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HANDBOOKS



The Routledge Handbook of Study Abroad Research and Practice

Edited by Cristina Sanz and Alfonso Morales-Front

The Routledge Handbook of Study Abroad Research and Practice

The Routledge Handbook of Study Abroad Research and Practice is an authoritative overview of study abroad and immersive context research specifically situated within applied linguistics and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) for graduate students and researchers in these fields. Featuring contributions from established scholars from around the world, this volume provides in-depth coverage of the theoretical approaches and methodologies used in study abroad and applied linguistics research, and examines their practical implications on program implementation. The handbook is organized around core areas of research and practice: language development and personal growth; study abroad settings; individual differences of learners; and applications concerning the preparation of students, teachers, and administrators for study abroad, the role of study abroad in foreign language curricula, and future directions. This handbook is the ideal resource for graduate students, researchers, and administrators interested in learning more about linguistic and personal development during study abroad.

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Introduction

Issues in Study Abroad Research and Practice

Cristina Sanz and Alfonso Morales-Front

Definition and Overview

Studying abroad, broadly defined as an academic experience that allows students to complete part of their degree program through educational activities outside their country, is not a new phenomenon. Its tradition goes back several centuries to the Grand Tour, which was considered to be the culmination of an aristocratic education and designed to broaden the horizons of the young members of elite British families by introducing them to, among other things, languages, art, and geography. For an activity with such old pedigree, it is somewhat surprising that the bulk of publications on language and personal development during study abroad (SA) did not appear until the early 1990s (DeKeyser, 1991; Freed, 1995; Lafford, 1995), with work coming out of Europe only recently. A search of all published reports of empirical studies on the effects of study/stay abroad yields about one hundred publications. Of those, about one fourth are journal articles, including several in the 2004 special issue of *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, and another fourth are book chapters in edited volumes, mainly dedicated to the topic of study abroad/immersion, such as Freed (1995), DuFon and Churchill (2006), Ortega and Byrnes (2008), and the most recent by Hansen (2012). There are also volumes dedicated to SA, such as Kinginger's (2010, 2013). Most research has contrasted the SA context and the traditional second language (L2) classroom, focusing on how lexicon and grammar (DeKeyser, 1986, 1991; Guntermann, 1995), listening skills (Carroll, 1967), communication strategies (e.g., Lafford, 1995), and specially fluency (Freed, 1995) seem to develop differently in those contexts. Reports of studies with an interest in SA now have their own strand, keynotes, and colloquia at major conferences, including the annual meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics and the Second Language Research Forum. *Frontiers* continues to be the journal of reference for all matters having to do with SA. Both *System* and *ARAL* have just published one volume each on international education; there is a new *Journal of Study Abroad*, and AILA (Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée) has a Research Network (ReN) fully dedicated to SA.

We think there are multiple reasons that account for the growth in the interest in SA among researchers, but among them, three deserve individual attention: numbers, surprising results, and the social turn in Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

We have certainly come a long way from the days when the Grand Tour was reserved for the few members of the elite. The number of students participating in SA programs has increased tremendously (see Chapter 35, this volume) with the success of the Erasmus program in Europe and the popularity of short-term programs in the US; SA is a considerable investment of time and money, and many parents and administrators, and students, are calling on researchers to answer questions on its efficacy.

A second reason is that practitioners, and of course language learners going abroad as well as their parents, have always assumed that SA provides the best conditions for language development: A sojourn abroad accelerates the learning process. There are aspects of language, such as pragmatics (politeness, making requests) that can only be learned while living in the country where the language is used. Whether intuitively attractive or based on anecdotal observation, these are common beliefs. Common as they are, we need to see that they are actually substantiated by research. Recent approaches to SLA, including neurocognitive approaches to SLA (e.g., Morgan-Short, Steinhauer, Sanz, & Ullman, 2012), show that only ‘immersion-like’ conditions lead to an electrophysiological signature typical of native speakers (NSs). Also, the basic tenets of classic SLA theories, such as Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1985), Long’s Interaction Hypothesis (1996), and Swain’s Output Hypothesis, (1995) imply that SA should provide the optimal context for language development. Immersion abroad is abundant in rich and meaningful input that keeps the focus on the message (Krashen, 1985). It also provides constant opportunities for the negotiation that comes with interaction and information breakdowns (Long, 1996) and pushes the learner to produce and consequently to move from semantic processing to syntactic processing (Swain, 1995). However, and contrary to all these expectations, SA research often finds minimal, or even no, effects of immersion experience on linguistic development (e.g., Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 1991; Diaz-Campos, 2004). There is also the notion that Millennial and Gen Z students see in SA a much-needed opportunity to break away from academic-induced stress. How do we make SA work for them? How do external factors, such as living arrangements or the type of program—sheltered vs. direct matriculation, for example—interact with individual differences, such as attitudes and aptitudes? We should not be surprised that researchers are now producing studies that take a broader and deeper approach in an attempt to explain results that contrast both with the public assumptions and with theoretical predictions.

A final reason is the birth of a new brand of research now getting track, which looks at the individual as a whole. Those studies pay especial attention to the learner’ identity, principles, and beliefs, and the role that gender or age, for example, have in the development of social networks that ultimately shape the individual’s development as a language learner and as a person.

The rest of the chapter presents our view of what has been accomplished in the field of SA, current developments, and future needs, both from the practitioner’s and from the researcher’s perspective. Many of the ideas have been outlined in some of our publications, especially in Marijuan and Sanz’s position paper forthcoming in *Foreign Language Annals*.

Research Methodology

Traditionally, SA research has compared progress by students learning abroad and at home (AH), which, in principle, makes sense if the interest is in seeing whether studying abroad is worth the effort and the investment. It may also be productive as a way of identifying differences, both in terms of efficacy and qualitative processes, between implicit and explicit context, i.e., contexts in which language is absorbed in the absence of awareness or in which language learning is effortful and very conscious. Unlike laboratory studies, however, in which random distribution is easy, abroad and AH comparisons end up comparing apples and oranges because students who choose to go abroad are different from students who choose to stay in their home institutions.

Studies that do not include an AH group have provided valuable information about linguistic changes taking place at different stages of the learning process, as seen in longitudinal studies (e.g., Du, 2013; Sasaki, 2011) or in within-subject design studies demonstrating how learners perform in different linguistic conditions, before and after immersion (see Marijuan & Sanz, 2017). Other learning outcome comparisons have also been drawn between SA programs of different lengths (e.g., Avello & Lara, 2014), of different levels of proficiency (e.g., Duperron & Overstreet, 2009), or of different student populations, such as L2 learners and heritage language learners (HLLs; e.g., Davidson & Lekic, 2013). These lines of research, as well as the comparison between SA programs that use different curriculum approaches (e.g., language-based vs. content-based), have the potential to help disentangle the role that internal and external variables play in language and intercultural development.

Nonetheless, there are other important limitations beyond lack of randomization in the research: Small samples result in low statistical power and contribute to the lack of reliability and generalizability of studies themselves; also, the coarse nature of the tasks implemented makes the studies unable to detect subtle changes in development, especially when learners are in the more advanced stages. Also, not every aspect of language will see the same impact of experience abroad. While research on fluency has produced evidence of significant positive changes, phonological development seems to lag behind. Even more fine-grained, early results from the Barcelona SA Project (Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz, 2015) suggest that for advanced learners of Spanish, five weeks studying abroad are enough to benefit the development of sentence structure but not of gender agreement. Predictably then, we close this paragraph calling for more strict methodological procedures. Yang's 2016 meta-analysis of empirical research identified 66 studies on linguistic development as a result of SA. Of those, only 11 qualified for inclusion, a reflection of the poor state of affairs in quantitative SA research. Results from the comparisons indicate that SA learners outperform AH learners and that short-term SA is more effective than long-term SA. The author concludes by outlining potential concerns about conducting meta-analyses on SA research and calling on scholars to take the necessary steps to make their research methodologically robust.

Technology can greatly contribute to improving research methodology. Today, SLA research is equally interested in the product of learning (accuracy) and in the cognitive processes that underlie changes in performance. Technological tools are necessary to investigate both, especially cognitive processes, which are more difficult

to identify without precise procedures. Studies now combine concurrent data elicitation techniques—response time, eye-tracking, event-related potentials (ERPs)—with assessments of L2 performance, often in conjunction with measures of individual differences. Other technological resources employed in noncognitively oriented studies, such as online surveys, blogs (i.e., public discussions and posts meant to be shared), and e-journals (i.e., ongoing personal reflections), have proved useful when answering important questions related to learners' motivation, identity, and intercultural competence. The present volume offers examples of all these technological advances for the study of language development and personal growth.

A relatively new approach in SA research, namely social networks, while more qualitative in nature, holds great potential for research as well as for practice. According to Milroy and Margrain (1980), social networks refer to both informal social circles and the strength of the ties between members of these circles. Social networks can be related to linguistic behavior since individuals tend to adopt the system of verbal behavior of the group(s) with which they wish to be identified. Social networks are characterized by their size, dispersion (number of groups learners belong to), intensity (closeness of relationships), and durability (frequency of interaction). Social network theory has only recently been applied to SA, but it has taken on a prominent role due to the extensive role that engagement and interaction with the host community seem to play in language and cultural learning (see, for example, Dewey, Belnap, & Hillstrom, 2013 and other research by Dewey and colleagues; Isabelli-García, 2006; Goldoni, 2013; Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, Bown, & Martinsen, 2014; Cadd, 2012). These scholars have studied how learners develop social networks abroad, what factors learners report to facilitate or inhibit social network development, how social networks relate to perceived gains or actual gains in speaking abilities, and what type of interventions can help learners expand and maintain their social networks.

External Factors

Obviously, SA programs differ widely in length and in structure. They are not always synonymous with implicit/immersive contextual factors: Sheltered programs that offer language classes may potentially be no different from AH experiences. It is thus very possible to expect contradicting evidence from programs that are radically different—programs that include language classes or only content classes, and sheltered programs or direct matriculation programs, like the Erasmus program in Europe. Cross-sectional program comparisons along variables such as short vs. semester-long programs, or content vs. language programs, have not yet been very productive. Also, studies that look at short-stay programs are not frequent, even though this is the type of program that has registered the largest growth in matriculation in the US (but see Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz, 2015).

Beyond length and type or structure, living arrangements are one of the programmatic characteristics that may influence learners' language and cultural learning during their experience abroad as these offer learners the opportunity to forge relationships with NSs in the local community. However, findings concerning the effectiveness of the homestay experience in supporting learners' SA development are inconclusive (DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Mancheño, 2008; Rivers, 1998; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Shiri, 2015; Shively, 2016a; Tanaka, 2007). Learners may simply engage

in formulaic and repetitive conversations; also, families may lower their expectations when learners do not possess high levels of proficiency. Finally, a mismatch in the goal of communication (focus on meaning vs. focus on grammar) can create discomfort in a learner who feels that a host family is paying too much attention to his/her grammatical errors. Because of these mixed results, recent literature, such as Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2010), has looked at the *quality* of students' relationships/interactions with their host families and at pedagogical interventions that could enhance learner-host family relationships and communication. Evidence suggests that task-based assignments can increase the likelihood that learners maintain a better, more beneficial relationship with their host families, which allows learners to expand their social network, leading to greater breadth and depth of experiences, with positive effects on learners' linguistic, sociolinguistic, and cultural gains.

Leaners may also maintain connections to their social network via social media after the program is over (Shiri, 2015), but the use of technology in the pursuit of social network development can be seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, students who rely extensively on electronic support networks from home do not seem to integrate into the host community as well as other students. By contrast, scholars such as Back (2013) have shown that the use of media (e.g., Facebook) seems to enhance the development of social networks abroad and expand and maintain them (see Shively, 2010).

The factors that propitiate social network development show, as is often the case, the close relationship between external variables and individual differences, such as personality, attitudes, or motivation (Dewey, Ring, Gardner, & Belnap, 2013; Goldoni, 2013; Isabelli-García, 2006). Some of the factors listed in the literature are having a personality that gets along well with others; being close to the university campus; volunteering; being willing to interact and tolerant of cultural annoyance; and pursuing leisure activities, such as sports. Quantitative studies have shown that the number of groups learners belong to, as well as the intensity or "level of friendship" of these groups, was a significant predictor of perceived language gains. Interventions that can help SA participants develop social networks include programmatic requirements that push learners to use the L2 with NSs in linguistically rich ways, such as taking part in conversation exchanges.

SA in the US has seen strong growth in short-term as well as nontraditional programs, namely those that include service learning and internships. Service learning and internships are seen as ways to promote adaptability and intercultural competence, two attributes that can improve the chances that students occupy leadership roles in a knowledge-based global economy upon graduation. Service learning—a type of educational experience tied to academic objectives emphasizing authenticity, critical thinking, and content reflection—can positively influence the development of learners' personal and linguistic growth (Curtin, Martins, Schwartz-Barcott, DiMaria, & Ogando, 2013; Goldoni, 2013; Isabelli-García, 2006). Service learning promotes the development of larger and stronger social networks among students as well as their chances to use the L2 for real purposes, and it may have an impact on students' confidence in linguistic skills, cultural understanding, motivation, and professional growth. Likewise, internships abroad are increasingly being promoted as a unique resource to explore and develop vocational skills, engage with international work cultures, and make professional connections around the world (e.g., Norris & Gillespie, 2009). Some internships can be credit-bearing and are accompanied

by a mandatory class, some can be more research-oriented or development-focused (e.g., internships in nongovernmental organizations or on sustainability projects), and others can also be non-credit-bearing (Soneson, 2010).

Despite the many benefits that volunteering, service learning, and internships in immersive contexts seem to have for learners, SA research on such program components is still in its infancy. In relation to their potential influence on language development, more studies need to employ mixed-methods designs, include objective measures of language proficiency other than self-reported data (questionnaires, surveys, journals), and triangulate data. On-site observed interactions (e.g., ethnography, case studies) would also be informative. Additionally, researchers need to investigate these components in relation to specific linguistic skills. For example, He and Qin (2017) noted that students in internships “wish to extend their skills to include more formal and sophisticated uses of the language to meet their future needs as global professionals” (p. 57); given such a linguistically oriented learning goal, a question we might ask is to what extent does the target language actually become more sophisticated as a result of participating in internships? How can interning abroad, or taking part in service-learning experiences, influence L2 vocabulary development or the acquisition of L2 pragmatics?

Individual Differences

We have studies that identify individual variables that determine proficiency during SA (e.g., Collentine & Freed, 2004). We also have a generalized and growing interest in understanding the relationship between cognitive abilities and L2 language development. Yet only a few studies have looked at the interaction between cognitive variables and the effects of SA: See Segalowitz and Freed (2004) for lexical access speed/efficiency and attentional speed/efficiency; Taguchi (2008) for processing speed; Sunderman and Kroll (2009) for working memory capacity; O’Brien, Segalowitz, Freed, and Collentine (2007) and Larson-Hall and Dewey (2012) for phonological short-term memory; and LaBrozzi (2012) for inhibitory control, and Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz (2015) for working memory capacity and lexical and grammatical development. In general, it seems that low-aptitude students achieve greater gains in highly structured environments (i.e., AH context), whereas their higher aptitude counterparts seem to do better in more informal and unstructured environments (i.e., SA). While cognitive factors such as working memory play a role in rate and attainment, other variables, such as expectations, motivation (e.g., Larson-Hall & Dewey, 2012), attitudes (e.g., Llanes, Tragant, & Serrano, 2012), strategy use (e.g., Adams, 2006), cognitive style (e.g., Hokanson, 2000), and linguistic outlook, also come to mind. Whether cognitive or psychosocial, individual differences have the potential to affect not only the amount of input, interaction, and output the learner is going to seek but, as importantly, the way the input is going to be processed. This is especially true if we take into account the role that working memory and attentional control have in explicit language processing. While SA research explaining the role of cognitive abilities in learners’ final attainment has begun to provide a unique account of language development in immersive contexts, much more research is still needed in this area. In particular, more SA studies considering more than one cognitive ability are needed.

As noted by Baker-Smemoe et al. (2014), the few quantitative studies that have investigated personality traits in immersive contexts have done so mainly in relation

to interaction and L2 use but not so much in direct relation to L2 gains (but see Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014, who did not find significant differences in L2 gains among L2 learners with different personality profiles). For example, Ożańska-Ponikwia and Dewaele (2012), who studied Polish immigrants living in the UK, found that openness and self-esteem were significant predictors of frequency of L2 use and potential L2 development. Dewey et al. (2014) observed that learners' openness to new experiences was a predictor of L2 use. Meanwhile, Stewart (2010) found that learner willingness to initiate conversations with native interlocutors seemed to be either helped or hindered by learner personality.

Motivation has been an evolving concept in language-learning research, as seen in the various motivation orientations that have been studied: integrative (e.g., Gardner, 1985), instrumental (e.g., Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991), resultative (e.g., Strong, 1984), and intrinsic and extrinsic (e.g., Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). Scholars who have examined motivation in SA contexts (e.g., Allen, 2010; Allen & Herron, 2003; Hernández, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2006; Sasaki, 2011) have drawn from the aforementioned literature and from theoretical perspectives related to learner agency, such as Activity Theory (Engeström, 1999)—which links motivation with learner goals and actions—and notions such as self-regulation (e.g., Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2007) or investment (Peirce, 1995). Evidence suggests that the construct of motivation should not be treated as a “high” or “low” state but rather as something that varies over time and across situations. This means that researchers should not limit the study of motivation overseas to psychometric studies that utilize correlations among scores in language tests and questionnaire responses (see Sasaki, 2011).

Meanwhile, Kinginger's (2009, 2013) work claims that gender is the most salient identity characteristic in SA research, affecting pragmatics in particular. Gender has been widely investigated in relation to sexual harassment and the negative effects it has on female learning opportunities in a variety of SA learning environments involving American students (e.g., Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2008; Polanyi, 1995). Shively's (2016a) study indicates that both age and gender can potentially play an important role in L2 learners' interactions with NSs in the SA setting. Nonetheless, as Baker-Smemoe et al. (2014) noted, the effects of age on L2 learning in SA contexts have received far less attention than gender, and the primary focus in these studies has been on differences between children and adults (Llanes & Muñoz, 2013) or between older and younger children (Muñoz, 2010). In both cases, advantages were reported for younger learners. Finally, research involving LGBTQ learners is largely absent in the SA literature. Therefore, discussion around the challenges LGBTQ students may face when they go abroad, and how these challenges may affect their learning opportunities, can sometimes be limited in scope and anecdotal in nature.

