00	85.67	4.16
Business Administration	2	91.00	4.24	90.50	3.54
Medicine	2	95.00	1.41	93.00	8.49
Economics	1	89.00		71.00	
Food Engineering	1	76.00		79.00	
Interior Architecture	1	70.00		84.00	
Landscape Architecture	1	84.00		88.00	
Sociology	1	83.00		96.00	.
Total	32	86.22	9.29	87.59	9.77

4.2. Findings

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the study was designed to investigate the impact of the Erasmus programme on competence development of the students. Throughout the study, it is aimed to find answers of the research question and its sub-questions formulated for the study.

In accordance with the research question of the study, the findings for sub-questions were reported in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13.

Total Scores on General Competences, Communicative Competences, Linguistic Competences and Intercultural Awareness

Competences	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean ± Sd
General	94	24.00	100.00	81.21 ± 15.33
Communicative language	94	12.00	50.00	41.26 ± 9.32
Intercultural awareness	94	3.00	15.00	13.24 ± 2.84
Linguistic	94	5.00	25.00	20.11 ± 5.18

The data obtained via the questionnaire were analyzed within the scope of the following sub-questions:

1. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on general competences of students?

2. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on communicative language competences of students?

3. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on linguistic competences of students?

4. What is the influence of the Erasmus student mobility programme on intercultural awareness of students?

The total score of a statement was calculated by scoring participants' answer as strongly disagree being the lowest (1), and strongly agree being the highest (5), and adding up scores for given statements. Table 4.13. presents students' total scores on each competence.

General competence score was calculated by adding up the scores of statements 1 to 20. The range of value for general competence score is between 20 – 100.

Communicative language competence score was calculated by adding up the scores of statements 21 to 30. The range of value for the communicative language competence score is between 10 – 50.

Intercultural awareness competence score was calculated by adding up the scores of statements 9 to 11. The range of value for the intercultural awareness competence score is between 3 – 15.

Linguistic competence score was calculated by adding up the scores of statements 21 – 25. The range of value for the linguistic competence score is between 5 - 25.

A higher score of students' agreement with the statements regarding development of general competences, communicative language competences, linguistic competences and intercultural awareness may be interpreted as a reflection of achievement of expected outcomes. However, as it is explained in Table 4.9., it should also be noted that to find out an answer for the development of linguistic competence of the students, pre-test and post-test scores were compared through "paired-sample t-test" and the results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores (p>.05).

The findings based on the fifth sub-question "**Does gender have an effect on competence development?**" revealed that males and females gave similar responses to the questionnaire. However, females had significantly higher level of agreement on five statements (Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25 and Q26) as it is shown in Table 4.3. Q22, Q23, Q24 and Q25 is related to the linguistic competence (grammatical knowledge, semantic knowledge, phonological knowledge and orthographic knowledge) development while Q26 is relevant to sociolinguistic knowledge in foreign language.

In addition, the total score analysis was made for the distribution of each competence with regard to gender, by scoring participants' answers as strongly disagree being the lowest (1), and strongly agree being the highest (5), and adding up scores for given statements, the results are shown in following tables.

Table 4.14 shows that there was no significant difference in t-test results of general competences with regard to gender (p> .05).

Table 4.14.

T- test Results of General Competences with regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
Female	50	83.26	10.59	1.340	64.966	.185
Male	44	78.89	19.23			

* p> .05

In Table 4.15., the data obtained via the questionnaire results indicated that females had significantly higher mean communicative language competences scores than males (p< .05).

Table 4.15.

T- test Results of Communicative Language Competences with regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
Female	50	43.48	6.82	2.465	69.698	.016
Male	44	38.73	11.07			

* p< .05

As can be seen from the Table 4.16, the analysis shows that there was no significant difference in t-test results of intercultural awareness with regard to gender (p> .05).

Table 4.16.

T- test Results of Intercultural Awareness with regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
Female	50	13.62	2.19	1.337	71.747	.185
Male	44	12.82	3.41			

*p> .05

The data obtained via the questionnaire results indicated that females had significantly higher mean linguistic competences scores than males as shown in Table 4.17 (p< .05) .

