

**KARADENİZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY \* INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE**

**MASTER'S PROGRAM IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS**

**THE INVESTIGATION OF THE LINGUISTIC AND ACADEMIC COMPETENCES OF  
THE TERTIARY LEVEL EXCHANGE STUDENTS WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS TO THE  
EFFECTS OF THEIR ERASMUS EXPERIENCE**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Seyhan AĐLAR ERDOĐAN**

**MAY-2019**

**TRABZON**

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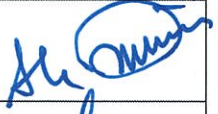

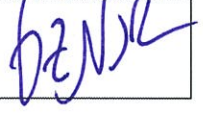
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**MAY-2019**

**TRABZON**

## APPROVAL

Upon the submission of the dissertation, **Seyhan AĐLAR ERDOĐAN** has defended the study “**The Investigation of the Linguistic and Academic Competences of the Tertiary Level Exchange Students with a Special Focus to the Effects of Their Erasmus Experience**” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English Language and Literature at Karadeniz Technical University, and the study has been found fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis by **unanimous / majority** vote on **18.06.2019**.

Committee Member		Decision		Signature
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Prof. Dr. Yusuf SÜRMEK

Director

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, **Seyhan AĐLAR ERDOĐAN**, hereby confirm and certify that;

- I am the sole author of this work and I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution,
- this work contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other university or institution,
- all data and findings in the work have not been falsified or embellished,
- this is a true copy of the work approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Karadeniz Technical University, including final revisions required by them.
- I understand that my work may be electronically checked for plagiarism by the use of plagiarism detection software and stored on a third party's server for eventual future comparison,
- I take full responsibility in case of non-compliance with the above statements in respect of this work.

20.05.2019

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May, 2019

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## ÖZET

Dünyanın her yerinde artık uluslararası öğrenci olmak yönünde giderek artan bir ilgi vardır. Yeni denemek ve kişisel yeterliklerini kazanmak için, yükseköğretim öğrencileri yurtdışına çıkma ve uluslararası bir eğitim alanında yer alma eğilimindedir. Son yıllarda, üniversite öğrencileri, Avrupa hayallerini gerçekleştirmek için Erasmus Hareketliliği Programını seçmektedirler. Erasmus Programı, öğrencilere Türkiye dışında yaşama, farklı bir ülkede okuma, yeni kültürleri tanıma, özgürce seyahat etme ve kendilerini keşfetme fırsatını yakalamayı sunmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın odak noktası, uluslararası öğrenci değişim hareketliliği programı olan Erasmu'un incelenmesi, örnekleme ise Türkiye'nin dört farklı üniversitesinden katılan öğrencilerdir. Bu çalışma, Erasmus Öğrenci Öğrenme Hareketliliği öğrencilerinin deneyimleri ve bakış açıları ile programın dilsel ve akademik açılarından öğrencilerin gelişim aşamalarındaki etkileri üzerinde durmuştur. Erasmus Programının, üniversite öğrencileri üzerindeki etkilerini incelemek için ilgili literatür gözden geçirilmiştir. Çalışmanın veri toplama ve analizi aşamasında, hem nitel hem de nicel yöntemlere yer verilerek karma yöntem kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışma, araştırma yöntemi olarak anketler ve yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat yöntemlerini uygulayarak 2015 ve 2018 yılları arasındaki üç akademik yılda, Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi, Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, Atatürk Üniversitesi ve Aydın Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi'nden programa katılan Erasmus öğrenim öğrencilerinden veri toplamıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarını yorumlamak ve Erasmus Öğrenim Hareketliliği Programının etkinliği ve öğrencilerin gelişim düzeyleri hakkında genellemeler yapmak için, kodlama ve içerik analizi yoluyla nitel veriler ve SPSS programı ile nicel verileri incelenmiştir. Tanımlayıcı istatistiklere ek olarak, nicel verilerin analizinde Açıklayıcı Faktör Analizi, T-Test ve Anova testleri kullanılmıştır. Anket soruları öğrencilerden cevaplar alındıktan sonra Faktör Analizi ile incelenmiş, tekrar gruplandırılmış ve yeni gruplarında yorumlanmıştır. T-Test ve Anova testleri ile değişkenler açısından iki veya daha fazla grup arasındaki önemli farkları yakalamak amaçlanmıştır. Erasmus programının dilsel yönü incelendiğinde, Erasmus deneyimi sonrası öğrencilerin İngilizce dilini kullanmaya yönelik özgüvenlerinin artmış olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Erasmus Programının akademik yönü incelendiğinde, öğrencilerin Türk Eğitim Sistemi ile Avrupa Eğitim Sistemi'ni karşılaştırma fırsatı bulduğu ve programdan döndükten sonra kendi üniversitelerine alışmakta zorluk yaşadıkları belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, bu çalışma Erasmus öğrencilerinin görüşlerine başvurarak dilsel ve akademik açıdan Erasmus programının amaçlarına ulaşmada ne kadar başarılı olduğunu gözlemlemeyi amaçlamıştır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Erasmus programı, değişim öğrencisi, dil yeterliği, akademik yeterlik

## ABSTRACT

It is a fact that there is a growing interest in being an international student all around the world. In order to try the new and gain personal competences, higher education students tend towards going abroad and become involved in various internationally- recognized educational settings. In recent years, university students have chosen Erasmus Mobility Programme to actualise their European dreams. Erasmus Programme presents students to seize the opportunity to live outside Turkey, to study in a different country, to know new cultures, to travel all around the continent and to discover themselves. The focus of the present study is the investigation of the effects of the Erasmus programme, which is an international Student Exchange Mobility Programme, and the samples of the study are the Erasmus outgoing students from four different universities in Turkey. The study focused on the experiences and perspectives of Erasmus mobility students and the impacts of the programme in their developmental stages in terms of linguistic and academic aspects. The related literature was reviewed to examine the effects of Erasmus Programme on university students. A mixed-methods design was employed in the data collection and analysis process through qualitative and quantitative methods. The study collected data by applying questionnaires and semi-structured interviews from Erasmus outgoing students who joined the programme within three academic years from 2015 to 2018 from Karadeniz Technical University, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Atatürk University and Aydın Adnan Menderes University. The qualitative data were examined via encoded and content analysis and the quantitative data via SPSS software package to interpret the results of the study and to make generalizations about the effectiveness of the Erasmus Mobility programme. In addition to descriptive statistics, Exploratory Factor Analysis, T-Test and Anova tests were also utilized for the analysis of quantitative data. The items of the questionnaire were re-examined and re-grouped after receiving responses from students via Factor Analysis. With the T-test and Anova tests, it was aimed to locate the significant differences among the two or more groups in terms of several variables. By studying linguistic aspect of the Erasmus programme, it was revealed that the students developed self-confidence in using English after Erasmus experience. By studying the academic aspect of the Erasmus Programme, it was found that the students had the opportunity to compare Turkish Education System and European Education System, and they experienced adaptation problems to home institution after the programme. Also, the study aimed to observe to what extent Erasmus Programme managed to reach its goals from linguistic and academic points by relying solely on Erasmus students' remarks.

**Keywords:** Erasmus programme, exchange student, linguistic competence, academic competence

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AMU</b>	: Adnan Menderes University
<b>ANOVA</b>	: The Analysis of Variance
<b>AU</b>	: Atatürk University
<b>DIO</b>	: Dış İlişkiler Ofisi
<b>EC</b>	: European Commission
<b>ECHE</b>	: The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education
<b>ECTS</b>	: European Credits Transfer System
<b>EFL</b>	: English Foreign Language
<b>EHEA</b>	: European Higher Education Area
<b>EP</b>	: European Parliament
<b>Etc</b>	: Et Cetera
<b>EU</b>	: European Union
<b>F</b>	: Frequency
<b>HEI</b>	: Higher Education Institution
<b>ICT</b>	: Information and Communication Technologies
<b>ISM</b>	: International Student Mobility
<b>KMO</b>	: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
<b>KTU</b>	: Karadeniz Technical University
<b>LLP</b>	: Lifelong Learning Programme
<b>OMU</b>	: Ondokuz Mayıs University
<b>QUAL</b>	: Qualitative
<b>QUAN</b>	: Quantitative
<b>SA</b>	: Study Abroad
<b>SALA</b>	: Study Abroad and Language Acquisition
<b>SMS</b>	: Erasmus Student Mobility for studies
<b>SPSS</b>	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

## INTRODUCTION

*I've found pieces of myself all over the world.*

*So I think...*

*How many hidden pieces of me does this world hold?*

*Every time I arrive at a new destination I discover pieces of myself.*

*I some of me in the dates of SW ASIA, streets of Seville, and also the cafes in France.*

*I've been enamored with conversation with a bella donna that left me in a trance.*

*A constant intrigue of self and world exploration.*

*A perfect movie with only nature's narration.*

*I may now be sitting-atop a mountain, a shore of the beach, or on a small boat in the middle of the ocean*

*But wherever I am, I remember I'm not living unless my life is in motion.*

(Lancaster, 2013)

The single and the most basic philosophy lying behind the current thesis is that where you live can not always be the place where you want to live. One can find some pieces from the life in a different place to live forever or for a specific time. Exploration of the new places means exploration of one's own life. Exploration means mobility, not remaining motionless.

It is an old consensus by now that inadequate language knowledge can be a major barrier deterring people from considering to take part in an international environment. On the other hand, stepping from being a national student to an international student is likely to change the student linguistically, academically, culturally and personally. This means of change and putting the dreams into practice is possible with international mobility at tertiary level. European Commission (EC) became responsible institution in 1958 for promoting and implementing European activities in terms of internalisation, education, economy, law, business and social life. Bologna Process was born in 1999 to provide students to discover pieces of them, to explore world and to have international views. Turkey joined this process in 2001. Since 2003 Turkey has been conducting international mobility programme for university students. The names of the international mobility programme were respectively Socrates-Erasmus Programme and Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). Since January 2014, the name of the international educational programmes has become Erasmus+. Erasmus+ is carried out and financed by European Commission as the head in Europe and National Agencies as subunits in every country. In Turkey, Turkish National Agency which is attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the public authority for international programmes carried out within Europe. The main goals of National Agencies are to promote educational and sport programmes of European Union (EU), to conduct a fair and transparent process, and to observe the activities of the programmes by raising the effectiveness of the programme at external boards (EC, 2019a: 14). European Commission of Education and Training supports international

mobility programmes which are carried out in countries. The well-known one at Higher Education System is Erasmus Student Mobility. The objectives of the Erasmus Mobility Programmes determined by the European Commission of Education and Training for students and higher education institutions are summarized as below (EC, 2019a: 31).

- Presenting opportunities to students in recognition of foreign language improvement, personal development, social competences, future career, new beginnings.
- Expanding the awareness of students and staff at universities and the people in society to the international side of life and corresponding the needs of society with the changing experiences.
- Enabling to improve the quality of higher educations, to enhance international cooperations between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and academic staff.
- Providing an insight to universities to be more contemporary, dynamic and innovative by applying good practices and new methods within administrative and academic units.

Also, Kehm (2005: 19) discourses on two main results of international student mobility. Firstly, he states that the personality of the students changes in a positive way, the students gain new perspectives by means of international education, and the intercountry experience enables the students to have a cultural and social awareness and to make the right decision when encountered unexpected cases. Secondly, except for these it is inevitable for students to acquire new competences such as being qualified in a foreign language which contributes the future job and career in an international environment. The impacts of Erasmus Programme on students can be undeniable. While evaluating the impacts and the quality of the programme, the perceptions of the participants should be taken into consideration (Aydın, 2012: 2). Since I worked at Erasmus Office at Karadeniz Technical University (KTU) as an academic expert during 11 years, I had the chance to witness the developmental process of students, their perceptions on Erasmus Programme, and the contributions and the difficulties they experienced during the programme.

Several studies indicated that Erasmus Programme had significant contributions to the participants. Bakioğlu and Certel (2010: 38) revealed in their study on Erasmus students that studying abroad via Erasmus programme was profitable in terms of academic aspect in addition to socio-cultural, linguistic and personal contributions and besides that the students were impressed by the educational atmosphere and the student-centered methods applied in courses in a positive way. While Martinez-Usarralde et al. (2017: 107) asserted that Erasmus contributed to the individual development, Jakabone and Moro (2015) claimed that Erasmus had effects on cultural reinforcement, self-improvement, and foreign language competences. In addition, Aslan and Jakobs (2014: 70) concluded that Erasmus Programme contributed to linguistic competences, personal and professional improvements, gaining new cultural elements, and using the technology more.



In spite of contributions, there are also studies concentrating on the challenges of Erasmus Programme for English Foreign Language (EFL) learners. In the study of Yücelsin-Taş (2013: 767), it was implied that having insufficient foreign language competence and challenges in complying with the new student life and the courses in a new university and department were the main problems experienced during Erasmus period. While Kehm (2005) concentrated on the barriers to student mobility and possible solutions, Aydın (2012) focused on both contributions and difficulties faced during Erasmus Programme. On the other hand, according to findings in the study of Endes (2015: 1412) focusing on the solutions during the programme Erasmus students could easily adapt the new life during Erasmus period since they were always in contact with their foreign lecturers and met them outside of the courses. In addition, they had the opportunity to pass the courses via delivering projects or making presentations and had no difficulty in understanding the language of the course since the academicians used comprehensible English and in comprehending the courses since teachers provided additional materials to students.

### **Background of the Study**

By virtue of the fact that Erasmus Student Exchange Programme has outstandingly reached to an enormous mass, it has become a popular subject among members of the universities. Therefore, as the best practise at tertiary level under the scope of international expansion, Erasmus Student Mobility composes the tendency to research about. Although Erasmus is the general name for all European mobilities directed by EC, it is at the same time the name of the higher education exchange programme for institutions, students, and staff. According to Ballatore and Ferede (2013: 526), Erasmus is based on the assumption that “meaningful educational activity in a foreign country facilitates leadership, language, inter-cultural awareness and adaptability skills; mobile students are thought to develop into mobile workers who can traverse national, economic and cultural borders with greater ease.” Therefore, Erasmus means international student identity for university students to take part in interconnected world and be the part of international education system. To see if the international activities reach the aim of universities except for just increasing the numbers but the quality in the process or any developmental step in return, it is significant to research the evaluation from the participants’ aspect taking part in international actions.

Study abroad at tertiary level is in the context of exchange programmes, the popular and most-known one is Erasmus Student Mobility for Studies (SMS). According to Jackson (2005), most students have difficulties in poor comprehension of lectures in English, over-reliance on memorization and spoonfeeding, reticence in class discussions at the beginning of tertiary level and these problems have a tendency to disappear after the first year. Second and third years are mostly preferred for tertiary level students to study abroad after getting enough familiarisation with the department. When students get used to their academic units, they are in search of different, new and exciting experiences. Exchange programmes are the most attractive phenomenon to make

difference in their routine. Erasmus Programme can enable students a life-changing experience to live and study in a foreign country, travel overseas, get to know new nationalities, and have global vision, and the students do all these by getting funding from their home institution. Therefore, it is considered as the European most successful story (Cairns, 2017: 728; Ballatore and Ferede, 2013: 525). In the study of Jenkins (2009: 200), Erasmus Exchange Programme was defined as first-hand experience of EFL (English as Foreign Language) communication and it was indicated that the program enabled EFL population to raise their awareness of its communicative effectiveness.

As well as positive contributions to students' life, during the study period abroad the complications the students encounter can not be ignored. Inadequacy in speaking English fluently, timidity in using the language efficiently in social and academical environments, hesitating to be involved in a conversation, and considering not to understand what is said arise as the problems regarding linguistic and academic difficulties (Ersoy, 2013). The students in the mentioned study hurdled the problems influencing their Erasmus study period with their own personal attempts and speaking English language in social areas. The significant point can be that if the students cope with the linguistic and academic difficulties concerning each other, they may have the linguistic strategies such as using the language in correct contexts. Campbell and Wales (1970) define linguistic ability as producing and understanding utterances and assert that using them appropriately in correct context is more important than grammatical rules. That is what Erasmus students follow out in language using.

That Erasmus Programme has become most popular student educational programme in Turkey makes the current study important. The study aims to investigate the impacts of Erasmus Student Mobility Programme on Erasmus outgoing students from four Turkish universities; Karadeniz Technical University (KTU), Ondokuz Mayıs University (OMU), Atatürk University (AU) AND Adnan Menderes University (AMU) and the changes occurring within the process from the perspectives of students and dealing with linguistic and academic competences. The study tries to observe the changes on students and the impacts of the programme by questioning linguistic and academic contributions; linguistic and academic difficulties; and linguistic and academic solutions to cope with those difficulties. The motivation to observe the perceptions of the students about the most adventurous experience during their university life, the changes in their personal lives, and skills to cope with difficulties has urged me to study in this field.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Universities have to overcome and stand open to new ideas such as “new cultural, social, political, and economic sur-roundings brought about by globalisation” (Kwiek, 2001: 31). Önder-Kasapoğlu and Balcı (2010) declare that HEIs place emphasis on ‘internationalisation’ in order to be known globally in the competitive area of higher education. Good implementation in Erasmus

Programme means good implementation in internationalisation policy at higher education world. Good implementation in internationalisation means high success rate of an institution over others.

Erasmus Student Mobility Programme can not be evaluated as a language learning or academic degree programme. It may help students improve language skills and academic knowledge. The students who would like to benefit from Erasmus Programme have to know English language since one of the essential qualification for attending programme is to have a sufficient level of English. In addition, from the academic perspective the students who would like to enter Erasmus English Proficiency Exam have to complete one full academic year after starting undergraduate study. In the study of Önder- Kasapoğlu and Balcı (2010), it is pointed out that Erasmus Programme has affirmative impacts on students and improves the language learning abilities of the beneficiaries. Stilianos et al. (2013) define Erasmus as multiculturalism and intercultural education and imply that most of the students participate programme mainly for academic reasons and multicultural reasons and gain new experiences and via Erasmus program students improve their knowledge in a foreign language, and from Erasmus view the program improves the quality of education.

Despite the studies in literature in previous years about Erasmus Programme, with the changing and developing world and educational environment and even the international programmes, little is known about Erasmus impact on tertiary level students from new generation in terms of the linguistic and academic developments or difficulties. This study makes a required contribution to the impacts, drawbacks, and possible solutions and recommendations on Erasmus Student Programme at universities in the context of study abroad. The study also presents the particular linguistic and academic competences acquired via Erasmus Student Programme and reveals the significant differences between certain variables considered to be important for the programme and the dimensions of contributions and difficulties.

### **Purpose and Significance of the Study**

In general terms, Erasmus Programme aims to raise the quality of education in Europe. Evaluating the quality of the programme is possible with the academic studies focusing on the participants of the programme. It is so significant to evaluate the programme in terms of its goals and the expectations and satisfaction of the participants via objective means and studies. Research results revealing the level of expectation and satisfaction of the program beneficiaries, their experiences during the programme, comparing them in terms of countries, nationalities, academic departments, genders and observing the programme actively are the main focuses of the program development strategies (Ünal and Özdemir 2011). In the study of Teichler (2004) the reasons for preferring studying abroad were as listed respectively with percentages: learning a foreign language with 87%, academic experience 82%, career 71%, and travel 71% (as cited in Kayaoğlu, 2016:

316). In the light of these considerations, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the impacts of Erasmus Programme on Erasmus students from Turkish universities with the earnings and challenges appertaining to their foreign language and academic field after Erasmus experience by consulting their views and concerns. In addition, it is aimed to exhibit whether some variables are efficient or not in the linguistic and academic contributions and difficulties of the programme.

The current study may be important in certain aspects such as being an assistant guide of Erasmus programme to see the experiences of former students during Erasmus process, and the outcomes of the programme. It is useful to get knowledge about the possible experiences before participating the programme for future students. It may be useful to the universities or international offices to develop and implement the programme with higher quality and focus on the problems stated by students, and suggestions to motive them. As a result of the study, Erasmus Mobility Programme can be said to be beneficial to university students with regards to linguistic and academic developments. Mobility programmes either in universities or in other institutions should be supported since they include big motivation in the education of individuals. Since the studies on Erasmus Programme in English language decreased with the era of Erasmus+, the present study comes into prominence dealing with the current issues of the programme in three deep-seated crucial academic years. Lastly, now that proficiency in English and general academic average are evaluated in order to determine the succesful students to study abroad via Erasmus Programme at higher educations, studying on the linguistic and academic side of Erasmus Programme comes out as an important issue to deal with.

### **Research Questions**

The present study intends to determine the developmental process of Erasmus exchange students from four Turkish universities in terms of linguistic and academic competences by concentrating on their experiences. The below-mentioned research questions guided the basis for the study:

1. What are the contributions of Erasmus Student Mobility in terms of linguistic and academic competences?
2. What sort of linguistic and academic difficulties do Erasmus students face during their Erasmus study period?
3. What are the solutions found by Erasmus students to cope with the difficulties in terms of linguistic and academic sides?
4. Is there any significant difference in the dimensions of contributions in terms of certain variables?
5. Is there any significant difference in the dimensions of difficulties in terms of certain variables?

## **Limitations of the Study**

Since the present study just focused on three academic years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, the results were interpreted for the restricted years. The academic years were chosen firstly as including the mobility years with its new name 'Erasmus+'. Starting with the year 2015 enabled to reach students still studying at the mentioned universities. Most of the students before the academic year 2015 graduated and they might have the idea not to deal with questionnaires or university issues so the researcher had to begin with the soonest years. In addition, the academic year 2018-19 wasn't taken into consideration since their Erasmus period was continuing abroad. These criteria confined the number of students. The data could be collected more than the existing participants. Besides, the research could be implemented to other Erasmus students from other Turkish or foreign universities.

One of the other limitations of the study is that it was unable to implement random selection method while designating the participants since the study was carried out with Erasmus students from four universities in Turkey. The study can not be respected as the representative for all Erasmus participants throughout the world since the study examined 289 outgoing students only from Turkey. The target of the study is to demonstrate the linguistic and academic competences of particular participants in terms of the impacts of Erasmus experience with its contributions, challenges, and survival solutions during Erasmus period and to present the significant differences among seven variables (gender, academic level, academic term, previous abroad experience, teaching language of the host institution, previous language learning experience and academic field) and contributions and difficulties of the programme.

## **Operational Definitions**

**European Commission:** The coordinator unit of legislations and policies of European Union. It deals with the budget, international policies, and the proposals for new principles, laws, and implementation of the rules of EU. (EC, 2019b).

**Bologna Process:** The outset of the mobility programmes deriving its name from the Bologna Declaration signed in 1999 by the ministers of 29 European countries responsible for higher education.

**Erasmus Student Mobility Programme:** European international mobility programme for university students to experience international study in a multicultural environment. The name of the programme dated back to Dutch scholar, Desiderius Erasmus.

**Linguistic Competence:** The knowledge of a language with all respects while using it.

**Academic Competence:** An educational outcome dealing with active involvement in classes and ability to make analysis, synthesize, judge, and apply information. It is also student engagement with their courses' content, writing academic papers, and coming into contact with several peoples, cultures, and ideas (Reason et al., 2006).

**Google Docs / Google Form:** It is Google's application tool to create online questionnaires freely and reach participants via internet easily.

### **Organization of the Thesis**

The study aiming to investigate the developmental process of exchange students from Turkey during Erasmus Student Mobility Programme in terms of linguistic and academic impacts is comprised of five parts.

**Introduction:** This section, first, introduces the topic of the study and submits respectively, the background of the study, the statement of the problem and the purpose and significance of the study. Secondly, it continues with the research questions. Lastly, it presents the limitations of the study and the definitions used within the study.

**Chapter 1, Literature Review:** This chapter presents the relevant studies about Erasmus Programme carried out abroad and in Turkey. It begins with the internationalisation and continues with study abroad. Then, it focuses on the development of Erasmus+ Programme in the world and in Turkey. The next part in this chapter presents the competences gained via Erasmus Programme, and the challenges faced during the programme.

**Chapter 2, Methodology:** This chapter includes the steps, actions and the process while investigating the research problem. It also presents the information about the research methods, participants and data collection tools and procedures. Finally, data analysis methods are introduced.

**Chapter 3, Findings and Discussion:** This chapter summarizes the main findings of the study through the analysis of items of questionnaire and semi-structured interview. In addition, the examined data in SPSS takes place in this chapter.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:** This section deals with the conclusions, implications and suggestions for further studies. It is a brief summary of the study.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

This chapter includes a review of the relevant literature and deals with the topics in sequence; internationalisation, study abroad, improvement period of Erasmus Student Programme for studies, linguistic and academic competences for tertiary level EFL learners, and the impacts of Erasmus programme on students linguistically and academically. The concepts of globalisation, internationalisation and europeanisation are defined and the relationship between them is presented in the first part of the chapter. The chapter continues with the researches on study abroad. Subsequently, the birth of Erasmus Programme is taken place. Afterwards, it draws attention to the term ‘competence’ and gives the relationship with Erasmus Programme. Lastly, it focuses on the impacts of the programme on linguistic and academic competences of Erasmus students. In addition, the relevant studies related to these topics are given.

#### **1.2. Internationalisation**

There has always been a hidden rivalry among nations. The fact that the nations are closer to each other via changing world means at the same time the occurrence of competitive fields among nations. By means of today’s technology, boundlessness emerged and it has become easy to follow what the other nations produce or achieve or implement as a new. Thus, it has become possible for every nation to be impressed by each other and to strengthen new networks or compete at international areas. The society is more international when compared to even a decade before and with the global changes the business world can easily increase in marketing, introduce and widen their business to every part of world and communicate with customers from a wide range of society (Hollsten, 2016: 1).

The term ‘internationalisation’ began to be mentioned firstly in the early 1970s. Its impact was felt on economy, culture, politics and society at the beginning. The concept of internationalisation is a very extensive one and there have been extremely different definitions even in the same contexts. The researcher should decide on own definition owing to the fact that internationalisation has extremely considerable sense and interpretations (Smelser, 2003: 645). Bartell (2003: 46) also states that internationalisation is a very complex term with various

definitions, relations and meanings. According to Fleury and Fleury (2012), internationalisation is described “as a phenomenon that is related to the social actors that participate in the process of globalization, which they are public or private companies, or governmental or non-governmental institutions.” (as cited in Scherer et al., 2018: 39).

Scholars also dealt with behavioral or social researches related to internationalisation. The reason can be that internationalisation has significant impacts on nations, communities, and the individuals and it has also effects upon the studies on human. According to Smelser (2003: 654), internationalisation is “the development of categories, insights, frameworks, propositions, models and theories that encompass and explain individual behavior and social processes (...) on a general basis.”

Besides all other associations and interpretations of internationalisation including several different disciplines, it deals with education. Knight (2015b: 2) declared that internationalisation in ten years time after it was born began to be identified with education. Van der Wende (1997: 19) describes internationalisation “as systematic, sustained effort aimed at making higher education (more) responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalisation of societies, economy and labour markets.” Internationalisation has always been a primary strategy for nations and can be associated with the terms relating global world.

### **1.2.1. Internationalisation in Relationship with Globalisation and Europeanisation**

These three terms are considered to be different from each other, but actually it is obvious that they are related. Teichler (2004: 6) stated that the words ending with “-sation” appeared upon “a problem in the past and an opportunity for improvement.” Internationalisation, globalisation, and europeanisation are best examples for this statement. Huisman and van der Wende (2005: 12) clarified the distinction among three concepts; “Europeanisation”, “Internationalisation” and “Globalisation” in the international activities and management policies of the higher education institutions. According to their study, while internationalisation means the interconnectedness and collaborations among countries in terms of economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions to expand the borders into cross-border, europeanisation is the regional form of internationalisation composed of increasing the growth in economics and other fields and also expanding European trace among passionate nations. As for globalisation, they regard it as the assemblage of economies and societies to reach a better connected world in these issues and correspondingly, ‘the liberalisation of international trade and global markets’ are evaluated as the significant steps. From a national narrower perspective Teichler (2004b: 22-23) describes internationalisation as a changing process “in the context and inner life of higher education relative to an increasing frequency of border-crossing activities amidst a persistence of national systems.” The common characteristic of three concepts is not to stay stable but it is always dynamic and it steps up. On the



other hand, Bernstein and Cashore (2000) considered globalisation and internationalisation as separate terms by characterising globalisation with economic forces and state politics, but internationalisation, meanwhile, with the process of enhanced performances of international institutions and stars of the state going beyond overseas. According to Kehm (2003: 110), “internationalisation is wider than europeanisation but not as wide as globalisation; because borders continue to exist and with these also inclusions and exclusions.”

The three terms pioneer English language to be international language of politics, economy, business, trade, social media, cooperations, and communication among nations. According to Guilherme (2007), mostly spoken languages around the world are European languages as Portuguese, English, Spanish and French, and English. English is considered to have the power to be a global language when compared to others. English as a global interlanguage is a popular study area for researchers. English is defined as leading and preferred lingua franca, global language or world language (Crystal, 2003; Cogo, 2012: 97; Guilherme, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011). However, Bennell and Pearce (2003: 231) highlight that “language will remain a critical constraint in the process of internationalisation of higher education provision.”

The spread of English language with globalisation is incontrovertible proof leading foreign language planning and policy in educational systems of nations (Hu, 2007). The nations bring an arrangement to their educational policies with the effects of globalisation and the global spread of foreign language. Robins claimed that Turkey also felt the influences of globalisation particularly in economy, society education and culture (cited in Acar, 2004). Since globalisation is also a social process, it is inevitable for the society not to be impressed by its power. Increase in the usage of English, the main foreign language at schools in Turkey that began to be studied even at the first years of educational life, reveals its global power on society and the change in culture. Doğançay-Aktuna (1998: 37) emphasizing that English began to be widespread in Turkey states that English is the second language tool in Turkey after Turkish since it is preferred mostly to be studied as a foreign language rather than other languages. In addition, he continues that English is a popular bridge among people for the sectors of international business and tourism. Now, it has become a symbol for distinguished and modernized society, indicating the social class distinction between the educated and uneducated. It functions as the headway to step up for the upper class.

### **1.2.2. Internationalisation at Higher Education**

Higher education plays the most significant role in internationalisation since the change and the development that occur at higher education defines the change in the world (Knight, 2004: 7). Therefore, the majority of higher educational institutions place great emphasis on internationalisation which is the response to global developments by educational sector (Huang, 2002: 200). It has become the top-line prestigious strategy for institutions to change world

rankings. Internationalisation of higher education is the change process of integrating innovation to curriculum, administration, and the quality of education with wide range of international activities. It also means international courses, foreign academicians, and foreign students for higher educations. Van der Wende (1997: 10) states “that internationalisation should be considered as an integral part of higher education planning, implementation and evaluation.” A great number of studies stress the internationalisation at higher education and create their own definition for the term. Altbach and Knight (2007: 291) describe internationalisation as “two-way street—students move largely from south to north, for example—and serves important needs in the developing world.” Altbach and Teichler (2001), Kehm and Teichler (2007), Schwald (2012), Bennett and Kane (2011) supported that internationalisation was mostly understood at higher education and achieved its goals there. Altbach et al. (2009: 2) presented in their report to the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education as following:

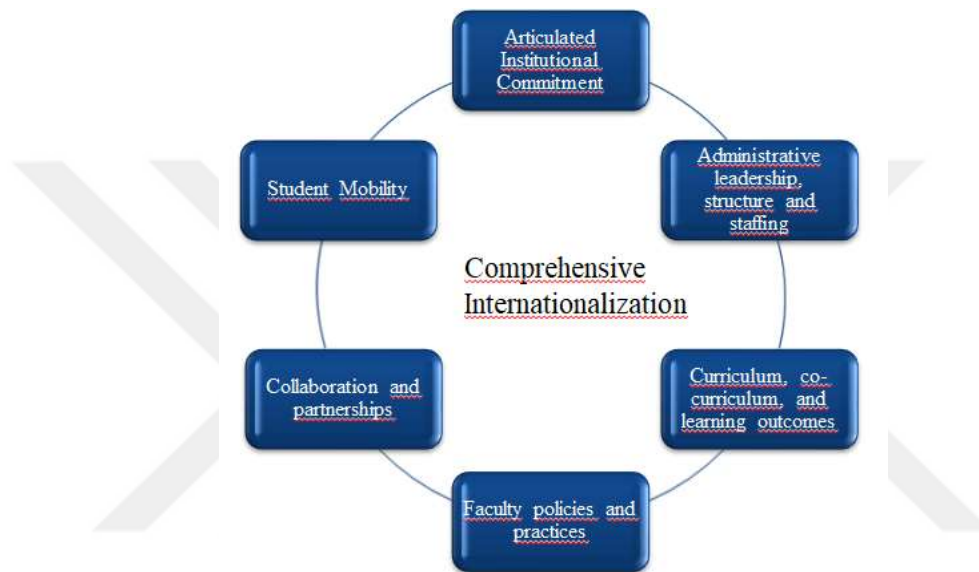
Universities have always been affected by international trends and to a certain degree operated within a broader international community of academic institutions, scholars, and research. Yet, 21<sup>st</sup> century realities have magnified the importance of the global context. The rise of English as the dominant language of scientific communication is unprecedented since Latin dominated the academy in medieval Europe. Information and communications technologies have created a universal means of instantaneous contact and simplified scientific communication.

Higher educations all around the world focus on internationalisation and aim at fostering international growth of the institutions. Internationalisation has been the top strategy to overreach cross-border in recent years. Internationalisation leading as a global process in European higher education has changed the landscape of higher educations with physical mobilities to international destinations all over the Europe (Teichler, 2004: 14; cited in Kasa and Mhamed, 2013). “Mobility is also closely linked to the attractiveness of higher education institutions and is a main tool of internationalisation.” (EHEA, 2012: 151). According to Kayaoğlu (2016: 315), student exchange programmes, international activities and particularly international student mobility are the necessary steps in the evolution of internationalisation at higher educations. Byram and Dervin (Eds.), 2008: 16) state that “a mobile student is a double agent: s/he is considered as outgoing from her country of origin and as incoming in her chosen country of study.” As both outgoing and incoming students, a mobility student sets the international connection between two institutions and also two countries. Aigner et al. (1992) combine three main rationales for higher education in the objective of internationalisation; “interest in international security; maintenance of economic competitiveness; and fostering of human understanding across nations.” (as cited in Qiang, 2003: 251). Knight (2004: 6) describes internationalisation at higher education level “as a series of international activities such as academic mobility for students and teachers; international linkages, partnerships, and projects; and new, international academic programs and research initiatives.” When the literature is reviewed, it is inferred that internationalisation includes new developments and strategies, ranging from ordinariness to excellence, international collaborations and networks, good practices, progress in curriculum, academic programs and research and training activities. In

other respects, with the aim of preparing the students and the staff for the global world by improving their viewpoints and skills and contributing their competencies and quality of experiences, internationalisation strategy is a significant element for higher education.

