



HOW DO MOBILITY PROGRAMS CHANGE EFL STUDENTS' POINT OF VIEW?

ÖĞRENİM HAREKETLİLİĞİ PROGRAMLARI İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EĞİTİMİ

BÖLÜMÜ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN BAKIŞ AÇISINI NASIL DEĞİŞTİRİR?

Binnur GENÇ İLTER*

ABSTRACT: Going abroad and getting university education there as Erasmus students at Turkish Universities are becoming more and more popular nowadays. EFL students usually choose Erasmus exchange programs in order to gain linguistic, cultural and individual benefits. They aim to improve their intercultural skills in the medium of the host countries' culture. The growing interest in learning different cultures and languages in the world brings with it the question whether mobility programs are efficient or not for university students. The present study was conducted to investigate if the university students who joined mobility programs changed their point of view about different cultures and raised their language and cultural awareness of different countries. This study employs qualitative methods to gather the data via semi-structured interviews with Erasmus students at Akdeniz University, Faculty of Education, and ELT Department joining mobility programs at least 1 term long.

Key Words: mobility programs, intercultural competence, cultural diversity, language development

ÖZET: Erasmus öğrencisi olarak üniversite eğitimini yurt dışında almak günümüzde çok popüler bir hale gelmektedir. İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü öğrencileri Erasmus değişim programlarını genellikle dilsel, kültürel ve bireysel gelişim kazanmak için seçmektedirler. Gittikleri ülkelerin kültürlerini öğrenerek kültürlerarası deneyim kazanmayı amaçlamaktadırlar. Farklı kültürlerle ve dillere duyulan bu ilgi beraberinde öğrenci hareketlilik programlarının üniversite öğrencileri için etkili olup olmadığı sorusunu getirmektedir. Bu çalışma, Erasmus hareketlilik programının üniversite öğrencilerinin bakış açılarını değiştirip değiştirmediği ve farklı ülkeler hakkında kültürel ve dilsel farkındalıklarını artırıp arttırmadığı konusunu araştırmaktadır. Bu çalışma Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümünde 1 dönem öğrenci hareketliliği programına katılmış öğrencilerle yarı-yapılandırılmış teknik kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiş nitel bir araştırmadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: değişim programları, kültürlerarası yeti, kültürel farklılıklar, dil gelişimi

1. INTRODUCTION

Language and cultural awareness amongst university students have been expanding not only in Europe but also in Turkey. Research in this area has demonstrated that mobility programs increase university students' intercultural and individual sensitivity. Teichler (2003) describes mobility programs as having a vertical dimension which is the changing place for education and a horizontal side which contains cultural, educational and personal varieties. Rathje (2007) contends that an intercultural atmosphere creates cultural and linguistic familiarity and leads students to be self-confident and goal-oriented. In other words, living in different societies and cultures change students' points of view in a positive way (Arndt, 1984; Saliba, 1995). According to the principles of Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2007), plurilingual and multicultural education provide mutual understanding and social cohesion which enable the students improve themselves. In recent years, researchers have begun to define intercultural competence and explain its importance in the language learning process. Ting-Toomey and Korzeny (1985) accept that language learning includes intercultural abilities because language learning and culture are interrelated. Kealey (1990, p. 5) explains the intercultural features such as feeling empathy, flexibility, respect, tolerance and willingness. These intercultural features bring good and effective language learning. It should be borne in mind that learning host cultures is not enough to have intercultural competence. It includes raising someone's attitudes, self-awareness and communicating with people. Chen and Starasta (1996) note that intercultural competence has three sides: attitudes, knowledge and skills. Mountford and Smith (2000, p. 97) claim that linguistic competence is not enough if you want to understand and

* Assist. Prof. Dr. Binnur Genç İlder. Akdeniz University .email: bgilter@akdeniz.edu.tr

communicate with someone in different cultures, we also need intercultural competence for excellent communication and adds that pedagogically, language learning and culture together make learners to become communicatively competent in educational perspective so it creates a multifunctional atmosphere. Lessard-Clouston (1977) and Seely (1988) also imply the importance of culture and intercultural competence in language learning and claim that culture helps the language learners be aware of their own learning and gain learner's autonomy. Peck (1988) supports this idea and declares that learning different cultures provide them a wide point of view and increase learner's empathy.