Another individual factor that is currently being examined more closely is national identity. This factor has been determined to be relevant both in discerning a learner's disposition toward the host community and in understanding the apparently ‘tense’ relationship between becoming a ‘global citizen’ and being an American (or a citizen of any other nationality, Kinginger, 2000; Block, 2007; Du, 2015; Goldoni, 2013). In some cases, SA experiences do not necessarily lead to greater intercultural understanding. In fact, they may even reinforce the participants' original sense of national superiority and result in lower attainments over the course of the SA program. How then do we promote greater appreciation for other cultures among SA students? Martinsen (2010) and Baker-Smemoe et al. (2014) propose that working on

the development of cultural sensitivity *prior to* going abroad is critical for L2 development and cultural understanding.

A population of interest in relation to national/ethnic identity is that of HLLs. Even though there are no reliable records of how many students study overseas primarily to explore their heritage, demographics suggest that heritage education is on the rise and is therefore worthy of the applied linguist's attention. Because HLLs are bilingual and bicultural, they are constantly renegotiating their two languages and their identity, and this experience can help in immersive contexts, since cultural sensitivity plays an important role in language and cultural development abroad. Also, while on the one hand, seeing themselves as in-group members of the host community can potentially help them to expand their social networks (Van Der Meid, 2003), these learners may be perceived as different from L2 learners and thus held to different linguistic and cultural standards, which can lead to problems in how they are received (Shively, 2016b). More studies, such as Quan, Pozzi, Kehoe, and Menard-Warwick (Chapter 28, this volume) and Van Der Meid (2003), investigating heritage language (HL) and identity development in different national contexts would provide a more complete picture of the complex intersection between SA and HL learning.

Looking Toward the Future

Language Development

There have been positive changes in this area as more researchers are interested in investigating linguistic skills that have received less attention. Their research is already producing evidence that learners can make improvements in areas other than fluency, although linguistic areas such as L2 writing and L2 listening comprehension continue to be under-researched, with a few exceptions (e.g., Cubillos, Chieffo, & Fan, 2008 for L2 listening, Godfrey, Treacy, & Tarone, 2014 for L2 writing). In future years, researchers should continue to take advantage of the increasing use of digital platforms in SA contexts (e.g., e-mail, e-journals, blogs, and social media) and use this writing as sources of data for L2 writing studies (e.g., Back, 2013; Stewart, 2010). More SA studies are also examining the linguistic development of advanced learners, although at a somewhat slower pace (e.g., Grey et al., 2015; Morales-Front, 2018; Nagle, Morales-Front, Moorman, & Sanz, 2016). Finally, given the growth in short-term programs, the most popular option among US students (Institute for International Education, 2016), as well as internships and service-learning programs, research on linguistic skill gains in these contexts is sorely needed since most evidence comes from traditional semester or even yearlong programs. That is new territory that needs to be charted.

Methodology

As a complex phenomenon, language development deserves complex methods. We have seen that more SA scholars have chosen to investigate language development abroad by accounting for both learners' individual characteristics and program variables within the same study. In the same vein, there has been a call in recent years to develop more robust designs that include multiple measures to capture changes

in language ability. More empirical studies are employing novel techniques coming from cognitive psychology via SLA, such as eye-tracking and ERPs, to collect data that can help SA researchers make inferences about changes in language processing in addition to language accuracy (see Marijuan & Sanz, 2017 for a review). Also, researchers are getting away from SA vs. AH comparisons and have started to develop alternative approaches; for example, Perez-Vidal (2014) followed students before the onset of SA to months after their return. Finally, studies need to be more precise about the specific internal and external variables that may influence outcomes. They need to clearly specify key elements of the program: type of courses, contact hours, extracurriculars, tasks and assessments, and the advisor's role, for example. We cannot assume that one SA program is just like another. A key factor differentiating programs could be the implementation of a language pledge or of an online component in which learners need to communicate with instructors, peers, families, and conversation partners prior to departure. Researchers can further examine the role that social media and other internet platforms may play in the creation of social networks in the host country and their maintenance upon return. And while studies have focused some attention on individual differences, more needs to be said about the role that those differences make in new, less traditional programs, including service learning and internships. Intuitively, it makes sense to think that motivation, gender, and intercultural sensitivity could also be relevant when studying integration in workplace culture, so we need to look at learning outcomes of learners that differ in their language background (L2, HLL) and participate in the same type of service-learning or internship program.

Programs

While the internationalization of education is most important in a globalized world, undergraduates are pressured to complete double majors and certificates that keep them on campus. The result is the current rise in the number of short-term programs, especially those that integrate a service or “hands-on” component—such as internships or service learning—into their programmatic features. As more researchers focus on these new programs, it is critical that they include data from local community members and raise awareness of the “global marketization of doing good” (Hartman & Kiely, 2014, p. 57) and uncover the potential negative consequences of these programs. On a broader scale, it would be relevant for future SA research on volunteering, service learning, and internships to look at theories on experiential learning (e.g., Kolb, 1984), social cognitive theory (e.g., Bandura, 1991), and transformational learning (e.g., Mezirow, 2000).

It is imperative that the SA field embraces the call to diversify SA access. This is a concern reflected in a growing number of studies on inclusivity and diversity in international education. It also appears prominently in recent conference threads of well-established SA associations in the US. Hiring returnees as peer advisors and including in the curriculum of courses abroad discussions about heritage, race, and ethnicity have the potential to encourage learners with different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds to reflect on their identities. Also of special interest are programmatic features that can be enhanced to accommodate unique student populations. For example, Marijuan’s (Chapter 21, this volume) focus-group study began to explore how the inclusion of HLLs as conversation partners in a hybrid, short-term,

study-at-home/SA program (e.g., two weeks AH, three weeks abroad) might help L2 learners AH develop their linguistic skills. Conversation partners worked in a supportive environment prior to departure, with the added benefit of helping HLLs themselves by providing them with professional opportunities that encourage HL maintenance and transformation. Little is known about how the beliefs of foreign instructors from host universities collaborating with SA programs might affect their interactions with minority students. HL development and HL identity renegotiation, race, and ethnicity are promising SA research areas that can align with calls to promote and democratize SA. Studies that inform the field not only on the obstacles but also on the successes of minority students studying abroad can lead the way for change.

Conclusion

From a methodological standpoint, SA researchers today are interested in exploring the development of a wide array of linguistic skills. New techniques are gradually being introduced to investigate development, most particularly in SA research that ascribes to the cognitive tradition; also, often with the help of technology, researchers are adding new sources of data, from behavioral to electrophysiological. In addressing differences in learning outcomes, a wider number of variables related to learner and context characteristics are being taken into account. Due to the growing presence of social media and other technological platforms in immersive contexts, there is a noticeable increment of L2 writing research; also, the creation of new programs, which tend to be shorter but also more complex, has the potential to make the participants' experience broader and deeper. In these new programs, individual differences having to do with identity (gender, ethnic identity) become important in the development of social networks. We see a clear need in the field for more studies that adopt a within-subject, longitudinal, cross-sectional, or cross-programmatic approach. Moreover, we would like to insist on the need for study replication and data triangulation that can strengthen our understanding of the effects that an academic experience abroad can have on language and intercultural learning.

From a theoretical standpoint, there is no ‘theory of SA.’ The field is an offshoot of applied linguistics in general and SLA in particular, and as such, it relies on a variety of borrowed theories and approaches. Dominated by cognitive theory at first, the field now includes sociocultural theory, experiential learning educational frameworks, and postcolonial and critical discourse perspectives that highlight the negative effects of “commodification” and the “exoticization” of SA (e.g., Caton & Santos, 2009; Jorgenson & Shultz, 2012). We could summarize the transformation of SA research as follows: It started with classroom vs. immersion comparisons that disregarded both differences in immersive contexts and individual differences, it moved through an emphasis on the role of learner’s cognition in explaining differential results of immersion, and it is now reaching a place where the student’s socialization and identity are starting to play a central role. Also, research is now looking outward into how programs actually affect the communities they have inserted themselves in. With such an amplitude of research interests and methodologies in use in the SA literature, the answer to the question of whether the immersive experience is beneficial for learners’ language, cultural, and personal growth is not simple. Complex phenomena require complex approaches and collaboration by scholars who ascribe to different approaches.

This Volume

The aim of this handbook is to provide a comprehensive survey of applied linguistics research on second language and identity development in immersion contexts abroad, written by top scholars in the field from around the world. Since the special volume on the topic of language and SA appeared in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (2004), the past decade has seen an increasing number of researchers whose interest in the area has generated important primary research as well as high-quality overviews and position papers on the topic, even a few volumes. The present *The Routledge Handbook of Study Abroad Research and Practice* within the Routledge Handbook series acknowledges this recent growth in interest and aims to provide academics—current researchers and graduate students—as well as practitioners—administrators in offices of international programs in college campuses and SA program directors and teachers—with an invaluable resource.

In order to capture the diversity that we consider one of the strengths of the volume, we followed two routes: We posted a call for papers on the LINGUIST list so as to open the volume to potential authors working outside of Europe and the US; abstracts were reviewed, and we proceeded to invite the authors of the abstracts that were accepted to contribute a chapter. We then proceeded to assess gaps across the different sections and invited a number of authors with expertise in those areas to also contribute a chapter. Every manuscript, whether invited or not, was blind-reviewed by two external reviewers.

The theoretical approaches and methodologies utilized to investigate SA are varied, as are the aspects of language—pronunciation, pragmatics, morphosyntax—and psychosocial variables—attitudes, identity, aptitude—that have been under focus. They are all represented in the volume, as are qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, from classic measurements of fluency, accuracy, and complexity to electrophysiological and gaze measures. Furthermore, and with the goal of representing the diversity that characterizes SA programs and learners, we have strived to include researchers working with SA data gathered in programs from around the world and from diverse learners that vary according to national origin: for example, US students in Europe and Latin America, and Chinese students in the UK; age, including teenagers, college students, and adults; and language experience, from beginners to language majors, HLLs, and beyond. In fact, the volume truly captures this diversity by including chapters on different SA programs: long-term, short-term, sheltered, and direct matriculation programs as well as the key variables that distinguish them. With regard to individual differences, we have identified authors who work with and for underrepresented groups of students in an effort to erase the concept that SA is about monolingual, middle-class, mainstream learners immersed in monolingual societies; the volume has chapters that capture individual differences, such as motivation and aptitude, and their role in language development.

The volume is divided into five sections. The first section introduces the reader to the psycholinguistic and variationist theoretical principles that have guided the research as well as the quantitative and qualitative tools implemented in empirical studies. The second section groups primary and secondary research on different aspects of language and personal growth, from fluency, which traditionally has received the most attention, through lexical and grammatical development to intonation as well as personal identity. The third section looks at the context of SA, namely

types of programs, including, for example, hybrid programs that combine immersion on campus with immersion abroad as well as research on key aspects of program design, such as length of stay and the inclusion of conversation sessions with student partners. Because we understand that experiences abroad and their resulting effects are the consequence of the interaction between external factors, such as those included in the third section, and individual differences, the fourth section includes primary and secondary research on these variables, from age and proficiency level at the onset of immersion to aptitude and attitudes. The last section is devoted to practical matters, proposals, and implications for SA program design and implementation, including matters such as the integration of programs in the college curricula, applications of workplace research, and the preparation of students going abroad. The handbook closes with a chapter on the past, present and future of SA.

We hope that current researchers in the field of multilingual development, post-graduate students, and language practitioners, be they teachers or administrators responsible for setting up, maintaining, and evaluating SA programs, find in this volume a useful tool.

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Part I

Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to Study Abroad

Survey of Theoretical Approaches



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Variationist Research Methods and the Analysis of Second Language Data in the Study Abroad Context

Kimberly L. Geeslin and Jordan Garrett

Introduction

Language acquisition is a process through which theoretical perspectives on linguistic knowledge, specifically the form this knowledge takes and how it changes over time, can be profitably explored. With adult second language (L2) learners, we are further able to examine how two linguistic systems are simultaneously developed, stored, and used, and the degree to which each influences the other. Any theoretical approach employed to explore the role of study abroad (SA) in the process of the acquisition of L2 knowledge must account for these issues (Firth & Wagner, 2007; Regan, Howard, & Lemée, 2009; Sanz, 2014). As a group, several so-called usage-based approaches to language (Bybee, 2010; Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2009; Tomasello, 2009) afford a central role to patterns in actual language, as it is used in real-life texts and interactions, in shaping linguistic knowledge and the paths of acquisition and language change. Additionally, usage-based accounts, as opposed to generative accounts/approaches, allow a clear role for nonlinguistic information, such as the characteristics of individual speakers or the context of interaction, to influence patterns of language use. Although to varying degrees of exclusion, these approaches also recognize the importance of frequency, either the frequency of a given form or lexical item, or the frequency with which certain elements appear together, in shaping native and non-native grammars (Beckner et al., 2009; Bybee, 2010; Tomasello, 2009). These characteristics make such approaches especially well suited to exploring the role of context, in this case, SA, as the frequencies of different collocations and linguistic cues to which a learner is exposed can vary both quantitatively and qualitatively according to context.

We begin this chapter with an overview of usage-based approaches to L2 data in the SA context and how the contributions of one particular usage-based approach, variationist L2 acquisition, have advanced the study of the acquisition of variable linguistic forms and sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). This chapter focuses on the methods of data collection and data analysis that make a significant contribution to the examination of language learners in SA contexts, namely that

they attend to multiple levels of linguistic and extralinguistic (e.g., social, contextual, and/or individual) factors. To show how these issues have been addressed, we review and provide examples of research that uses a variety of data collection instruments, ranging from questionnaires, matched-guise tasks, and highly controlled production tasks to sociolinguistic interviews and more open-ended production tasks. In so doing, we show that such an approach allows us to explore questions related to development, in part due to this methodological variety but also due to its focus on the complex interaction of multiple factors that work in tandem to contribute to learner development.

The final sections of this chapter will highlight the most recent research insights gleaned from the application of variationist methodology and outline directions for future research. In fact, the SA context poses several interesting questions about language acquisition that have been profitably explored with the variationist approach. For example, if linguistic systems are influenced by contexts of use, SA provides an intensive case study about a change in context. Specifically, we would expect that certain forms would be newly introduced through SA, that others would appear with heightened frequency, and that the demands of SA would require exposure to new registers and contexts of interaction, thus influencing various levels of language use and language systems, i.e., the lexicon, phonology, morphosyntax, pragmatics, etc. Each of these changes can lead to measurable predictions about the influence of SA on L2 systems.

Usage-Based Theories: An Overview

The term usage-based is relatively transparent in that this umbrella term includes approaches to language that focus on how languages are used in real-life interaction, such as Exemplar theory, Dynamic systems and Chaos/Complexity theory, Connectionism, Thinking-for-speaking, and Variationist approaches (Bybee, 2010; Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2009; Tomasello, 2009). This means that the source of evidence for theories of this type is language as it occurs, with variability, pauses, disfluencies, and all of the imperfections found in real-time communication as opposed to idealized language disconnected from discursive and contextual meaning, as in formal, i.e., generative, approaches. In these approaches, patterns in the input are associated with child and L2 development, language change, and language variation, to name a few. Learning is often described as the process of perceiving and storing information about linguistic forms in context. The goal of this brief review is to identify several common principles and show that the investigation of these central issues lends itself to the use of variationist methods of analysis.

Although few theories still claim that frequency effects are the sole causative factor in language acquisition and/or change, most continue to recognize that the frequency of a given lexical item or grammatical form, or the frequency of occurrence of a form in a particular context influences language in a variety of ways. For example, frequent forms are said to be acquired early and to resist language change longer (e.g., Bybee, 2010). They are also shown to participate more readily in certain linguistic processes, such as reduction. Additionally, frequency tends to influence hearer expectations. We anticipate certain, more commonly occurring syntactic structures after hearing the first part of an utterance precisely because those are the structures that most frequently follow those particular preambles (see van Gompel, 2013), and we

even perceive variants more frequently when listening to speech from speakers (who we believe to be) from particular social or geographic groups who produce these variants more frequently (e.g., Hay, Warren & Drager, 2006). Given these findings, and the range of roles afforded to frequency across approaches, a method of analysis that allows frequency to be examined along with other factors of interest is of great value.

Usage-based approaches also posit a role for social factors, including but not limited to characteristics of the speaker and the context of interaction. Sociolinguistic research has long documented the many ways in which speakers vary the forms they produce as a function of social factors, such as age, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and the like (see Geeslin & Long, 2014). We also know that the topic of conversation, the genre of the language produced, the formality of the context, and even the location of the interaction influence our linguistic choices (e.g., Bell, 1984; Travis, 2007). What makes usage-based approaches unique is that they generally claim that this nonlinguistic information about the social context within which language occurs is stored along with the linguistic information and available to influence future language use. To explore this assertion, it is essential to employ methods of analysis that incorporate social information along with linguistic facts, rather than including one to the exclusion of the other.

A final consideration for usage-based approaches to L2 acquisition in particular is the degree to which patterns in the input available in a given context drive the developing grammar (Gurzynski-Weiss et al., 2017). For example, we can see how the development of L2s might be different for learners in uninstructed, instructed, and SA contexts of learning because the input to which each has access is inherently different in a variety of ways. To be sure, common paths of development can be explained under usage-based approaches, perhaps due to frequency effects in the language as a whole or to cognitive strategies. Nevertheless, methods of analysis that fail to explore differences in contexts of learning, as well as situational and individual differences, cannot be used to examine these issues.

Despite the central tenets of usage-based approaches to language, there are important differences between these approaches (see Atkinson, 2011; Geeslin & Long, 2014). Nevertheless, we believe that many of the questions that are shared by these usage-based approaches could, in fact, be explored more closely through an application of variationist methods. For example, we show how frequency can be examined alongside other factors, how social factors may remain at the forefront, and how input can be compared to learner language at various points during the process of development. Looking specifically at the role of SA, we show how learner language is analyzed before, during, and after these changes in access to input occur (i.e., through SA) and the implications of these findings for theories of acquisition.