Table 4.17.

T- test Results of Linguistic Competences with regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
Female	50	21.40	3.84	2.594	70.894	.012
Male	44	18.64	6.08			

 *p< .05

To sum, in order to support the linguistic competence data obtained through questionnaire, language proficiency test results were also analyzed. As stated previously in Table 4.10., results revealed that there was no significant difference between pre-test scores of male and female students. However, males had significantly higher scores on post-test than females (Table 4.11).

In following tables (4.18., 4.19., 4.20. and 4.21.), the findings based on sixth sub-question "**Does the duration of the mobility have an effect on competence development?**" revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in total score analysis with regard to the duration of the mobility (p> .05).

Table 4.18.

T- test Results of General Competences with regard to Duration

Duration	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
One semester	60	82.63	11.65	1.039	45.661	.304
Two semesters	34	78.71	20.23			

* p> .05

Table 4.19.

T- test Results of Communicative Language Competences with regard to Duration

Duration	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
One semester	60	41.82	7.77	.695	49.991	.490
Two semesters	34	40.27	11.64			

* p> .05

Table 4.20.

T- test Results of Intercultural Awareness with regard to Duration

Duration	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
One semester	60	13.45	2.45	.931	92	.354
Two semesters	34	12.88	3.44			

* p> .05

Table 4.21.

T- test Results of Linguistic Competences with regard to Duration

Duration	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p*
One semester	60	20.55	4.32	.995	50.286	.325
Two semesters	34	19.32	6.41			

* p> .05

When findings obtained from the sub-questions are interpreted, it is visible that the Erasmus programme has a considerable effect on developing general and communicative language competences. It should also be stated that linguistic competence development was found to be highly in agreement by the respondents even though the same improvement could not be observed in the post-Erasmus language proficiency test.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. Conclusion and Discussion

Among major concerns of the Council of Europe, arguably the most important one in terms of personality development is to achieve a sufficient level of intercultural competence among its citizens. The particular significance of such an aspiration is better recognized when the culturally diverse structure of the European Union (EU) and non-EU programme countries is taken into consideration. In order to be able to provide these societies with a peaceful and democratic environment, the Council of Europe endeavors to ensure that all individuals independently of their cultural backgrounds as well their human rights are protected by the law. Furthermore, the Council of Europe aspires democratic societies in which all individuals are included and have certain participatory roles. To this respect, intercultural competence plays a pivotal role in achieving the core objectives of the Council of Europe (Barrett, Byram, Lazar, Mompoint-Gaillard and Philippou, 2014).

Byram (2000) characterizes an interculturally competent individual as a person who is able to comprehend intercultural relationships and has a critical and analytical understanding of all cultures including his/hers. In addition, he/she is the one who is conscious of the fact that a person's way of thinking is culturally determined and therefore is subject to change from one person to another.

Commonly considered a prerequisite of intercultural competence, language skills of an individual "support international understanding by facilitating deeper knowledge and understanding of different cultures and by facilitating change or personal growth in individuals" (Mirici, Ilter, Saka and Glover, 2009, p. 151). Therefore, linguistic competences of all persons who are expected to possess intercultural competences require particular attention and effort for development. Of these individuals, the ones those are ever growing in number and potential candidates for intercultural competence are international exchange students.

It is no secret that Erasmus has contributed substantially to the palpable perception that studying in another European country is no longer deemed exceptional for the students of the participating countries (Teichler, 2004). Thanks to its widely accepted efficacy in achieving certain goals, which include promoting mobility, developing individual skills and competences and enhancing international understanding, the experience of Erasmus is attributed significant importance in participants' lives and in the development and internationalization of higher education in Europe. In a similar manner to those of its non-European counterparts, "the Erasmus seems to have successfully developed students' competences both in terms of formal study and wider knowledge and life skills" (Mirici et al., 2009, p. 149). As previously pointed out by Teichler and Jahr (2001), Erasmus students believe that study abroad is particularly valuable in contributing to cultural enhancement, personality development and foreign language proficiency. Student exchanges were found to be beneficial in many ways, which include but not limited to, providing gains in professional knowledge, experience of life and a new perspective on studies at participants' own institution (Stastna, 2001). In her study, which seeks to illuminate if the university students who joined mobility programs changed their point of view about different cultures and raised their language and cultural awareness of different countries, Ilter (2013) concluded that being abroad provides participants with a good experience and cross-cultural awareness in addition to an improved awareness of their own culture. She also reported to have found an acquisition of individual and social responsibilities among participants who acknowledged the preparatory role of Erasmus mobility programme for their future careers.

