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EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD. THE ERASMUS +

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this project is to present an assessment of the Erasmus + Programme. This is a European Union (EU) student exchange programme established in 1987. **Erasmus + or Erasmus Plus** is the new programme combining all the EU's current schemes for education, training, youth and sport, which started in January 2014.

Nowadays, this programme is being implemented in some Secondary Schools in Spain, especially in Andalusia, and in the secondary school object of my study, which is IES Licinio de la Fuente, in Coín (Málaga). By means of this programme, the EU attempts to spread cultural and linguistic aspects among European students by means of the Erasmus + programme. Therefore, this paper will analyse whether the programme is achieving this objective by creating motivation and interests in the students toward the different European countries.

To begin with, the literature review will introduce the new scenario and the new characteristics of students of today. This review will reveal that Secondary Schools need a programme that meets the needs of students and provide them with the tools to manage in today's globalised and multicultural world.

With this aim, the study will be focused on students of Compulsory Secondary Education and will involve both a quasi-quantitative and qualitative research design. The former will comprise information about the programme itself and how this is performed. In turn, three types of instruments will be employed for the qualitative side of the study: questionnaires to students, interviews to teachers, and parents, and direct observation on students' progress in the foreign language.

Finally, this paper will conclude by presenting the following findings: firstly, the programme serves as multicultural experience for students; secondly, it also serves as a motivational tool towards the English subject and finally, the programme meets nowadays students' needs: it is globalised, multicultural and related to new technologies.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Learning a foreign language not only reveals how other societies think and feel, what they have experienced and value, and how they express themselves, it also provides a cultural mirror in which we can more clearly see our own society.”

Chancellor Edward Lee Gorsuch¹

This quote has been chosen to begin with this piece of work because it reveals the importance of learning foreign languages when it comes to the development of societies. In this way, when students are learning a foreign language, they are becoming democratic citizens at the same time, since they are not only learning a language, but also the nation's history implied in a language, that is to say, languages provide valuable information about history: their expressions, proverbs, sayings, and songs are, in words of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL hereafter): “knowledge of this accumulated folk wisdom which is a significant component of the linguistic aspect of sociocultural competence”. (Council of Europe, 2001: 119). Thus, a language is the “mirror” which a society offers. Moreover, when people are able to communicate in a better way, they are able to solve conflicts. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyse how the EU tries to spread those cultural and linguistic aspects among European students by means of the Erasmus + programme.

Besides, the present study is focused on the importance of languages in today's globalized world. Nowadays, we live in an ever-changing society, where new information and communication technologies offer us what some authors have called *The Third Revolution in Education*. “As soon as the technology became essential, a third stage was established. [...] it is the revolution that gives rise to the expression of society of knowledge” (Esteve, 2003: 9-10).

To begin with, this paper will highlight the actual scenario where teachers have to carry out their daily work and where students have to do their best for their future. For this reason, the literature review will analyse important aspects such as globalization, multiculturalism, and the technological revolution. All these constitute a very important and complex phenomenon which involves very different realities. Likewise, globalization fosters the learning of global languages, as English.

¹ <https://noviceinlanguageand.wordpress.com/2012/01/03/20-quotes-for-foreign-language-learners/>

“One main benefit of teaching world languages like English and French is that because these languages are spoken around the globe, [this] it makes communication between different populations more simple and effective than any other time in our history.”²

As a result, bilingualism has become the answer to this increasing necessity of improving foreign linguistic competence in our students, which will facilitate their insertion into the labour market. Besides, the influence that new technologies have on students should not be forgotten: Today’s students have been renamed as “digital natives”.

Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach. [...] Today’s students represent the first generations to grow up with this new technology. They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age. [...] the most useful designation I have found for them is Digital Natives. Our students today are all “native speakers” of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet. (Prensky, 2001: 1)

All these aspects will lead us to the core of this paper, which is the programme object of study. The Erasmus + appears to be the main programme providing students with the opportunity to learn and improve a foreign language. The European Commission presents this programme as a contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, and social equity and inclusion. It is presented by the European Commission as something more than an instrument to improve languages, since students who join this programme will not only acquire an improvement in the foreign language, but will also reinforce important values such as tolerance, awareness of team work, etc.

Next, the paper will provide a case study in a Secondary School based on students’ experiences throughout the Erasmus +. This will be based on questionnaires handed out to students, interviews to both teachers and parents and observation of students’ marks improvement. All in all, this dissertation will aim to give an insight into programme achievements in those Secondary Schools which take part of it. Furthermore, this paper will conclude by presenting the following finding: the Erasmus + programme put into practice in the IES Licinio de la Fuente serves as a unique experience for all the educational community, namely: students, teachers and parents since they all agreed that the programme provided

² Wilson, A., 2017 at <http://www.globalethicsnetwork.org/profiles/blogs/the-influence-of-globalization-onlearning-languages>

them an unforgettable experience dealing with students from other countries. What is more, it constitutes a satisfactory experience not only for those taking part directly in the programme but also to those classmates who witnessed the experience at school. In addition, it provides a valuable tool to develop motivation on students' interest in learning foreign languages. Likewise, it meets all the important features which appeal nowadays' students: the programme is globalised, multicultural, and linked to new technologies.

1.1. Justification

Spain has been deeply devoted to the construction of the EU, since it became a member of it in 1986. One of the aspects where Spain has been very committed has been the inclusion of a European dimension in education which would develop two main aspects: firstly, the dimension of cognition, which will imply the knowledge about Europe, and that of affection referred to the relationship and attitude towards the EU. Within these two dimensions, the ability to speak a second language is presented as a key factor to promote free movement of people and to enhance cultural, economic, technical, and scientific cooperation among its members.

Besides, the geographical situation of Spain and its economic development for the last twenty years make it essential to train our students to live in an increasingly international, multicultural, and multilingual world, where English plays a crucial role as the language of global communication. This importance has been reinforced due to the most recent economic crisis which made students think about the possibility of searching a job abroad. Thus, English is seen as an indispensable tool for international communication.

Moreover, English is one of the EU official languages, and occupies a prominent place in European meetings and conferences. In addition, the English language has gained an enormous importance in the world. Its worldwide prestige is mainly due to its social, economical, and cultural supremacy from the period of splendour of the British Empire, and the influence of British institutions in the modern world.

Nowadays English is not only a well-known and international language, but it is also used as a lingua franca in almost every communicative situation where speakers do not share the same mother tongue. This use of English also contributes to its supremacy as an international language.

In brief, learning English as a foreign language (EFL from now on) implies social and cognitive growth, competitiveness in the global market, and understanding people from different cultures. That is why the acquisition of a certain degree of proficiency in English is

one of the main goals of the CEFRL.

All the reasons stated above justify the importance of teaching English to our students. We will need to lay stress on the fact that English will provide students with some of the tools to succeed in a more and more competitive society. Moreover, in the section devoted to the literature review we will make reference to the educational European programmes prior to the so called Erasmus +.

Furthermore, the European Programme under scrutiny is relatively new, a reason why I consider this research really motivating and which will contribute with something new in my field of study.

1.2. Objectives

The broad objective of this research is to carry out an evaluation on the impact that the Erasmus + programme has on the students, teachers, and parents who take part in it. This will be presented as a case study carried out on a group of 20 Erasmus students in a Secondary School in the province of Málaga. In the following subsection, we will discuss the specific objectives of this study:

1.2.1. Specific objectives

1. To value students' satisfaction with the experience by means of a questionnaire focused on this academic experience and personal experience.
2. To identify the impact generated by the Erasmus + programme on the Educational Community, that is, students, teachers and parents.
3. To show the results on the development on students' linguistic competence.