The Variationist Approach

The variationist approach to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a usage-based approach known for the application of methods of analysis employed in sociolinguistic research (Geeslin & Long, 2014; Gudmestad, 2013; Preston, 1989). The primary insight of this approach is that language is not monolithic, but rather multiple forms may be used to fulfill a single communicative function. These forms carry information about the speaker, the hearer, and the context of interaction.¹ Sociolinguistic competence, then, is the ability to vary one's speech according to context, to reflect

one's own social identity and assessment of the context of interaction, and to interpret this variation in the language of others. For learners, variation between forms can fall along two axes: the first between structures that generally do not vary among native speakers (NSs) but can show inconsistent performance in L2 speakers (*vertical variation*, Adamson & Regan, 1991) and the second between two or more forms that fulfill the same function for NSs (*horizontal variation*). Thus, in variationist models, the choice between the many forms that may fulfill a given function is dependent on a confluence of linguistic, social, and, in some cases, developmental factors (Bayley & Tarone, 2012).

Under variationist approaches, grammars are viewed as probabilistic systems, and the rules that govern them are described in terms of predictive factors that favor or disfavor (rather than requiring) the use of a given form. In the SA context, we can use the variationist approach to explore the L2 development of sociolinguistic competence or the ability of learners to vary speech according to the hearer and the context of interaction (Canale & Swain, 1980). This essential ability is said to be acquired more effectively in the SA context, and the variationist methodology provides a manner in which development can be charted during a stay abroad. Investigations in this framework also examine the role of individual characteristics and identity to L2 acquisition and use. For instance, variationist research in the SA context has suggested a relationship between learner identity and language acquisition in that learners' attitudes, motivation, identities, and contact experience in SA, in turn, can influence language acquisition and a learner's willingness and/or ability to integrate herself into the respective host community (Regan et al., 2009). With these goals in mind, we explore the elicitation methods and analytical tools employed in contemporary variationist research.

Methods of Data Elicitation

The variationist approach is most centrally recognized by the analytical tools it employs, rather than any single technique for eliciting data. Nevertheless, variationist studies are often characterized by the attempt to elicit relatively spontaneous, unmonitored, or informal language, usually in the form of the sociolinguistic interview, characterized as a semidirected, informal interview between the participant and another speaker (Labov, 1972). This tendency results from the idea that unmonitored, informal speech is the best source of data for researchers that seek to elicit samples of language that best reflect pattern of use in a given community (Labov, 1972; Schilling, 2013). However, the inherent challenge rests in the fact that the presence of the researcher makes the participant unlikely to produce unmonitored speech (the *Observer's Paradox*). To overcome this, sociolinguists have developed techniques, such as recounting a brush with death, with the goal of leading the participant into a narrative in which engaging content causes them to cease focusing on the language itself (Labov, 1972, 2006).² While there are few examples in the L2 literature in which such questions are employed, the sociolinguistic interview itself, perhaps with questions geared toward daily life, experiences during SA, or plans for the future, is often used (e.g., Gudmestad & Geeslin, 2011). Some modifications for L2 participants, especially those with lower L2 proficiency, include oral response to situational prompts (e.g., Linford, 2016) or sentence-level discourse completion tasks (e.g., Woolsey, 2008). The goal of these supported oral response tasks is similar to that of the narrative: to allow

as free a response as possible and create a context in which the production of multiple variants is likely in response to other factors.

There are also more directed elicitation tasks that can be effective. One of the most widely used is often referred to as the WCT, or written contextualized task, in which participants select their preferred response among a range of possible, fully grammatical forms. The key element in such instruments is the context itself, which is more elaborate than the typical grammaticality judgment task and allows the researcher to manipulate or control the linguistic and some social independent variables thought to influence variation for the function under examination. The clear disadvantage of this method over more spontaneous, less guided production data is that the data elicited reflect preferences for a given form in a given context of use, and this is a more explicit (i.e., more monitored) task. Nevertheless, studies of variability tend to examine properties of the language that are not explicitly taught in instructed settings, so results are not likely to reflect formal rule learning alone. More importantly, this type of task has the distinct advantage of allowing valid comparison across participants, who are unlikely to produce several tokens with the same combination of independent linguistic variables in less structured tasks (see also Geeslin, 2011).

The elicitation tasks covered so far do well for examining linguistic and task-related influences on variation, but alone, they cannot contribute to a conversation about social or individual differences. To overcome this, most variationist studies use a background questionnaire to elicit data about an individual's characteristics. Additionally, these instruments often gather information about experiences abroad, motivation, attitudes, knowledge of other languages, and contact with the target language, to name a few. The advantage of these instruments is that they provide a wealth of information in very little time. Nevertheless, they are limited to self-report. This means that some constructs, like age or level of education, may be measured more reliably than others, like proficiency, motivation, or attitudes toward a particular variety.

The time these specialized instruments require must be weighed against factors such as participant fatigue and relevance to the research questions at hand. It is generally not practical (or advisable) to include specialized measures of every construct. However, in a study where a cross-sectional design (i.e., multiple levels of learners that represent various stages of acquisition) is used to show acquisition, a proficiency measure can be of tremendous benefit. Likewise, a study that focuses on motivation but is based on the analysis of a handful of self-report items on a background questionnaire may not be as generalizable as one that employs a more precise measure. One area where we know that self-report is insufficient alone is in the study of implicit linguistic attitudes. In such cases, a task such as the Matched Guise Task (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, & Fillenbaum, 1960) may be better suited. The matched-guise task asks participants to listen to speech samples and rate them on scalar attributes, such as likeability or level of education (e.g., Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012). In the various adaptations of this task, researchers may manipulate a photo, so that the speaker is believed to have different inherent traits (e.g., income based on clothing and housing backdrop), even though the speech sample is unchanged, or some elements of the speech sample itself, such as regional accent, may be manipulated. It is generally assumed that likeability is a good indicator of solidarity, where in-group speakers are viewed by participants as more likeable, and that perceptions of prestige language influence ratings of traits such as employability or level of education. The benefit of

these tasks is that participants are generally not aware of the features being manipulated and the task is said to tap subconscious attitudes. For a more complete overview of attitudes and perception research in sociolinguistics, see Campbell-Kibler (2010) and Preston (2013).

Methods of Data Analysis

Variationists are known for statistical models that account for multiple factors and their simultaneous influence on a given form. These factors can be linguistic, social, situational, or individual, and each can be operationalized according to experts in the respective fields. In other words, scores on the very best measure of motivation from education psychology can be taken as one factor and included in the model. Although these factors are explored to differing degrees across studies, there is almost always a careful account of the linguistic context (as defined by the intersection of independent factors) in which forms occur. This means that the typical first step in analyzing language data is to arrive at a coding scheme that characterizes each of the linguistic aspects of the context that are believed to influence use of a given form. The study of clitic pronouns in Spanish, for example, includes an analysis that takes telicity of the verb, animacy of the referent, referent gender, and several other linguistic factors into account. Each potential context is then coded for each of these variables and every individual token assigned a value for each variable, which, in turn, is included in the statistical analysis. Additionally, the social and individual characteristics of the speaker/participant can be coded and entered into the statistical model in much the same way.

The statistical models themselves have evolved over time, but most are a form of regression analysis. The statistical programs in which these tests are performed vary, but collectively, the tests have become increasingly sophisticated. Variationists are no longer limited to binary categorical dependent variables, but rather statistical tests can account for multiple potential forms in a single analysis (e.g., Gudmestad & Geeslin, 2011). Likewise, although it was once quite difficult to differentiate between variables that affected each token independently (e.g., linguistic-level variables, such as animacy of the reference) and those that affected all the forms produced by a single speaker (e.g., gender of the speaker, type of elicitation task), there are several good examples of research that achieves this distinction (e.g., Linford, 2016). These same tests may be used to model data elicited through production or perception tasks, with open-ended or guided responses, and with categorical or scalar responses. Thus, the diversity of instruments employed in the aforementioned studies expands the number and types of factors that can be considered in variationist research, but each contributes to a common goal of modeling variability in native or learner grammars.

Research Highlights of the Variationist Approach in Study Abroad

Since the context of acquisition involves the presence of regional variation, it can play a significant role in the frequency of a given collocation or individual lexical item in the input and, thus, the forms learners perceive and/or select on a variety of language tasks. Therefore, with the central role of input in L2 development, variationist methods are uniquely equipped to study the development of learners' sociolinguistic competence on multiple levels. In this section, we examine specific

methodological and theoretical contributions of research using variationist methods and/or studies that investigate the acquisition of regionally variable structures in the SA context in three levels of linguistic development: phonology, morphosyntax, and L2 pragmatics.³ Following a brief overview, we provide an example study from the acquisition of Spanish during SA.

L2 Phonology

While the regional variation of phonological categories has been extensively studied in sociolinguistic research (Labov, 2006), it is much less prevalent in the study of L2 development. Specific studies on the acquisition of regionally variable structure in the L2 can often divide themselves between studies of perception (e.g., Avello, Mora, & Pérez-Vidal, 2012; O'Brien, 2003; Rasmussen & Zampini, 2010; Schmidt, 2009) or production (e.g., George, 2014; Knouse, 2012; Regan et al., 2009). There are several studies of the acquisition of L2 phonological variation (Knouse, 2012; Lord, 2010; Regan et al., 2009; Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012), which, in general, find that while learners are often able to perceive phonological variation in SA and, at times, adopt this variability in production, they often do not produce it with the same frequency nor with the same predictive factors as NSs of the dialects to which learners are exposed (George, 2014). Further, especially prevalent in production studies is the inclusion or discussion of nonlinguistic individual learner factors (such as motivation, attitude, explicit instruction in regional variation, etc.), which, in turn, raises additional questions about the role of learner choices of whether to use regional variants before, during, and after SA.

Case One: The [θ]/[s] Distinction

A model study of the acquisition of regional phonological variation is Knouse's (2012) analysis of the acquisition of the voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ in north/central varieties of Peninsular Spanish. In these varieties, there is a distinction between /θ/ in words containing the graphemes *ce*, *ci*, and *z* and the voiceless alveolar fricative [s] in other contexts orthographically represented by *s*. This distinction is illustrated in Table 1.1.

Knouse's study compares a group of SA learners ($n = 15$) in a short-term (six weeks) SA program in Salamanca, Spain, a city whose speakers show high levels of the phonemic distinction, with a group of at-home instructed learners in the US ($n = 10$) whose instructor uses the /θ/ variant and who were explicitly taught the patterns of distinction during a six-week intensive Hispanic linguistics course in the US. Participants performed two oral production tasks, a reading of a newspaper article and answering open-ended questions in Spanish, once upon arriving in Spain (or at the beginning of the at-home course) and also six weeks later. Previous studies, such as

Table 1.1 Minimal pairs of [s] and [θ] in Peninsular Spanish

<i>s</i>	IPA	<i>ce, ci, or z</i>	IPA
<i>coser</i> 'to sew'	[ko.sér]	<i>cocer</i> 'to cook'	[ko.θér]
<i>sidra</i> 'cider'	[sí.ðra]	<i>cidra</i> 'citron'	[θí.ðra]
<i>asar</i> 'to roast'	[a.sár]	<i>azar</i> 'fate'	[a.θár]

Geeslin and Gudmestad (2008), find that learners can (but do not always) produce /θ/ with greater frequency over time (as opposed to [s] or the nontarget [z]), possibly due to attitudinal differences. Thus, in addition to the oral production tasks, Knouse had participants complete an explicit measurement of attitudes toward acquiring native-like pronunciation. It was predicted that higher scores on this inventory (reflective of a strong desire to achieve native-like pronunciation) would be predictive of higher levels of production of [θ].

Knouse (2012) coded the oral production data for linguistic factors, such as graphemic representation (i.e., words containing the digraphs *ci* and *ce*, or the grapheme *z*), situational factors, such as task, and at the level of individual participants, for factors related to experience (e.g., living with a host family) and attitude (e.g., their desire to achieve native-like pronunciation). Results show that like the previous research, few tokens of [θ] were recorded, with no tokens produced by the at-home group. Only seven learners in the SA group produced [θ], and did so with a rather low token frequency ($n = 36$). A multivariate regression analysis showed that learners produced more interdental fricatives with the grapheme *z* and on the newspaper reading task. With regard to nonlinguistic factors, having stayed with a host family was not significant in the multivariate analysis, despite a large percentage of tokens having been produced by this subgroup of learners ($n = 11$). This may be due to the low number of tokens. Results from the pronunciation attitudes inventory showed that high levels of desire to improve pronunciation was a significant predictor of [θ] production. Knouse's results are corroborated in a later study by George (2014) who finds low frequency of [θ] and another Castilian variant, [χ], in production but that other individual mediating factors may be at play. Knouse (2012) concludes that while SA can facilitate learning, neither exposure to the [θ] nor explicit instruction guarantees its production.

To summarize the contributions of Knouse (2012) and other studies like it, we see that a major role should be afforded to factors beyond the linguistic context. A central tenet of variationist approaches is that nonlinguistic factors play a role in L2 development and contribute to our understanding of how learners' development in SA may be influenced by those individual factors. By looking at the relationship between acquisition, on the one hand, perhaps operationalized through perception or interpretive abilities, and identity and language attitudes on the other, perhaps operationalized as the choice to (not) produce regional variants, we can begin to understand the complex nature of language acquisition and language variation more generally. Further research should explore how individual factors interact with other linguistic factors in L2 phonological development in SA. Finally, variationist methods would be profitable for analyzing perception data as well as subconscious attitudinal research.

L2 Morphosyntactic Development in Study Abroad

In the preceding section, we noted that both linguistic and attitudinal factors are essential in understanding patterns of acquisition and use. Although production of [θ] was infrequent, we find with several studies of morphosyntax that one key element of understanding learner patterns is to examine both frequency of use of a form and the linguistic and social factors that predict that use (Geeslin, 2011; Geeslin & Long, 2014). In L2 research, there are examples of structures where

learners' frequency of use/selection is similar to that of NSs, but the predictors differ (e.g., *ser* and *estar* in Geeslin, 2003). Likewise, the opposite can also be true, where the frequency is different, but the predictive factors are the same, as is the case for future time reference (e.g., Gudmestad & Geeslin, 2011). Looking specifically at SA research on the L2 acquisition of dialectally constrained variation, there are studies that analyze multiple morphosyntactic properties ranging from subject and object expression in Spanish (Linford, 2016; Salgado-Robles, 2011), *ne* deletion (Regan, 1996) and *nous-on* alternation (Dewaele, 2002; Sax, 2003) in French, to past and future time expression in both languages (Kanwit, Geeslin, & Fafulas, 2015; Regan et al., 2009). This nonexhaustive list illustrates how variationist studies contribute to our knowledge of L2 development by exploring how different predictive factors influence learner and NS comparison groups' linguistic behavior independent of and in addition to their frequency. Such a view gives us a methodologically and conceptually richer picture of learner behavior and the developmental path toward NS norms in the SA context.

Case Two: Variable Object Pronouns in Spanish

Taking object expression in Spanish as an example, the topic of *leísmo* (i.e., the use of the dative object pronoun *le(s)* in accusative contexts as opposed to *lo(s)* or *la(s)*) is highly studied in sociolinguistics (e.g., Fernández-Ordóñez, 2012; Klein-Andreu, 2000; Ormazabal & Romero, 2013) and is part of a growing body of SA research (Geeslin, García-Amaya, Hasler-Barker, Henriksen, & Killam, 2010; Linford, 2016; Salgado-Robles, 2011). One example of a *leísta* system is illustrated in Table 1.2.

In the clitic paradigm in Table 1.2, masculine singular animate (specifically, [+human]) referents are often realized as *le*, but there is variation in pronominal systems in other varieties of Peninsular Spanish.⁴

Testing 33 high-school learners three times during a seven-week intensive SA program, Geeslin et al. (2010) found that learners in León, Spain (a *leísta* dialect region) initially showed similar rates of selection of *le* (and the plural *les*) in accusative contexts to an NS comparison group on a written contextualized preference task. However, Zyzik (2006) found that at-home learners in the US overgeneralize dative pronouns to all animate or human referents, even in accusative contexts. This suggests that it may be difficult to distinguish by frequency alone whether learners have acquired this unique regionally constrained system or if there is another process, like overgeneralization, at work. Geeslin and colleagues did find that learners' frequency

Table 1.2 Central Peninsular Spanish clitic paradigm*

<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>		<i>Neuter</i>
<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	
[+human]	[-human]			
Accusative	le	lo	la	los
Dative	le			les
				lo
				le

*Ormazabal and Romero (2013).

of selection of *le(s)* was lower at the midpoint of the program, and then rose again but not to the same level of NSs by Week 7. They suggest that this is because learners first move beyond the overgeneralization of human referents and then slowly increase use of *le* forms, but at that stage, their patterns of use are more consistent with native norms. A logistic regression analysis showed that telicity was a significant predictor at all times for the learners and for the NSs. At Time 1, coreferentiality and telicity were predictive factors, while at Time 2, telicity was the only significant predictor apart from improvement on Proficiency Test 2. Results for Time 3 show that improvement on the proficiency measure, referent animacy, and coreferentiality were predictive factors. For NSs, coreferentiality was not a significant factor, and in contrast to learners, referent gender was a significant predictor. The results indicate that learners move toward the NS patterns for both frequency and predictors.

Salgado-Robles (2011) builds upon this design by including an oral production task and comparing two study sites: a *leista* dialect region (Valladolid, Spain) and a non-*leista* region (Seville, Spain), with learners ($n = 40$) and NS in both cities. The learners in Valladolid increased their rates of use of *le(s)* in accusative contexts to a rate similar to that of NSs and also with similar predictors: *le(s)* is more likely with animate, masculine referents, and atelic verbs. One key difference from the findings of Geeslin et al. (2010) is that learners in Salgado-Robles's study acquired the gender constraint on use of *le(s)*. The learners in Seville also moved toward NSs rates of use of *le(s)*. Salgado-Robles's study shows that learners in two different dialect regions approach NS frequency of use and predictors of use over the course of a five-month stay.

Finally, Linford (2016) expands this body of work through the inclusion of Latin American dialects in which *leismo* is much less prevalent.⁵ Although many studies examine one linguistic structure or category in SA contexts, Linford analyzes three morphosyntactic categories (grammatical subjects, objects, and past time expression), comparing 11 learners in Spain with 11 in the Dominican Republic. He finds that learners show some development toward NSs norms but that learners' development was highly dependent on the grammatical structure, as well as location and task. Much like Knouse's (2012) and George's (2014) studies, individual factors, such as motivation, attitudes toward the language, motivation, contact with NSs, and proficiency, were also important in learner development.