In addition to its above-mentioned benefits, international student exchange, particularly Erasmus, has also been commonly associated with improvement in language and communication skills. Several studies have previously pointed out to the potential role of exchange in enhancing language skills (Teichler, 2004; Teichler Gordon and Maiworm, 2001; Teichler and Jahr, 2001; Fernandez, 2005; Papatsiba, 2005a). In a study by Maiworm (2001), it was found that 90% of the participants believed that they had reached an adequate level of language proficiency following the study period abroad with the Erasmus. Moreover, potential benefits of foreign exchange programmes with respect to language skills are not limited to students. In 2001, Stastna (2001) evaluated the impact of European Union programmes on

internationalization of higher education in Czech Republic and reported that the teachers who participated in exchange programmes tried to implement innovations to then current curricula and what is more, they started to publish in foreign languages.

Despite the fact that above mentioned uses of international exchange in learning outcomes and personal improvement have been largely supported by experimental research, arguments over the extent to which benefits merit the resources expended have persisted, and whether gains are personal or beneficial to a wider community have remained an issue of debate until today (Messer and Wolter, 2007). A number of researchers have claimed that the benefits vary considerably depending on several factors, which include age, nationality, pre-departure language proficiency level of the participant and the type of program (Teichler and Janson, 2007; Wilkinson, 2000). Therefore, additional research that aims to identify the true role of international exchange in gaining linguistic, cultural and individual competences is required. Consequently, the purpose of the present study was to ascertain the influence of the Erasmus programme on competence development of students. With this object in mind, variations in general competences, communicative language competences and intercultural awareness levels of participants following their time abroad were assessed by a self-assessment questionnaire which consisted of 30 Likert scale agree/disagree statements. The influence of Erasmus programme on linguistic competences were evaluated by means of comparing pre-Erasmus and post-Erasmus scores of an English language proficiency test in addition the self assessment questionnaire which also included CEFR-borne statements on linguistic competences. As a supplement to its findings, the correlation of gender and duration of mobility with variations in afore-mentioned competences were also evaluated.

In the present study, the evaluation of the impact of Erasmus on general competences of participants revealed favorable outcomes indicating the constructive role of international exchange. This finding is well in line with the study of Ilter (2013), which investigated the impact of mobility programmes on EFL students who finally reported, from their own perspective, to have developed personal beliefs and values, improved intra and interpersonal skills, gained self confidence and a wider perspective. It is noteworthy that majority of the participants in the present either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with every single statement of the questionnaire that questioned general competences of participants. At this point, one could argue that

such a strong acknowledgement of the formative characteristic of Erasmus programme reported by the participants reinforces the idea that international exchange is a powerful tool for developing general competences.

The notion of communicative competence has been previously described as the "aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts" (Brown, 1994 and Hymes, 1967, 1972). It has contemporarily served as a key reference point in describing second language proficiency and has provided a basis for the development of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Leung and Lewkowicz, 2013). For this very reason, (having taken CEFR as a point of reference) the notion of 'communicative competence' was used instead of 'international communicative competence' in the present study. It should however, be noted at this point that the term 'communicative competence' has been recently reconsidered by several authors who urge to deal with 'intercultural communicative competence' instead. (Alptekin, 2002; Savignon, 2007; Hismanoglu, 2011). Hismanoglu (2011, p. 806) justifies this approach as "Alptekin (2002) states that the conventional model of communicative competence is no longer suitable for explaining learning and employing an international language in cross-cultural contexts because of its rigid link to native speakers forms". At this juncture, it should be stressed that independently from the way it is documented in this study, the domain questioned herein had an intercultural component, and it should be interpreted as such. The variations in communicative competence levels of the participants were evaluated by means of recording their perspective of ten statements. All but one of these statements was 'agreed' while all other statements were 'strongly agreed' by majority of the participants. This finding similarly points out to the improving role of international exchange in communicative competences. In 2006, Bracht et al. performed a comprehensive study, which utilized expert ratings of the former Erasmus students' competences as compared to students not having been internationally mobile. They reported that the majority of experts believe that formerly mobile students are at least somewhat superior upon return from the study period abroad, with respect to intercultural and communicative competences. Taking the findings of the present study and previous others' into consideration, it can be