1.2.2. Research questions:

The purpose of this study is to analyse the Erasmus + programme implemented in the IES Licinio de la Fuente by answering the following question: Do Erasmus + programmes implemented in Andalusia develop linguistic competences in the English language? Are those kinds of programmes covering the expectations of the actors involved, that is, (the Educational Community: students, teachers, and parents)?

1.2.3. Research hypotheses:

This paper will be based on the following research hypotheses: first, students who take part on an Erasmus programme get positive results in the Foreign language. Second, students

who take part on this cultural and linguistic programme are highly satisfied with the results of the programme.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Scenario of teachers' job

Firstly, it is of utmost importance to identify the current scenario where teachers have to work. Education is affected by the social reality that surrounds it. All social, cultural, or economic changes influence in one way or another structural reforms (educational reforms) that are then implemented (with greater or lesser success) until they reach the student.

Esteve (2005: 2) argues that, nowadays, the enormous acceleration of social change modifies so rapidly our way of life, introducing new economic conceptions, new scientific and technological developments, and new social values.

Moreover, the emergence of the new information and communication technologies opens new possibilities and raises new demands to design 21st century learning. This will be based not on ancestral traditions but on the scientific analysis of learning psychology and on the new methodological approaches to Information and Communication Technology (ICT hereafter). It is not exaggerated, therefore, to affirm that we are facing a "Third Educational Revolution" in European countries.

Tejada (2000:1) describes some of the characteristics of the current society that can have influences and necessary answers on the part of the educational systems and we can summarize them in: globalization, multiculturalism, and the technological revolution. Due to their great importance, three different subsections will be devoted to the explanation of each of them.

2.1.1. Globalization

The first characteristic which is going to be dealt with can be defined as: "a situation in which available goods and services, or social and cultural influences, gradually become similar in all parts of the world".³ Those influences have effects on our daily lives, including education, which is the object of study in this piece of work. As translated from what Pedró & Rolo (1998) stated in Puelles (2010: 123), the effects of globalization on education can be identified as the following ones:

- a) Curricular convergence in education systems, whose main model is the occidental one.

³ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles-espanol/globalization>

Computer-related contents and the English language are emphasized.

- b) A certain globalization of the educational policies related to the government; nowadays the State is not understood as the main responsible of the educational systems but the market and a greater or less privatization of the education.
- c) Global objectives that may be foreign to national needs are allocated to education systems.

As it can be inferred, globalization is a very complex phenomenon where different realities are mixed. Besides, migration flow due to working situations makes essential for students at any educational level the learning of a second (or even a third and fourth) foreign language.

2.1.2. Multiculturalism

Secondly, multiculturalism constitutes another factor, which is closely related to globalization. This term makes reference to: “[...] understand and respond to the challenges associated with cultural and religious diversity”⁴. Obviously, this also has special importance when promoting educational projects and curricular configurations since multiculturalism is a fact.

We live in a complex and plural world. Increasingly, we are forced to learn to live in a society that becomes more and more diverse, in terms of cultural, linguistic and social diversity. A world characterized by the ever increasing deepening of social, economic and cultural differences between people who live in it. It is a great endeavor to be prepared to face the challenges which arise from the educational meaning of being together, of recognizing the other in their diversity, and at the same time, trying to do it from a dialogic, integrating perspective. (Montero, 2000: 2).

Thus, education needs to be focused on becoming inclusive and tolerant. It has to accept the differences and take advantage of them, that is, learn from them. “[...] a salient role of schools is to promote a more equitable and just society and that diversity is worthy of affirmation. It is therefore compatible with accountability systems that give serious attention to principles of access, equity, and diversity in education.” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002: 30). To sum up, and as Perez (2014: 1) states,

Our society cultural diversity requires rethinking about practices and institutions in order to achieve an inclusive coexistence. Teaching in and for interculturality means

⁴ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/multiculturalism/>

to teach in and for the dialogue between the ones who are culturally different in order to reach for agreements which will allow life in community. In teaching contexts we must look for both the reception of cultural traditions and the ability to be critical about them.

In other words, these days, teachers and more particularly, EFL teachers face a very peculiar working framework which searches for students capable of dealing with tolerance and respect to interculturality.

2.1.3. *The technological revolution*

Finally, new information and communication technologies have renamed our society as the knowledge and information society.

In this society, the acquisition of digital competence has become a must since it represents an essential instrument for the acquisition of other basic skills, thus becoming a transversal element in the teaching learning process.

Floris (2014: 141) suggests the advantages in the use of ICT in the EFL classroom. They could be listed as follows:

- Up-to-date information: “[...] both teachers and students of English can have quick and affordable access to the most up-to-date sources and information.”
- High variety of activities and sources to practice English: “[...] Students can practice speaking in English with Siri in their iPad or iPhone or Assistant in their android devices.”
- Methodological flexibility. “[...] with the wide range of teaching and learning materials available for free in the Internet, [the] teacher can select the ones that fit better to the students’ needs according to their age, level, and abilities.”
- Interactivity. “[...] There are also many discussion groups for professional development, interactive reading books for students, sound recordings for both teachers and students.”
- Autonomous learning: “[...] I believe that ICT promotes student achievement because this tool allows them to progress at their pace and needs.”
- Fast access: “[...] Furthermore, the Internet also provides an easy and fast access to the current and authentic materials in the language being studied, which is motivating for language learners.”

- Access to authentic material, which promotes motivation on students: “Such authentic materials include, for instance, online newspapers, webcasts, podcasts, newsrooms, video clips or even video sharing websites such as YouTube. Another motivating language learning opportunity using ICT is provided by chat rooms and virtual environments such as Second Life which enable learners to practice the written and spoken language, without the fear of making mistakes”
- Language practice: “Another motivating language learning opportunity using ICT is provided by chat rooms and virtual environments such as Second Life which enable learners to practice the written and spoken language, without the fear of making mistakes.”

As it can be outlined from these advantages, the use of ICT is extremely useful in any EFL classroom. However, although ICTs are very useful and indispensable tools, it is important not to forget that there are a number of circumstances that can turn our innovative experience into a failure.

Beyond its advantages (democratization, equality of information opportunities through the different means of communication, etc. real time exchange of communicative situations, fusion of cultures, ...), there are some risks that should be borne in mind (saturation of information, citizens' vulnerability to the information and, advertising, unnoticed manipulation, spreading of stereotypes, virtual isolation, etc.).

Pérez (1998) (as quoted from Tejada, 2000: 3)

Besides, Floris (2014: 141) listed the following disadvantages, as far as EFL is concerned:

There are some potential disadvantages of using ICT for language teaching. It is expensive for the first investment (computers, Internet connection, servers, employment of ICT personals, etc). It is also expensive in running ICT training for teachers (and administrative staff). Thus, teachers often have minimum exposure and experience in the use of ICT in English Language Teaching (ELT).

Therefore, nowadays teachers have to be trained on new ICT and, more precisely, on the use of these tools in EFL. The question that arises here is whether teachers are willing to commit to this new form of teaching. New technologies offer a wide range of possibilities and it is up

to teachers to use them in a greater or lesser degree. Therefore, teaching today means to be able to adapt to all kinds of cultural, technological, ideological, and labour changes. Besides, all this within a globalized world in which any event is likely to influence on foreign territories.

Moreover, as part of the teachers' work it is important to take into account today's students characteristics. Because of that, once the today's teaching scenario has been settled, it is time to look into the characteristics of the today's students.

2.2. Students of XXI century: Digital natives

These days, teachers deal with a new type of students who are called "digital natives". They are shaped by their electronic and digital environment. Their brains are adapted to the use of these tools and, consequently, they feel motivated by their use. They feel the necessity of being "connected", of belonging to a wider world where communication is mostly in English. They feel curiosity and English is an open window for understanding the world, and learning autonomously by linking different languages.

