



Open European Languages & Cultures Network

IO1. Research report: Mapping the Language
Learning Profile of the Erasmus+ KA1 Mobility
Participants (1st Version)

May 2020



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This project is funded by Erasmus+ KA2 grant Agreement No 2018-1-EL01-KA203-047967. This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).



**Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union**

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Foreword

According to both the Council of Europe and the European Union mobility is one of the cornerstones of European society. The lack of language competences is still one of the main barriers to participation in European education, training and youth programmes. With 4 million participants by 2020, Erasmus+ is a unique opportunity to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer abroad (EU, 2013). As languages are the heart of mutual understanding and comprehension, it is essential to promote language learning for Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants.

The OPENLang Network project addresses the needs for linguistic skills and culture awareness of Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants and the training needs for OERs of language teachers:

- a) Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants (HE students & staff, VET, Adult & School education staff, Youth learners, Youth Workers, Youth Entrepreneurs) that need to boost their language skills (24 EU) and cultural awareness including those who will not enrol in the OLS courses.
- b) Volunteers language teachers who will support the Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants offering their professional experience while receiving professional certified training on the creation, sharing and use of language OERs.

- The OPENLang Network project envisages to:

- 1) connect these 2 groups in an interactive collaborative environment (Web-based and mobile-based) that will support more efficiently their effort to raise language awareness of the target mobility EU languages and to develop European intercultural knowledge covering all EU cultures.
- 2) foster the Open Education European multicultural and multilingual vision to all OPENLang Network members.

The research report on Mapping the Language Learning Profile of the Erasmus+ KA1 Mobility Participants is the first intellectual output envisaged by the OPENLang Network project. The research aims to identify, analyze and present the language needs of the participants involved in long-term mobility activities supported under Erasmus+ Key Action 1. Participants are Higher Education students and staff, VET for at least 1-month mobility, learners/staff, adult and school education staff, Youth learners and workers. Based on the findings of this first output, the project's consortium will design and develop in a more efficient way the services and the material of the open and highly interactive web platform for language practice and cultural awareness. The contribution of this Output is to discover Language Placements Tests (LPTs) for the EU24 languages and enable users to test their language proficiency level. Particularly, this report includes the following: Exploration of available Language Placement Tests for 24 EU languages, and evaluation and final selection of one or two open LPTs for each language in order to provide access to them via the project's online platform. Then a visitor to the OPENLang e-platform would check his/her language proficiency level in order to select appropriate Open Educational Resources (OERs) for learning the language as well as a peer for tandem learning.

Please cite this report as:

Panagiotis Kosmas, Antigoni Parmaxi, Maria Perifanou, and Anastasios Economides (2020). *“Research report: Mapping the 'language learning profile' of the Erasmus + KA1 Mobility Learners”*. Research Report, Intellectual Output 1, OPENLang Network project. May 2020, Limassol-Cyprus.

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Introduction

The innovation of the Intellectual Output 1 (IO1) is to create new knowledge for Erasmus+ KA1 participants profiles that do not exist, as over the past few decades, international student mobility significantly increased (Van Mol & Ekamper, 2016). There is a considerable amount of research regarding the impact of mobility on participants' language skills and intercultural competences, but there is not any previous research on profiles of Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants. Output 1, based on the findings from the needs analysis survey and interviews, models and classifies participants' profiles according to their language skills, experiences, needs, and preferences.

Previous literature regarding the Erasmus+ mobility has revealed that students participate in Erasmus mobility actions mainly for personal development (e.g. Asoodar, Atai & Baten, 2017; van Maele, Vassilicos & Borghetti, 2016). The study of Mitchell, 2012 showed that the initial motivation of Erasmus students is to discover a country and learn its culture. Other researchers have argued that participants in mobility would like to develop their language proficiency (e.g. Aslan & Bayram Jacobs, 2014; Borghetti & Beaven, 2017; Llanes, Tragant & Serrano, 2012; van Maele, Vassilicos & Borghetti, 2016) and to learn a foreign language in general. However, they usually use the English language both in classes and in their extracurricular activities (Llanes, Arnó & Mancho-Barés, 2016). Even though, they encounter difficulties in understanding the content of the lectures in English (Camiciottoli, 2010). Furthermore, they participate in Erasmus mobility actions to enhance their professional and career profile in order to find a job (Gallarza et al., 2019), to increase their self-confidence, to get a new horizon, to learn academic or profession-specific skills, to experience adventure, or to have a good time (King, Findlay, & Ahrens, 2010). However, next to the motivations, students face a number of difficulties for participating in a mobility program (Desoff, 2006). Some of the barriers, according to the literature, include language difficulties (Mas-Alcolea, 2018), lack of foreign language skills, lack of awareness about study abroad opportunities, family and social commitments in the home country, and uncertainty about the positive impact benefits of participating in a mobility (Beerkens, Souto-Otero, de Wit, & Huisman, 2016).

Having all the above challenges in mind, IO1 aims to gather Erasmus+ participants' needs, expectations, difficulties and challenges in order to build a platform based on their needs. Also, findings and conclusions from IO1 can be used by various other stakeholders (e.g. all Erasmus+ KA1 Mobility Participants, Partners' Institutions, Universities, Schools, Businesses, National Authorities, National Erasmus+ Offices, Erasmus+ program, CEDEFOP, European Language Council - CELELC, EPALE, and other EU officials) who are interested in knowing the profiles of Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants.

In particular, the findings of Intellectual Output 1 are expected to positively impact:

- A. **Mobility Participants who** would become self-aware of their language status and then take appropriate actions to improve it. They would also become aware of possible language and cultural requirements at their hosting country.
- B. **Project Partners** who will enhance their knowledge and research expertise on Student Modelling and increase their cooperation.
- C. **Partners' Institutions, National Erasmus+ Offices and Erasmus+ programme officials** who will become aware and understand the profiles of their Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants. Then they could design better Erasmus+ policies and strategies to support them.
- D. **Government officials at the local and European level** who would have a better view of the EU citizens' skills, mobility, and preferences.

Intellectual Output 1 includes five tasks:

1. Task 1: Online Needs Analysis questionnaire;
2. Task 2: Interviewing key stakeholders (including the interview protocol's creation);
3. Task 3: Online Questionnaire dissemination;
4. Task 4: Analysis of questionnaire and interview findings;
5. Task 5: Report & Dissemination.

In the following sections, a detailed description of the five tasks is provided.

O1-T1: Online Needs Analysis Questionnaire

1.1 Introduction

In this task, an online questionnaire was created with the use of the online tool, *Google Forms* (see Appendix the questionnaire in word format), in order to collect all the necessary information that would help us explore and identify the language and cultural needs of the EU KA1 Mobility participants as well as their preferred pedagogical methods and learning preferences. This is a common method that is being used by many other researchers in the area of Erasmus+ mobility for collecting information about participants' expectations, experiences, difficulties, challenges, and gains (Van Maele, Vassilicos & Borghetti, 2016; Asoodar, Atai & Baten, 2017).

With 4 million participants by 2020, Erasmus+ is a unique opportunity to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer abroad. However, according to the European report (EU, 2013), the lack of language competences is still one of the main barriers to participation in European education, training and youth programmes. For that reason, our main priority should be the creation of an effective language learning platform for Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants offering them opportunities to acquire or improve their language skills.

1.2 The online survey: Rationale and methodology

Having in mind the need to cultivate Erasmus+ mobility participants language skills, the European Union has decided to offer linguistic support through the Online Linguistic Support (OLS, <https://erasmusplusols.eu/en/>) to all Erasmus+ participants for studying, carrying out a traineeship or volunteering abroad in the framework of long-term mobility activities supported under Erasmus+ Key Action 1. This is the only online linguistic support opportunity that Erasmus+ participants have so far. Using

OLS participants can test their current level in the language they will use while they are abroad on Erasmus+. OLS complements face-to-face teaching, allowing participants to develop their skills outside the classroom, whilst it also promises for collaborative and peers learning opportunities (OLS, 2018). However, the OLS platform is not available in all 24 EU languages, has limited opportunities for oral authentic communication, and no access to multilingual language Open Educational Resources (OERs), etc.

Existing literature on Erasmus+ mobility emphasizes the need for more organized actions as so far limited information is provided on the needs of mobile students, in particular, linguistic and cultural needs. Indeed, while there is great interest in participating in Erasmus+ mobility activities and generally in studying abroad (Varela, 2006), there is a lack of a comprehensive tool to enhance and facilitate the mobility of participants in terms of linguistic (Mas-Alcolea, 2018) and cultural needs and challenges (Beerkens, Souto-Otero, de Wit, & Huisman, 2016). Responses from several surveys in different studies have shown two main motivation factors for participating in mobility activity: First is the willingness for a living abroad experience and inter-cultural skills; Second, participants see this mobility experience as an opportunity to increase their competitiveness in the labor market (Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990; Findlay et al., 2010; Souto-Otero & McCoshan, 2006).

Moreover, the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) which is the biggest and most known organization for Erasmus+ mobility, shares often online surveys to gather related information from Erasmus+ participants. For example, in the study “ESN Survey 2005” (Krzaklewska & Krupnik 2006) where Erasmus+ participants were asked to mention the skills acquired during the mobility, participants stated: The acquisition of cultural knowledge and skills, the personal development, the social development, the academic enrichment and last the discovering - exploiting of new opportunities in their area of interest.

Taking into account all the above, and with an eye to better understand all language and cultural challenges and expectations of Erasmus+ mobility participants, we created an online needs analysis questionnaire. Based on findings from the survey, we will be able to develop an open, authentic, social, interactive and enjoyable

platform for all participants offering them further support in their linguistic and intercultural needs.

Our online questionnaire was structured collaboratively with the contribution of all the partners of the consortium. We created the questionnaire using the online tool *Google forms* because it is free and accessible to everyone on the web. We also chose the online questionnaire in order to disseminate it everywhere online and reach as many people as possible. Since English is the preferred foreign language of almost all mobility participants (as it is also documented by the interviews) we have chosen to distribute the questionnaire in English. Before the dissemination of the questionnaire, we shared a pilot questionnaire with several colleagues to get feedback and comments in order to improve it.

The overall aim of the questionnaire is to address the language and cultural needs of the Erasmus+ mobility participants, and to identify their expectations, challenges and learning preferences. For that reason, the questionnaire is divided into five parts including questions regarding the overall experience of the participants during the mobility:

- 1) Profile
- 2) Needs, expectations, and benefits
- 3) Language and Cultural needs
- 4) Learning delivery mode and learning Preferences
- 5) Demographic Information

The questions focus on the participants' needs, expectations, challenges, benefits, and learning preferences. It is important to note that the questionnaire includes mostly select-all-that-apply (SATA) to facilitate the easy answering to the survey. Specifically, the questionnaire starts with a small introduction and overview of the project and continues with the consent form (see figure 1).

Part A consists of general questions regarding the participants' profile to identify in which activity of KA1 mobility they participated and for how long, the country of work and the country of the mobility of those participants.

Part B focuses on participants' needs, expectations and benefits of the mobility to identify what actually participants expect from their mobility and what they finally gained and to get a clearer picture of the rationale behind the mobility. Along the same lines, previous studies explored the expectations, perceptions, and experiences of students involved in Erasmus programs in order to better understand the students' cultural and intercultural needs (Asoodar, Atai & Baten, 2017).

Part C includes questions regarding the language and cultural needs of the participants to address particularly participants' linguistic priorities and challenges. In this part, we would like to examine which skills (linguistic and cultural) participants need during mobility in order to have them in mind when creating the platform to enhance the participants' mobility. Similar questions with the focus on the linguistic and cultural needs of the participants can be found in previous studies (e.g. Van Maele, Vassilicos & Borghetti, 2016; Souto- Otero & McCoshan 2006; Klimova, 2015; Schwieter, Ferreira, & Miller, 2018).

Part D focuses on the modes of learning, preferences and participants' expectations in an online language environment. We have asked the preferable learning delivery mode and what expectations might have from an online language learning environment because this info was needed in order to create a platform based on participants' needs. This part is also important, as the responses/ideas of the participants will be taken into consideration in the development of our platform.

Last, Part E gathers demographic information of the participants (i.e. country of origin, age, current status, and sex).

The online questionnaire is available in the link below but you can find a word format of the questionnaire in Annex, at the end of the report:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfiiW6sXTXA9Fmx5OhPSgL3NdqnZnSyhzkxEhslmtq-yURqmQ/viewform>

Mapping the Language Learning Profile of the Erasmus+ KA1 Mobility Participants

Project Title
The OPENLang Network

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for your interest in this project. This study is part of a funded project under Erasmus KA2 (find out more about the project and the research team here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XpdiOPaVTIVulEI8k-semwuY_3oBoWzp9jel812jppq0/edit?usp=sharing).

