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### **THE EFFECT OF ERASMUS EXCHANGE PROGRAM ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

As a result of globalization the societies have got closer and there has occurred a link between countries and cultures in terms of trade, immigration and the exchange of information and ideas. Erasmus Exchange Program is another way of sharing cultures and information. Erasmus Exchange Program has paved the way for participants to think in different dimensions. Culture and language may be preferred as the selection of these dimensions. In this sense, sharing culture plays a major role among the objectives of Erasmus Program. In addition, culture may be represented with the use of EFL among the advantages of this program. Gardner (1985) states that the attitudes are important elements of learning process and suggests that the more positive attitudes a learner develop, the more achievement s/he gets during learning process. The study of Jenkins (2009) revealed that Erasmus Exchange Program helps participants to develop an appreciation towards the idea of being a non-native speaker of English in a multicultural environment. Put another way, English plays another major role and in this study the ultimate purpose has been determined to indicate changes in the attitudes of Erasmus Students at Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University in Turkey towards learning EFL after Erasmus Exchange Program.

18 items in a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview have been conducted within the study. There are 65 participants in this study who studied in different European countries during an educational period. The results of the study indicate that living and studying in a multicultural environment either strengthened their already positive attitudes towards learning EFL or helped the participants to develop positive attitudes.

**Key Words:** Language, Attitudes, Culture, Erasmus Exchange Program.

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## Introduction

Language is the most powerful means of communication in the world and can be considered as a crucial tool for broadening the culture and making it conventional in the world (Abbasi, Asayeshh, Assemi, Janfaza, 2012). English is considered the predominant language of wide-ranging communication and used by millions of people alongside their mother tongues (Gorter, Cenoz, Nunes, Riganti, Onofri, Puzzo, Sachdeva, SUS.DIV).

Every year thousands of students all over the world leave home for the purpose of participating in an educational experience in a country or province other than their home. This experience might take place in a bordering state as in interprovincial exchanges in Canada; in another European countries as in the case of 31-member country exchanges promoted by the Erasmus programme, as part of an Exchange programme among countries of the Asian Pacific border, or in promoted study abroad programmes for students who choose to study in Europe, Latin America, Asia or Africa (Freed, 1995, p.3). The purpose of the students for going abroad differs from each other according to their needs, abilities, interests or expectations for those students. Learning language or improving their linguistic skills is one of these purposes. Dwyer (2004) considers studying abroad as a consequential impact on students in the areas of prolonged language use, academic accomplishment measures, intercultural and personal development, and career choices.

Being one of the most popular programmes for studying abroad, Erasmus student exchange programme is promoted by European Union (EU) and it involves undergraduate and graduate students of many fields of study. There is no education fee demanded by the receiving university to the exchange students. It is possible for a student to study abroad from 3 up to 12 months within this exchange programme (Genc&Bada, 2005). The purpose of the Erasmus programme is defined in Erasmus Mundus Programme Guide (2012) as to strengthen the European Higher Education, to assist the improvement and the enhancement of the career opportunities of the students as well as to increase the intercultural understanding by a cooperation with third party countries, in conformity with EU external policy objectives to promote to the sustainable development of third countries in the domain of higher education.

## Literature Review

Globalization is someway a critical step toward both a more established world and better lives for people (Doku & Asante, 2011). Globalization is a term which has been used for many years. Hutton & Giddens (2000) defines globalization as the process which makes connections between cultures and makes each other more similar through trade, immigration, and the exchange of information and ideas. Due to the fact that globalization becomes widespread all over the world, countries and their cultures get closer with each passing day. There has been a significant increase in cultural interaction between cultures and societies among countries especially in the last few years as a result of globalization. It is clear that in the age of globalization, English has gradually become a truly global language and has also been accepted as the lingua franca of the world. In the same respect, De Bary (2007) considers English as the first actual global lingua franca in terms of extent and effect; also, examines the word "global" not only in a sense of a geographical term, but also in the

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sense of an extensive usage; that is, the spread of English is a crucial part of globalization. Thus, learning a second language becomes essential for communicating with people from different cultures and countries.