In sum, we can take several insights from this body of research on clitic pronouns in Spanish and apply them to other contexts of learning, other languages and other linguistic structures. As with Case One from phonology, we see that individual factors mediate development. One advantage of variationist methods in this line of research is the inclusion of nonlinguistic factors in the analysis of variation. Additionally, as demonstrated by these studies of object expression, learners may approach NS-like frequency in production (e.g., oral production tasks) and preference (e.g., Written Contextualized Preference Tasks), but those factors that constrain use of those forms will indicate whether the form is used in a similar manner by learners and NSs. Variationist methods are uniquely equipped to consider multiple factors, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, that influence NS and L2 learners' external linguistic behavior, and to distinguish these constraints on use from mere rates of use, which may appear to be similar, despite their having arisen for distinct reasons, perhaps related to language development as opposed to sociolinguistic variation.

Study Abroad and Interlanguage Pragmatics

While there is little existing research in interlanguage pragmatics using variationist methods, much of its study is, in fact, compatible with these methods and wholly compatible with a usage-based framework of SLA as SA learners are “socialized” into the target speech language communities. Further, SA participants are well represented in interlanguage pragmatics research, and studies include SA as a variable or take place in the SA context (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Félix-Brasdefer, 2004; Matsumura, 2001; Owen, 2001; Schauer, 2004). As Bataller (2015) notes, the study of pragmatic variation is a relatively new field and the number of studies is growing especially in languages like Spanish that display high levels of regional variation, especially at the speech act level (see Félix-Brasdefer, 2009; Placencia, 2005).⁶ As the knowledge of pragmatic variation increases, it is logical that more studies of learners’ pragmatic development in SA should follow. In the existing research on SA learners, Bataller (2010) notes a division between studies that show that learners demonstrate the ability to move toward NS pragmatic norms and those that show little to no development depending on the speech act (p. 161). Such divisions make interlanguage pragmatics a potentially fruitful area for future study from multiple perspectives, including those employing variationist methods.

Case Three: Service Encounters in Spanish

One speech act explored in the SA context is requests, often made during service encounters. Bataller (2010) notes that after SA, learners do begin to use more native-like request strategies. Both Bataller (2010) and Shively (2011) study service encounters with learners in Spain using different research designs but finding similar results. Service encounters are both a frequently and naturally-occurring speech activity in SA and are ideal for L2 pragmatics research (see Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005). Bataller (2010) studies the development of English-speaking learners’ ($n = 31$) requests over the course of a four-month SA experience in Valencia, Spain. Analyzing data from open role-plays at the beginning and end of the SA experience, she finds that learners’ behavior had ‘slightly changed’ (p. 170) in that they moved toward the NS comparison group’s choices of (in-)direct strategies and that learners did change the kinds of strategies employed over the course of SA. However, no statistically significant changes were observed. She cites the short time abroad, the possible lack of awareness of L1 and L2 differences, or the possibility that learners may simply prefer the L1 convention, despite being aware of the difference. In conclusion, she calls for more instruction in L2 pragmatics and investigations of how instruction and SA interact in L2 pragmatic development.

In a related study, Shively (2011) examines the pragmatic development of seven undergraduate SA learners during a 14-week experience in Toledo, Spain. Unlike Bataller’s (2010) study, the participants in Shively’s study received explicit instruction in pragmatics during orientation and a 30-minute face-to-face lesson on requests in Spanish. Participants made naturalistic audio recordings, in which they performed authentic service encounters, at Weeks 2, 6, and 11 of the semester and made journal entries about the encounters. Her analysis showed that learners adopted some NS norms for service encounters and that explicit instruction appeared to influence learners’ choices. For example, learners shifted from speaker- to increased

hearer-oriented verbs (e.g., *Quiero...* ‘I want’ to *¿Me das...?* ‘Will you give me...?’), and toward direct requests and syntactically less-complex structures, such as imperatives or simple interrogatives. This departs from learners’ L1 (American English) norms, which tend to use more syntactically complex structures (modals, subordination, etc.) and indirect requests. Learners approached NS norms in some respects, but they differed in others. For example, learners still used ‘need’ requests at Week 11 (*Necesito...* ‘I need...’), which is inappropriate in the target language community. Shively notes that the material outcome of many of the requests was not affected by the different language strategies used. She concludes that the collection of naturalistic data has many important advantages and that the study suggests that learners were able to be socialized into new practices.

In sum, these studies of L2 pragmatics are compatible with many different usage-based models of language acquisition and show that while learners can move toward NS norms, there are multiple mediating factors that affect development and the strategies L2 learners employ during service encounters. The variety of research designs and speech acts available makes this a fruitful area for research using variationist methods. For example, with a growing body of knowledge about regional pragmatic variation, comparative interlanguage pragmatic studies are a logical ‘next step.’ How learners’ L2 pragmatics develops over time in different SA sites can be investigated using these methods. Further, as learners’ use of linguistic devices and pragmatic strategies can be influenced by a number of linguistic and nonlinguistic factors, L2 pragmatics research employing these analytical methods is a potential source of future knowledge of how learners’ sociolinguistic competence develops in SA.

Conclusions and Future Directions

The study of L2 acquisition in the SA environment has benefited from the insights available through variationist analyses. The studies profiled in the present chapter provide details about the path of development of phonological, morphosyntactic, and pragmatic constructs. These methods have been applied to learners with varying levels of proficiency and a broad range of target languages. They support the inclusion of linguistic, social, and individual factors in a single research design; they highlight the value of employing multiple elicitation tasks and analyzing frequency of use of a form and the factors that influence use of a form; and they demonstrate how target norms, interlanguage at various stages of development, and learner outcomes may be described in comparable terms. In sum, there is a significant and fast-growing body of work that employs these methods in order to increase our understanding of the development of communicative competence in the SA environment.

Although the application of variationist methods of elicitation and analysis to the study of language acquisition in the SA context has been fruitful, it has also served to indicate several areas where future research would be helpful. For example, there is a growing range of target languages included in this field of research, stemming from earlier concentrations on English, French, and, more recently, Spanish, to additional target languages. However, the language pairs themselves are not especially diverse, generally including English as the first language or the target. Future research would do well to expand this focus. Additionally, the role of attitudinal factors is still relatively understudied. Taking Ringer-Hilfinger (2012) as a notable exception, there is little application of experimental methods that tap underlying attitudinal or

processing biases (e.g., the influence of contextual or social information on the identification of a variant as in Hay, Warren, and Drager (2006) for L1) and these factors are clearly implicated in the acquisition of regional variants. Finally, as we continue to increase and diversify this body of work, care should be taken to add longitudinal studies (e.g., Linford, 2016) and those with multiple research sites (e.g., Kanwit et al., 2015) to this body of work so that the limits of generalizability are more clearly understood. With these goals in mind, the field of variationist linguistics in the SA context has an exciting future ahead.

Key Terms

Variation	Matched-guise
Variationist	Register
Sociolinguistic competence	Context
Usage-based	Probabilistic
Individual differences	Data elicitation

Notes

- 1 In L1 work, Eckert (2012) has argued that variation influences the construction of social meaning and issues like this could also be examined in the L2 context (see also Kiesling, 2013).
- 2 To be sure, the concerns with the observer's paradox have changed considerably, and L1 and L2 research are now both characterized by a broad range of data types and elicitation materials (for overview, see Schilling, 2013).
- 3 These three areas are selected for focus because they represent well-studied structures, but it is important to note that this method can work equally well in the study of other areas, such as the lexicon.
- 4 See Fernández-Ordóñez (2012) or Klein-Andreu (2000) for a discussion of variation in different *leísta* dialects or comparisons with the so-called etymological system that is distinguished by case, in which the *lo(s)/la(s)* forms are used exclusively in accusative contexts and *le(s)* is reserved for dative contexts. In sum, variable pronominal paradigms are influenced by factors such as the number, gender, animacy, countability of the referent, and speaker gender and class.
- 5 While there have been claims that there exist various types of *leismo* in Latin American varieties, they are not necessarily considered to have the same distribution as Peninsular Spanish varieties (e.g., Schwenter, 2006).
- 6 It should be noted that pragmatics encompasses a wide range of phenomenon, such as politeness, address forms, implicatures, turn-taking, etc. However, interlanguage pragmatics research has overwhelmingly considered speech acts, especially in the SA context, so this research is reviewed here (see Taguchi, 2011, for an example of non-speech-act-related research).

Further Reading

- Bataller, R. (2010). Making a request for a service in Spanish: Pragmatic development in the study abroad setting. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43, 160–175. (This investigation of requests in service encounters examines acquisition during a four-month study abroad program in Valencia, Spain. An analysis of role-plays shows that learners increased their use of direct request strategies in a low-imposition scenario, but they did not show the same development in the use of indirect—native-like—strategies in a more imposing situation.)
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1, 1–47. (This paper responds to

- the need for a comprehensive framework in understanding the multifaceted nature of communication. The authors identify three subtypes of communicative competence—grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic—and they explore the implications for second language teaching and testing. Their model continues to be used as the basis for contemporary models of communicative competence in instructed settings.)
- Kanwit, M., Geeslin, K. L., & Fafulas, S. (2015). Study abroad and the SLA of variable structures: A look at the present perfect, the copula contrast, and the present progressive in Mexico and Spain. *Probus*, 27, 307–348. (This study investigates the acquisition of three variable phenomena in Spanish—the copulas *ser* and *estar* + adjective, the preterit and present perfect in past-time contexts, and the present and present progressive for actions in progress. The data were collected in two different study abroad sites using a written contextualized questionnaire. Learners showed development in sociolinguistic competence in general, but gains differed by variable structure as well as the location of their stay—Mexico vs. Spain.)
- Regan, V., Howard, M., & Lemée, I. (2009). *The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters. (This book explores the relationship between study abroad and the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation through a careful analysis of oral interviews with English-speaking learners of French as a second language. The findings of analyses of several variable structures in French show that extra-linguistic factors, such as gender and the amount of exposure to the second language, play a role in the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence.)
- Ringer-Hilfinger, K. (2012). Learner acquisition of dialect variation in a study abroad context: The case of Spanish [θ]. *Foreign Language Annals*, 45, 430–446. (This study investigates the acquisition of the geographically variable phoneme [θ] during a one-semester study abroad program in Madrid, Spain by English-speaking learners. A series of tasks were administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the program to measure awareness, language attitudes, and use of [θ]. Results show that although learners' awareness increased over the course of the semester, this awareness did not determine their rates of use of [θ]).
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Psycholinguistic, Cognitive, and Usage-Based Approaches to Study Abroad Research

Timothy McCormick

Introduction

Although it is a commonplace belief that a sojourn abroad is the most efficient or even the only way to truly acquire a second language, years of research have not been so unequivocal (cf. Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 1991; Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004; Sanz, 2014). In fact, this discordance between the general public's expectation and the researcher's vacillation is so prominent that to highlight it has become a leitmotif of introductions to publications on language acquisition during study abroad (SA; e.g., Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz, 2015; Tokowicz, Michael, & Kroll, 2004). Certainly, the difficult nature of research on SA contributes to the inconclusive results (DeKeyser, 2014; Llanes, 2012; Sanz, 2014). To begin, there are simply far fewer students abroad than in the at-home (AH) context, and while individual differences play an important role in both contexts, SA programs also differ in length, in living arrangements, in type of matriculation, and in nature of classes, among many other variables. Of course, the study abroad experience (SAE) contains many more opportunities for exposure to and interaction with the target language, adding an additional layer of complexity to the research agenda.

The assumption goes that only in the SA context can the motivation to improve one's language abilities lead to sufficiently frequent interactions with native speakers, which leads to greater opportunity to practice the second language (L2) and therefore otherwise unattainable language gains. The connections between each of these steps have been the attention of a considerable amount of research, and while there is some support of the idea that integrative motivation leads to more interactions (e.g., Hernández, 2010) and increased language use leads to greater language gains (e.g., Foster, 2009), the conclusions are not as easily made as the aforementioned assumption (e.g., Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, Brown, & Martinsen, 2014). Instead, several authors have suggested that individual differences play a key role at each link of this chain (e.g., Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014; Grey et al., 2015). This is reflective of usage-based approaches to L2 acquisition, which work on the hypotheses that language learning depends on exposure and input, and that from this

input, learners utilize nonlinguistic cognitive capacities to induce the rules of the L2 (Ellis & Wulff, 2015). Researchers' goals of clarifying the role of each link of this chain of the abroad learning experience have resulted in a complex network, merging usage-based and psycholinguistic approaches to L2 research, and have predominantly focused on how a sojourn abroad affects oral proficiency or lexical and morphosyntactic development.

This chapter begins by highlighting the predominant dependent variables that have received much attention in psycholinguistic, cognitive, and usage-based research on SA. This is followed by a brief discussion of the research addressing the relationship between linguistic development abroad and nonlinguistic cognitive and psycholinguistic independent variables, such as motivation, cognition, and aptitude, as well as language use and proficiency. Finally, I discuss recommendations for practice and areas in which future research can contribute to the SA literature.

Dependent Variables

In order to delineate fully the primary directions of research in psycholinguistic, cognitive, and usage-based approaches to SA research, it is worth highlighting that two broad dependent variables receive the most attention in these lines of research. In what follows, I highlight the general findings for oral proficiency and lexical and morphosyntactic development, including both between-subject studies that compare SA and AH groups and within-subject studies that compare pre- and postsojourn values.

Oral Proficiency

Given the laymen's view of SA as a panacea of L2 acquisition addressed earlier, it is no surprise that much of the attention from academic researchers on linguistic development abroad is directed at oral proficiency, the logic being that with more opportunities for use comes more development. Researchers divide oral proficiency into three domains: complexity, accuracy, and fluency (see Chapter 12, this volume). Of these, fluency has by far received the most attention within the SA literature.

Researchers have found a relative consistency for gains in oral fluency during a semester abroad that holds true for beginners (e.g., Freed, 1995; Serrano & Llanes, 2015), intermediate (e.g., Llanes, Tragant & Serrano, 2012; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012) and advanced learners (e.g., Lennon, 1990; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009), and both short-term programs (e.g., Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Serrano & Llanes, 2015) and three- to six-month terms (e.g., Freed, 1995; Freed et al., 2004; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). But while one domain may flourish, it may be at the cost of the others, so the domains must be considered together in order to understand the greater picture.

The other domains, complexity and accuracy, have received less attention, and the results are mixed: One study reports development in both accuracy and complexity for children but not for adult learners (Llanes, 2012), others report gains in accuracy but not complexity (Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Pérez-Vidal & Juan-Garau, 2011), and most find no gains for either grammatical dimension (Llanes & Muñoz, 2013; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012; Serrano, Llanes, & Tragant, 2011). In addition to the mixed findings, these studies use only one measure of accuracy and complexity: error-free T-units and clauses per T-unit, respectively. However, these constructs are multidimensional, and minor developments may go undocumented. For example,

using only error-free T-units as a quantitative tool does not reveal changes in the number of errors in the disregarded T-units. For a more detailed analysis, researchers can subdivide errors into specific categories, such as free morpheme errors, verbal errors, and nominal errors, which can reveal subtle changes within learners of various proficiencies. Future research on oral accuracy and complexity development should aim to illuminate the mixed findings highlighted earlier by employing finer-grained measures to complement broader measures in order to amplify our understanding of oral proficiency development as a whole.

Lexical and Morphosyntactic Development

The development of discrete lexical and grammatical features has received less attention in the SA literature than global oral proficiency, though these features represent an important component of the psycholinguistic and usage-based research on SA. For example, timed lexical decision tasks and grammaticality judgment tasks (GJTs) have been employed to evaluate the automaticity of specific linguistic constructs (e.g., Grey et al., 2015; also see Chapter 3, this volume). Studies on lexical and grammatical development can be divided into between- and within-subject designs, though both tend to reveal a positive relationship between SAE and linguistic growth.

SAE has been associated with descriptively faster and more accurate lexical comprehension and production than AH formal classroom learning (Sunderman & Kroll, 2009) as well as with descriptively improved oral lexical translation accuracy and greater employment of circumlocution when compared to AH peers (Tokowicz et al., 2004). Research has revealed less dependence on explicit lexical cues and an increased use of morphological cues by sojourners than by traditional classroom learners (LaBrozzi, 2012) as well as the use of a more precise lexicon featuring “narrowly defined lexical verbs” (e.g., *have something to eat* vs. *eat*) (Foster, 2009, p. 105). The research, however, is not without divergent findings. For example, an AH group showed superior gains in discrete lexical and grammatical features compared to their SA peers (Collentine, 2004), although this study also cites improved narrative abilities and increased semantic density for the SA group on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language’s Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), a common tool in oral proficiency studies. These findings highlight the idea that different contexts may promote gains in different domains, likely dependent on the specific language use and language exposure experienced by learners.

In within-subject designs, morphosyntactic development has been observed during an SA program (e.g., Grey et al., 2015; Guntermann, 1995). For example, GJTs, employed by Grey and colleagues (2015), revealed faster responses associated with Spanish word order, number agreement, and gender agreement as well as improved accuracy associated with word order and number agreement (though not gender agreement). Lexical development was observed of the same group of students, who manifested increased accuracy identifying nonwords in a lexical decision task after their five-week program in Spain and decreased reaction times for both words and nonwords (Grey et al., 2015). Such methodologically strict, within-subject designs help to elucidate some of the contrasting findings highlighted earlier, as do comparisons to language use and language contact, discussed later.

Independent Variables

While psycholinguistic and usage-based approaches to SA include a broad range of questions, attention has been focused in four main domains. In this section, I highlight the usage-based, psycholinguistic, and cognitive variables that are most fruitful in their respective domains.