Answering this questionnaire should require you about 10-15 minutes. All responses are anonymous and confidential. Be sure to click "Submit" at the end of the survey, in order for your responses to be saved.

Thank you for your time.
Research Team
Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus
University of Macedonia (OUM)-Coordinator
The Open University (OU), UK
PIXEL, Associazione Culturale, Italy

* Required



Consent

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study. *

Agree

NEXT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Figure 1. Overview of the project (top) and consent form (down)

O1.T2. Interviewing key stakeholders

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this task is to collect additional information in identifying the linguistic and cultural needs of all the Erasmus+ participants who would like to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer abroad. We wanted to strengthen the research conducted via questionnaires and to get feedback from different groups. We adopted a mixed research method (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003), which is suggested as a successful method to enhance case studies or empirical research. To that end, a series of interviews with key stakeholders (representatives of organizations who enhance and facilitate the EU KA1 Mobility activities in HE, VET, Schools, leaders of specific networks and more) was conducted by the consortium.

In particular, following the proposal, each partner aimed to conduct two interviews with key-stakeholders, one interview with KA1 National Agency officer(s) and one interview with KA1 University officer. All the interviews have been recorded and transcribed. Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) was responsible to collect all the interview transcriptions in order to prepare the analysis based on interviews' qualitative data.

All partners followed the same procedure/guide and protocol, that was initially created by CUT and then finalized with the contribution of the consortium. The reason for using the same protocol is that we are mapping the needs of European mobility and we don't focus on national needs. Furthermore, we used the same protocol for both interviews because we wanted feedback on the same questions but from different perspectives. So we have collected feedback from both National Agencies and universities' stakeholders.

Specifically, this guide includes an interview protocol (see below the protocol used in the interviews) which supported partners in undertaking their interviews with key stakeholders. Henceforth, the aim of this protocol is to guide the data collection for the requirements of Intellectual Output 1.2.

2.2 Methodology of the Interviews

Our data were collected from semi-structured interviews, as decided by the consortium, with EU KA1 Mobility key stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews can be used as a method to collect information about practices, beliefs, opinions, and information on past or present behaviours or experiences.

CUT, with the contribution of the partners, prepared a guide with some predetermined questions and topics that must be covered (see below), but the order can be modified based upon the interviewer's perception of what seems most appropriate. This method of data collection is very common in qualitative research and is appropriate for the exploration of the perceptions, opinions, and attitudes of respondents and enables probing for more information and clarification of answers (Harrell & Bradley, 2009; Ayres, 2008).

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the means of our data collection because of the following considerations:

- a) They are useful for exploring the views and attitudes of key stakeholders towards the linguistic and cultural needs of all the Erasmus+ participants.
- b) There is flexibility in how questions are asked (what follow-up or probing questions to use, etc).
- c) We can investigate in-depth the views, perceptions and experiences of Erasmus+ stakeholders.

As mentioned earlier, we decided to conduct at least 2 interview sessions (by each partner) with key stakeholders (approx. 20-30 minutes for each interview); one interview session with KA1 National Agency officer and one interview session with KA1 University officer. The following section provides an interview protocol for managing an interview session.

The Interview protocol

“Thank you for agreeing to answer this interview regarding Erasmus+ KA1 mobility. Your contribution will help us to identify, analyze and present the language needs of the participants involved in long-term mobility activities supported under Erasmus+ Key Action 1.

This project is in collaboration between the University of Macedonia (UOM), the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT), Open University (U) UK, and the Pixel Association.

Linguistic needs

1.1 Let’s talk a little bit about your work tasks as an [add profession].

1.2 As [add profession], what linguistic difficulties have you noticed for students/staff participating in Erasmus+ KA1 mobilities? (both incoming and outgoing)?

1.3 How does your office address these difficulties (both incoming and outgoing)?

1.4 What extra activities your office would like to do in order to address these difficulties?

1.5 In terms of language, what does your organization offer for Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants (both incoming and outgoing)?

1.4 In terms of language, what extra activities your organization would like to offer to Erasmus + KA1 mobility participants?

1.5 [Add other...]

Cultural needs

2.1 What challenges do you encounter during your work as [...]?

2.2 As far as you know, what kind of linguistic and/or cultural support is needed for KA1 mobility participants by your country of residence? (both incoming and outgoing)?

2.3 From your point of view, what are the most important gains/benefits for KA1 mobility participants (both students/staff/other)? (both incoming and outgoing)?

2.4 [Add other...]

2.5 [Add other...] “

O1-T3. Online Questionnaire Dissemination

3.1 Introduction

In this section, the dissemination strategy of the online questionnaire is presented in detail. The dissemination of the questionnaire will follow a concrete dissemination strategy. All partners proposed specific channels for dissemination, organizations, or people to help the consortium to reach the target audience and successfully conduct the survey. The dissemination strategy involves: 1) the dissemination of the questionnaire through social networking channels such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn groups which are used by thousands of participants (Staff Mobility - KA1 Erasmus+), 2) the dissemination of the questionnaire through email to communities of teaching and learning (e.g. partner Universities, Associations, Organizations, etc., 3) the support of the National Agencies to share the questionnaire with the EU KA1 Mobility participants and 4) the dissemination of the questionnaire through personal contacts of each member of the consortium. Accordingly, the consortium, with the support of the dissemination leader, requested the contribution of the key stakeholders' representatives that were invited for interviews. Thousands of people were contacted through the dissemination process. PIXEL was responsible for monitoring the dissemination of the questionnaire with the contribution of all partners.

3.2 Dissemination through social networking channels

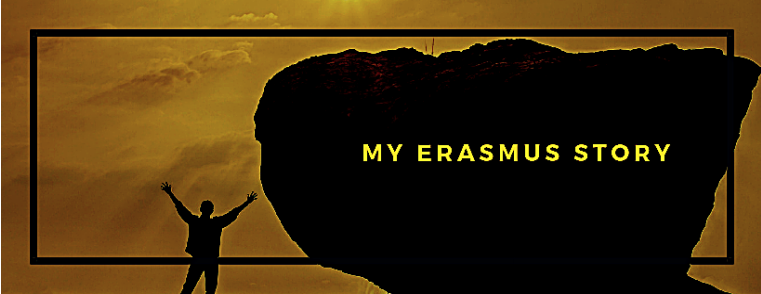
The online questionnaire was disseminated through different social networking channels such as:

- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/openlangnetwork/>)
- Twitter (<https://twitter.com/OPENLangNET>)
- LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12181081/>).

In the following sections, we describe the specific groups in which our questionnaire was distributed.

3.2.1 Dissemination through Facebook

The following text and picture were shared through Facebook groups (see the complete list of Facebook groups in pages 15-16, Twitter accounts (page 17) with specific hashtags (see figure 3) and LinkedIn groups (page 17-18). We decided to use the same text and picture for the distribution of the questionnaire in social networks (see figure 2).



For all Erasmus people!
The OPENLang Network invites you to participate in our Erasmus community! We would appreciate if you could fill in our online survey to help us build an open community that would satisfy the needs of all Erasmus participants.

Please fill in the following survey: <https://goo.gl/QkJv53>

Figure 2. Text and picture shared in social networking channels.

We chose specific groups on Facebook which were related to Erasmus+ mobility taking also into account the number of members in each group. We shared the survey in groups with a lot of members to reach as many participants as possible.

We posted the invitation to the following Facebook groups:

1. Erasmus Student Network
<https://www.facebook.com/esn/>
2. Erasmus+ <https://www.facebook.com/EUErasmusPlusProgramme/>
3. Erasmus YoungEntrepreneurs
<https://www.facebook.com/erasmus.foryoungentrepreneurs>
4. European Centre for Modern Languages
<https://www.facebook.com/ecml.celv/>

5. TEL summer school <https://www.facebook.com/JTELSS/>
6. ETwinning Europe <https://www.facebook.com/ETwinningeurope/>
7. Erasmus+ KA1 Learning Mobilities for Teachers Cervantes Training
<https://www.facebook.com/KA1.Learning.Mobility.Erasmusplus/>
8. Staff Mobility - KA1 Erasmus+
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/330460740475431/>
9. 2nd Erasmus Staff Week for Librarians
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1314663375249703/>
10. European Youth <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanYouthEU/>
11. Erasmus + Mobility by ITC International <https://www.facebook.com/Erasmus-Mobility-by-ITC-International-1412049775709499/>
12. Erasmus Plus Projects <https://www.facebook.com/groups/211479949023086/>
13. Erasmus+ KA1 & KA2 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1584904988430053/>
14. Erasmus+ International Mobility Office at Cyprus University of Technology
<https://www.facebook.com/erasmusCUT/>
15. UNIC - Erasmus <https://www.facebook.com/erasmusuniversityofnicosia/>
16. Erasmus Ucy <https://www.facebook.com/ucyerasmus.outgoing/>
17. Erasmus+ partner search <https://www.facebook.com/groups/eramus.plus/>
18. Erasmus+ & Other Youth Related Opportunities CY (CYPRUS ONLY)
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ErasmusPlusAndOtherYouthOpportunitiesCY/>
19. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/post.survey.find.respondents.study.participants/>
20. Garag Erasmus <https://www.facebook.com/garagErasmus/>
21. ERASMUS STUDENTS and AU PAIRS in Seville / Sevilla
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/459481194257427/>
22. ERASMUS Youth in Action
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/erasmus.youthinaction/>
23. International Students @ K.U. Leuven - ERASMUS/ Exchange
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Student.PhD.KULeuven/>
24. Erasmus in Thessaloniki 2018-2019 by ESN
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/erasmsthessaloniki2018.19/>
25. ERASMUS Europe Network
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ErasmusEurope/>

26. Official ERASMUS/ International Students Munich 2019
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/312755169190607/>
27. Erasmus & International Students Barcelona 2018/2019
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1328775410469614/>
28. Erasmus in Thessaloniki 2018-2019 by ESN
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/erasmusthessaloniki2018.19/>
29. Dissertation Survey Exchange
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1255012211233315/?notif_id=1548257349192568¬if_t=group_r2j_approved
30. FB official page-OPENLangNET <https://www.facebook.com/openlangnetwork/>
31. Smart Mobile Interactive Learning Environments-SMILE LABoratory
<https://www.facebook.com/SmartMobileLearning/>
32. LangMOOC project <https://www.facebook.com/langmoocs/>
33. JTEL, Federica & EMMA Summer School 2015
<https://www.facebook.com/jtelss15/>
34. EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE DIGITAL ERA
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EdDigEraConference/>

3.2.2 Dissemination through Twitter

We invited people at the following twitter accounts:

For all Erasmus people!
Participate in our Erasmus community by filling in our survey: <https://goo.gl/QkJv53>
[#erasmus](#) [#language](#) [#exchange](#) [#languagelearning](#) [#euproject](#) [#culture](#) [#mobility](#)

Figure 3. Text and hashtags used in twitter

1. Erasmus+ <https://twitter.com/EUErasmusPlus>
2. Erasmusu <https://twitter.com/erasmusu>
3. Erasmus+Ka1 Courses <https://twitter.com/spainka1courses>

4. Erasmus+ UK <https://twitter.com/erasmusplusUK>
5. Cyprus Youth Clubs https://twitter.com/KOKEN_CY
6. Erasmus helping hand <https://twitter.com/Erasmus>
7. City Campus gr <https://twitter.com/CitycampusGr>
8. Erasmus+ Jeunesse <https://twitter.com/ErasmusplusJeun>
9. ESN Nicosia <https://twitter.com/ESNNicosia>
10. ErasmusEntrepreneurs <https://twitter.com/EYEprogramme>
11. Erasmus @Staffs <https://twitter.com/ErasmusStaffs>
12. IKY https://twitter.com/IKY_Erasmusplus

3.2.3 Dissemination through LinkedIn

We invited people at the following LinkedIn groups:

1. Erasmus Plus <https://www.linkedin.com/in/erasmus-plus-83b0619b/>
2. Erasmus Project <https://www.linkedin.com/in/erasmus-project-443935142/>
3. ILC Inspired Learning Centre <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ilc-inspired-learning-centre-32315a91/>
4. Erasmus Panteion University, Athens <https://www.linkedin.com/in/erasmus-panteion-university/>
5. Erasmus Student Network <https://www.linkedin.com/company/erasmus-student-network/>
6. ESN Italia (Erasmus Student Network) <https://www.linkedin.com/company/esn-italia-erasmus-student-network/>
7. Erasmus Mundus Association <https://www.linkedin.com/company/erasmus-mundus-students-and-alumni-association/>
8. University of Macedonia <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6579647587387793408/>
9. Official OPENLang Network <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12181081/>

3.3 Dissemination through email

Apart from social networks channels, the questionnaire was sent via email to the

following stakeholders:

- a) Language teachers and Higher Education Students (the Cyprus University of Technology, University of Macedonia, The Open University - UK)
- b) Primary and secondary school teachers in fourth countries of consortium (Greece, Cyprus, Italy, United Kingdom).
- c) Entrepreneurs
- d) Community

We decided that all the partners use the same text to be sent through email. In the following figure 4, the template email is presented.