English is the foremost foreign language possessing an important place in many countries, with the addition of Turkey following the end of World War II. It is not either national or official language in Turkey; however, it is the most extensively taught foreign language at all stages of education. The start of learning English in Turkey changes as high school, primary school or pre-school (Karahan, 2007). Kırkgöz (2005) composes a concise review of socio-political context of Turkey in order to comprehend the influence of globalization on Turkey's language policy. The study explains that Turkey is placed on a strategically significant area of the world connecting the continents of Asia and Europe. In addition to being a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and a candidate for entering the European Union (EU), Turkey's importance is not only restricted to NATO and EU countries but also to the whole territory. Therefore, it is specifically important for citizens of Turkey to learn English which is the principal language of international communication together with being the world's lingua franca of science, technology and business due to the fact that Turkey has a critical strategic and geopolitical status in the world.

English, doubtlessly, is taught as a foreign language at schools of not only in Turkey but also nearly all countries all over the world (Broughton, Brumfit & Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, Pincas, 2003, cited in Tılfarlıoğlu, 2011). The European Council (Barcelona March 2002, cited in Council of Europe Language Education, 2005-2007) demanded the member countries to advance the knowledge of essential skills, in especially through teaching foreign languages no less than two starting from a very early age. English desists to become a foreign language since it increasingly takes the position of being the official and social communication tool in many communities. As performance defines usage, linguistic and cultural habits are closely associated (Coleman, 2006). Taking the crucial role of English as a lingua franca all over the world, it is important to find out the factors that affect the learning process. There is an exact relation between learning a language and the attitudes towards the languages (Starks & Paltridge 1996: 218 cited in Karahan, 2007). Identifying students' attitudes towards language learner will be useful for both teacher and student in the process of language learning and teaching. So, the critical role of the attitudes should be taken into consideration (İnal, Sevim, Saracaloğlu, 2005).

It is possible to say that the studies on attitudes towards language and culture can be separated into two categories: the attitudes of students towards learning language and the linguistic attitudes of students towards target language culture. Crystal (1992) defines "linguistic attitude" as being an individual's psychological constructions regarding their native language or the languages of others. Baker (1988, cited in Üzümlü, 2007) states that attitudes are learned as sensitivity instead of being gained by inheriting. They are stable to some extent; however, influenced by experiences. On the other hand, culture can be defined as one of the most important elements in teaching and learning language. The integrated relation between culture and language has been widely accepted by people involved in language teaching (Pulverness, 2003). Genç & Bada (2005) consider L2 teaching inaccurate and incomplete without the study of culture.

Attitudes have been regarded as a fundamental concept in social psychology and language learning for long. In order to analyse the attitudes of the students it would be better to define the term 'attitude'. There have been many definitions of the term. Among all, one of the

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generally accepted definition of attitude is suggested by Ajzen (1993), "An attitude is an individual's disposition to react with a certain degree of favorableness or unfavorableness to an object, behaviour, person, institution, or event – or to any discriminable aspect of the individuals world". Attitudes and cultural effect towards learning language have been investigated in many studies and the relationship between these two has been a prominent area for research in education for many years. Most of the studies on the area reported that attitude is a fundamental part of learning and accordingly should be considered as a crucial element of language learning process (İnal et al., 2005). Culture can be regarded as one of the most considerable reflections of nature. Similarly, language could be considered as the most prototypical of all examples of conventionalization process of nature. However, language is related to culture as an example of a systematic relation between nature and culture. In addition, language is presuming and being presumed by a range of other primarily non-linguistic cultural phenomena. Allwood (1990) defines outcome of all, as that linguistic and cultural competence cannot be separated. Attitudes are also called as one of the most significant important factors in language learning achievement. There is an exact relation between learning a language and the attitudes towards the languages (Starks & Paltridge 1996: 218 cited in Karahan, 2007). Gardner (1985) considers L2 learners with positive attitudes towards the target culture and people as being more effective learners of the target language than those who do not have such positive attitudes. In his socio-educational model of second learning education (SLA), attitudes toward the learning situation are a crucial part of integrative motivation.