“Internationalization is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalization”, remarks Jane Knight (2008: 1). As Ward (2015) describes below, internationalisation plays an active role in every unit of a higher institution.

**Figure 1: CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization**



**Source:** Ward, 2015: 10.

Ward (2015) defends that internationalisation is one of the main goals of higher education institutions by administrative representatives. They establish the international offices, structure the organization chart, and provide employment opportunity. With the faculty representatives, the curriculum is updated upon international components, and learning outcomes. Collaboration and partnerships with other higher education institutions are expected from the faculties or international offices to revive international mobility. Lastly, student mobility data reveals the internationalisation level of higher education in universities. In his study, Harry (1999) focusing on international strategies of universities stated that an international study programme for students was the main concern of internationalisation. It is also deduced from the research that for the aim of realising international strategy teaching, curriculum, specialist offices using foreign language, institutional connections must include international components and the students and staff must adopt to be international, not to be domestic.

Knight (2015a: 14) focused on “Five Myths about Internationalization”. The myths are given below:

- Myth one: Foreign students as internationalisation agents: “more foreign students on campus will produce more internationalized institutional culture and curriculum”.
- Myth two: International reputation as a proxy for quality: “the more international a university is—in terms of students, faculty, curriculum, research, agreements, and network memberships—the better its reputation.”
- Myth three: International institutional agreements: “the greater number of international agreements or network memberships a university has the more prestigious and attractive it is to other institutions and students.”
- Myth four: International accreditation: “the more international accreditation stars an institution has, the more internationalized it is and ergo the better it is.”
- Myth five: Global branding: “an international marketing scheme is the equivalent of an internationalization plan.”

Internationalisation at higher education affects both the academic and administrative staff and students. It enables all of them to cross borders and to carry the international experiences to home. Marmolejo (2012) explains internationalizing an institution, in order of importance, under five top reasons:

- To improve student preparedness;
- To internationalize the curriculum;
- To enhance the international profile of the institution;
- To strengthen research and knowledge production; and
- To diversify its faculty and staff

Bologna Process is the main step to internationalisation at higher education institutions in Europe. As Teichler (2004) explains, europeanisation known especially with Bologna Process and Erasmus Programme is a process focusing on the regulations just for single European pattern which involves standardization of higher education programmes and degrees and provides introduction of horizontal mobility and cooperation between academic institutions. On the other hand, Yilmaz Findik (2016) pointed out that Turkey attached great importance to internationalisation since Bologna Process, and will become influential with international activities. According to Ritzen and Marcony (2011: 84), the issues for making European Institution more international are stated as below:

- Recognising English as main and most-widely used language apart from the universities in United Kingdom
- Determining a European policy for higher educations;
- Attracting the participants with new innovative international programs instead of traditional ones;
- Providing better funding with scholarships for an international study;
- Increasing the academic standards and the quality of teaching and learning;
- Providing easy and flexible entry requirements for international students

Internationalisation has also been the foremost strategy by the Council of Higher Education in Turkey. It has become urgent necessity and important strategic priority in recent years with the developments in internationalisation in the world. In an attempt to be an international attraction center for foreign students and academicians, a variety of strategies were developed for the higher education system. Bologna process, Erasmus+ Programmes, Turkish Scholarships, Mevlana Exchange Programme, Joint-Degree Programmes, Project based International Programmes, expanding the duration of stay for PhD students after their graduation, and providing scholarship for international students admitted to Turkish universities are the initiatives by the Council of Higher Education with respect to promoting internationalisation in Turkey (YÖK, 2017: 15). Turkey pursues the policies and objectives of European Union particularly in the fields of education and culture. Erasmus Programme is the most popular and visible motion in the process of internationalising an institution. In order to be successful in the programme, the institutions established international offices at universities, and employed generally academic experts to deal with international meetings or correspondences, concluded agreements with universities abroad and participated in other international programmes.

Internationalisation puts forward English language as the global communication instrument. All formal meetings between the representatives, international conferences, correspondences, and conversations at international areas are held in English. English is the principal language of cross-cultural communication and the world's lingua franca in the fields of science and technology. In Turkey, English is the first foreign language at schools, beginning from primary school to the graduation from university. Acar (2004: 6) signifies that “internet, global economy, tourism, American movies and the emergence of multi-channels, educational policies of the Turkish government” play fundamental role in the process of spread of English in Turkey.

### **1.3. Study Abroad**

Education is the main medium of the development of an individual in all aspects and skills. In addition, universities are the central places to meet with upmost education and to exhibit the immense potential. Expanding education to different places promotes the quality of education and in the meantime, personal and social growth of the individual. At that point, international experience in education is considered to be a step further and to develop global-mindedness (Tarrant, 2010: 434; Kitsantas, 2004; Braskamp et al., 2009: 111; Carley and Tudor, 2010). Such experience may be possible with studying abroad and study abroad programmes. The increasingly compelling argument for study abroad is rooted in the undeniable realities of a globally intertwined world (Salisbury et al., 2013: 16). Maharaja (2018: 18) states that “leaders in international education recognize the transformative nature of study abroad programs in developing students who become interculturally sensitive and intellectually prepared to take their place in the world.” As a result, students are encouraged by the universities to participate studying abroad programmes,

and the universities approve the study, the courses, and the credits taken abroad to support and expand international study. Previous studies mostly define study abroad programmes as overseas educational programs being experienced in another territory where students expand their knowledge and broaden their horizons (Kitsantas, 2004; Braskamp et al., 2009: 101)

Since the popularity of studying abroad has widened within the last decades, the tendency of studies has been on study abroad (Oosterbeek and Webbink, 2011; Cisneros-Donahue et al., 2012; Cubillos and Ilvante, 2013: 494; Varela: 2017). Studying abroad is a fundamental instrument for students to have opportunities in gaining international experience, a great knowledge of different nations, cultures, traditions, and developing personally by discovering more about themselves. It can also be an open door to determine the future career path by setting international contacts. The study carried out with more than 3400 respondents by Dwyer and Peters in 2004 on the impacts of study abroad programmes on students discloses the positive contribution of study abroad with personal growth, academic commitment, intercultural development, and career development. The research by Kauffman (1992) indicates that study abroad ensures students three benefits: intercultural perceptions, intellectual development, and global understanding.

Although extensive research has been carried out on long-term study abroad programmes which are considered more beneficial, few writers have been able to investigate short-term ones. There is a progression in the participation of short-term programmes (Kehl and Morris, 2008: 67; Peterson, 2015: 192). In the literature on short-term study programmes which are preferred owing to a low-cost programme and convenient for most of the individuals when the time is considered, it has been highlighted that these programmes have positive impacts on educational, behavioural, personal and global outcomes (Carley and Tudor, 2010; Tarrant et al., 2015: 68). On the other hand, Dwyer (2004: 151) states that “the longer students study abroad the more significant the academic, cultural development and personal growth benefits that accrue.” Kehl and Morris (2008: 77) drew conclusion “that if colleges and universities have as an objective student growth in global-mindedness, they should promote semester-long programs.” However, Green (2002: 19) asserts that even cultural and linguistic accumulation is more remarkable via a long-term experience; the new generation prefers the shorter programmes being held in summer or lasting for a few weeks.

Based on the previous studies in literature, the studies mostly assert that studying abroad has certain impacts on linguistic development (Freed, 1990; Magnan and Black, 2007; Carson and Longhini, 2002). Recently, the researchers have examined the effects of study abroad on academic outcomes (Cisneros-Donahue et al., 2012; Norris and Gillespie, 2009). A considerable amount of literature has been published on intercultural side of study abroad programmes. These studies have shown that international experience has impacts on the participating students’ intercultural competence (Koskinen and Tossavainen, 2004; Deardorff, 2011; Langley and Breese, 2005). This

view has recently been challenged in Root and Ngampornchai's study (2013) that living in a different culture during studying abroad does not mean increase in intercultural skills.

Studying abroad is significant for not only students but also higher institutions. It is a strategy for institutions to offer opportunities to students and at the same time to prove its quality and reputation in the competitive international community. Therefore, "internationalizing campus" has become an important topic for several scholars (Brustein, 2007; Braskamp, 2009). The goal of the universities is to form an international atmosphere with global population having various competences in the campus. World rankings, graduate employability, and the international and technological activities and awards provide universities to be preferred by students nowadays. In this respect, long-term career impact is one of the expected outcomes from study abroad programmes. Study abroad experiences act as a considerable factor in individuals' career paths and better job prospects (Paige et al., 2009: 42). Study abroad programmes, especially long-term ones, have an efficient power on the change of career plans after establishing professional networks (Dwyer, 2004: 159). According to some researchers, study abroad is an international engagement for shaping future career by contributing international qualifications to own personal growth and building strong connections with the representatives from business area (Orahod et al., 2004: 117; Kimberly, 2010; Norris and Gillespie, 2009). In the process of applying employment, the one having international experience overshadows the others.

### **1.3.1. The European Union and International Student Mobility (ISM)**

European Union is the organization established in 1950s and comprised of European countries to provide better economical and social conditions to their own citizens. EU developed a schengen area for removing borders among countries to enable its citizens' free movement. Employment, immigration, and labour have been the current topics of this powerful association recently. In this context, with the developments in Europe the terms "brain drain", "high-skilled" and "low-skilled" have begun to be mentioned both in society and literature. The terms refer to the replacing of high-skilled brains or knowledge workers from developing to developed countries in consequence of opportunities provided by the developed nations having the power of technology, economy and science (Mahroum, 2000; Lowell and Findlay, 2001; Meyer, 2001; Rizvi, 2005; Chiswick, 2005). Beine et al. (2014) emphasize that when compared to other migrants such as workers or the married individuals from abroad, the mobility of international students described as the ones having skilled and highly skilled qualifications has formed a different type of migration and has indicated a profound increase. Researchers of social sciences have examined international student migration since 1960s and 1970s (Gaillard and Gaillard, 1997; Hazen and Alberts, 2006: 201; Soon, 2008). Wells (2014: 23) summarizes the further development of the studies on international student mobility as "the shift from study of the student mobility as a subset of Migration Studies to the study of mobility as a socially embedded practice." "In migration and

mobility studies, international students are undoubtedly an under-researched phenomenon.” (King et al., 2010: 46).

According to Field (1998), education plays a central role in the construction of the European Union. Europe has regarded the higher education as the key to compete with other nations in terms of economic, social, cultural and technologic superiority. The changes, innovations, broader developments, and top-down schemes in higher education are inevitable for Europe to exhibit the attractiveness and quality of European higher education to the world and to homogenize higher education with cross-border cooperations by establishing a system in which departments are active and improving integrated approaches to curriculum for increasing students’ academic achievements with the recognition of the study period abroad (Brooks, 2018). The governments in Europe has endeavoured to lead with international mobility in higher education for decades, and EU has been supportive of this mobility by initiating the Erasmus Exchange Programme since 1987. In addition, as a next developmental step to internationalisation in higher education, international cooperation among HEIs has arised. International cooperation creates opportunities not only for students but also for the staff at higher education through exchange programmes. These all are for the purpose of establishing a European Higher Education area (EHEA) and expanding European higher education world wide (Luijten-Lub, 2007: 9).

EU established a formal chamber, EC, to promote the policies of EU. Erasmus Programme is one of the main projects of EU, and EC allocates a huge amount of budget for this exchange mobility. Erasmus programme leading as the first rate programme has enabled funding for the mobility of up to 4.3 million young people between the years 2007 and 2016 (EC, 2018b). According to definitions provided by Teichler (2009), Erasmus Study Mobility is the success story of European Union, “the largest scheme of temporary mobility” and “a trigger for a qualitative leap of internationalisation strategies and policies since the 1990s: towards cooperation and mobility on equal terms.”

#### **1.4. The Development of “Erasmus+”**

A large number of existing studies in the broader literature have examined Erasmus Programme. It has been still popular with its new name, Erasmus+ Programme. More than 135.000 students annually study in another European country, and up to 2 million higher education students will have benefited from Erasmus Programme until 2020 (EC, 2017a). Erasmus established as the largest student exchange programme is the gateway to Europe for students. Starting in 1987 with the first exchange of approximately 3.000 students from 11 countries of EU (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom), Erasmus is heading the international success of almost all higher educations. In this respect, this



part of literature review provides the developmental phases of Erasmus Programme from Bologna process to Erasmus+.

#### **1.4.1. Bologna Process**

The Bologna Process is a process of cooperation of 48 European countries in the field of higher education. It guides the collective effort of public authorities, universities, teachers, and students, together with stakeholder associations, employers, quality assurance agencies, international organisations, and institutions, including the European Commission, on how to improve the internationalisation of higher education (EC, 2018a). For Davies (2008: 935), it refers to “a quiet revolution” occurred in European higher education area, and it is the most important higher education reform act and will be effective in practice, education and research to create European aspect of higher education. In Matsuzuka’s investigation on the relationship between the student mobility and economic growth of European countries, it has been underscored that Bologna Process has a great impact on education and international mobility improvement at a considerable extent in terms of mobility grants, the development of transferable credits and degrees and as a result, the curriculum, and the quality in every level of education. Correspondingly, this leads to greater economic power with the intelligent and talented individuals equipped with new educational changes and improvement (2010: 1-2). The process is a response to the difficulties in the employment of higher education graduates and the international competition increased in higher education.

Up to now, a good deal of researchers have tended to focus on the history, development, and significancy of Bologna Process in European Higher Education. The term “Bologna Process” (BP) referring European reform process agreed by 29 states (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom) aiming to achieve an integrated and harmonised academic degree and quality standards in a EHEA until the year 2010 came forward with the declaration signed in 1999 in Bologna by the respective ministers of education and higher education institutions upon the 900th anniversary of the University of Bologna (Hackl, 2001; Papatsiba, 2006: 95; Tomusk, 2006; Cappellari and Lucifora, 2009: 638). The Sorbonne Declaration signed in 1998 by the ministers of four countries creates the infrastructure of Bologna Declaration. The prominent power of universities' in promoting European social extents was underlined and the new aspect of European higher education in attaching importance to the enlightenment in all fields, especially in the mobility and employment of individuals was marked (Bologna Declaration, 1999). Similarly, Jeliaskova and Westerheijden noted that the primary objective of the Bologna Declaration to achieve comprehensible and homogeneous comparative

degree structures all through Europe would be the key to confine the obstacles in the development of a European area for university level (2002: 445).

A considerable amount of literature has argued that the strategy of harmonizing European Higher Education system and conveying structural changes lead some difficulties in higher educations (Rauhvargers, 2004; Phillips and Ertl, 2007: 297; Caddick, 2008). On the other hand, researches have already been conducted on the implementation of the new degree structures in particular countries after the announcement of the changes with the reform process (Witte et al., 2008). For instance, in Spain Fernandez Diaz et al. (2010) studied the challenges of the programme by investigating the attitudes of the professors against new changes both in learning models and in the curriculum. Hairston investigated the reforms in higher education with the perceptions of professors, and the changes in the working structure of faculty in Germany (2013) and the changed academic relationship between professors and students after Bologna reforms (2015). In other respects, Cappellari and Lucifora (2009: 638-639) declared that with the effects of the reform process, in Italy, although the existing system at higher education level included four/five-year degree programme, it was launched to implement “three-year degree (first cycle, undergraduate) and two-year degree (secondary cycle, master level)” programme. This change can be explained with the objectives listed in the Bologna Declaration (1999):

- Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- Adoption of a system based on two main cycles
- Establishment of a system of credits (European Credit Transfer System)
- Promotion of mobility for students and staff
- Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance
- Promotion of the European dimensions in higher education.

On 18-19 May 2001, the follow-up meeting was held in Prague to review the progress after the Bologna Declaration, to determine the priorities for next years, and to stress the mobility for students and all staff of higher education taking into consideration the democratic values, the value of diversity of cultures, languages, and higher education system (Prague Communique, 2002). It was highlighted in the meeting that students were main members of higher education community, and free movement and academic recognition must be enabled for students and staff to exhibit their qualifications and competencies throughout EHEA. In the same year, four additional countries began to take part in Bologna Process; Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Turkey. Three additional points were included at the follow-up meeting in Prague:

- Introduction of lifelong learning
- Involving higher education institutions and students in the Process
- Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

### 1.4.2. Socrates-Erasmus

European international activities in higher education came under the umbrella of the Socrates programme, established in 1995 (Maiworm, 2001), and formed the second phase of Bologna Process. The Socrates programme addresses to the education from school level to adult education aiming to promote European cooperation in education and the quality of education and training in European zone (Teichler et al., 2001: 1). The same year, it was defined as a “window of opportunity” for developing European activities and providing wide range of initiatives and themes by Gordon (2001: 417). Erasmus programme became a sub-programme of Socrates even though it was launched in 1987. Erasmus was named after Dutch humanist and theologian Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus (1466-1536), but also served as an acronym for European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students. Previously known as one of the phases in the outset of internationalisation in European higher education and generally exchange programmes, with Socrates process it began to serve as the international educational program providing the mobility of students and staff of higher education, and strengthening cooperations among European countries. In addition, it was viewed increase in the support for student mobility and cooperation in higher education, and not only student mobility but also teaching staff mobility and curriculum development came into prominence in higher education (Teichler, 2002: 14). Student mobility is predicated as the chief component of Erasmus programme (Kumpikaite and Duoba, 2010: 43; Maiworm, 2001; Aslan and Jacobs, 2014; Cairns, 2017). Erasmus considered as the flagship of European educational programmes leads to quantitative and qualitative changes: financial aid from commission for student mobility and the number of mobile students within Europe have increased enormously after 1987, and student mobility programme has received most of the Erasmus grant when compared to other mobilities (Kumpikaite and Duoba, 2010: 43). In fact, when the number of mobile Erasmus students was 160,000 in 1995/96, it increased up to nearly 220,000 in 1999/2000, which meant an increase about 9 per cent annually (Teichler et al., 2001)

The Socrates programme proceeded until 2006. During this period, in 2003, the Erasmus University Charter was submitted instead of Institutional Contracts, including the basic principles of European cooperation activities within the framework of Erasmus (Klemencic and Flander, 2013: 26) With the introduction of the Socrates programme in international process of higher institutions, two noteworthy changes of Erasmus were observed. With the innovation in the curriculum and the administrative changes, it was focused on the new plannings in strategies of implementing Erasmus activities for the policy of carrying higher education into highest European education level (Teichler, 2001). There have been numerous studies to investigate Socrates-Erasmus process concentrating on issues such as employment situation in Erasmus (Teichler and Janson, 2007), the comparison of studying abroad or residing abroad in a European context (Coleman, 1998), the impacts of European funding on schools (Gordon, 2001: 417), the

implementation of Erasmus programme after Bologna Process (Valiulis and Valiulis, 2006), European Commission's role in European higher education (Keeling, 2006).

### **1.4.3. Lifelong Learning Programme**

The third phase in the development of Erasmus+ programme is “Lifelong Learning” era starting in 2007 and lasting until 2013. The international programmes in European region were named after the philosophers like Erasmus, Comenius, and Socrates, and enabled the students and academicians from different cultures to “develop respect, tolerance, understanding and peace” (Dinçer, 2014: 64). Lewis (1981) mentions that the origin of the concept of lifelong learning is related to views of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The common idea of them is that intellectual development and the use of mind is for lifelong.

The new process in international advance with the new and developed principles was announced with the treaty adopted by the European Parliament (EP) and the Council in 2006. It was declared that Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) would contribute “to the development of the European Union as an advanced knowledge society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” in addition to the policies stated in 1987 (EP and Council, 2006: 46). LLP includes various activities to serve both educational and training sectors beyond Europe with its four sectoral sub-programmes: Comenius (for schools); Erasmus (higher education); Leonardo da Vinci (vocational education and training); and Grundtvig (adult education). LLP addresses to people at all stages to improve their knowledge, skills, and competences and to discover the benefits of learning in personal and professional development in different learning experiences (Field, 2001; Laal, 2011). However, even if Erasmus comprises of many different mobilities, the most well-known one with its highest budget is the student exchange programme which is for university students (Gonzalez et al., 2011: 415).

“Competence in the fundamental basic skills of language, literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technologies (ICT) is an essential foundation for learning, and learning to learn supports all learning activities.” (EU, 2006: 14). Lifelong learning has been all the while a popular topic by authors in literature such as Teichler et al. (2001: 1), Ambrosio et al. (2014: 3799), and Longworth (2006). Furthermore, some studies signal the unintended consequences and failures of the process (Martens and Wolf, 2009; Reichert, 2010). For instance, Hoell et al. (2009: 10) described Bologna Process as “Bologna Fatigue” by laying stress on the difficulties the higher educations experienced arising with changes in the administrative and curricular structures.

From 2007 to 2013, LLP enabled nearly 260.000 individuals to take part in the programme. Within the years 2009 – 2010, 3.000 institutions are cooperating in the program with 33 countries

and in 2012 – 2013 expectations were covered with 3 million students in the program with the highest funding.

#### **1.4.4. Erasmus+ Programme**

Erasmus+ is the new EU's funding programme for education, training, youth, and sport from 2014 till 2021, appeared as a result of the integration of all European programmes carried out by EC during the period 2007-2013: The Lifelong Learning Programme, The Youth in Action Programme, The Erasmus Mundus Programme, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink, and Programmes of cooperation between industrialised countries and higher education institutions (EC, 2019a). Thereby, the disjointed structure of international programmes is abandoned with an integrated structure. The brand name 'Erasmus' is extended to cover all programmes since it is the most recognised one throughout the world (EC, 2019a). The programme related to higher education institutions remained unchanged as Erasmus and the basic characteristics of the Erasmus Student Mobility Program also remained the same. The seven years programme is expected to spend €14.7 billions for over 4 million Europeans to experience international study, work, train and travel, abroad (Turkish National Agency, 2012b). Today, 33 countries and over 1000 higher education institutions with Erasmus Charter are implementing Erasmus Programme. From Bologna period to 2020 it is intended that at least 20% of the graduates from European Higher Educations should have taken part in international programmes as exchange students (EC, 2015: 5). During Erasmus+ era the EU tends to support especially the mobility at higher educations by allocating the highest budget with the stated objectives of enhancing learning mobility of individuals, development of joint master degrees international partnerships for innovation, and the improvement on the changes of higher education strategies (Klemencic and Flander, 2013: 8) In their study, they also express the expectations of the EC as regarding the impacts of Erasmus Programme both on individuals and on higher education institution with advanced internationalisation policies and collaborations and as witnessing the positive consequences of Erasmus+ in the modernisation process of the system of higher educations and the advancement of higher educations.

Erasmus+ Programme comprises of 3 sub-programmes called as Key Actions (EC, 2017c):

- Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of Individuals (student mobility for studies, student mobility for traineeship, staff mobility for teaching, staff mobility for training)
- Key Action 2: Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices
- Key Action 3: Support for Policy Reform

Key Action 1 and Key Action 2 is for higher educations to conduct international activities. Erasmus programme took its place under Key Action 1- Mobility of Individuals as mobility of learners and staff. It provides opportunities for students, trainees, young people and volunteers, as

well as for professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, staff of education institutions and civil society organisations to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country (EC, 2017c).

The literature review shows that most of the studies after the beginning of Erasmus+ period are mostly about the quality of programme by investigating the experiences, perceptions of students or academic staff (Klemencic et al., 2017; Ünal, 2016; Gimbuta et al., 2017; Erdem Mete 2017; Spiewak and Stasiak-Betlejewska, 2016; Endes, 2015; Marshall, 2017; Dinçer et al., 2017; Asoodar, 2017). One of the main goals of the Erasmus+ Programme is to encourage the students and staff with physical, mental or health disabilities. Hromatko et al. (2016) pointed to the opinions of the disabled participants and educators. Besides, the other popular topics explored in many studies of researchers are the attitudes of non-mobile students to Erasmus programme by Çenberci et al. (2019), the adaptation of incoming Erasmus students by Vevere et al. (2017).

#### **1.4.4.1. Erasmus Programme**

Almost all studies on Erasmus Mobility Programme include the expression “the flagship of the educational programmes” conducted by the European Union (e.g. Teichler, 2001: 202; Bracht et al., 2006: 7; Sigalas, 2010: 1346; Hujak, 2015). At the very beginning, the characteristics of the Erasmus Programme were described as: regional European mobility, temporary student mobility, collective mobility (carried out according to the agreements among certain institutions and departments), mobility and cooperation among different institutions, organized study abroad from beginning to end with the support of both home and host institutions, curricular integration, and recognition criteria as well as non-refundable scholarship (Bracht et al., 2006: 7). According to Teichler (2003), mobility always has a vertical dimension. One can move from a place where a high calibre of educational provisions is lacking to get acquainted with a higher level of education somewhere else. However, mobility can also have horizontal direction: It is considered desirable to get to know a variety of regions, cultures, educational provisions, and professional practices that are more or less on equal terms.

Erasmus student mobility for studies (SMS), is a study period abroad at a partner higher education institution. The programme enables university students to take education in a different country between the study periods of three months to a maximum of twelve months. The mobility is carried out in the framework of prior “inter-institutional agreements” between the sending and receiving institutions, both of which must be holders of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (Turkish National Agency, 2012a). The financial support supplied via the programme is non-refundable. After students complete all the process to study at foreign university as Erasmus exchange student and deliver all the related documents, they deserve to get 80% of total grant

before leaving the sending institution, and after they complete the study at European university and reach adequate success, they deserve to get the remained amount of their grant.

In the study of Schwald (2012: 45), it is stated that “One possible way to provide students an international perspective is by offering and promoting study abroad programs, for incoming as well as for outgoing students.” Besides, in their research, Kumpikaite and Douba (2013) reveal that student mobility provides individuals international competences for just a person in a society and as a whole for a country. The countries have an investment on students by offering them international opportunities and in return, the students are back to their countries enriched in educational, cultural and social competences. In opposition to oft-repeated contributions in the studies, Sigalas (2010: 1347) studying on both mobile and non-mobile students demonstrates that even though both home and host instituton open the way for diminishing the problems for students in adapting to new environment, the process and the change with Erasmus Programme can be hard and stressful. Being compulsory to use foreign language as they know that there is no other way to communicate, can create adverse impact on students in taking part in society or setting a new circle of friends which will be their family in a new country. In addition, he also points that the more unpleasant experience the students have, the less effective the programme will be in being the supporters of EU.

European Commission stresses the Erasmus programme as a great attack in the expansion of European integration and construction of European identity. Correspondingly, a considerable amount of authors point the Erasmus programme as a significant means of supporting European integration and promoting European citizenship or identity. Oborune (2013) researched the impact of Erasmus on European identity and integration. Jacobone and More (2016) studying on both Italian and Belgian students focused on the development of a European identity. Llurda et al. (2016) explored Spanish students to reach the extent of the impacts of Erasmus experience on the attitudes and feelings of European citizenship. Furthermore, in Turkey, Mutlu (2011) analysed Erasmus students’ experiences and outlined that Erasmus Programme had effect on strengthening European consciousness and providing the interaction among European people. Aksoy (2018) also investigated both Turkish and Dutch Erasmus students’ perspectives regarding Europeanness. On the other hand, Sigalas investigating the same topic reached the result that there appeared a low effect on advancing support for European integration with Erasmus mobility. In addition, even if it enhanced sense of community among Europeans, the participants had the feeling before attending programme. Similarly, Kuhn (2012) stated in her study that Erasmus had little power on strengthening European identity since the students had the feelings as European.

As it has been stated in the literature, Erasmus Programme is also one of the most popular subject areas for scholars throughout Europe in terms of effects, difficulties and results. Keogh and

Russel-Roberts (2009) from Germany indicated that the personal and educational expectations of the participants in Erasmus Exchange Programme were compensated regardless of the linguistic challenges. Messer and Wolter (2007) from Switzerland investigated how academic and professional career of university graduates were influenced by exchange programme. Lipowski (2012) from Poland listed the exchange problems as cultural differences, weather conditions, finding courses in English, communication, the size of the city by focusing on the experiences of students studying in Poland. Very limited researches appeared studying the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting students' intention and decision to apply Erasmus Mobility Programme. For instance, Hujak (2015) from Hungary studying both encouraging and discouraging factors that have impact on the idea of benefitting from the programme advised universities to increase the number of applicants. On the other hand, Pop-Flanja and Nistor-Gaz (2017) from Romania who investigated Romanian students enrolled at the Faculty of European Studies remark that Erasmus programmes aim to enhance the awareness on what the world brings and to present an international identity upon individuals whether or not home country has the upper opportunities. They support that "if there is an intention of young graduates to seek employment or to relocate abroad, this intention is determined by the incapacity of their home countries to respond properly to their needs and expectations when it comes to professional or personal development." (2017: 72).

Other studies reviewed in literature indicated that the related research topics on the Programme generally focused on experiences of students in terms of intercultural interaction (Demir and Demir, 2009), and EFL (English as Lingua Franca) (Jenkins, 2009; Kalocsai, 2009). Other topics studied are; the foundation for a European higher education system by Papatsiba (2006), Davies (2008) and Keeling (2006) analyzing the Erasmus programme in the historical context, and the improvement of the quality in higher education, and increase in employability after graduation by Bryla (2015).

#### **1.4.4.2. Erasmus Programme in Turkey**

In parallel with Turkey's participation into Bologna Process in 2001, Turkish National Agency with its broad name 'Center for European Union Education and Youth Programmes' which is responsible for conducting international educational policies and fostering the cooperations with other nations was founded in 2002. Within the same year, International Offices were structured within the body of Turkish universities to implement Erasmus Programme in a transparent and equal way for all participants. According to data from Erasmus+ Annual Report Factsheets Turkey, it has been written that "in 2017, 43097 participants in 1304 Turkish projects benefited from mobility in higher education, vocational education and training, school education, adult learning and youth for a total grant amount of €76.73 million" (EC, 2017b). In addition, it is stated that the three top universities that lead the high numbers of mobility are Anadolu University in Eskişehir, Ankara University in Ankara and Hacettepe University in Ankara (EC, 2017b).



The first pilot study in Erasmus Programme started within the scope of Erasmus student mobility as determining 15 best pilot universities which would have impacts on further developments in the programme. The population of the city and the university, and the popularity of the city are among the factors in deciding for these 15 universities; Karadeniz Technical University from Trabzon, Istanbul University, Istanbul Technical University, Marmara University, Sabancı University and Galatasaray University from Istanbul, Ankara University, Middle East Technical University and Bilkent University from Ankara, Çukurova University from Adana, Akdeniz University from Antalya, Atatürk University from Erzurum, Dokuz Eylül University and Ege University from İzmir, and Gaziantep University from Gaziantep. In academic years, between 2003 and 2004 the first Erasmus students commenced the international activities of student mobility programme to Europe. In April 2004, Turkey has become a full member of the EU Education and Youth Programmes, and with totally 65 Turkish universities holding The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) both student and staff mobility activities were launched to be carried out (YÖK, 2017: 20). Now, in Turkey with the foundation of new universities, there are 190 universities holding ECHE. However, 174 of them are entitled to receive Erasmus grant to its mobility facilities.

Since the beginning of the program, in Turkey there has been a considerable increase in the number of the students to study at foreign universities. Table 1 presents information about the number of outgoing and incoming students within years in Turkey.

**Table 1: Number of Outgoing and Incoming Students within Years in Turkey**

The year of Call for Proposal	The number of Erasmus Outgoing Students	The number of Erasmus Incoming Students	Total Numbers
2004	1.142	299	1.441
2005	2.854	828	3.682
2006	4.426	1.321	5.747
2007	7.119	1.982	9.101
2008	7.794	2.658	10.452
2009	8.758	3.336	12.094
2010	10.095	4.288	14.383
2011	11.826	5.269	17.095
2012	14.412	6.145	20.557
2013	15.084	7.403	22.487
2014	14.710	7.948	22.658
2015	16.103	6.913	23.016
2016	15.556	3.004	18.560
<b>Total</b>	<b>129.879</b>	<b>51.394</b>	<b>181.273</b>

**Source:** Yükseköğretimde Uluslararasılaşma Strateji Belgesi, 2017: 20-21

As it is observed from the table, almost every year the number of outgoing and incoming students increased. However, the decrease in the number of outgoing students in 2014 is because of the transition period from LLP-Erasmus to Erasmus+. At that time, the cooperations with European

institutions were renewed, and the student quota and the validation years in the agreements were re-arranged. Even most of the European universities terminated bilateral cooperations with Turkish universities. In addition, the decrease in the number of incoming students may be related to the increase in the terror activities in the biggest and the most popular cities, and in the eastern part of Turkey. As it is understood from the table, there is a huge imbalance between the numbers of outgoing students and incoming students. On the contrary, it is totally opposite in Europe. The number of incoming students are always higher than the outgoing ones. Cairns (2017: 732) indicates in his study that while the number of incoming students is over 10.000 in 2013- 14, the number of outgoing students is just over 6.000 in Portugal. He explains the case with low level of Erasmus grants for outgoing students, tendency for rich countries, recognition problems of courses and negative view of society. He states the reasons why Portugal is selected as one the most visited country are low cost of living, the quality of universities, and the attractiveness for tourists (2017: 735).

According to the data, the top five countries whose students selected Turkey as Erasmus destination are Germany with 14.483 students, France with 5.102 students, Poland with 4.988 students, Holland with 4.181 students and Italy with 3.362 students. In addition, in terms of the countries selected by Turkish students as Erasmus destination (between the years 2004-2016), Poland takes place at the first line with 23.682 students. Respectively, Germany (22.829), Italy (11.035), Spain (8.974), and France (6.327) are the next countries chosen by the students (YÖK, 2017: 21).