Byram (1997) defines intercultural competence as the intersection of linguistics and cultural competence. Discovering, interacting and critical awareness are the crucial components of intercultural competence. In her research, Roskava (2009, p. 206) defines functions of multiculturalism's as increasing students' knowledge of cultural conflict, improving communication in groups, using cooperative learning methods and helping them to better understanding their cross-cultural experiences and their influence on their personal judgment. Paige (2006) claims that intercultural competence provides not only knowledge of the host culture but also flexibility, open-mindedness and self-awareness. Mobility programs may have positive effects on students' personal improvement. Studies for the improvement of individual skills often show a strong positive correlation between the mobility program and its personal effects. Dignes (1983) and Jackson (2005) think that intercultural competence widens students' flexibility which means adaption to new situations and critical skills which help students' create new ideas. Krzaklewska and Krupnik (2008) stress that Erasmus programs for higher education enrich the learner's point of view about open-mindedness, multilingualism, tolerance, independence and responsibility and consequently these kinds of programs lead the students into intercultural dialogues. They also add that learners can be more autonomous learners, have lower affective filters and create a global identity.

2. METHOD

A qualitative method was chosen for this study. According to Crotty, (1996, p. 14) this kind of study contains inquiry, in-depth interviewing, observation and analyzing the documents. It is a phenomenological research because this phenomenological research was used in order to gather students' description of their experience about different countries and cultures. Moreover, the aim of this phenomenological study was to identify how mobility programs changed EFL students' point of view. For this reason, some open-ended questions were prepared. The data were collected by in-depth conversations in which the students were interactive. The interviews were also recorded and transcribed in full, and all these interviews were written by a language expert in ELT Department and these written responses were added to the interview data. All data were gathered from Akdeniz University, Faculty of Education, ELT Department students who had been abroad at least 6 months for Erasmus exchange program. Students expressed their ideas about intercultural competence, similarities, differences in cultures and their gains as Erasmus student. A qualitative method was selected for this study because this method provides an opportunity for self-expression (Warwick, 1982).

2.1. Sampling

In order to collect data related to mobility programs and their effects on university students, the interview was planned by the researcher in Antalya Akdeniz University. It was conducted at Akdeniz University, Faculty of Education, and ELT Departments. The International Relations Department of Akdeniz University has signed 225 bilateral agreements with universities from 25 countries under Erasmus Program and won an Erasmus lifelong learning prize in 2009 (International Relations Office, 2009). During the year 2004-2010, 569 students from Akdeniz University were sent to Europe as Erasmus students. Antalya Akdeniz University, Faculty of Education ELT Department was established in 2005 and in 2007 it started its Erasmus exchange program, 42 students from ELT department went abroad over 5 years. In this interview, 20 students were recorded and 10 of them were selected. All of the selected students joined Erasmus mobility programs at least 6 months. When they returned and completed their mobility program, they were asked about their experience and cultural gains. The

number of the students who joined this program between 2007 and 2010 can be seen in Table 1. The name of the students and Erasmus countries which were visited by the participants can also be seen in Table 2.

Table 1: Erasmus Students Who Have Been Abroad from ELT Department

Year	Number of Students	Countries
2007-2008	13	Slovakia, Austria, Latvia
2008-2009	13	Slovakia, Austria, Latvia
2009-2010	16	Slovakia, Austria, Latvia, Spain, Check Republic

Table 2: Erasmus Students Who Accompanied Data Collection from ELT Department

Year	Name of the Students	Countries
2008	MB	Spain
2008	ADS, FY, DS	Austria
2009	MT, SE, UET	Latvia
2009	MY, OD, BT	Slovakia

2.2. Data Collection

In order to understand Erasmus Students' ideas on mobility programs, semi-structured interviews were used because this interview gave the researcher to investigate the students' ideas deeply. Semi-structured interview also was flexible and encouraged two-way communication. The average size for this interview was suggested from 6-12 so 10 students were selected for the interview (Lindlof & Taylor 2002, p. 182). Data were collected from September 2010 through December, 2010. The face to face interviews lasted 30 minutes for every individual and the ideas of the participants were recorded. During the interview, the researcher asked questions for understanding of all details. The students also wrote their ideas and kept a diary during their mobility programs.