In the area of teaching language, it is mostly realized that students' achievement in learning language improves when their attitudes are positive. Correlatively, their attitudes towards the culture of target language community also affect their success in L2 learning. For example, their attitudes towards the target language, the target language speakers and their culture, the social value of learning the second language, and also the students' attitudes towards themselves as members of their own culture can influence their ability to learn a second language (Ellis, 1994, cited in Elyıldırım & Ashton, 2006). Although learning language is not an easy process, if students develop positive attitudes towards the language and culture of the target language, it will get easier to be successful in learning language. İnal, Evin, Saraçaloğlu (2007) also show the proof that positive attitudes have an influence on language achievement.

Similarly, it is easier for students having formed positive attitudes to make use of more learning strategies than the ones having negative attitude towards learning a language (Gan, 2004, cited in Üzümlü, 2007). According to Brown (2000), attitudes have both cognitive and effective aspects relevant to thoughts and feelings. Attitudes begin developing in the early childhood and parents' and peers' attitudes and interactions with other people may shape the attitudes. Byram (2004, cited in Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013) states that there is two point of views between attitude and language learning as resultative and motivational hypothesis. The resultative hypothesis declares that "experience of success affects attitudes toward language, country and people".

It is clear that developing positive attitudes towards foreign language and the foreign culture is one of the most significant factors for achieving in learning. Hemann (1980, cited in Er, 2009) also states that the way how to acquire a language is influenced by attitudes and so, attitudes affect language learning. In order to develop positive attitudes towards target

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language, culture is one of the main factors to be considered. Byram, Gribgofa & Starkey (2002) claim that the feelings, attitudes and motivations of learners regarding the target language itself, the speaker of the language and the culture of the target language influence the way learners react to the input, which they are subjected to as language is used on social exchanges. To put differently, the scale and grade of L2 learning will be influenced by these affective variables.

### **Methodology**

The aim of the study was to determine whether Erasmus exchange program has an effect on Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University outgoing students' attitudes towards learning language through living in a different culture for a period or not. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The basic data instrument is an attitude questionnaire which was administered to the participants before they left the country for Erasmus program and after they came back to Turkey in order to measure the changes in their attitudes towards learning language. A five-point Likert Scale language attitude questionnaire which was prepared by Missouri University and adapted from Er (2009) was used in order to collect data about the attitudes of the students who studied abroad for an educational period. To support the data gained through the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview prepared by the researcher was conducted with the participants who were volunteer to answer. The interviews were conducted with each student to find out their feelings and thoughts and the differences between their first and last attitudes. The data collected from the questionnaire were examined in SPSS descriptive analysis and the data collected from interviews were examined in content analysis. The design of the study is centred on the students of Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University Erasmus outgoing students. The data regarding their perceptions and attitudes constructed the determination of the study.

The participants of this study were outgoing students of Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University through Erasmus Exchange Program. The number of the participants was 65 and their age ranged from 22-26. The selection of the participants was made on the basis of convenience sampling method because of their accessibility and proximity.

### **Findings**

The data gained through the questionnaire were analyzed through descriptive statistics in SPSS program. The pre-questionnaire and post- questionnaire data of the questionnaire were analysed and compared by categorising the items as follows:

1. Statements to determine the attitudes about learning English
2. Statements to determine instrumental dimension of the attitudes
3. Statements to determine integrative dimension of the attitudes
4. Statements to determine overall evaluation about speaking English

The analysis and comparison results are shown in tables.

This part represents the comparison of the attitudes of students towards learning language by the analysis of pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire data in tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. In order to identify the differences between the attitudes, the results of the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire are presented in the same tables.

### Statements to Determine the Attitudes about Learning English

This part of data analysis represents the differences between pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire results on the items evaluating attitudes about learning English. The results are presented in Table 4.1 and clear explanations and comparison of each item are displayed.

**Table 4.1**

*Summary Results of Pre-Questionnaire and Post-Questionnaire Comparison for "Overall Evaluation about Speaking English"*

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		I Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Pre1	28	43.1	2	41.7	6	9.2	0	0	4	6.2	1.846	1.0342
Post1	48	73.8	1	16.1	2	3.1	1	1.5	3	4.6	1.461	.98547
Pre2	18	27.7	2	43.8	1	23.5	3	4.6	1	1.5	2.092	.91384
Post2	37	56.9	2	35.3	0	0	1	1.5	4	6.2	1.646	1.0372
Pre3	0	0	4	6.2	6	9.2	2	30.8	35	53.8	4.323	.88579
Post3	2	3.1	1	1.5	3	4.6	1	27.8	41	63.1	4.461	.90272
Pre4	7	10.8	1	21.4	2	36.4	1	24.6	4	6.2	2.938	1.0735
Post4	5	7.7	5	7.7	8	12.3	3	50.3	14	21.5	3.707	1.1280