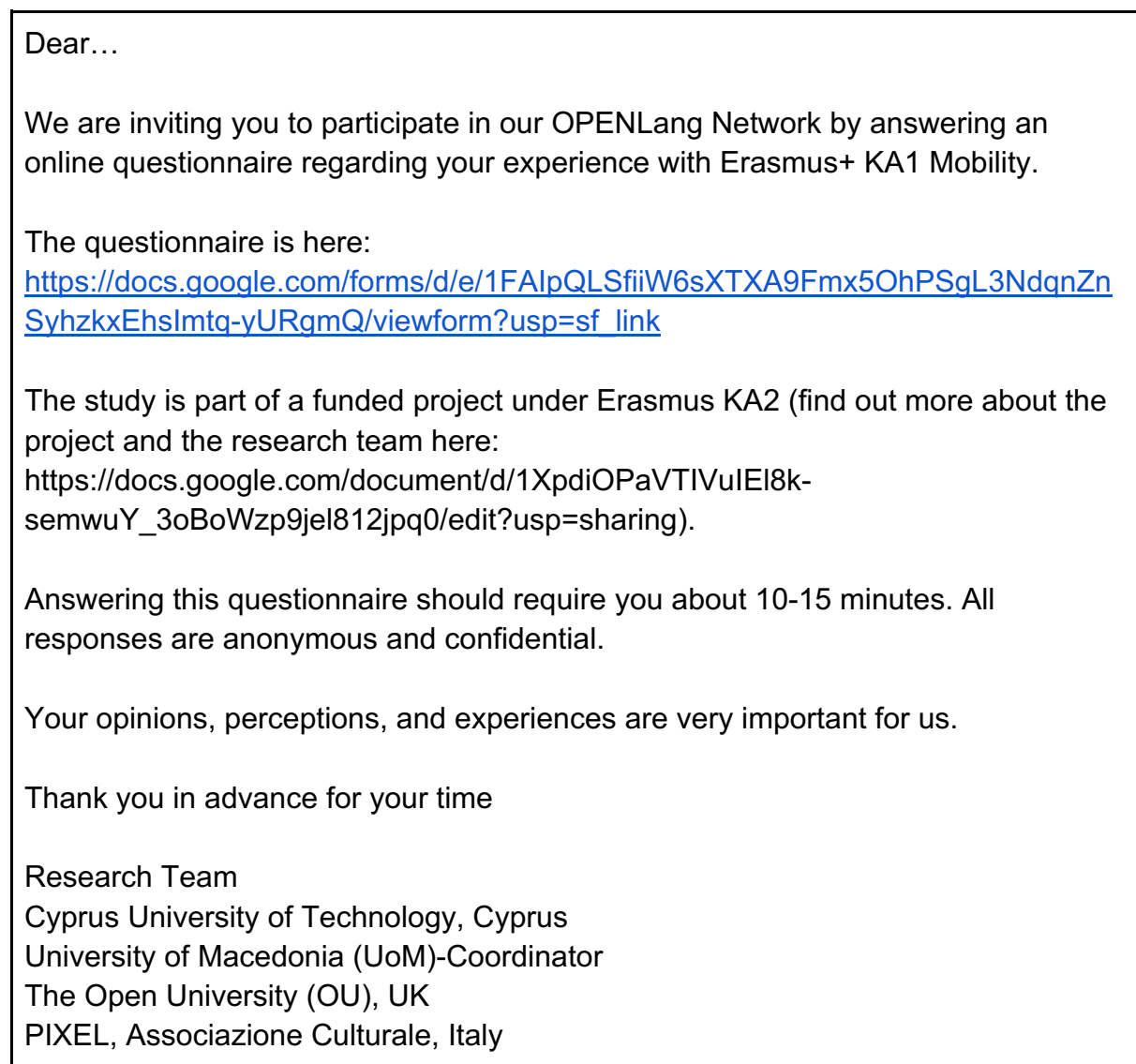


Figure 4. Email template that was sent to different stakeholders for answering the “OPENLang Network” survey.

3.4 Dissemination through National Agencies

The OPENLang Network survey was also distributed to the national agencies of Greece, Cyprus, Italy, and UK using the following email invitation (see figure 5).

Dear.....

We are contacting you regarding the Erasmus+ KA1 mobility and we need your support to disseminate an online questionnaire to all the EU KA1 Mobility participants.

This questionnaire is part of a funded project under Erasmus KA2, OPEN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES NETWORK (OPENLang Network) - Project Code: 2018-1-EL01-KA203-047967.

The aim of the project is to develop an Open Language Network to connect and support all Erasmus+ KA1 participants (HE students and staff, VET, Adult, and School education staff, Youth learners, Youth Workers, Youth Entrepreneurs) during their mobilities increasing their language proficiency and also developing their intercultural and digital skills.

The online questionnaire is here:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfiiW6sXTXA9Fmx5OhPSgL3NdqnZnSyhzkxEhslmtq-yURqmQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

We would be grateful if you could share the questionnaire with all EU KA1 Mobility participants.

Thank you in advance for your help

Research Team
 Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus
 University of Macedonia (OUM)-Coordinator
 The Open University (OU), UK
 PIXEL, Associazione Culturale, Italy

Figure 5. The email that was sent to National Agencies for answering the “OPENLang Network” survey.

O1-T4. Analysis of Questionnaire & Interview findings

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings of the online questionnaire created by the consortium and also the findings derived from the interviews with Erasmus+ KA1 key stakeholders. As mentioned earlier, the aim of the questionnaire and interviews is to address the language and cultural needs of the Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants, to identify their expectations, challenges and learning preferences and to collect useful information from many Erasmus+ participants who participated in the mobility for study, train or gain work experience.

4.2 Results of the online questionnaire answers

Before the reporting of the results, it is important to highlight the difficulties that the consortium faced during the dissemination of the questionnaire. We made an effort to contact many European associations/organizations, such as the ESN community (<https://www.esn.org/>) which is the biggest student association in Europe, to help us with the dissemination of the questionnaire in order to reach our target group. Due to GDPR, there was no help from those organizations. In particular, administrators of these organizations couldn't disseminate the questionnaire to members of their organization because they didn't have the authorization to do so because of GDPR. We have reached a large number of people via social networks and in fact, more than expected. However, again group administrators couldn't disseminate the questionnaire to members of their organization because again they didn't have the authorization to do so because of GDPR.

Therefore, over thousands of people were contacted through the dissemination process. In particular, responses to the online questionnaire were received from 168 people. The results of our online survey focus on the following parts:

- Demographic characteristics of the respondents,
- Participants' profile (country of work, country of mobility, Erasmus+ activity, duration of mobility, the reason for mobility and benefits of mobility)
- Language and cultural needs during the mobility
- Learning preferences in an online learning environment

In the following sections, we present the main results of each part using graphs as well as a brief description.

4.2.1 Demographic Information

As presented in figure 6, the majority of respondents (71%) were women while 27.4% were men.

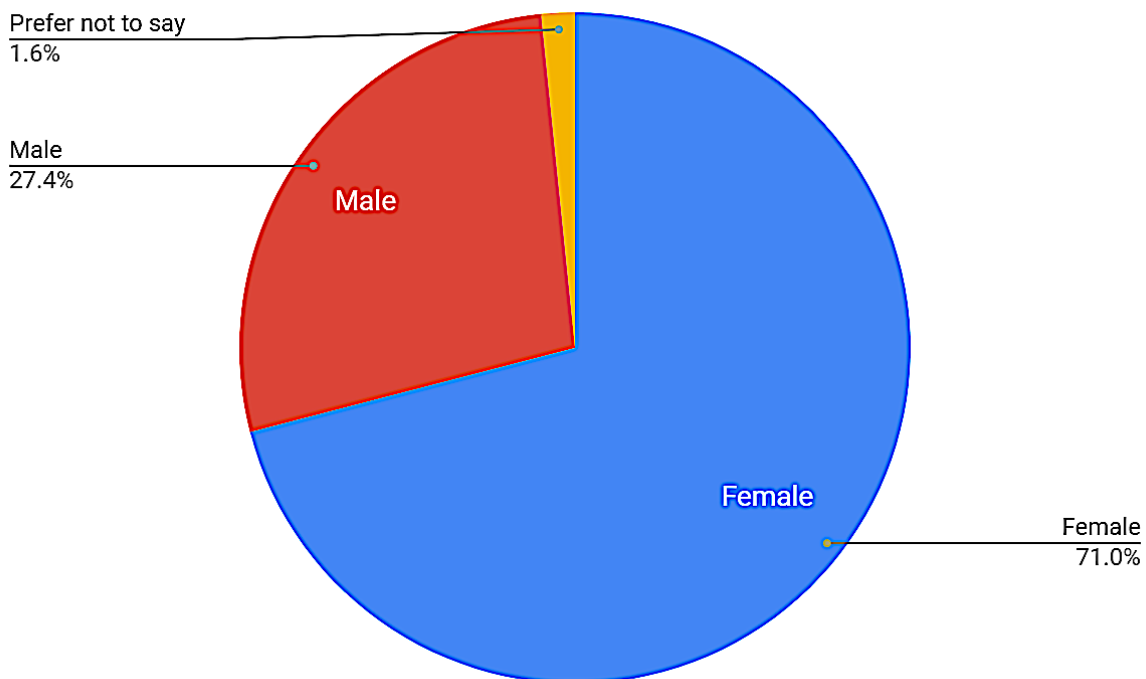


Figure 6. Gender of the participants in the questionnaire

We received responses from 32 countries, namely Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Albania,

Serbia, USA, North Macedonia. As shown in figure 7, most participants were Cypriot people (29%), Greek (27.4%), Romanian (8.9%) and Italy (8%).

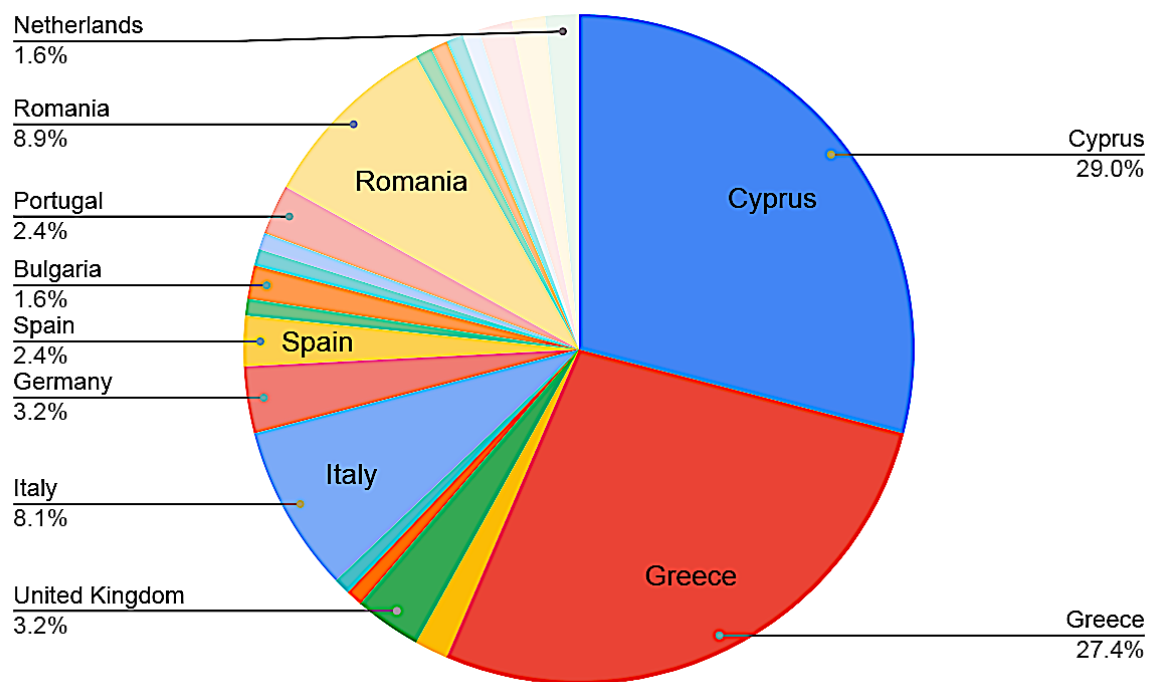


Figure 7. Respondents' country of origin

4.2.2 Participants' Profile

44.4% of the participants in the survey are Higher Education students and the mobility took place as a part of their studies. The 16.9% are Higher Education staff, 10.5% are school education staff (teachers) and 8.1% are youth workers who use mobility especially for training purposes (see figure 8). It is logic that most participants were Higher education students, as those participants have many opportunities for mobility under the Erasmus+ activities and thus many researchers focused on the investigation of university students' mobility (Asoodar, Atai & Baten, 2017; Van Maele, Vassilicos & Borghetti, 2016; Souto-Otero & McCoshan, 2006).