Language Contact

Quantity of interactions in the target language during SA is related to language gains; this has been established in several studies (e.g., Freed et al., 2004; Isabelli-García, 2006; Segalowitz et al., 2004). For example, increased language contact has been associated with more rich or native-like lexical use (e.g., Foster, 2009), or with greater oral fluency, reflecting easier access to native-like formulaic phrases (e.g., Towell, Hawkins, & Bazergui, 1996; Wood, 2010). In fact, SA research, to a large degree, is built around the idea of usage-based language acquisition: With more (opportunity for) use of the language, greater gains are expected. However, when certain researchers have looked more deeply at contact and use, a different picture has been revealed. Use of the L2 is not always the greatest predictor of language gains (e.g., Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014; Mendelson, 2004; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). These studies suggest that measuring L2 use as a raw number does not accurately reflect the quality of interactions. For example, Baker-Smemoe and colleagues' (2014) analysis of the pre- and postabroad OPIs of 102 students from the same university studying in six different countries reveals that the best predictor of gains was the students' local friends' English proficiency and not L2 use. While this may seem counterintuitive, it has also been observed in other studies (e.g., Dewey, Belnap, & Hillstrom, 2013), and the researchers suggest that it does not reflect English use per se. For example, Dewey and colleagues (2013) reveal that the sojourners' friends did not speak English with them, but rather the role of English proficiency reflected a history of SA on the part of the learner, who understood the sojourners' situation and made attempts to provide socializing opportunities with locals because of his or her own experience. The second-best predictor of gains in Baker-Smemoe and colleagues' (2014) study was change in social network size, which was negatively correlated. While this again seems counterintuitive, the researchers interpret these findings as suggestive that deeper conversations with fewer friends can be more effective in developing greater language gains than speaking more hours per se.

Proficiency and Aptitude

Modern language aptitude refers to a group of capacities that researchers have associated with a learner's basic "cognitive disposition or readiness for language learning" (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004, p. 175). These capacities include, for example, phonetic coding ability, rote learning, and sensitivity to grammatical features, and are standardly measured using the Modern Language Aptitude Test, which has been found not to correlate to oral gains by SA participants (Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1995; Freed, 1995). A more recent study has found a correlation between one component of aptitude and gains during a three-week SAE (Serrano & Llanes,

2015). However, these results should be interpreted with caution: The study includes only one component of aptitude, rote learning ability, which was measured using the vocabulary test LLAMA B (Meara, 2005). These scores were then compared to scores on a formulaic sequence test from both before and after the SA program. The correlation likely reveals an overlap of the cognitive demands recruited by the two tests rather than a true correlation between the more global modern language aptitude and language development.

While aptitude is a measure of cognitive readiness to learn an L2, proficiency is a measure of language ability at a given moment. Data from several empirical studies show that predeparture proficiency is inversely related to gains (particularly oral gains) made abroad, whereby lower proficiency learners improve more than their peers at higher proficiency levels (e.g., Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009). Despite these data, DeKeyser's long-standing argument persists that there exists a minimum threshold of proficiency before which the learner cannot take full advantage of the abroad experience (DeKeyser, 1991, 2007, 2014). It is likely that there is some hierarchy or order to acquisition by which lower proficiency does impinge on learners' progress. For example, Grey and colleagues (2015) revealed gains for accuracy on GJTs for number agreement but not gender agreement for US learners of Spanish. This may reveal that number agreement is a target that is more easily acquired at earlier proficiencies than gender agreement. However, more research is needed to elucidate the role of predeparture proficiency that investigates gains in SA from a cross-sectional and longitudinal perspective before such hierarchies can be presumed.

Motivation

Motivation in SA is a variable of interest to a highly interdisciplinary array of researchers beyond applied linguists, particularly as the number of students studying abroad increases and universities must appeal to a wider array of students (Institute of International Education, 2017). Emphasis on the practitioner or program developer is quite salient in the literature on motivation and attitudes, as universities look to take advantage of the data to tailor programs to the goals of their students.

Much of the research on motivation and SA focuses on preprogrammatic questions, such as what factors most drive students to study abroad, from financial concerns to parental support (e.g., Nafari, Arab, & Ghaffari, 2017), and how different types of motivation affect students' preferences regarding program characteristics (e.g., Janda, 2016). Motivation has also been investigated as a dependent variable in at least one case, considering the role of SAE as a positive feedback mechanism on continued language learning upon return from abroad (Allen, 2010). These programmatic and paralinguistic data are valuable tools for practitioners and researchers alike, though their direct implication on language development cannot be assumed.

As it pertains to linguistic development, the research on motivation includes an intermediary variable that researchers must account for: language contact or language use. Researchers tend to investigate this complex interaction using some combination of simulated OPIs, diaries, questionnaires, and interviews. This research paradigm has produced mixed results, with one study finding no correlation between motivation and contact or between contact and language gains (Freed, 1990), while two more recent studies have found positive relationships (Hernández, 2010;

Isabelli-García, 2006). However, while Freed (1990) considered participants in a six-week program, Isabelli-García's (2006) and Hernández's (2010) studies follow the progress of students during a semester abroad. Future research should explore whether these differences are responsible for the conflicting findings, that is, whether motivation's effect on interactions with NSs and oral proficiency development only manifests (at least statistically) during longer stays abroad.

Motivation's relation to language learning (in particular, domains beyond oral proficiency) merits further investigation. Kinginger's (2008) monograph, an in-depth analysis of the language learning of 23 US students in France, aimed to flesh out some of the variability found in SA research. The author calls for continued collection of detailed qualitative data to moderate and complement quantitative data, in order to reveal the complexities often buried by "monolithic psychological constructs" (p. 108). Kinginger's call is justified, but a review of the studies on motivation, such as those described earlier, reveals that quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies that consider motivation alongside language growth should be encouraged to further our understanding of the role of each on the other during SA.

Cognitive Capacity

Research that considers cognitive capacity in SA tends to aim to answer whether internal resources and context interact, and if so, in what ways. One of the most referenced studies investigating cognitive variables in the SA literature, Sunderman and Kroll (2009), delineates four hypotheses that may account for how context and internal resources relate: internal resources hypothesis, external cue hypothesis, interaction hypothesis, and threshold hypothesis. Understanding these four hypotheses will help the reader understand the intersection of cognitive capacity and SA. Sunderman and Kroll's (2009) internal resources hypothesis says that working memory resources can account for differences in learners' performance, regardless of context. On the other hand, the external cues hypothesis says that the opportunities for intake are so much greater in the host country (or other high-exposure environments) that these learners would excel beyond classroom learners, regardless of internal resources. The interaction and threshold hypotheses both predict that internal factors will modulate the role of external factors. The key difference between these two resembles predictions of other researchers (e.g., DeKeyser, 1991, 2007, 2014) that not all students will be equipped to take full advantage of the learning opportunities in the L2, but contrasting these other predictions, their threshold hypothesis suggests that cognitive capacity (and not proficiency) will be the predictor that causes differences in gains among learners with similar experiences. The interaction hypothesis does not address such a minimum: Greater internal resources will allow greater uptake of external cues. These four hypotheses help to frame the discussion of how researchers address cognitive capacity during SA, but researchers often consider different aspects of cognitive capacity, evaluate different aspects of language learning, measure linguistic development using highly dissimilar tools, or all of the above.

Focus on cognitive capacity and oral fluency development in the SA research hinges on the idea that greater cognitive resources facilitate faster processing of language, and those with more resources will be better able to take advantage of the opportunities SA provides. The data thus far have supported this logic, as studies have found that more oral fluency gains are observed of sojourners with higher first language

(L1) phonological working memory (O'Brien, Segalowitz, Freed, & Collentine, 2007) and with higher L2-specific cognitive processing speed and efficiency (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). However, researchers have recently recommended that cognitive capacity measures be conducted in the L1 (see Linck, Osthuis, Koeth, and Bunting [2013] for a review and meta-analysis of studies involving cognitive capacity during L2 acquisition), which casts some doubt on the latter study as there may be an issue of operationalization confounding the relationship between L2 cognitive processing and L2 proficiency itself. Other research has avoided this issue by including cognitive capacity measures in both the L1 and L2 (e.g., Grey et al., 2015).

Researchers have also investigated development of lexical and morphological abilities while abroad and their relationship to cognitive capacity. Thus far, however, a limited number of studies have focused on distinct domains of cognitive capacity and their relationships to different linguistic abilities. More such research is needed to clarify how these different aspects may interplay during language development in SA. For example, inhibitory control, which is understood as the ability to promote relevant information or suppress irrelevant information, has been found not to relate to differences in morphological or lexical processing of temporal cues after an SAE (LaBrozzi, 2012). Working memory capacity has been descriptively, though not statistically, associated with oral lexical translation accuracy and more frequent circumlocution (Tokowicz et al., 2004). In addition, while comparing learners with SAE to those with only formal classroom learning, Sunderman and Kroll (2009) observe within their data that there is a cognitive threshold below which lexical production is comparably accurate for both +SAE and -SAE, but +SAE participants with a working memory capacity measure above this threshold reveal a proportional benefit from their experience abroad.

However, these three studies aimed to compare +SAE learners with -SAE learners, and so the +SAE participants varied in terms of length of SA and time since returning from abroad, which could conceal relationships that might be observed if these same tasks were performed immediately following an SAE. One study to date has avoided these complications by using within-subject comparisons and conducting the pre- and posttests in the L2 environment. Lexical recognition was found not to be associated with either working memory capacity or phonological short-term memory (Grey et al., 2015). Future research can complement these findings by following Grey and colleagues, and maintaining as many variables constant as possible in order to test findings against each of the four hypotheses listed earlier as these relationships are likely complex and nonlinear, and may involve thresholds relating to length of stay, cognitive capacity, proficiency, or other variables.

Recommendations for Practice

Throughout this chapter, I have highlighted promising avenues for future research within the literature of psycholinguistic, cognitive, and usage-based approaches to SA. Some of these paths are aimed at the practitioner, though most are for research purposes. Segalowitz and Freed (2004), for example, say that “Different language-learning contexts can differentially lead to gains in oral performance, but the relationship between what a context offers and the nature of what an individual brings to the learning situation is both crucial and complex” (p. 196). This assessment

fairly depicts the situation on both sides of the SA world: While the researcher wades through complex issues involving individual differences, incomparable programs, and a limited participant pool, the practitioner may still have many questions that the young field has not yet been able to answer, so sustained research agendas in SA research are necessary.

However, we can take away some conclusions for practitioners to implement. Understanding students' motivations, for example, is paramount in order to assist them during program selection (see Janda, 2016). To date, there does not seem to be a clearly defined minimum proficiency threshold that would help practitioners determine the appropriate moment to advise students to study abroad (cf. Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014; DeKeyser, 1991, 2007, 2014; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009). Finally, through certain predeparture counseling, practitioners may be able to gear students toward increased language gains by discussing the importance of close, smaller social networks and friends with similar experiences.

Future Directions

Researchers interested in SA have many paths to pursue in order to broaden our understanding. Continuing the same broad research questions highlighted earlier but including continuous measures has been recommended by researchers. For example, Sunderman and Kroll (2009) call for measures of length of stay and cognitive capacity as continuous measures in order to consider thresholds before or after which benefits are not differential. And of course, in the case that variables like length of stay cannot be continuous, clear and consistent reporting practices are highly important. For example, three months abroad may represent “more SAE” in one study but “less SAE” in another, so it is highly pertinent to explicitly state the numerical values.

In general, finer-grained, more tailored tools and more explicit methodological practices will elucidate our understanding of language development during SA. For example, utilizing both global and fine-grained measures of each of the three domains of oral proficiency will help determine how oral skills develop during SA. In addition, continued movement toward within-subject designs (following Grey et al., 2015, for example) will lead to a clearer understanding of the processes involved in language development during SA, rather than a comparison to AH peers. These comparisons aim to reveal if SA is as productive for language gains as AH formal classroom study, but decisions to study abroad are not exclusively motivated by goals of linguistic development (Janda, 2016; Nafari et al., 2017), and therefore, understanding learning processes rather than products may be more valuable from a scientific perspective, and it does not limit the SAE to merely a chance at linguistic development.

Key Terms

Motivation	Aptitude
Cognitive	Oral proficiency
Capacity	Language use
Working memory capacity	Language contact
Proficiency	Lexical development

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Survey of Methodological Approaches

Quantitative Approaches for Study Abroad Research

Sarah Grey

Introduction

Stakeholders in the study abroad (SA) field—students, international program offices, program leaders, parents, and teachers—often want to “see” the results of the extensive time and resources that are invested in the experience. From a linguistic perspective, evidence of the effectiveness of studying abroad is generally related to quantifiable development in target foreign language abilities.

This chapter discusses current quantitative approaches in SA research. Such approaches allow researchers to measure particular aspects of linguistic knowledge and development: for example, in oral fluency, speed, and accuracy of accessing words in a foreign language or sensitivity to target language grammar structures. Thus, these approaches are able to provide measurable insights into the effects of studying abroad on foreign language abilities.

The chapter begins with a review of the main SA research design options and a discussion of their advantages and limitations. Following this, I provide a brief review of global quantitative methods, that is, methods that provide broadly measured evidence of the effects of SA. Then, I discuss specific quantitative approaches, such as measures of response time (RT) and brain wave activity, which reveal more detailed information about the linguistic underpinnings of SA.

Designs in Study Abroad Research

One approach for measuring the efficacy of SA is providing evidence that it confers linguistic benefits that are not otherwise realized in a matched classroom setting. In this vein, researchers employ between-subjects designs that compare an SA group with an at-home (AH) group (e.g., Isabelli-García, 2010; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). This approach operates on the assumption that AH serves as the experimental equivalent of a control group. Intuitively, AH vs. SA designs make sense. Because the two contexts are so different from one another—for example, in the amount, type, and frequency of target language comprehension and production opportunities—any

differences in language outcomes between the two groups seem reasonably due to the quality/quantity of foreign language exposure and use in SA. The quality/quantity differences in AH/SA are highlighted in descriptions of the two contexts (e.g., Collentine & Freed, 2004) and often underscored in explanations for observed gains reported for SA compared to AH (for a review, see Llanes, 2011).

However, methodologically, between-subjects AH vs. SA designs introduce a number of confounding learner-level variables. Although some researchers attempt to limit preexisting differences between AH/SA groups by administering preprogram measures (e.g., Isabelli-García, 2010), other studies administer no preprogram measures at all, and learners may be tested several months post-SA (e.g., LaBrozzi, 2012; Sunderman & Kroll, 2009). The core limitation in AH vs. SA designs is that students who elect to study abroad are likely to differ from their AH counterparts in a number of important factors—such as motivation, aptitude, or attitude—and this, compounded with self-selection bias for SA, means that it is not just the SA *context* that differs from AH but the SA *learner* as well. Currently, AH vs. SA designs cannot avoid these potentially confounding factors, even with preprogram measures. This makes considering AH a reliable comparison group for SA difficult (for related discussion, see Rees & Klapper, 2008).

An alternative SA design employs within-subjects comparisons of pre- and post-program SA but without comparison to an AH group (e.g., Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz, 2015). This allows researchers to enhance knowledge about the efficacy of studying abroad without introducing confounding factors of an AH comparison. From a within-subjects perspective, preprogram measures serve as an experimental baseline and postprogram measures reveal whether SA learners advanced from their own baselines. The aim of this design is to closely characterize the effects of the SA context on linguistic development, rather than compare different contexts.

Regardless of whether researchers choose a within-subjects SA focus or a between-subjects AH/SA approach, the next consideration is *when* learners are tested. SA research may be conducted *in situ*: for example, just after learners arrive to the SA setting and again before they leave (e.g., Grey et al., 2015; Isabelli-García, 2010; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). This allows researchers to control for non-SA target language exposure or practice that might occur if learners are tested weeks/months before beginning SA or after returning from SA. *In situ* within-subjects designs are arguably the experimental ideal for SA research, but they are not always feasible due to scheduling or other programmatic factors. Additionally, researchers may not have the necessary testing equipment or materials in the SA setting.

Rather than conduct the study *in situ*, researchers may opt to test learners prior to their SA departure and after their SA return (e.g., Faretta-Stutenberg & Morgan-Short, 2017) or focus on testing learners after their SA experience (e.g., LaBrozzi, 2012; Sunderman & Kroll, 2009). The approach of testing learners after their SA return is subject to at least two critical limitations. First, learners are immersed in their native language environment at time-of-testing. This is qualitatively and quantitatively different from the target language immersive context of SA and therefore is likely to affect the study's outcomes. Second, the time-lapse between SA and testing (which in some studies has been up to three months), paired with potential target language exposure/practice in the interim, makes it very difficult to directly relate the study's outcomes with SA.

Overall, each of these SA research designs has advantages and limitations. The specific design employed in any given study will depend on a number of factors, including the research questions, access to equipment/materials, and program structure and length. Critically, researchers must be cognizant of these design limitations when motivating their study and especially when interpreting SA outcomes.

Global Quantitative Measures

Global measures of language development are valuable in providing a broad metric for the effects of SA. Additionally, due to the standardized nature of many global measures used in SA research, the outcomes can be effectively interpreted across studies to better understand similarities or differences in results. This section discusses two main global measures, one production-based and the other survey-based, both of which have been fruitful in SA research.

Oral Proficiency Interviews

Due to increased opportunities to interact in the target language, SA is often considered to be a catalyst for promoting development in language production abilities. Indeed, across SA research, its most consistent effect has been found to be broad gains in oral fluency and proficiency (Llanes, 2011).

Language production abilities are reliably elicited with *Oral Proficiency Interviews* (OPIs), which are a popular tool in SA research (e.g., Hernández, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2010). They can be administered via in-person interviews, a computer avatar, or a (prerecorded) simulated interview (SOPI) composed of pictures and situational prompts. (Avatar-delivered OPIs and SOPIs have the advantage of controlling for potential interviewer bias.) (S)OPIs are useful because they can provide a number of data points from which to assess oral abilities. First, (S)OPIs produce generalizable proficiency ratings that are interpretable across different studies. Moreover, the acquired oral data can be coded for a number of additional variables: for example, conversational turn-taking behavior and length, fluency (i.e., speech rate, filled pauses, syllables per minute, longest fluent run), lexical and grammatical accuracy, speech complexity (T-units or C-units), and creativity (i.e., lexical diversity). These additional variables for oral production data can also be gathered with other measures, such as storytelling, picture description, and role-play (e.g., Allen & Herron, 2003; Arnett, 2013). This makes (S)OPIs and related oral production measures rich sources of data for quantitatively assessing oral abilities related to SA.

Language Contact Profile

SA is generally believed to provide students with greater exposure to language, for both production and comprehension, as well as in different modalities via print media, television or radio, social interactions, etc. To gather focused information on the various language exposure/interaction opportunities that characterize individual learners' SA experiences (and thus may influence SA's linguistic outcomes), Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, and Halter (2004) developed the *Language Contact Profile* (LCP) survey.