Note: Column Values: f= Population, M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

According to the data shown in Table 4.1, regarding the item "I think foreign language should be a requirement", the greatest improvements in attitudes between two questionnaires were in the choices of from agree to strongly agree and from I do not know to develop a positive attitude. Furthermore, there is also a decrease in the number of the participants who had not developed any kind of attitude toward the necessity of learning language before their Erasmus Exchange experience. Therefore, it can be inferred that Erasmus Exchange Programme either had effects on the participants who had already developed positive attitudes towards the idea of foreign language learning is a requirement to strengthen their

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positive attitudes to more positive ones or on the participants who had not developed any kind of attitude before their experience to form positive attitudes.

Regarding the item *"Learning another language interests me"*, the results obviously show that there is an explicit shift to positive or more positive attitudes in the same manner of the previous item. The number of the participants who selected the choice of 'Strongly Agree' extended which can be inferred as Erasmus Exchange Programme contributed to the participants to reinforce their already positive attitudes to more positive ones based on their interests in learning language. The results of the post-questionnaire point out that there were not any participants who remained neutral after Erasmus Exchange experience. On the whole, the result of the pre and post-questionnaire clearly show that the participants who considered learning another language interesting strengthened their interests and the ones who had not developed any idea concerning their interest in learning a foreign language became interested in learning after Erasmus Exchange Programme.

Regarding the item *"I have never considered learning another language"*, it is apparently displayed on Table 4.1 that the responses to the statement indicate that there is an increase on the concerns of the participants' consideration of learning another language. Thus, it can be understood the Erasmus Exchange Program has helped the participant to re-consider their opinions about their consideration on learning another language which resulted in either intensifying their positive attitudes or developing positive attitudes from neutral or negative ones.

Regarding the item *"I would like to learn another language, but I think it is too hard"*, As compared with the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire, the results given in Table 4.1 show considerable decreases in the numbers of the participants who regarded learning another language as a challenge or did not develop any idea concerning the difficulty of learning another language. At the same time, there is also a reduction in the number of the participants who selected the choice of 'disagree'. Hence, it can be claimed that; through Erasmus Exchange Program, most of the participants realized that learning another language is not a hard process for them.

In order to make an overall summary of the results of the statements evaluating the attitudes about speaking English; it can be stated that most of the participants had already developed positive attitudes toward speaking English. On the other side, a noticeable number of the participants had not developed either a negative or a positive attitude about speaking English. The results of the post-questionnaire after Erasmus Programme, it is clearly pointed out that Erasmus Exchange experience helped participants not only enhance their already positive attitudes to stronger ones but also contributed to the neutral participants to develop positive attitudes about speaking English.

### **Statements to Determine Instrumental Dimension of Attitudes**

This part of data analysis represents the differences between pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire results on the items evaluating instrumental dimension of attitudes. The results are presented in Table 4.2 and clear explanations and comparison of each item are displayed.

**Table 4.2**

*Summary Results of Pre-Questionnaire and Post-Questionnaire Comparison for “Instrumental Dimension of Attitudes”*

ITEM	Strongly Agree		Agree		I Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Pre5	15	23.1	3	55.	8	12.	6	9.2			2.076	.85344
			6	4	3						9	
Post5	48	73.8	9	13.	4	6.2	2	3.1	2	3.1	1.476	.96998
			8								9	
Pre13	40	61.5	2	32.	4	6.2					1.446	.61316
			1	3							2	
Post13	52	80.0	1	15.	2	3.1			1	1.5	1.276	.67332
			0	4							9	
Pre14	8	12.3	7	10.	3	47.	1	16.	8	12.3	3.061	1.1302
			8	1	7	1	9				5	
Post14	33	50.8	1	23.	8	12.	4	6.2	5	7.7	1.969	1.2620
			5	1	3						2	

Note: Column Values: f= Population, M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

It is obviously displayed in Table 4.2, the change of the attitudes of participants regarding the instrumental dimensions of their attitudes has occurred in the same manner of the previous 4 items. There seems again an alteration from their neutral attitudes to positive ones or a change from already positive ones to relatively more positive attitudes. Furthermore, there are also some participants who seem to change their negative attitudes to the positive ones.