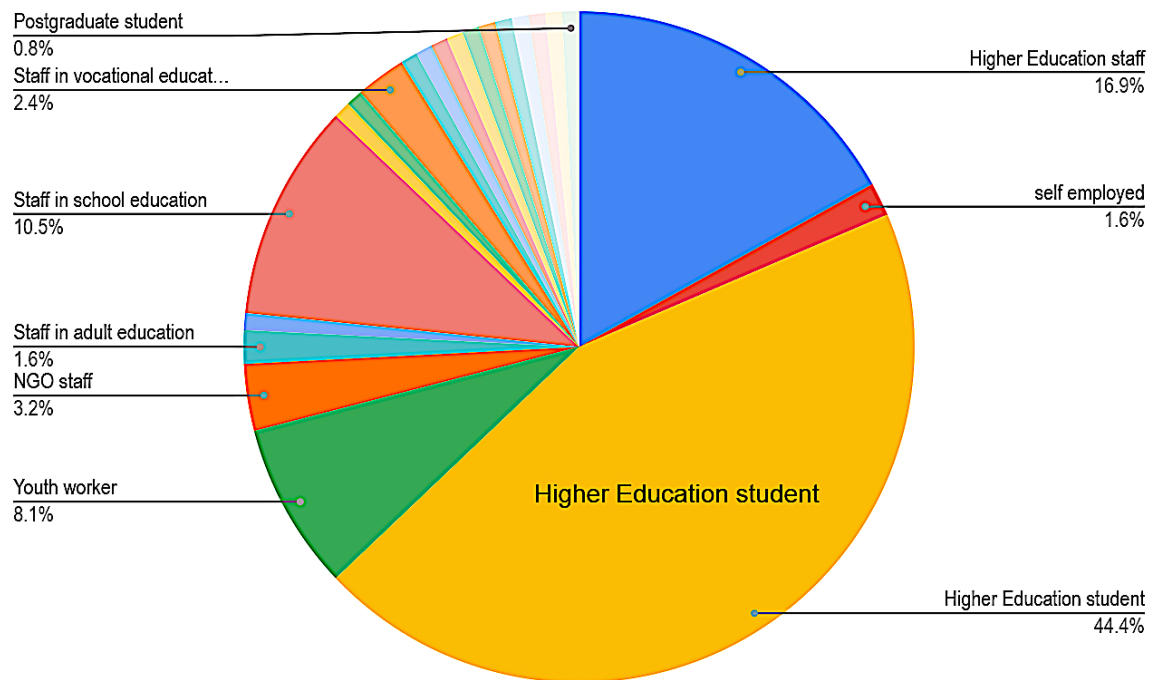


Figure 8. Current status of participants

Participants were involved in many different activities under the umbrella of Erasmus+ KA1 mobility. As the majority of participants are Higher Education students and staff, the main activities in which the respondents participated in the Erasmus+ for Higher Education students and Erasmus + for staff working in Higher Education. The rest of the participants were involved in other Erasmus+ activities such as VET, Youth Workers, Youth Entrepreneurs and Staff mobility for training (see figure 9). As mentioned earlier, most of the participants in the questionnaire were Higher Education students, so they were involved in mobility activities under the regulations/conditions of Erasmus+ for Higher Education students. These students participated in a mobility activity in another EU country for one or more semesters, as part of their studies and under the support of their universities.

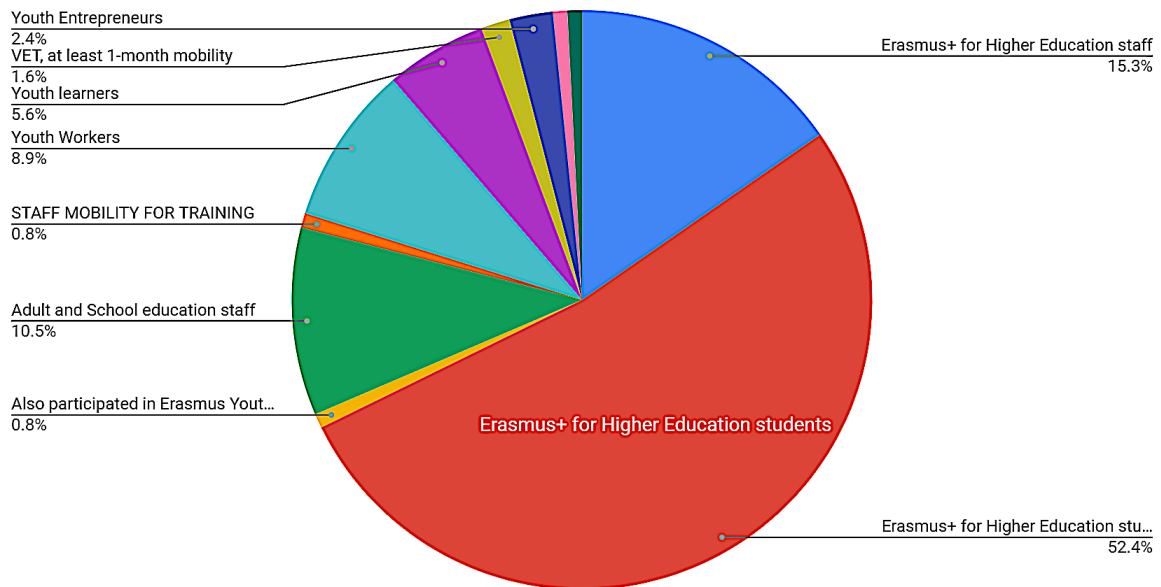


Figure 9. Roles of participants in an Erasmus+ activity

The following figure 10 shows the duration of the mobility, where the 61.3% participated in an Erasmus+ KA1 mobility for more than a month, the 33.9 % less than a month, and the 4.8% participated in one-month mobility. Even if the proposal has targeted mostly to long term participants, we have decided to address also the needs of the short-term participants because this course could be the starting point of learning the language of the target country. Furthermore, staff usually takes no more than one-month mobility and we wanted to consider this group too.

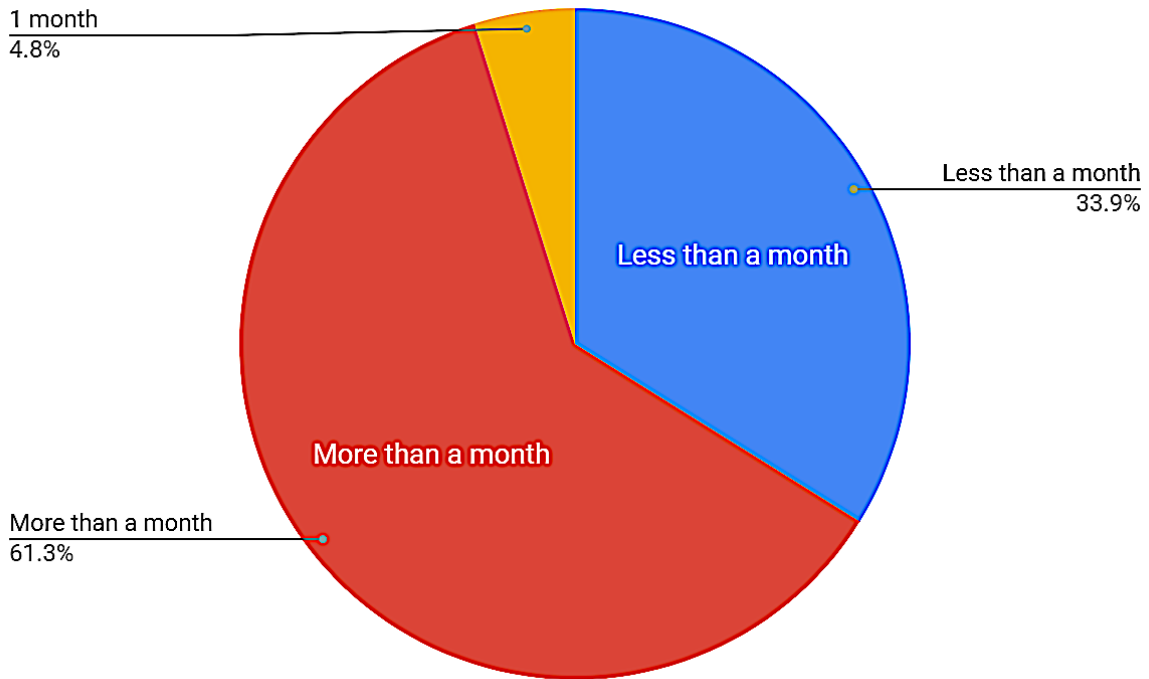


Figure 10. Duration of Erasmus+ KA1 mobility

Erasmus+ participants visited different 34 countries for their mobility. As the figure 11 shows, the countries selected most by the participants are Spain (16.1%), Italy (8.9%), Cyprus (6.5%), United Kingdom (5.6%), and Greece (4.8%).

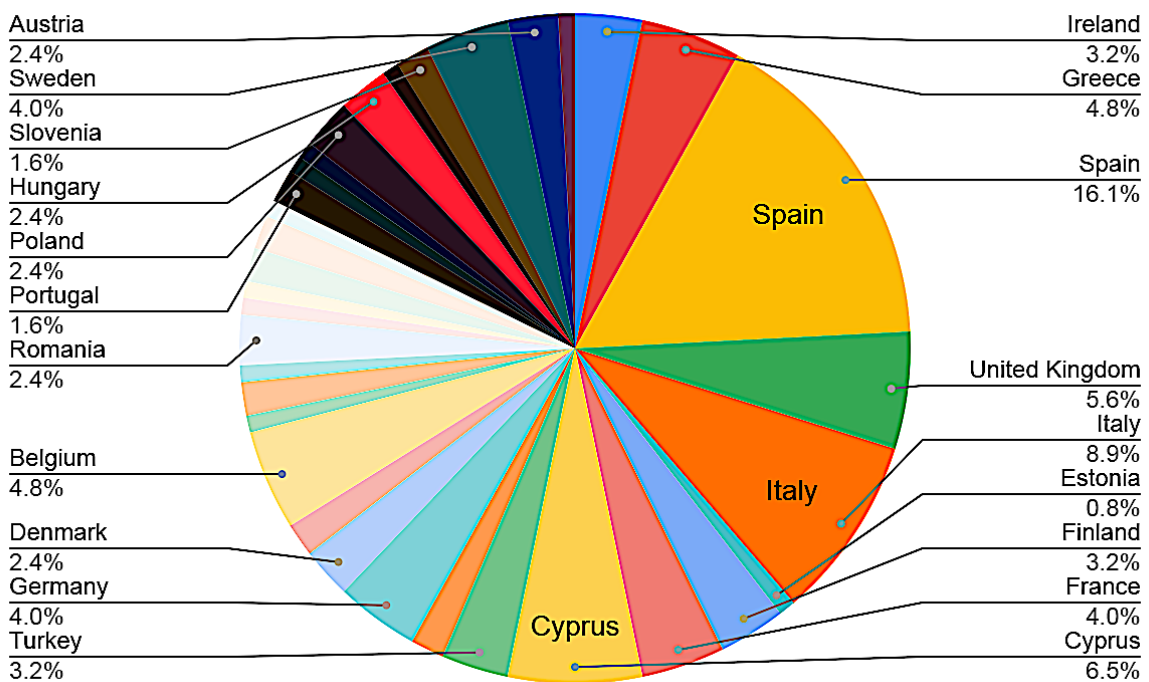


Figure 11. Country of mobility

Focusing on participants' expectations and needs of the mobility, the majority of participants choose to involve in those activities in order to gain academic, work or study experience in another EU country (36%). Then, 32.9% participated in an Erasmus+ mobility to learn a new culture, while 31.1% to discover a new place. Other reasons for participating in mobility include: to improve my academic or professional qualifications, to improve or gain language skills for basic communication, to improve or gain language skills for specific purposes, etc (see figure 12).