The LCP collects information on the frequency and types of language contact that occur during SA. Researchers often administer this survey at pre-/post-SA

time points *in situ* (e.g., Isabelli-García, 2010; Pérez-Vidal & Juan-Garau, 2011) to assess the trajectory of potential contact-changes that take place during SA. The LCP gathers an array of language use and exposure details. For instance, it surveys where students live during SA, i.e., whether they lived with a host family or in a student dormitory, and gathers subsequent details on these living arrangements, i.e., whether the host family spoke the student's native language or whether there was a dormitory roommate who spoke the target language. It also examines students' self-assessments of how many hours-per-day and days-per-week they spend (or seek out) speaking with native speakers of the target language, reading it in various contexts (e.g., magazines, schedules, menus), listening to the language in different settings (e.g., television, songs, conversations), and writing different types of products (e.g., e-mails, homework). The LCP also assesses these activities for students' native language, which enables researchers to compare profiles of native and foreign language behavior during SA. Similar SA-based survey measures have recently been developed: for example, Mitchell, Tracy-Ventura, and McManus's (2017) *Language Engagement Questionnaire*, which may reduce the memory demands placed on learners via the LCP.

This survey-based information (as well as OPIs) provides quantifiable information on the effects of SA on language behavior. However, because global measures are, by their nature, broad, they cannot capture more detailed information on how SA impacts language knowledge and processing. To gain this insight, researchers utilize measures that are able to examine specific aspects of language.

Specific Quantitative Measures

To reveal precise linguistic information on the effectiveness of SA—for example, to study lexical processing or the development of particular grammatical structures—researchers often employ psycholinguistics-based methods. These methods are effective in elucidating the cognitive processes that are involved in language comprehension and production. They are therefore very useful in revealing the effects of SA on language processing and development. This section reviews several psycholinguistic methods that help inform interests in SA research. It begins with behavioral measures and ends with a review of a neuroscientific measure: event-related potentials (ERPs).

Decision-Elicitation Measures

Many psycholinguistic tasks elicit a decision (in response to a stimulus) from participants. Participants' responses on these tasks are typically examined in terms of ratios, raw accuracy, or discrimination ability (i.e., A or d -prime values, which help control for participant response biases; Wickens, 2002; Zhang & Mueller, 2005). From participants' responses, researchers are able to infer underlying linguistic representations or processes. For instance, a phoneme discrimination task elicits a decision about whether a pair of speech sounds are the same or different, and can be employed in SA research to examine the influence of SA on learners' phonological representations (e.g., Mora, 2008). Decision-elicitation tasks are able to measure processing across all levels of language, are well attested in the field of psycholinguistics (Traxler & Gernsbacher, 2011), and can be conveniently administered within the SA setting.

For lexical processing, decision-elicitation involves asking participants to make a decision about individual words. The accuracy (and speed; see the Latency Measures section) of participants' decision provides insight into the organization of and access to the interlanguage lexicon. For SA research, these tasks tap into whether access to words in the target language becomes more accurate with SA experience. Sunderman and Kroll (2009), for example, administered a *translation recognition task* to English native speakers who either did or did not have prior Spanish SA experience. The goal of this task is to elicit a decision on whether two words are translation equivalents of each other, i.e., whether the Spanish word 'cara' (face) is a translation equivalent of the English word 'card.' In an earlier study, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) employed a *semantic classification task* with English native speakers studying Spanish in an AH context or completing SA in Spain. In the task, participants were asked to decide if a word was living (e.g., the boy) or nonliving (e.g., a boat) to help probe speed and efficiency of lexical access due to SA. Another common decision-elicitation task for lexical processing is the *lexical decision task*. Grey et al. (2015) used this task with English native speakers completing a short-term SA program in Spain. Participants were presented with letter strings that constituted real Spanish words (e.g., 'ventana'; window) or nonwords, which are letter strings that follow the phonotactic and orthographic constraints of the language but are not real words (e.g., 'ventapa'). The aim is to decide whether each string is a word or not. Accuracy in correctly accepting words and rejecting nonwords is understood to reflect aspects of participants' lexical competence and lexical knowledge.

A widely used sentence-level decision task in psycholinguistics and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research elicits grammaticality judgments. In *grammaticality judgment tasks* (GJTs), participants decide whether a sentence is grammatically acceptable, and sentences are designed to be grammatically well formed or not, as in (1). Using this task, researchers examine learners' sensitivity to target language grammar information.

- 1 a El lago es tranquilo por la mañana (grammatically well-formed sentence)
 b El lago es tranquila por la mañana (error in grammatical gender, bolded)
 'The lake is tranquila in the morning' (example from Bowden, Steinhauer, Sanz, & Ullman, 2013).

GJTs have particular promise for advancing SA research because researchers can design their sentences to examine learners' knowledge of specific linguistic structures, such as grammatical gender agreement (Isabelli-García, 2010) and syntactic word order (Grey et al., 2015). This provides precise information on the impact of SA in promoting specific linguistic development.

Elicited Imitation

Another method for examining grammatical abilities is the *elicited imitation* (EI) task (e.g., Yan, Maeda, Lv, & Ginther, 2016). EI is a very simple task: Participants listen to a sentence and are asked to repeat it verbatim. The psycholinguistic assumption behind EI data is that if participants can repeat the sentence quickly and accurately, they possess the linguistic knowledge contained in the sentence. EI can serve as a measure of global proficiency (e.g., Wu & Ortega, 2013), but it can also assess specific linguistic structures (e.g., Rassaei, Moinzadeh, & Youhannaee, 2012).

Notably, EI is considered a valid assessment of implicit (i.e., unconscious, automatic) linguistic knowledge (e.g., Erlam, 2006; Serafini & Sanz, 2016; Spada, Shiu, & Tomita, 2015). Therefore, applying EI in SA research could elucidate not only linguistic abilities for specific grammatical structures but also help researchers ascertain the effects of SA on the development of implicit knowledge of those structures. To date, there is almost no SA research that has utilized EI (but note Mitchell et al., 2017). However, it seems a promising tool for the field, and it can easily be administered with *in situ* SA designs, which is an important methodological advantage.

Latency Measures

The decision-elicitation tasks described previously are often employed in tandem with experimental recording of participant RTs, the time (in milliseconds) that it takes participants to respond to an external stimulus, such as a sound, word, or sentence. When coupled with decision-elicitation, RT essentially indexes how long it takes to make and execute the decision. And when measuring both accuracy and RT, research can assess processing efficiency by examining whether there is a speed-accuracy tradeoff, that is, whether increased speed (shorter latency) is accompanied by decreased accuracy. If faster RTs are observed with no concomitant decreases in accuracy, there is no speed-accuracy tradeoff and processing is deemed efficient. Examination of speed-accuracy details can inform the effects of SA for specific linguistic structures in sentence contexts (Grey et al., 2015) and speed of lexical access (Sunderman & Kroll, 2009).

Another method for determining processing efficiency is to calculate a *coefficient of variation* (CV) from the RT data (Segalowitz & Segalowitz, 1993). In brief, the CV “reflects the relative noisiness of the processes underlying a person’s response time” (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004, p. 177). From this perspective, lower CV (and a positive RT-CV correlation) indexes change in the underlying processes, and this is interpreted as higher processing efficiency and stability (for discussions, see Hulstijn, Van Gelderen, & Schoonen, 2009; Lim & Godfroid, 2015).

Although it has not yet been applied to SA research, *mouse-tracking* is a recently developed latency measure that provides continuous measurement of participants’ decision trajectories as they make a response among multiple options on a screen. It does this by sampling the movement of the computer mouse many dozen times a second (Freeman & Ambady, 2010; Hehman, Stolier, & Freeman, 2015). This technique allows researchers to gather precise information on the onset and timing of an unfolding decision and observe online how competition among items (e.g., words or pictures) is resolved during decision-making. Mouse-tracking has recently been used to study language processing, for example morphological complexity (Blazej & Cohen-Goldberg, 2015), pragmatic intent (Roche, Peters, & Dale, 2015), and lexical competition (Bartolotti & Marian, 2012). Thus, it should be highly informative in testing pertinent questions in SA research. Furthermore, the experimental software for mouse-tracking is freely available (*MouseTracker*, Freeman & Ambady, 2010), and with a testing laptop and the appropriate software, mouse-tracking data are relatively easy to collect remotely. In fact, latency data in general are suitable for remote data collection, making these measures convenient and reliable for *in situ* SA designs.

Tracking Eye Movement

Eye-tracking measures naturally occurring eye behavior as it unfolds online during language processing: for example, as participants read sentences (Dussias, 2010) or look at visual scenes (note that this chapter does not discuss this visual world paradigm; for a thorough review, see Huettig, Rommers, & Meyer, 2011). Tracking eye movement provides three main dynamic measures of processing: fixations, saccades, and proportion-of-looks to regions of interest. Fixations refer to the amount of time spent on a location (e.g., a word in a sentence) and include both early and later measurements. First-fixation duration and gaze duration are considered early measurements, whereas total time spent in a location is a later measurement. Saccades are quick eye movements from one location to another. They are typically discussed in terms of forward saccades (i.e., forward movements in reading) and regressive saccades (or regressions; returns to a location). Using these measurements, researchers can test questions about the processing of specific lexical items and grammatical structures during sentence reading. There is currently little research that has applied eye-tracking to research questions for SA, likely due to its higher cost and relative immobility, that is, it cannot easily be transported to the SA setting for in situ testing. Nonetheless, as reviewed earlier, researchers may opt to test participants upon their return from SA, as in LaBrozzi (2012), who used eye-tracking to investigate the extent to which English native speakers would use morphological and lexical cues to process verb morphology during Spanish sentence reading after an SA experience.

Brain Processing: Event-Related Potentials

In the last 15 years, research in SLA has begun to use the ERP technique in order to investigate questions about adult language learning and processing from a neural perspective (for a review, see Morgan-Short, 2014). ERPs are derived through amplifying and averaging naturally occurring electroencephalogram data, which consist of changes in the brain's electrical activity recorded from electrodes placed on the scalp. Through the study of these changes in the brain's electrical activity, ERP researchers investigate neurocognitive processing with very high temporal precision (see Luck, 2014, for elaboration).

ERPs reflect brain activity elicited in response to a time-locked external event, such as the words ‘tranquilo’ compared to ‘tranquila’ in example (1). Language studies using ERPs often use “violation paradigms”—for instance, within the context of a GJT, which contains both well-formed sentences and sentences with grammar errors—in order to study the time-course of language processing. Using this paradigm, ERP language processing research has revealed a set of well-studied brain wave patterns, or ERP effects, that are understood to reflect distinct neurocognitive processes. For example, the N400 effect has been reliably linked to lexical/semantic processing and the P600 effect has been reliably tied to grammatical processing (Kutas & Federmeier, 2011; Swaab, Ledoux, Camblin, & Boudewyn, 2012).

In general, SLA research shows that at lower proficiency, learners show N400s while processing target foreign language grammar (e.g., McLaughlin et al., 2010), which suggests that they rely on lexical/semantic information. At higher proficiency, learners are more likely to show P600s while they process target grammar (e.g., Steinhauer, White, & Drury, 2009). This indicates that the process of adult language

learning involves a neurocognitive progression from using lexical/semantic information to using structural, grammatical information while processing foreign language grammar (see also Tanner, Inoue, & Osterhout, 2014).

These field-wide insights can be exploited for SA research. Using well-studied ERP effects, researchers can examine language processing during or as a result of an SA experience. A recent study by Faretta-Stutenberg and Morgan-Short (2017) applied the ERP technique to SA research by testing sentence processing of an AH and SA group in a pre-/post-SA design. By gathering ERPs, the study could assess the potential impact of SA for not only behavioral performance but also for the online neurocognitive processing of target language structures (for related details, see also Chapter 27, this volume). This seems to be a promising area for future SA research. Note, however, that ERP-SA designs, like eye-tracking, will predominantly rely on measuring processing after a return from SA since the equipment and setup for ERP research is not usually mobile. In lieu of measuring processing post-SA, researchers may seek out in-country collaborator institutions that have the facilities needed to collect this type of data (including for eye-tracking). While ERP equipment can be quite expensive, there are excellent lower cost ERP equipment options on the market that are, importantly, also suitable for mobile research (e.g., ActiCHamp from Brain Products, Germany), and these could be useful for in situ SA studies.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed quantitative approaches for measuring the effects of SA on foreign language behavior and processing. I have discussed common SA design options and the global as well as specific measures that researchers can utilize within those designs to elucidate the effects of studying abroad on foreign language knowledge and development. The chapter did not discuss all available methodological approaches but rather focused on currently employed methods (OPIs, GJTs) as well as additional interdisciplinary methods (EI, mouse-tracking) that SA research might also benefit from.

With many of the technologically advanced methods reviewed in the chapter (ERPs, eye-tracking), SA researchers stand at the forefront of language learning and processing research. Pairing these methods with interests in SA research, and the overall application of quantitative methods, enables researchers to reveal compelling information on the measurable positive effects of studying abroad.

Key Terms

Oral proficiency	Event-related potentials
Grammaticality judgment	Elicited imitation
Response time	Lexicon, grammar
Eye-tracking	

Further Reading

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Qualitative Approaches for Study Abroad Research

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Introduction

While study abroad (SA) literature has shown substantial benefits that may be accrued by participants, it has also shown striking individual variation in the achievement of positive outcomes. Understanding this variation is crucial for theory building and for SA program design. Socially and anthropologically oriented research in SA settings has been making strides toward illuminating the complex factors that shape students' varied experiences, employing overwhelmingly qualitative methodologies.

Qualitative research is understood here as “based on descriptive data that does not make regular use of statistical procedures” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 61). Research questions are oftentimes open-ended, and they may be reshaped during data collection and analysis. Researchers taking ethnographic approaches are commonly interested in providing detailed descriptions of contextualized aspects of human experience (“thick descriptions”), and they usually work with few participants whose perspectives they strive to incorporate.

Projects with qualitative methodology have always been part of the SA literature (e.g., Schumann & Schumann, 1977), but they have become more prominent over time for several reasons. Among these is scholars' initial surprise in discovering that learners' reported amount of time using the second language (L2) was unrelated to linguistic gains (e.g., Ginsberg & Miller, 2000). This finding persuaded many of the need to carefully examine the nature of students' interactions as well as their individual differences. This view was strengthened by the “social turn” in applied linguistics (Block, 2003) that encouraged scholars to reconceptualize language learning and use as socially situated processes, a theoretical stance that is usually accompanied by qualitative methodologies.

The aim of this chapter is to present a selection of SA qualitative studies that illustrates the field's methodological diversity from an applied linguistics perspective. This survey includes studies that are representative of common methodological choices as well as work containing innovations that may inspire future research. A brief description of main theoretical orientations is provided, followed by relevant studies, and a final section discusses present and future trends.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Socially oriented SA research is informed by different theoretical approaches. Prominent among them is sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), which draws on Vygotsky's work and emphasizes the role of the sociocultural context and semiotic mediation (the use of signs as tools) in language learning. Vygotsky's notion of "social cognition"—children's cognitive development is achieved through engagement in social behaviors guided by adults and peers who provide "scaffolding"—has also inspired Lave and Wenger's (1991) "situated learning" in "communities of practice." A community of practice (such as a workplace) revolves around an area of expertise and builds a repertoire of resources over time (the "practice"), which is shared by experts with novice members who, as their expertise increases, gradually attain a more central position within the community. Similar notions inspire language socialization approaches (Ochs, 2002) that explore how language constitutes both the means and the result of learners' participation in a community (see Wang, 2010, for a review).

Poststructuralist views on individual identity and its role in L2 learning and use have also given rise to a growing body of SA literature. Under this lens, identity is contradictory, evolving, and negotiated in social interaction. Language can be regarded as a form of "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 1991), a resource at someone's disposal, but also as the site of conflict itself. Learners' "investment" (Norton, 2000) refers to their relationship to the target language, particularly the social and historical aspects of this connection. Finally, Anderson's (1991) "imagined communities" (on nation-building) are also used in SA research to explore learners' membership in communities that stretch across time and space, such as "Western students in the Middle East."

Guided by these theoretical notions, qualitative research on SA language learning has focused on two broad topics that are not mutually exclusive: the nature of students' participation in host communities and students' personal characteristics, including identities, which bear on their engagement with L2 learning and use.

Learner Engagement Abroad

Studies in this section share an interest in the details of how learners' participation in L2 communities is negotiated. Several authors analyze these processes drawing on the concept of communities of practice and associated notions, while others explore the formation of social networks abroad and its potential impact on the SA experience. Other studies focus on the specifics of the language socialization process. Additionally, some research documents factors that prevent or enhance L2 interactions.

Trentman (2013a) shows how Western students in Cairo construe themselves as members of an imagined community (students in the Middle East across years) where the roles of cross-cultural mediator and dedicated language learner are paramount. After examining three actual communities of practice joined by students (a closely knit SA group, a partying group, and a rugby team), Trentman considers the possibilities these communities afford for enacting students' imagined roles and encouraging L2 use. In addition to administering an open-ended questionnaire about motivation for learning Arabic and the Language Contact Profile (a measure of L2 use; see Chapter 3, this volume), Trentman conducted individual interviews with students, instructors, and Egyptian peers. She also drew from her experience participating

in activities with six female students (“participant observation”) and produced field notes on observations in various settings. She was granted access to 14 participants’ blogs and 19 Facebook pages, but the specific contribution of these data is not made explicit in the report.

Whereas Trentman is concerned with overall engagement, Churchill (2006) focuses on the academic experience of Japanese students in four US high schools during a three-week stay. Prior to departure, Japanese students had been trained to observe and take notes on classroom interaction, which they did in the US, also summarizing and commenting on their notes. Additionally, the researcher observed classes and interviewed students, chaperones, and instructors. Back in Japan, class time was devoted to an evaluation of the program by the students in a format approximating a focus group. These data allow Churchill to describe practices at both the classroom and the school levels that work toward integrating or excluding the newcomers in the host communities.

Longitudinal studies are particularly well suited to capturing the dynamics of students’ access to populations abroad. Iwan, the Indonesian participant in Umino and Benson’s (2016) case study, spent four years in Japan. The research goal was to investigate the evolution of his participation in local communities of practice. To this end, the researchers conducted two language-learning history interviews: one shortly after the end of Iwan’s third year and the other at the end of his fourth year. Coupled with this, the authors relied on photo-elicitation: Before each interview, Iwan sorted all the photographs he had taken in Japan and examined them together with one of the researchers in multiple sessions, in which he described their significance. Then, the authors analyzed them in terms of the people represented (international students, school staff, Japanese students) and the activities portrayed (institutionally vs. self-organized) in order to trace Iwan’s “scaffolded” access to a legitimate position in a “self-managed” community of Japanese students.