As Table 4.2 illustrates, regarding the item “Another language is part of an educated person’s make-up”, results for the perceptions of the participants on foreign language as a crucial component of a well-educated person, the majority of the participants had already perceived foreign language as an essential tool for a good educational make-up. Viewing the results of the post-questionnaire after Erasmus Exchange Program, it is apparent that Erasmus Exchange Program affected many of the participants with positive attitudes in the way of strengthening their positive views. Additionally, it also had an effect on the participants who were neutral or possessed with negative attitudes to develop positive ones. Therefore, it can be understood that Erasmus Exchange Program had a positive effect on participants to acknowledge the importance of foreign language on an individual’s educational make-up.

Regarding the item “It will help me in my future job, make me more marketable”, Table 4.2 displays that there is not a major difference between pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire results on the positive views about the effect of a foreign language on career choices. It is clear that the majority of the participants had already acknowledged the importance of a foreign language for better career choices and any job opportunities. However, when comparing the proportions of ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ choices; it is apparent that there is a great shift from previous to former.

Regarding the item *"I want to do business abroad"*, it is obvious that the most striking change occurred in this statement among the others in this cluster. It is apparent that the majority of the participants had not developed any idea about working abroad or not before Erasmus Exchange Program. In addition, nearly 1 participant out of 3 had not thought about working in another country. Comparing the results; before and after Erasmus Exchange Program, there occurred a great increase in the number of the participants developing positive attitudes. It can clearly be inferred that living in a different country for a period was a beneficial experience for participants to develop a consideration about living in a foreign country. Accordingly, nearly half of the participants who had not considered working abroad before changed their negative attitudes.

To conclude, it is apparent that Erasmus Exchange Program seems to become a beneficial experience for the participants to develop positive attitudes regarding their opinions to work in abroad. The major changes on the attitudes of participants can be interpreted as a result of a real abroad experience to dissolve prejudices. It can be understood that the participants realized the good aspects of living in a different country. Therefore, it can be inferred that Erasmus Exchange Program helped the participants to admit English as a beneficial tool for their future plans, career choices and education lifes.

### **Statements to Determine Integrative Dimension of Attitudes**

This section of data analysis figures out the differences between pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire results on the items seeking for the integrative dimension of attitudes. The results are presented in Table 4.3 and further explanations and comparison of each item are displayed.

**Table 4.3**

*Summary Results of Pre-Questionnaire and Post-Questionnaire Comparison for “Integrative Dimension of Attitudes”*

ITEM	Strongly Agree		Agree		I Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Pre6	16	24.6	1	27.	2	33.	5	7.7	4	6.2	2.430	1.1315
			8	7	2	8					8	0
Post6	40	61.5	1	27.	3	4.6	2	3.1	2	3.1	1.584	.95020
			8	7							6	
Pre7	12	18.5	2	38.	2	38.	2	3.1	1	1.5	2.307	.86464
			5	5	5	5					7	
Post7	30	60.0	1	29.	4	6.2	3	4.6	0	0	1.553	.81069
			9	2							8	
Pre8	29	44.6	2	43.	5	7.7	1	1.5	2	3.1	1.753	.90192
			8	1							8	
Post8	51	78.5	1	15.	2	3.1	1	1.5	1	1.5	1.323	.75224
			0	4							1	
Pre9	17	26.2	2	36.	1	29.	2	3.1	3	4.6	2.230	1.0272
			4	9	9	2					8	7
Post9	37	56.9	1	29.	6	9.2	2	3.1	1	1.5	1.630	.89389
			9	2							8	
Pre10	23	35.4	2	30.	2	30.	2	3.1	0	0	2.015	.89254
			0	8	0	8					4	
Post10	42	64.6	1	29.	3	4.6	1	1.5	0	0	1.430	.66071
			9	2							8	
Pre11	16	24.6	2	44.	1	18.	4	6.2	4	6.2	2.246	1.0901
			9	6	2	5					2	7
Post11	42	64.6	1	21.	5	7.7	2	3.1	2	3.1	1.584	.98254
			4	5							6	
Pre12	30	46.2	2	30.	1	18.	3	4.6	0	0	1.815	.89952
			0	8	2	5					4	
Post12	47	72.3	1	20.	2	3.1	1	1.5	2	3.1	1.430	.88334
			3	0							8	
Pre16	10	15.4	1	26.	2	30.	8	12.	10	15.4	2.861	1.2732
			7	2	0	8		3			5	5
Post16	19	29.2	2	40.	6	9.2	9	13.	5	7.7	2.307	1.2490
			6	0			8				7	4
Pre17	22	33.8	1	24.	1	20.	6	9.2	8	12.3	2.415	1.3680
			6	6	3	0					4	8
Post17	38	58.5	1	20.	6	9.2	2	3.1	6	9.2	1.846	1.2775
			3	0							2	8