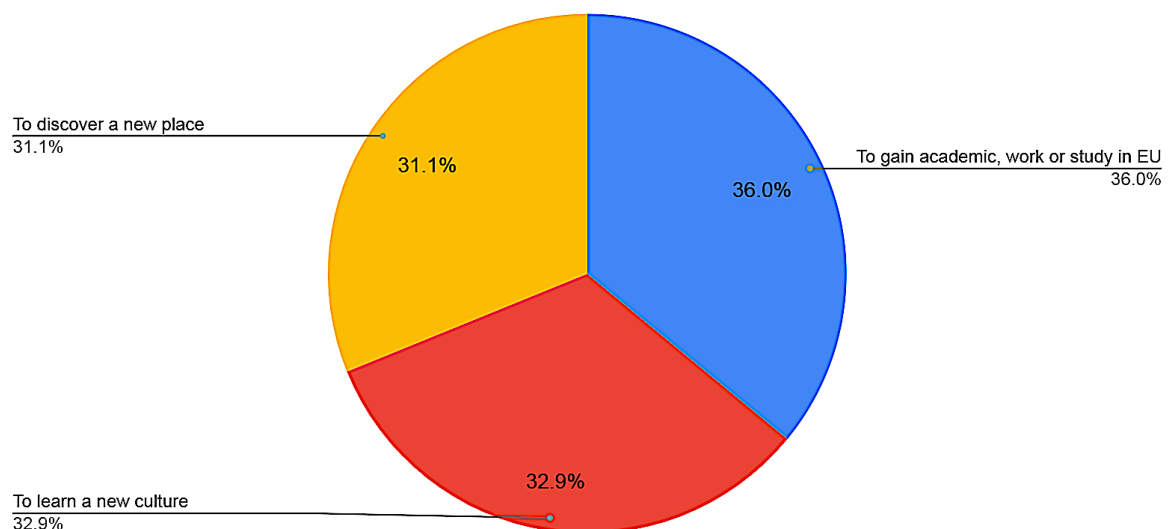


Figure 12. The reasons for participation in an Erasmus+ mobility

Similarly, a previous study by Asoodar, Atai, and Baten, (2017) explored the expectations, perceptions, and experiences of students involved in Erasmus programs in order to better understand the students' cultural and intercultural needs. They found that learners considered important factors the following: becoming more independent, gaining another perspective on the way things are at home, and interacting with people from different origins. In this sense, Gallarza, Fayos, Currás, Servera, and Arteaga, (2019) work showed that language learning and living in a different culture are the main reasons for participating in Erasmus mobility.

Other studies in the area of studying abroad demonstrated that Erasmus students are mainly motivated by experiential instead of academic goals (e.g. Teichler, 2004).

4.2.3 Language and Cultural Needs during the mobility

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to address the language and cultural needs of the Erasmus+ mobility participants and to identify their expectations and challenges during mobility. According to the participants, the language skills Erasmus participants need during the mobility varies. As indicated in figure 13, most participants (21%) believe that Erasmus participants need to have a C2 level of language. Based on CEFR, the C2 level is the capacity to deal with material that is academic or cognitively demanding and to use language to good effect at a level of performance.

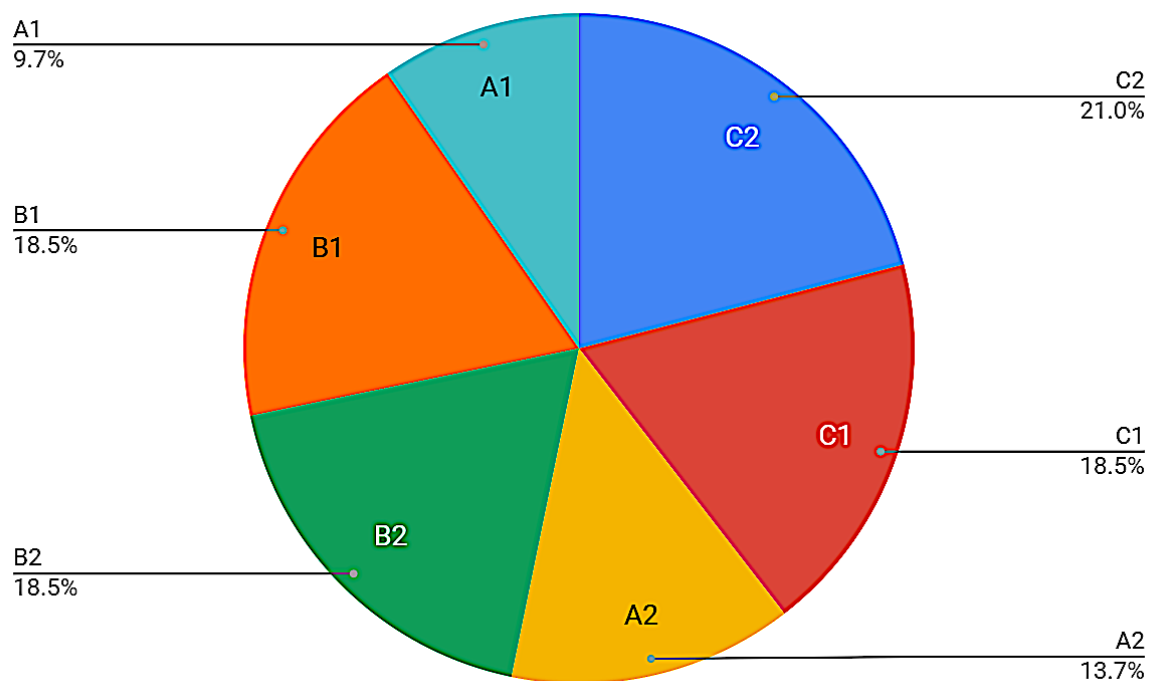


Figure 13. Perceptions of participants regarding the needed language level (CEFR) for Erasmus+ mobility

These results are in line with previous empirical studies, which have argued that the level of language proficiency in the host country plays an important role in the outcomes of the experience (Schwieter, Ferreira, & Miller, 2018). Other studies have shown that mobility can have a positive impact on every domain of language competence (Kinging, 2011). However, it seems that English has also become the language of academia, where it is mainly used by all in the international higher education sector (Aleksandrowicz-Pędich, 2019).

Moreover, participants claim that the most important language priority is to improve their listening and to become more fluent speakers. Also important for many participants is to become more accurate speakers and to expand their general vocabulary. Less important for them is to improve their reading and writing (see figure 14).

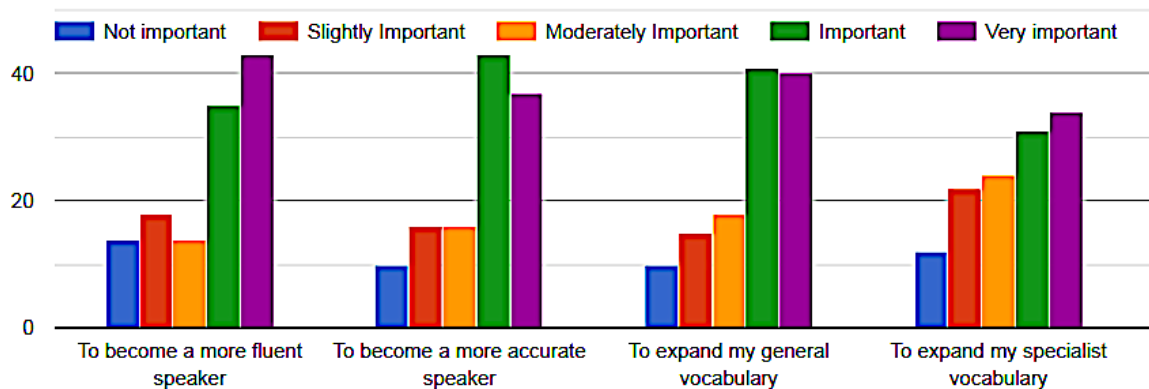


Figure 14. Language priorities of participants during the Erasmus+ mobility

Studies in this area, on outgoing and incoming Erasmus students, reported a statistically significant increase of communication skills in the language of the host country (Souto-Otero & McCoshan, 2006), while other studies have shown the development of listening skills, reading comprehension skills, writing skills, and also grammar (Isabelli-García, Bown, Plews, & Dewey, 2018).

Identifying the main linguistic challenges that participants encountered during mobility (see figure 15), the biggest challenge, according to them, is to be able to communicate in everyday instances (36.6%). Other challenges based on the participants' responses are the difficulty to understand the regional accents/dialects (34.1%) and to understand the academic language (29.3%).

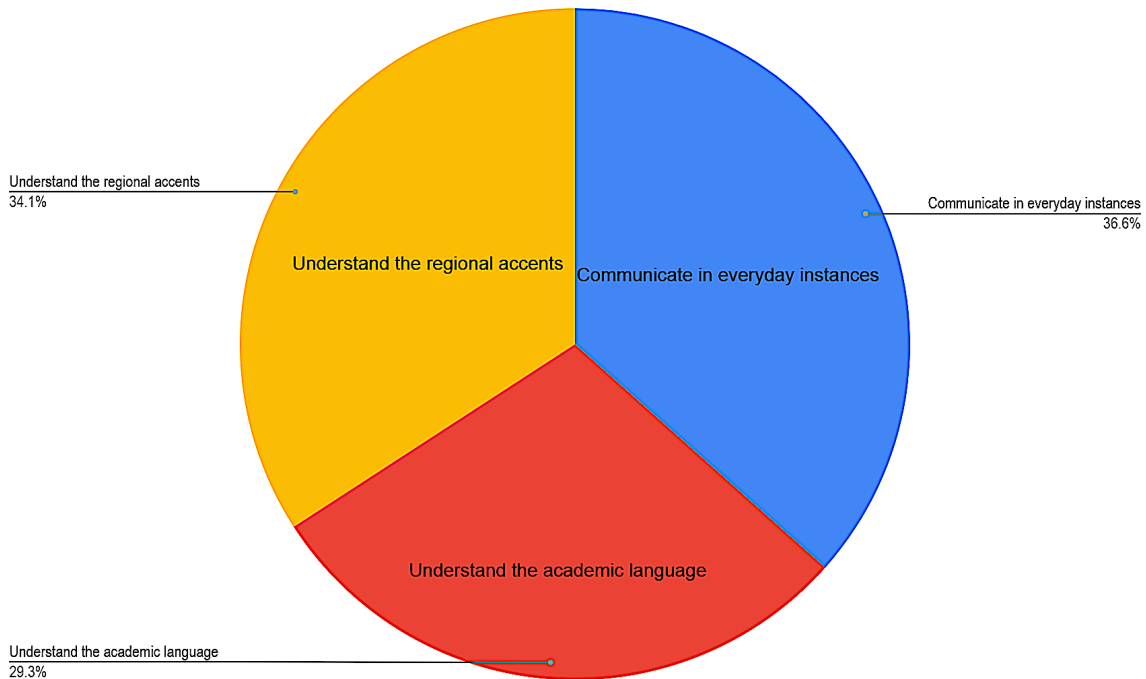


Figure 15. Linguistic challenges during the Erasmus+ mobility

As previously mentioned, language learning is one of the main reasons for participating in an Erasmus mobility (Gallarza, Fayos, Currás, Servera, & Arteaga, 2019), thus participants want to interact successfully with professors and instructors at the host university and to interact with other students in their host country. However, many studies have revealed that Erasmus students have some difficulties in terms of communication in the host country and for that reason, the lack of foreign language become a barrier for the mobility (van Maele, Vassilicos & Borghetti, 2016; Isabelli-García, Bown, Plews, & Dewey, 2018).

In the same lines, in the study of Klimova, (2015) students reported not having many language difficulties in terms of listening comprehension, but in terms of speaking in the foreign language and express their ideas.

In addition, respondents stated that there are some opportunities for linguistic support during mobility, highlighting the online language course training (41.1%) while a high percentage of participants (30.2%) responded that they don't know what linguistic support is available (see figure 16).