2.3. Data Analysis

After face to face interview, data analysis started with repeated readings of interview transcripts with another language expert from ELT Department and then interview transcripts and diaries were examined by the researcher and one of the staff from the ELT Department. As Higgs (2001) states validity and reliability are not suitable and applicable to a phenomenological research, credibility was used for this research. The aim of this analysis was to be more objective and catch the details. During data analysis, the data were analyzed according to the name of the countries. As the purpose of this study was to investigate Erasmus students' ideas on different culture and people seven questions about these subjects were prepared and asked in detail. Firstly, they were asked how student mobility programs helped them improve their English language skill. Secondly, they were asked what they did to learn about the host culture. Thirdly, they were asked how they overcame the problems resulted from living in another culture. Next, they were asked how they avoided offending their hosts. Then, they were asked whether going abroad affected their awareness for differences across language and culture. Later, they were asked about what they had learned most during the program. Finally, the students were asked what they had expected to gain from the exchange program and what they found.

3. FINDINGS

Erasmus students were asked how student mobility program helped them improve their English language skill. **FY** who went to Austria stated that English was the only language to communicate with friends and teachers so she became more fluent in speaking and learned different words belonging to the host culture. **MT** who went to Latvia said that mobility programs helped her use language very much. To be able to get on with people, she had to speak English all the time not only

in the lesson but also in social life. She added that she had lots of friends coming from all over the world and the only common point among them was the English language. English was an inevitable tool to communicate to understand and to be understood for her. **SE** who had been in Latvia mentioned that there was almost no possibility for her to speak in Turkish in the Latvian society, she had to do her best to communicate in English. Therefore, it automatically improved her speaking skills and the lessons which she attended in the faculty improved her 5 skills of in English. **ADS**, who had been in Austria, said that real life situations and experience were the best way to learn a language. Hence, when you are involved in a completely new culture, you gain components of that culture such as language and lifestyle. She added that she had to speak, write and think English in every condition so she improved her all skills. **MY** who went to Slovakia explained that she had improved her English in Slovakia even though English was not spoken commonly there because many of the courses were in English and she lived with other Erasmus students from different countries. Dormitory life also improved her pronunciation skills. **OD**, who had been in Slovakia, said that the Erasmus program offered him the chance to study his subject in a different context, with different teachers and different classmates. He also said that it was very surprising, challenging and highly rewarding to observe other classes from different countries. **DS** who had been in Austria said that her roommate was foreign and English was the only language that they could understand each other with. She realized that she felt more confident in speaking. **UET**, who had been in Latvia, mentioned that the Erasmus program helped him improve his listening and speaking skills and he added that he read lots of articles and books in English so his reading skills increased. **BT** who went to Slovakia said that the intercultural atmosphere increased all his skills and he improved his fluency. **MB**, who had been in Spain, said that this mobility program had a great effect on his life, personality and language skills as well. During the Erasmus process in Spain he said that he had difficulty in understanding at the beginning but he became more familiar day by day.

Secondly, they were asked what they did to learn about the host culture and language. **FY** explained that she learned most about the host culture by communicating with people. **MT** said she joined parties and observed the real atmosphere. **SE**, **ADS**, **MY** and **OD** stated that language contains culture so they tasted the traditional meals, visited historic places, and listened to the traditional music of the host country. Besides, **DS**, **UET**, **BT** and **MB** thought that they learned the traditions of the host countries, social life, and daily speech.

Thirdly, they were asked how they overcome the problems resulted from living in another culture. **FY** mentioned that she asked for help from experienced students. The Erasmus coordinators both in Turkey and Austria told her how to deal with problems. **MT** said that she faced language problems in Latvia so she had to use sign language at the beginning. **SE**, **ADS** and **OD** said that they did not face any problems which could not be solved. **MY**, **DS** and **UET** explained that they had very small communication problems with local people but they behaved in a friendly way and solved these problems. Just like them, **BT** and **MB** also had some problems in finding food that they were familiar with. They said that they could not find any suitable meal at the beginning but later they got used to eating different food.