Prensky (2001: 2) was the one who coined the term "digital natives" as opposed to "digital immigrants." The formers are consumers and will be the producers of technologies since they are fully deploying their learning in the technological environment. The latter, on its part, are those who were born prior to the technological age. Although digital immigrants have experienced a slower and more linear adaptation process, they are also fascinated and interested in technology. Garcia et al., (2007: 2) state: "Their [digital natives] main characteristic is undoubtedly its technophile. They are attracted to everything related to new technologies. With the ICTs they satisfy their needs of entertainment, fun, communication, information and, in certain occasions, also training. "

Prensky (2004: 2) also identifies different areas in which the digital natives are developed in a different way. The most relevant are the next ones:

1. They share differently. Digital natives have developed specific mechanisms to do it in a synchronous way: For example, the blog. These websites allow digital natives to share their personal and emotional life's details and anyone can access to the archived entries permanently. In addition, they have links to other blogs, so they serve as a form of interconnection between a social group. For digital immigrants it serves more as a tool of intellectual exchange. (Prensky, 2004: 4)

2. They create differently. They are creators of technology: “One of the defining characteristics of the Digital Native is the desire to create. Digital Natives are adept (or become quickly so, given the chance) at building Web sites, Flash movies, and other online creations.” (Prensky, 2004: 6)
3. They meet differently. “Meeting used to be considered purely a face-to-face activity. Obviously, people still do meet face-to-face, but online meeting, and arranging meetings online has become an important hallmark of this generation”. (Prensky, 2004: 7)
4. They coordinate differently. They are able to coordinate online, involving hundreds of people, and adopting roles to achieve a common goal. (Prensky, 2004: 7)
5. They get evaluated differently: Nowadays, online reputation has reached an utmost importance among adolescents. “While some immigrants may see all these rating opportunities (rate this page, rate this post) as intrusions, or wastes of time, natives know their online compass depends upon them and are often more eager to comply”. (Prensky, 2004: 8)
6. They learn differently. Knowledge is no longer a teacher’s property which is transferred to the student. Knowledge is also on the Internet, thus, the student has the opportunity to learn autonomously. (Prensky, 2004: 9)
7. They search differently: “Immigrants, in general, want the most filtering – they get overwhelmed easily by lots of information; Natives, on the other hand prefer more raw information so they can filter for themselves”. (Prensky, 2004:10)
8. They report differently. Nowadays, information does not give power. What gives power is the ability to share that information. "Knowledge is power" was immigrants’ motto, whereas natives, who love to share information, prefer their motto "sharing knowledge is power". (Prensky, 2004: 11)
9. They socialize differently: Socialization has always occurred as a consequence of the interaction in the group of peers, which takes place in everyday life outside the school or work setting. However, “digital Natives are both socializing online and “being socialized,” as the social scientists say. Their online contacts are as “real” to them as their face-to-face ones, albeit different in style”. (Prensky, 2004: 12)
10. They evolve differently: One of the most intriguing things about the Digital Natives’ e-life is that it is continually evolving, and the kids are continually creating new behaviors that facilitate their lives. Natives have learned to type messages with the keys on their cell phones, in their pockets, at quite reasonable rates of speed.”

(Prensky, 2004: 12). In this way, they use language as a way of evolution and play with it in order to create faster codes to write on their mobile phones.

In conclusion, these digital natives are usually appealed by everything related to new technologies; in this way, the Erasmus + programme needs to make use of ICT in order to attract students' attention. Besides, the demands of these days' world require the use of new technologies, new tools, and innovative methodologies. New technologies serve not only as a primordial element in the teachings of our time, but also the language most typically used to communicate is English. Therefore, this serves to introduce more than justifiably the following two sections, where we will see, first, international student mobility and next the importance of languages in a globalized world. In addition, language learning, along with digital competence, is one of the priority objectives of our Consejería de Educación: "Language learning, together with digital competence, is one of the transversal core ideas in the *Agenda 2020* and all efforts towards these objectives are welcomed. In this sense, the ICT 2.0 School has become a formidable support line in the learning of a foreign language." (Junta de Andalucía, 2015: 1). All these students' features make of an utmost importance the fact that teachers have to deal with them and with students through digital tools and by using new technologies.

2.3. International student mobility

Other important characteristic of these days' students is their motivation to study abroad. Student mobility can be defined as: "students who cross national borders for the purpose or in the context of their studies" (Kelo, Teichler, & Wächter, cited in Souto-Otero et al, 2013: 70). Furthermore, as it has been previously mentioned, globalization is one of the main characteristic of the world that students have to deal with. "Education in the age of globalization calls to provide everyone with an opportunity to make a choice involving a combination of specific professional knowledge and skills with the needs of the individual development, formation of civil qualities and moral attitudes (Sakhieva et al, 2015: 335).

Sakhieva et al, 2015: 337 provide us with some objectives applied to academic mobility, and these could be listed as follows:

1. To provide the students with an opportunity to test themselves in a different system of higher education and to enhance prestige of the education they receive;

2. To develop the students' new skills and competencies;
 3. To expand social and cultural horizons of the students, improve foreign language proficiency and intercultural communication skills;
 4. To increase the availability of education at all levels throughout life.
- (Sakhieva et al, 2015: 337).

As it will be mentioned later, these objectives are quite similar to those ones listed in section 2.4., established by the CEFR for the acquisition of a second (a successive) foreign language. Moreover,

Studying abroad has been claimed to be the most efficient way to learn a second language (L2 hereafter) because immersion in the L2 community offers learners what seems to be an ideal opportunity to acquire the language: a combination of formal (language instruction) and informal (out-of-class) learning (Allen & Davidson, 2007, cited in Llanes & Muñoz, 2013: 64).

These advantages can be appreciated above all for those programmes which take place during a whole academic year, which is the case of the classical Erasmus programme in Higher Education. However, the time the students spend immersed in this kind of programme is quite limited (the programme has been carried out for 2 academic years, but the students' immersion lasts for about six or seven days), so that, although they have the opportunity to practice the L2, the time might not be enough to take these advantages into account.

2.4. The importance of learning languages

According to Meno (2002: 257), European citizens must know languages to participate in this society; in this way, this knowledge is considered a basic competence that must be acquired without pretext. Europe is characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity. Besides, multilingualism facilitates mobility, cooperation, and the exchange of ideas among European citizens.

The mastery of languages reinforces one of the most important competences that the citizen of today has to develop, that is, communication. Interpersonal relationships are becoming more important when it comes to perform tasks in our daily life, for example, to look for a job, study, etc. To paraphrase Daller (2002: 26), one of the most recent piece of research related to bilingual education, concludes that being bilingual implies many positive effects in the

cognitive field since languages are an instrument for dialogue, exchange of ideas, learning, etc.

Moreover, although learning languages in general is important, no matter what language people learn, English has established as a Lingua Franca. As Firth has defined (cited in Kaypak & Oraçtepe, 2014: 356), English “is a ‘contact language’ between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication”. Firth continues arguing that: “English has gained many responsibilities, one of which is acting as a common language for interaction among students who study abroad” (2014: 356).

In addition, as aforementioned in previous sections, globalization and multiculturalism are the characteristics of today's society that can influence education most. At this point, therefore, the importance of acquiring competence in a second (and successive) foreign language is more than justified. This is as a main objective within the European Union and the following objectives can be found in the Preamble of the CEFRL (2001: 3-4):

- To equip all Europeans for the challenges of intensified international mobility and closer co-operation not only in education, culture and science but also in trade and industry.
- To promote mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity through more effective international communication.
- To maintain and further develop the richness and diversity of European cultural life through greater mutual knowledge of national and regional languages, including those less widely taught.
- To meet the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe by appreciably developing the ability of Europeans to communicate with each other across linguistic and cultural boundaries, which requires a sustained, lifelong effort to be encouraged, put on an organised footing and financed at all levels of education by the competent bodies.
- To avert the dangers that might result from the marginalisation of those lacking the skills necessary to communicate in an interactive Europe.