Over time, an extensive literature on benefits or outcomes of Erasmus programme has developed in Turkey. According to Aydın (2012), Erasmus has significant impacts on the development of language skills and professional and personal development while at the same time it has been revealed the potential difficulties the students experienced and the solutions they created to strive them. Yıldırım and İlin (2013) particularly focused on problems defined at affective, behavioural, and cognitive levels and the strategies developed to handle these problems. Yücelsin-Taş (2013) also concentrated on the problems experienced before, during and after the exchange programme. Ersoy (2013) investigated the cultural side of exchange programmes and deduced that the participants encountered some difficulties including feeling inadequate while speaking English effectively, cultural adaptation and cultural bias. In addition, the strategies were also presented to cope with the problems such as taking part in English-used areas, accepting the cultural differences and introducing own culture to ones who had bias against them. In addition, Yağcı et al. (2007) investigated outgoing exchange students' satisfaction levels of the daily life, academic life, and student support services provided and concluded that the students were satisfied with these points. In the study on incoming students visiting Turkish universities, it was found out that the students had difficulty in establishing contact with the members of the university because of lacking in English and the missing international atmosphere (Burçer, 2015).

#### **1.4.4.3. Erasmus Programme at Karadeniz Technical University**

Karadeniz Technical University, founded in 1955, is one of the first universities in Turkey that commenced Erasmus Programme. In order to carry out the mobility programmes, KTU received its Erasmus Charter Number as TR TRABZON01 in 2003. Within the same year, KTU signed its first bilateral agreement with Ghent University in Belgium and in the academic years 2003-2004 directed students to Erasmus programme. 12 students from the departments of Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering, and Biology became the first Erasmus students at the records of the university. KTU having 146 different bilateral agreements with 22 different countries in Europe has opened the doors to Europe for students and staff from 59 different departments. Now Poland constitutes nearly 20% of total agreements. In addition, KTU has 16 agreements with German institutions and 13 agreements with Italy and Czechia sharing the third place (KTU, DIO). Lipowski (2012: 752) states in his research that in Poland higher educations proceed to attack to increase internationalisation, spread international actions and strengthen the quality of education with providing international courses for incoming students. This could be possible with increasing the number of agreements, foreign students and outgoing students. This supports the statistics of KTU and the general case in Turkey that Poland is the most popular country for outgoing students to visit and for the universities to make agreements. Between the academic years 2015-2018, 557 students benefited from Erasmus Student Study Programme. 162 of them visited Poland, 64 of them were in Portugal and Hungary was at the third place with 50 students. Still, Poland is the most popular country preferred by Erasmus students to take Erasmus education. The reasons why Erasmus students chose Poland were listed by Lipowski (2012: 753) as follows; the cheapest country compared to others, the different way of life compared to home country, the recommendations by ex-Erasmus students, and the potential of finding English courses and passing courses more easily.

Regarding the popularity of researching on Erasmus Programme, there appeared two studies from the scholars of KTU. Semiz and Saylan (2017) highlighted the reasons directing students to Erasmus programme and the obstacles hindering them to give up. According to the study, enhancing linguistic abilities and cultural experience are the motivative sides while financial and household issues, and the possibility of adaptation problems are the disincentive determinants in taking part in the exchange programme. In Kayaoğlu's study (2016: 319), thirty students presented their experiences from Erasmus Programme. The gathered data reveals that the attitudes of the students towards English language have altered in a positive way, and culturally they understand to respect all cultures and not to see Europe as the most perfect.

According to the data of 2018 gathered from the website of National Agency in budget matter, Karadeniz Technical University is at 15th rank with a budget of 681.950 Euro, and the accepted mobilities is 265. In addition, 79% of the total grant is used for Student Mobility (Turkish

National Agency, 2012c). At previous year, the amount was 670.700 Euro and the number of accepted mobilities was 226. It is observed throughout the years that KTU has revealed acceleration in being one of the universities conducting Erasmus Programme of a high quality.

## **1.5. Competence and Erasmus Student Mobility in Study Abroad Context**

### **1.5.1. ‘Competence’ in Relation to Erasmus Student Mobility in Study Abroad Context**

Erasmus Student Mobility is considered to present significant contributions in the development of some aspects of the students. In most of the works in literature, it is described as “competence” or “competency”. Competency is used in more professional or legal contexts. According to Pukelis (2009: 13), competence is described as “occupational activity of a person in an unpredictable (working) situation guaranteed by the qualification acquired and occupational experience gained in the field (proved ability in an unpredictable situation or occupational practice)” and gives meaning of competency as “person’s ability, formally confirmed by some document, to perform a certain valid (relevant, qualified, at a concrete quality level) and reliable (precise and fast) part or function of occupation.” On the official Journal of the European Union, competence has been defined as the unit of both knowledge and skills that need to be improved with the changing world, and eight key competences have been outlined with lifelong learning process as “a key measure in Europe's response to globalisation and the shift to knowledge based economies”:

1. Communication in the mother tongue;
2. Communication in foreign languages;
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
4. Digital competence;
5. Learning to learn;
6. Social and civic competences;
7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and
8. Cultural awareness and expression (EU, 2006: 13).

Most of the authors have driven the development of some certain components via Erasmus Programme by examining the relationship with them in their works. In the following parts of the present study, the studies related the development of competences are presented. Table 2 below indicates the relation between Erasmus Mobility and various competences Erasmus has impacts on. It can be summarized from the table that Erasmus Programme does not affect just one proficiency since at least two of them are interactive.

**Table 2: The Researches on Competences in Relation to Erasmus Student Mobility**

<b>The authors</b>	<b>The competences the authors engaged in their works which is related to Erasmus programme</b>
Ünlü (2015)	academic, cultural, and personal
Yücelsin-Taş (2013)	linguistic, cultural and personal
Tekin and Hiç-Gençer (2013)	academic, professional and personal
Teichler and Kerstin (2007)	academic, cultural, linguistic, personal and professional
Biçer et al. (2014)	academic and professional
Genç İlter (2013)	personal, intra and interpersonal, cultural
Pop-Flanja and Nistor-Gaz (2017)	personal, cultural, academic and professional
Jacobone and Moro (2015)	cultural, personal and linguistic development
Kayaoğlu (2016)	linguistic and cultural
Endes (2015)	personal and career
Marshall (2017)	academic and personal
Ekti (2013)	linguistic, scientific and cultural
Milne and Cowie (2013)	personal and professional
Kumpikaite and Duoba (2013)	international as well as linguistic, academic and intercultural
Bogain (2012)	linguistic, personal, academic, cultural, professional

There is a correlation between usage of a foreign language in a social and academic environment and the changes and the gains for non-residents while studying as an exchange student. It is inevitable for an exchange student to remain same after the study period. Strong competency means strong individuals in all aspects and it means strong education, society and economy of the country. Competences gained by Erasmus students compared to non-mobile students after returning to their institution have been searched by Bracht et al. (2006: 45) with the percentages as following: foreign language proficiency (99%), intercultural understanding and competences (97%), knowledge of other countries (94%), preparation for future employment and work (82%) and academic knowledge and skills (73%).

Kallioinen (2010: 57) explains that “Competent experts are extremely valuable for an organisation and therefore it is very important that higher education institutions produce good quality students with relevant learning outcomes for working life.” Whence, the development of an individual means the development of the higher institutions, and they have to present the opportunities for individuals to go beyond boundaries, to contribute new learning and teaching strategies by interacting with more developed ones. Therefore, studying as exchange student has turned into the most extreme type of higher educations in internationalization (Juknyte-Petreikiene and Pukelis, 2007: 75). Konevas and Duoba (2007: 590) summarize the competences gained via Erasmus Student Mobility as “foreign language proficiency, intercultural understanding and competences, knowledge of other countries, preparation for future employment and work, academic knowledge and skills, socio-communicative competencies, problem-solving competencies.” In the present study, three of these competences are taken in consideration; foreign language competence, academic proficiency and the strategies developed by students in solving problems as problem-solving competencies.

### **1.5.2. Linguistic Competence**

Languages are critical components in the enhancement of countries, as in Europe aiming to unify the society and to achieve the goals of European Union. Spoken by quarter of the world's population, English has become the global language. That indicates the powerfulness of Europe in the challenging and competitive arena. Phillipson (2004: 5) states that 'its advance has major implications for speakers of all other languages, for education systems and professional qualifications, for the economy, and for the vitality of cultures big and small.' On the other hand, Gomez and Vicente (2011: 83) assert that language has always been a principal communicative tool but stand as local, yet as long as the world is changing and being more globalised, it has come into prominence that there is needed to place restriction on more cultural and linguistic areas. They add that European higher education institutions have made attempts to reinforce language learning and to advance the quality in teaching foreign language. English is the common second language for Europeans and most of the other nations. It is essential to learn English in today's world since it is dominant in every field and an open door to the world. The introduction of the concept, "linguistic competence" was presented by Chomsky (1965: 4) as the "speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language" and has been used throughout the years with the introduction of study programmes.

#### **1.5.2.1 Erasmus Effects on Linguistic Competence in Study Abroad Context**

"English as a foreign language at the tertiary level has to be considered from various aspects so as to meet the requirements of the emerging socio-political, educational and economic European context, in which linguistic policy is one of most prominent aspects of integration of EU" (Kovacic et al., 2009: 26). A series of recent studies have indicated that Erasmus student mobility has a remarkable dominance on the linguistic competence of students (Teichler, 2001; Sigalas, 2010; Aydın, 2012; Önen, 2017). In addition to its impact, the advancement within the students' language abilities is affirmed by a few authors. In the study of Endes (2015: 1413), it is revealed that Erasmus Programme has an affirmative impact on Erasmus students in terms of developing their language levels as a result of practising spoken Language and gaining self-confidence in using language. Guo (2015: 57) claims that foreign language and intercultural communicative competence are the notable gains of studying abroad, and he adds that learning second language and improving in speaking, listening, and reading skills are the possible acquisitions in both long and short term programmes, but it is unutterable for writing skills since it requires longer time to be developed markedly. In his study, Mitchell (2012) defining Erasmus involvement as 'Civic Experience' applied a survey for both Erasmus and non-Erasmus students and reached over 2000 respondents (1041 Erasmus students and 970 non-mobile university students) from 25 EU countries in order to present the differences between two groups, to observe the effect of Erasmus experience and the perspectives of two groups for Europe. He revealed that Erasmus students learnt, spoke

more foreign languages abroad, and did this better when compared to non-Erasmus students. Since Erasmus students are in communication with European people, the fluency in using two or more languages is reported as better than non-mobiles. The Turkish researchers (e.g. Aydın, 2012; Genç İltir, 2013; Ünlü, 2015) also revealed that Erasmus experience substantially made contribution to the participants' language talents and knowledge.

The studies on Erasmus Programme are very popular almost all years but the research area in students' intention to study abroad remains limited (Salisbury et al., 2010: 618). Waters and Brooks (2010: 569) stress that the media has a certain impact on the students' decision to study abroad, and declares that "media-derived images have made certain overseas locations seem familiar (and therefore desirable) to students, lessening the anticipation of 'culture shock'." Most of the studies reach the outcomes that the students select Erasmus Programme firstly for developing their foreign language skills and then academic knowledge (Messer and Wolter, 2007: 648; Maiworm; 2001). Language obstacles can be regarded as the obstacles to be Erasmus student since the student has to pass English Proficiency exam before admission to programme. The students in low linguistics infrastructure can be eliminated by the successful students having high level of English competence in the process of applying to programme. Inadequacy in language skills is the main cause of all problems in being an international student (Lipowski, 2012: 751). As well as the possible linguistic problems during pre-Erasmus period, the students also experience problems during and after the programme. Students experience linguistic problems mostly during the programme, and communicating is the major one (Önen, 2017: 364). Rexeisen (2013: 176) also approaches to this issue by likening it a boomerang effect. While students are abroad, they are in a utopian world where limitless freedom is, but after returning to home they confront with the real world. He also indicates that "without further intervention, the positive gains achieved while abroad may be lost, at least temporarily, after returning home" (2013: 178). The sense that there is a positive correlation between study abroad, and language acquisitions has recently been challenged by some studies. Deakin (2013: 469) demonstrates that "the increase in universities offering courses taught in English in order to attract international students also challenges the positive link between study abroad and language gains" and highlights that mobile students create restricted relations with local students of the university.

Erasmus outcomes related to foreign and second language acquisition have also been investigated in terms of specific skills. Several studies have investigated the effects of study abroad programmes on the participants' oral competences, and most of the findings demonstrate that the improvement in productive skills (speaking, writing) is more apparent rather than receptive ones (listening and reading), and the students reveal more oral competences compared to other competences and improve oral competences in fluency and lexicon (Segalowitz and Freed, 2004; Llanes and Munoz, 2009; Perez-Vidal et al., 2012: 229; Llanes et al., 2012).

Bogain (2012) studied on the language of Erasmus students from Germany, France and Spain studying in a British university by conducting bespoke questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that the students' skills in English improved as, 90% in listening, 70% in speaking and 60% in writing and reading skills. In the study of Isabelli-Garcia, it was remarked "that contact with the host culture outside of the classroom and attitudes towards the host culture can be related to the development of oral communication skills and accuracy" (as cited in Badstubner and Ecke, 2009: 42).

The effects of Programme on listening competences in study abroad contexts were researched by Meara (1994: 32), Freed (1998), Llanes and Munoz (2009), and Beattie et al. (2014). In his SALA (Study Abroad and Language Acquisition) project, Perez-Vidal (2015) focused on two groups: formal instruction (FI) and study abroad which was in fact Erasmus Programme (SA) to examine the written and oral proficiencies in two learning contexts. It has shown that oral and listening competences take place more in SA context rather than in FI context.

Writing as a productive competence seems to be developed by mobile students, either. The improvement is utmost on fluency, accuracy and lexical complexity (Sasaki, 2007; Perez-Vidal, 2015; Lansing Hui; 2015; Serrano et al., 2011). In the study of Llanes et al. (2016: 292), 39 Spanish Erasmus students who studied in European countries where English was used as lingua franca were investigated to observe linguistic competences especially in writing by conducting language tests before and after the programme. It was concluded "that spending a term abroad in an academic context in a non-English speaking country resulted in significant gains in two out of the four language measures examined, namely general English proficiency and written lexical complexity" (2016: 300) and "the language gains observed in academic settings where English is used as a lingua franca underscore the importance of developing teaching materials focusing on ELF" (2016: 301).

The effects of programme on reading-writing competences were treated as developing less (Coleman, 1998: 186). He states that "respondents assessed their own gains as lying principally in speaking, listening, L2 and knowledge and self-confidence, with modest gains in reading competence and little in written skills" (1998: 185). On the other hand, Watson et al. (2013) associating short term study abroad to "language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and regional awareness" found out that participating in a short term study abroad programme enhanced the progress in students' listening, reading, and speaking skills. Aydın (2012) also discovered in his study on Turkish pre-service teachers of English that listening and speaking competences in English were advanced more than reading and writing competences. Most of the students in the study stated that they began to use English in meaningful settings and became accustomed to different accents of English. But according to some, it was difficult to communicate with local students or lecturers who used their own language. Nevertheless, Jakobone and More suggested



that the development in linguistic competences strengthened new connections and settled the conflicts in any issue. It also enhanced the consolidation of cultural understanding, and communicative competence. They also highlighted that “increased non-classroom interaction in the target language is inevitable during a stay abroad and aids the development of world outlooks among the young through studying new cultures and foreign languages, new experiences of living with others and new occasions to explore the world.” (2016: 311).

The reviewed literature indicates that there is also a variety of issues in the linguistic competence context. The change in vocabulary skills and phonological skills has been the other popular research fields by scholars. Milton and Meara (1995) studying on the impacts of Erasmus Exchange Programme on 53 exchange students’ vocabulary development found out that high level students or native-like students gained less vocabulary skills than the low-level students or non-native-like students. It was because the classes didn’t balance the learning for both high-level or low level students but mostly closer to low level ones, so it was supported that the best way for prosperous students in progressing this competence was achieved at home. In addition, Collentine (2009: 218) showed that “study abroad (SA) context takes place in countries where the L2 enjoys an important sociological and functional status, entailing a combination of planned curriculum and a host family.” In his research, he (2004) also emphasized that SA context enhanced the development of second language abilities in communicative contexts, whereas domestic settings providing both learning and communicative contexts presented opportunities for discrete grammatical and lexical competences (as cited in Hernadez, 2010; 659). Whether study abroad context improves the competences of learners and particularly the phonological skills of Spanish students or not is the research topic for Mora (2018). He completed his research with two groups of Spanish students studying modern languages; one group studying abroad in an English-spoken country and the other group at a regular programme at home. He outlined that study abroad has little impact on the development of phonological skills of students when compared with the students stayed at home institution. He explained the reason as “a three-month term may not be a long enough immersion period to produce significant gains in advanced learners’ perceptual ability.” (2018: 260).

### **1.5.3. Academic Competence**

The majority of prior research has applied the components in the improvement process of students’ academic success for nearly 40 years (Zepke and Leach, 2010: 167). Academic success is achieved with academic competences. Diperna and Elliot (1999: 208) “defined academic competence as multidimensional construct composed of skills, attitudes and behaviors of learner that contribute the teachers’ judgements of academic performance.” According to them, “academic skills, study skills, academic motivation, interpersonal skills, and academic self-concept” are the main components of academic competence (1999: 208). In addition, Fazey and Fazey (2001: 349)

investigate self-perceived competence and academic engagement in two academic domains: “scholastic competence (ability to undertake academic study) and perceived intellectual ability (perception of intelligence).” Besides, in their research, Ferla et al. (2010) remark that the effects of academic competence plays a significant role in motivation, academic performance, academic objectives and academic level of the students. Ateş (2016) emphasizing the importance of academic competence in Turkish Education System for future profession claims that the factors affecting students’ academic competence are academic motivation and expectation, intelligence, communicative competences, the educational system of the university, social competence, the physical facilities of the academic environment and being happy psychologically. Generally, in order to feel excited and psychologically better, study abroad seems a new breath for university students.

### **1.5.3.1. Erasmus Effects on Academic Competence in Study Abroad Context**

Erasmus programme has been considered an opportunity to increase the academic knowledge and to provide a step further in acquiring employability. In fact, the main goal and function of the Erasmus Programme seems academical improvement since the concept is about university education and the studies of one or half academic year are taken at a different institution. There have been numerous studies to investigate that Erasmus Student Programme has also significant effects on academic competences, success, and motivation of tertiary level students (Kumpikaite and Duoba, 2010; Bryla, 2015; Di Pietro, 2015). Teichler (2015: 23) presuming linguistic competence as academic competence stated in his study that more than half of the Erasmus students achieved greater academic success abroad than the year at home, while on the other hand one quarter claimed that their academic success increased, and according to other quarter their academic success was lower than the one at home. In addition, he (2015: 24) categorized international competences gained with international experience related to university education as:

- Foreign language proficiency (%88)
- Knowledge/Understanding of international differences in culture and society, modes of behaviour and life styles (%76)
- Ability to work with the people from different cultural backgrounds (%59)
- Professional knowledge of other countries (%59)

In the study of Bracht et al., after Erasmus experience the students rated the competences in academic knowledge, foreign language skills, and various professional attitudes and styles (2006: 61). 73% of the participants in the study considered the academic knowledge of Erasmus students returning from abroad to be better than that of non-mobile students (2006: 16). Besides, another study on Erasmus students from Nursing department by Biçer et al. (2014) implied that the programme enabled students acquire academic learning outcomes, develop their knowledge in their academic field, gain personal progression in being more confident in asking, making interpretation,

using foreign language, and have information about a new educational system. It can be commented that academic achievements after Erasmus experience can accompany with personal improvements as well.

Camiciottoli (2010) researched the academic problems that Italian business students faced during their Erasmus exchange period in English-medium universities. In his study, he also responded to the problems of the students by presenting resolution advisories. He pointed out that Erasmus students had difficulties in understanding the context of the courses, catching the core of the course in a short course time, and not taking part in more group projects and making oral presentations. He attracted attention to the significant role of audio/visual materials in introducing the courses to the students with its linguistic, structural and interactional sides. Upon the data gathered from the students, the strategies developed are reading, watching TV/films, and getting help from fellow students. As another example of the impact of Erasmus Programme on academic abilities, Özdem (2013: 61) carried out a qualitative study with 24 Erasmus students from Giresun University in order to present suggestions for future Erasmus students, the teaching staff, Erasmus Offices, and the administration of the university. He gathered the data regarding the education at host institution under four sub-titles; the attitudes of teaching staff, the education quality of universities, academic services and researches, and lastly the university environment and facilities. The majority of the students found the program beneficial in terms of academic gains. Students mostly stated that the academic staff was very kind and tolerant in every issue. In addition, they declared that they were not exposed to any cultural discrimination; the education system abroad was extremely great in all its parts; the academic circumstances included a high-quality substructure with laboratories, libraries, and the courses, and the researches were utterly practical. Lastly, the students evaluated the academic environment and the facilities with wide range of course materials and devices, the libraries at every department, a great number of classes to exhibit their assignments, and computer laboratories for all students and the fewness of the class population (2013: 80-82). In brief, academic observation of the students from Giresun University having a good experience via Erasmus Programme contributed to their academic competence.

In Önen's study (2017), it was stated that students had academic challenges in every period of Erasmus Programme: lots of tedious paper-works and deciding for the courses to study abroad were the ones at pre-Erasmus period; getting accustomed to different education and grading system and new teachers, new teaching methods, new curriculum were the ones during Erasmus period and getting used to the previous educational environment after mobility programme was the final one which made the significant crisis on students.

Altbach and Knight (2007: 291) stated that "international academic mobility similarly favors well-developed education systems and institutions, thereby compounding existing inequalities. Initiatives and programs, coming largely from the north, are focused on the south."

Correspondingly, it can not be denied that Erasmus Programme coming from north has significantly influenced the students from south. Without mobility around the world or experiencing the new and developed, there can not be mentioned change or progress in any country. Varghese (2008: 15) with the same considerations noted that “cross-border movements of students used to be from developing to developed countries. This trend is changing, although developed countries continue to be the major destination of students studying abroad.” In his book, he (2018: 24) also defined study abroad programs as prestigious since they enhanced one's academic qualifications, provided opportunities for high-paid and better jobs and enhanced to enter into efficient professional networks.

The policies of governments attach importance to the improvement in competences of human resources for the survival and the progress of the organisations. University students are the possible human resources for universities and so the developments or the competences related to them carry the utmost importance. Student mobility programmes are the main means to reach this purpose (Kumpikaite and Duoba, 2010: 41). De Ville et al. (1996: 208) claim that when the quality of the higher institution is not at the expected standards or the programmes, the disciplines and their quality at home university are sometimes insufficient, the host country providing mobility programme for students becomes attractive in presenting the quality of all items related to their education. De Ville et al. (1996: 208) add that “the same goes for better teaching conditions or ones which come closer to the expectations of the mobile students: better pedagogical support, greater material comfort (auditoriums, libraries, computer equipment...).” The presented opportunities by host institution under the scope of Erasmus Mobility Programme is for the development of the academic competence of human resources. However, in Mutlu's study (2011: 100), the students conclude that Erasmus experience is not related to students' academic development but rather individual development since they consider Erasmus Programme as a discovery of themselves. On the other hand, according to Martinez-Usarralde et al., (2017: 107) who emphasized the development of human with international education stated that “Erasmus Programme promotes the development of capabilities as regards adaptation of participants to different environments, the development of skills suited to the labour market, the increase in opportunities for employment and broadening in the range of options for life projects.”

### **1.6. Challenges to Erasmus Student Mobility and Possible Solutions**

Previous studies have also focused on the problems and barriers confronted by Erasmus students during their study period abroad rather than on the problems of nonmobiles (Souto-Otero et al., 2013: 71). In addition, Klemencic et al. (2017: 926) focusing on the problems of mobile students argued that Erasmus students had always in tendency to compare home and host institution in terms of the education system, environmental conditions, academic facilities and the quality of their education. It is difficult for them to manage these changes between the local and the

international. In this respect, they (2017: 926) conceived that international offices were expected to provide assistance by listening to their complaints even if it is at individual base, and unfortunately, “the collective agency of international students, construed as their capabilities to influence the quality of their student experiences, is fairly limited.” On the other hand, the study by Souto-Otero et al. (2013: 75) researching both mobile and nonmobile students on the participation to Erasmus Programme indicated that Erasmus participants expected difficulties in the quality of education abroad, family and personal relationships, lack of language skills, the low Erasmus grants and credit recognition.

Erasmus students face with many challenges upon arrival in the host country, including issues of adjustment, integration, discrimination, financial costs, restricted access to the labour market and other administrative and legal hurdles. Mikulas and Svobodova (2019: 2) asserted that ‘despite the aim to limit the barriers and support the triggers of international student mobility, Europe as a study abroad destination is still a place of diverse cultures and different education systems.’ They concentrated on the experiences of Erasmus students studied at France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain on campus discrimination, academic support, and academic satisfaction. The results gathered from the survey that Erasmus students didn’t face any discriminated problems since the teaching staff was always supportive and did their best to set a tolerant educational atmosphere for the satisfaction of the students from different cultures (2019: 15). Discriminated experiences would affect international students, but Atri et al. (2007: 70) claimed that social support, hardiness, and acculturation were the fundamental keys in the adaptation process to new academic environment and being mentally healthy. They stated that “the more acculturated the individual is, the higher mental health he or she would have.” (2007: 69). Even if the former study was carried out with Asian students studying in United States, the position of an international student in a different country was the same and the problems related to social, cultural, academic or linguistic problems were the similar.

It is announced by formal authorities that Erasmus grant generally does not cover all living expenses abroad. In this respect, the low Erasmus grants are one of the most significant challenges at abroad for exchange students. “Problems regarding academic matters were less often named than those concerning accommodation, financial matters and administrative matters.” (Teichler, 2015: 23). In the suggestions and opinions section of Endes’s study, it was outlined four major problems put forward by participants: the high prices in accommodation and transportation, lack of communication with host institution, prejudices against Erasmus students by teaching staff, and the adaptation to new society (Endes, 2014: 1413-1414). The solutions can be possible with the connection between two Erasmus Offices for the quality of the programme and the education and conducting the international education in a favourable setting for students (2014: 1414).

Wiers-Jenssen (2003: 399-405) gathering data from Norwegian students in his study concluded the findings about the obstacles encountered by Erasmus students as: adaptation problems to a new foreign language, a different culture and a new educational system, the bureaucracy in the host country and the limited connection with family. The Norwegian Erasmus students studying in Scandinavian countries notified that they solved adaptation problem within few weeks, and also students in English-speaking countries also overcame the same problem in a short but the students in eastern part of Europe had difficulty in adapting the new environment after a long time. These students rarely spent their free time with local individuals, but preferred to be with Norwegians. However, integration with both new friends and the host university students would diminish the adaptation problems during Erasmus experience. For possible academic problems, it was necessary to work harder at the host institution than at home institution. In terms of professional and academic outcomes, 87% of the exchange students evaluated Erasmus Programme more advantageous than studying in Norway. The students were satisfied with the academic, professional and pedagogic quality of courses, the adaptable curriculum for international students, group work studying or self-initiated studying, the feedback from academic lecturers, the convenient conditions of classroom and other learning areas, the social, academic and professional environment. These all are the fundamental factors preventing students having challenges as an international student in a different world.

Aydın (2012: 21-23) explaining almost all problems in Erasmus period summarized the types of problems faced by EFL pre-service teachers studying at Balıkesir University and participating Erasmus Programme as following: communication problems with local students at university and local people outside, usage of native language by teaching staff instead of English (linguistic problems); complex formal procedures and not finding equivalent courses (procedural problems); difficulties in adapting a new country and difficulty in adapting to native country after Erasmus period (adaptational problems); positive discrimination in passing courses, difficulty in adjusting new educational model, and adjusting the traditional system at home institution after Erasmus Programme (academic problems); experiencing culture shock, prejudices on Turkish people and Islam, living in male-female mixed dormitories, consuming too much alcohol by participants, being common of recreational activities (cultural problems); feeling depressed and loneliness, having difficulty in making friends (personal problems); having difficulty in using public transportation and not getting sufficient help from mentors, negative climatic conditions, meeting with difficulties in changing eating habits, the low Erasmus grants and not getting grants on time (logistical problems).

As a reply to the problems given above, the recommendations reported at the study of Klemencic and Flander (2013: 10-15) on the impact of the Erasmus Student Mobility Programme in Slovenia can be generalized to all institutions and summarized as following:

1. Hybrid systematised approaches should be developed by institutions to offer courses, study programmes in foreign languages and provide modernisation of teaching and learning.
2. Individualised work should be enhanced with exchange students.
3. Elective courses in foreign languages should be offered to national students and they should be encouraged to take these courses
4. Virtual mobility and internationalisation of study at home should be fostered via the use of ICT and distance education
5. Institutions should promote tutor systems and mentor support for both incoming and outgoing Erasmus students for better adaptation to new academic life
6. Institutions should develop course or study programme packages in foreign language for incoming students, or other foreign students.
7. It should be developed a kind of mechanism through which outgoing Erasmus students come together with academic staff or their academic advisors to exchange knowledge
8. Student mobility particularly should be supported in teacher education programmes since the students graduated from these departments can transfer the notes about the mobility programmes to their students before they start to universities.
9. Institutions should extend their partnerships with different areas
10. International offices and institutional authorities should pursue international activities
11. There should be a close relationship between all offices related to internationalisation and the staff should be trained and instructed to manage data on international students
12. Institutions should present easily accessible information for incomings by indicating the foreign programmes and courses with credits and even the lecturers.

Klemencic and Flander (2013: 6) in the same study declared that “when a student goes abroad, the exchange experience creates a point of comparison between their home and host institution. Returning students tend to be able to point out the deficiencies in teaching and learning more concretely and can voice them more constructively.” These students experience culture shock at the arrival to host country in adapting new learning environment, and also the culture shock when they turn to home country in adapting the traditional learning and teaching system. Krzaklewska and Skorska (2013: 105) described culture shock as “a form of stress caused by the inability to adjust to a new environment and induced by a lack of information.” Erasmus students tend to belong to neither the host institution at the beginning of the programme nor the home institution at the end of the programme. On the other hand, expressing Erasmus Programme as a success story Mutlu (2011: 100) reported that even if the students experienced hard times in their new international setting regarding adapting a new home and friends functioning as family, financial issues, official works, linguistic difficulties, most of the students did not put into words the challenges. For this reason, it can be deduced that experiencing exciting time during Erasmus indicate more significance than feeling the impact of difficulties.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology followed in the study. It is divided into four main sections; research design of the study, setting and participants, data collection, and lastly data analysis. In brief, this part provides information about the nature of the study, the selection of the participants, the research context, the research methods selected for conducting the research, and the followed process of collecting and analyzing data.

**Table 3: The Methodology of the Study**

The Methodology of the Study	
<b>Research Method</b>	Mixed Method (Quantitative and Qualitative)
<b>The Setting</b>	Karadeniz Technical University, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Atatürk University, Aydın Adnan Menderes University
<b>Sampling method</b>	Convenience Sampling Method (Questionnaire) Quota Sampling Method (Semi-structured Interview)
<b>The Participants</b>	289 participants (207 from KTU, 35 from OMU, 32 from AU, 15 from AMU)
<b>Data Collection</b>	1. Questionnaire 2. Semi-structured Interviews (with 25 students)
<b>Data Analysis</b>	Questionnaires were analysed through SPSS (v. 25) Semi-structured interviews were analysed through encoded analysis and content analysis
<b>Piloting</b>	The questionnaire was applied to two groups of ex-Erasmus students Semi-structured interviews were piloted with the first group

#### 2.2. Research Design

The linguistic and academic impacts of Erasmus Student Mobility for studies on students are the main focus of this study. With the aim of examining the linguistic and academic development of Erasmus Programme through the experiences of Erasmus outgoing students from four different universities in Turkey, the mixed method including both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were chosen. In addition, a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were developed for the participants. Since the study investigates the experiences of the students and their attitudes throughout the programme towards language of academic environment, using only a quantitative tool couldn't be limited just to the expressions or questions in questionnaire. The findings acquired



via quantitative analysis of the questionnaire were followed by a qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions in questionnaire and the responses gathered via semi-structured interviews in order to reach an extended understanding. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018: 46) see qualitative method as the best in order to “explore a problem, honor the voices of participants, map the complexity of the situation, and convey multiple perspectives of participants.” However, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018: 46) also sense quantitative method as the best in order “to understand the relationship among variables or determine if one group performs better on an outcome than another group.” The third methodology is also preferred by combining qualitative and quantitative methods to support the research studied. Greene et al. (1989: 256) define mixed method designs “as those that include at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect words).” At the same point, Bryman (2004: 134) notes that “the presence of qualitative data may greatly assist the analysis of quantitative data.” In this study, the ideas of Creswell and Plano Clark about mixed method design are followed (2018: 43):

In mixed methods, the researcher collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data rigorously in response to research, questions and hypotheses, integrates (or mixes or combines) the two forms of data and their results, organizes these procedures into specific research designs that provide the logic and procedures for conducting the study, and frames these procedures within theory and philosophy.

The reviewed literature reveals that sequential strategies appear in the process of evaluation of data by using mixed methods. This study follows the strategy, “Sequential explanatory”, as stated by Creswell and Plano Clark (2013) with the definition that “quantitative data is collected and analyzed in the initial stage of the research, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data” (as cited in Santos et al., 2017: 4). In addition, it was explained with the statement of “QUAN → qual” which means ‘a study conducted quantitatively’ followed by ‘a study conducted qualitatively.’ Dörnyei (2007: 171) claims that it is easy to apply explanatory research design and analyse the data, and it conveys rich ultimate findings. Besides, according to Dörnyei, “QUAN → qual” is ‘questionnaire survey with follow-up interview or retrospection’ (2017: 170). This research design enables researchers to reach an enormous capacity of data in an even limited time. On the other hand, the weakness of the method is that there can not be reached complex and context-bound meanings from the data since it is necessary to set interrelations among acquired knowledge, and when the unexpected results appeared it is difficult to evaluate them with just questionnaires. Supporting the questionnaire with a qualitative study takes away the weakness of the study (Dörnyei, 2007: 170). In the present study, at first, quantitative data was gathered via questionnaires and qualitative data was gathered via interviews afterwards. The leading research design types in the study are mixed and explanatory designs. The quantitative data collected through questionnaires from the participants of Erasmus Programme were examined in SPSS descriptive analysis and the qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews from the volunteers of the participants in questionnaire and open-ended questions in questionnaires were

examined in content analysis. In addition, as Hair (2014: 92) stated if there appeared correlation among variables the ways such as ‘grouping highly correlated variables together, labeling or naming the groups, and perhaps even creating a new composite measure that can represent each group of variables’ needed to be implemented. Therefore, Exploratory Factor Analysis was also implemented for the analysis of quantitative data for the purpose of interpreting similar statements in similar groups, and revealing the significant differences among variables.