assumed that international mobility programmes have the potential to positively impact the participants' intercultural and communicative competences.

Linguistic competence of an individual is a key element of survival and success in a foreign environment. Aside from requirements of everyday-life and obvious humane needs, one necessitates language skills to develop intercultural skills and therefore a better understanding of different cultures. This is particularly the case for international exchange students, many of whom spend enough time 'away from home' for such needs to arise. In 2005, Brumfit et al. (p. 165-166) spoke of a rather unique but equally important and extremely positive role of language for exchange students that is, to pave the way for engagement "with other insider cultures across the greatest barrier offered between cultures". Although the level of support that can be provided by linguistic competences vary from one person to another and by circumstances, the fact that acquisition of a certain level of intercultural understanding by means of linguistic competences and the ability to deal with linguistically and culturally complex situations cannot be overlooked. Mirici et al. (2009) attach great importance to linguistic competences of a person and their potential role in supporting exchange. They assert that the ability to properly use a language is an indispensable element of both education and employment abroad. According to them, language competences are crucial elements of both the academic and every-day life, which can also support international awareness by means of facilitating intercultural knowledge and personal growth. They further emphasize that the extent to which an individual can utilize linguistic competences in supporting exchange is likely to vary between contexts and individuals.

In the present study variation in linguistic competences of participants were investigated by using two different methods. Firstly, the participants were asked of their perspectives on the impact of the Erasmus mobility programme on development of their language skills using five Likert-scale statements. Secondly, they were asked to take once again the English language proficiency test that they had previously taken prior to their time abroad. The 'pre-Erasmus' and 'post-Erasmus' test scores were compared statistically. Although one would anticipate obtaining higher language proficiency scores upon return from exchange, statistical comparison of the 'pre-Erasmus' and 'post-Erasmus' test scores did not reveal a significant difference. This finding may be explained with the fact that all participants had previously taken

the test, obtained adequate scores and proved certain level of proficiency in English language as a prerequisite of participating in Erasmus programme. Therefore, it can be assumed, to a certain extent, that these individuals were already linguistically competent prior to participation and thereof post-Erasmus test scores failed to introduce a statistically significant difference. It should however be noted that 'post-Erasmus' test scores of male students were higher when compared to female students. Additionally, this finding is in contrast with the one that is obtained from the evaluation of students' perspectives reflected on five statements included in the questionnaire. Although higher number of females 'strongly agreed' on the improving role of Erasmus, male students essentially achieved higher scores on the 'post-Erasmus' language proficiency test. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to mention that the majority of participants – regardless of the gender- 'strongly agreed' on the improving role of Erasmus on linguistic competences on all related items that were included in the questionnaire. A review of the literature on the impact of gender on linguistic gains during study abroad reveals controversial findings. Although several researchers previously found differences in second language proficiency levels between genders upon return from study abroad programmes (Haneda and Monobe, 2009), in their recent study Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, Bown and Martinsen (2014) failed to identify a gender-related difference among Eygpt study abroad students with regard to gains in second language skills. These authors explained this finding with the program's requirement for all participants to interact with native speakers beforehand and qualify at a certain level of second language proficiency before assessment. Unlike the true impact of gender on linguistic competence development of students that remains unclear, the fact that such impact is highly culture-related and dependent on social variables, leaves no room for doubt.