In addition to the notion of “communities of practice,” scholars have employed other theoretical tools to clarify students’ patterns of interaction at their destinations. Specifically, the concept of social networks (Milroy, 1987) has gained acceptance in SA research since Isabelli-García’s (2006) publication. In this mixed-methods study, the author worked with four US students living in Argentina for a semester. To complement data on oral proficiency and accuracy development, Isabelli-García asked participants to write weekly entries in a notebook detailing perceptions of their language progress as well as positive and negative events. These journal entries provided the basis for an assessment of the participants’ motivations and attitudes. They also completed “contact log sheets” in which they specified the people with whom they interacted. These logs allowed the author to reconstitute and graphically represent participants’ social networks in order to better understand their patterns of language use. Two aspects of the social networks are highlighted in the analysis and related to the potential quality of interactions: whether the student interacts with members in a single capacity (e.g., teacher, service provider) or not (the same person can be, for instance, a friend and a fellow volunteer) and whether members in the network introduce students to new people who, in turn, become members. Further research has considered additional dimensions of the social network construct (e.g., Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, Bown, & Martinsen, 2014; Gautier & Chevrot, 2015), and while much of it is quantitatively oriented, the construct is also used in studies with a strong qualitative component (e.g., Campbell, 2015).

Together with studies on participation in local communities, substantial effort has also been devoted to analyzing actual linguistic interactions between students and populations abroad. The studies presented next are based on audio- or videotaped interactions, which are usually supplemented by additional data sources for purposes of triangulation, i.e., increasing the credibility and dependability of the findings. Regarding their theoretical frameworks, many adopt a language socialization approach and/or are informed by sociocultural theory. Others emphasize elements of sociolinguistic or pragmatic competence and sometimes draw from Conversation Analysis techniques (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977).

The dinner table has been shown to be a fruitful setting for interaction, and conversations around it are featured in several studies. Based on recordings of mealtime conversations in Japan, Cook (2006) analyzed the narration of folk beliefs, and Iino (2006) explored the construction of the SA guest student as a source of cultural enrichment for the host family. Practices and discourse involving food have been investigated in China (e.g., Kinginger et al., 2016) and Indonesia (DuFon, 2006). DuFon based her analysis of “the socialization of taste” on video- and audiotaped interactions, along with the inclusion of additional data. The five learners in her study kept journals in which they commented on the interactions they had recorded, and the researcher herself had written two journals during her own previous SA experiences in Indonesia. Learners were also interviewed, and they participated in group discussions. Finally, DuFon reports recording three types of field notes: observational, methodological, and theoretical.

Other researchers prefer to turn their attention to the formal properties of linguistic exchanges. For instance, Wilkinson (2002) and Pryde (2014) have identified features of classroom discourse (e.g., initiation-response-evaluation sequences) in conversations between students and host family members in France and New Zealand, respectively. Besides host families, learners may interact with a variety of people while abroad, most notably classmates and friends, and several authors have included these interlocutors in their investigations of the development of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence. Working with learners in Spain, and focusing on interactional competence (He & Young, 1998), Dings (2014) examines conversational moves (collaborative contributions, completions, and assessment activity), and Shively (2013) traces how her participant Kyle learns to “do humor” in Spanish using his journal on social interaction and language learning, the language contact profile interviews, and observation. Interaction with peers is also investigated by Back (2013), who analyzes L2 use in social media by three Portuguese learners before, during, and after their stay in Brazil. Among other aspects, such as frequency and length of posts, the author looks at the use of vocabulary and symbols associated with computer-mediated communication and informal registers.

Although not their focus, studies about language socialization and about development of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences often point to the importance of learners’ personal differences in attaining a legitimate status within L2 communities. Bown, Dewey, and Belnap (2015) and Trentman (2013b) identify contextual and individual factors in L1/L2 use among students in Jordan and Egypt, respectively. Bown and colleagues drew on students’ weekly “speaking journals,” which contained reflections about their speaking experiences, plans for improving interactions, and self-ratings of their fluency, accuracy, listening comprehension, success in communicating ideas, and efforts to find new interlocutors. In addition, students

met weekly with program staff to discuss their progress, and twelve of them (representative of a range of proficiencies and levels of satisfaction with the program) were selected by the authors to participate in in-depth interviews (see the aforementioned data sources employed in Trentman, 2013a). Both reports analyze contextual factors and highlight the role played by learners' L2 proficiency, gender, personality, and interactional goals (practicing the L2 vs. forming true relationships) in achieving meaningful contacts with local people. The same data allow Bown and colleagues to discuss strategies employed by students to improve communication in the L2.

If there is anything that SA research has consistently shown, it is the fact that merely being in L2-speaking territory does not equal automatic access to language-learning opportunities. Studies in the next section concentrate on personal differences that affect the qualities of the SA experience. In addition to journals and interviews, these projects sometimes incorporate other student-produced materials with narrower foci; for instance, intercultural reflection essays or notes on learning strategies.

Learner Personal Dimensions

Language-learning motivation has attracted considerable attention in SA research, but it has mostly been assessed by means of closed-item questionnaires. Some scholars, however (Allen, 2010, 2013; Isabelli-García, 2006), have taken a qualitative approach, and besides surveys, they have used learners' journals and interviews to attain a more contextualized and/or longitudinal perspective on this construct. Students wrote weekly or biweekly entries in journals about either "perceptions of language progress and positive and negative events" in Argentina (Isabelli-García, 2006) or "language and cultural learning, evolution of personal goals and how and with whom was time spent" in France (Allen, 2010). Relying on journals with the same format and adding e-mail correspondence and three interviews (presojourn, midsojourn, and three years later), Allen (2013) studied learners' self-regulatory strategies, including motivation maintenance.

To a lesser extent, L2 learning beliefs have nonetheless been explored on several occasions including Yang and Kim's (2011) work with two older Korean learners of English in the US and the Philippines. The researchers e-mailed questions to their participants monthly, asked them to complete an L2 learning autobiography, and interviewed them twice requesting that they bring memorable pictures and objects to the post-SA session to stimulate recall.

Within the large-scale project "Language Learning during Study Abroad: The Case of Russian" (developed by the American Council of Teachers of Russian and the National Foreign Language Center), Miller and Ginsberg (1995) investigated "folklinguistic theories of language learning" among SA students in Moscow and St. Petersburg. To this end, besides holding interviews at different times, the authors examined 80 written journals, 29 oral journals, and 10 notebooks. The journals (oral and written) contained information about two or three social encounters per week with details about participants, settings, and language use. The notebooks focused on language learning and the relation between in-class and out-of-class learning. Student linguistic attitudes, not toward learning but toward the use of English as a lingua franca in Finland and France, have been investigated by Dervin (2013), who employed a survey with open-ended questions answered by

250 students (what is referred to as a “macro approach”) and an interview with a Finnish student for a “micro approach.”

Moving on to explorations of identity in the SA literature (see Kinginger, 2013, for a review), the data collected in the ACTR/NFLC Russian project have also informed Polanyi's (1995) work on the role of students' gender in shaping learning opportunities and proficiency assessment results. Russian learners are the protagonists as well in Pellegrino Aveni's (2005) account of the “construction of the L2 self” or how the creation and maintenance of Russian-mediated identities are at the core of students' interactions. Among her varied data sources, Pellegrino Aveni distinguishes between “grand tour” general interviews, which often contain the request that the learner narrate a regular day in his or her life in Russia, and “directed interviews,” which follow up on a specific aspect from the general interview, the journals, or the observations.

From a methodological perspective, Jackson's (2008) description of the SA evolution of sociocultural identities and views of language and cultural learning stands out if only because of the sheer breadth of data collection instruments, arguably difficult to emulate without extensive institutional support. Participants were four English majors at the Chinese University of Hong Kong who enrolled in a special program articulated around a five-week sojourn in the UK. Prior to the sojourn, the students took two courses with the researcher: intercultural communication and ethnography, in which they produced a cultural identity narrative, an intercultural reflection journal, and a home ethnography project. During their stay in England, they kept a diary and a language use log, besides completing weekly surveys about their experiences and participating in debriefing sessions. They also conducted fieldwork for a small-scale ethnography project. Back in Hong Kong, a postsojourn survey was administered, a debriefing session was held, and participants wrote up their ethnographic reports in a follow-up course. Additional data came from individual interviews and field notes.

Using a more limited range of data sources (pre- and poststay interviews and summaries of experiences sent while abroad via e-mail, blog, MSN, or Facebook), Benson, Barkhuizen, Boddycott, and Brown (2013) diversified their participant sample by including Hong Kong high-school, undergraduate, and graduate students enrolled in English-medium SA programs of different lengths and purposes. Seeking to build on their model of SA outcomes for second language identity, the authors embrace a narrative inquiry approach (Bruner, 2009). This entails that narratives are not only data but also analytical tools: for each participant, they produced a narrative that was then shared with the student and formed the basis for subsequent analysis.

Since understanding learners' perspectives is evidently crucial to research on identity development, Dressler and Dressler (2016) go a step further and involve the case-study participant in the data analysis process as coauthor. Further reasons add methodological interest to this project: The authors investigate linguistic identity positioning in Facebook posts written by a Canadian-German learner during her two stays in Germany as an adolescent and as a college student.

The notions of “imagined identity” and “imagined communities” are prominent in Dressler and Dressler (2016)—specifically an imagined community of English-German bilinguals—as well as in Song (2012). In her study of two Korean families living in the US with the goal of benefitting their five-year-old boys, Song employs interviews, audio/video recordings, and participant observation. Most notably, she uses the notion of “imagined community” to describe how the mothers' attitudes

toward membership in a specific Korean social class (with English-proficient children) influence linguistic practices in the families, hereby interweaving linguistic identity and children language socialization approaches in her analysis.

Overall, reflecting trends in applied linguistics, work on identity-related issues in SA has been growing over the last 15 years and will probably continue to do so, along with other developments discussed in the following section.

Current and Future Directions

As the previous sections have shown, SA qualitative research displays a healthy variety of approaches and methodologies. It is, however, possible to identify general trends: Coleman's (2013) emphasis on researching "whole people and whole lives" finds echo in many recent pages of the SA literature. Thus, we increasingly learn about the implications of SA time after reentry, and we begin to hear directly from the people who interact most with the students. These methodological decisions—delayed data collection and different types of participants—provide us with more pieces to the puzzle of learners' "whole lives."

There is also growing recognition that students shape as much as they are shaped by experiences abroad. We are more careful in characterizing students as language learners, and we acknowledge the involvement of multiple dimensions in their development. Methodologically, researchers are striving to map the strictly subjective meanings that students recreate: identities, beliefs, ideologies, etc. because these subjective meanings—part of the "whole person"—are crucial to their experience.

These trends are likely to continue. We will probably find out more about host communities from their perspectives, and it is also desirable to gain more insight into long-term effects of SA and how best to integrate it in the curriculum. Regarding participant selection, scholars have repeatedly pointed out the need to work with students of varied geographical origins in different destinations. Student profiles in the literature are becoming more diverse with the inclusion of, for instance, high schoolers or heritage speakers, but many groups—professionals or disabled students, to name some—remain under-researched. In addition, the impact of multilingualism in host communities and of the spread of lingua francas on SA learning has so far received little attention. Similarly, our knowledge of less traditional study/residence abroad programs is still limited.

Technological development will undoubtedly affect SA research in many respects. On the one hand, explorations of learners' use of communication technologies, be it from the point of view of L2 communicative competence, of social network dynamics, of identity issues, or of learning affordances should be expected to increase. On the other hand, technology allows for greater amounts and types of data to be gathered (photographs, video/audio recordings, multimedia products, etc.) either by researchers or by participants themselves, and it will also support new data collection and analysis instruments.

Technological advances may also allow for easier access to information that is often excluded or very succinctly summarized in SA reports. Interview prompts or specific instructions for student journals are increasingly provided in appendices, but this is still subject to constraints. Similarly, it is helpful when criteria followed in the selection of data sources, particularly student assignments, application essays, or material in the students' L2, are made explicit. Additionally, readers of ethnographies

need detailed information about researchers and research assistants, including their roles in the program, their investments, and their relationships with participants.

Finally, we may see in the future a wider use of standardized instruments—measures of motivation, intercultural sensitivity, L2 use anxiety, social networks, etc.—in primarily qualitative research, either as a springboard for in-depth explorations or as a means for triangulation. This “modest” move would align with calls to better combine qualitative and quantitative perspectives in investigations about language learning (e.g., King & Mackey, 2016). Ultimately, an integration of approaches is needed to solve real-world problems: in this case, the development of SA programs capable of supporting the growth of students as “whole people” throughout their academic lives.

Key Terms

Social turn	Social networks
Sociocultural theory	Participant observation
Identity	Diararies
Communities of practice	

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Part II

Language Development and Personal Growth: Key Areas

Phonological Development



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Acquisition of Phonetics and Phonology Abroad

What We Know and How

Megan Solon and Avizia Yim Long

Introduction

As evidenced by this volume and others (e.g., Kinginger, 2009, 2013; Mitchell, Tracy-Ventura, & McManus, 2015; Pérez-Vidal, 2014), interest in the potential impact of study abroad (SA) on second language (L2) linguistic development has grown in recent years, fueled, no doubt, by an increase in the number of university students who participate in such programs. Considering just US students, during the 2015–2016 academic year, over 325,000 studied abroad for academic credit, representing a 3.8 percent increase over the previous year (Institute of International Education, 2017). Although this increase may reflect a growing interest in the development of international competence (Institute of International Education, 2015), it also reflects the belief of many instructors, students, and parents that a stay abroad positively impacts an individuals' L2 competence in some way.

Compared to other aspects of linguistic development, however, research on the effect of SA on the development of L2 sound systems has lagged somewhat behind (in part, we believe, because of some of the data elicitation, analysis, and interpretation challenges described in the next section). Despite this *relative paucity* of attention to L2 phonetic and phonological systems, there exists a robust body of research on the topic. This chapter aims to synthesize this research both in terms of its methodological approaches (e.g., data analysis and interpretation choices) and its results to offer a critical overview of what we currently know about the acquisition of phonetics and phonology abroad and how we came to know it. We conclude the chapter with some discussion of future directions for research on this topic.

Methodological Approaches to and Considerations for the Study of L2 Sound Development during Study Abroad

Research on L2 phonetic/phonological development during SA has largely focused on pronunciation development, that is, changes in learners' oral production patterns during or as a result of time abroad. Research is growing on changes to learners'

perceptual systems during SA, and this research will be reviewed in a later section. Nevertheless, because of the overwhelming empirical focus on production, this brief review of methodological choices and considerations will largely center on those decisions as they pertain to production studies, although some of the considerations are inherently relevant to both studies of perception and production.

Data Elicitation

Research on the acquisition of phonetics and phonology abroad is, of course, subject to the same challenges as other L2 phonetic/phonological research. For production data, for instance, speech samples must be controlled enough to ensure that the segmental or suprasegmental phenomena under examination will occur and in the necessary contexts but also that they are natural enough to encourage learner use of the full range of forms existent in their system. In a study on the development of L2 Spanish learners' intonation patterns following a seven-week stay abroad, Henriksen, Geeslin, and Willis (2010) designed and employed a contextualized sentence reading task that required learners to read one of three utterance types (i.e., declaratives, absolute interrogatives, or pronominal interrogatives) aloud after having read and taken into account its corresponding discourse context. A sample item from this task is provided in (1):

- (1) *Context: Mamini asks you: "What was Papini doing yesterday afternoon?" You respond: "He was spoiling the girl."*
(p. 128)

From (1), it is evident that the task in Henriksen et al. (2010) not only controls for the type of utterance produced but also provides a context for the production of a meaningful utterance, facilitating the elicitation of more natural, albeit controlled, speech.

An additional consideration of importance in the elicitation of production data is task type as several studies on pronunciation development during SA have explicitly pointed to the effect of elicitation task. For example, Díaz-Campos (2006) found that both his SA and at-home English-speaking learners of Spanish produced more targetlike Spanish segments in a conversation task than in a more controlled read-aloud task. For three of the four groups of segments studied, the differences between conversation and read-aloud target likeness were much greater for the SA learners, a finding Díaz-Campos suggested may be due to their potential greater contact with native speakers and greater experience in informal contexts than the at-home group. Task effects are not uncommon in L2 speech production research (e.g., Dickerson & Dickerson, 1976; Sato, 1985) and have been linked theoretically to speech formality (see, e.g., Major, 1987; Tarone, 1983) but have also been shown to be affected by factors such as the first language (L1) social value of a particular phonetic variant (Beebe, 1980) and the interaction between task type and the particular variable(s) under study (Levis & Barriuso, 2012). Thus, researchers should carefully consider how samples of learner speech may differ considerably from one elicitation task type to the next and in relation to other factors (e.g., linguistic, contextual, and speaker-related) relevant to the speech situation.

The method of elicitation likewise plays an essential role in ensuring appropriate and relevant data in studies that examine the acquisition and use of dialectal and/

or sociolinguistically variable features during SA. Ringer-Hilfinger (2012), for example, employed two different types of elicitation tasks—a read-aloud text and an informal interview—to explore the effect of speech style and the role of graphemic context on English-speaking learners' use of the interdental fricative [θ] in Spanish. She reported higher instances of [θ] use during reading than during the informal interview and higher instances within *ci* contexts than within *ce* and *z* contexts. Beyond just elicitation task type, the actual process of elicitation can also impact the data elicited. Raish (2015), for example, acknowledged that the fact that the prompts of the simulated oral proficiency interviews used to elicit data from his L2 Arabic speakers studying abroad in Egypt used Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as opposed to Cairene Arabic may have contributed to the prevalence of self-correction among learners in the production of the voiced velar occlusive phoneme (the structure under examination) from the Egyptian allophone [g] to the MSA allophone [j]. Investigators must thus carefully consider the elicitation tasks and procedures most appropriate for the constructs and phenomena being investigated.