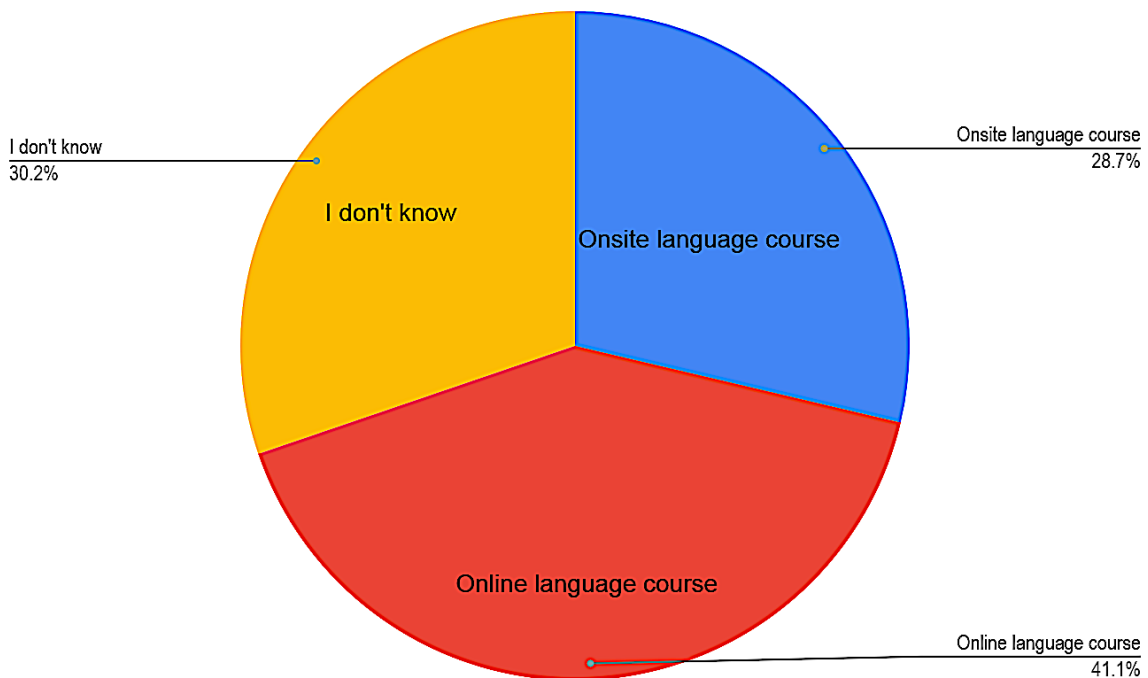


Figure 16. Linguistic support available for KA1 mobility participants

4.2.4 Learning Preferences

Another point to consider is the mode of learning in an online language learning environment. According to the participants, there is no big preference to synchronous or asynchronous learning. As figure 17 shows, participants prefer both ways of learning, synchronous (i.e. Skype) and asynchronous (email, messenger, forum, etc). In asynchronous-based learning, the majority preferred the group work, while in synchronous-based learning both autonomous and group work receives almost the same percentage.

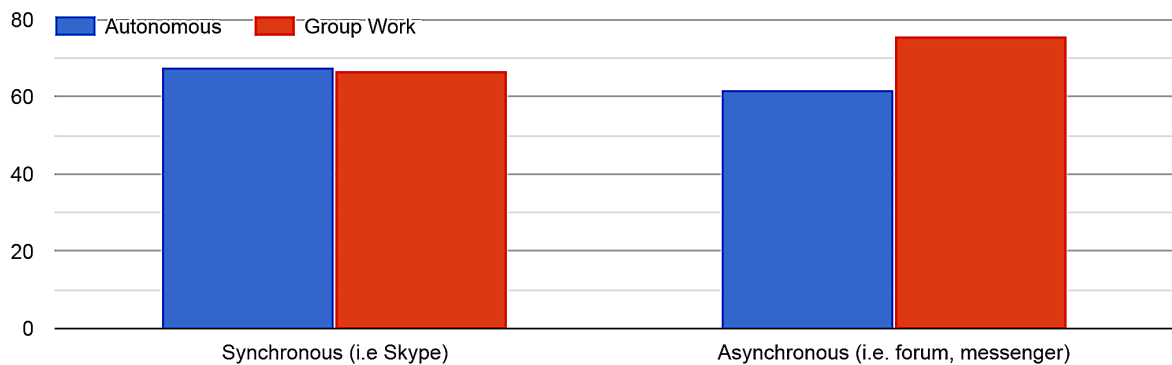


Figure 17. Modes of learning in an online language learning platform

Regarding the participants' learning preferences in an online language learning environment, the high percentage of 23.2% preferred the information to be presented in a visual (using pictures, images, and spatial understanding) and interactive ways to learn in groups or with other people. The third-highest percentage of 17.1% prefers the verbal-linguistic way, while 16.4% of participants prefer the social way of learning (see Figure 18).

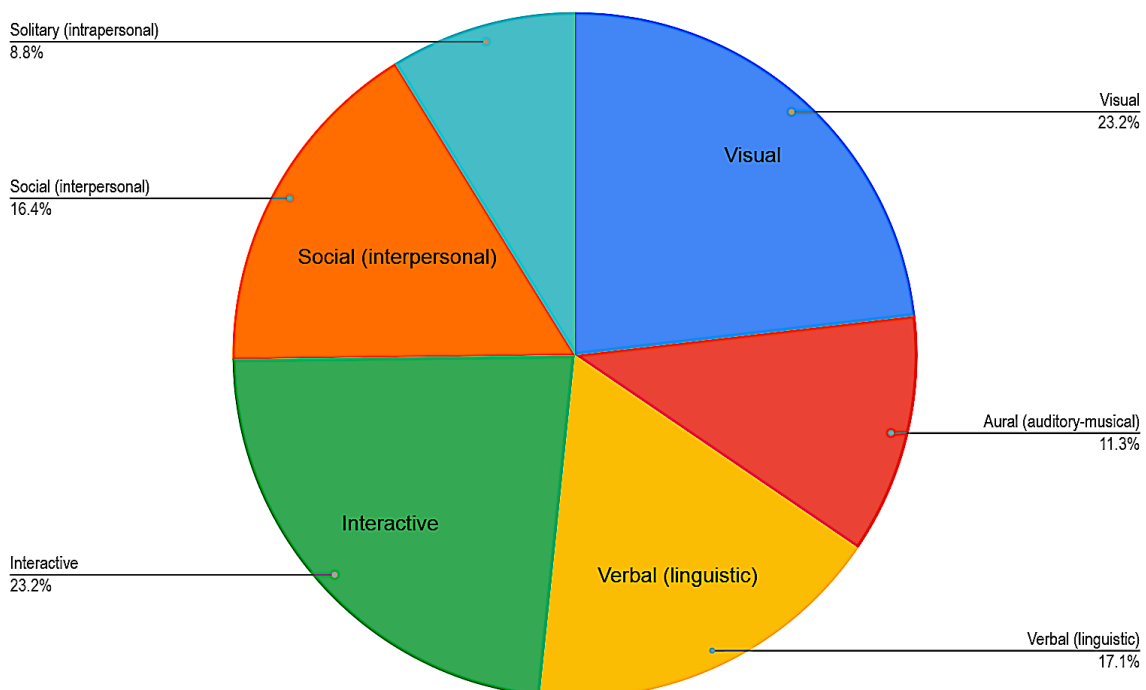


Figure 18. Learning preferences in an online language learning platform

In an online language environment, Erasmus+ participants, as illustrated in the figure 19a, expect firstly that they will be able to explain their ideas to other students and ask other students to explain their ideas. Also, the majority of participants expect that the tutor will stimulate their thinking (see figure 19b).

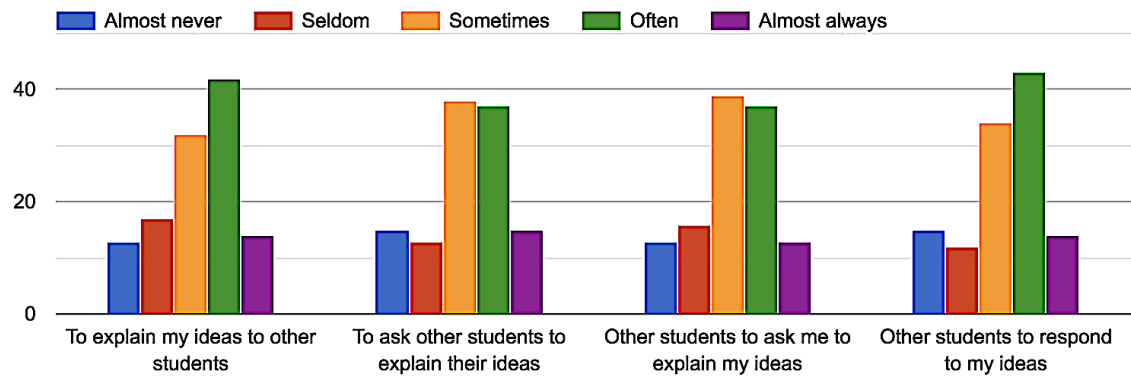


Figure 19a. Participants' expectations from an online language learning platform

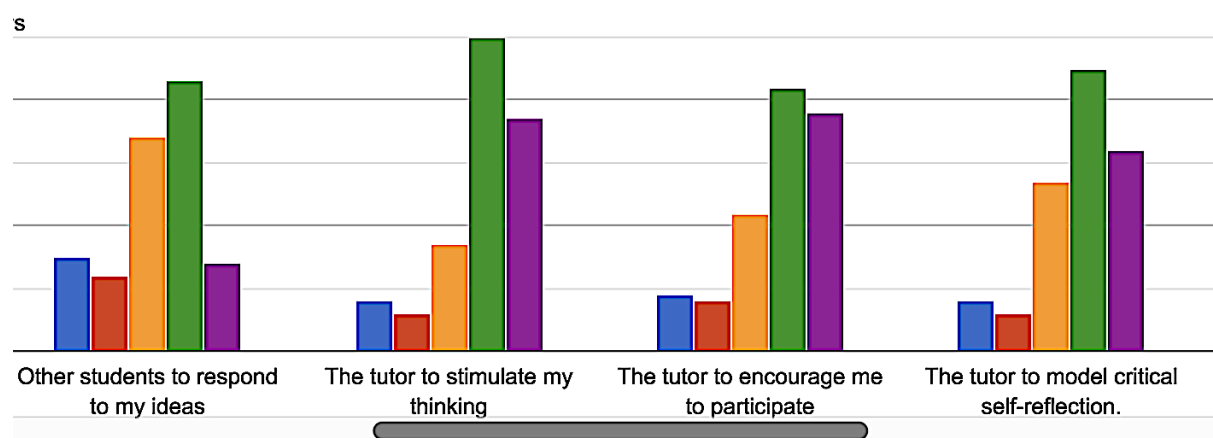


Figure 19b. Participants' expectations from an online language learning platform

Based on the findings of the questionnaire, one significant point to consider is the use of open educational resources. In the question “Would you enjoy using an open educational resource for enhancing your language skills before your mobility?” almost all the participants (72.6%) responded positively to that possibility (see figure 20).