The findings of the present study pertaining to the impact of international student mobility on linguistic competences are compatible to those found in the literature. In Bracht's study, which called upon expert opinion on the impact of international mobility programmes, the authors concluded that mobile students were found to be superior compared to non-mobile students almost consistently with regard to foreign language proficiency (Bracht et al., 2006). In a similarly survey-based and relatively recent study, Jacobone and Moro (2015, p. 319) investigated the effects of participation in the Erasmus programme among university students. They have found

Erasmus students to be superior with regard to foreign language skills after studying abroad and asserted that "attending international programmes at a foreign campus, studying with texts in another language and, above all, living abroad, clearly enhances both foreign language speaking and comprehension skills".

Intercultural competence provides an individual with knowledge of the surrounding culture in addition to tolerance and open-mindedness. Clearly, such a rewarding competence has several elements that need to be practiced and developed. Intercultural sensitivity can be gained through experience. Mobility programmes are commonly associated with the potential to help individuals gain intercultural competences in addition to personal improvements in several other domains. Krzaklewska and Krupnik (2008) previously emphasized that Erasmus programs enriched the learner's point of view about multilingualism, tolerance, independence and responsibility.

Several studies have previously assessed the impact of mobility programmes on intercultural awareness levels of participants. In 2005, Papatsiba (2005b) evaluated the Erasmus experience of 80 participants and concluded that Erasmus student mobility helped participants to develop an enhanced understanding of intercultural and social awareness in addition to ability of living in the company of different cultures. Bracht et. al. (2006, p. 18) compared former ERASMUS students' competences, activities and education and professional paths as with those of students who did not participate in mobility programmes and found a positive impact of an ERASMUS on the intercultural understanding and competences. Furthermore, the experts who provided the relevant information in Bracht's study associated "living in another country, in another cultural system, getting along with people from different cultures … with tolerance and intercultural understanding, which is not possible by staying in the home country".

The evaluation of the findings of the present study with regard to the perception of participants on the intercultural awareness and intercultural competences revealed a remarkable outcome. Vast majority of participants 'strongly agreed' on all statements related to the impact of Erasmus on intercultural awareness levels. This finding may be explained with the fact that following its introduction in Turkey, Erasmus programme provided university students with the opportunity to spend time abroad interacting with different cultures, an opportunity that was not previously prominent

before Erasmus, mainly due to visa restrictions of the European countries. This line of vision can be supported by a number of studies, which reported experiences of Turkish students upon return from Erasmus programme. Tekin and Hic Gencer (2013) looked at the effects of Erasmus in students' perspectives, their assessment of events. They reported that several students described their experience after they participated in the programme with the statements of: 'experience of a lifetime', 'a vital condition', and 'the best year of my life', which authors interpreted as an impression of vital significance of the programme on providing the participants with improved skills that strengthen trans-national social relationships. Ilter (2013) similarly reported that the respondents in her research 'felt themselves as global citizens' when participating in Erasmus, and concluded that Erasmus was an excellent opportunity for Turkish university students.

The role of duration of the study abroad experience in improving competences of participants remains unclear, as there are controversial findings in the literature. Engle and Engle (2004) previously reported that students that are involved in longer-term programmes (full year versus one semester) yielded better results with regard to gain in intercultural sensitivity, whereas Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen and Hubbard (2006) associated study abroad programmes as short as four weeks with positive impact on intercultural sensitivity of the participants. In contrast with these findings, Medina-Lopéz-Portillo (2004) found only little evidence of improvement of the individuals after a seven-week or semester-long study programme in Mexico. Despite this inconsistency evident in the literature, the available information is sufficient to conclude that study abroad programmes have the potential to improve participants' intercultural competences to a certain extent, independently of the duration. This assumption can also be reinforced with the findings of this study, which failed to indicate a statistically significant difference between the competence development levels of students who participated in the programme for one semester and those who studied abroad for two semesters. This finding can be explained with the fact that the role of this parameter requires a more advanced, multi-precision test technique to be able to determine a possible difference among participants, all of whom reported significant competence developments.