Although the main data collection method of the study was quantitative, the Erasmus students were also invited to participate in an interview in order to reach detailed information and generalized understandings for the research questions. The questionnaire prepared for Erasmus outgoing students was sent to all participants from four state universities in Turkey. On the other hand, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the volunteers. The students were informed that the information gathered from them would be used nowhere except for this research. The questionnaire was sent to students’ emails acquired from International Relations Offices of the participated universities. The questionnaire was designed with Google forms. The aim of the study was stated at the beginning of the mail and the questionnaire. At the last part of the questionnaire, the students were asked if they were volunteer to join the interview. If they approved to be interviewed, they would type their contact information to be called later for the appointments. The language of the questionnaire and the interviews were Turkish since the students could express themselves explicitly and easily in their mother tongue. The duration of questionnaire was on average of 15 minutes whereas the duration of interview was approximately 30 - 45 minutes.

### **2.3. Setting and Participants**

The population of the study is Erasmus outgoing students who studied in European universities within the framework of Erasmus+ SMS programme from four different state universities; Karadeniz Technical University, Atatürk University, Ondokuz Mayıs University and Aydın Adnan Menderes University during the academic years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18. The study included ‘convenience sampling method’ put forward by Dörnyei (2007) which means “a type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study” (as cited in Etikan et al., 2016: 2).

Karadeniz Technical University was selected as the main sample for the study since it is one of the universities that have large budget for Student Mobility Programme out of 15 universities at the top of the list. In addition, it is easy to contact with Erasmus students from KTU than the others. The number of the distribution of participants supports this statement. From 2015 to 2018, 559 students (the students participated the programme more than once within the stated academic years

were evaluated as once) received international education as Erasmus students in European countries. Out of 559 Erasmus students, 207 of them became volunteer to take part in the study. It is equal to 37% of the participation from the whole population. KTU's population of Erasmus outgoing students for studies is approximately 200 for one academic year. The other universities for instance, Ondokuz Mayıs University nearly send 150 Erasmus students per an academic year, and Atatürk University and Adnan Menderes University send approximately 75 students to study abroad for a term or two terms (Turkish National Agency, 2012c). 35 Erasmus students participated the study from Ondokuz Mayıs University; 32 students from Atatürk University became the part of study and the number of Erasmus students from Aydın Adnan Mendered University is 15. Totally, the whole population of the study became 289 Erasmus students who benefited from SMS from four different universities in Turkey. It is shown with the percentages as below:

**Table 4: Distribution of Participants from Four Universities with Percentages**

University	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
KTU	207	71,6
OMU	35	12,1
AU	32	11,1
AMU	15	5,2
<b>TOTAL</b>	289	100

The second item in the questionnaire is the participants' age. As it is seen from Table 5 below, majority of students from 4 universities were aged between 19 and 22 with the percentage of 66,4. The age range shows that the undergraduate students outnumber the graduate ones.

**Table 5: Distribution of Total Participants According to Age**

Age	f	%
19-22	192	66,4
23-26	58	20,1
27+	29	10,0
Missing	10	3,5
<b>TOTAL</b>	289	100

The third item in the questionnaire is the participants' gender. As Table 6 shows below, among 289 Erasmus students who participated in the questionnaire, 129 (44, 6%) of them are female and 160 (55, 4%) of them are males. It can be said that male students outnumber the female students by a percentage of 10,8%.

**Table 6: Distribution of Total Participants According to Gender**

Gender	f	%
Female	129	44,6
Male	160	55,4
<b>TOTAL</b>	289	100

The fourth item in the questionnaire is the participants' nationality. According to Table 7 below, 269 (93,1%) participants forming the majority of the group are Turkish while only 20 (6,9%) students are from other nationalities.

**Table 7: Distribution of Total Participants According to Nationality**

Nationality	f	%
Turkish	269	93,1
Other Nationality	20	6,9
<b>TOTAL</b>	289	100

The fifth item in the questionnaire is the participants' academic level. According to Table 8 following, 234 undergraduate students with the percentage of 81% formed the majority of the participant group. 55 (19%) students who filled the questionnaire were graduates.

**Table 8: Distribution of Total Participants According to Academic Level**

Academic Level	f	%
Undergraduate	234	81
Graduate	55	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	289	100

The sixth item in the questionnaire is the participants' departments. Table 9 shows the departments of students at home institution. Upon the answers from the student, there formed 67 different departments. The questionnaire was filled mostly by the students from the department of English Language and Literature (f=31 and p=10,7%). The second highest number of students are from the department of International Relations (f=25 and p=8,7%). The third department is Civil Engineering with 23 students and percentage of 8,0%.

**Table 9: Demographic Data of Participants According to Departments**

Department	TOTAL	
	f	%
Architecture	10	3,5
Agricultural Biotechnology	1	0,3
Aviation Management	1	0,3
Biology	1	0,3
Business Administration	11	3,8
Catering Management	1	0,3
Civil Aviation Transport Management	1	0,3
Civil Engineering	23	8,0
Classroom Education	1	0,3
Coaching Education	1	0,3
Computer Engineering	9	3,1
Economics	2	0,7
Economics and Finance	2	0,7
Electrical and Electronic Engineering	15	5,2
Elementary Mathematics Education	2	0,7
Energy Systems Engineering	2	0,7
English Language and Literature	31	10,7
English Teaching	13	4,5
Finance	4	1,4
Fine Arts	1	0,3
Food Engineering	1	0,3
Forest Engineering	1	0,3
Forest Industry Engineering	1	0,3
French Teaching	2	0,7
Geological Engineering	1	0,3
Geomatic Engineering	7	2,4
German Language and Literature	1	0,3
German Teaching	2	0,7
History	1	0,3
Industrial Engineering	7	2,4
Interior Design	2	0,7
International Economics	1	0,3
International Relations	25	8,7
International Trade and Logistics	3	1,0
Journalism	1	0,3
Labour Economics and Industrial Relations	1	0,3
Landscape Architecture	2	0,7
Law	8	2,8
Management Information Systems	2	0,7
Maritime Transportation and Management Engineering	8	2,8
Mechanical Engineering	15	5,2
Medicine	3	1,0
Metallurgical and Materials Engineering	4	1,4
Mining Engineering	5	1,7
Music Education	2	0,7
Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering	1	0,3
New Turkish Literature	1	0,3
Nursing	2	0,7
Pharmacy	3	1,0

**Table 9 Continued**

Philosophy and Regional Sciences	1	0,3
Physical Education and Sports Teaching	1	0,3
Political Sciences	1	0,3
Political Sciences and Public Administration	1	0,3
Preschool Education	3	1,0
Psychological Counseling and Guidance	5	1,7
Psychology of Religion	1	0,3
Public Administration	13	4,5
Public Relations and Advertising	3	1,0
Russian Language and Literature	4	1,4
Science Education	2	0,7
Social Sciences Education	1	0,3
Sociology	1	0,3
Software Engineering	1	0,3
Statistics and Computer Sciences	2	0,7
Tourist Guiding	1	0,3
Turkish Teaching	1	0,3
Veterinary Medicine	2	0,7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 10 below shows the academic fields of students at home institution classified under 4 headings as Language, Science, Social and Health. The main aim of the classification was to analyze the differences among departments in terms of Erasmus effects. That there were 67 different departments in the study made it difficult to analyze data. By classifying the departments into academic groups, the analysis was done more comprehensible while implementing ANOVA test. In addition, since the linguistic departments would like to be examined particularly as separate, they were evaluated as a unique academic field instead of examining with social departments. As it is shown in Table 10, most of the students (f=125 and p=43,3%) participated in the questionnaire are from science fields and the next highest number of students (f=101 and p=34,9%) are from social sciences. The third academic field is language field with 53 students and percentage of 18,3% and, 10 (3,5%) of the students are from health sciences.

**Table 10: Demographic Data of Participants According to Academic Fields**

<b>Academic Fields</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Language</b>	53	18,3
<b>Science</b>	125	43,3
<b>Social</b>	101	34,9
<b>Health</b>	10	3,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

The seventh and eighth item in the questionnaire are the academic years and terms of the students. As Table 11 illustrates, the majority of the students participated in the questionnaire are from 2017-18 academic year with the number of 142 students (49,1%). 74 (25,6%) of the total

students are from 2016-17 academic year while the number in 2015-16 is 73 (25,3%). In addition, the table also shows that most of the students who took part in questionnaire studied as Erasmus students for one semester with a number of 273. 16 of them are one year students.

**Table 11: Distribution of Total Participants According to Academic Years and Terms**

Academic Year	One Term (Winter or Spring)		Two Terms (Winter + Spring)		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
2015-16	70	25,6	3	18,8	73	25,3
2016-17	71	26,0	3	18,8	74	25,6
2017-18	132	48,4	10	62,5	142	49,1
<b>TOTAL</b>	273	100	16	100	289	100

Table 12 below indicates that the majority of the students preferred Poland for their Erasmus program with a number of 69 students (23,9%). Hungary is at the second stage with 33 students (11,4%), and Portugal is following with the number of 31 students (10,7%).

**Table 12: Distribution of Participants from Four Universities According to Visited Countries**

Countries	Universities								TOTAL (Within Countries)	
	Karadeniz Technical University		Ondokuz Mayıs University		Atatürk University		Adnan Menderes University			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Austria	2	1	3	8,6	-	-	-	-	5	1,7
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6,7	1	0,3
Czechia	13	6,3	7	20	4	12,5	-	-	24	8,3
Denmark	1	0,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0,3
Estonia	3	1,4	3	8,6	1	3,1	-	-	7	2,4
France	2	1	2	5,7	-	-	-	-	4	1,4
Germany	13	6,3	3	8,6	5	15,6	-	-	21	7,3
Greece	1	0,5	1	2,9	-	-	-	-	2	0,7
Hungary	27	13	-	-	4	12,5	2	13,3	33	11,4
Italy	26	12,6	3	8,6	1	3,3	-	-	30	10,4
Latvia	2	1	-	-	2	6,3	2	13,3	6	2,1
Lithuania	10	4,8	-	-	2	6,3	3	20	15	5,2
Poland	46	22,2	6	17,1	11	34,4	6	40	69	23,9
Portugal	30	14,5	1	2,9	-	-	-	-	31	10,7
Romania	11	5,3	1	2,9	1	3,1	-	-	13	4,5
Slovakia	5	2,4	-	-	1	3,1	1	6,7	7	2,4
Slovenia	1	0,5	4	11,4	-	-	-	-	5	1,7
Spain	11	5,3	1	2,9	-	-	-	-	12	4,2
Sweden	1	0,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0,3
United Kingdom	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0,7
<b>TOTAL</b>	207	100	35	100	32	100	15	100	289	100

## **2.4. Data Collection**

### **2.4.1. Data Collection Tools**

Questionnaire forms and semi-structured interviews were used as data collection tools in order to collect data about the connection between Erasmus Mobility programme and the linguistic and academic effects on students. The data gathered from the surveying method were examined by qualitatively and quantitatively in order to examine the relationship between the variables. Besides, in order to find out linguistic and academic competences during Erasmus programme in terms of contributions, difficulties and in fact, the impacts of the programme on students and to reach comprehensive information, questionnaire survey was chosen. As Dörnyei (2007: 101-102) states, questionnaire surveys “are relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processible.” In addition, in Dörnyei’s study (2007: 102) three question types that questionnaires measure were given: “factual questions; behavioural questions and attitudinal questions.” In this study, the questionnaire implemented on Erasmus students includes all three mentioned question types as demographic questions, the questions related to their previous actions and the questions asking their opinions by focusing on their experience.

#### **2.4.1.1. Questionnaire**

In order to develop the scale of the questionnaire and to define the aim and the contents of the questionnaire, the researcher reviewed the literature and applied the opinions of advisor and experts for the questions. The questionnaire was prepared at the beginning of November 2018 and it was viewed by the advisor. Supplementations and regulations were done by the advisor and the questionnaire was formed again. Every item in the questionnaire was examined in detail in order to be understood with the same meaning for all participants.

The process of data collection started with examining the key words in academic area: Erasmus, Erasmus Student Mobility, Erasmus effects, linguistic side of Erasmus, and academic side of Erasmus. Books, Erasmus handbooks, articles, and related questionnaires were investigated in detail to determine the specific points of the study. Since linguistic effects and academical effects were supposed to be experienced much more than the other effects and to share close subject areas, it was decided to make progress in that way.

In order to form a questionnaire related to the topic of the study, it is enlightened from the study of Aydın (2012), professor at the Department of English Language Teaching at Istanbul Medeniyet University now, who used for the research “I am not the same after my ERASMUS.” In addition,



the interview questions of Certel (2010), the author of the master thesis “Erasmus Öğrenci Değişim Programına Katılan Türk Öğrencilerin Akademik Yaşantılarının Nitel Olarak İncelenmesi” were examined and the researcher gained inspiration while preparing the items for academical approach. The current questionnaire were formed by adopting the statements that took part in these two studies by getting direct items in some parts and making some changes in some items on condition that it was compatible with the context. Moreover, experiencing Erasmus Programme in all its aspects and being familiar with all stages during 11 years at Erasmus Office, some of the items were prepared by the researcher upon the long years of working experience at Erasmus Office. Online questionnaire survey via Gmail forms was used to learn the experiences of Erasmus students in linguistic and academic frames. Using online survey enables researcher to reach more participants via emails. Also, it enables to send reminder emails to non-respondents.

The language of the questionnaire was Turkish. It was planned under four parts. The first part includes the demographic questions and preparatory questions for Erasmus participants before starting to the main context of the study. The second part includes the views of the students in terms of benefits of the programme linguistically and academically. The third part investigates the difficulties the students experience during exchange programme abroad. The fourth part focuses on the possible solutions by the students to difficult situations. The last three parts indicate the linguistic and academic evaluation of the programme from the perspective of Erasmus students. Five-point likert scale was used for quantitative questions to respond the items related to linguistic and academic development of the programme, problems faced as linguistically and vocationally and the keys for removing difficulties faced as linguistically and academically during the programme. A five-point likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) was employed to search the linguistic and academical contributions and difficulties of the programme, and solutions to the difficulties. Detailed information for the implemented questionnaire composing of 4 parts is revealed below.

Part I: The first part includes totally 16 items including demographic questions, the questions asking background information related to being abroad and linguistic preparation and open-ended questions. Aiming to reach confidential data, the questionnaire was prepared as anonymously. The questionnaire was anonymous in order to obtain accurate results. There are two subtitles under this part: Demographic Information and Initial Information for the Questionnaire. The first nine questions at the first subtitle ask to obtain demographic information of the respondents aiming to learn the age, gender, nationality, academic level, the department, the duration of visit, and the visited country. The next seven questions at the second subtitle intend to learn Erasmus background of the respondents such as abroad and linguistic experience, and the language of the host intitution. In addition, three open-ended questions in this subtitle try to obtain the reasons for attending Erasmus Programme, in which aspects the programme have made contributions to students’ life and what Erasmus Programme means for them in three words.

Part II: The second part consists of likert scale questions. The contributions of Erasmus Programme were trying to be gathered in this part under two subtitles: linguistic contributions and academic contributions. There are 11 questions examining the contributions of the programme on linguistic competence. In addition, there are eight questions examining the academical contributions of the programme.

Part III: The third part also includes likert scale questions. It comprises of the questions asking the linguistic and academic difficulties Erasmus students experience about studying abroad. There are seven items aiming to identify the linguistic difficulties, and eight items designating academic difficulties.

Part IV: The last part of the questionnaire also investigates the answers to the questions via likert scale statements. The questions are about the solutions to difficulties developed by the students to make their new linguistic and academic life better. The linguistic solutions are comprised of six items, and the academic solutions contain five items.

The questionnaire composing the main core of the study consisted of four parts and 61 items. At the end of the questionnaire, the students were asked whether they were volunteer to participate in interview section. The voluteers were expected to designate their contact information to provide communication at a later time.

#### **2.4.1.2. Semi-structured Interview**

After completing the process of the implementation of questionnaire and reaching the responses by the participants, semi-structured interview was put into process. In order to reach more comprehensive information with examples by students and to present rich data about their opinions and experiences and to fill the gaps not acquired fully via questionnaire, semi-structure interviews were applied. For the present study, 25 students took part in the interview section.

Longhurst (2003: 143) describes semi-structured interview with the following statement:

A semi-structured interview is a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions. Although the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important.

Laforest (2009: 1) explains that semi-structured interviews are utilized to collect data while studying with small number of participants and it is easy with them to reach a deep understanding of perceptions and problems. He also underlines that they “are useful for studying specific

situations or for supplementing and validating information derived from other sources used for making safety diagnoses.”

The researcher developed the interview questions herself. The items of the questionnaire were taken into consideration while the questions of the interview were being prepared. In addition, the components of the interview especially focusing on the outcomes of Aydın’s study (2012: 19-23) were formed in consideration of the knowledge obtained from the literature related to the research questions. Based on the suggestions of the advisor and experts who were at the same time ex-Erasmus students, the questions took their final form.

The semi-structured interview questions were collected under five headings with totally 11 questions. The first three questions were concerned with the contributions of Erasmus Programme in terms of linguistic and academic aspects and asked what kind of contributions Erasmus Programme provided students in their lives and how. The following three questions in the second section sought the difficulties faced by the Erasmus students during Erasmus process in terms of linguistic and academic aspects, and also the biggest hardships experienced. The next two questions in third part dealt with the solutions to linguistic and academic difficulties found by Erasmus participants. The next two questions at the next part focused on the observations by the students in terms of linguistic and academic changes or differences before and after Erasmus Study Programme. Finally, the last question at fifth part was asking the inadequacies of the programme in students’ eyes and the suggestions for the authorities.

The study followed quota sampling method while deciding on the numbers, genders, the visited countries and the departments of the students. The researcher can assign quota for each group. According to Cohen et al., (2018: 218) there are factors reflecting the characteristics of the population and limitations to decide for the numbers of the samples. In addition, they (2018: 218) state that “a quota sample strives to represent significant characteristics (strata) of the wider population and sets out to represent these in the proportions in which they can be found in the wider population.”

**Table 13: Demographic Data of Participants from Four Universities Involved in Interviews for the Qualitative Section of the Study**

University	Code of the Student	Department	Gender	Academic Level	Duration of Stay	Visited Country	Interview Date
KTU (20 students)	ES1	Business Administration	Female	Undergraduate	Spring	Germany	11.03.2019
	ES2	Civil Engineering	Male	Undergraduate	Spring	Poland	12.03.2019
	ES3		Male	Undergraduate	One Year	Portugal	12.03.2019
	ES4	Coaching Education	Male	Undergraduate	One Year	Italy	11.03.2019
	ES5	Electrical and Electronic Engineering	Female	Undergraduate	Spring	Poland	08.03.2019
	ES6	English Language and Literature	Female	Undergraduate	Spring	Romania	08.03.2019
	ES7		Male	Undergraduate	One Year	Hungary	08.03.2019
	ES8		Female	Undergraduate	One Year	Italy	11.03.2019
	ES9		Female	Undergraduate	Spring	United Kingdom	09.03.2019
	ES10		Female	Undergraduate	Winter	Poland	11.03.2019
	ES11	English Teaching	Female	Undergraduate	One Year	Czechia	12.03.2019
	ES12	International Relations	Male	Graduate	Spring	Slovakia	12.03.2019
	ES13		Female	Undergraduate	Winter	France	13.03.2017
	ES14	Maritime Transportation and Management Engineering	Male	Undergraduate	Winter	Estonia	08.03.2019
	ES15		Male	Undergraduate	Winter	Latvia	11.03.2019
	ES16	Mining Engineering	Male	Undergraduate	Spring	Austria	11.03.2019
	ES17		Male	Undergraduate	Winter	Spain	12.03.2019
	ES18	Preschool Education	Female	Undergraduate	Spring	Portugal	08.03.2019
	ES19	Psychological Counseling and Guidance	Male	Undergraduate	One Year	Lithuania	13.03.2019
	ES20	Public Administration	Male	Undergraduate	One Year	Hungary	08.03.2019
OMU (1 student)	ES21	International Trade and Logistics	Female	Undergraduate	Winter	Greece	18.03.2019
AU (2 students)	ES22	English Teaching	Male	Undergraduate	Spring	Hungary	15.03.2019
	ES23	Law	Male	Undergraduate	Winter	Poland	17.03.2019
AMU (2 students)	ES24	Psychological Counseling and Guidance	Male	Undergraduate	One Year	Hungary	18.03.2019
	ES25	Public Relations and Advertising	Female	Undergraduate	One Year	Poland	15.03.2019

According to Table 13 above, it can be stated that the students were coded as Erasmus Student (ES) + Ranking (Number). The table was sorted by firstly universities and then departments.

### **2.4.1.3. The Pilot Study**

A pilot study is defined “as small-scale versions of the planned study, trial runs of planned methods/measures, or miniature versions of the anticipated research in order to” evaluate the validity of the research study, check the sufficiency of methodological tools and to catch the problems before data collection process (Prescott and Soeken, 1989: 60). For this reason, it is needed to pre-test the questionnaire and interview of the research study before it is shared with the main participants. The aim of implementing questionnaire or interview as a pilot study before the main implementation is to see if the questions are understood with the same meanings by all participants in practice, if there are any mistakes to be corrected, and if there are unnecessary items unrelated to the research study.

The questionnaire was piloted twice with different groups of ex-Erasmus students, and at the end of two piloting process the questionnaire was examined by the advisor of the researcher. The questionnaire was implemented at first via Word format as presented at the end of survey as a pilot study. It was administered with five ex-Erasmus students from the department of English Language and Literature who are academicians now (two of them are at Karadeniz Technical University; one of them is at Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University; one of them is at Artvin Çoruh University and the last one is from Trabzon University). This process of the study is getting expert opinions both as students and as academicians. They both filled the form and examined the study to present feedback to the researcher, to check the conformity with items and the topic of the study, and to view design of the study. The draft form of semi-structured interview was also shared with them to check the questions if they were related to questionnaire, research questions and the research topic of the study. At that time, there were 19 interview questions. The number of interview questions was diminished to 15 by putting the close questions together in one question. With the correction and combination of some questions by the advisor, the number of semi-structured interview questions became 11 as finalized.

The feedbacks and the adjustments were gathered from the first participants of the pilot study and the questions in the questionnaire were examined again with the advisor of the researcher at the end of November 2018. The pilot study of the questionnaire showed the researcher that the word format of the survey could be difficult for the actual participants to respond the questions. It was because the ex-Erasmus students had to download the form on their computer after getting e-mail from the researcher, and they had to save it and fill and send to the researcher again via e-mail. The prepared format also wasn't active on mobile phones which students carried with them continuously. In addition, since we live in a technological era and can't live without smart phones and the students carry out most of their works online via smart phones, the way of filling the survey had to be practical for the students. The researcher decided to prepare questionnaire via Google drive as online form so that it would be easy for students to reach the questionnaire. On 10th of

December, the questionnaire was turned into an online survey. One of the reasons why the researcher selected online Google form as a survey method is that the system makes it possible to obtain the data gathered via questionnaires in excel form and it provides easiness for the researcher at the stage of transferring data to SPSS program.

The questionnaire was examined again by the researcher and the advisor and on 15th of December, 2018 the second pilot study was carried out with seven ex-Erasmus students whom the researcher were in contact by sending the questionnaire via Google form as online. The samples consisted of six Erasmus students from KTU, and one Erasmus student from Gazi University. The researcher sent the questionnaire to their message box as online link. Within two days the survey was responded by seven ex-Erasmus students. The aim of this step was to check whether the online form was receiving answers without any problem as expected. The respondents were asked to respond the questionnaire and inform the researcher if they noticed any modification or omission related to the items and experienced any difficulty with the new format of the questionnaire. They were also asked to define the duration of the questionnaire while filling to inform the main respondents later.

While checking the responses, it was noticed that some questions should have been multiple choice instead of open-ended questions because when the participant replied the question, there would be wrong or incomplete word in open-ended responses. As an example, the question ‘the teaching language of the institution’ in the first part was prepared as open-ended. One of the students replied as ‘ingilizce’ and one of the other students replied as ‘İNGİLİZCE’. The Google form perceived these two answers as different languages even if they were the same words and one of them was written in small letters and the other in capital letters. So, this question was turned into a multiple choice question. In order to classify the items in the analysis research, this change made it easy for the researcher. The last check was done by the researcher and the academic advisor on 18th of December, 2018 and the researcher began to send questionnaire form from Gmail account prepared via Google form to the main participants of the study on 19th of December, 2018.

#### **2.4.2. Data Collection Process**

The questionnaire and semi-structured interview were the main instruments for the present research, and the participants of the study were Erasmus outgoing students for studies from Turkey who completed their Erasmus era within the academic years 2015 and 2018. The e-mail list of Erasmus students for Student Mobility Programme for the years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 were gathered from International Relations Office of KTU, and the questionnaire was sent them via e-mail. For the other universities, the questionnaire was sent to the representatives of International Offices at Ondokuz Mayıs University, Atatürk University, Aydın Adnan Menderes University, Erciyes University, Karabük University and Celal Bayar University to share the questionnaire with

their Erasmus students at the mentioned academic years. Consent was received from the representatives of International Offices of the participating universities before the students were asked to fill in the questionnaire. In addition, at the beginning of the e-mail and the questionnaire the students were informed in Turkish that the data to be gathered from them would be utilized just for academic study. The volunteer participants completed the questionnaire to join the study by presenting their Erasmus experiences related to linguistic and academic developments, difficulties and solutions. There was no student participation from Erciyes University, Karabük University and Celal Bayar University to fill the questionnaire. It can be because of technical problems related to e-mail sending system.

There were difficulties experienced with the online questionnaire, either. Since the pilot study was implemented with a small group, the difficulty was not caught at that period. Using Google form as a questionnaire application made it difficult to send the form at one time to all participants since the mail sending limit for one day includes 100 recipients. The population of Erasmus students for three academic year was 559 for KTU. It took six days to send questionnaires to KTU Erasmus students' emails from KTU one by one via Google form. This step was preferred to reach more students. However, since the representatives of other universities sent the form directly to all e-mail addresses of participants by their official e-mail via online link, they achieved to reach all participants in one day but few participants filled the questionnaire by this way. On 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, the number of Erasmus students who participated the questionnaire of the study was 120. In order to reach more accurate data, the researcher needed to increase the number of participants. On 7<sup>th</sup> of January, the researcher began to send e-mail reminders to nonrespondents to incorporate more participants in the research study. After two and half months later, the number of Erasmus students was 289, and it was decided to complete questionnaire process.

The next step of the study after questionnaire process was the implementation of semi-structured interview with the volunteer Erasmus students filling out the questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in an attempt to support and strengthen the data obtained through the questionnaire and provide the trustworthiness of the study. Out of 289 students completing the questionnaire, 57 of them agreed to join interview section. 25 Erasmus students out of 57 were decided to be interviewed. The students who were interviewed constituted 8,6% of the total students participated in the questionnaire. 20 of the interviewed students were from Karadeniz Technical University, two from Adnan Menderes University, two from Atatürk University and one from Ondokuz Mayıs University. Of those 25 respondents, the number of male students was 14 while the female students were 11. While selecting the students for the interview, different terms, different nationalities, different countries and different departments were taken into consideration in order to provide variety among participants. The number of students from linguistic departments is higher than the other departments since most of the participants in the study are from linguistic departments.

The researcher prepared an interview schedule by getting contact with the respondents to decide for the day and the exact time to conduct the interview. They were informed that the interview would take almost one hour. Four of the students would like to participate in this section by obtaining the questions via e-mail in word file. One of the students accepted to make interview face-to-face at the researcher's office and since the other students were in different cities, they agreed to conduct the interview via social media applications in a synchronous mode. The language of the interview was Turkish. The comfort of the participants while answering the questions of the interview was the most significant item. The researcher was in front of the smart phone at the scheduled time. The researcher asked the questions one by one, and the interviewee answered one by one. In some parts, the researcher asked the respondents to make the answer explicit or give examples to the statements. The entire interview was carried out in friendly conversations and correspondences. In addition, all the interviews were transcribed at the end of every interview conversation. As it was seen in table 13, it took 10 days to complete interview process.

## **2.5. Data Analysis**

The research study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods during the the process of data analysis. The data obtained through the questionnaire were analyzed through descriptive statistical techniques which provide the information via numerical summaries and factor analysis in SPSS program (v.25). The data collected from the Erasmus participants via online questionnaire were extracted from google forms as in the Excel file, and were transferred into SPSS. In this respect, Larson (2006: 76) states that "Data analysis begins with calculation of descriptive statistics for the research variables. These statistics summarize various aspects about the data, giving details about the sample and providing information about the population from which the sample was drawn." However, the open-ended questions in questionnaire were examined in a qualitative content analysis. In addition, independent samples T-Test and ANOVA was conducted for the research by using SPSS programme with intent of examining statistically whether there were meaningful differences between the means of two independent groups.

The Cronbach's Alpha value, coefficient of reliability, of the whole questionnaire was 0,789. It is the value indicating the level of consistency and integrity among the questions in surveying the same variable. The values over 0.60 or 0.70 were evaluated as reliable (Van Griethuijsen et al., 2015: 588). In addition, according to Taber's study (2017: 1278) the value of the present study can be described as fairly high since the value is between 0.76 and 0.95. In addition, Exploratory Factor Analysis was also utilized for the analysis of quantitative data for the purpose of interpreting fewer variables instead of large number of variables considered to have common relationship by omitting unique and error variances (whose percentage is under 50%). The questions in the questionnaire were evaluated according to Exploratory Factor Analysis and formed seven groups which came together since they were perceived as common contexts. Van Griethuijsen et al. (2015: 588) claim



that “exploratory factor analysis was used to reduce the large numbers of items to a smaller set of factors to make international comparison more straightforward. Factor analysis was carried out using the entire sample.”

In analyzing qualitative data, content analysis was used to analyse data gained through semi-structured interviews to make interpretations. According to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017: 94),

The objective in qualitative content analysis is to systematically transform a large amount of text into a highly organised and concise summary of key results. Analysis of the raw data from verbatim transcribed interviews to form categories or themes is a process of further abstraction of data at each step of the analysis; from the manifest and literal content to latent meanings.

The written forms of interviews were read several times to catch the presence of repetitive concepts to understand the view or comments of the students for the question. The questions were evaluated as focusing on the same question from all participants. The similar expressions were summarized in small phrases by taking notes. The data was classified into manageable and meaningful titles extracted from the data by not disregarding the real meaning of the reply. As Flick (2018: 423) states “coding is a process of labelling and categorizing data as a first step in the analysis.” In the present study, the themes or codes were formed by the researcher predicated on the answers received by the students. This type of organisation of texts is defined as ‘coding scheme’ in literature review. Erlingsson and Brysiewicz explains this process under four steps “ a) familiarising oneself with the data and the hermeneutic spiral, b) dividing up the text into meaning units and subsequently condensing these meaning units, c) formulating codes, and d) developing categories and themes” (2017: 95). The present study examining the questions one by one formed encoded categories for the responses from students to evaluate the texts in short.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, analysis of the data collected through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Quantitative and qualitative techniques have been applied in the study. The aim of the analysis is to reveal the effects of Erasmus Programme on Erasmus students in terms of linguistic and academic development. The findings are presented via tables.

#### 3.2. Analysis of Initial Information for the Questionnaire

This section includes the analysis of seven questions taking part in the initial information section of the questionnaire. Frequency tables for each item were presented and they were followed by their interpretations. The first question in this section was the “previous abroad experience.” The second question was a follow-up for those students who answered yes to the first question: the students replied the visited countries as only “Georgia” and “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” were evaluated as no previous abroad experience. It was thought that these countries were very close to home country and the participants made for short-term travels, and therefore their possible roles in language development were disregarded. Only one table was used for two questions. As it is indicated in Table 14 below, most of the students ( $f=207$  and  $p=71,6\%$ ) had no previous abroad experience before Erasmus SMS Programme. On the other hand, 82 of the students ( $28,4\%$ ) had visited Europe, USA or different countries around the world before attending Erasmus SMS Programme.

**Table 14: Previous Abroad Experience**

Previous Abroad Experience	f	%
Yes	82	28,4
No	207	71,6
<b>TOTAL</b>	289	100

The third question in this section was “the teaching language at the host institution.” As can be seen from Table 15 illustrated below, majority of the students ( $f=190$  and  $p=65,7\%$ ) were taught in English or most of the courses were in English during their Erasmus period. However, 99 of the

students (p=34,3%) responded that they took courses in different languages except for English during their Erasmus stay.

**Table 15: Teaching Language of the Host Institution**

Teaching Language of the Host Institution	f	%
English	190	65,7
Other	99	34,3
<b>TOTAL</b>	289	100

The fourth question in this section asked whether the students attended an English language course before Erasmus SMS Programme. According to Table 16 below, majority of the students (f=216 and p=74,7%) participated in a language course in order to develop their foreign language before Erasmus Programme. On the other hand, 73 of the participants (25,3%) did not attend any language course before going abroad via Erasmus Programme.