Next, they were asked how they avoided offending their host. **FY** and **MT** said that there were some misunderstandings because of cultural differences at the beginning but she tried to be calm, thought logically and solved the problems. **SE** stated, *'I did nothing special, actually I behaved as myself and that was enough, because they were curious about us'*. **ADS**, **OD**, **MY** and **DS** said that they obeyed the rules of host countries' and respected their cultural beliefs and values so they did not have any problems to overcome. **UET**, **BT** and **MB** explained that they were very careful with their words: they became very good listeners about their cultural values.

Then the students were asked whether going abroad affected their awareness for differences across language and culture. **FY** said, *'I was affected profoundly because I was in an environment with a totally different language and culture...observing a different culture was enjoyable and left unforgettable memories...'* **MT**, **ADS**, **MY** and **OD** mentioned that they visited many countries and observed lots of European cultures. It was a challenging process for them. **DS** explained *'...going abroad changed my point of view. I was scared of differences before going abroad now I am fairly*

open to new cultures, differences do not make me scared, on the contrary; I regard them as a window of life...' **UET** and **BT** told that it was an amazing experience in their lives. **SE** said '*.....to live inside of a different culture and to hear another foreign language enabled me to think about the millions of cultures and languages all over the world, which are things really amazing*'. **MB** stated that he realized his responsibility as a language teacher and learned Spanish culture in order to teach differences to his students.

Later, they were asked what the most important basis was for their gains during the program. **FY** said that on a cultural basis, she learned different things about how to celebrate religious and national festivals. On a linguistic basis, she had more self-confidence about communicating with foreigners and improved her skills and on an individual base, she learned how to look at the same thing from different aspects and became more tolerant for differences in life. **MT** and **OD** mentioned that they generally gained intercultural competence more than linguistic and individual ones and felt themselves as 'World Citizen'. In contrast, **ADS** and **MY** admitted that the Erasmus program enriched their individual point of view most. They learned themselves better, they learned what their limits were for different situations and also they improved their human relationships. Similarly, **DS** mentioned '*...I could say I was rather narrow-minded but this experience totally changed my viewpoint of life. Differences caused fear and prejudice before going and I did not use to tolerate differences. Now I can see that I was wrong.....*' **UET**, **BT**, **SE** and **MB** said that they gained cultural, linguistic and individual improvement.

Finally, the students were asked what they had expected to gain from the exchange program and what they found. **FY** said '*....Now I'm experienced. Thanks to this program I was able to go to different places and cities. I observed how a person who grew up in a different culture might become very close friends. The last thing I learned was to love my country again*'. For **MT**, the country she went to was a bit beneath her expectations in terms of the usage of English but she also had excellent cultural experiences. **OD** and **MY** mentioned that discovery learning was a fascinating experience for them and they also mentioned that they had a great opportunity to visit some primary and secondary schools in the country they had been. They observed the language classes, language teachers and the methods they used. Besides, they developed sensitivity and thought that the most important factor in forming a real language atmosphere is the lack of motivation for both students and teachers. **ADS** said that she gained everything that she had expected. She added that she was satisfied from the educational perspective and her dream turned into reality. She became a newly open-minded person and broke down all the barriers in her mind. She also said that all the children and language teaching methods all over the world are nearly same but a strong positive relation should be between the language teachers and the students, when this relation is weak, students have negative ideas about learning a foreign language. Similarly, **DS** mentioned that she was satisfied and changed her point of view about foreigners and had some interesting ideas how we can teach foreign language better in our country. **UET**, **BT** and **SE** explained that this program gave a chance to them for both personal improvement and language teaching skills. **MB** said that his gains were mostly based on culture and education and he added, '*I had a chance to transmit my cultural characteristics to them*'.

4. DISCUSSION

This study examined how Erasmus programs had changed students' points of view. They reflect generally similar ideas. They mentioned they had a chance to improve their English for a language teacher as well as for their own personal needs. They struggled to use foreign languages throughout their life abroad. This may bode well for being communicative language teachers in their future career. They gained excellent experience about the different cultures which helped them expand their point of view. Furthermore, this experience supported them and made the students more enthusiastic, tolerant and open-minded. Besides, they left their prejudices and fears behind. They learned to love differences and show respect for the values of other countries.

To sum up, all the students were pleased about the mobility programs and by means of mobility programs they learned to live together with others. These programs provided them a great educational and intercultural experience.

5. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion of the research, it is said that students who joined mobility programs developed their personal beliefs and values, improved intra and interpersonal skills; they became more self-confident and had a wider perspective. According to the research, it is obvious that being abroad provided them with good experience and cross-cultural knowledge. Besides the cross-cultural awareness, they also improved awareness of their own culture. They gained both individual and social responsibilities and they felt ready for their future career by means of Erasmus mobility programs. Moreover, it can be understood mobility programs encouraged them to be active participant in another international project. They felt themselves as a global citizen. As a conclusion, Erasmus is an excellent opportunity for Turkish university students. These kinds of programs have positive effects on student's behavior and points of view. Thus, university students should be supported to join more mobility programs.

I should emphasize that my findings have some limitations. The sample group was only from Akdeniz University, ELT Department, A sample from different universities may enhance the reliability of result thus the generalization of the results can be wider. For this reason, I suggest that further research of this subject should be investigated. Results of this study can be useful for ELT students who do not have enough courage for going abroad and planning their future career and have prejudice for differences.

Çalışmanın Kayıt Tarihi : 07.03.2011
Yayına Kabul Edildiği Tarih : 27.08.2012

REFERENCES

- Arndt, R.T. (1984). Rethinking international education. In W. C. Olson & L. D. Howell (Eds.). *International education: The unfinished agenda*. Indianapolis. IN: White River Press.
- Council of Europe. (2007). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crotty, M. (1996). *Phenomenology and nursing research*. South Melbourne, Australia: Pearson Professional.
- Dignes, N. (1983). 'Intercultural competence'. In D. Landis & R. W. Brislin (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training*. Volume 1. Elmsford. NY: Pergamon Press, Inc.
- Higgs, J. (2001). Charting standpoints in qualitative research. In H. Byrne-Armstrong, J. Higgs & D. Harsfall (Eds.), *Critical moments in qualitative research*. Oxford, UK. Butterworth-Heinemann.
- International Relations Office. (2009). Retrieved July 24, 2012, from Akdeniz University: <http://uluslararasi.akdeniz.edu.tr/en>
- Jakson, J. (2005). 'Assessing intercultural learning through introspective accounts' *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*.
- Kealey, D. J. (1990). *Cross-cultural effectiveness: A study of Canadian technical advisors overseas*. Hull. Quebec: Canadian International Development Agency.
- Krzaklewska, E., & Krupnik, S. (2008). *The Role of the Erasmus Programme in Enhancing Intercultural Dialogue. Presentation of the Results from the Erasmus Student Network Survey 2007*. Proceedings of the 4th International Barcelona Conference on Higher Education, Vol. 6. Higher education for intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism. Barcelona: Global University Network for Innovation.
- Lessard-Clouston, M. (1997). Towards an understanding of culture in L2/FL education. In Ronko, K. G. *Studies in English*, Vol. 25, 131-150. Japan: Kwansei Gakuin University Press.
- Lindlof, T. R & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods*. (2nd eds). Sage Publications. Thousands Oaks. CA.
- Mountfort, A & Smith, NW. (2000). *British studies: intercultural perspectives*. Longman.
- Paige, R. M. (2006). Dimensions of intercultural learning. In R. M. Paige, A. D. Cohen, B. Kappler, J. C. Chi & J. P. Lassegard (Eds.). *Maximizing study abroad: A student's guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use*. (2nd eds.). Minneapolis: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition. University of Minnesota.
- Peck, D. (1988). *Teaching culture: Beyond language*. Yale: New Haven Teachers Institute.

- Rathje, S. (2007). Intercultural competence-status and future of a controversial concept. *Journal for language and intercultural communication*.
- Roskosa, A. (2009). Teaching/learning English in a multicultural environment. Presentations Erasmus intensive programs 2007-2008. The National Agency in Austria.
- Saliba, M. (1995). An institutional framework for international education. In J. Callega. (Eds.). *International education and the university*. Bristol, PA: Jessica Kingsley.
- Seelye, H. N. (1988). *Teaching culture*. Lincolnwood, IL. National Company.
- Teichler, U. (2003). Mutual recognition and credit transfer in Europe: Experiences and problems. *Journal of studies in international education*.7:312. Sage.
- Ting-Toomey, S. & F. Korzeny (Eds.). (1989). *Language, communication, and culture: current directions*. Newbury Park, CA: Stage.
- Warwick, D. (1982). 'Tea Room Trade: Means and Ends in Social Research' in M. Bulmer (Eds.). *Social research ethics: An examination of the merits of covert participant observation*. London: Macmillan.