Limitations of this study need to be taken into consideration when interpreting its findings. Firstly, the number of students who were applied the post-Erasmus

language proficiency test did not match the number of respondents of the questionnaire and remained relatively limited, which complicates generalization of the outcomes of the impact of Erasmus mobility on linguistic competences. However, it should be noted that this limitation was addressed to a certain extent by means of applying the questionnaire to all the participants in order to be able to obtain more objective outcomes in this domain. Secondly, the responses given by the students are limited with the validity of their self-assessment abilities and other inherent factors such as perception levels of the statements included in the questionnaire. At this juncture, it was assumed that this limitation was compensated by means of using a questionnaire written in the participants' native language. However, the accuracy of self-assessment methods remains a controversial issue, although its validity has been the subject to extensive research. In respect thereof, Glover (2011, p. 122) states; "self-assessment is a central part of learner autonomy that enables the learners to make choices about their learning and to monitor their progress". Furthermore, Little (2005) draws attention to the significance of self-assessment in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and characterizes it as a learner-centered tool that supports the development of learner autonomy through goal setting, self-assessment, and self-reporting. Based on these views, it can be concluded that the methodology used in the present study is valid in terms of providing objective outcomes.

5.2. Suggestions

The findings of the present study indicate that Erasmus student exchange has a visible potential of providing university students with improvement in competences, which include general competences, communicative language competences, linguistic competences and intercultural awareness levels. In consideration of these findings, largest number of students within the bounds of possibility should be given the opportunity to participate in intercultural exchange programmes. This opportunity may be of particular significance for English Language Teaching (ELT) students who are expected to develop more prominent linguistic skills.

Language learning is not just dependent on linguistic competences of a person, but is also related to other important competences such as prominent skills of learning. Therefore, language teachers may significantly benefit from the competences defined in CEFR in providing their students with an action-based language learning method, which uses the communicative approach. In the light of the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that implementing such an approach not only paves the way for more favorable outcomes in terms of language learning but also provides language learners with other significant competences such as general and communicative competences.

Intercultural student mobility programmes should be promoted to furthest extent by universities and their administrative offices that are responsible for their coordination.

In an increasingly globalizing world troubled with tensions, afore-mentioned intercultural skills and competences undoubtedly deserve special interest and effort of all individuals who aspire to avoid conflicts and live in a better world.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

INFLUENCE OF THE ERASMUS STUDENT MOBILITY PROGRAMME ON COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Students,

This questionnaire aims to collect information about general and communicative competence development of students who attended to the Erasmus Student Mobility Programme. The collected data through the questionnaire will be used in a scientific research within the scope of the M.A. thesis called "Influence of the Erasmus Student Mobility Programme on Competence Development of Students". All the personal information will be kept confidential.

I would like to offer you my gratitude for your effort and time.

Ayça ALTAY

E-mail: altay.ayca@gmail.com

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I.

This part aims to gather your personal information. Please provide the personal information and the details regarding your Erasmus Programme experience by means of choosing one of the following and filling in the blanks.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender:

☐ Female   ☐ Male

2. Age: ……………….

3. Faculty: ………………

4. Department: ……………….

5. The academic year when you participated in the Erasmus Programme:

☐   2004-05   ☐   2005-06   ☐   2006-07   ☐   2007-08   ☐   2008-09
☐   2009-10   ☐   2010-11   ☐   2011-12   ☐   2012-13

6. The duration of your Erasmus Programme mobility:

☐ 1 semester   ☐ 2 semesters

7.   The   country   in   which   you   participated   in   the   Erasmus   Programme: …………………

PART II.

This part aims to determine the impact of Erasmus Student Mobility Programme on your general and communicative competence levels after participation. Please define the impact of Erasmus Programme taking your status before and after participation into consideration, by means of defining it on a scale of 1 to 5.