**Table 16: Previous Language Learning Experience**

Previous Language Learning Experience	f	%
Yes	73	25,3
No	216	74,7
<b>TOTAL</b>	289	100

The fifth question in this section was about “the reasons influencing students to participate in the Programme.” As can be observed in Table 17, socio-cultural reasons including living in a different society and with different people from different cultures (f=123 and p=42,5%) were the most popular items marked by the students. It was followed by personal development item with 77 students and a percentage of 26,6%. Developing linguistic skills or acquiring language ranked among the third place with 75 students and a percentage of 25,9%. They were followed by the reasons related to academic attitudes (f=46 and p=15,9%), travelling (f=2 and p=0,6%), achieving the dreams (f=1 and p=0,3%), career (f=1 and p=0,3%) and money (f=1 and p=0,3%).

**Table 17: Students' Reasons for Participating in the Programme**

Reasons for Participating to Erasmus Student Mobility	f	%
<b>Socio-cultural</b>	123	42,5
<b>Personal Development</b>	77	26,6
<b>Linguistic</b>	75	25,9
<b>Academic</b>	46	15,9
<b>Travelling</b>	2	0,6
<b>Making the Dreams Come True</b>	1	0,3
<b>Career</b>	1	0,3
<b>Money</b>	1	0,3
<b>Entertainment</b>	1	0,3
<b>TOTAL</b>	289	100

The sixth question in this section was about “the most significant contribution of the Programme” according to Erasmus participants. Based in the Table 18 below, most of the students (f=110 and p=38%) seemed to consider that socio-cultural contributions were higher than the other contributions. Other contributions were personal development (f=99 and p=34,2%), linguistic aspect (f=73 and p=25,2%), academic aspect (f=22 and p=7,6%), travelling (f=2 and p=0,6%), career (f=1 and p=0,3%) and money (f=1 and p=0,3%).

**Table 18: The Most Important Contribution of the Programme**

The Most Important Contribution of the Programme	f	%
<b>Socio-cultural</b>	110	38
<b>Personal Development</b>	99	34,2
<b>Linguistic</b>	73	25,2
<b>Academic</b>	22	7,6
<b>Travelling</b>	2	0,6
<b>Career</b>	1	0,3
<b>Money</b>	1	0,3
<b>TOTAL</b>	289	100

The seventh and the last question in this section was about “the most popular three words while summarizing Erasmus experience.” The collected data from the respondents were analyzed via qualitative design by using content analysis, and the results were given in the Table 19 in frequencies and percentages. The words repeated 20 times or more were selected and listed. There were 11 words uttered more than 20 times. Close and similar statements were evaluated as same. As can be seen in Table 19, the most repeated word by the respondents is ‘entertainment’ or ‘entertaining’. It was repeated by 61 students (p=21,1%). It was followed by ‘culture’, repeated by 59 participants (p=20,4%) and the similar adjectives such as ‘wonderful, fantastic, awesome, fascinating and magnificent’ repeated by 56 students (p=19,3%).

**Table 19: The Three Words Summarizing Erasmus Experience**

<b>The Most Repeated Words While Explaining Erasmus Programme</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Entertainment / Entertaining</b>	61	21,1
<b>Culture</b>	59	20,4
<b>Wonderful / Fantastic / Awesome / Fascinating / Magnificent</b>	56	19,3
<b>Experience</b>	55	19
<b>Travel</b>	41	14,1
<b>Excitement / Excited / Adventure / Adventurous</b>	36	12,4
<b>Language</b>	27	9,3
<b>Perspective / World-view / Vision</b>	25	8,6
<b>Development / Developer</b>	24	8,3
<b>Personal Development</b>	23	7,9
<b>Friend / Friendship</b>	20	6,9

### **3.3. Analysis of Quantitative Data Collected Through the Main Parts of Questionnaire**

In this part, the quantitative data collected through questionnaire completed by 289 Erasmus students were examined in SPSS-25 by using descriptive statistics, factor analysis, T-Test and ANOVA test. This process was evaluated in accordance with the research questions of the study.

This study followed the multivariate statistical technique of Hair (2014) by implementing exploratory factor analysis. Since the study includes many variables, it is needed to manage the variables via factor analysis. Hair (2014: 89) defines the multivariate statistical technique of factor analysis as below:

a technique particularly suitable for analysing the patterns of complex, multidimensional relationships encountered by researchers. It defines and explains in broad, conceptual terms the fundamental aspects of factor analytic techniques. Factor analysis can be utilized to examine the underlying patterns or relationships for a large number of variables and to determine whether the information can be condensed or summarized in a smaller set of factors or components.

#### **3.3.1. Analysis of Contributions, Difficulties and Solutions of Erasmus Programme**

This section indicated the analysis of the responses given to the questions and assessed the findings by focusing on the mean of the items through three tables below. A reliability analysis was done for the items in the second, third and fourth parts of questionnaire via SPSS-25. There were 19 items in the second part (contributions), 15 items in the third part (difficulties) and 11 items in the fourth part (solutions). The frequencies, percentages and overall averages of the answers to these questions were illustrated in Table 20 below. Cronbach's Alpha value for Part 2 was calculated as 0.893, for Part 3 as 0.775 and for Part 4 as 0.676. Since Cronbach's Alpha value over 0.70 is considered as more acceptable level of reliability, the second part and third parts of the questionnaire were evaluated with factor analysis and the fourth part was examined via descriptive

statistics in SPSS. In addition, the other reason of applying factor analysis for two parts was that the items in Part II and Part III were researched before by Aydın (2012) and Certel (2010) whereas Part IV was formed by reviewing the literature and focusing on the possible solutions against difficulties.

**Table 20: Contributions of the Erasmus Programme**

Part II- CONTRIBUTIONS	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
<b>Linguistic Contributions</b>											
1- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed my general English skills.	67	23,2	151	52,2	58	20,1	9	3,1	4	1,4	3,9273
2- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed my listening skills in English.	103	35,6	138	47,8	39	13,5	6	2,1	3	1	4,1488
3- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed my reading skills in English.	71	24,6	134	46,4	60	20,8	18	6,2	6	2,1	3,8512
4- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed my writing skills in English.	67	23,2	133	46	51	17,6	30	10,4	8	2,8	3,7647
5- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed my speaking skills in English.	136	47,1	104	36	40	13,8	6	2,1	3	1	4,2595
6- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I improved my pronunciation.	83	28,7	137	46,4	51	17,6	10	3,5	8	2,8	3,9585
7- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I improved my vocabulary.	72	24,9	144	49,8	54	18,7	17	5,9	2	0,7	3,9239
8- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed the ability to think in English while expressing a situation.	137	47,4	108	37,4	33	11,4	9	3,1	2	0,7	<b>4,2768</b>
9- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed a second foreign language apart from English.	22	7,6	28	9,7	60	20,8	141	48,8	38	13,1	<b>2,4983</b>
10- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed the ability to use English effectively outside the classroom (writing-speaking).	94	32,5	133	46	44	15,2	12	4,2	6	2,1	4,0277
11- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed self-confidence to use English.	156	54	104	36	21	7,3	4	1,4	4	1,4	<b>4,3979</b>
<b>Academic Contributions</b>											
12- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I had knowledge about a different education system.	182	63	101	34,9	6	2,1	0	0	0	0	<b>4,6090</b>
13- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I had a chance to compare the education systems of host country and home country.	200	69,2	86	29,8	3	1	0	0	0	0	<b>4,6817</b>
14- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I had more information about my field.	95	32,9	103	35,6	54	18,7	31	10,7	6	2,1	3,8651
15- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I had the opportunity to see new teaching methods applied in courses.	128	44,3	116	40,1	24	8,3	17	5,9	4	1,4	<b>4,2007</b>
16- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I established good contacts with foreign academicians for my future profession.	64	22,1	106	36,7	63	21,8	42	14,5	14	4,8	3,5675
17- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I took part in different learning environments related to my field (multicultural classes, laboratory, field work, conferences, exhibitions etc.).	106	36,7	130	45	25	8,7	18	6,2	10	3,5	4,0519
18- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I believe that I can get a better job with my academic achievements.	84	29,1	131	45,3	50	17,3	17	5,9	7	2,4	3,9273
19- Thanks to my Erasmus experience, It was enabled for me to pass the courses at host institution.	72	24,9	98	33,9	49	17	45	15,6	25	8,7	3,5087

Table 20 above illustrates the responses by Erasmus participants in terms of evaluating the linguistic and academic contributions of Erasmus Programme. The items with the highest and the lowest mean in each part were marked as bold and examined. It can be inferred from the table that most of the students (104 students agree, 156 students strongly agree) agreed or strongly agreed that they developed self-confidence in using English after Erasmus Programme. In addition, several students (108 students agree, 137 students strongly agree) agreed or strongly agreed that they developed the ability to think in English while expressing a situation. On the other hand, most of the students ( $f=141$ ,  $p=48,8\%$ ) disagreed that they developed a second foreign language apart from English.

As academic contributions, most of the students agreed or strongly agreed that via Erasmus Programme they had the chance to compare two different education system (86 students agree, 200 students strongly agree), to experience a new education system (101 students agree, 182 students strongly agree) and to observe new classroom teaching methods (116 students agree, 128 students strongly agree). In the part of academic contributions, there is no item under 2,5 as mean value which means that the students generally agree with the academic contribution items.

**Table 21: Difficulties Faced during Erasmus Programme**

PART-III DIFFICULTIES	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
<b>Linguistic Difficulties</b>											
20- During my Erasmus period I couldn't find an environment outside the class that could improve my English language skills.	7	2,4	20	6,9	14	4,8	119	41,2	129	44,6	<b>1,8131</b>
21- During my Erasmus period I had communication problems since the local people didn't know English.	46	15,9	73	25,3	46	15,9	83	28,7	41	14,2	<b>3,0000</b>
22- During my Erasmus period I didn't have the opportunity to improve my English since I was with the friends from my own country.	23	8	31	10,7	60	20,8	115	39,8	60	20,8	<b>2,4533</b>
23- During my Erasmus period I had difficulty in verbal communication with the students from the host country.	11	3,8	26	9	20	6,9	140	48,4	92	31,8	2,0450
24- During my Erasmus period I had difficulty in following the courses since the lecturers didn't use English.	28	9,7	35	12,1	28	9,7	79	27,3	119	41,2	2,2180
25- During my Erasmus period I was timid to use English since I considered that my English was weak.	2	0,7	38	13,1	35	12,1	104	36	110	38,1	2,0242
26- During my Erasmus period I couldn't be active in the courses since I considered my English was weak.	1	0,3	17	5,9	19	6,6	107	37	145	50,2	<b>1,6920</b>
<b>Academic Difficulties</b>											
27- During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in finding courses in English related to my field.	43	14,9	56	19,4	22	7,6	89	30,8	79	27,3	2,6367
28- During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in following the courses	14	4,8	37	12,8	28	9,7	128	44,3	82	28,4	2,2145
29- During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in accessing the course materials.	10	3,5	16	5,5	30	10,4	135	46,7	98	33,9	<b>1,9792</b>
30- During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in adapting to the education system of the host country.	7	2,4	30	10,4	23	8	132	45,7	97	33,6	2,0242
31- During my Erasmus period, I had to study more than the local classmates in order to pass courses.	26	9	59	20,4	54	18,7	99	34,3	51	17,6	<b>2,6886</b>
32- During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in adapting to a different grading system.	17	5,9	48	16,6	27	9,3	122	42,2	75	26	2,3426
33- During my Erasmus period, I had problems with lecturers of the courses.	6	2,1	23	8	22	7,6	98	33,9	140	48,4	<b>1,8131</b>
34- After returning to home university, I had difficulty in adapting to my department.	78	27	58	20,1	35	12,1	67	23,2	51	17,6	<b>3,1557</b>

Table 21 reveals the responses by Erasmus participants in terms of evaluating the linguistic and academic difficulties during Erasmus Programme. It can be deduced from the table that while 28,7 percent of the respondents remarked that they did not have communication problems with local people, 25,3 percent of the respondents agreed that they had communication problems with local people because of local people's lack of English. So, most of the students held neither negative nor positive views on this difficulty. On the other hand, most of the students (f=115, p=39,8) disagreed with the difficulty regarding not improving English because of being with the friends from Turkey. The mean of 20<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> items is below than two and it can be stated that the students disagreed or strongly disagreed that they could not find an environment outside the class to improve language, and they were inactive in class because of the weakness of their language.



As for the academic difficulties, 136 students in total agreed or strongly agreed that they tended to have adaptation problems after returning to home institution. In addition, 150 of the students (51, 9%) disagreed that they had to study more than the local classmates in order to pass courses. The means of 29<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>th</sup> items are below two and it can be concluded that most of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had difficulty in accessing the course materials (135 students disagree, 98 students strongly disagree) and they had problems with the lecturers at host institution (98 students disagree, 140 students strongly disagree). It can be stated that except for the difficulty regarding the adaptation to the department at home institution after Erasmus programme the participants seemed to have no linguistic and academic problems seriously.

**Table 22: Solutions Found Against Difficulties**

PART IV- SOLUTIONS	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
<b>Linguistic Solutions</b>											
35- During my Erasmus period, in order to improve my English language skills I participated in various social events.	99	34,3	122	42,2	46	15,9	17	5,9	5	1,7	<b>4,0138</b>
36- During my Erasmus period, in order to improve my English language skills I worked in a part-time job.	9	3,1	10	3,5	14	4,8	71	24,6	185	64	<b>1,5709</b>
37- During my Erasmus period, in order to improve my English language skills I attended a language course at the host country.	8	2,8	21	7,3	20	6,9	72	24,9	168	58,1	<b>1,7163</b>
38- During my Erasmus period, in order to improve my English language skills I didn't use my mother tongue.	16	5,5	36	12,5	85	29,4	77	26,6	75	26	2,4498
39- During my Erasmus period, in order to improve my English language skills I tried not to get together with friends from home country.	23	8	56	19,4	62	21,5	84	29,1	64	22,1	2,6194
40- During my Erasmus period, in order to improve my English language skills I took the risk of trying to speak English constantly.	69	23,9	92	31,8	67	23,2	43	14,9	18	6,2	<b>3,5225</b>
<b>Academic Solutions</b>											
41- During my Erasmus period I did research from extra sources to understand the courses better.	60	20,8	102	35,3	53	18,3	41	14,2	33	11,4	<b>3,3979</b>
42- During my Erasmus period I was prepared for the exams by studying more.	41	14,2	65	22,5	69	23,9	69	23,9	45	15,6	2,9585
43- During my Erasmus period I passed the courses I had difficulty by giving homework assignments or presentations.	30	10,4	77	26,6	54	18,7	81	28	47	16,3	2,8685
44- During my Erasmus period I passed my exams by getting more support from my friends about courses and assignments.	15	5,2	78	27	67	23,2	75	26	54	18,7	<b>2,7405</b>
45- During my Erasmus period I tried to make close contact with lecturers.	73	25,3	115	39,8	63	21,8	26	9	12	4,2	<b>3,7301</b>

Table 22 above indicates the responses by Erasmus participants in terms of evaluating the linguistic and academic solutions developed by students against difficulties during Erasmus Programme. It can be concluded from the table that most of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they participated in various social events (122 students agree, 99 students strongly agree) and took the risk of trying to speak English constantly to solve linguistic difficulties (92 students agree, 69 students strongly agree). On the other hand, the means of 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> items are lower than two and it can be claimed that most of the students didn't work as a part-time student (71 students disagree, 185 students strongly disagree) and didn't attend a language course while in Erasmus (72 students disagree, 168 students strongly disagree).

As academic solutions, 115 of the respondents (39,8%) agreed that they set close communication with lecturers at host institution and 102 of the students (35,3%) agreed that they studied from extra sources to understand the courses better. In addition, the students were neutral toward passing exams by getting more support from friends about courses and assignments.

### **3.3.2. Factor Analysis of Two Sections (Contributions and Difficulties) of the Questionnaire**

The factor analysis was carried out in order to see which items grouped with each of the other items carrying similar purposes, and how these items are strongly linked to these groups. Before the application of the exploratory factor analysis, the structure of the data set was examined in order to check the appropriateness for analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was applied to test the size of sample for factorization, and Bartlett Test of Sphericity was applied to check if the values are significant. The obtained results indicate that the data set is appropriate for exploratory factor analysis.

KMO value was defined as 0,905 for contributions part. In addition, KMO value was defined as 0,794 for difficulties part. Based on these findings, it was concluded that the data set is appropriate for factor analysis. In addition, when Bartlett Test of Sphericity results were examined, the chi-square values for contributions and difficulties parts were statistically significant. The chi-square values for contributions part were ( $\chi^2_{(120)} = 2748,887$ ;  $p < .00$ ). The chi-square values for difficulties part were ( $\chi^2_{(91)} = 1223,836$ ;  $p < .00$ ). In this respect, the data indicates a multivariate normal distribution.

As a result of factor analysis, there appeared 7 groups in which items came together with the similar items. While the contributions section included three groups (F1-F2-F3) from 2 sub-titles and 19 items, the difficulties section included four groups (F4-F5-F6-F7) from 2 sub-titles and 15 items. The new data set composed of 16 items in contributions part, and 14 items in difficulties part. Three items (9-18-19) from first part and one item (34) from the second part were reduced

from the data set. Since the communalities values of the item 9 (“I developed a second foreign language apart from English”) and the item 18 (“I believe that I can get a better job with my academic achievements”) were below 0,50, they were reduced from the analysis. It means that they were not significant for linguistic contribution of Erasmus Programme. In addition, since the item 19 (“It was enabled for me to pass the courses at host institution”) and the item 34 (“After returning to home university, I had difficulty in adapting to my department”) composed single group, they weren’t included in the analysis. Table 23 below reveals which item belonged with each of the seven factors and the means and standard deviations.

**Table 23: New Groups after Factor Analysis**

	Cronbach’s Alpha Values	Mean	Std. Deviation
Factor 1- Linguistic Development Contributions (Items 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-11)	0,931	4,0536	,68890
Factor 2- Departmental Contributions (Items 14-15-16-17)	0,802	3,9213	,81654
Factor 3- Contributions Related to Education System (Items 12-13)	0,830	4,6453	,47102
Factor 4- Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up (Items 24,27,28,29)	0,835	2,2621	1,01479
Factor 5- Systemic Difficulties (Items 30,31,32,33)	0,670	2,2171	,79590
Factor 6- Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences (Items 20,21,22,23)	0,670	2,3279	,80525
Factor 7- Lack of Skills in Language Use (Items 25,26)	0,755	1,8581	,85834

### 3.3.2.1. Factor Analysis for Part 2- Contributions of the Erasmus Programme

With factor analysis, the Cronbach’s Alpha value of the contributions part became 0, 910. With the aim of revealing the factor structure of the questionnaire of Erasmus effects on students in terms of contributions, principal components analysis as factorization method and orthogonal rotation method (varimax) as rotation method were selected. Table 24 illustrates the contributions of factors to variance for contributions of Erasmus. The described variance was calculated as 66.51%.

**Table 24: Contributions of Factors to Variance for Contributions of Erasmus**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
F1	7.18	44.87	44.87	6.07	37.91	37.91
F2	2.25	14.03	58.90	2.76	17.28	55.18
F3	1.22	7.61	66.51	1.81	11.33	66.51

Table 25 below indicates the distribution of items to factors, factor load and Cronbach’s Alpha values for contributions section of the questionnaire.

**Table 25: Factor Loadings and Cronbach's Alpha Values of Contributions of Erasmus**

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>				Total Reliability
Items	Component			0.910
	F1	F2	F3	Factor Reliability
Item 1	0,842			0.931
Item 2	0,829			
Item 8	0,816			
Item 5	0,809			
Item 3	0,756			
Item 6	0,747			
Item 7	0,742			
Item 11	0,734			
Item 10	0,703			
Item 4	0,680			
Item 15		0,777		
Item 16		0,771		
Item 14		0,751		
Item 17		0,686		
Item 13			0,882	0.830
Item 12			0,857	

As a result of the factor analysis, the factors formed by the items were given new names for the contributions part. The first factor was entitled as “Linguistic development contributions”, second factor as “Departmental contributions”, and the third factor as “Contributions related to education system”. Related items and factors can be seen in Table 26.

**Table 26: Contributions Questionnaire for Erasmus Programme**

Linguistic Development Contributions (F1)	
<b>Item 1</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed my general English skills.
<b>Item 2</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed my listening skills in English.
<b>Item 8</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed the ability to think in English while expressing a situation.
<b>Item 5</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed my speaking skills in English.
<b>Item 3</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed my reading skills in English.
<b>Item 6</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I improved my pronunciation.
<b>Item 7</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I improved my vocabulary.
<b>Item 11</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed self-confidence to use English.
<b>Item 10</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed the ability to use English effectively outside the classroom (writing-speaking).
<b>Item 4</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I developed my writing skills in English.
Departmental Contributions (F2)	
<b>Item 15</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I had the opportunity to see new teaching methods applied in courses.
<b>Item 16</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I established good contacts with foreign academicians for my future profession.
<b>Item 14</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I had more information about my field.
<b>Item 17</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I took part in different learning environments related to my field (multicultural classes, laboratory, field work, conferences, exhibitions etc.).
Contributions Related to Education System (F3)	
<b>Item 13</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I had a chance to compare the education systems of host country and home country.
<b>Item 12</b>	Thanks to my Erasmus experience, I had knowledge about a different education system.

### 3.3.2.2. Factor Analysis for Part 3- Difficulties Faced During the Erasmus Programme

With factor analysis, the Cronbach's Alpha value of the "difficulties" part became 0,794. With the aim of revealing the factor structure of the questionnaire of Erasmus effects on students in terms of difficulties, principal components analysis as factorization method and orthogonal rotation method (varimax) as rotation method were selected. Table 27 illustrates the contributions of factors to variance for difficulties of Erasmus. The explained variance was calculated as 62.17%.

**Table 27: Contributions of Factors to Variance for Difficulties of Erasmus**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
F4	4.02	28.69	28.69	2.69	19.20	19.20
F5	2.20	15.68	44.37	2.19	15.65	34.84
F6	1.34	9.54	53.91	2.01	14.38	49.22
F7	1.16	8.26	62.17	1.81	12.95	62.17

Table 28 below indicates the distribution of items to factors, factor load and Cronbach's Alpha values for difficulties section of the questionnaire.

**Table 28: Factor Loadings and Cronbach's Alpha Values of Difficulties of Erasmus**

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>					Total Reliability
Items	Component				0,794
	F4	F5	F6	F7	Factor Reliability
Item 27	0,843				0,835
Item 24	0,837				
Item 28	0,806				
Item 29	0,626				
Item 32		0,732			0,670
Item 31		0,674			
Item 30		0,671			
Item 33		0,606			
Item 20			0,751		0,670
Item 22			0,749		
Item 21			0,651		
Item 23			0,573		
Item 25				0,873	0,755
Item 26				0,864	

As a result of the factor analysis, the factors formed by the items were given new names for the difficulties part. The fourth factor was entitled as “Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up”, fifth factor as “Systemic Difficulties”, the sixth factor as “Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences” and the seventh factor as “Lack of Skills in Language Use”. Related items and factors can be seen in Table 29.

**Table 29: Difficulties Questionnaire for Erasmus Programme**

<b>Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up (F4)</b>	
<b>Item 27</b>	During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in finding courses in English related to my field.
<b>Item 24</b>	During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in following the courses since the lecturers didn't use English.
<b>Item 28</b>	During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in following the courses.
<b>Item 29</b>	During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in accessing the course materials.
<b>Systemic Difficulties (F5)</b>	
<b>Item 32</b>	During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in adapting to a different grading system.
<b>Item 31</b>	During my Erasmus period, I had to study more than the local classmates in order to pass courses.
<b>Item 30</b>	During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in adapting to the education system of the host country.
<b>Item 33</b>	During my Erasmus period, I had problems with lecturers of the courses.
<b>Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences (F6)</b>	
<b>Item 20</b>	During my Erasmus period, I couldn't find an environment outside the class that could improve my English language skills.
<b>Item 22</b>	During my Erasmus period, I didn't have the opportunity to improve my English since I was with the friends from my own country.
<b>Item 21</b>	During my Erasmus period, I had communication problems since the local people didn't know English.
<b>Item 23</b>	During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in verbal communication with the students from the host country.
<b>Lack of Skills in Language Use (F7)</b>	
<b>Item 25</b>	During my Erasmus period, I was timid to use English since I considered that my English was weak.
<b>Item 26</b>	During my Erasmus period, I couldn't be active in the courses since I considered my English was weak.

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis for the validity of the questionnaire and the reliability analysis for reliability, the questionnaire developed to measure Erasmus contributions and difficulties on Erasmus students' developmental process was determined as a valid and reliable measurement tool.

### **3.3.3. Findings about the Effects of Erasmus Programme in Terms of Contributions and Difficulties on Linguistic and Academic Aspects of Erasmus Students**

In this study, the effects of Erasmus programme in terms of contributions and difficulties on linguistic and academic aspects of Erasmus students were evaluated via Independent Samples T-Test in terms of the variables; gender, academic level, academic term, previous abroad experience, teaching language of the host institution, and previous language learning experience in order to find

out whether or not there was a significant difference between the dimensions of contributions and difficulties of Erasmus Programme and variables. Average and standard deviation values for all dimensions and questions were shown below.

The departments of Erasmus students were grouped under four headings as language, science, social, and health. Since there appeared more than two groups, the department dimension of the study was examined via ANOVA test in order to check whether or not there was a significant difference according to academic fields and the dimensions of contributions and difficulties. Average and standard deviation values for the dimension and questions were shown below.

### 3.3.3.1. Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Gender

In this section, it was determined whether or not the effects of Erasmus indicated statistically significant difference according to gender. For this purpose, the developed questionnaire by the researcher including the contributions and difficulties of Erasmus Programme was used. Since the scores were consistent and the gender variable consisted of two categories, and the samples whose averages to be compared were independent, the data were analyzed via using Independent Samples T-Test. The obtained findings were illustrated in Table 30 below.

**Table 30: Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Gender**

	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	s	t	df	p																																																																				
Linguistic Development Contributions	Female	129	3,97	0,74	<b>-1,78</b>	287	<b>0,08</b>																																																																				
	Male	160	4,12	0,64				Departmental Contributions	Female	129	3,94	0,83	<b>0,35</b>	287	<b>0,73</b>	Male	160	3,91	0,81	Contributions Related to Education System	Female	129	4,70	0,45	<b>1,70</b>	287	<b>0,09</b>	Male	160	4,60	0,49	Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	Female	129	2,20	1,03	<b>-0,97</b>	287	<b>0,33</b>	Male	160	2,31	1,00	Systemic Difficulties	Female	129	2,26	0,81	<b>0,82</b>	287	<b>0,42</b>	Male	160	2,18	0,79	Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	Female	129	2,43	0,81	<b>1,88</b>	287	<b>0,06</b>	Male	160	2,25	0,79	Lack of Skills in Language Use	Female	129	<b>2,03</b>	0,93	<b>3,12</b>	287	<b>0,00*</b>
Departmental Contributions	Female	129	3,94	0,83	<b>0,35</b>	287	<b>0,73</b>																																																																				
	Male	160	3,91	0,81				Contributions Related to Education System	Female	129	4,70	0,45	<b>1,70</b>	287	<b>0,09</b>	Male	160	4,60	0,49	Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	Female	129	2,20	1,03	<b>-0,97</b>	287	<b>0,33</b>	Male	160	2,31	1,00	Systemic Difficulties	Female	129	2,26	0,81	<b>0,82</b>	287	<b>0,42</b>	Male	160	2,18	0,79	Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	Female	129	2,43	0,81	<b>1,88</b>	287	<b>0,06</b>	Male	160	2,25	0,79	Lack of Skills in Language Use	Female	129	<b>2,03</b>	0,93	<b>3,12</b>	287	<b>0,00*</b>	Male	160	<b>1,72</b>	0,77								
Contributions Related to Education System	Female	129	4,70	0,45	<b>1,70</b>	287	<b>0,09</b>																																																																				
	Male	160	4,60	0,49				Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	Female	129	2,20	1,03	<b>-0,97</b>	287	<b>0,33</b>	Male	160	2,31	1,00	Systemic Difficulties	Female	129	2,26	0,81	<b>0,82</b>	287	<b>0,42</b>	Male	160	2,18	0,79	Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	Female	129	2,43	0,81	<b>1,88</b>	287	<b>0,06</b>	Male	160	2,25	0,79	Lack of Skills in Language Use	Female	129	<b>2,03</b>	0,93	<b>3,12</b>	287	<b>0,00*</b>	Male	160	<b>1,72</b>	0,77																				
Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	Female	129	2,20	1,03	<b>-0,97</b>	287	<b>0,33</b>																																																																				
	Male	160	2,31	1,00				Systemic Difficulties	Female	129	2,26	0,81	<b>0,82</b>	287	<b>0,42</b>	Male	160	2,18	0,79	Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	Female	129	2,43	0,81	<b>1,88</b>	287	<b>0,06</b>	Male	160	2,25	0,79	Lack of Skills in Language Use	Female	129	<b>2,03</b>	0,93	<b>3,12</b>	287	<b>0,00*</b>	Male	160	<b>1,72</b>	0,77																																
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	Male	160	2,18	0,79				Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	Female	129	2,43	0,81	<b>1,88</b>	287	<b>0,06</b>	Male	160	2,25	0,79	Lack of Skills in Language Use	Female	129	<b>2,03</b>	0,93	<b>3,12</b>	287	<b>0,00*</b>	Male	160	<b>1,72</b>	0,77																																												
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	Male	160	2,25	0,79				Lack of Skills in Language Use	Female	129	<b>2,03</b>	0,93	<b>3,12</b>	287	<b>0,00*</b>	Male	160	<b>1,72</b>	0,77																																																								
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	Male	160	<b>1,72</b>	0,77																																																																							

\*p<,05

Table 30 demonstrates that the linguistic and academic effects of Erasmus Programme on Erasmus students indicated no statistically significant difference in terms of gender in the dimension of Linguistic Development Contributions ( $t_{(287)} = -178$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Departmental Contributions ( $t_{(287)} = 0,35$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Contributions related to Education System ( $t_{(287)} = 1,70$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up ( $t_{(287)} = -0,97$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Systemic Difficulties ( $t_{(287)} = 0,82$ ;  $p > .05$ ) and Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences ( $t_{(287)} = 1,88$ ;  $p > .05$ ) since p value of these items was bigger than 0,05.

On the other hand, in Table 30 it was seen statistically significant difference in terms of gender in the dimension of Lack of Skills in Language Use ( $t_{(287)} = 3,12$ ;  $p < .05$ ) since p value of these items was smaller than 0,05. Therefore, it can be said that according to the dimension of Lack of Skills in Language Use female participants ( $\bar{X} = 2,03$ ) exhibited more negative views than male participants ( $\bar{X} = 1,72$ ). When examined Table 30 and Table 29 together, it can be concluded that female participants more agreed that they were timid to use English since they considered that their English was weak, and they couldn't be active in the courses since they considered their English was weak when compared to male participants.

### **3.3.3.2. Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Academic Level**

In this section of the research, it was found out whether or not the effects of Erasmus indicated statistically significant difference according to level of undergraduate and graduate. Since the scores were consistent, the academic level variable consisted of two categories, and the samples whose averages to be compared were independent, the data were analyzed via using Independent Samples T-Test. The obtained findings were indicated in Table 31 below.



**Table 31: Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Academic Level**

	Academic Level	N	$\bar{X}$	s	t	df	p
Linguistic Development Contributions	Undergraduate	234	4,09	0,65	<b>1,67</b>	287	<b>0,10</b>
	Graduate	55	3,91	0,83			
Departmental Contributions	Undergraduate	234	3,91	0,77	<b>-0,44</b>	69,25	<b>0,66</b>
	Graduate	55	3,97	1,01			
Contributions Related to Education System	Undergraduate	234	4,65	0,47	<b>0,16</b>	287	<b>0,88</b>
	Graduate	55	4,64	0,47			
Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	Undergraduate	234	2,30	1,03	<b>1,39</b>	287	<b>0,16</b>
	Graduate	55	2,09	0,93			
Systemic Difficulties	Undergraduate	234	2,24	0,82	<b>0,79</b>	287	<b>0,43</b>
	Graduate	55	2,14	0,70			
Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	Undergraduate	234	<b>2,28</b>	0,79	<b>-2,20</b>	287	<b>0,03*</b>
	Graduate	55	<b>2,54</b>	0,83			
Lack of Skills in Language Use	Undergraduate	234	1,85	0,86	-0,40	287	0,69
	Graduate	55	1,90	0,88			

\*p<,05

Table 31 reveals that the linguistic and academic effects of Erasmus Programme on Erasmus students indicated no statistically significant difference in terms of academic level in the dimension of Linguistic Development Contributions ( $t_{(287)} = 1,67$ ;  $p > .05$ , Departmental Contributions ( $t_{(69,25)} = -0,44$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Contributions Related to Education System ( $t_{(287)} = 0,16$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up ( $t_{(287)} = 1,39$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Systemic Difficulties ( $t_{(287)} = 0,79$ ;  $p > .05$ ) and Lack of Skills in Language Use ( $t_{(287)} = 0,40$ ;  $p > .05$ ) since p value of these items was bigger than 0,05.

On the other hand, as can be observed in Table 31, there was statistically significant difference in terms of academic level in the dimension of Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences ( $t_{(287)} = -2,20$ ;  $p < .05$ ) since p value of these items was smaller than 0,05. Therefore, it can be said that according to the dimension of Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences graduate participants ( $\bar{X} = 2,54$ ) exhibited more negative views than undergraduate participants ( $\bar{X} = 2,28$ ). When examined Table 31 and Table 29 together, it can be concluded that graduate students more agreed that they couldn't find an environment outside the class to improve their English language skills, they didn't have the opportunity to improve their English since they were with the friends from home country, they had communication problems since the local people didn't know English and they had difficulty in verbal communication with the students from the host country when compared to undergraduate students.

### 3.3.3.3. Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Academic Term

In this section of the research, it was examined whether or not the effects of Erasmus indicated statistically significant difference according to terms; one term or one year (two terms). Since the scores were consistent, the study term variable consisted of two categories, and the samples whose averages to be compared were independent, the data were analyzed via using Independent Samples T-Test. The obtained findings were indicated in Table 32 below.