These objectives are pursued by means of the Erasmus + programme, since it intends students to travel around Europe in order to, firstly, learn or improve other European languages; secondly, foster tolerance among its members; and thirdly, raise awareness of European cultural diversity.

Furthermore, the same document recognizes that language learning is a "task that lasts a lifetime" and, thus, it is extremely important to develop the "motivation, skills and confidence" of young people at the same time they are facing new linguistic experiences outside the school.

Moreover, the usefulness of a second language is not only referred to in linguistic terms. It should be added to the main objective of other aspects such as cultural enrichment, increased respect, tolerance etc., all of which have been mentioned in the CEFRL. Besides, the Ministry of Education of the Government of Andalusia is trying to foster all these aspects by the implementation of the Plurilingualism Plan.

From this perspective, the Plan for the Promotion of Plurilingualism in Andalusia (Junta de Andalucía: 2004) is intended to answer to the need of the Andalusian society to face the challenge of technological, social, and economic changes linked to globalization. This plan also promotes knowledge of other languages as a fundamental instrument to achieve a successful adaptation to this global environment and coexistence in diversity. In general terms, the Plan proposes as objectives, which can be summarized as follows:

- A. To promote the mastery of foreign languages by the Andalusian citizenship with a clear communicative purpose;
- B. To train Andalusian students through linguistic and cultural multilingualism in order to integrate in an increasingly globalized context;
- C. To approach a multi-ethnic, pluri-cultural and multilingual Andalusia, to new languages and cultures. The Andalusian universities, along with other educational institutions, will play a relevant role in achieving the objectives proposed. (Plan of Linguistic Policy of the University of Seville, 2009: 3)

It should be noticed, that the word "globalized" appears repeatedly when we treat the issue of the learning of languages. Our contemporary society cannot be understood from a perspective other than that.

From this last idea, something that must be taken into account by any language student is the following: one person never stops learning something new in one language. Hence the importance of motivating students to expand their knowledge to what is learned in class and to be able to generate their own knowledge just for the "mere pleasure of learning." Because of the importance of the mastery of languages, this task does not only concern the language teacher but also this is something that needs to be encouraged by the whole educational

community (parents, teachers, and students). Moreover, economic and linguistic globalization is a recent phenomenon. It needs to be added to the intellectual enrichment of mastering several languages, the openness to other visions of the world other than oneself, as well as a multitude of enriching experiences. That is why the European Union is decided to promote linguistic diversity and language learning in the field of education. That is one of the main reasons why they have coined the term “European dimension”, which will be dealt throughout the following section.

2.5. European dimension in education

This dimension is “[...] supposed to prepare young people to participate in the economic and social life of the EU, make them aware of the benefits and challenges of being a member, and develop their knowledge of both the EU and its Members”. (Savvides, 2008: 305). That means opening horizons of global thinking and intercultural understanding. The European Parliament has always supported and enhanced the development of this dimension by publishing different texts, such as “The Green Paper on the European dimension in Education” in 1993. According to this report, “Education should have a European dimension wherever possible, particularly through teaching about Europe in curriculum subjects, teaching foreign languages and civics, and providing students and teachers across Europe with opportunities to be in contact with one another.” (Savvides & Fass, 2015: 374) Thus, this can be summarized in five broad areas of education:

- ✓ Teaching about Europe, which is related to curricular aspects
- ✓ student mobility and exchange programmes arranged by the European Union
- ✓ creating international European schools
- ✓ promoting teacher training and mobility
- ✓ teaching foreign languages

In order to implement this dimension in European institutions, the Council of Europe created the Project of Language Learning for European Citizenship, which has been in charge of the CEFRL and the European Language Portfolio. As a consequence, many programmes whose aim was to promote the knowledge and understanding of foreign languages across European countries were created, as it was the case of Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, or Grundtvig programmes. The programme which is object of the present study, that is, the

Erasmus + programme, was created as a result of those programmes and will be focus of attention in the next section.

Needless to say that the benefits of studying abroad are extremely important, since young people can learn new languages, cultures...; and at the same time they are able to grow personally and professionally. Some of the benefits could be summarized as follows:

- Experience: Students enjoy the opportunity to know other cities and cultures and learn from those cultures.
- Languages: They can improve the language they learn at school, since they feel the need to get understood by others. Furthermore, students will understand the reason why to speak different languages is important.
- Coexistence: Students learn to share and live with people from other cultures and traditions; they will have to respect the traditions of others; in this way, they will become more tolerant and respectful.
- Independence: They will have to learn to fend for themselves, since there is no other member of the family who supports them. They will have to solve problems on their own, growing into a more independent person.
- Learn: They will observe different ways of doing things and working.
- Know other countries: They will have the opportunity to “see” the world, and experience a brand-new country with incredible new outlooks, customs, and activities.⁵

These are some of the benefits of studying abroad and these are usually bigger when a person spends a whole academic year in the destination in question. Even if our students stay just for a few days, they can get a perception of these benefits. In this way, this experience will encourage them to study abroad. This is one of the objectives that the Erasmus + programme looks for in the Secondary School they are performing the programme. Throughout the next section, the programme is going to be explained, as well as its history and challenges.

2.6. The Erasmus + programme

2.6.1. The Erasmus programme: History

The Erasmus programme (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) was built on pilot student exchanges from 1981 to 1986 and formally

⁵ <https://www.internationalstudent.com/study-abroad/guide/ten-benefits-to-studying-abroad/>

adopted on 17 June 1987. In the first year, 1987/1988, the programme involved 11 countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and United Kingdom), with 3244 students travelling abroad to study.⁶ At first, the programme was simply called “Erasmus”, and it was only focused on university students. This programme coexisted with the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP hereafter) from the years 2007 to 2013. The LLP included four main subprogrammes:

- Comenius for schools (this is the programme which I will analyse)
- Erasmus for higher education
- Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training
- Grundtvig for adult education⁷

The Comenius sub-programme was the one which Secondary Schools applied since it focused on all levels of school education, as well as the individuals involved, including pupils, teachers, local authorities, and education institutions, among others. It was designed to:

- Improve and increase the mobility of pupils and staff across the EU
- Enhance and increase school partnerships across the EU
- Encourage language learning, ICT for education, and better teaching techniques
- Enhance the quality and European dimension of teacher training
- Improve approaches to teaching and school management⁷

All these LLP activities are now being accomplished under the new Erasmus+ programme from 2014-2020.

Erasmus + aims at going beyond these programmes, by promoting synergies and cross- fertilisation throughout the different fields of education, training and youth, removing artificial boundaries between the various Actions and project formats, fostering new ideas, attracting new actors from the world of work and civil society and stimulating new forms of cooperation. (European Commission, 2017: 8)

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/anniversary/30th-anniversary-and-you_en

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme_es

2.6.2. The Erasmus + programme.

As it has been aforementioned, the Erasmus + programme emerged from the so-called Erasmus programme widely used for higher education students. This programme was “Introduced in 1987, the Erasmus (European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) programme is one of the most visible practices of the EU influencing directly the lives of EU citizens, and usually considered one of the best components of EU policy. It is also one of the main instruments for constructing European identity”. (Oner, 2015:108).

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Its budget of €14.7 billion will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain experience, and volunteer abroad.