	After the Erasmus Programme experience…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	my general knowledge level about the world has increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
2	my knowledge level about everyday living has increased. (food and drink, holidays, working hours, leisure activities, etc.).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
3	my knowledge level about living standards has increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
4	my knowledge level about interpersonal relations has increased (relations between sexes and interaction, family structures and relations, relations in work situations, relations between officials, etc.).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
5	my knowledge level about sociocultural values with respect to social classes, occupational groups, arts, politics, history, regional cultures, minorities, social wealth has increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
6	my values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to foreign countries, different cultures and sense of humour have developed.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
7	my knowledge level about body language has increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

8	my knowledge level about ritual behaviours of the society has increased (celebrations, birth, marriage, death, religious ceremonies, etc.).	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
9	my ability to understand different cultures has developed.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
10	my intercultural awareness level has increased.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
11	my intercultural ability level has increased (understanding the similarities and distinctive differences between my own culture and the foreign culture).	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
12	my ability level regarding daily life has developed.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
13	my vocational skills have developed.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
14	my interest and skills in leisure time activities has developed (arts, sports, hobbies, etc.).	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
15	my interest level in new experiences, new people, societies and cultures has increased.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
16	my knowledge level about ethical and moral values has increased.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
17	my religious, ideological and philosophical knowledge levels have increased.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
18	my ability to learn a foreign language has developed.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
19	my phonetic awareness (distinguishing and producing unfamiliar sounds) has increased.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
20	my study skills in learning situation have developed.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
21	my lexical knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

22	my grammatical knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
23	my semantic knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
24	my phonological knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
25	my orthographic (written language usage) knowledge level in my foreign language has increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
26	my sociolinguistic knowledge level in my foreign language has increased (expressions of folk-wisdom in social relations, dialect etc.).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
27	my functional usage knowledge of my foreign language has increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
28	my communicative competence regarding travelling has increased (buying plane tickets, making reservations, using plan and map etc.).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
29	my interest and willingness in living abroad and using a foreign language for vocational needs have increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
30	my competence of reaching and using knowledge in a different educational culture setting has increased.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

ERASMUS ÖĞRENCİ DEĞİŞİM PROGRAMI'NIN ÖĞRENCİLERİN YETERLİK GELİŞİMLERİNE ETKİSİ ANKETİ

Değerli Öğrenciler,

Bu anket, Erasmus Öğrenci Değişim Programı'ndan yararlanan öğrencilerin genel ve iletişimsel yeterlik gelişimleri hakkında bilgi toplamayı amaçlamaktadır. Anket yoluyla elde edilen veriler, "Erasmus Öğrenci Değişim Programı'nın Öğrencilerin Yeterlik Gelişimlerine Etkisi" konulu yüksek lisans tezim kapsamında, bilimsel araştırmada kullanılacak olup; kişisel bilgiler saklı tutulacaktır.

Emeğiniz ve ayırdığınız zaman için teşekkürlerimi sunarım.

Ayça ALTAY

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ANKET

I.BÖLÜM

Bu bölüm sizin kişisel bilgilerinizi öğrenmek için hazırlanmıştır. Lütfen sizin için doğru olan seçeneği işaretleyiniz ve gerekli bilgileri doldurunuz.

KİŞİSEL BİLGİLER

1. Cinsiyet:

☐ Kadın   ☐ Erkek

2. Yaş: …………………

3. Fakülte: ………………

4. Bölüm: ………………

5. Erasmus değişiminde bulunduğunuz dönem:

☐ 2004-05   ☐ 2005-06   ☐ 2006-07   ☐ 2007-08   ☐ 2008-09
☐ 2009-10   ☐ 2010-11   ☐ 2011-12   ☐ 2012-13

6. Erasmus değişimi süreniz: ☐ 1 dönem   ☐ 2 dönem

7. Erasmus değişiminde bulunduğunuz ülke: ………………...

II.BÖLÜM

Bu bölüm, sizin Erasmus Öğrenci Değişim Programı'ndan yararlanmanızdan sonra Erasmus Öğrenci Değişim Programı'nın genel ve iletişimsel yeterlik düzeyinize etkisini belirlemek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Lütfen, aşağıdaki ifadeleri Erasmus Öğrenci Değişim Programı öncesi durumunuzu ve bu programdan yararlandıktan sonraki durumunuzu göz önünde bulundurarak işaretleyiniz.