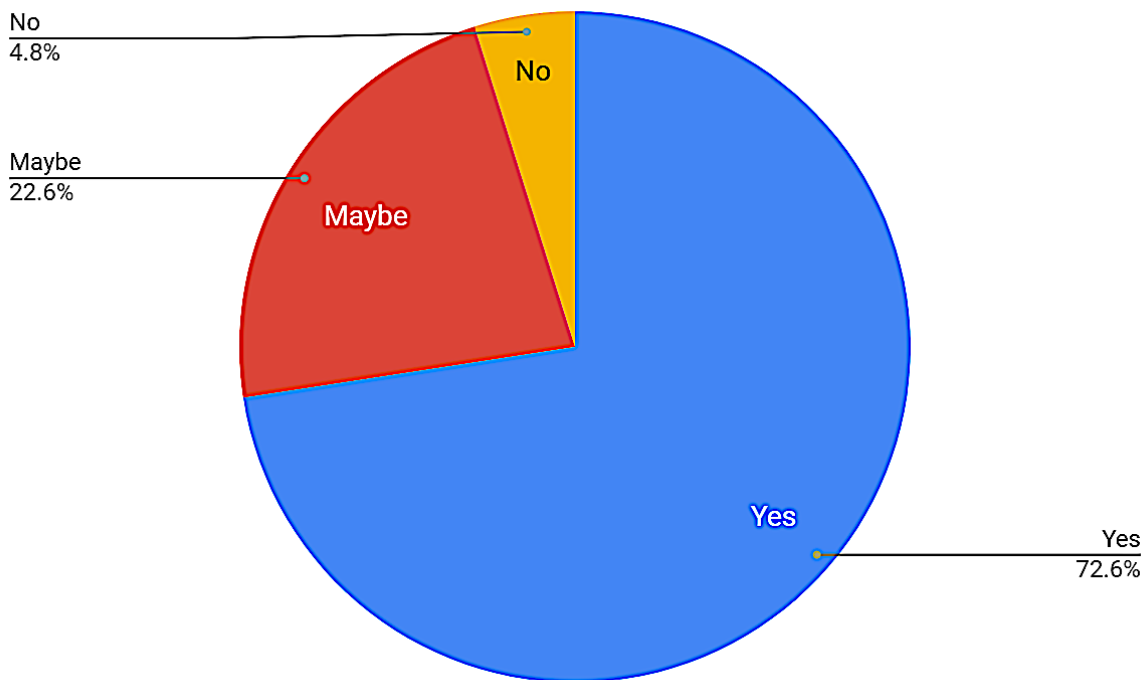


Figure 20. The use of an open educational resource for language learning

4.2.3 Correlations

To examine and understand further the language needs of mobility participants a couple of tests were conducted in SPSS. In particular, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the participants' period of mobility and the required language skills. There was a negative correlation between the two variables as demonstrated in the table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of the results

		Time	Skills
Time	Pearson Correlation	1	-.179*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.046
	N	124	124
Skills	Pearson Correlation	-.179*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	
	N	124	124

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Results demonstrated that participants for short term mobility needed a higher language level whilst participants in long term mobility needed a lower level of language skills (see table 2). Since long term participants were in the majority students, their expectations were to gain basic language skills in order to communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.

Table 2. Correlation between participants' period of mobility and the language skills

V1 * V3 Crosstabulation

			V3											Total	
			HE stu d	HE staff	V E T	Staf f SEd *	Staff Aed*	SS Ed*	SA Ed*	V L *	Y W *	N G O	S E S*	Oth er	
V1	Less than a month	Count	15	15	3	11	0	1	0	1	4	3	0	0	53
		% within V1	28. 3%	28.3 %	5 . 7 %	20.8 %	0.0%	1.9 %	0.0 %	1 . 9 %	7 . 5 %	5.7 %	0. 0 %	0.0 %	100. 0%
		% within V3	16. 7%	44.1 %	1 0 . 0 %	84.6 %	0.0%	10 0.0 %	0.0 %	1 0 . 0 %	4 0 . 0 %	75. 0%	0. 0 %	0.0 %	31.5 %
	More than a month	Count	75	18	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	1	1	8	109
		% within V1	68. 8%	16.5 %	0 . 0 %	0.9 %	0.9%	0.0 %	0.0 %	0 . 0 %	3 . 7 %	0.9 %	0. 9 %	7.3 %	100. 0%
		% within V3	83. 3%	52.9 %	0 . %	7.7 %	50.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0 . %	4 0 . %	25. 0%	1 0 0.	100 .0 %	64.9 %

				0					0	0		0		
				%					%	%		%		
1 month	Count	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	6
	% within V1	0.0%	16.7%	0%	16.7%	16.7%	0.0%	16.7%	0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within V3	0.0%	2.9%	0%	7.7%	50.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%
Total	Count	90	34	3	13	2	1	1	1	1	4	1	8	168
	% within V1	53.6%	20.2%	1.8%	7.7%	1.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	6.0%	2.4%	0.6%	4.8%	100.0%
	% within V3	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

- *Staff SEd= Staff in School Education
- *Staff AEd= Staff in Adult Education
- *SSEd= Students in School Education
- *SAEd= Students in Adult Education
- *VL= Volunteers
- *YW= Youth Workers
- *SES= Social Enterprise Staff

Building on the aforementioned finding, the OPENLang Network platform should focus primarily on A1-B2 levels of CEFR since long term mobility participants do not seek higher levels of language competence.

4.2.4 Interviews' Results

Three partners conducted interview sessions with key stakeholders of Erasmus+ KA1 mobility. Each interview lasted approximately 20-30 minutes following the guidelines provided by the CUT for conducting the interview sessions. In total nine semi-structured interviews were conducted; three interviews with KA1 National Agency officers and six interview sessions with KA1 University officers. CUT has conducted five interviews, UOM one interview, and PIXEL three interviews. OU contacted the UK Erasmus+ National Agency, which refused to give an interview or to disseminate the questionnaire. Also, the Greek Erasmus National Agency refused to give an interview stating that it was the project's funding agency. However, it disseminated the questionnaire to the Erasmus+ officials at Greek Universities. For that reason, we have covered this gap - we have conducted three more interviews in Cyprus and one more in Italy.

The interview analysis focused on the following themes:

- 1) Linguistic needs of Erasmus participants
- 2) Cultural needs of Erasmus participants
- 3) Benefits of the mobility
- 4) Recommendations for the future

4.2.4.1 Linguistic Needs

According to the responses obtained, the linguistic needs of both outcoming and incoming participants is an important factor for effective and successful mobility. A selection of additional interesting comments:

- *“For the outcoming mobility, one important difficulty is the language of instruction, which is an enormous barrier for mobility and for our collaboration with other universities.”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus)
- *“Some incoming students don't speak very well English (that's a big issue because we have many difficulties in our communication). We ask B2 in English*

but many times we have students with lower levels” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).

- *“Students are afraid of a foreign language - they face many difficulties because of the language. This is one of the factors that people don’t want to participate in Erasmus mobility” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).*
- *“A major difficulty can be considered the lack of knowledge by the users of the specific jargon of the Erasmus+ programme and in general of the academic setting” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Greece).*

However, one participant claimed:

“Because all the people speak English and the working language is English, we don’t have serious problems or big issues. Especially, when the mobility is short we don’t have a problem regarding the language” (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency Officer, Cyprus).

Regarding the use of OLS, two participants argued:

- *“OLS provides students with tailored support, depending on their capabilities. At the beginning, a test is given in order to place a student under an appropriate CEFR level. Having completed the initial test the student can follow an individualized path of activities and courses that can help him meet the linguistic needs of the target language” (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency Officer, Cyprus).*
- *“There is an online tool which is helping students to acquire the language (OLS) but this is not enough. This is an obligation for all but is not effective taking into account the language needs of a higher education student” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).*

Additionally, the key stakeholders pointed out some extra activities which the universities or organizations offer to address these language needs. Some indicative quotes from the interviews are:

- *“We would like our University to offer many courses in English concurrently attended by both Greek and foreign students. In this way, Greek and foreign students will communicate in English and perhaps in Greek and their mother*

tongue. They will also exchange cultural behaviors” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Greece).

- *“There is help for students who participate in non-English lessons (translation of the material in English, assignments instead of exams, etc)” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Italy).*
- *“In the last two years, we created (together with my colleagues) a network called “bodies”. Each incoming student has his/her own “body”. The “body” is helping Erasmus students with everything (in terms of accommodation, university, cultural life, etc). The “bodies” are very helpful for Erasmus students as they speak Greek and English. This is a person who helps them on a daily basis. These “bodies” are usually students who participated in Erasmus mobility (ex Erasmus participants). Last two years the idea with “bodies” works very well (especially in Spring semester)” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).*
- *“For incoming and outgoing students the International Mobility Office, in cooperation with the Foreign Languages Department, organizes E.U funded language courses completely free of charge for the participants. These courses allow the students to better adapt to foreign countries that lead to faster and successful academic integration” (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency, Italy).*

4.2.4.2 Cultural Needs

Other important factors that have been raised from the interviews are the issues related to cultural needs. As interviewees claimed, there are some issues regarding this issue. Interviewees made the following comments with regards to Erasmus+ participants’ cultural needs:

- *“Most incoming students are experiencing a cultural shock. However, the European Students Network (ESN, <https://uom.esngreece.gr/>) offers valuable support to these students” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Greece).*
- *“The cultural effect affects and discourages people to go to other countries. For that reason, many Cypriot students choose to go to Greece or England or other countries where they have relatives” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).*
- *“One difficulty is the adjustment in a new place. Some people leave their own*

country for the first time” (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency, Cyprus).

The interviewees shared some activities that their organizations do during their Erasmus+ mobility participants to address the cultural needs of participants.

Below we present some examples:

- *“As Erasmus office, we proposed the creation of an international week. This week will include seminars, lectures from foreign professors, exchange ideas/experiences with the collaborator universities in order for our students to get to know a little bit the Erasmus experience”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).
- *“We try to engage all incoming Erasmus participants in different social and cultural events. Our goal is to encourage students to do this kind of thing and not the office. We created an organization regarding where students can have the initiative to help other Erasmus students/ participants”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).
- *“Usually, we organize twice a semester cultural excursions/visits exclusively for Erasmus participants to introduce them in our culture”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).
- *“Cultural elements and cultural aspects are expected to be added in the OLS platform soon”* (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency, Cyprus).

4.2.4.3 Benefits

Interviewees argued that mobility offers a lot to the participants enabling them to develop significant academic, social and personal skills. To sum up, based on the interview data, interviewees discussed the beneficial role of mobility in many sectors and pointed out the following strengths/benefits:

- Developing collaborations, friendships, and networking
“They develop collaborations with other people in other countries. Some of these friendships last for many years. They become aware of different academic environments and mentality, different cultures and ways of life” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Greece).

- Adaptability

“[...] People can adapt to new situations” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Italy).

- Problem- solving

“[...] because in a new country someone should find solutions on its own” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).

- Intercultural communication

“People will learn to communicate and collaborate with other people with a different mindset, language, and culture. They learn to respect other cultures. The people’s management I believe is very important, specifically in the workplace. Only with the mobility, you can acquire all these skills” (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency, Cyprus).

- Cultural benefits

“[...] learn new worlds, people and cultures” (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency, Italy).

“The participants acquire valuable experience and important skills, such as to work apart from your comfort zone, to collaborate with people with different rhythm and mindset, to organize/manage your time. These skills are very important for their future life” (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency, Cyprus).

- Improvement of language skills
- Self-confidence

“People who participated in mobility increase their self-confidence” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).

- Professional opportunities

“They see what other opportunities exist abroad for education and work - we have many cases of students who chose (after the mobility period) to continue their studies abroad or to work there” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).

- Communication skills

“In addition, the participants improve their communication skills (not necessarily acquire a new language)” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Greece).

- Developing academic competencies

“The experience they will gain by spending a period abroad, knowing a new culture and being involved in it, meeting lots of new people, creating networks of contacts which might be useful in the future, start building their own future, enhance their CV” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Italy).

4.2.5 Recommendations

We received a number of helpful comments and opinions on how we can address the linguistic and cultural needs of Erasmus participants in the future and enhance the overall mobility activity. The recommendations arose directly from participants' comments (see below some quotes from the participants).

Some useful recommendations are:

- *“During the studies and before the mobility, students need to be informed. We have also to increase the foreign language courses and offer advanced levels of languages to the students”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Italy).
- *“It would be great if there is a short-intensive language course (online or not) before the mobility in order to prepare participants. But this course should be intensive and well organized in order to address the specific language needs of the participants. This course (even if it is online) should last at least six months”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).
- *“In terms of language, it would be very helpful if there are online language lessons/sessions to help students acquire the language of the country. There is a game usually - Erasmus students are going to the cafeteria/restaurant and each table speaks a different language. You could digitize this concept to help students learn the foreign language and practice before or during the mobility”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).
- *“Students need more interactive lessons”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).
- *“Languages quizzes with some useful daily phrases in every language - for communication”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).
- *“A chat-discussion forum where those participants can find other Erasmus participants to help each other. It would be very useful for Erasmus students”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).
- *“Administrative support - there are some standards forms/documents that Erasmus participants need to provide (Id, language certificate, European insurance, health documents, nomination, etc.”* (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Greece).

- *“A forum where students (all Erasmus participants) can discuss, talk to each other. For example, someone who is going to Portugal for Erasmus mobility he will have the opportunity to meet all the other Erasmus students - something similar is ESN but it would be better to exist an official European platform where you can find other people (to share your concerns and find solutions, to exchange experiences)”* (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency, Cyprus).
- *“Furthermore, if there is a particularity regarding the culture of the country of the mobility which is probably will affect the overall behaviour of the participants, this platform should inform future participants about that. It would be nice if participants could communicate with the organization for special requests”* (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency, Cyprus).