The aim of Erasmus+ is to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion, as well as the aims of ET2020, the EU's strategic framework for education and training. Erasmus+ also aims to promote the sustainable development of its partners in the field of higher education, and contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy (The Strategy supports young people in eight fields of action: Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Health and Well-being , Participation, Voluntary activities, Social inclusion , Youth and the world, and Creativity and Culture.⁸

Specific issues tackled by the programme include:

1. Reducing unemployment, especially among young people
2. Promoting adult learning, especially for new skills and skills required by the labour market
3. Encouraging young people to take part in European democracy
4. Supporting innovation, cooperation and reform
5. Reducing early school leaving
6. Promoting cooperation and mobility with the EU's partner countries⁹

It [the Erasmus + programme] has been designed to support Programme Countries' efforts to efficiently use the potential of Europe's talent and social assets in a lifelong learning perspective, linking support to formal, non-formal and informal learning throughout the education, training and youth fields. The Programme also enhances

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/youth/gallery/eu-youth-strategy_en

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en

the opportunities for cooperation and mobility with Partner Countries, notably in the fields of higher education and youth. (European Commission, 2017: 5).

Erasmus + (Comenius) is the programme analysed in this dissertation. The main aim of this paper is to clearly analyse and evaluate if this programme is achieving its objectives, and if it is leaving a mark on students, as it is intended to do. Erasmus + is structured in three Key Actions (KA):

- **KA 1: Mobility of individuals:** It is aimed to provide assistance for the mobility of people. These actions include both the mobility of students and the educational staff, especially teachers, principals and monitors.
- **KA 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices:** As its own name signals, its main purpose is the cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices. It is addressed to associations, especially to those ones which are devoted to training and education.
- **KA 3: Support for policy reform:** They are based on the support to the reform of educational, training and youth policies.¹⁰

As it can be deduced, the object of study is located in the KA 1. During the following section, the project under scrutiny centered on the IES Licinio de la Fuente is going to be analysed.

2.6.3. The Erasmus + in the IES Licinio de la Fuente

During two academic years (2015/2016 and 2016 /2017) this Secondary School participated, together with other European educational centres in the project "Small Explorers in a Magic World of the European Folk Culture", which looks for increasing students' knowledge on the traditional culture of the countries involved in the project. Each country (Poland, Poland, Turkey, Spain, Lithuania, Croatia, and Italy) received students from the other participant countries. The visits were undertaken under the following dates:

Portugal, from 22nd to 28th November 2016.

Turkey, from 13th to 17th March 2016.

Spain, from 22nd to 28th May 2016

Lithuania, from 2nd to 8th October 2016

¹⁰ <http://www.becascomenius.net/programa-erasmus/>

Croatia, from 4th to 10th December 2016

Italy, from 12th to 18th March 2017

Poland, from 21st to 27th May 2017

All in all, students during their stays in each country visited the most popular places, tasted their traditional dishes, watched traditional dances, created fascinating videos, learnt about their educational systems, and participated in workshops in order to learn to do traditional handicrafts. Thus, we are going to analyse if students value their visits to other countries and acquire the objectives that the European commission aimed them to acquire.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

According to the general framework, this case study is applied, since it implements the product of basic research to a specific problem, that is, the specific problem is related to students' linguistic competence in the foreign language, in this case, English, and how the European Erasmus programme KA 1 helps developing that linguistic competence.

Next, as regards the source of information, it can be said that this study comprises both secondary and primary research, as it is based on the theories found in books or research projects, but it is also related to a case study on a secondary school, in this way, the information is also extracted from a primary research, that is, students who have taken part on the Erasmus + programme.

Besides, the purpose of this research is deductive, since it tries to test a particular hypothesis. It will examine qualitative data provided by the students' impressions, perspectives, and opinions. Furthermore, the teachers' and parents' opinion will be also examined by means of interviews in order to know their experience and opinion about the programme. Besides, it will evaluate quantitative data, as it will identify objective data, such as the improvement of those students' marks in English. Moreover, it will be a quasi-experimental research, based on classroom-based conditions.

3.2. Sample

This research is a case study made up by a homogeneous group of 20 students from one of the Secondary Schools in Coín (Málaga). These students have similar characteristics related to age (they are all from ages from 12 years to 16), they are students of compulsory education, and they all belong to the Erasmus + programme. They all have similar language

levels, (A1 or A2 according to the CEFRL). Related to gender, they are 11 females and 9 males. Moreover, two teachers of English and five students' families were interviewed.

The school is located in Coín, not far from the provincial capital (33 kms west of Málaga) and about 30 km north of Marbella. It has a population of about 20,000 inhabitants. In recent years, foreigners have made up a substantial proportion of the town's inhabitants and are attracted to Coín because it is only 25 minutes from the beaches of Málaga and Marbella.

The economy was traditionally agriculture, coexisting with marble mining (since Roman times) and ceramics. Tourism, construction, and the hospitality industry have replaced old industries, although there are still many potters and several quarries where local marble, dolomite rock, and sand are produced for construction materials.

There are two Secondary Schools in this town, though IES Licinio de la Fuente is the only one that is carrying out the Erasmus+ programme.

There are three different types of Bachillerato taught at this school: Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Technology and Art. Furthermore, there are other non-compulsory teachings at the school such as vocational training of intermediate level on Administration and Social and Health Care and vocational studies of high level on Administration and Finances. Besides, there is a program called FPB (Formación Profesional Básica), addressed to students between 15 and 21 years old who lost interest in academic teaching; something which is an opportunity to get a professional certificate through this type of programme promoted by the Spanish government.

Students who come to this Secondary School everyday are, most of them, middle class teenagers. It can be stated that 60% of them come from families working in the building and service sectors, whereas 40% belong to a very heterogeneous group whose parents are administration employees, teachers, state security employees, industrialists, traders, as well as retired people. In this last group we can include a number of immigrant students who come from different countries, mainly from South American countries, Great Britain, and Morocco. There are also some students who do not live in Coín but they stay there during the school week at the School Residence "Nuestra Señora de la Fuensanta", which is placed beside the Secondary school. Most of these residence students are in the first cycle of compulsory secondary education and come from underprivileged socio-cultural backgrounds or difficult family environment what makes them drop out of school at a very early age.¹¹

¹¹ <http://www.eurofolklore-erasmusplus.eu/spain/spain.html#opis>

As regards new technologies, this school has an interactive whiteboard in every classroom. As aforementioned in subsection 2.2.2, we are dealing with *digital natives*, so we must make our lessons attractive and interactive. The school also has a web with links to the different teachers' blogs. Besides, the project carried out by this school is also located in a website (<http://www.eurofolklore-erasmusplus.eu/index.html>). Information about the project, visits, and different presentations can be found in this website. Moreover, most of the teachers use a moodle platform, which is used to post the different subjects' handouts and homework. The use of new technologies aims to develop habits that will help students become autonomous and continue learning beyond the classroom walls, developing life-long learning. Finally, there is also WiFi connection throughout the school.

3.3. Variables

In this case-study, three types of variables can be found: dependent, independent and moderator variables:

- **Dependent variable:** The students' competence in grammar, vocabulary, and the four skills.
- **Independent variable:** The teachers' and parents' opinion about the success of the project, and the effects that the programme has had on the students' perception of the English language and European countries.
- **Moderator variable:** Students' motivation, positive experience, and gender.

3.4. Instruments

In this paper, three types of instruments will be employed for the qualitative side of the study: questionnaires to students, interviews to teachers, and parents, and direct observation on students' progress in the English subject:

1. A questionnaire filled by these students (Appendix 1), which will provide information about the second aspect analysed in this case study, that is, the satisfaction generated by the programme and the perceptions of these students towards this programme. This questionnaire will be handed out in their mother tongue, Spanish.
2. Interviews to both parents and teachers of the Secondary School in order to get their perceptions about the programme and the students' response to it. (Appendices 2 and 3).

3. The mark obtained in the subject of English, which will serve as an instrument for the research. It will provide information about the students' progress in the subject of English.

