ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ERASMUS STUDENTS:

The case of the Faculty of Economics
at the University of Valencia.

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- ➢ **Erasmus experience offers benefits**, **both at individual** (personal development, enhanced language skills, inter-cultural awareness, better employability and job prospects) **and at institutional level** (links between institutions, teacher and business staff mobility, joint-projects). But …

- ➢ **Erasmus is an academic programme; consequently, the academic performance of students cannot be disregarded.** Then…

## Our Purpose

The aim of this paper is to **analyze the factors determining the level of academic performance achieved by ERASMUS students** of the Faculty of Economics (University of Valencia) during their stay abroad.

Descriptive analysis

- **Dataset**: 225 Erasmus students from the Faculty of Economics of the University of Valencia during the academic years 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

- **Variables:** previous grade point average (GPA), credits earned, percentage of passed exams, number of previous academic years at the UV, gender, language skills. Note all these variables are measured before the students join the Erasmus programme.

- **Outcomes:** Average grades, credits passed.

Erasmus destinations

Eastern Europe; 6.2%
GER/AUT; 11.1%
ITA; 13.3%
FRA/BEL; 18.7%
UK; 30.2%
Nordic countries; 20.4%
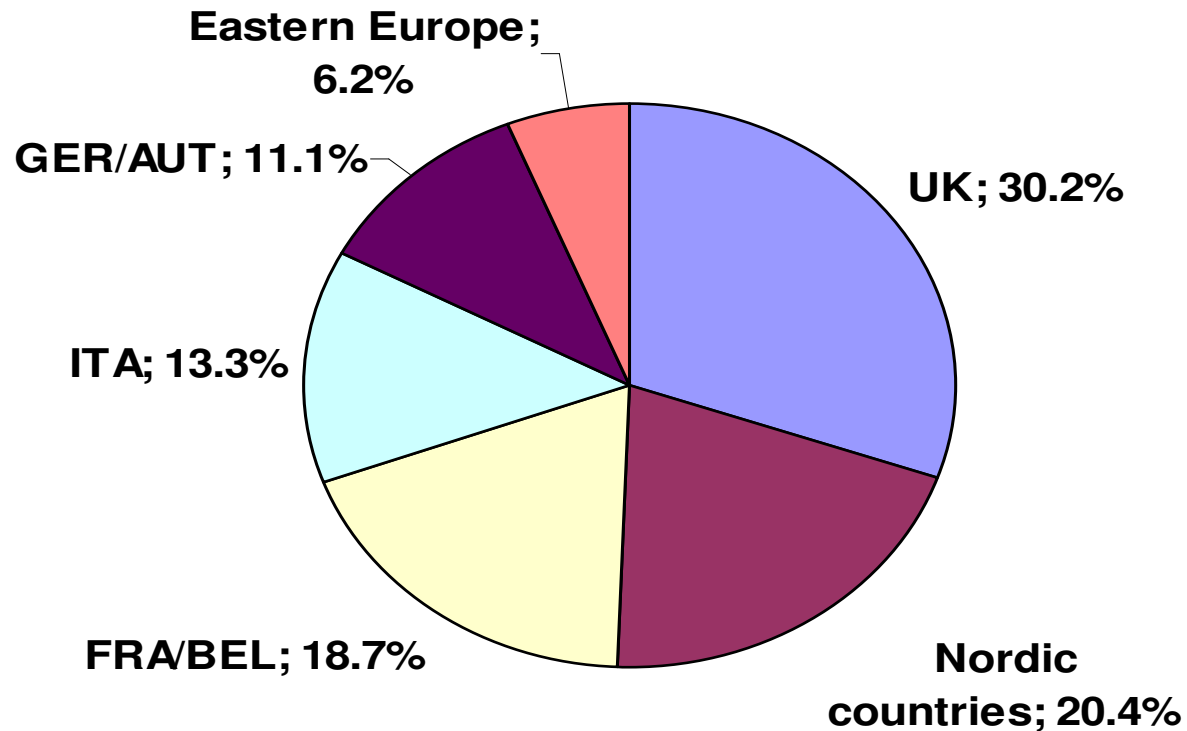
➢ **More than 70 partners universities. More than 30% in UK. In recent years Eastern Europe destinations have increased their importance.**