4.3 Integration of the Questionnaire & Interviews’ findings

Combining the results of questionnaires and interviews we found that the participants in the KA1 Erasmus+ mobility need linguistic support via training, seminars or language courses. It seems that this is the main priority of the participants as most of them have difficulties communicating in everyday instances in the language of the host country. This necessity supported by the participants’ responses in the questionnaire, as the 36.6% claim that the biggest linguistic challenge during their mobility is exactly the communication with local people. Also, this difficulty arose from the interviews with Erasmus+ KA1 stakeholders, who claim that the linguistic needs for both outcoming and incoming participants are an important factor for effective or successful mobility. In regards to this one Erasmus+ University officer says:

“[...]students are afraid of a foreign language - they face many difficulties because of the language. This is one of the factors that people don’t want to participate in Erasmus mobility” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).

In the same line, another University officer argues:

“[...] a major difficulty can be considered the lack of knowledge by the users of

the specific jargon of the Erasmus+ program and in general of the academic setting” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Greece).

All participants - in the survey and in the interview sessions - agree on the use of English as the preferred language. As one participant in the interview session claims:

“Because all the people speak English and the working language is English, we don’t have serious problems or big issues. Especially, when the mobility is short we don’t have a problem regarding the language” (Erasmus+ KA1 National Agency Officer, Cyprus).

In addition, based on the findings of the questionnaire, almost all the participants (72.6%) claimed that they would enjoy the use of an open educational resource in order to enhance their language skills. This possibility is also considered as important by some of the participants in the interview session. One Erasmus+ KA1 University officer underlines:

“it would be great if there is a short-intensive language course before the mobility in order to prepare participants. But this course should be intensive and well organized in order to address the specific language needs of the participants (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).

Another Erasmus+ KA1 University officer agrees:

“it would be very helpful if there are online language lessons/sessions to help students acquire the language of the country [...] and help students learn the foreign language and practice before or during the mobility” (Erasmus+ KA1 University Officer, Cyprus).

Taking into consideration the analysis from questionnaires and interviews, the main findings can be summarized in the following Table 1.

Table 3. Summary of the results

1	The reasoning behind the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gain academic, work or study
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	mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experience in another EU country ● Learn a new culture ● Become a more fluent speaker ● Expand their general vocabulary
2	Linguistic Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● C2 (CEFR) level of language ● Communicate orally in everyday situations ● Understand the regional accents/dialects ● Understand the academic language
3	Learning Preferences in a language learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Synchronous-based learning ● Asynchronous-based learning ● Autonomous work ● Group work ● Social (interpersonal) way of information presented ● Learn with other people ● Visual way (e.g. pictures, images, spatial understanding)
4	Cultural Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students need support to adjust to a new place ● Erasmus+ participants need to be informed regarding specific cultural aspects of the hosting country
5	Benefits of the mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adaptability ● Problem- solving ● Intercultural communication ● Cultural benefits ● Improvement of language skills ● Self-confidence ● Professional opportunities ● Communication skills ● Developing academic competencies
6	Recommendations for OPENLang Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer short-intensive language course before the mobility ● Gamify the online language lessons/sessions ● Offer more interactive lessons ● Provide languages quizzes ● Provide a chat-discussion forum ● Provide administrative support ● Inform future participants regarding the particularities of each country

Conclusions

Previous works focusing on Erasmus students have reported the benefits and costs experienced by students. Aslan and Jacobs' (2014) work showed that language learning and living in a different culture are the main reasons for participating in Erasmus mobility. Based on the literature, there are several ways in which language educators can help students prepare for mobility in terms of guidance and understanding of both what and how they may learn while they are abroad (Kinging, 2011).

The main findings of this report will be used to develop an online language platform taking into consideration the new knowledge regarding the Erasmus+ KA1 participants profiles. The analysis of the questionnaire and interviews brought to light new ideas, approaches, and strategies to address participants' language and cultural needs during their mobility.

Additionally, the report could be used by various other stakeholders (e.g. all Erasmus+ KA1 Mobility Participants, Partners' Institutions, Universities, Schools, Businesses, National Authorities, National Erasmus+ Offices, Erasmus+ programme, and other EU officials) who are interested in knowing the profiles of Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants.

As mentioned earlier, findings of Intellectual Output 1 could positively impact:

- Erasmus KA1 mobility participants would become self-aware of their language status and then take appropriate actions to improve it.
- Project Partners will enhance their knowledge and research expertise in Student Modelling and increase their cooperation.
- Partners' Institutions, National Erasmus+ Offices and Erasmus+ programme officials will become aware and understand the profiles of their Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants. Then they could design better Erasmus+ policies and strategies.
- Government officials at the local and European levels would have a better view of their citizens' skills, mobility, and preferences.

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APPENDIX I: Online Questionnaire

**Mapping the Language Learning Profile of the
Erasmus+ KA1 Mobility Participants**

Project Title: The OPENLang Network

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for your interest in this project. This study is part of a funded project under Erasmus KA2 (find out more about the project and the research team here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XpdiOPaVTIVuIEI8k-semwuY_3oBoWzp9jel812jppq0/edit?u=sp==sharing).

Answering this questionnaire should require you about 10-15 minutes. All responses are anonymous and confidential. Be sure to click “Submit” at the end of the survey, in order for your responses to be saved.

Thank you for your time.

Research Team
Cyprus University of Technology,
Cyprus University of Macedonia (OUM)-Coordinator
The Open University (OU), UK
PIXEL, Associazione Culturale, Italy

* Required

Consent

*I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study. **

Mark only one oval.

Agree

PART A - Eligibility and Profile

1. Have you participated in an Erasmus+ KA1 Mobility (HE students and staff, VET Adult and School education staff, Youth learners, Youth Workers, Youth Entrepreneurs)? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

PART A- Profile

2. In which activity did you participate? *

Mark only one oval.

- Erasmus+ for Higher Education students Erasmus+ for Higher Education staff VET, at least 1-month mobility
- Adult and School education staff
- Youth learners
- Youth Workers
- Youth Entrepreneurs
- Other:

3. Country of work/ study (before taking your Erasmus KA1 mobility) *

Mark only one oval.

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands

- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- Other:

4. Country of mobility *

Mark only one oval.

Austria
 Belgium
 Bulgaria
 Croatia
 Cyprus
 Czech Republic
 Denmark
 Estonia
 Finland
 France
 Germany
 Greece
 Hungary
 Ireland
 Italy
 Latvia
 Lithuania
 Luxembourg
 Malta
 Netherlands
 Poland
 Portugal
 Romania
 Slovakia
 Slovenia
 Spain
 Sweden
 United Kingdom
 Other:

5. For how long did you participate in an Erasmus+ KA1 mobility? *

Mark only one oval.

Less than a month
 1 month
 More than a month

PART B. Needs, expectations and benefits

1. Why did you participate in an Erasmus+ KA1 mobility? *
Check all that apply.

- To gain academic, work or study experience in another EU country
- To improve my academic or professional qualifications
- To improve my teaching/ learning practices
- To improve or gain ICT skills
- To improve or gain language skills for basic communication
- To improve or gain language skills for specific purposes
- To learn/practice a language in an authentic environment
- To discover a new place
- To learn a new culture
- To improve or gain intercultural communication skills
- To improve or gain collaboration and networking skills
- To grow my professional and/or my social network worldwide
- To boost my self-confidence and autonomy
- To deliver training

2. At what level your expectations were fulfilled? *
Mark only one oval per row.

To a Great Extent Somewhat Very Little Not at All Not applicable

- To gain academic, work or study experience in another EU country
- To improve my academic or professional qualifications
- To improve my teaching/ learning practices
- To improve or gain ICT skills
- To improve or gain language skills for basic communication
- To improve or gain language skills for specific purposes
- To learn/practice a language in an authentic environment
- To discover a new place
- To learn a new culture
- To improve or gain intercultural communication skills
- To improve or gain collaboration and networking skills
- To grow my professional and/or my social network worldwide
- To boost my self-confidence and autonomy
- To deliver training

3. What did you finally gain from your Erasmus+ KA1 mobility? *
Check all that apply.

- To gain academic, work or study experience in another EU country
- To improve my academic or professional qualifications
- To improve my teaching/ learning practices
- To improve or gain ICT skills
- To improve or gain language skills for basic communication
- To improve or gain language skills for specific purposes

To learn/practice a language in an authentic environment
 To discover a new place
 To learn a new culture
 To improve or gain intercultural communication skills
 To improve or gain collaboration and networking skills
 To grow my professional and/or my social network worldwide
 To boost my self-confidence and autonomy
 To deliver training
 Other:

PART C - Language and Cultural Needs regarding the destination country

1. Which language skills did you need during your Erasmus+ mobility? *
 Mark only one oval.

A1 (Breakthrough or Beginner): A basic ability to communicate and exchange information in a simple way. Example: I CAN ask simple questions about a menu and understand simple answers.

A2 (Waystage or Elementary): An ability to deal with simple, straightforward information and begin to express oneself in familiar contexts. Example: I CAN take part in a routine conversation on simple predictable topics.

B1 (Threshold or Intermediate): The ability to express oneself in a limited way in familiar situations and to deal in a general way with non-routine information. Example: I CAN ask to open an account at a bank, provided that the procedure is straightforward.

B2 (Vantage or Upper Intermediate): The capacity to achieve most goals and express oneself on a range of topics. Example: I CAN guide visitors around and give a detailed description of a place.

C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency or Advanced): The ability to communicate with the emphasis on how well it is done, in terms of appropriacy, sensitivity and the capacity to deal with unfamiliar topics. Example: I CAN deal with hostile questioning confidently. I CAN get and hold onto his/her turn to speak.

C2 (Mastery or Proficiency): The capacity to deal with material which is academic or cognitively demanding, and to use language to good effect at a level of performance which may in certain respects be more advanced than that of an average native speaker. Example: I CAN scan texts for relevant information, and grasp main topic of text, reading almost as quickly as a native speaker.

2. Please mark your language priorities during your Erasmus+ mobility *
 Check all that apply.

Not important Slightly Important Moderately Important Very important

To become a more fluent speaker
 To become a more accurate speaker
 To expand my general vocabulary
 To expand my specialist vocabulary
 To improve my listening
 To improve my pronunciation

To improve my reading
To improve my writing

3. What were the main linguistic challenges you encountered during your mobility? *

Check all that apply.

Communicate in everyday instances (e.g. at a cafeteria)

Communicate with fellow-students/colleagues

Understand academic language at the hosting institution (e.g. in a lecture)

Regional accents/dialects

Use of jargons and slang

Other:

4. As far as you know, by the country of your KA1 mobility, what kind of linguistic support is available for KA1 mobility participants? *

Check all that apply.

Onsite language course/training

Online language course/training

Financial support for attending a language course

Understand academic language at the hosting institution (e.g. in a lecture)

I don't know

Other:

PART D – Delivery mode and learning preferences

1. Which of the following modes of learning do you prefer in an online language learning platform? *

Check all that apply.

Autonomous Group Work Synchronous (i.e. Skype) Asynchronous (i.e. forum, messenger)

2. How would you prefer the information to be presented in a language learning platform?

Check all that apply.

Visual: You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.

Aural (auditory-musical): You prefer using sound and music.

Verbal (linguistic): You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.

Interactive: You prefer interaction with the material.

Social (interpersonal): You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.

Solitary (intrapersonal): You prefer to work alone and use self-study.

Other:

3. In an online language learning environment I expect *
Mark only one oval per row.

Almost never Seldom Sometimes Often Almost always

- To explain my ideas to other students
- To ask other students to explain their ideas
- Other students to ask me to explain my ideas
- Other students to respond to my ideas
- The tutor to stimulate my thinking
- The tutor to encourage me to participate
- The tutor to model critical self-reflection
- Other students to encourage my participation
- Other students to praise my contribution
- Other students to value my contribution
- Other students to empathise with my struggle to learn public domain or introduced

4. Have you used an open educational resource (=educational materials that are in the public domain or introduced with an open license, e.g. in an open online course) before? *
Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

5. Would you enjoy using an open educational resource for enhancing your language skills before your mobility? *
Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

PART E - Demographic Information

1. Country of origin *
Mark only one oval.

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic

Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
United Kingdom
Other:

2. Age range *

Mark only one oval.

18 - 24
25 - 34
35 - 44
44-54
55+

3. Current status *

Mark only one oval.

Higher Education student
Higher Education staff
Learner in vocational education and training (VET)
Staff in vocational education and training (VET)
Staff in school education
Staff in adult education
Student in school education
Student in adult education
Volunteer
Youth worker
NGO staff
Social enterprise staff
Informal youth organisation
Other:

4. Sex *

Mark only one oval.

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

5. Do you have any other comments?