3.5. Data collection: Timeline

The questionnaires were administered to the students during the week of 19th May. At that time, there was one visit left to be done. Because of that reason, during the month of June the two students who were participating in the last visit were given the questionnaire.

Moreover, the interviews to the other educational community parties, that is, teachers and parents were carried out in September.

Besides, the students' marks have been analysed from the beginning of the programme, that is, from the academic year 2015/2016 to the end of it, that is, the academic year 2016/2017.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Students' questionnaires

The twenty participants were selected from the three groups of Compulsory Secondary Education (one group belonged to the second year and two groups to the third year of ESO) who took part in the Erasmus programme carried out at the school. This questionnaire was handed out in Spanish (Appendix 1) in order to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the students. Thus, the following table shows the results obtained:

Table 2: Questionnaire results

	N	%
Total number of students	20	100
<u>Background information</u>		
<i>Gender</i>		
Females	11	55
Males	9	45
<i>ESO year</i>		
2nd ESO	6	30
3rd ESO	14	70

Information gathered through questionnaires**Q1. Which motivation was the key factor to join the programme?**

a) Meeting people from other countries	15	75
b) Improving your level of English	4	20
c) Others (please indicate):	1	5

Q2. What level of satisfaction did you receive from the trip to the country of destination?

a) Highly satisfied	17	85
b) Satisfied	1	5
c) Not satisfied	2	10

Q3. Do you consider the length of the visit has been:

a) Appropriate	4	20
b) Short	14	70
c) Long	2	10

Q4. What level of satisfaction did you receive from your Erasmus friend's visit?

a) Highly satisfied	15	75
b) Satisfied	5	25
c) Not satisfied	0	0

Q5. Do you consider the length of his/her visit:

a) Appropriate	8	40
b) Short	10	50
c) Long	2	10

Q6. What language did you use to communicate with your friend during your stay?

a) English	14	70
b) Spanish	3	15
c) Other (please indicate):	3	15

Q7. Do you keep in contact with your Erasmus friend?

a) Yes	20	100
b) No	0	0

Q8. How often do you email or speak to your Erasmus

friend?		
a) Every day	5	25
b) Every week	6	30
c) Every month	7	35
d) Less than once in a month	2	10
Q9. Which language do you use to communicate with your Erasmus friend through Skype, phone, or email?		
a) English	18	90
b) Spanish	2	10
c) Other (please indicate):	0	0
Q10. From the beginning of the programme... have your interest in the subject of English increased?		
a) Yes	14	70
b) No	6	30
Q11. From the beginning of the programme... have you got better marks in English?		
a) Yes	17	85
b) No	3	15
Q12. How much did you know about the country you have visited before the trip?		
a) I have already visited it	0	0
b) I have heard something about it and I wanted to visit it	13	65
c) I knew the name of the city	7	35
d) I have never heard of it before	0	0
Q13. Has your perception about the destination country improved after your visit?		
a) Yes	8	40
b) No	12	60
Q14. Do you think you will visit again your Erasmus friend's country in the future?		
a) Yes; I will visit it in the future	4	20
b) I would like to go again	5	25
c) I don't think I will go again	10	50

d) No	1	5
Q15. What kind of project have you carried out to present during the Erasmus trip?		
a) Videos	7	35
b) Cultural workshops	10	50
c) Performances	1	5
d) Power Point presentations	2	10
Q16. Have you discovered new things about your country you didn't know before?		
a) Yes	1	5
b) No	19	95
Q17. Which language did you use to present the project in the other country?		
a) English	20	100
b) Spanish	0	0
c) Mother tongue of the country of destination	0	0
Q18. In case you used English to present the project, please, indicate the degree of difficulty to make it:		
a) Difficult	3	15
b) Very difficult	16	80
c) Easy	1	5

Table 2: Questionnaire results

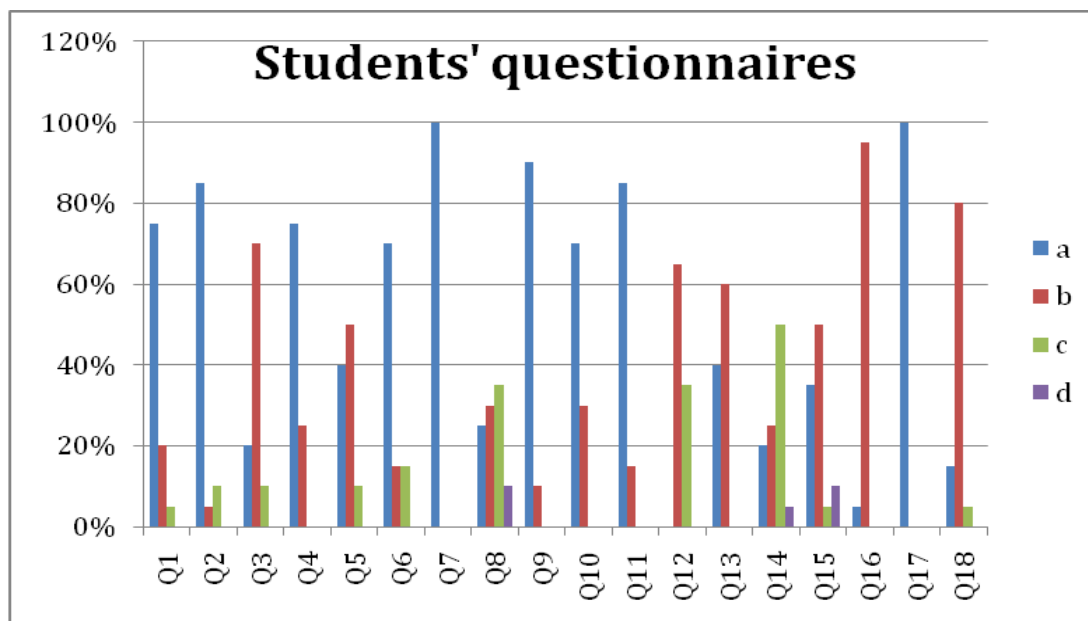


Figure 2: Students' questionnaires

The results show the following findings, where Q1 refers to question 1: As regards the motivations to join the programme (Q1), most of the students joined it in order to meet new people, which would serve them as a new experience (75%); 20% of them joined it in order to improve their English, and just 5% had another type of motivation, but he/she did not specify it.

All students have already visited their Erasmus mates in their home countries because the programme was nearly finished when the questionnaire was administered. The two remaining students were questioned once they have arrived from the last trip. Thus, for 85% the visit highly satisfied their expectations (Q2); 5% were satisfied and 10% of them had a low level of satisfaction. The reasons of this dissatisfaction could be due to cultural misunderstandings with the host family, or to problems of adaptation to the country of destination; this 10% of students also considered the length of the visit long (Q3); whereas a vast majority, a 70% considered it short, and 20% of them thought the length was appropriate to their expectations. When it comes to their mates' stay, all of them (100%) have already received that visit. (This visit was held during last year, which was the academic year 2015 /2016). Most of them, 75% were highly satisfied with that visit (Q4) and 25% thought the visit satisfied their expectations. Again, 10% of the students considered that the visit was too long (Q5), whereas the others thought it was appropriate (40%) and short (50%).

As regards the language they use to communicate among them (Q6), most of them use English as a lingua franca (70%), Spanish (15%), and Italian (15%).

As regards the relationship they maintain with their mates (Q7), all of them (100%) keep in contact frequently, being the frequency (Q8) every month (35%) and every week (35%), and again they use mostly English (Q9) as the vehicle of communication (90%). The fact that they use English to communicate between them was perceived as an improvement on their marks, since 85% thought they did get better marks in the subject of English (Q11), and they admitted their interest in English has improved 70% of them (Q10). Nevertheless, as in the section 4.3., they did get better results, though they were not aware of this fact.