**Table 32: Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Academic Term**

	Academic Term	N	$\bar{X}$	s	t	df	p
Linguistic Development Contributions	One Term	273	4,06	0,70	<b>0,77</b>	287	<b>0,44</b>
	One Year	16	3,93	0,53			
Departmental Contributions	One Term	273	3,92	0,81	<b>-0,16</b>	287	<b>0,87</b>
	One Year	16	3,95	0,93			
Contributions Related to Education system	One Term	273	4,64	0,47	<b>-0,10</b>	287	<b>0,92</b>
	One Year	16	4,66	0,47			
Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	One Term	273	2,28	1,02	<b>1,00</b>	287	<b>0,32</b>
	One Year	16	2,02	0,88			
Systemic Difficulties	One Term	273	2,22	0,81	<b>0,56</b>	287	<b>0,58</b>
	One Year	16	2,11	0,57			
Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	One Term	273	2,33	0,81	<b>0,24</b>	287	<b>0,81</b>
	One Year	16	2,28	0,68			
Lack of Skills in Language Use	One Term	273	1,86	0,87	<b>0,52</b>	287	<b>0,60</b>
	One Year	16	1,75	0,58			

Table 32 reveals that the linguistic and academic effects of Erasmus Programme on Erasmus students indicated no statistically significant difference in terms of academic terms in all dimensions since the p value of none of the items was smaller than 0,05 ( $p > 0,05$ ). Both one term students and one year students had similar beliefs for the dimensions of Linguistic Development Contributions ( $t_{(287)} = 0,77$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Departmental Contributions ( $t_{(287)} = -0,16$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Contributions Related to Education System ( $t_{(287)} = -0,10$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up ( $t_{(287)} = 1,00$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Systemic Difficulties ( $t_{(287)} = 0,56$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences ( $t_{(287)} = 0,24$ ;  $p > .05$ ), and Lack of Skills in Language Use ( $t_{(287)} = 0,52$ ;  $p > .05$ ).

### 3.3.3.4. Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to *Previous Abroad Experience*

In this section of the research, it was examined whether or not the effects of Erasmus indicated statistically significant difference according to previous abroad experience. As stated before, the students who visited only “Georgia” or “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” before Erasmus Programme was accepted as no previous abroad experience owing to the fact that it may be a one day stay and English may not be used in a long time to be improved. Since the scores were consistent, the previous abroad experience variable consisted of two categories, and the samples whose averages to be compared were independent, the data were analyzed via using Independent Samples T-Test. The obtained findings were given in Table 33 below.

**Table 33: Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Previous Abroad Experience**

	Previous Abroad Experience	N	$\bar{X}$	s	t	df	p
Linguistic Development Contributions	Yes	82	4.05	0.77	<b>.00</b>	287	<b>1.00</b>
	No	207	4.05	0.66			
Departmental Contributions	Yes	82	4.01	0.80	<b>1.19</b>	287	<b>.23</b>
	No	207	3.89	0.82			
Contributions Related to Education System	Yes	82	4.70	0.46	<b>1.27</b>	287	<b>.21</b>
	No	207	4.62	0.48			
Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	Yes	82	2.33	1.09	<b>.68</b>	287	<b>.50</b>
	No	207	2.24	0.99			
Systemic Difficulties	Yes	82	2.30	0.82	<b>1.10</b>	287	<b>.27</b>
	No	207	2.18	0.79			
Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	Yes	82	2.20	0.75	<b>-1.69</b>	287	<b>.09</b>
	No	207	2.38	0.82			
Lack of Skills in Language Use	Yes	82	<b>1.63</b>	0.80	<b>-2.91</b>	287	<b>.004*</b>
	No	207	<b>1.95</b>	0.86			

\*p<,05

Table 33 indicates that the linguistic and academic effects of Erasmus Programme on Erasmus students indicated no statistically significant difference in terms of previous abroad experience in the dimension of Linguistic Development Contributions ( $t_{(287)}= 00$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Departmental Contributions ( $t_{(287)}= 1,19$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Contributions Related to Education System ( $t_{(287)}= 1,27$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up ( $t_{(287)}= -0,68$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Systemic Difficulties ( $t_{(287)}= 1,10$ ;  $p > .05$ ) and Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences ( $t_{(287)}= -1,69$ ;  $p > .05$ ) since p value of these items was bigger than 0,05.

On the other hand, in Table 33 it is seen statistically significant difference in terms of previous abroad experience in the dimension of Lack of Skills in Language Use ( $t_{(287)} = -2,91$ ;  $p < .05$ ) since p value of these items was smaller than 0,05. Therefore, it can be said that according to the dimension of Lack of Skills in Language Use the participants having no abroad experience before ( $\bar{X} = 1,95$ ) approached the items 25 and 26 more positively in comparison with the participants having abroad experience before ( $\bar{X} = 1,63$ ). In fact, in general both the participants having no abroad experience before and the participants having abroad experience before the programme disagreed that they had difficulty in using English and being active in the courses since they considered their English was weak. However, the participants having no abroad experience before had more difficulty to some extent than the participants having abroad experience before.

### 3.3.3.5. Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Teaching Language of the Host Institution

In this section of the research, it was examined whether or not the effects of Erasmus indicated statistically significant difference according to Teaching Language of the Host Institution. Since the scores were consistent, the variable consisted of two categories; English and other languages, and the samples whose averages to be compared were independent, the data were analyzed via using Independent Samples T-Test. The obtained findings are indicated in Table 34 below.

**Table 34: Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Teaching Language of the Host Institution**

	Teaching Lang. at Host Institution	N	$\bar{X}$	s	t	df	p																																																																				
Linguistic Development contributions	English	190	4.09	0.67	<b>1.10</b>	287	<b>.27</b>																																																																				
	Others	99	3.99	0.73				Departmental Contributions	English	190	3.97	0.80	<b>1.48</b>	287	<b>.14</b>	Others	99	3.82	0.84	Contributions Related to Education System	English	190	4.64	0.47	<b>-.03</b>	287	<b>.98</b>	Others	99	4.65	0.48	Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	English	190	<b>1.83</b>	0.72	<b>-11.05</b>	152.2	<b>.00*</b>	Others	99	<b>3.08</b>	1.00	Systemic Difficulties	English	190	<b>2.05</b>	0.72	<b>-5.16</b>	287	<b>.00*</b>	Others	99	<b>2.54</b>	0.83	Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	English	190	2.28	0.80	<b>-1.47</b>	287	<b>.14</b>	Others	99	2.42	0.81	Lack of Skills in Language Use	English	190	1.86	0.85	<b>-.006</b>	287	<b>.96</b>
Departmental Contributions	English	190	3.97	0.80	<b>1.48</b>	287	<b>.14</b>																																																																				
	Others	99	3.82	0.84				Contributions Related to Education System	English	190	4.64	0.47	<b>-.03</b>	287	<b>.98</b>	Others	99	4.65	0.48	Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	English	190	<b>1.83</b>	0.72	<b>-11.05</b>	152.2	<b>.00*</b>	Others	99	<b>3.08</b>	1.00	Systemic Difficulties	English	190	<b>2.05</b>	0.72	<b>-5.16</b>	287	<b>.00*</b>	Others	99	<b>2.54</b>	0.83	Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	English	190	2.28	0.80	<b>-1.47</b>	287	<b>.14</b>	Others	99	2.42	0.81	Lack of Skills in Language Use	English	190	1.86	0.85	<b>-.006</b>	287	<b>.96</b>	Others	99	1.86	0.88								
Contributions Related to Education System	English	190	4.64	0.47	<b>-.03</b>	287	<b>.98</b>																																																																				
	Others	99	4.65	0.48				Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	English	190	<b>1.83</b>	0.72	<b>-11.05</b>	152.2	<b>.00*</b>	Others	99	<b>3.08</b>	1.00	Systemic Difficulties	English	190	<b>2.05</b>	0.72	<b>-5.16</b>	287	<b>.00*</b>	Others	99	<b>2.54</b>	0.83	Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	English	190	2.28	0.80	<b>-1.47</b>	287	<b>.14</b>	Others	99	2.42	0.81	Lack of Skills in Language Use	English	190	1.86	0.85	<b>-.006</b>	287	<b>.96</b>	Others	99	1.86	0.88																				
Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	English	190	<b>1.83</b>	0.72	<b>-11.05</b>	152.2	<b>.00*</b>																																																																				
	Others	99	<b>3.08</b>	1.00				Systemic Difficulties	English	190	<b>2.05</b>	0.72	<b>-5.16</b>	287	<b>.00*</b>	Others	99	<b>2.54</b>	0.83	Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	English	190	2.28	0.80	<b>-1.47</b>	287	<b>.14</b>	Others	99	2.42	0.81	Lack of Skills in Language Use	English	190	1.86	0.85	<b>-.006</b>	287	<b>.96</b>	Others	99	1.86	0.88																																
Systemic Difficulties	English	190	<b>2.05</b>	0.72	<b>-5.16</b>	287	<b>.00*</b>																																																																				
	Others	99	<b>2.54</b>	0.83				Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	English	190	2.28	0.80	<b>-1.47</b>	287	<b>.14</b>	Others	99	2.42	0.81	Lack of Skills in Language Use	English	190	1.86	0.85	<b>-.006</b>	287	<b>.96</b>	Others	99	1.86	0.88																																												
Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	English	190	2.28	0.80	<b>-1.47</b>	287	<b>.14</b>																																																																				
	Others	99	2.42	0.81				Lack of Skills in Language Use	English	190	1.86	0.85	<b>-.006</b>	287	<b>.96</b>	Others	99	1.86	0.88																																																								
Lack of Skills in Language Use	English	190	1.86	0.85	<b>-.006</b>	287	<b>.96</b>																																																																				
	Others	99	1.86	0.88																																																																							

\* $p < .05$

Table 34 reveals that the linguistic and academic effects of Erasmus Programme on Erasmus students indicated no statistically significant difference in terms of teaching language at the host institution in the dimension of Linguistic Development Contributions ( $t_{(287)} = 1,10$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Departmental Contributions ( $t_{(287)} = 1,48$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Contributions Related to Education System ( $t_{(287)} = -0,03$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences ( $t_{(287)} = -1,47$ ;  $p > .05$ ) and Lack of Skills in Language Use ( $t_{(287)} = -0,006$ ;  $p > .05$ ) since p value of these items was bigger than 0,05.

On the other hand, as can be observed in Table 34 there was statistically significant difference in terms of teaching language at the host institution in the dimensions of Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up ( $t_{(152,2)} = -11,05$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and Systemic Difficulties ( $t_{(287)} = -5,16$ ;  $p < .05$ ) since p value of these items was smaller than 0,05. Therefore, it can be said that according to the dimension of Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up, the students having the courses in different language abroad ( $\bar{X} = 3,08$ ) exhibited more negative views than the students having the courses in English abroad ( $\bar{X} = 1,83$ ). When examined Table 34 and Table 29 together, it can be concluded that while the students having the courses in different language abroad agreed that they had difficulty in finding courses in English, following the courses and accessing the course materials; the students having the courses in English abroad disagreed with these difficulties. In addition, according to the dimension of Systemic Difficulties, the students having the courses in different language abroad ( $\bar{X} = 2,54$ ) faced with the difficulties related to education system but the students having the courses in English abroad ( $\bar{X} = 2,05$ ) faced with the difficulties less than the others. So, the students having the courses in English abroad approached more positively to systemic difficulties when compared to others.

### **3.3.3.6. Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to *Previous Language Learning Experience***

In this section of the research, it was examined whether or not the effects of Erasmus indicated statistically significant difference according to Previous Language Learning Experience. Since the scores were consistent, the variable consisted of two categories; attending English language course before participating Erasmus programme as YES, and not attending English language course before participating Erasmus programme as NO, and the samples whose averages to be compared were independent, the data were analyzed via using Independent Samples T-Test. The obtained findings were indicated in Table 34 below.

**Table 35: Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Previous Language Learning Experience**

	Previous Language Learning Experience	N	$\bar{X}$	s	t	df	p
Linguistic Development Contributions	Yes	73	4.04	0.70	-.14	287	.89
	No	216	4.06	0.69			
Departmental Contributions	Yes	73	3.96	0.77	.41	287	.68
	No	216	3.91	0.83			
Contributions Related to Education System	Yes	73	4.62	0.49	-.61	287	.55
	No	216	4.66	0.47			
Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	Yes	73	2.23	1.01	-.28	287	.78
	No	216	2.27	1.02			
Systemic Difficulties	Yes	73	2.13	0.79	-1.12	287	.26
	No	216	2.25	0.80			
Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	Yes	73	2.32	0.87	-.07	287	.94
	No	216	2.33	0.78			
Lack of Skills in Language Use	Yes	73	1.86	0.85	.06	287	.96
	No	216	1.86	0.86			

Table 35 reveals that the linguistic and academic effects of Erasmus Programme on Erasmus students indicated no statistically significant difference in terms of Previous Language Learning Experience in all dimensions since the p value of none of the items was smaller than 0,05 ( $p > 0,05$ ). Both the students attending English language course and the ones not attending had similar views for the dimensions of Linguistic Development Contributions ( $t_{(287)} = -0,14$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Departmental Contributions ( $t_{(287)} = 0,41$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Contributions Related to Education System ( $t_{(287)} = -0,61$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up ( $t_{(287)} = -0,28$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Systemic Difficulties ( $t_{(287)} = -1,12$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences ( $t_{(287)} = -0,07$ ;  $p > .05$ ), and Lack of Skills in Language Use ( $t_{(287)} = 0,056$ ;  $p > .05$ ).

### 3.3.3.7. ANOVA Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Academic Fields

In this section of the research, it was determined whether or not the effects of Erasmus indicated statistically significant difference according to departments of the participants. Therefore, the developed questionnaire by the researcher including the contributions and difficulties of Erasmus Programme was used. Since there were high number of departments, they were gathered under four categories. In addition, in the research the academic field “Language Departments” was preferred to be examined and compared with other fields particularly. The department variable was turned into academic field variable consisting of Language, Science, Social and Health categories. In addition, owing to the fact that the scores were consistent and there were four independent samples whose averages to be compared, the data were analyzed via using one way ANOVA.

Firstly, the average and standard deviation of the scores of Erasmus students gathered from the questionnaire according to academic fields were illustrated in Table 36. Secondly, ANOVA results were presented in Table 37.

**Table 36: The Average and Standard Deviation Values of the Scores According to Academic Field Gathered from the Questionnaire Researching the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme**

	Academic Field	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Linguistic Development Contributions	Language	53	4,09	0,70
	Science	125	4,12	0,56
	Social	101	3,96	0,81
	Health	10	4,01	0,73
	Total	289	4,05	0,69
Departmental Contributions	Language	53	<b>4,17</b>	0,68
	Science	125	3,92	0,72
	Social	101	<b>3,76</b>	0,97
	Health	10	4,23	0,48
	Total	289	3,92	0,82
Contributions Related to Education System	Language	53	4,74	0,42
	Science	125	4,67	0,47
	Social	101	4,55	0,49
	Health	10	4,75	0,42
	Total	289	4,65	0,47
Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	Language	53	<b>1,90</b>	0,88
	Science	125	<b>2,58</b>	1,00
	Social	101	<b>2,06</b>	0,97
	Health	10	2,25	1,27
	Total	289	2,26	1,01
Systemic Difficulties	Language	53	<b>2,35</b>	0,83
	Science	125	<b>2,31</b>	0,81
	Social	101	<b>2,04</b>	0,75
	Health	10	2,13	0,65
	Total	289	2,22	0,80
Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	Language	53	2,37	0,72
	Science	125	2,21	0,71
	Social	101	2,43	0,94
	Health	10	2,58	0,78
	Total	289	2,33	0,81
Lack of Skills in Language Use	Language	53	1,94	1,01
	Science	125	1,85	0,83
	Social	101	1,86	0,84
	Health	10	1,50	0,41
	Total	289	1,86	0,86

The results of ANOVA carried out for determining whether or not there was statistically significant difference according the academic field variable (1-Language, 2-Science, 3-Social, 4-Health) by focusing on given scores in Table 36 were demonstrated in Table 37 below.

**Table 37: ANOVA Results on the Linguistic and Academic Effects of Erasmus Programme According to Academic Field**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Difference
Linguistic Development Contributions	Between Groups	1,356	3	,452	,952	,416	-
	Within Groups	135,323	285	,475			
	Total	136,679	288				
Departmental Contributions	Between Groups	6,545	3	2,182	3,352	,019*	1-3
	Within Groups	185,477	285	,651			
	Total	192,022	288				
Contributions Related to Education System	Between Groups	1,467	3	,489	2,232	,085	-
	Within Groups	62,429	285	,219			
	Total	63,896	288				
Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up	Between Groups	23,958	3	7,986	8,349	,000*	1-2, 2-3
	Within Groups	272,625	285	,957			
	Total	296,583	288				
Systemic Difficulties	Between Groups	5,202	3	1,734	2,788	,041*	1-3,2-3
	Within Groups	177,236	285	,622			
	Total	182,438	288				
Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences	Between Groups	3,641	3	1,214	1,889	,132	-
	Within Groups	183,107	285	,642			
	Total	186,748	288				
Lack of Skills in Language Use	Between Groups	1,673	3	,558	,755	,520	-
	Within Groups	210,511	285	,739			
	Total	212,183	288				

Table 37 reveals that the linguistic and academic effects of Erasmus Programme on Erasmus students indicated no statistically significant difference in terms of Academic Field in the dimensions of Linguistic Development Contributions ( $F_{(3-285)} = 0,952$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Contributions related to Education System ( $F_{(3-285)} = 2,232$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences ( $F_{(3-285)} = 1,889$ ;  $p > .05$ ), Lack of Skills in Language Use ( $F_{(3-285)} = 0,755$ ;  $p > .05$ ) since the p value of these items was bigger than 0,05 ( $p > 0,05$ ).

On the other hand, as can be observed in Table 37 there was statistically significant difference in terms of academic field in the dimensions of Departmental Contributions ( $F_{(3-285)} = 3,352$ ;  $p < .05$ ) between the linguistic students and social students, Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up ( $F_{(3-285)} = 8,349$ ;  $p < .05$ ) between linguistic students and science students, and between science students and social students and Systemic Difficulties between linguistic students and social students and between science students and social students ( $F_{(3-285)} = 2,788$ ;  $p < .05$ ) since p value of these items was smaller than 0,05.

It can be inferred by focusing on the mean values in Table 36 that according to the dimension of Departmental Contributions the students from language departments ( $\bar{X} = 4, 17$ ) considered that



Erasmus Programme contributed their departmental issues more when compared to the students from social sciences ( $\bar{X} = 3, 76$ ). In fact, both two groups agreed that they saw new teaching methods applied in courses, established good contacts with foreign academicians for their future professions, had more information about their fields, and took part in different learning environments related to their fields. However, the linguistic students held more positive views on the departmental contributions than the social students.

It can be deduced from the mean values in Table 36 that according to the dimension of Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up, science students ( $\bar{X} = 2, 58$ ) agreed that they had more difficulties in finding courses in English, following the courses and accessing the course materials when compared to linguistic students ( $\bar{X} = 1, 90$ ) who considered that they experienced less difficulties and social students ( $\bar{X} = 2, 06$ ) who also considered that they had less difficulties.

It can be concluded from the mean values in Table 36 that according to the dimension of Systemic Difficulties social students, linguistic students, and science students disagreed that they had difficulty with education system. However, social students ( $\bar{X} = 2, 04$ ) had the views that they were a bit more ease in the face of difficulties when compared to linguistic students ( $\bar{X} = 2, 35$ ) whose responses were close neither agree nor disagree and science students whose responses were also close neither agree nor disagree ( $\bar{X} = 2, 31$ ).

#### **3.4. Analysis of Qualitative Data, Semi-Structured Interview**

This section includes the analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured interview. The data were examined through content analysis which included the coding for common themes. The analyzed data in semi-structured interview was described with frequency and percentage of the answers gathered from 25 outgoing volunteer Erasmus students from four different Turkish universities. The students were defined from ES1 to ES25 throughout the study. After the answers were transcribed, the repeated readings were done, the taken notes was put into codes for themes, and the tables were formed for each question.

The Erasmus students were asked about the evaluation of Erasmus Programme in terms of linguistic and academic gains, challenges, and developed strategies against challenges in order to support the questions in questionnaire. 11 tables below, each of which symbolizes the 11 questions of the interview, indicate frequency and percentage of responses by interviewees for the questions of the semi-structured interview. The responses were turned into codes/themes to be interpreted descriptively.

### 3.4.1. Qualitative Analysis of PART 1: Contributions

**Table 38: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 1<sup>st</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
Contributions of Erasmus Programme in the Development of Linguistic Competences	Speaking competence (fluently/without doubt)	12	48
	Practice in English	7	28
	Using English in daily life (outside class)	6	24
	Being exposed to language	6	24
	Learning a second foreign language	5	20
	Self-confidence in using English	5	20
	Listening	4	16
	No contribution in English	4	16
	Vocabulary	2	8
	Thinking in English	2	8
	Completing linguistic incompetences	2	8
	Increasing scores at international exams	1	4
	Reading	1	4
	Vocational English	1	4

In the first question of the interview, the students reflected their experiences in linguistic gains via Erasmus Programme. Table 38 shows that 48% of the participants seem to have developed their speaking competence via Erasmus Programme. Several of these students reported that they were speaking English more fluently and without concern. For instance, according to the ES8:

*“... even if I was in a non-English spoken country, the language among students were English. I noticed to think in English in time and I developed speaking English fluently.”*

In other respects, according to ES15:

*“...I considered that I didn't know English before attending Erasmus because I was unable to speak English. During Erasmus period I noticed that I wasn't bad at English when I was able to communicate with people.”*

Moreover, 28% of the samples stated they had the opportunity to practise their English through Erasmus Programme. ‘Using English in daily life’ and ‘being exposed to language’ options were seen as the next significant contributions by 24% of the samples. This suggests that several of these students clearly reported the increase in their speaking competence through joining Erasmus program and they seem to have done so with considerable exposure to the target language.

The other contributions stated by the students are: using English outside the class (f=6, p=24%), being exposed to use English (f=6, p=24%), learning a second foreign language (f=5, p=20%), having self-confidence in using English (f=5, p=20%), listening skills (f=4, p=16%),

increase in vocabulary (f=2, p=8%), starting to think in English (f=2, p=8%), and completing linguistic incompetences (f=2, p=8%). On the other hand, 4 students (16%) declared that they have noticed no contribution in their English since they had enough English competence before the programme. ES13 explains this issue as below:

*“The language of instruction at the host instituton is French. I tried to communicate in English at first but I couldn’t sort all dayworks out by speaking English in France. I started French course...I loved French through Erasmus Programme.”*

Three of these students were from the department of English studies so they considered in that way as ES10 declared below:

*“In my opinion, I don’t consider that Erasmus contributed to my linguistic competence. The first reason is that I’m the student of English Language and Literature, and the studies in my department are fully in English. In addition, nobody knows English at host country except for the classmates.”*

Very few students declared that Erasmus Programme contributed in increasing scores at international exams, reading competence and vocational English.

**Table 39: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
Contributions of Erasmus Programme in the Development of Academic Competences	Developing different perspectives related to education, school, courses etc.	7	28
	Insufficient contribution / No contribution	6	24
	Career (Academic Career / CV)	6	24
	Discovering academic competences (academic language/ academic writing/ making presentations)	5	20
	Learning different teaching methods	4	16
	Contribution the education at home institution	3	12
	Comparing the education at home and host institution	3	12
	Being self-confident and outgoing in lessons	3	12
	Having knowledge about new education system	2	8
	Being prestigious through international education	2	8
	Taking courses from native speakers	2	8

The second question intended to find out the contributions of Erasmus Programme in the development of academic competences of Erasmus students with an international education in a different education system and environment. Table 39 above shows that most of the students seemed to experience positive contributions via Erasmus education. Seven out of 25 students reported that they tended to develop different perspectives at university education. Some of the respondents’ comments are given below to explain the option.

ES7: *"...After joining Erasmus, my point of view changed... I began to catch the topics in lessons from a different perspective"*

ES19: *" Since each country has a different approach to education and topics taught in lessons, the contribution of the different university education has given a different perspective to my field."*

ES25: *"...I don't look from one aspect any more"*

As it can be deduced from the participants' responses, Erasmus Programme in some points had insufficient contribution to academic development of students or no contribution in this issue. According to ES11:

*"I don't think Erasmus Programme made a contribution to university education. The reason was that we were foreigners in a different country as Erasmus students and they were more tolerant to us, they didn't force us and they allowed us to pass the lessons."*

In other respects, according to ES23:

*"I think that the opportunities offered within the framework of the Erasmus program do not contribute except for the foreign language."*

In addition, the comments of 24% of the samples imply that Erasmus will have contribution to their career, and it means a powerful item in preparing CV. ES16 mentioned his case as below:

*"I think that the Erasmus program contributed to my university education, because through Erasmus experience, I decided to make my graduate degree in Europe. Now, I'm studying in Germany as graduate student."*

The other contributions in terms of academic aspect were defined by students as discovering academic competences of themselves (f=5, p=20%), learning different teaching methods (f=4, p=16%), contribution to the education at home institution (f=3, p=12%), having the opportunity to compare the education at home and host institution (f=3, p=12%), and being self-confident and outgoing in lessons (f=3, p=12%).

However, there are also few comments in this section ranking under 10% such as having knowledge about new education system, being prestigious through international education, and taking courses from native speakers. ES21 stated as below:

*"Of course it has contributions because I have been studying abroad, and I think that Erasmus has a really good prestige among people. They think about you that you are curious and courageous."*

**Table 40: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
The Other Contributions of Erasmus Programme to Students' Life	Socio-cultural competence	19	76
	Personal Development	17	68
	Future career / finding a job	15	60
	The change in the vision of the world	7	28
	Visiting different countries	6	24
	Contribution in every sphere of life	2	8
	Feeling as 'the man of the world'	2	8
	Having knowledge about European education system	1	4

The study attempts to gather data regarding the actual contributions of the programme to the students' life. Except for linguistic and academic changes or developments, there was also question asking about the other contributions of the experience. Nearly all students (f=19) stated that Erasmus mostly developed their socio-cultural competence. Here are some samples from the interview to support this code:

ES8: *"I had culture shock when I went abroad with Erasmus Programme. At first, I abstracted myself from anywhere and then I started to adapt to the environment. I got used to everything that was unusual to me at the beginning. Adapting the food, new environment, new people. I have become more open-minded and respectful to the different. Moreover, I have adopted my own culture leastwise. I searched and learned about my own culture just to share with my friends and enlighten about the correct."*

ES10: *" It has contributed to my social life. I can give examples such as being patient, thoughtful and tolerant in society. For a while you are learning to get used to a foreign culture with people you don't know. I have also learnt to respect their food, the things they love, and briefly, I have learnt that I should understand their way of life and the differences are beautiful."*

ES14: *"Erasmus Program contributed to my life mostly in social aspect. Sharing the same house with new and different people, living with them, getting to know their culture are the most prominent contributions for me. In addition, the other important contributions are increasing my point of view, visiting different countries and staying my friends' house from those countries, getting to know them well and having unforgettable memories."*

As the comments in long sentences show that the students seem to have talked more about in socio-cultural development via Erasmus experience. However, 68% of the students acknowledged that they developed personally in the programme and it is the most significant contribution by some participants. They explain the change in personal development with the phrases following: self-confidence, leadership, making speeches in front of people, risk analysis, problem solving, making organisations, revealing personal skills, exploring yourself, overcoming the fears, being extrovert, solution-oriented personality, breaking down the prejudices, self-government, and increase in self-respect. ES18 explains her personal development as below:

*“The greatest contribution of Erasmus to me is to discover that I can remove my borders as long as I desire. It was a great pleasure to push to the limits and even push more and, I think that I became a more self-confident individual by integrating it into my life after Erasmus experience. Now, this helps me to ease my work and enjoy life.”*

Finding a job, the change in the vision of the world, having the chance to visit different countries, positive effect in every sphere of life, feeling as ‘the man of the world’ and having knowledge about European education system are among the other contributions of Erasmus Programme on students’ life.

### 3.4.2. Qualitative Analysis of PART 2: Difficulties

As for the first question of this section, the students were asked if they had sufficient foreign language for Erasmus experience. While some of the students (f=2, p=8%) stated that they were thinking that they had sufficient linguistic proficiency before going abroad but it wasn’t as they considered, most of them (f=17, p=76%) stated that they weren’t competent in language skills. On the other hand, six of the students (24%) noted that their English was not adequate for Erasmus Programme even if they passed English Proficiency exam for participating the programme. The question was followed with the question asking the problems and difficulties the students faced during their Erasmus stay. Table 41 below shows the difficulties stated by the interviewed Erasmus students.

**Table 41: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 4<sup>th</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
Problems Experienced in Terms of Language Use	Local people’s lack of English	18	72
	Speaking / Communication problems	7	28
	Various accents	5	20
	High level of English usage by academicians	3	12
	Bewaring in speaking	2	8
	Mislearning by friends	1	4
	Limited vocabulary	1	4
	Insufficient English of academicians	1	4

Based on Table 41, it is seen that 72% of the samples appear to experience difficulties with local people in communication since they didn’t know international language. The following are the statements declared by students in this context:

ES10: *“...I’ve had problems dealing with people who are not native English speakers. The city I visited was not big and the local people were unable to speak English. For example, when I went to a grocery, I was showing the photo what I was looking for. In addition, when I told people that I couldn’t speak Polish, they continued to speak Polish. I think that was the biggest problem.”*

ES20: *"...we have experienced this problem because the English speaking rate of Hungary is very low especially in small cities like Eger. Hungarian is an extremely difficult language and this has made communication problematic.*

ES25: *"...since local people did not know English, I had a lot of troubles. For example, in my dormitory the officials were speaking in Polish, and this could be challenging to communicate when I needed to speak with any officials. In addition, when the tram officers realized that we were strangers, they tore into us...The tram attendant asked me to show him the ticket. I tried to tell him that I was waiting in line, but he talked in Polish and we couldn't agree. He fined me. No one helped and I became very sad that day."*

Some of the students declared that even if local people couldn't speak English, they didn't have difficulties with local people. They expressed their cases as below:

ES3: *"...I studied as Erasmus student in a country whose mother tongue is not English, and not even one Erasmus students' native language was English. I can't say that I have had a problem with this issue in the Erasmus environment... I attended a language course of the target country. Thanks to this course, I learned the basic things in Portuguese and tried to solve my basic needs like shopping, pharmacy, hospital, barber."*

ES4: *"In Italy, English was not being used both in the city and my Italian was not enough. Having a good level of English has helped me make a language exchange with a few young English speakers. In daily life I spoke with the local people in their native language."*

The next significant problem was stated by students (f=7, p=28%) as "speaking or communication problems." In addition, the other significant problem was reported by the students (f=5, p=20%) as the various accents used by the friends, local people or by the academicians. ES2 explains his speaking problem as below:

*"...I could understand what was talked about when I entered a new environment, but I could not participate in the conversation."*

On the other hand, ES8 expresses her problem as below:

*"...The biggest problem was that since both sides are not native speakers of English, we had difficulty in understanding each other's speeches and accents."*

It is an interesting point that while ES15 was suffering from academicians' low level of English, ES5 was suffering from academicians' high level of English. Here are the statements by two:

ES15: *"...Some of the lecturers were poor in English, so we had some serious problems in some courses."*

ES5: *"...Since the English of the lecturers were very good, I could not reach their speed."*

The other problems faced by the students during Erasmus period were expressed as various accents by lecturers and students (f=5, p=20%), bewaring in speaking (f=2, p=8%), mislearning by friends (f=1, p=4%), and limited vocabulary (f=1, p=4%).

**Table 42: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 5<sup>th</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
Evaluation of Academic Environment	Positive (free/ nice)	10	40
	Not having a campus	4	16
	Lower than home institution's level	4	16
	Midlevel	1	4
	The same with home institution	1	4
	Not mentioned / Missing	5	20
TOTAL		25	100
Problems Experienced While Following the Courses	Having no difficulties	12	48
	Usage of native language at courses by lecturers	7	28
	No tolerance for Erasmus students	5	20
	Insufficient English skills / different accents of lecturers	4	16
	Course selection /Not finding English courses	3	12
	Compulsory attendance	3	12
	Adaptation to different education system	3	12
	Heavy schedule	1	4
	Academic language	1	4
	Cold behaviours by classmates	1	4

The fifth question in the interview is about the academic environment and if the students had difficulty in following courses. Most of the students (f=10 and p=40%) evaluated academic environment with positive phrases by expressing that the university environment is pretty free and nice (ES1, ES2, ES6, ES7, ES8, ES11, ES17, ES18, ES20 and ES21). %16 of the students (f=4) stated that there was no campus life unlike many Turkish universities and their campuses. It is known that the faculties/ departments at universities in Europe are located in different parts of cities as single buildings. 16% of the group evaluated the academic area as small and found the standarts of the university lower than home institution. One student evaluated the academic environment at midlevel, and also another one student evaluated at the same with home institution. Five students didn't mention anything about this question.

As the participants' responses demonstrated, most of the students (f=12, p=48%) seem to have had no difficulties while abroad from academic side. Here are some outstanding examples representing this code:

ES10: "...I had no academic problems. The lecturers were very understanding and we passed the courses with ease when compared to Turkey. For example, we were able to take the exam more than once when we did not pass the exam of a lesson. The instructors were also considerate to ignore the absence at classes. They paid as much attention to us as we were to



*spend a perfect time in their country in limited time. The lessons were easy and understandable.”*

ES12: *“...I can say that I have received a more effective education abroad with a wide variety of courses to be chosen, having lessons from very different subjects that interest me, and small number of classes.”*

ES19: *“...I didn't face much academic problems. The reason for this was the private Erasmus classes taught in English for exchange students.”*

ES25: *“University of Lodz was really helpful from academic aspect. I had no problems. I was in contact with the instructors via e-mail all the time. Since we were Erasmus students, they didn't raise any difficulties for us. So, I was very happy with my courses and instructors.”*

28% of them stated that they faced difficulties when the language of courses was the native language of lecturers. These students were regarded as local students by lecturers. The students explained their experiences as below:

ES3: *“...The only problem I experienced academically was that some professors couldn't speak English. At this point, we had to attend the course and listen to the lesson in the mother tongue of the country, take notes and then translate the notes for studying. I can say that this process is seriously difficult for me.”*

ES17: *“...Although the language of the course was English, there were times when the lesson was taught in Spanish because the majority in the class was native.”*

The next serious difficulty for the students was expressed as ‘not indicating any tolerance’ by 5 students (20%) even if they were exchange students. The statements below indicate that Erasmus students were considered as local students.

