European Dimension and Multilingual Functioning in Higher Education: Erasmus Students’ Experience

Daiva Užpalienė, Vilhelmina Vaičiūnienė

crossref http://dx.doi.org/10.5755/j01.sal.0.20.1777

Annotation. We live in a global society where education goes beyond the boundaries of one educational institution or even one country. In the European Union (EU) context, mobility of university students and their multilingual competence have always been a major concern and are at the heart of the EU policy towards the integration of its country members.

Today we have to assume that multilingualism has become students’ mobility and employability increasing factor. Seeing that, communication in several languages is an urgent need for young people who search for new learning or work experiences. Students from different nationalities or cultures come together to study in teams bringing with them different levels of language skills as well as expectations and beliefs of how they should be taught together. In other words, they contribute to the whole with their own cultural and linguistic input. The promotion of students’ mobility in the EU has also had a huge impact in recent years in Lithuania, which has now become one of the countries with more students going abroad on an Erasmus programme.

The conducted research focuses on Erasmus Exchange Students’ self-evaluation of their language competence and reflections about the challenges they have encountered while applying their knowledge and skills in study process. For collection of data the qualitative research method was applied. The instrument was an interview composed of 10 open-ended questions. The paper also addresses a very important issue of interrelation between students’ language competence and their educational aims.

Key words: linguistic competence, multilingualism, Erasmus exchange programme, acquired skills, students’ mobility, self-assessment.