When it comes to the knowledge about other cultures or countries (Q12), they had before joining the programme, most of them (65%) do know something about the place they were going to visit thanks to the programme, whereas just a few (35%) knew the name of the city or country. The fact that they have some information about the country made some perspectives over the students (Q13), which have not changed after their visit because 60% stated their perceptions have not changed.

Next, students described the projects to present Spain to the destination countries (Q14) as quite challenging. They made use of new technologies, such as social networking, or tools to make the presentations more attractive as for example, videos (35%); some others collaborated with cultural workshops to make our Spanish culture be known (50%) and others (5%) did a cultural performance (regional dances or playing an instrument). Others opted for using more classical tools Power Point (5%).

All in all, ICT and English were present in their projects. These were about things they already knew about Spain or their city, Coín, since, 95% of the students admitted (Q16) not having discovered anything new about their region. Again, English was the language used as a common language for understanding (100% in Q17). Students have the impressions of those projects as something (Q18) quite difficult (80% said it was quite difficult and 15% thought it was difficult). Only 5% stated that the project has been an easy task (for him/her).

From these results it can be inferred the following: first, students give more importance to their social relations than to the improvement on their level of English; second, the level of satisfaction is higher when they have to receive the students at home rather than when they have to travel abroad. Moreover, English is mainly used as a lingua franca, when they have to communicate with foreign students face to face (70%), when they communicate to each other through new technologies (90%), and when they have to make a presentation about their countries (100%). This provides an utmost importance to the English language, which is reflected in an increase in their interest towards the subject of English (70%); and therefore they got better marks in it. Furthermore, these trips produce an unequalled experience which

gives students the opportunity to know other countries and to create links with European students. This experience helps students to know other cultures and to respect the European cultural diversity. Moreover, students have made projects using the new technologies, though the programme is appealing to this kind of students called digital natives.

4.2. Interviews

There were two teachers of English and a third one who participated in the programme and, thus, they were the two teachers interviewed. Furthermore, 5 parents were also interviewed. Both interviews can be found in the Appendix 2 and 3 of this project. The results from the interviews presented the following findings.

4.2.1. Teachers' interviews

Firstly, they were asked about the cooperation among the countries which have taken part in the programme. (Q1). They all agreed that there has existed a fluent cooperation among the participants, thought it is true that the cooperation was stronger at the beginning of the programme because this was needed to implement it successfully. Moreover, tolerance among participants (Q2) has been the overall tone among students, even though they have had to struggle with some cultural interferences or misunderstandings. Concerning their linguistic competence (Q3 and Q5), there has been an improvement in that competence, but they do not believe that this has not only been because of the programme, but also due to students' increase in their knowledge on the English language. Teachers agreed there has been a growth on students' interest about language (Q4) because they discover that speaking foreign languages is important to communicate with others. Besides, one of the teachers added that this higher interest was also produced in the students who have not taken part in the programme, because when the Secondary School held the visit of the foreign students they were eager to speak with the foreign visitors.

4.2.2. Parents' interviews

Parents were critical about the organization of the programme, since some of them complained about the disorganization of some of the trips their children have done (Q1), as they were not informed about what their children were doing while they were travelling. They appraised the programme as a good way in order to create an interest on students to learn about the cultural differences present throughout Europe, since the programme is a very valuable cultural experience for their lives (Q3 and Q4). Also, parents agreed that their

children were keen on doing the projects (Q2), and that this was directly connected with a rise in their interest towards the English subject. Students were aware that they need English to communicate with their Erasmus friends. (Q5)

4.3. Students' marks

As far as the teachers' observation is concerned, all the teachers interviewed have agreed that there has been an increase in the students' interest in the subject of English. Students have discovered the utility that English has as an instrument of communication between people who do not speak the same language. Teachers contributed to this study by providing students' marks in order to analyze their development in the subject of English. The following table and chart gather the results of the evolution of students' marks in the subject of English as a foreign language:

	2015/2016				2016/2017			
Student	In Ev	1st Ev	2nd Ev	3rd Ev	In Ev	1st Ev	2nd Ev	3rd Ev
S 1	7	7	8	8	7	8	9	9
S 2	8	7	7	8	8	9	7	9
S 3	6	6	6	6	7	6	4	5
S 4	6	5	6	6	5	6	7	8
S 5	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	10
S 6	6	6	7	8	7	8	7	8
S 7	5	5	6	7	6	7	8	8
S 8	8	8	9	9	9	9	8	9
S 9	7	8	9	9	10	10	10	10
S 10	8	8	9	9	10	9	10	10
S 11	5	4	5	8	8	8	8	8
S 12	6	8	8	7	7	7	8	8
S 13	4	3	5	4	3	4	5	5
S 14	7	8	10	9	7	9	8	9
S 15	8	6	6	7	7	8	8	8
S 16	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
S 17	7	8	5	8	7	7	4	6
S 18	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	7

S 19	8	9	10	9	7	8	9	10
S 20	9	9	10	10	10	10	9	10

Table 1: Classification of students' mark during the two academic years of the programme.

An excel table was used in order to present the data where "S" stands for student and each number is used to refer to each student. These data were used to create the following graph in order to clearly represent the evolution of each student's mark:

- Figure 1:

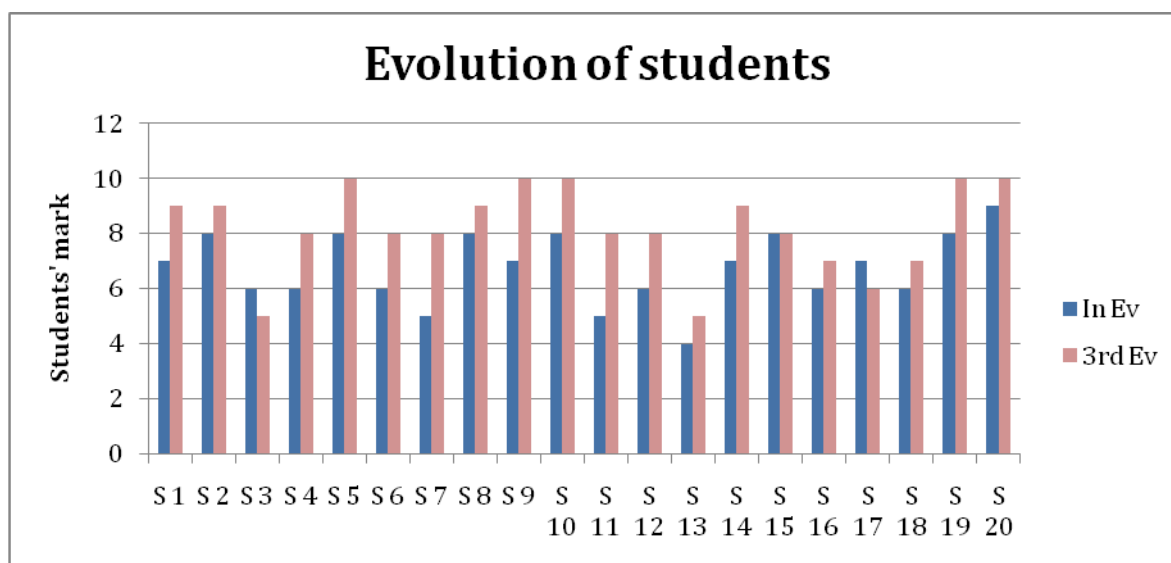


Figure 1: Evolution of students' marks in English

The above bar chart illustrates the evolution that students made from the beginning of the Erasmus programme, that is, the results related to the initial evaluation in the academic year 20015/20016 (blue bar) to the results they got at the end of the programme, that is, the third evaluation of the academic year 20016/20017 (pink bar).

