Learner-internal factors in the Erasmus+ mobility context

The Erasmus+ exchange programme has become very popular, with the number of student sojourners growing each year. However, despite advances in understanding the effects of the immersion experience on language and cultural development, many questions in study abroad (SA) research remain unanswered. Some of the most interesting ones are related to the role of learner -internal factors in foreign language learning. Contrary to the assumption that studying abroad leads to solid linguistic gains, not all students benefit equally from the SA experience. Thus, we strongly believe that understanding the SA complex processes, as well as the independent variables that might influence them, is of crucial importance.

Consequently, the main aim of the present study is to investigate stable psychological factors (emotional intelligence, personality), relatively stable sociopsychological factors (attitudes and motivation), and more dynamic emotional factors (anxiety and enjoyment in using the target language) concerning foreign language gains and self-selection processes among Erasmus+ mobility students. It is hypothesised that the interplay of the above-mentioned variables might shape the development of the target language among sojourners, as well as influence the very decision to participate in such programmes. At the same time, it is important to highlight, that this is the first, broad, longitudinal study to focus on emotional intelligence, an aspect neglected so far in SA studies. Thanks to the proposed multidimensional analysis we will get a more coherent picture of the researched phenomena allowing us to understand complex processes taking place before, during and after sojourners stay abroad.

We strongly believe that the results of our study will significantly contribute to the already existing body of knowledge, allowing stakeholders to implement certain actions to be able to enrol even more students in SA programmes, as well as to maximise the institutional and individual gains from studying abroad.