ES5: *“...the education system here at KTU is different from there. They did not tolerate Erasmus students. We had to work hard to pass the courses.”*

ES6: *“...they didn't have much understanding for the overlapping courses taken from different classes. The attendance for the courses was compulsory. However, it was scheduled in time.”*

Four students (16%) also noted that the lecturers were not good at English skills and the students had difficulty in understanding courses.

ES15: *“...the academic English of some of the lecturers were poor and although we stated that, we had the same English exam with local students. We had problems in these lessons.”*

ES9: *“I had difficulties in terms of academic aspect, and especially at the first two weeks I could not understand the lessons because of the accents of teacher.”*

Three students (12%) responded that they had problems in course selection process since there were not enough English courses to complete enough credits. Otherwise, they would face difficulties when they returned to home institution.

ES13: “...Since most of the lessons and exams were in French, it was difficult for me. Language wasn't a problem in daily life, but the academic language was quite difficult. So, it was almost impossible to follow the lessons, but I wasn't absent from school. I had problems in recognition of the courses with my home institution. I did not get a valid grade from 80% of the courses I attended.”

Another three of the interviewed students (12%) expressed that attendance to courses was compulsory, and three more students complained about the different education system including different types of examination and teaching techniques. In addition, 3 different students explained their experiences with following difficulties: heavy schedule, academic language used in the lessons and cold behaviours by classmates. One of the outstanding statements is as below:

ES1: “...Since the lessons were usually very heavy and completely in English, I was unable to pay attention to lessons from time to time. In addition, I couldn't understand some concepts that I didn't hear before. This sometimes made the course even more difficult.”

**Table 43: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 6<sup>th</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
The Biggest Problem Experienced during Erasmus Process	Linguistic Problems	5	20
	Food Culture	4	16
	Financial Problems	4	16
	Adaptation process	3	12
	Homesickness	3	12
	No biggest problem related to Erasmus	3	12
	Dormitory Conditions	2	8
	Transportation at First Arrival	2	8
	Loneliness	2	8
	Prejudices	1	4
	Health Problems	1	4
	Course selection process	1	4
	Irritating behaviours	1	4

As it can be inferred from Table 43 above, there were 13 different biggest problems they experienced. The most serious problem for most of the students in interviewed group (f=5, p=20%) is related to language. They presented their different linguistic problems as below:

ES13: “The biggest difficulty as I explained was in terms of language. Especially at the beginning of Erasmus period, I didn't know what to do. That made me even more determined. I didn't behave as a shy person that I wasn't good at foreign language. However, I tried more to learn it...”

ES4: “The biggest difficulty was that the language of the courses was Italian. If I had any prior knowledge on this, I would study Italian before Erasmus Programme.”

ES24 also focused on the language of the courses as the biggest problem he faced stated that *“the biggest challenge I had in this process was that I couldn't find English lessons.”*

ES17 and ES23 also stated that they experienced the great challenge in communicating with the local people who couldn't speak English.

The next serious problems expressed by the students were different food culture and financial problems. These students emphasized that they missed Turkish food and since currency differences between Euro and Turkish Lira were high it was too expensive to stay in European countries. Here are prominent statements for two items:

ES3: *“The biggest challenge I had during my Erasmus period was food. I couldn't eat what I wanted to eat since what I wanted to eat more was in Turkey. That increased my longing for our food.”*

ES14: *“The biggest challenge I had during my Erasmus period was the insufficient financial support. So, 300 Euros per month for Estonia was a very small amount of grant. It is impossible to live with 300 Euros in a city where the rents were between 300 and 350 Euros. It is almost impossible for an individual with middle income to go there. This is the main reason why most of the students do not participate in this program or give up after they deserve to be Erasmus students.”*

The other biggest problems stated by students are: adaptation process at the beginning (f=3, p=12%), homesickness (f=3, p=12%), bad dormitory conditions (f=2, p=8%), transportation at first arrival (f=2, p=8%), loneliness (f=2, p=8%). However, 3 students (12%) mentioned that they didn't encounter any biggest problem during Erasmus period.

According to four different students, the biggest difficulties they experienced were exposure to prejudices, health problems, course selection process, and irritating behaviours by some local people. ES20 who also mentioned the same difficulty at fifth question stated here as following:

*“...As I mentioned earlier, I can say the course selection period. It was very challenging to enter every classes for two weeks until finding equivalent courses which were in limited number.”*

### **3.4.3. Qualitative Analysis of PART 3: Solutions**

This section of the interview questions focused on the solutions developed against challenges during Erasmus period abroad. The solutions for language problems uttered by the interviewees were explored with 7<sup>th</sup> question in Table 44, and the solutions to be successful in academic aspect were evaluated with 8<sup>th</sup> question under Table 45.

**Table 44: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 7<sup>th</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
The Solutions in order to Overcome Language Problems (during Erasmus Study Period)	Studying /Having knowledge about the language of the host country	8	32
	Using language insistently / Addressing the language issue	7	28
	Utilising online applications /websites	5	20
	Practising in English	4	16
	Being exposed to language	3	12
	Developing speaking skills before Erasmus	3	12
	Reading articles/books in English	2	8
	Joining social activities/having social surroundings	2	8
	Making agreements with English-spoken countries	2	8
	Getting help from local students/people	2	8
	Joining language courses while abroad	2	8
	Watching tv series in English	1	4

The seventh interview question was “What are the solutions for overcoming language problems?” Based on the theme above, the codes were created as students replied to the question. While some of the students approached the question from Erasmus period abroad, some of the others commented on the period before Erasmus. As a result, there appeared 12 items gathered from the participants’ answers.

Eight (32%) out of 25 students found the solution “studying or having knowledge about the language of the host country” as more effective in overcoming language problems. In order to maintain their lives in a different society, the students need to communicate in English or in the language of society. Three of the statements about this item are given below:

ES4: “...I was studying Italian in 4 different ways; first one was using the rosetta stone program at home alone, second one was participating in the language course of the university, third one was participating in the Italian language course for immigrants and the final one was getting help from Italian friends. I followed these paths and I was satisfied.”

ES16: “I tried to learn German and I was trying to talk to people in German.”

ES17: “At least we need to have certain knowledge of the language of the country to be visited before we go there.”

Analysis of the student responses to seventh question revealed that nearly 30% of the students argue that language problems can be solved by insisting on using it without hesitation. Three of the experiences about this item are shown below:

ES2: “I definitely think that it should be tackled with the language issue. In the first month period, I was trying to set friendships with Turkish friends or not leaving my room by avoiding this problem. However, it was definitely the biggest mistake. Of course, you would have Turkish friends or when you desired to be alone you could close your room. Nevertheless, if you really

*needed to behave like that, you would do it. You shouldn't do them in order to escape from the language. One month later I started to take the language in hand and I realized that my English level improved. When you realized that nobody spoke perfect English and you could speak as much as your friends spoke, you were relaxed and started to speak."*

ES9: *"First of all, you must trust yourself and always try to communicate and not keep yourself in the background."*

ES12: *"The best way to overcome English problems is to read the textbooks in English, and more importantly, according to me the best way is not to stop speaking even if it is difficult, and try to speak persistently in foreign language."*

The other important solutions uttered by the students are: utilising online applications or websites (f=5, p=20%), practising in English (f=4, p=16%), being exposed to language (f=3, p=12%), developing speaking skills before Erasmus (f=3, p=12%), reading articles/books in English (f=2, p=8%), joining social activities/having social surroundings (f=2, p=8%), making agreements with English-spoken countries (f=2, p=8%), getting help from local students/people (f=2, p=8%) and joining language courses while abroad (f=2, p=8%). ES8 arguing that one must be exposed to language and ES13 addressing to more than one item in solving language problems abroad are given as examples below:

ES8: *"I think being exposed to language is the only way to learn the language. The Erasmus experience was hundred times more useful than the language courses I had been studying for years. There were two important factors that prevented me from speaking English. The first one was to refrain from speaking the language for fear of misspeaking and the other was to be speak with obeying grammar rules. I overcame them through Erasmus..."*

ES13: *"Absolutely the first advice is to have a social environment. Although I attended language course, only theoretical knowledge was not enough. The most important solution is to make friends and chat frequently. It is also easy to develop yourself because there is plenty of free time there. By means of accessible internet websites, one can develop her language accent and the ability to speak fluently."*

Only ES5 mentioned "watching tv series in English" as with the statements following:

*"Reading articles related to vocational English and watching tv series can help overcome the language problems."*

**Table 45: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 8<sup>th</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
The Solutions in order to Be Successful in Academic Aspect (during Erasmus Study Period)	Attending courses regularly	7	28
	Studying more and well	6	24
	A better foreign language	4	16
	Studying from international resources	3	12
	Improving yourself	2	8
	Participating social activities	2	8
	More course options	2	8
	Solving the compatibility of the courses between home and host institution before	2	8
	Getting help from local students /lecturers	2	8
	Having knowledge about the educational system of the host institution	1	4
	Writing essays	1	4
	Taking part in Erasmus means being successful in academic aspect	1	4
	Being aware of the fact that Erasmus is an education programme	1	4
	Increasing the communication between the lecturers from both host and home institution	1	4
	Lecturers should be proficient in English	1	4
	The Erasmus period should be long	1	4
	Exams should not be in homework delivery	1	4

Table 45 above includes the items concerning the strategies suggested by the participants of the semi-structured interview in terms of academic success during Erasmus period. As the participants' responses indicated, there appeared 17 different ideas about how Erasmus students could catch academic success with the effect of Erasmus Programme. Most of the students (f=7, p=28%) seem to believe that the most important solution in dealing with academic issues is attending courses regularly. Here are the comments as examples explaining the most mentioned item clearly:

ES1: *"I had a lot of course choices in the academic sense for myself, and I didn't have much difficulty. But the fact that I attended the classes was also effective in not having difficulties..."*

ES6: *"...It is very important to attend courses regularly, otherwise it would be difficult to compensate the lack of knowledge."*

ES21: *"I think it might be to study the subjects and follow the courses you think it is hard. I can't answer the question from my aspect since I didn't make an effort."*

The next important item in this section represents that the students seem to study more and well when compared to the study at home university.

ES9: *“There should be more research and reading for the courses...”*

ES12: *“I think that the students should study seriously from the aspect of academic success without thinking that they can easily pass the courses. Apart from studying the courses, it is of great importance to participate actively in the classes and do the assignments. This is because the class performance is more important than the examinations in their education system. In addition, it is difficult to achieve success without going to school since academicians know students personally.”*

ES13: *“During the Erasmus period, the most important key to your academic success is to develop yourself. It's unfortunately not enough to just follow the lessons. Additional study should be done.”*

The items displayed in Table 8 show that the students consider that having a better foreign language (f=4, p=16%), studying from international resources (f=3, p=12%), improving yourself (f=2, p=8%), participating social activities (f=2, p=8%), having more course options (f=2, p=8%), solving the compatibility of the courses between home and host institution before (f=2, p=8%), and getting help from local students /lecturers (f=2, p=8%) are also significant in academic development. There are prominent samples below including some different items together as replied by the students:

ES4: *“...In order to develop academic side, one can follow current researches from international sources, and if he or she discovers a backward deficiency (such as the basic knowledge of the field) while studying the researches, he or she can fill those deficiencies. The students can communicate with lecturers and scientists in the field by learning foreign language, and can do internship with them.”*

ES24: *“First of all, a good level of English will help a lot since the language of instruction is English. However, in order to be more successful in the academic sense I also think that the departments at home and host institution should be the same and that the courses to be taken abroad should be in parallel with the ones at home. I think these two conditions and a good working ethics are important to succeed.”*

ES10: *“Attending classes and fulfilling homework and responsibilities can be the solution. There are some social activities by the local students of the university. The students should join them and the lecturers become happy for this.”*

Very few students (f=1, p=4%) stated that for academic development students may have knowledge about the educational system of the host institution, may write essays in foreign language, may take part in Erasmus Programmes, and may be aware of the fact that Erasmus is an education programme.

ES2: *“... I think that the students should understand that Erasmus is an education programme. Of course, there will be entertainment during the period, but doing the timing and planning correctly will bring success.”*

In addition, there also solutions except for the performances of the students for the academic success: the communication between the lecturers from both host and home institution should be provided; the lecturers of the courses for Erasmus students should be proficient in English; the duration of Erasmus period should be long and the exams should not be in homework delivery.

ES15: *“Something must be done to check whether English proficiency of the instructors who teach in the departments is adequate or not. I spoke with my Erasmus Coordinator about this issue and he /she welcomed this as a normal problem and said that we would get used to it. However, it could be possible to take that lesson from another instructor.”*

#### 3.4.4. Qualitative Analysis of PART 4: Changes /differences observed after Erasmus

In this part, the participants were asked if they observed any difference / change in terms of foreign language and academic development before and after Erasmus for the ninth and tenth questions. They firstly answered if they observed any changes in both senses or not, and secondly they answered in which aspects the changes occurred. Almost all students (f=24, p=96%) answered that they observed changes in terms of linguistic development, and its effects on both sides. However, only ES10 replied as *“No, I didn’t observe.”*

**Table 46: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 9<sup>th</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
Observation of the Changes in Terms of Foreign Language Before and After Erasmus	Positive	24	96
	Negative	1	4
TOTAL		25	100
In Which Aspects the Students Observed the Changes in Terms of Foreign Language Before and After Erasmus	Developing speaking in English (without worrying)	18	72
	Gaining self-confidence	8	32
	Developing a second foreign language	5	20
	Increasing English skills generally	4	16
	Increasing listening / comprehending skills in English	3	12
	Develeoping thinking in English	3	12
	Having a broad vision	3	8
	Increasing reading comprehension skills in English	1	4
	Relieving the anxiety in exams	1	4

More than half of the respondents out of 25 students (72%) believed that Erasmus SMS Programme has contributed to develop their speaking competence. They stated that they gained the courage to speak English without worrying to be ridiculed even if they uttered wrong words. The results show the similarity with the first questions concerning the contributions of Erasmus programme in foreign language aspect. Most of the students replied that contribution of the programme was mostly perceived in speaking skills. The following statements are given to indicate the changes in Erasmus students’ life in terms of speaking skill after Erasmus experience:

ES2: *“By all means, you are evaluating yourself before and after the programme. Even though I benefited Erasmus 3 years ago, I am still evaluating this process. The contribution of the foreign language is an indisputable fact, of course. Before the programme, I was not capable of conducting a long-term English dialogue with anyone. However, after the programme, perhaps*



*most importantly, you gain this confidence and after you return you start to look for people whom you can speak English."*

ES8: *"Yes, I've been speaking English in a more fluent and more efficient way. Previously, while I was abstaining from joining English courses for fear of speaking English, I began to participate the courses at home institution by adding my questions, answers, and comments after Erasmus."*

ES25: *"Of course, I have observed. I desire to speak English all the time and I want to contact more people from new cultures. I was abstaining from speaking English earlier whether I could speak or not, but now I have no fear and I'm more outgoing."*

On the basis of the data displayed in Table 46, eight students (32%) agreed that they gained self-confidence in using language. In addition, in the first question of the interview 20% of the students have answered that Erasmus SMS contributed to self-confidence in using English. Three of the students (ES8, ES9 and ES19) focused on this item in both questions. Here is the example for this item:

ES9: *"I have definitely discovered my self-confidence and I have become more aware of myself. Owing to the kindness of the people there, I became a more moderate individual in cultural sense."*

The other items defined in terms of students' statements depending on their observations are as follows: they developed a second foreign language (f=5, p=20%); they increased their general English skills (f=4, p=16%); they increased listening and comprehending skills (f=3, p=12%); they developed the skill thinking in English (f=3, p=12%); and they had a broad vision (f=3, p=12%) after the programme. Below are some significant samples for each item:

ES14: *"There was a revolutionary change in terms of foreign language before and after Erasmus. I've learnt Spanish as second foreign language and I'm better at speaking English. Now I can discuss with anyone in any subject in a very comfortable way."*

ES19: *"...the increase in self-confidence in speaking English in my daily life, the disappearance of the accent problem and the expansion of the vocabulary. At the same time I acquired the ability to manage the communication with the ones good at English and the bad ones. I can explain the disappearance of the accent problem with the conversation with American basketball players. They told me, "Did you live in America?"*

ES23: *"I'm not skilled enough in listening, understanding, thinking and speaking English before my Erasmus, but after 5 months in Erasmus, I realized that I made great progress. It was odd to start thinking in English, especially after speaking a lot in English in some days."*

ES24: *"Before Erasmus, when one spoke English, I could think of what he/she spoke and then I understood. But after months of practicing in Erasmus, I realized that I could automatically translate the sentences in my mind as my mother tongue. Even from time to time I observed that there were many words I forgot in Turkish but knew in English."*

ES7: *"Before Erasmus, I was not thinking big and my vision was narrow. However, after Erasmus my vision has expanded and my point of view has changed. Erasmus contributed a lot to my world vision."*

The linguistic effects of Erasmus Programme in increasing reading comprehension skills in English and relieving the anxiety in exams were observed by one each student. ES12 stated that “...I felt that my reading comprehension skills also improved owing to my readings in English” and ES3 expressed that “Before Erasmus I was hesitant to speak English and worried before the exams. After Erasmus, I have no worries about speaking English and failing exams...”

**Table 47: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 10<sup>th</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
Observation of the Changes in Academic Aspect Before and After Erasmus	Positive changes	13	52
	Very few changes	5	20
	Observation no changes	3	12
	Negative changes	2	8
	Both Positive and Negative changes	2	8
TOTAL		25	100
In Which Academic Aspects the Students Observed the Changes Before and After Erasmus	Gaining new perspectives /methods / information / ideas	10	40
	Revealing the abilities	5	20
	Feeling negative towards home institution	4	16
	Increasing in using foreign resources	4	16
	Development in researching / preparing reports etc.	3	12
	Increasing of interest in the department at home university	1	4
	Being unsuccessful/disappointed after Erasmus	1	4

The tenth question in the interview is about the observation of changes from academic aspect. More than half of the students (f=13 and p=52%) evaluated their observation and the changes as totally positive. 20% of the students (f=5) stated that there were many changes occurred through their observation. Three of the students (p=12%) mentioned that they didn't observe any changes before and after the programme. Two students (p=8%) declared that they observed negative changes, and the other two students (p=8%) said that they both experienced positive and negative changes. Since the other responses will be given in the next paragraphs and evaluated as items in the second part of the table, here are the statements for “observation no changes”:

ES10: “I have not observed any differences in the academic sense since I took the same courses with same contents in Turkey before. That's why it didn't make any contribution.”

ES14: “As I mentioned in previous questions, I did not observe any contribution from academic aspect. Since my home university was much better than the university in Estonia, I didn't experience any difficulty in all the lessons. In this topic, Estonian Maritime Academy does not contribute much to me.”

ES22: “I didn't notice any change from academic aspect. The education levels of two universities were almost the same.”

Describing the data given in Table 47, most of the participants (f=10 and p=40%) observing changes in academic sense stated that they gained new perspectives, methods, information or new ideas after Erasmus experience. A few statements about this issue are presented below:

ES2: *"...Of course, studying in a different country, studying in English language and experiencing the departmental applications on site in a different country allows you to create new thoughts."*

ES6: *"Actually, while I was considering that I was perfect in some ways, I noticed that I was so lacking and I should do better things, for example when preparing a presentation etc."*

ES12: *"I benefited from Erasmus at thesis period. I can say that it provided me gaining new ideas about choosing a thesis topic."*

ES25: *"My answer will be yes again because we are going and adapting to a completely new system. I think that passing the courses there is a sense of contribution to yourself. I argue that all of them have developed with the adaptation process. As I said, we were writing articles in English, learning new systems. For example, I had a course called Radio Practice in which we created a radio program within the studio and learned the programs we installed on our own computers in a practical way. Now, with the information I have acquired, I am not satisfied with the presented information. I always strive for more. For me, briefly, Erasmus means innovation."*

As can be found in Table 47 above, five students (p=20%) declared that they observed changes in the development of some abilities in academic aspect. Followings are the statements of the students about this issue:

ES9: *"Erasmus also had great influence on language development and reading and writing article. I found out my ability to analyse and think deeply."*

ES13: *"Of course there was a change I could feel. Developing socially even increases analytical thinking. In addition, many people who learn that you are participating in the Erasmus program even change their perspectives about you. In this way, with the development of the ability to express myself, I have done more successful works in the academic field. I had a social personality before joining the program, but it was an incredibly nice feeling to add my personality a great Erasmus experience."*

ES19: *"Yes. In particular, I experienced a change arising from academic communication. When I came back from Erasmus, I was thinking in English because of the constant communication in English abroad and I got difficulty in expressing myself in Turkish for the first two months. Or rather, I slowed down. Afterwards, there appeared increase in expressing myself more clearly in academic terms and looking the topics from different points of view since I began to think in Turkish and presented what I acquired from abroad."*

The other items remarked by the participants are as follows: observing negative thoughts towards home institution (f=4 and p=16%), the tendency to use foreign resources (f=4 and p=16%), development in academic issues such as researching or preparing reports (f=3 and p=12%). Here are the samples for each item:

ES23: *“I am in Erzurum at the moment and I have difficulty in adapting again academically. This is a negative effect, of course. But I hope that I will adapt again in a short time. It is difficult to speak from positive side in academic aspect since I didn’t make any progress while I was in Erasmus.”*

ES20: *“Firstly, I made a great progress in reading academic essays in English. Secondly, I showed improvement in writing article because there weren’t any writing activities in our department in Turkey. In addition, with the help of my presentations, my oratory skills have improved a bit, and I have become better at speaking and expressing myself in lessons.”*

ES16: *“While researching in any subject, I started researching more extensively and more based on book information.”*

On the other hand, only ES8 stated about increasing of interest in the department at home university with the expressions below:

*“Thanks to the professors of literature in Italy, the interest in my department (literature and linguistics) increased some more. When I returned to my country, my in-class performance increased with the effects of this interest.”*

In addition, only ES24 expressed being unsuccessful and feeling disappointed after Erasmus Programme. The statement is given below:

*“I can say that I studied better and harder before Erasmus, but then I became lazy after Erasmus. Since the education system in Hungary focused mostly on practising when compared to Turkey, I passed one year by making practising and learning by experience. However, when I returned to Turkey, I felt a bit disappointed after seeing rote learning in our education system.”*

### **3.4.5. Qualitative Analysis of PART 5: Suggestions**

Table 48 includes the items concerning the deficient sides of Erasmus Programme and the suggestions uttered by the students for the general problems.

**Table 48: The Encoded Analysis of the Responses for the 11<sup>th</sup> Interview Question**

Theme	Codes	f	%
Did you Observe any Deficiencies in the Erasmus SMS Programme?	No	11	44
	Yes	10	40
	Not stated	4	16
TOTAL		25	100
Suggestions for the Observed Deficiencies	Insufficient Erasmus grant should be enhanced	6	24
	There should be conscious of the program's importance	3	12
	The students should be informed or encouraged for attending the program	2	8
	Students should be tolerated in course selection/matching	2	8
	The host institutions should solve accommodation problems	2	8
	English proficiency exams should be implemented more seriously and in a professional way	2	8
	Agreements should be examined in detailed	1	8
	Resolving the imbalance between the numbers of outgoing and incoming students	1	4
	There should be developed a communication method among Erasmus students	1	4
	The mentorship system should be more developed	1	4
	Document preparation process should be eased	1	4
	Academicians should be more interested in the program	1	4
	Erasmus grants should be in local currency of the countries	1	4
	Communication between home and host institutions should be improved	1	4
	The number of the bilateral agreements should be increased	1	4
The travel days (at most 10 in a term) should be extended	1	4	
There should be a rule for students to know the local language of the country	1	4	
Grading systems of the universities should be improved	1	4	

As the first question of this section, the students were asked if they observe any deficiencies in the Erasmus SMS Programme. Most of the students (f=11, p=44%) stated that I don't think there is any deficient side of the program. 10 of the participants (p=40%) seemed to observe some lacks related to Erasmus experience. Four of the students (p=16%) in this section didn't present any ideas about the deficiencies of the program but made suggestions for the improvement of the programme. In addition, it should be taken into consideration that while some of the students evaluated the programme as inadequate in terms of small amount of Erasmus grant, some of the others evaluated as adequate but suggested that the amount of Erasmus grant should be increased.

In this suggestion section, the answers are quite various. Majority of participants (f=6, p=24%) responded to 11th question as “Erasmus grant should be enhanced” with the statements below:

ES1: *“Obviously, I have not seen any deficiency in my Erasmus process. I had no problems. Maybe it could be better if the grants are increased a bit.”*

ES19: *“...Specific adjustments or enhancements can be made on the grants for the countries using different currency exchange rates, such as Turkey.”*

ES22: *“The only deficiency of the program is that the grant is absolutely insufficient.”*

The next important item stated by the participants (f=3, p=12%) is that the universities, the academicians, and the participants should be conscious of the program’s importance. One of the students expressed their ideas as below:

ES2: *“I can say that there is nothing deficient related to the programme. I only think that students at the university should know what the Erasmus Program is and learn what it contributes to them. There should be studies on this subject.”*

RS9: *“Students can be encouraged to increase the participation and provide opportunities for students to study at English-speaking countries. It may be pointed out that the programme should be for linguistic and academic aims rather than travelling.”*

ES25: *“There is a perception, Erasmus environment. I had so many Turkish friends. There were students from many universities who knew nothing about language. In my opinion, these occasions should be prevented. I think that Erasmus examinations and interviews should be carried out with seriousness. I’m not pleased with sending the students randomly.”*

The other items stated by the participants (f=2, p=8%) are as follows: the students should be informed or encouraged for attending the program; the students should be tolerated in course selection or matching process; the host institutions should help accommodation problems and English proficiency exams should be implemented more seriously and in a professional way. Here are the samples for each item:

ES5: *“Students don’t know much about the programme. They don’t look into the webpage of Erasmus Office and they should be given more information by visiting the departments. I think the program does not have a general lack...”*

ES8: *“Yes, there are. There should be focused on course matching. I had to take the lessons of the upper classes’ because I didn’t find relevant courses for my class level and because I did not want to get other courses from different fields. When I returned to my own university, I missed a lot of lessons. I think that there should be taken common decision about the courses to be given at the universities in order to minimize the loss of the students.”*

ES23: *“...Not every Erasmus student is offered an opportunity for accomodation. This was generally a deficiency. We didn’t experience any problems in our city. The solution is simple. Agreements should be signed with the schools providing dormitory or the universities should provide dormitory facilities.”*

Only one of the students stated the following: The agreements should be examined in detailed; the imbalance between the numbers of outgoing and incoming students should be resolved; there should be developed a communication method among Erasmus students; the mentorship system should be more developed; document preparation process should be eased; academicians should be more interested in the program; Erasmus grants should be in local currency of the countries and communication between home and host institutions should be improved. The outstanding examples are given below:

ES3: *“Missing points are the following: Two universities mutually should send and receive the same number of students. At this point, there should be equality in both outgoing and incoming Erasmus students’ numbers and so the development of the programme can be provided in two universities. The second point is related to documents to be filled by students. A student who is going to go to Erasmus is faced with a request by both universities to fill their own documents. Documents must be the same for all countries and universities. Otherwise, it will prevent the students from having difficulty in this process and make it difficulty of the experts working at International Relations Offices.”*

ES15: *“...In some courses if we passed, we would take CC. If we didn’t pass, the note would be FF. This made a reduction on our grades. The grading system can be put into a better system.”*

ES16: *“I can suggest that the students should know the native language of the country at least A1 level.”*

In sum, the findings of qualitative data reveal that Erasmus program has positive and significant effects on Erasmus students in terms of gaining linguistic and academic competences as discussed in the present study. In addition, most of the students’ answers reveal that the program also contributed to their socio-cultural competence and personal developments. As linguistic contribution, most of the students evaluated that they increased their speaking competence especially in speaking fluently and without worrying. It was encouraging for them to see that most of the Erasmus students were all in the same boat. Since they had to communicate with people in daily life, they had to speak. Being compulsory to speak English may develop their speaking competence without being aware of it. From academic aspect, most of the students considered that they developed different perspectives through courses in Erasmus. However, in this issue sufficient number of students expressed that they didn’t observe any academic contribution since they may see the other contributions more effective than academic. Thanks to Erasmus Program the students experienced a new social and cultural life. Trying new may have positive impact on them and add contribution for personal sense.

In addition to the contributions, the responses by the students show that they experienced the difficulties during the programme, either. The participants of the interview mostly stated that they were not good at English before the programme. When they became Erasmus students and began to live as a foreign student in a foreign country, they felt the biggest problem in communicating with the local people as linguistic difficulty. Since the local people was not good at English, and the

Erasmus students couldn't know native language of the country, it seems to be impossible for students to complete official works or daily works or even they are misunderstood in some cases. From the academic aspect, it is an interesting point that most of the students tended not to experience any difficulties, and they considered the new academic environment as pleasant. However, another problem reported by some students is the native language used in the courses by lecturers. In this respect, the students were faced to overcome new difficulties such as failing from the courses or completing the process of recognition upon returning to home institution. Apart from linguistic and academic difficulties, when the biggest challenges through Erasmus period were asked, they again presented the responses related to language. Since Erasmus offers a new beginning for university students, they need to find new ways to maintain their new life even if it is difficult sometimes.

The solutions developed by students while overcoming the linguistic problems show that learning or researching the native language of the visited country may diminish the communication problems with local students or even people. In addition, the other striking point is that if they use English insistently or focus on this topic, they may overcome the linguistic problems. To get to the academic point, the students stated outnumbering solutions such as following courses regularly, studying harder than they do at home institution, developing the foreign language and focusing mostly on international resources while researching or studying. Almost all Erasmus students observe positive changes in terms of linguistic foreign language during the stages abroad. The level of being able to speak in English without any fear seems the most observed difference before and after the programme. This also seems to enable them to increase their self-confidence. Similarly, the academic changes before and after the programme are mostly observed in positive way. Studying in a new campus and in a foreign institution appear to show that according to students they gained new perspectives, methods, information and ideas. They also responded that they found the opportunities to reveal their abilities. The final question in the interview part was about the observation of any deficiencies related to Erasmus study Program and what the suggestions can be for the missing sides. The participants seemed to have contradictory remarks in this part since nearly half of them answered as observing deficiencies while nearly the other half replied as no deficiencies. In addition, there were various ideas as suggestions. However, most of them tended to complain about the low Erasmus grants. For most of the students, the grants should be increased, Erasmus should be regarded as study programme instead of travelling programme, and more students should be encouraged to participate in.



## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The central concern of this study is to investigate the linguistic and academic impacts of Erasmus SMS Programme on students' competences after their experience in Europe. Erasmus Programme seems to be a developmental stage for students with its effects of contributions or difficulties or the struggle for living and at the same time studying far from home. Being obliged to solve problems on their own in a different country can also be considered a developmental step in life for students who have this international opportunity. In order that the individuals gain this international experience, the states invest mostly on education. "The investment in knowledge, skills and competences will benefit individuals, institutions, organisations and society as a whole ..." (EC, 2017). From the point of Turkey, there has been a process of internationalisation in recent years. According to the Prime Ministry data (2015) within the framework of the 64th Government Programme, various policies related to internationalization have come forward. The two prominent policies are the expansion of foreign educational programs and presenting more opportunities for foreign staff and students to prefer Turkey (as cited in Selvitopu and Aydın, 2018: 804). The aims are also presented to provide an international and intercultural dimension to especially higher education institutions, to enable academic and student mobility, and to acquire international academic standards in cooperation with international partners (Selvitopu and Aydın, 2018: 816). The present study focused on the dimension of student mobility abroad in order to investigate to what extent Erasmus Programme touch the lives of tertiary level students on the exhibition of students' views and perceptions after their experience abroad from the aspect of evaluation of the foreign language and academic setting.

This study concentrates on Erasmus Programme effects on students by implementing both quantitative and qualitative inquiry. A questionnaire was developed to evaluate the beliefs of Erasmus students in terms of linguistic and academic contributions, difficulties, and possible solutions. In addition to the quantitative data gathered through the questionnaire, qualitative data relating to having information about the linguistic and academic experiences of Erasmus students with their own expressions were gathered through a semi-structured interview prepared by the researcher to obtain deeper understanding of the process. The developed questionnaire was sent to outgoing Erasmus students between the academic years 2015-2018 from Karadeniz Technical University, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Atatürk University, Aydın Adnan Menderes University via online form.

The study was conducted with 289 participants who agreed to take part in the research. While 129 of the students were female, 160 of them were male. While 82 of the students visited another country before, Erasmus was the first abroad experience for 207 of them. Interviews were carried out with 25 participants who were volunteer to respond to the questionnaire by presenting their contact information on the questionnaire form.

The quantitative data were analysed in SPSS (25) by using descriptive and inferential statistics for presenting the summary of the results as gathered from respondents, the frequencies and percentages according to “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “disagree” or “strongly disagree” statements, factor analysis to find out the relationships among the statements and the groups they formed between each other as perceived by the students, T-test and ANOVA test whether there were significant differences among variable groups. The data collected from semi-structured interviews and one open-ended question from questionnaire were analysed through content analysis.

When the first part of the questionnaire including the initial questions of the questionnaire (Part I-B) was analysed via descriptive statistics, the below determinations showed up;

- Socio-cultural reasons were determined as the most important reason for the participants to apply for Erasmus Programme. Besides, it was followed by reasons as; personal development and linguistic reasons.
- Socio-cultural contributions were determined as the most important contributions experienced via Erasmus Programme. In addition, it was followed by the personal development and linguistic contribution. The findings in this part were similar to the findings of Teichler (2004: 406), Yücelsin-Taş (2013: 85; Jakobone and Moro, 2015).
- The most repeated three words by the participants while summarizing their Erasmus event were “entertainment/entertaining”, “culture” and the similar words grouped together are “wonderful, fantastic, awesome, fascinating, magnificent”. These positive expressions coincide with the outcomes of the Tekin and Hiç-Gencer’s study (2013: 121) as named for Erasmus ‘experience of life time’ and ‘the best year of my life’.