Note: Column Values: f= Population, M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

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Regarding the item *“Another language can help me think and analyze better”*, it can be understood on Table 4.3 that through Erasmus Exchange Program some participants with neutral and negative attitudes 88 developed positive attitudes toward the idea that another language has an effect on thinking and analysing abilities. Therefore, it can be inferred that Erasmus Exchange Program had an effect on participants to realize the beneficial aspects of another language on their mental abilities such as thinking and analyzing in an improved way.

Regarding the item *“Another language can open my mind”*, it can be inferred that Erasmus Exchange Program helped participants either to strengthen their already positive attitudes or develop positive attitudes instead of neutral ones by realizing the fact that another language can open an individual’s mind.

Regarding the item *“It will help me understand others better”*, it can be inferred that the participants had already acknowledged the requirement of a foreign language to develop a better understanding toward other people. It is apparent from the comparison of the results, the participants strengthen their already positive attitudes regarding the view of the statement by living in a multicultural atmosphere through Erasmus Exchange Program.

Regarding the item *“I would like to enjoy another’s culture, literature, history”*, it can be claimed that Erasmus Exchange Program is a beneficial way for participants either to strengthen their already positive attitudes or to develop positive attitudes from negative and neutral ones in respect of creating an interest in different cultural, historical and literal aspects of other societies.

Regarding the item *“It will broaden my cultural views”*, it can be inferred that the participants either strengthen their positive attitudes or developed positive attitudes instead of neutral ones through living in a different cultural context after Erasmus Exchange Program.

Regarding the item *“Speaking another language would make me more sophisticated”*, it can be understood that the Erasmus Exchange Program helped participants to have a perception that knowledge of another language is a component of a sophisticated person, either by empowering their already positive attitudes or developing positive attitudes instead of neutral or negative ones.

Regarding the item *“I would like to travel abroad”*, as it is clearly shown on Table 4.3, one of the mostly agreed upon statement is on the desire of participants to travel abroad. The majority of the positive attitudes can be interpreted on the basis of the fact that the students would live in another country for an education period. The comparison of the results indicate that Erasmus Exchange Program supported the participants either to strengthen their already positive attitudes or either to develop positive ones other than neutral ones.

Regarding the item *“It helps me get in touch with family/history/tradition/heritage”*, the results clearly indicate that Erasmus Exchange Program participants to recognize the support of a foreign language to get in touch with family, history, tradition and heritage to a large proportion either by reinforcing the positive ones or by crating positive attitudes.

Regarding the item *“Speaking another language would allow me to meet more girls/guys”*,it can be understood that the participants acknowledged the importance of a foreign language to develop relationship or friendship with a range wide of people after their Erasmus Exchange Program either by strengthening their already positive views or changing their neutral or negative views into positive ones.

It can be clearly understood from Table 4.3 the changes on the attitudes of participants regarding the integrative dimensions have appeared in the same way of the instrumental dimensions. Simultaneously, there seems again an alteration from their neutral attitudes to positive ones or a change from already positive ones to relatively more positive attitudes. Furthermore, there are also some participants who seem to change their negative attitudes to the positive ones.