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Dilsel ve kültürel farkındalık sadece Avrupa'da değil, Türkiye'de de giderek artmaktadır. Bu alanda yapılan çalışmalar öğrenci hareketlilik programlarının kültürlerarası ve bireysel duyarlılığı arttırdığını belirtmektedirler. Teichler (2003) çalışmasında öğrenci hareketlilik programlarının yatay ve dikey boyutlu olarak iki yönlü olduğundan söz eder.

Dikey boyutunun eğitim amaçlı yer değiştirmeyi, yatay boyutunun ise kültürel, eğitimsel ve bireysel farklılıkları kapsadığını açıklar.

Arnt (1984) ve Saliba (1995) çalışmalarında farklı kültürlerde ve farklı toplumlarda yaşamın öğrencinin bakış açısını olumlu yönde değiştirdiğini ve daha hoşgörülü olduklarını belirtmektedirler. Chen ve Starasta (1996) çalışmalarında kültürlerarası yetinin tutum, bilgi ve beceriler olmak üzere üç unsurundan bahsetmektedir. Avrupa Konseyi Ortak Çerçeve Program İlkeleri'ne göre (2006) çok dillilik ve çok kültürlülük programları bireyin dilsel olgunluğunu geliştirirken, kişisel değişime de katkılarda bulunmaktadır. Son yıllarda bu konu üzerinde çalışan dilbilimciler ve araştırmacılar kültürler arası programların dilbilimsel yönlerini de incelemektedirler. Ting-Toomey ve Korzeny (1985) çalışmalarında dil öğretiminin aynı zamanda farklı kültürlerle ilişki kurma yeteneğini de kapsadığını belirtmektedirler. Kealey (1990, s.5) çalışmasında ise bu farklı kültürlerarası ilişki kurma yeteneğinin bireyin empati kurma yetisini geliştirdiğini, daha esnek ve farklı düşünebilme yetisine sahip olduğunu, hoşgörü ve öğrenme limitlerinin arttığını açıklamaktadır. Bu kültürel farkındalık ve çok dillilik ortamları daha etkili ve iyi dil öğrenmeyi de beraberinde getirmektedir.

Byram (1997) çalışmasında da aynı şekilde kültürlerarası yetiyi dilbilimsel ve kültürel yetinin bileşkesi olarak tanımlamaktadır. Ayrıca keşfederek öğrenme, tartışma ve eleştirel düşünme farkındalığını kazanma da kültürlerarası yetinin en önemli unsurlarıdır. Dignes (1983) ve Jakson (2005) çalışmalarında kültürlerarası yetinin öğrencilerin bakış açılarını geliştirdiğini, onların yeni ortamlara uyum sağlamalarını kolaylaştırdığını ve böylece daha yaratıcı fikirler ortaya koyduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu yetiye sahip olan öğrenciler daha bağımsız bir kimlik geliştirirken, özerk öğrenenler olarak da küresel bir bakış açısı kazanmaktadırlar.

Erasmus programı ile yurt dışında bulunan öğrencilerin bakış açıları nasıl bir değişiklik olduğunu algılayabilmek için Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümünde öğrenim gören ve değişim programlarıyla 1 dönem yurt dışına giden 20 öğrenciye değişim programları ile ilgili sorular yöneltilmiştir. Yarı yapılandırılmış nitel araştırma tekniği kullanılarak yapılmış bu çalışmada 20 öğrencinin görüşleri kaydedilmiş, 10 tanesinin görüşlerine de bu çalışmada yer verilmiştir. Öğrencilerle yapılan görüşme süresince İngiliz Dili ve Eğitimi Bölümünden bir uzman da görüşmelere katılmış ve notlar almıştır. Öğrencilere toplamda 7 soru sorulmuş ve veri analizleri yapılırken ülkelerin sıralanmasına özen gösterilmiştir. 30 dakikalık süre içinde görüşme tekniği kullanılarak yapılan bu çalışmada öğrencilere değişim programlarının dilsel, kültürel ve bireysel etkileri ile ilgili aşağıdaki sorular sorulmuştur;

Değişim programları İngilizce dil becerinin gelişimine ne oranda katkıda bulunmuştur?