Language tuition

- English 78.7%
- Italian 13.3%
- French 5.8%
- German 2.2%
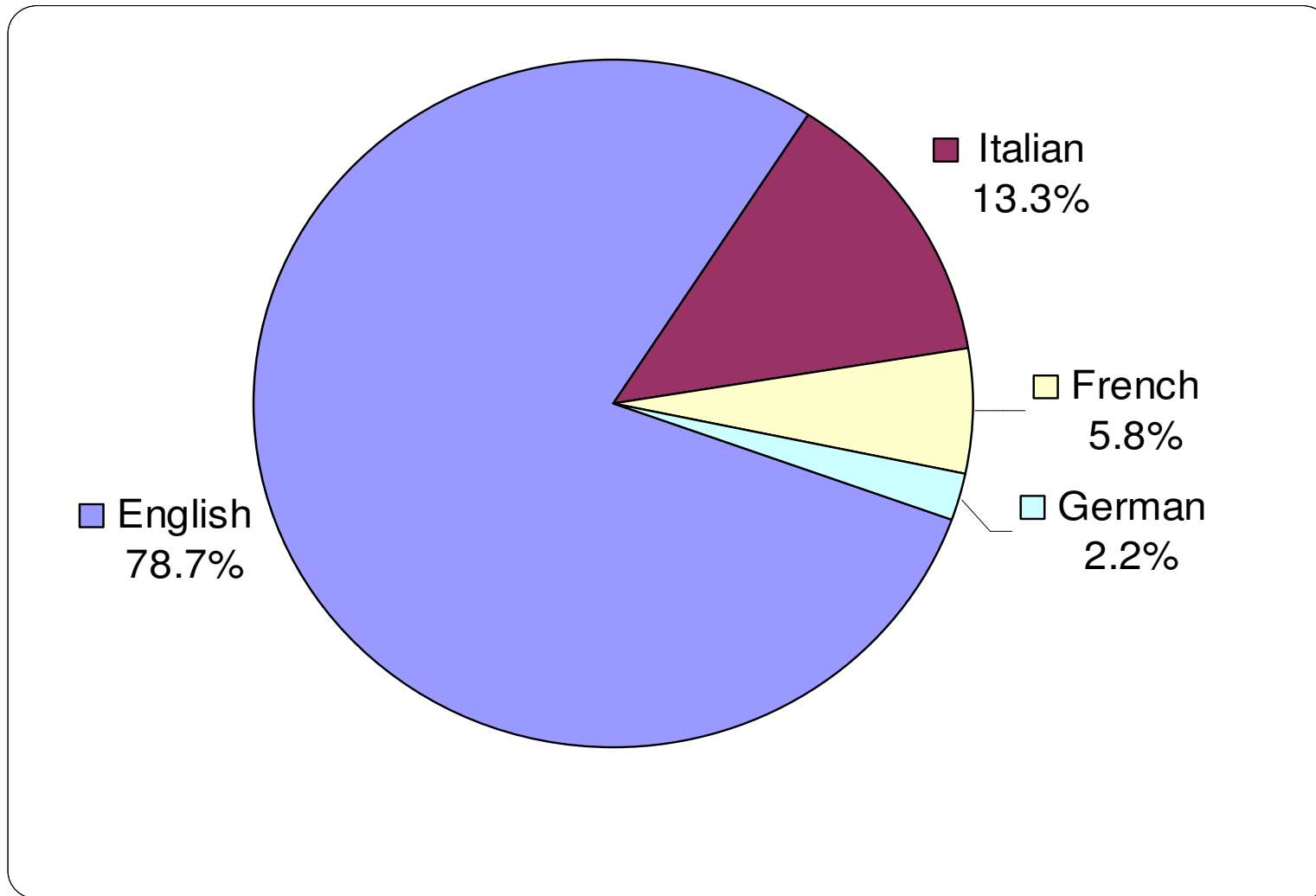
➢ **Around 80% of our students receive tuition in English.**

Main features & learning outcomes previous to the Erasmus stay.

	Male	Female	All
Number	112	113	225
Freemovers	3%	1%	2%
Annual stays	96%	90%	93%
Academic variables			
Credits passed	131.5	144.2	137.9
Years of stay at UV	3.12	3.02	3.07
ECTS per year	46.55	51.34	48.80
Language skills			
Overall	0.67	0.61	0.64
- English	0.65	0.61	0.63
- French	0.64	0.85	0.76
- Italian	0.60	0.57	0.59
- German	0.81	0.78	0.80

➢ **The vast majority stays a full year and receives an Erasmus grant**

➢ **Erasmus female students perform better than male before their stay**

➢ **Interestingly, females language skills are slightly lower than those of males**

➢ Do the Erasmus students take advantage of their stay abroad?

	Male	Female	All
Previous average grades	6.30	6.63	6.46
Average grades at Erasmus stay	6.69	6.90	6.79
-Difference	+0.39	+0.27	+0.33
Previous number of credits per year (average)	46.55	51.34	48.80
Credits earned during their Erasmus stay	48.76	48.28	48.53
-Difference	+2.21	-3.06	-0.27

➢ **Both, male and female students, increase their grades**

➢ **Female students decrease the number of credits earned while male increase them**

➤ **Do the Erasmus students take advantage of their stay abroad?**

	Male	Female	All
% students that improve their grades	71.3%	61.8%	66.7%
% students that improve the number of ECTS per year	62.6%	53.1%	58.1%
% students that improve both	40.7%	30.4%	35.7%
% students that does not improve any	13.9%	20.6%	17.1%

➤ **41% of male and 30% of female clearly improve their academic performance**

➤ **Only 14% of male and 20% of female have a worse academic performance**

Do the Erasmus students take advantage of their stay abroad? Academic performance per geographic areas.