It can be seen that almost all of them have made a progress in their marks in English, there are only two students whose pink bar is smaller than the blue one (students 3 and 17). Therefore, it can be seen an upward trend in the mark of those students who took part in the Erasmus + programme. This trend can be due to other factors, but motivation is a key factor in this respect, and motivation has been highly increased thanks to this programme.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has come across with many obstacles, due to very different factors: firstly, as far as the search of information is concerned, this was not really clear since the programme changed its name some years ago. All the literature related to the Erasmus programme was

based on higher education, and there is not literature related to either the Comenius programme (as it was its name before) or the Erasmus + programme.

Secondly, the questionnaire has also its lacunae, since many students tend to answer questions randomly without paying attention to what they are writing. The results obtained could not be absolutely faithful to reality. Besides, the sample chosen was rather small, but it includes all the students who were part of the programme.

Thirdly, it was impossible to interview all the parents due to lack of time. Another drawback found was the difficulty of setting a date with them to make these interviews. Anyway, those interviews mixed with the teachers' ones served as an important way to set up a general idea about the perception of the rest of the Educational Community.

Finally, as regards the marks of the students, there are other factors which make them to progress. It would have been very interesting to make an English test to these students before the beginning of the programme and after it. However, this was not possible because I was not working in this secondary school when the programme began.

6. LINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this case study has tried to provide an analysis of the programme, more research about this topic should be done. The analysis of the results obtained through the students' questionnaire has allowed us to answer the research question and draw some conclusions and pedagogical implications. However, further research could be made in the following areas:

- It would be interesting to have expanded this study to the opinions and perspectives of students' pals in the other countries.
- Studies based on the role of the teacher and their training This European programme also offers teachers training, something which would be also very important to analyse and clarify if they are really doing an improvement on the latest affected, that is, the students.
- The Erasmus + programme offers a wide variety of subjects to research about. For example, this study has been focused on the KA 1, but it could also be interesting to carry out further research on the other Key Actions.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This piece of paper has tried to analyse the role that the Erasmus + programme plays in a Secondary School in Andalusia. For this reason, a general framework where students and

teachers have to deal with and struggle on their daily basis has been firstly introduced, which gave importance to the creation of this type of programmes in Education. As it was explained in the literature review, the following features make the programme essential in education: globalization, multiculturalism, and the technological revolution, the latter has produced a new type of students, those known as *digital natives* and, finally, student mobility, which is presented as a way to give students the opportunity to experiment with languages and different cultures.

All in all, the Erasmus + programme, and more precisely, the KA 1, is introduced as a way to bring that experience closer to Secondary Schools.

After analyzing the findings, it is possible to come to the following conclusions: first, this programme has certainly served as a multicultural experience for both the students who took part in it and also for all the students of the IES Licinio de la Fuente, who also interact with the foreign students. Second, the programme served as a motivational tool to improve students' interest towards the subject of English and it was therefore reflected on an improvement in their marks of the subject of English. Finally, the programme had all the characteristics to meet students' needs: it is globalised, multicultural, and related to new technologies.

Moreover, teachers' and parents' opinions have provided very valuable information about what they thought was more remarkable from the programme. They all agreed to value this as an enriching experience and a way to incentive motivation towards the subject of English.

However, more research is needed on the part of the European Community concerning the organization of this type of programmes and also on the part of researchers as far as the effectiveness of these programmes is concerned.

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APPENDIX 1: Erasmus students'questionnaires

Cuestionario alumnos Erasmus

Señala con una cruz la respuesta la opción de respuesta.

P1. ¿Cuál de estas motivaciones te hizo formar parte del programa?

- a) Conocer gente de otros países
- b) Mejorar el nivel de inglés
- c) Otras (por favor, indica):

P2.¿Cuál es tu nivel de satisfacción del viaje al país de destino Erasmus?

- a) Altamente satisfactorio
- b) Satisfactorio
- c) Nada satisfactorio

P3. Consideras que el tiempo de visita al país extranjero ha sido:

- a) Adecuado
- b) Corto
- c) Largo

P4. ¿Cuál es tu nivel de satisfacción de la visita de tu compañero a España?

- a) Altamente satisfactorio
- b) Satisfactorio
- c) Nada satisfactorio

P5. Consideras que el tiempo de visita a Málaga ha sido:

- a) Adecuado
- b) Corto
- c) Largo

P6. ¿Cuál fue el idioma que utilizabas durante tu estancia en el país extranjero para comunicarte con tus compañeros?

- a) Inglés
- b) Español
- c) Otro (indica):

P7. ¿Mantienes contacto con tu compañero Erasmus?

- A) Sí
- b) No

P8. ¿Con qué frecuencia escribes emails o hablas con tu compañero Erasmus?

- a) Todos los días

- b) Todas las semanas
- c) Todos los meses
- d) Menos de una vez al mes

P9. ¿En qué idioma/s te comunicas con tu compañero Erasmus por Skype, teléfono o email?

- a) Inglés
- b) Español:
- c) Otro (por favor, indica):

P10. Desde el inicio del programa... ¿Ha aumentado tu interés hacia la asignatura de inglés?

- a) Sí
- b) No

P11. Desde el inicio del programa... ¿Ha mejorado tu calificación en la asignatura de inglés?

- a) Sí
- b) No

P12. ¿Cuánto conocías sobre el país de destino antes de visitarlo?

- a) Había estado con anterioridad
- b) Había escuchado hablar de ella y tenía ganas de conocerla
- c) Conocía el nombre de la ciudad
- d) No había escuchado hablar de ella con anterioridad

P13. ¿Ha mejorado la percepción sobre el país al que has viajado después de hacerlo?

- a) Sí
- b) No

P14. ¿Crees que volverás a visitar el país de tu compañero Erasmus en el futuro?

- a) Sí; voy a ir a visitar a mi compañero Erasmus en el futuro
- b) Me gustaría volver
- c) No creo que vuelva
- d) No

P15: ¿Qué tipo de trabajos has realizado para presentar en el país de destino?

- a) Vídeos
- b) Talleres culturales
- c) Actuaciones
- d) Presentaciones de *Power Point*

P16. ¿Has descubierto cosas de tu país que no conocías al realizar el trabajo para presentarlo en el país de destino?

a) Sí

b) No

P17. ¿En qué idioma habéis presentado el proyecto para dar a conocer tu país en el país de destino?

a) Inglés

b) Español

c) Lengua materna país de destino

P18. En caso de ser inglés el idioma para presentar el proyecto, indica el grado de dificultad de la realización de este proyecto:

a) Difícil

b) Muy difícil

c) Fácil

APPENDIX 2: Teachers' interviews

Entrevista a los profesores.

1. ¿Cuál es tu opinión acerca de la cooperación entre los países que han participado en el proyecto?
2. ¿Has apreciado un aumento de la tolerancia y la hermandad entre ellos?
3. ¿Crees que se ha producido un aumento de la competencia lingüística de los alumnos implicados en el proyecto?
4. ¿Crees que se ha producido un aumento del interés del alumnado respecto a las asignaturas de idiomas?
5. ¿Crees que la mejora de las calificaciones en el alumnado ha sido debido a su participación en el programa?

APPENDIX 3: Parents' interviews

Entrevista a padres

1. Cuénteme cuál es tu percepción acerca del programa.
2. ¿Qué interés ha mostrado su hijo en la organización del proyecto, es decir, las actividades que tenían que realizar para presentar a los alumnos de otros países?
3. Valoración de la experiencia en general de su hijo hacia el programa Erasmus. ¿Cree que es buena en general?
4. Valoración de la experiencia de tener alojado a un alumno de otro país en su domicilio.
5. ¿Cree que se ha producido un aumento en el interés de su hijo hacia la asignatura de idiomas? ¿Cree que esto es gracias al programa Erasmus?