Öğrenciler buldukları ülkenin dilini ve kültürünü öğrenmek için neler yapmışlardır?

Öğrenciler farklı bir kültürde yaşamalarından dolayı oluşan zorlukların üstesinden nasıl gelmişlerdir?

Buldukları ülkenin insanlarını gücendirmemek için neler yapmışlardır?

Yurt dışına gitmek farklı kültürler ve dillere karşı bir farkındalık oluşturmalarını sağlamış mıdır?

Bu programdaki dilsel, kültürel ve bireysel olarak en önemli kazanımları nelerdir?

Bu programdan ne umuyorlardı ve beklentilerini elde ettiler mi?

Öğrencilerin bu sorulara verdikleri yanıtlar sonucunda değişim programına katılanların olumlu kazanımlar elde ettikleri anlaşılmıştır. Öğrencilerin yanıtları onların sadece bireysel kazanımlar elde etmediklerini aynı zamanda da sosyal sorumluluk geliştirdiklerini ortaya koymuştur. Bu program sayesinde öğrenciler 4 temel dil becerisini (dinleme-konuşma-okuma-yazma) geliştirmiş, buldukları toplumun kültürleri ile ilgili bilgi edinmiş kültürel farklılıklara saygı duymayı öğrenmişlerdir. Bu programlar, öğrencilere kendi kültürlerine karşı da farklı bir bakış açısı kazanmalarını sağlamıştır. Öğrenciler bu program sayesinde daha hoşgörülü, açık fikirli ve kültürel farkındalığa sahip olduklarını belirtmişlerdir.

Erasmus öğrencileri bu programlara katıldıktan sonra dinleme, konuşma, okuma ve yazma becerilerinin her birini geliştirdiklerini fakat konuşma ve dinleme beceri gelişimlerinin çok yüksek olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Bunun nedeni olarak da gittikleri ülkede İngilizce anadil olmamasına rağmen iletişim kurabildikleri tek dilin İngilizce olmasını göstermektedirler. Zaman zaman gittikleri ülkenin anadilini öğrenmekte zorluk çeken Erasmus öğrencileri, katıldıkları sosyal ortamlarda edindikleri farklı ülkelerden arkadaşları ile de İngilizce konuştuklarını ve dilde akıcılık kazandıklarını söylemişlerdir. Katıldıkları etkinliklerde o ülkenin sosyo-kültürel özelliklerini daha iyi algıladıklarını ve günlük konuşma dilini daha çabuk öğrenebildiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Karşılaştıkları sorunları çözebilmek için hem Türkiye'deki hem de buldukları ülkelerdeki koordinatörlerden yardım alsalar da bazı sorunları kendileri çözerek problem çözme yetilerini geliştirdiklerini açıklamışlardır. Kültürel farklılıklardan doğan bazı yanlış anlaşılmalara da yine problem çözme yetilerini kullanarak, hoşgörülü ve sabırlı davranarak çözebildiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Buldukları ülkenin kültürel değerlerine saygı duymayı öğrenmiş, farklılıkların bir zenginlik olduğunu kabul etmişlerdir. Farklı bir ülkede ve kültürde olmanın kendilerine farklı bir pencere açtığını ve dünyada binlerce farklı dilin ve kültürün olduğunu farkına vardıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bir İngilizce öğretmeni olarak farklı dilleri ve kültürleri öğrenmenin kendilerini zenginleştirdiğini, önyargılardan uzaklaştırdığını, daha farklı, duyarlı ve hoşgörülü olduklarını belirtmişlerdir.

Son olarak da değişim programına katılan öğrencilerin hemen hemen hepsi farklı kültürlerde yaşayan, farklı dilleri konuşan bireylerin de çok iyi arkadaşlıklar kurabileceklerini ve birbirlerini anlayabileceklerini gözlediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Kazanımları sadece kültürel ve dilsel gelişim düzeyinde olmamış, bireysel olarak da çok büyük kazanımlar elde etmişlerdir.

Bu çalışma Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Eğitimi Bölümüne devam eden ve Erasmus programı ile yurt dışına giden 10 öğrenci ile sınırlıdır.