	UK	GER	FRA	Nordic	ITA	East	ALL
Language Skills	0.66	0.68	0.66	0.61	0.61	0.62	0.64
Average grades (APG)	6.67	6.11	6.29	6.53	6.40	6.37	6.46
Credits per year	51.22	49.98	44.53	52.24	41.91	43.57	48.80
Number of credits passed	51.86	49.67	45.18	41.69	54.25	51.11	48.53
Erasmus grades (out of 10)	6.71	7.48	6.55	6.63	6.85	7.28	6.79
GPA improvement (out of 10)	0.04	1.37	0.25	0.10	0.44	0.90	0.33
Improvement in number of ECTS passed	0.64	-0.32	0.64	-10.55	12.34	7.54	-0.28
% students improve their grades	52.2%	95.2%	70.3%	64.4%	69.2%	85.7%	66.7%
% students that improve the number of ECTS per year	57.9%	47.0%	59.4%	39.0%	80.0%	81.8%	58.1%
% students that improve both	28.4%	47.0%	43.2%	26.7%	34.6%	64.3%	35.7%
% students that does not improve any	22.4%	0.0%	18.9%	24.4%	7.7%	7.1%	17.1%

➢ **There are remarkable differences among the academic performance per geographical areas**

➢ **The <u>GPA</u> is improved in all areas, mostly in Germany, Eastern countries and Italy**

➢ **With regard to the <u>number of ECTS passed</u>, there are quite notable differences. Thus, whereas in Nordic countries students do pass less ECTS than their previous average in the UV, it seems that both Eastern countries and Italy, specially, are appropriate destinations to increase the number of ECTS passed per year.**

➢ **Globally, 35% of all the students improve their academic performance, whereas only 17% make it worse.**

Regression Analysis

$$\text{Output}_i = f(G_i, L_i, \text{Controls}_i) + u_i$$

- **Output$_i$** : Academic performance: GPA, ECTS credits passed

- **G$_i$** : Academic transcript of records previous to the Erasmus stay: APG, credits passed per year, total credits passed

- **L$_i$** = Language skills

- **Controls$_i$** : Academic year, gender, destination area

- **u$_i$** : stochastic term $N(0, \sigma^2_u)$

Regression Analysis (Results)

	GPA	GPA	GPA	GPA
Constant	4.288 ***	4.185 ***	3.358 ***	3.206 ***
Previous GPA	0.331 ***	0.301 ***	0.400 ***	0.355 ***
Language Skills	0.556 *	0.656 *	0.318	0.479
Credits per year				
Credit passed bef.		0.002		0.003 *
Gender			-0.100	-0.098
Native language			0.455 **	0.438 *
Germany			1.307 ***	1.316 ***
France			0.280	0.271
Nordic countries			0.475 *	0.438 *
Italy			0.310 *	0.349 *
Eastern Europe			1.238 ***	1.226 ***
Year			0.091	0.084
Field			0.015	-0.017
R^2	0.13	0.14	0.33	0.307
loglikelihood	-217.5	-216.7	-191.8	-157.4

➢ **Once we control for the effects of the geographical area, gender, language, <u>previous GPA is statistically significant</u> to explain grades on the Erasmus stay, <u>but not the previous language skills</u>**

➢ **The most statistically significant variable to explain the academic grades during the Erasmus stay is the previous GPA.**

➢ **Once we control for the effects of the geographical area, gender, language, the previous GPA is the only variable statistically significant to explain the number of credits passed during the Erasmus stay.**

➢ **Both the previous GPA and the language skills are statistically significant in order to explain the GPA improvement during the Erasmus stay, but they have opposite signs. Whereas the previous GPA shows a negative coefficient (i.e. the higher the prior grades are, the more difficult it is to improve one's grades), however, the previous language skills show a positive coefficient (ceteris paribus, the higher the prior language skills, the larger the GPA improvement).**

Conclussions

- **In general, the Erasmus stay implies good academic performance.**

- **Even if females continue to perfom better tan men, in relative terms male students do perform slightly better than their female counterparts.**

- **There seem to appear significant differences among geographical destination areas.**

- **The regression analysis shows that the most relevant variable to better explain the grades obtained during the Erasmus stay is the previous GPA.**

- **Previous language skills are only significant to explain the improvement in the academic performance during the Erasmus stay.**