	Erasmus Programı deneyimimden sonra …	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Emin Değilim	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
1	dünya hakkında genel bilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
2	günlük hayat hakkında bilgi düzeyim arttı (yiyecek, içecek, tatiller, çalışma saatleri, boş zaman aktiviteleri, vb).	☐1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
3	yaşam standartları hakkında bilgi düzeyim arttı (bireysel, bölgesel, etnik, vb farklılıklar).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
4	bireysel ilişkiler hakkındaki bilgi düzeyim arttı (cinsiyetler arası iletişim ve etkileşim, aile yapıları ve ilişkileri, çalışma hayatındaki ilişkiler, resmi kurumlarla ilişkiler, vb).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
5	sosyal sınıflar, mesleki gruplar, sanat, politika, tarih, bölgesel kültürler, azınlıklar, toplumsal refah gibi sosyokültürel değerlerle ilgili bilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
6	yabancı ülkeler, farklı kültürler ve espri anlayışı hakkındaki değerlerim, inanışım ve tutumum gelişti.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

7	vücut dili hakkındaki bilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
8	toplum tarafından adet edinilmiş davranışlar hakkındaki bilgi düzeyim arttı (kutlamalar, doğum, evlilik, ölüm, dini törenler, vb).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
9	farklı kültürleri anlama yeteneğim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
10	kültürlerarası farkındalık düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
11	kültürlerarası beceri düzeyim arttı (kendi kültürüm ile yabancı kültürün ortak ve farklı noktalarını anlayabilme).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
12	günlük hayata dair beceri düzeyim gelişti.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
13	mesleki beceri düzeyim gelişti.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
14	boş zaman aktivitelerindeki ilgi ve beceri düzeyim arttı (sanat, spor, hobi, vb).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
15	yeni deneyimler edinmek, yeni kişileri toplumları ve kültürleri tanımak için ilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
16	etik ve ahlaki değerler hakkındaki bilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
17	dini, ideolojik ve felsefi bilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
18	Yabancı dil öğrenebilme yeteneğim gelişti.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
19	fonetik farkındalığım arttı (farklı sesleri ayırt edebilme ve farklı sesler çıkarabilme).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
20	öğrenme ortamındaki "çalışma" becerilerim gelişti.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
21	yabancı dilimdeki sözlük bilgisi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
22	yabancı dilimdeki dilbilgisi bilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

23	yabancı dilimdeki anlamsal bilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
24	yabancı dilimdeki fonolojik (sesbilgisi) bilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
25	yabancı dilimdeki yazınsal (yazılı dil kullanımı) bilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
26	yabancı dilimdeki toplumsal dil bilgi düzeyim arttı (toplumsal ilişkilerde kullanılan halka ait sözler, diyalekt vb).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
27	yabancı dilimdeki dili fonksiyonel olarak kullanma bilgi düzeyim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
28	yolculukla ilgili iletişim kurma yeterliliğim arttı (uçak bileti alma, rezervasyon yaptırma, plan ve harita kullanma, vb).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
29	yurtdışında yaşama ve yabancı dili mesleğimle ilgili alanlarda kullanmakla ilgili ilgi ve isteğim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
30	farklı bir eğitim kültürüne ait bir ortamda bilgiye erişme ve bilgiyi kullanma yeterliliğim arttı.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

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Tarih : 7 Ocak 2016

Influence of the Erasmus Student Mobility Progr...

By: Ayça ALTAY

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION As

> **education and training are essential to the development of today's knowledge society** `72`
> **and economy, European Union (EU)**

gives great importance to international collaboration in terms of education and labour. In accordance with this, EU sets strategies concerning education and training policies at the European level. Bologna Process, revolutionary for cooperation in European higher education, has been put forward to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) throughout Europe aiming

> **to make European Higher Education more compatible and comparable, more** `90`
> **competitive and more attractive.**

In 1998, education ministers of

> **France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom signed the Sorbonne Declaration** `75`
> which emphasised the need for creating the European area of **higher education.**
> Bologna Process, a

voluntary reform in education, was officially started with the Bologna Declaration, signed by 29 countries in 1999. The initial purpose of

> **the Bologna Process was to strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of the** `30`
> **European higher education and to** enable **student mobility and employability**
> **through the introduction of a system based on undergraduate and postgraduate studies**

Doç. Dr. Binnur GENÇ İLTER