**Statements to Determine Overall Evaluation about Speaking English**

This section of data analysis shows the differences between pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire results on the items evaluating overall attitudes about speaking English. The results are presented in Table 4.4 and detailed explanations and comparison of each item are displayed.

**Table 4.4**

*Summary Results of Pre-Questionnaire and Post-Questionnaire Comparison for “Overall Evaluation about Speaking English”*

ITEM	StronglyAgree		Agree		I Don't Know		Disagree		StronglyDisagree		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%		
Pre15	20	30.8	2	35.	1	18.	6	9.2	4	6.2	2.246	1.1730
			3	4	2	5					2	1
Post15	30	46.2	2	38.	7	10.	2	3.1	1	1.5	1.753	.88443
			5	5	8						8	
Pre18	32	49.2	2	38.	7	10.	0	0	1	1.5	1.661	.79602
			5	5	8						5	
Post18	53	81.5	6	9.2	5	7.7	1	1.5	0	0	1.292	.67830
											3	

Note: Column Values: f= Population, M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

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Regarding the item *“With more Turkish speaking another language, the Turkey will be more competitive”*, concerning the results on Table 4.4, it can be assumed that Erasmus Exchange Program created a realization among participants that the more citizens of a country know a foreign language, the more competitiveness that specific country gains in international area.

Regarding the item *“Overall I think to speak another language is very important”*, Erasmus Exchange Program helped the participants to improve their positive attitudes to a stronger degree. This can be referred as the participants were in need of speaking English to a great extent as English was the communication language for all participants from different countries as lingua franca of the world.

In order to make an overall evaluation about the attitudes of the participants toward speaking English; it can be mentioned that Erasmus Exchange Program helped the participants to improve their attitudes toward the importance of foreign language in national and international aspects. Therefore, it can be concluded that Erasmus Exchange Program mostly helped participants to improve their positive attitudes and it helped to change negative or neutral attitudes for a small number of participants.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study investigated the learners’ attitudes with the reference of four subjects, the attitudes about learning English; instrumental dimension of the attitudes, integrative dimension of the attitudes and overall attitudes; about speaking English. Most of the participants had already developed positive attitudes towards learning language before their Erasmus Exchange experience, but there was also a considerable number of participants who had not developed either a negative or a positive attitude. The program helped the participants either to improve their positive attitudes or develop positive attitudes. It also changed the negative attitudes of a small number of participants.

The study supports the idea that the direct exposure to the language in real-life situations helps the learners to perceive importance of learning EFL. In addition, using English as a common language in a multicultural environment enhances the positive attitudes or creates positive attitudes towards language. As Gardner (1985) states that positive attitudes and achievement in learning are directly interrelated to each other. Therefore, creating positive attitudes among learners is crucial during teaching process. Regarding the results of the study, it can be understood that creating learning environments in which language is used in real-life situations is a crucial step to create an awareness about the necessity of learning English. As the results of the current study clearly display, the learners acknowledge the importance of learning a foreign language by being directly exposed to the language. Therefore, more importance should be given to create opportunities for learners directly to interact with people coming from different cultural and linguistics backgrounds. Teachers should create learning atmospheres in which the participants will have to speak English to

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communicate with other people. Taking the increase of the number of foreign students at higher education institutions due to globalization into consideration, multicultural classrooms can be designed for English classes. The exchange programs should be supported to a considerable extent at schools for students and language instructors as it will be beneficial for teachers to transfer their acquisition of language from multicultural environments into their classrooms.

Given the fact that learning cultural elements have also contributed to develop positive attitudes towards English, teachers should include cultural elements which can raise multicultural awareness among learners. As Shemshadsara (2012) suggests that culture and language are inseparable concepts and the teachers should prepare their learners for intercultural communication through integrating cultural elements into their classrooms. The teachers should create opportunities for their learners to contact with different people coming from different cultural backgrounds. Cultural trips where students have an interaction with people from different backgrounds who speak English can be arranged as a part of language learning process.

A further study should be designed to compare the attitude changes of participants after staying in a native English speaking country and in a non-native English speaking country. The research may investigate the difference between the effect of target culture and the effect of multicultural learning environments on attitudes of the learners.

As this study investigated the attitude changes after an exchange program, another study may search for the change in the level of linguistic achievement of the participants after changing their attitudes.

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