The quantitative data collected through questionnaire consisting of 45 questions in three parts- contributions (Part II), difficulties (Part III) and solutions (Part IV)- were analysed via descriptive statistics. The participants were asked to evaluate the statements according to five-point likert scale, so there appeared the determinations below:

- The second part of the questionnaire composed of the statements focusing on linguistic and academic contributions. From the aspect of linguistic contributions, most of the participants considered that they developed self-confidence in using English after Erasmus experience. The second prominent linguistic contribution according to

participants was that they could think in English while expressing a situation. As academic contributions, most of the participants agreed that they had the opportunity to compare the education system at home and at host institution. They also seemed to hold positive views for Erasmus Programme in having knowledge about a different education system and experiencing different teaching strategies. Similar to the studies of Aydın, (2012: 20), Konevas and Duoba (2007: 590) and Biçer et al. (2014: 51) the students both acquired linguistic and academic gains via Erasmus SMS programme.

- The third part of the questionnaire was related to difficulties faced during the Erasmus programme in terms of linguistic and academic perspectives. The students considered that they had neither negative nor positive views for the communication problems with local people because they spoke in native language. In Aydın's study (2012: 15) it was determined that the students had challenges in communicating local people because their lack of English. Except for this item, the participants in the present study did not seem to have challenges related to language. From the side of academic difficulties, the main problem was felt after returning to home university. Most probably, the participants experienced adaptation problems to old education system or teaching methods at their home institution. In Önen's study (2017: 339) this process was stated as "the post-Erasmus syndrome." Having problems with the lecturers as an academic difficulty abroad was mostly disagreed by the participants, so it can be understood that the attitudes of the lecturers abroad towards the students was friendly.
- The fourth part of the questionnaire regarding possible solutions in the face of difficulties indicated that as linguistic solutions the participants took part in different social events to demolish the linguistic difficulties. In addition, the participants seemed to be self-confident in using English constantly even if their English was not sufficient. These efforts were considered as the contributions of the programme, either. Working in part-time job and attending a language course were not considered as the linguistic solutions by most of the participants in the face of linguistic difficulties. From the aspect of academic solutions, most of the participants held positive views with the items regarding researching from additional sources to have knowledge about the courses in detail and setting close contacts with lecturers.

The study applied factor analysis technique since the structure of data and sample size were appropriate for the analysis. In addition, the main purpose was to present more certain and reliable results and to be used for further studies. The study implemented T-test and ANOVA after factor analysis according to seven variables; gender, academic level, academic term, previous abroad experience, teaching language of the host institution, previous language learning experience and academic field in order to examine whether there were significant differences among variables. Owing to the fact that Cronbach's Alpha value for Part II-Contributions and Part III-Difficulties in

the questionnaire was calculated as over 0.7 and these two parts were studied in previous studies and acquired results from their items, factor analysis was applied for two parts of the questionnaire while Part IV was evaluated only by descriptive statistics. After factor analysis, the items were grouped with themselves since carrying similar contents. Previously, there were 4 subtitles under contributions and difficulties: linguistic contributions, academic contributions, linguistic difficulties, and academic difficulties. Seven new groups were determined as subtitles for contributions and difficulties of Erasmus programme and they were named after factor analysis as Linguistic Development Contributions (F1), Departmental Contributions (F2), Contributions Related to Education System (F3), Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up (F4), Systemic Difficulties (F5), Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences (F6), Lack of Skills in Language Use (F7). The number of total items in seven groups was 30, whereas before factor analysis the number of items was 34. Four items were extracted in the process of factor analysis since the communalities value of two items was not over 0,50 (item 9 and item 18), and item 19 and item 34 formed single groups. After the new groups, Cronbach's Alpha value for Contributions part was 0,91 and for Difficulties part was 0,79.

New factors were analysed via independent T-Test and ANOVA. The results of the participants' perceptions on contributions and difficulties of Erasmus Programme according to the seven dimensions and seven variables were summarized below by concentrating on whether there were statistically significant differences among the groups of variables.

- In the dimension of Linguistic Development Contributions there appeared no significant difference after T-Test in terms of variables: gender (female or male), academic level (undergraduate or graduate), academic term (one term or one year), previous abroad experience (yes or no), teaching language of the host institution (English or others), previous English learning experience (yes or no) and after ANOVA in terms of the variable; academic fields (Language, Science, Social, Health). It means that the subgroups of variables had the similar perspectives in the contributions of developing general English skills, listening skills, the ability to think in English, speaking skills, reading skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, self-confidence in using English and the ability in using English effectively outside the classroom and writing skills.
- In the dimension of Departmental Contributions there appeared a significant difference after ANOVA test in terms of academic level variable. The significant difference showed up between linguistic students and social students. The participants from language departments seemed to believe that Erasmus Programme contributed their departmental competences more than that the students from social sciences seemed to believe. In other words, the linguistic students had more positive views for the contributions of seeing new teaching methods applied in courses, establishing good contacts with foreign academicians

for their future professions, having more information about their fields and taking part in different learning environments related to their fields.

- In the dimension of Contributions Related to Education System there appeared no significant difference after T-Test in terms of variables: gender (female or male), academic level (undergraduate, graduate), academic term (one term or one year), previous abroad experience (yes or no), teaching language of the host institution (English or others), previous language learning experience (yes or no) and after ANOVA in terms of the variable; academic fields (Language, Science, Social, Health). It means that the subgroups of variables had the similar perspectives in the contributions of comparing the education systems of host country and home country and having knowledge about a different education system.
- In the dimension of Difficulties in Course Selection and Follow-up there appeared a significant difference after T-Test in terms of teaching language of the host institution variable and after ANOVA in terms of academic field variable. The participants having the courses in different language abroad seemed to exhibit more negative perspectives than the participants having the courses in English abroad. The participants having the courses in different language abroad agreed that they had difficulties during Erasmus period in finding courses in English, following the courses because of the insufficient English of lecturers and accessing the course materials. The students having the courses in English abroad disagreed that they experienced these challenges. In addition, the students from science department confirmed that they had difficulties in finding and following courses and accessing the course materials when compared to linguistic and social students who had positive approaches that they did not seem to experience these difficulties.
- In the dimension of Systemic Difficulties a significant difference was observed after T-Test in terms of teaching language of the host institution variable and after ANOVA in terms of academic field variable. So, the students having the courses in English abroad designated more positive views towards systemic difficulties when compared to the students having courses in different language. It can be inferred that getting courses in English diminished the difficulties in adapting to a different grading system, studying more than the local classmates, adapting to the education system of the host country and having problems with lecturers of the courses. In addition, social students, linguistic students, and science students did not seem to experience these difficulties. However, while linguistic and science students evaluated the systemic difficulties as ‘neither agree nor disagree’, social students didn’t seem to have systemic difficulties as the two experienced.
- In the dimension of Difficulties in Developing Linguistic Competences it was determined that there was a significant difference after T-Test in terms of academic level variable. It can be concluded that undergraduate participants presented more positive views than graduates. In other words, while graduate students were neutral but agreed slightly on the

difficulties regarding not finding environment outside the class to improve their English language skills, not improving their English since they were with the friends from home country, having communication problems since the local people didn't know English and having difficulty in verbal communication with the students from the host country, the undergraduate students expressed that they didn't experience these difficulties.

- In the dimension of Lack of Skills in Language Use a significant difference was determined after T-Test in terms of gender variable and previous abroad experience variable. It can be deduced from the findings that male students strongly disagreed with the difficulties of behaving timid to use English and not being active in the courses since they considered that their English was weak while female students agreed that they didn't have these problems, so females held more negative perceptions than males. In addition, the participants having no abroad experience before approached these difficulties more positively than the participants having abroad experience before. In fact even if both of these two groups of participants considered that they did not experience these difficulties, the participants having no abroad experience before had less difficulty than the participants having abroad experience before.
- In all dimensions, no significant difference was observed in terms of the variables; academic term and previous language learning experience. It means that both one term and one year students had the similar views for the contributions and difficulties of Erasmus Programme. In addition, both the students who participated English language course before Erasmus programme and the students who did not participate had the similar views for the contributions and difficulties of Erasmus Programme.

The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews composing of 11 questions in five parts: contributions, difficulties, solutions, changes /differences observed after Erasmus, and suggestions were analysed via content analysis and coding technique. The participants composing of 8, 6% of the total participants were asked to respond according to Erasmus experiences, and there appeared the determinations as shown below according to findings:

- The participants stated that in terms of linguistic contributions they mostly developed their competence in speaking English fluently and without doubt, and practising in English. The reason may be that they had to use English in daily life constantly in order to communicate and the English speaking community around them was not better than them. Being exposed to language enabled them to develop their English. The findings regarding the contribution of speaking competence were parallel with the findings of Collentine and Freed (2004), Hernandez (2010) and Llanes and Munoz (2009).
- The responses of the participants indicated that they developed different perspectives related to education, school, and courses via Erasmus programme in terms of academic competence. They had the opportunity to observe a different education system and

different teaching techniques and the way of lecturing even if it was the same courses at home and had positive impact on students to improve different perspectives. Therefore, academic gains can not be ignored (Ünlü, 2015: 234) even if the academic enhancement was not regarded as important as the linguistic and cultural enhancement by the participants. While sufficient number of students remarked that Erasmus did not contribute academically, another sufficient number of students confirmed that they would observe its impact in their future life.

- Except for linguistic and academic contributions, the participants stated that they enhanced socio-cultural competence and personal development after their Erasmus experience. Beginning to live with people from different countries and from different cultures provided contributions to participants in developing themselves both from socially and culturally. The participants learnt to be respectful to the different, and to be more tolerant in social life. With adapting new life during Erasmus the participants observed the contribution on their personal development. They explained the development in their personality with the following expressions; self-confidence, leadership, making speeches in front of people, making risk analysis, problem solving, making organisations, revealing personal skills, exploring yourself, overcoming the fears, being extrovert, solution-oriented personality, breaking down the prejudices, self-government, and increase in self-respect.
- Most of the participants taking part in interview stated that they were not competent in English skills before Erasmus Programme. Therefore, during Erasmus programme they experienced linguistic challenges (Yücelsin-Taş, 2013: 85). Even if their English level was not high, the English level of local people was rather weak to provide communication. This became the biggest problem for students especially when they had some official works to do.
- Most of the students regarded academic environment with positive statements but it was a different experience for them to study in a university with no campus life as in Turkey. However, most of the participants noted that they did not experience academic difficulties while following courses since the lecturers were tolerant (Özdem, 2013: 94), there were private classes for Erasmus students and they had the opportunity to get wide range of courses. In addition, the problem uttered by significant number of participants was the usage of native language at courses by lecturers. The usage of native language in courses was the outstanding difficulty faced by students (Zhelyazkova, 2013: 383)
- The students seemed to have biggest problems in foreign language, food culture, financial issues, adaptation process, and homesickness. In the study of Gonzales et al. (2011: 427), ‘the cost of living’ and ‘distance’ were seen as the main challenges in Erasmus Student Programme. In the study of Souto-Otero et al. (2013:76), the significance of financial support was also emphasized as a barrier to programme.

- In order to overcome linguistic problems during Erasmus period, the participants acknowledged that they tried to learn the native language of the host country as in the study of Tekin and Hiç-Gencer (2013: 118), and they used language insistently by focusing on linguistics issue, and used online applications or websites to provide communication with the people in the new environment.
- In order to be successful in academic aspect without experiencing difficulties during Erasmus period, the students declared that the most popular strategies were to attend courses regularly, study more and well, try to develop a better foreign language and study from international resources. In the study of Certel (2010), the results indicated that the students attended the courses regularly since they thought it was beneficial and not attending the courses would bring negative challenges such as falling behind the subjects, and having difficulty in exams.
- Almost all students attending the interview stated that they observed positive changes on them after Erasmus experience. They observed the significant changes in foreign language in terms of developing speaking competence in English without worrying, gaining self-confidence towards foreign language and also developing a second foreign language.
- Half of the participants considered that they observed positive changes from academic aspect after Erasmus experience. The changes were mostly related to gaining new perspectives, methods, information and ideas, revealing the abilities and beginning to feel negative towards home institution since the adaptation process would last long.
- Almost half of the participants replied that they observed deficiencies in Erasmus Programme. However, nearly the other half stated that there were no deficiencies related to programme. When the participants asked about the suggestions for the programme, the significant ones were stated as following: Erasmus grants should be enhanced; the importance of the programme should be taken into consideration; the participation for the programme should be extended and encouraged; the students should be tolerated for in course selection or matching process; the accommodation problems should be solved and English proficiency exams for Erasmus programme should be implemented more seriously in order to send more competent students to abroad.

The study offers an in-depth look at the perceptions of Erasmus students on the impacts, developments, contributions, and challenges of the student mobility programme and illustrates to what extent this impact appeared with the survey. Regarding the limitations of the study, the study can not be generalized since it was carried out with only Erasmus students from four state universities in Turkey. The study should be extended with more universities and more countries by implementing the questionnaires and interviews to more international students. In addition, the academic years of the students were between 2015 and 2018. This limitation should be extended with including more than three academic years, either. The study could also be studied in different



aspects such as cultural and personal development which the participants of the study highlighted their impact utmost. In addition, the items of the questionnaire could be increased with an extended review of literature to reach more reliable findings, and for T-test or ANOVA, the variables could be increased to find out other correlations.

In contrast to limitations, the study has attempted to present some considerable implications for the field of education in Turkish universities and Erasmus student mobility programme. According to the findings obtained from the outgoing Erasmus students, they gained new perspectives and new teaching methods abroad which were mainly student-centered, and after their Erasmus experience they had difficulty in adapting old teaching system and old materials and rote-learning based education system. In addition, the study underscores the importance of English for all departments which are expected to increase their English courses.

Considering the results of the research, it can be recommended that academic achievements of the students should be evaluated. International Erasmus Offices should be well-organized to solve the problems of the students abroad by being in contact with foreign partners. In order to diminish the course challenges, the universities should sign the agreements by checking the English course lists since the courses given in foreign languages cause the students to experience difficulties at host institution. In order to reduce the difficulties related to course selection process or following courses in English, it should be determined as a strategy to support more staff qualified in English skills. In addition, after returning to university various activities should be developed for outgoing Erasmus students to pave the way for adapting to home institution again. There should be a center for guidance and counselling for students to get help at home institution after Erasmus visit since they experience culture shock to their own culture. Besides, the linguistic preparation before Erasmus programme should be enhanced since most of the students consider that they are not well competent in English. Especially English speaking environments should be developed before going abroad and cultural acknowledgement should be presented via seminars or courses. From the point of students, they should develop themselves in the second foreign language which can be the native language of the host country in order to eliminate communication problems with local people. In addition, Erasmus program should be considered as a beneficial international mobility for their future job. Especially the students from linguistic departments should benefit from the programme. For that matter, as in some European countries, the students from linguistic departments can not be graduated without attending an international programme abroad for a while. Lastly, the main problem for students was always related to financial issues. Therefore, in addition to Erasmus grant supported by European Commission, the universities can add their own financial support for their own students who deserve to visit a European institution as the representative of home institution.

In conclusion, it can be stated that findings of this study indicated that that Erasmus programme achieved its objectives in contributing to develop linguistic and academic competences of the participants. Not many significant difficulties were observed especially in academic aspect. Even if there were difficulties during Erasmus process, the students found their own ways to overcome these difficulties. The deficiencies from the linguistic side and academic side of the programme should be taken into consideration, and significant steps should be carried out for increasing the quality of the programme and the participation to the programme. Stronkhost (2005: 300) found that students were likely to be satisfied with their international education abroad and more competent in foreign language abilities in addition to cultural and professional competencies. The findings of his study are congruent with the outcomes of this study. Erasmus SMS Programme can be regarded as the most useful and effective international education programme for tertiary level students regarding it a turning point to have the chance to be an international individual.



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# APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX 1: THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **THE EFFECTS OF ERASMUS PROGRAM ON ERASMUS STUDENTS FROM LINGUISTIC AND ACADEMIC ASPECTS**

Dear Erasmus Students,

I'm doing a research on the linguistic and academic effects of the Erasmus Program on Erasmus students. I formed a questionnaire on the contributions of Erasmus program, the difficulties the students faced during abroad and the solutions found by the students. The responds I'll receive from you is quite important conduct the study successfully. Therefore, I need to obtain clear and understandable data. I ask for you to do the survey in a comfortable time in one week. These data will only be used for academic purposes. The questionnaire will be anonymous.

Thank you in advance for agreeing to participate in the study and since help.

Seyhan ÇAĞLAR ERDOĞAN  
Karadeniz Technical University  
Department of English Language and Literature  
Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics



**PART I - PERSONAL INFORMATION AND INITIAL INFORMATION FOR THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please answer the following questions according to your Erasmus period.

**A. Demographic Information**

<b>University</b>	
<b>Age while in Erasmus</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 19-22 <input type="checkbox"/> 23-26 <input type="checkbox"/> 27+
<b>Gender</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
<b>Nationality</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Turkish <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<b>Academic Level while in Erasmus</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate
<b>Department</b>	
<b>The academic year in which you benefit from the Erasmus + SMS Programme</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 2015-16 <input type="checkbox"/> 2016-17 <input type="checkbox"/> 2017-18
<b>Erasmus Period Abroad</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> One Term <input type="checkbox"/> One Year
<b>Host Country</b>	

**B. Initial Information for the Questionnaire**

<b>1- Did you go abroad before Erasmus Programme?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>2- If yes, where did you go?</b>	
<b>3- Teaching Language of the Host Institution</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<b>4- Did you attend an English language course before Erasmus Programme?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>5- What was your reason to participate in Erasmus? (You can mark more than one item)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Linguistic <input type="checkbox"/> Socio-Cultural <input type="checkbox"/> Academic <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Development <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:
<b>6- In which aspect did the Erasmus Programme contribute to you most? (You can mark more than one item)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Linguistic <input type="checkbox"/> Socio-Cultural <input type="checkbox"/> Academic <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Development <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:
<b>7- Please explain your Erasmus experience in 3 words?</b>	

**PART II -CONTRIBUTIONS of the ERASMUS PROGRAMME**

**A. Linguistic Contributions**

Please mark the appropriate degree.

Thanks to my Erasmus experience,	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1-I developed my general English skills.					
2-I developed my listening skills in English.					
3-I developed my reading skills in English.					
4-I developed my writing skills in English.					
5-I developed my speaking skills in English.					
6-I improved my pronunciation.					
7-I improved my vocabulary.					
8- I developed the ability to think in English while expressing a situation					
9-I developed a second foreign language apart from English.					
10-I developed the ability to use English effectively outside the classroom (writing-speaking).					
11-I developed self-confidence to use English.					

**B. Academic Contributions**

Please mark the appropriate degree.

Thanks to my Erasmus experience,	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12-I had knowledge about a different education system.					
13- I had a chance to compare the education systems of host country and home country.					
14- I had more information about my field.					
15- I had the opportunity to see new teaching methods applied in courses.					
16-I established good contacts with foreign academicians for my future profession.					
17-I took part in different learning environments related to my field (multicultural classes, laboratory, field work, conferences, exhibitions etc.).					
18-I believe that I can get a better job with my academic achievements.					
19-It was enabled for me to pass the courses at host institution.					

**PART III –DIFFICULTIES FACED DURING ERASMUS PROGRAMME**

**A. Linguistic Difficulties**

Please mark the appropriate degree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
During my Erasmus period					
20-I couldn't find an environment outside the class that could improve my English language skills.					
21-I had communication problems since the local people didn't know English.					
22-I didn't have the opportunity to improve my English since I was with the friends from my own country.					
23-I had difficulty in verbal communication with the students from the host country.					
24-I had difficulty in following the courses since the lecturers didn't use English.					
25-I was timid to use English since I considered that my English was weak.					
26- I couldn't be active in the courses since I considered my English was weak.					

**B. Academic Difficulties**

Please mark the appropriate degree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
27-During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in finding courses in English related to my field.					
28-During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in following the courses.					
29-During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in accessing the course materials.					
30-During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in adapting to the education system of the host country.					
31- During my Erasmus period, I had to study more than the local classmates in order to pass courses.					
32- During my Erasmus period, I had difficulty in adapting to a different grading system.					
33- During my Erasmus period, I had problems with lecturers of the courses.					
34- After returning to home university, I had difficulty in adapting to my department.					

**PART IV - SOLUTIONS FOUND AGAINST DIFFICULTIES DURING ERASMUS PROGRAMME**

**A. Linguistic Solutions**

Please mark the appropriate degree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
During my Erasmus period, in order to improve my English language skills					
35-I participated in various social events.					
36-I worked in a part-time job.					
37-I attended a language course at the host country.					
38-I didn't use my mother tongue.					
39-I tried not to get together with friends from home country.					
40-I took the risk of trying to speak English constantly.					

**B. Academic Solutions**

Please mark the appropriate degree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
During my Erasmus period,					
41-I did research from extra sources to understand the courses better.					
42-I was prepared for the exams by studying more.					
43-I passed the courses I had difficulty by giving homework assignments or presentations.					
44-I passed my exams by getting more support from my friends about courses and assignments.					
45-I tried to make close contact with lecturers.					

## APPENDIX 2 – ANKET

### ERASMUS PROGRAMININ DİLSEL ve AKADEMİK AÇIDAN ERASMUS ÖĞRENCİLERİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

Değerli Erasmus Öğrencileri,

Erasmus Programının Erasmus öğrencileri üzerindeki dilsel ve akademik etkileri ile ilgili bir araştırma yapıyorum. Erasmus programının katkıları, yaşattığı problemler ve bu problemlere öğrenciler tarafından bulunan çözümler üzerine bir anket oluşturdum. Sizlerden alacağım cevaplar araştırmamı başarıyla tamamlamak için oldukça önemli. Bu sebeple, açık ve anlaşılır veriler elde etmem gerekmektedir. Anketi rahat bir zamanınızda yapmanızı rica ediyorum. Bu veriler sadece akademik amaçlı kullanılacaktır. Ankette adı ve soyadı belirtmenize gereke yoktur.

Ankete katılımınız ve içten yardımlarınız için şimdiden çok teşekkür ederim.

Seyhan ÇAĞLAR ERDOĞAN  
Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi  
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı  
Uygulamalı Dil Bilimi Yüksek Lisans Programı

## BÖLÜM I -KİŞİSEL BİLGİLER ve ANKETE BAŞLANGIÇ BİLGİLERİ

Aşağıdaki soruları Erasmus yapmış olduğunuz dönemdeki durumunuza göre cevaplayınız.

### A. Kişisel Bilgiler

Üniversiteniz	
Erasmus Dönemindeki Yaşınız	<input type="checkbox"/> 19-22 <input type="checkbox"/> 23-26 <input type="checkbox"/> 27+
Cinsiyetiniz	<input type="checkbox"/> Kadın <input type="checkbox"/> Erkek
Uyruğunuz	<input type="checkbox"/> TC <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer
Erasmus Dönemindeki Öğrenim Düzeyiniz	<input type="checkbox"/> Lisans <input type="checkbox"/> Yüksek Lisans/Doktora
Bölümünüz	
Erasmus+ Öğrenci Öğrenim Hareketliliği Programından faydalandığınız akademik yıl	<input type="checkbox"/> 2015-16 <input type="checkbox"/> 2016-17 <input type="checkbox"/> 2017-18
Erasmus Programı Kapsamında Yurt dışında Kaldığınız Dönem	<input type="checkbox"/> Tek Dönem <input type="checkbox"/> Güz-Bahar
Erasmus Öğrencisi Olduğunuz Ülke	

### B. Ankete Başlangıç Bilgileri

Erasmus Programından yararlanmadan önce yurt dışına çıktınız mı?	<input type="checkbox"/> Evet <input type="checkbox"/> Hayır
Bir önceki soruya cevabınız evet ise nereye gittiniz?	
Erasmus Öğrencisi Oldğ. Üniversitenin Öğretim Dili	<input type="checkbox"/> İngilizce <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer
Erasmus Programı ile yurt dışına çıkmadan önce İngilizce dil kursuna katıldınız mı?	<input type="checkbox"/> Evet <input type="checkbox"/> Hayır
Erasmusa katılma amacınız hangisiydi? (Birden fazla seçenek işaretleyebilirsiniz.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yabancı Dil <input type="checkbox"/> Sosyo - Kültürel <input type="checkbox"/> Akademik <input type="checkbox"/> Kişisel gelişim <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer, belirtiniz:
Erasmus programının size en çok hangi alanda katkısı olmuştur? (Birden fazla seçenek işaretleyebilirsiniz.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yabancı Dil <input type="checkbox"/> Sosyo - Kültürel <input type="checkbox"/> Akademik <input type="checkbox"/> Kişisel gelişim <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer, belirtiniz:
Erasmus deneyiminizi 3 kelime ile özetler misiniz?	

## BÖLÜM II -ERASMUS PROGRAMININ KATKILARI

### A. Dilsel Katkılar

Aşağıdaki ifadelerden size uygun olanı işaretleyiniz.

Erasmus deneyimim sayesinde,	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
1-genel İngilizce becerilerimi geliştirdim.					
2-İngilizce dinleme becerimi geliştirdim.					
3-İngilizce okuma becerimi geliştirdim.					
4-İngilizce yazma becerimi geliştirdim.					
5-İngilizce konuşma becerimi geliştirdim.					
6-İngilizce telaffuzumu geliştirdim.					
7-İngilizce kelime dağarcığımı geliştirdim.					
8-karşılaştığım bir durumu ifade ederken İngilizce olarak düşünebilme becerimi geliştirdim.					
9-İngilizce dışında başka bir yabancı dili geliştirdim.					
10-İngilizceyi sınıf dışında da etkin kullanabilme becerimi(yazma-konuşma) geliştirdim.					
11-İngilizceyi kullanmada kendime olan özgüvenimi geliştirdim.					

### B. Akademik Katkılar

Aşağıdaki ifadelerden size uygun olanı işaretleyiniz.

Erasmus deneyimim sayesinde,	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
12-başka bir ülkenin eğitim sistemi hakkında bilgi sahibi oldum.					
13- gittiğim ülkenin eğitim sistemi ile Türkiye'deki eğitim sistemini karşılaştırma fırsatı buldum.					
14-kendi alanımla ilgili daha fazla bilgi sahibi oldum.					
15-derslerde uygulanan yeni öğretim yöntemlerini görmüş oldum.					
16-gelecekteki mesleğim için yabancı akademisyenlerle iyi bağlantılar kurdum.					
17-alanımla ilgili farklı öğrenme ortamları (çok kültürlü sınıflar, laboratuvar, saha çalışması, konferans, sergi vs.) içinde yer aldım.					
18-edindiğim akademik kazanımlar ile iş hayatında daha kolay iş bulabileceğime inanıyorum.					
19-bulduğum üniversitede dersleri geçme konusunda bana kolaylık sağlandı.					

### BÖLÜM III -ERASMUS PROGRAMINDA KARŞILAŞILAN ZORLUKLAR

#### A. Dilsel Zorluklar

Aşağıdaki ifadelerden size uygun olanı işaretleyiniz.

	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
Erasmus dönemimde					
20-İngilizce dil becerilerimi geliştirebilecek sınıf dışı bir ortam bulamadım.					
21-gittiğim ülkedeki yerel halk İngilizce bilmediği için iletişim kurmada problemler yaşadım.					
22-kendi ülkemden arkadaşlarla aynı ortamda olduğumuz için İngilizcemi geliştirme fırsatı bulamadım.					
23-gittiğim ülkedeki öğrencilerle sözlü iletişim kurmakta zorluk yaşadım.					
24-öğretim üyeleri derslerde İngilizceyi kullanmadıkları için dersleri takip etmekte zorluk çektim.					
25-İngilizcemin zayıf olduğunu düşündüğümden dolayı İngilizce konuşmaktan çekindim.					
26- İngilizcemin zayıf olduğunu düşündüğümden dolayı derslere katılım gösteremedim.					

#### B. Akademik Zorluklar

Aşağıdaki ifadelerden size uygun olanı işaretleyiniz.

	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
27-Erasmus dönemimde alanımla ilgili İngilizce ders bulmakta zorluk yaşadım.					
28-Erasmus dönemimde dersleri takip etmekte zorluk yaşadım.					
29-Erasmus dönemimde ders materyallerine ulaşmakta zorluk yaşadım.					
30-Erasmus dönemimde gittiğim ülkenin eğitim sistemine adapte olmakta zorluk yaşadım.					
31-Erasmus dönemimde dersleri geçmek için aynı dersleri alan bulunduğum ülkenin öğrencilerine oranla daha çok çaba gösterdim.					
32-Erasmus dönemimde başka bir not sistemine adapte olmakta zorluk yaşadım.					
33-Erasmus dönemimde aldığım derslerin öğretim üyeleri ile problem yaşadım.					
34-Kendi üniversiteme döndükten sonra bölümüme adapte olmakta zorluk yaşadım.					



**BÖLÜM IV -ERASMUS PROGRAMINDA YAŞANILAN SORUNLARA BULUNAN ÇÖZÜMLER****A. Dilsel Çözümler****Aşağıdaki ifadelerden size uygun olanı işaretleyiniz.**

	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
Erasmus dönemimde İngilizce dil becerilerimi geliştirmek için					
35- çeşitli sosyal etkinliklere katıldım.					
36- bir işte yarı-zamanlı olarak çalıştım.					
37-bulduğum ülkede dil kursuna katıldım.					
38- kendi ana dilimi hiç kullanmadım.					
39- kendi ülkemden olan arkadaşlarla bir araya gelmemeye çalıştım.					
40- sürekli İngilizce konuşmaya çalışarak risk aldım.					

**B. Akademik Çözümler****Aşağıdaki ifadelerden size uygun olanı işaretleyiniz.**

	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
Erasmus dönemimde					
41-dersleri daha iyi anlayabilmek için ekstra kaynaklardan araştırma yaptım.					
42-sınavlara daha fazla ders çalışarak hazırlandım.					
43-zorluk yaşadığım dersleri ödev teslimi yaparak/ sunum hazırlayarak geçtim.					
44-arkadaşımdan dersler ve ödevler hakkında daha fazla destek alarak sınavlarımı geçtim.					
45-öğretim üyeleri ile yakın iletişim kurmaya çalıştım.					

## APPENDIX 3

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### **PART 1: Contributions**

1. Do you think that Erasmus Programme contribute to the development of your linguistic competences? Please explain briefly.
2. Do you think that Erasmus Programme contribute to the development of your university education (as academic competence)? Please explain briefly.
3. In what other aspects did your Erasmus experience contribute to your life? Please explain briefly.

#### **PART 2: Difficulties**

4. Was your foreign language sufficient for your Erasmus experience? What problems did you experience in terms of language use?
5. How was the academic environment at the host university you attended in the Erasmus program? Have you had any problems in following the courses? Please explain briefly.
6. What was the biggest problem during your Erasmus process?

#### **PART 3: Solutions**

7. What are the solutions for overcoming language problems?
8. What are the solutions to be successful in academic aspect? (during Erasmus study period)

#### **PART 4: Changes /differences observed after Erasmus**

9. Did you observe any difference / change in terms of foreign language before and after Erasmus? Please explain briefly.
10. Did you observe any difference / change in academic aspect before and after Erasmus? Please explain briefly.

#### **PART 5: Suggestions**

- 11- Are there any deficiencies that you observe in the Erasmus Student Mobility Program? What are your suggestions for resolving these deficiencies?

## APPENDIX 4

### MÜLAKAT SORULARI

#### **BÖLÜM 1: Katkılar**

1. Erasmus Programının yabancı dil becerilerinizin gelişiminize katkısı olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Cevabınızı kısaca açıklayınız?
2. Erasmus programının üniversite eğitiminize (akademik açıdan) katkısı olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Cevabınızı kısaca açıklayınız?
3. Erasmus deneyiminiz hayatınıza başka hangi alanlarda katkı sağladı? Kısaca anlatır mısınız?

#### **BÖLÜM 2: Zorluklar**

4. Yabancı diliniz Erasmus deneyiminiz için yeterli miydi? Dil kullanım açısından ne gibi sorunlar yaşadınız?
5. Erasmus programı dahilinde gittiğiniz üniversitede akademik ortam nasıldı? Dersleri takip etme açısından sorunlar yaşadınız mı? Kısaca anlatabilir misiniz?
6. Erasmus sürecinizde yaşadığınız en büyük zorluk neydi?

#### **BÖLÜM 3: Çözümler**

7. Yaşanılan dil problemlerini aşmak için çözümler neler olabilir?
8. Akademik anlamda başarılı olabilmek için çözümler neler olabilir?

#### **BÖLÜM 4: Erasmus Programından Sonra Gözlenen Değişim/Farklılık**

9. Yabancı dil açısından Erasmustan önce ve sonra kendinizde bir farklılık/değişim gözlemlediniz mi? Kısaca anlatır mısınız?
10. Akademik açıdan Erasmustan önce ve sonra kendinizde bir farklılık/değişim gözlemlediniz mi? Kısaca anlatır mısınız?

#### **BÖLÜM 5: Öneriler**

11. Erasmus Öğrenci Öğrenim Hareketliliğinin Programının eksik gördüğünüz yönleri var mıdır? Eksik yönlerin giderilmesi için önerileriniz nelerdir?

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Seyhan AĐLAR ERDOĐAN, born in April, 1984, completed her primary school education in her hometown in arşıbaşı Gazi Primary School, and secondary and high school education in Akaabat in Akaabat Anatolian High School. In 2002, she began to study in the English Language and Literature Department of Faculty of Letters, Erciyes University. Following her graduation from Erciyes University in 2006, she began teaching as an English teacher at arşıbaşı Gazi Primary School. In 2007, she began to work at International Relations Office at Karadeniz Technical University as Erasmus officer. In 2008, she began her MA at KTU in Applied Linguistics Program. In 2018, she was transferred to International Student Office and has been working there as instructor since then.

AĐLAR ERDOĐAN is married and has two daughters. She speaks English at advanced level and German at elementary level.