Analysis Techniques and Measures

An equally important methodological decision concerns how the elicited data will be analyzed. A wide variety of measures and techniques have been utilized in research on phonetic/phonological development in SA. In studies dealing with production or pronunciation, researchers have adopted specific acoustic measures (e.g., formant values or duration measurements for studies of vowel acquisition; O'Brien, 2003; Pérez-Vidal, Juan-Garau, & Mora, 2010), rater judgments (e.g., for studies examining foreign accent, comprehensibility, intelligibility, or global pronunciation; Avello, 2013; Baker-Smemoe & Haslam, 2013; Hardison, 2014; Hiraishi, 2013, among others), or rates (i.e., counts and percentages) of the production of “accurate” as compared to nontargetlike realizations (e.g., Díaz-Campos, 2004) or of the production of particular allophones (e.g., Raish, 2015; Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012, 2013) or pronunciation patterns (e.g., Trimble, 2013, for intonation). The type(s) of measure(s) utilized greatly influences the next important consideration, which is determining what counts as a gain during SA.

Accounting for Gains

In conjunction with the measure of analysis adopted, researchers must also determine how to account for linguistic gains during SA. For some measures, what constitutes a gain is relatively clear. For example, on ratings-based measures of foreign accent, a gain is generally operationalized as a numerical (and, likely, statistically significant) change in the direction of less foreign accent over the course of time abroad (e.g., comparing a Time 1 or pre-SA measure to a Time 2 or post-SA measure). Similarly, for studies of perceptual abilities, changes in discrimination rates or lexical decision accuracy between pre- and post-SA tests can indicate gains or lack thereof during SA. But for some acoustic measures, accounting for gains is not as clear-cut. For instance, a number of studies have examined vowel production during SA by measuring vowel quality using formant values (or concentrations of energy around particular frequencies in the speech signal that index vowel position along vertical [first format; F1] and horizontal [second format; F2] dimensions). For each formant

and each vowel, the expected or targetlike change could be in a different direction and depends on several factors, including the specific vowel and formant as well as learners' Time 1 formant values and the potential variability of native speaker norms with regard to the measure. Additionally, it is quite conceivable to witness a change that may be in a targetlike direction but that surpasses average native values for the same vowel in the other direction. The question then becomes whether a move from a vowel that was, for example, too low and is now too high constitutes a gain, and, if so, to what extent? The challenges in answering these questions can account for some of the variability observed in results and conclusions across studies and in the difficulty in aggregating existing research on phonetic/phonological development during SA (see Solon & Long, 2016).

Arguably, though, a central question in SA research is not just whether learners make linguistic gains during SA but whether those gains outpace gains made in other contexts, such as an at-home classroom. In order to be able to (try to) answer this question, many studies elect to include an at-home comparison group comprised of learners at approximately the same level of study and sometimes enrolled in the same or similar courses. Yet, as Sanz (2014) points out, often with such study design, researchers end up "comparing apples and oranges, because students who choose to go abroad are different from students who choose to stay in their home institutions" (p. 3). The comparison becomes even more difficult if the two groups are not comparable with regard to the structure under examination at Time 1. Nevertheless, we contend that an at-home comparison group, even if not entirely compatible with the SA group, is better than no at-home comparison group at all. One large-scale project has adopted an ingenious and innovative way of addressing this issue: The SALA (Study Abroad and Language Acquisition) project studies the same learners over extended periods of time, including time when they study in an at-home environment and time when they study abroad. Thus, researchers in this project are able to compare development within the same learner across distinct contexts of learning (see, e.g., Pérez-Vidal, 2014).

Finally, especially for production studies examining particular acoustic cues or pronunciation patterns, researchers must also decide whether the inclusion of a (region-specific) native speaker comparison group is warranted. It is, we would argue, necessary in studies on the acquisition of region- or dialect-specific allophones or features (e.g., as evidenced in various studies on the use of the Spanish phoneme /θ/ during SA in Spain; e.g., George, 2014; Knouse, 2012; Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012, 2013), but it can also be important in other studies and can shed light on whether or not learners adjust to the production norms to which they are exposed during SA. For example, in his study of the acquisition of liaison in L2 French by native English-speaking learners, Thomas (2004) found that not only did his SA group show development in the realization of compulsory liaison, but where their patterns deviated from the standard or official norm (i.e., in optional liaison contexts) reflected native speaker deviation patterns (whereas no similar pattern of native-like deviation was observed for at-home learners). Thus, information regarding site-specific native speaker production (and perception) patterns can help situate findings with greater detail and subtlety than does relying on established norms. With these methodological challenges and considerations in mind, we now turn to a review of findings of existing research on SA and L2 phonetic and phonological development.

Current Contributions and Research

Role of Study Abroad in the Development of L2 Sound Production

The L2 acquisition of segmental phenomena has garnered the most attention thus far, with research exploring the development of voiceless stops (Avello, 2013; Avello & Lara, 2014; Bongiovanni, Long, Solon, & Willis, 2015; Crane, 2011; Díaz-Campos, 2004, 2006; Díaz-Campos & Lazar, 2003), approximants or voiced fricatives (Alvord & Christiansen, 2012; Bongiovanni et al., 2015; Díaz-Campos, 2004, 2006; Lord, 2010), laterals (Bongiovanni et al., 2015; Díaz-Campos, 2004, 2006), nasals (Díaz-Campos, 2004, 2006), rhotics (Bongiovanni et al., 2015; Detrixhe, 2015), and vowels (Avello, 2013; Avello & Lara, 2014; Han, Hwang, & Choi, 2011; Højen, 2003; O'Brien, 2003; Pérez-Vidal et al., 2010; Simões, 1996; Stevens, 2011) by learners of English, Spanish, German, and French (though with an overwhelming focus on learners of English and Spanish). Findings regarding the development of L2 segments during SA have been decidedly mixed and appear to depend greatly on many of the methodological decisions mentioned in the previous section as well as the particular segment(s) and L1-L2 pairing studied. Nevertheless, overall, improvement is often observed for particular groups of segments or in particular acoustic measures but not necessarily across the board for all segments or even for all measures for a single segment. Given the breadth of research on segmental acquisition during SA (and the varying methodologies, target segments, and conclusions therein), we present a concise review of a representative (but by no means exhaustive) sample of studies in this realm in Table 5.1.

As observed in Table 5.1, a fair amount of research has examined segmental development during or as a result of SA in various languages and SA locations, and using a variety of measurement techniques; the conclusions of these studies have likewise been quite variable. Future research would benefit from expanding the language pairings examined (the undeniable prevalence of studies on English-speaking learners of Spanish limits the generalizability of findings) and from exploring segmental development in learners of other ages (e.g., children), L2 proficiency levels (or at least accounting for Time 1 proficiency level), and backgrounds (e.g., what effect, if any, does SA have on the phonetic/phonological systems of heritage learners?).

The studies summarized in Table 5.1 focus on the production of particular segments in correct/incorrect, acceptable/unacceptable, or more/less targetlike ways. Nevertheless, research on segmental production during SA also features studies on the acquisition of regional consonantal allophones, such as the Spanish interdental fricative (George, 2014; Knouse, 2012; Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012, 2013), the Spanish uvular fricative (George, 2014), and the Egyptian Arabic voiced velar occlusive (Raish, 2015), as well as segments that are variable in the speech of native speakers (e.g., /l/ deletion in French; Howard, Lemée, & Regan, 2006; Regan, Howard, & Lemée, 2009). In general, research on the use of region-specific variants has found an increase in the use of these variants after time abroad (e.g., George, 2014; Knouse, 2012; Raish, 2015), although Ringer-Hilfinger (2012) presents an exception: Her learners exhibited greater awareness of Spanish /θ/ after four months abroad but very little use of the variant at all. In fact, even in studies that exhibit gains in the use of dialect-specific variants during or after SA, in general, relatively little use of the variants by learners (as compared, for example, to native speaker rates of use) is observed. Knouse (2012), for instance, observed [θ] production in only 1.7 percent of possible contexts in her

Table 5.1 Summary of several existing studies on the acquisition of segments during SA

Study	L1-L2 pairing	Participant age (years)	Participant L2 proficiency or level	SA location	SA length	Inclusion of AH comparison group?	Feature(s) examined	Measurement type	Conclusion as reported by author(s)
Avello (2013)	Spanish/Catalan or Basque/Catalan-English	M = 18.8	Upper intermediate	British Isles, North America	3 months	No	/t k/, /i:-i/ /æ-ʌ/	VOT, duration (ms) and Euclidean distance	No significant improvement.
Avello and Lara (2014)	Spanish/Catalan-English	M = 18.3	Upper intermediate/advanced	Not reported (Erasmus program)	3 months, 6 months	No	/t k/, /i:-i/ /æ-ʌ/	VOT, duration (ms) and Euclidean distance	Significant improvement in /æ-ʌ/ quality distinction in 3-month group and in VOT of /k/ in 6-month group.
Bongiovanni et al. (2015)	English-Spanish	Not reported	Intermediate	Dominican Republic	4 weeks	Yes	/p t k/ /b d g/ /l/ /r/	VOT, relative intensity, F2, frequency of category/type	Additional benefit of SA over AH observed in production of /d/ and /ɾ/.
Detrixhe (2015)	English-Spanish	Not reported	Intermediate	Galicia, Spain	1 semester	Yes	/r/	Number of taps, duration, intensity, F1, F2, F3	Positive change (and more than AH group) observed in all acoustic cues except F1 and F3.
Díaz-Campos (2004)	English-Spanish	Not reported	Not reported	Alicante, Spain	10 weeks	Yes	/p t k/ /b d g/ /l/ /p/	Error rates	No additional benefits of SA observed for any segment.
Han et al. (2011)	Korean-English	19–27	Not reported	No specific program; compared group with residence abroad experience in English-speaking country to group with no abroad experience	1–10 years (M = 35 months)	Of sorts; comparison group with no residence abroad experience	English reduced vowels	Mean duration ratios and F1-F2 patterns	Group with no residence abroad experience tended to produce reduced vowels as full vowels; group with residence abroad displayed vowel reduction patterns similar to native English speakers.

Llanes, Mora, and Serrano (2016)	Spanish/Catalan-English	<i>M</i> = 15.41 (range = 12–17)	Intermediate–upper intermediate	UK	3 weeks	Yes (taking intensive course)	/p t k/ /b d g ð ɣ/	VOT	Greater gains in VOT for SA group than for AH group.
Lord (2010)	L2 Spanish	Not reported (L1 not reported)	Intermediate	Mexico	8 weeks	No	[b d g ð ɣ]	Percent accurate production in appropriate contexts	Improvements observed over course of SA; participants with previous phonetic instruction improved more.
Mora (2008)	Catalan/Spanish-English	Not reported	Not reported	English-speaking country	3 months	No	/p t k/	VOT	No effect of SA on VOT.
O'Brien (2003)	English-German	19–22	Most in sixth or seventh semester of university German	Freiberg, Germany	1 academic year	Yes	/i:/, /y:/, /u:/	Mean difference of F1, F2, and F3 from those of a native speaker; ratings by 5 native listeners	Positive effect of SA on vowel production, especially in ratings: SA group improved on /i:/ and /u:/ as rated by listeners (AH group did not).
Pérez-Vidal et al. (2010)	L2 English (L1 not reported)	<i>M</i> = 18.2	Not reported	Varied (Erasmus program)	3 months	No	/i:-ɪ/ /e-æ/ /æ-ʌ/	Duration, F1, F2 (bark normalized)	No significant changes in duration; some global changes in quality (formants) but not in the direction of a more distinct contrast.
Stevens (2011)	English-Spanish	Adult	Novice–high, intermediate–low	Úbeda, Spain	4 weeks	Yes	/i e a o u/	Duration	SA group shortened vowels over SA period (targetlike change); AH group does not. SA group still differs significantly from NS comparison group.

Note: AH = at-home; F1 = first formant; F2 = second formant; F3 = third formant; L1 = first language; L2 = second language; NS = native speaker; SA = study abroad; VOT = voice onset time.

data set. A notable exception to this general pattern, however, is Raish (2015), whose L1 Arabic learners produced the Cairene-specific variant in 61.5 percent of possible contexts after SA (up from 38.9 percent prior to SA). With regard to the use of sociolinguistically variable phenomena, Howard et al. (2006) and Regan et al. (2009) point to an increase in /l/ deletion in L2 French (a move in a targetlike direction) for learners spending time abroad as compared to learners at home.

Research on the role of SA in the L2 acquisition of suprasegmental phenomena in production has garnered much less attention than segmental production. The existing research has focused on different aspects of prosody in English (Trofimovich & Baker-Smemoe, 2006; Valls Ferrer, 2011), Spanish (Henriksen et al., 2010; Trimble, 2013), and Chinese (Kim et al., 2015), with special attention to how learners come to adjust (or not) correlates of stress, rhythm, or intonation in a targetlike manner. The findings of this small but promising body of work highlight important areas of consideration in the investigation of a L2 sound system—namely, what it means to produce L2 sound features in a targetlike way and both the nature and importance of the target. Two studies on the L2 acquisition of Spanish intonation (Henriksen et al., 2010; Trimble, 2013), for instance, look in depth at the individual patterns of a small number of participants over the SA period to be able to track changes in the prevalence of certain patterns in the speech of particular speakers over time, and both discuss the wide-ranging individual variability in L2 (and native!) intonation patterns as central findings of their studies. In particular, by comparing “preferred patterns” of specific L2 learners to prevailing native English and native Spanish patterns, Trimble (2013) was able to propose a general finding of a shift away from more Englishlike and toward more Spanishlike intonation patterns at least for some learners. With regard to tone acquisition, Kim et al. (2015) utilized the ratings of four native Chinese raters judging the accuracy of tone production in the speech of 22 English-speaking learners of Chinese studying abroad for 16 weeks. Overall accuracy in tone production improved significantly. Valls Ferrer (2011) examined the acquisition of English rhythm (as well as oral and perceived fluency) by advanced Catalan-Spanish learners of English as a foreign language during a three-month SA period. Rhythm, as accounted for via various rhythm metrics, was observed to significantly improve during the SA period. Finally, Trofimovich and Baker-Smemoe (2006) examined multiple suprasegmentals (i.e., stress timing, peak alignment, speech rate, pause frequency, and pause duration) in 30 adult Korean learners of English with short (3 months), medium (3 years), and long (10 years) lengths of residence in the US. Length of stay abroad was found to significantly influence the production of stress timing, with those learners with greater experience exhibiting smaller (i.e., more targetlike) syllable duration ratios. Thus, though the body of literature is quite small, research on the acquisition of suprasegmentals during SA has explored a variety of features and phenomena in multiple language pairings and, so far, is showing trends of positive effects of experience abroad on development. Still, much more research is needed that explores these and other suprasegmental features, different types and lengths of SA, and learners of differing ages and backgrounds.

Role of Study Abroad in the Development of L2 Sound Perception

In contrast to research on the development of L2 sound production during SA, fewer studies have examined the potential impact of a stay abroad on learners’ perception

of L2 speech. These studies have focused primarily on the perception of phonemic contrasts in the L2, particularly consonant and/or vowel contrasts known or hypothesized to be challenging for learners to distinguish. An early study by Højen (2003) examined Danish learners' identification and discrimination of /s/-/ʃ/ and /a/-/ʌ/ in English and revealed no additional benefit of SA on perceptual gains. In fact, both the SA group (14 learners who spent 7.1 months on average in Southern England) and the at-home group (11 learners who remained in Denmark) demonstrated a very similar shift in the perceptual boundary between /s/ and /ʃ/ by Time 2 and showed a high rate of success in the identification and discrimination of /a/ and /ʌ/ at Time 1. Two studies by Mora (2008, 2014) also explored the role of SA in L2 learners' perceptual development of English phonemic contrasts. In his 2008 study, Mora examined the potential benefit of a 3-month stay abroad on 25 bilingual Catalan-Spanish learners' discrimination of five vocalic contrasts (/i:/-/ɪ/, /æ/-/ʌ/, /æ/-/a:/, /ɪ/-/ə/, and /e/-/ɛ/) and four consonantal contrasts (/t/-/d/, /s/-/z/, /tʃ/-/dʒ/, and /d/-/ð/) in English. His findings did not lend support for a positive impact of SA, as learners' performance on an AX discrimination task revealed significant perceptual gains for some contrasts following an initial 80-hour formal instruction period but insignificant gains following the academic term abroad. In his 2014 study, Mora similarly examined bilingual Catalan-Spanish learners' perceptual development of three vocalic and three consonantal phonemic contrasts in English: /i:/-/ɪ/, /æ/-/ʌ/, /e/-/æ/, /p/-/b/, /s/-/z/, and /tʃ/-/dʒ/. His analysis of 66 learners' performance on an AXB discrimination task after two academic terms of formal instruction and one term abroad revealed, once again, notable gains following the formal instruction period but no further improvement following the SA period. Taken together, these three studies (Højen, 2003; Mora, 2008, 2014) appear to suggest minimal benefit or impact of SA on L2 learners' perception of consonant and vowel contrasts in English. However, much more research featuring a diverse array of experimental designs (e.g., distinct L1 learner groups, other task types, differing lengths of stay) is needed. Additionally, future research of this kind should continue to strive to address and interpret experimental findings in light of models or frameworks of L2 speech perception (e.g., Speech Learning Model, Flege, 1995; Perceptual Assimilation Model-L2, Best & Tyler, 2007) to contribute to growing theoretical development in the field.

Two additional studies relevant to the review of research on the development of L2 sound perception as a result of a stay abroad have examined native English-speaking learners' perception of dialectal variants in Spanish. Schmidt (2009) investigated dialect familiarity and the role of SA in 11 learners' comprehension of a previously unfamiliar variety of Spanish. Following exposure to Dominican Spanish during a three-week SA program in the Dominican Republic, the learners in Schmidt's study demonstrated significant improvement in the comprehension of spoken Dominican Spanish at the word- and phrase-level (although greater gains were observed at the word- than at the phrase-level) as well as slight improvement in the comprehension of standard Spanish (spoken by non-Caribbean native speakers of Spanish). Bedinghaus (2015) examined learners' perception of /s/ aspiration (a dialectal feature of the Spanish of southern Spain in addition to much of Latin America) over the course of an academic semester. The SA group included 48 learners enrolled in intermediate or advanced Spanish courses in Seville, Spain, and the at-home group included 25 learners enrolled in a second- or third-year Spanish course in the US (only one of whom had previously spent substantial time in a Spanish-speaking country [i.e., for

three weeks and not to study Spanish]). Findings from a forced-choice identification task and a lexical decision task revealed that learners in the SA group demonstrated gains in the perception of /s/ aspiration at the end of the study period, whereas learners in the at-home group did not show improvement over the same time period. Once again, much more research is needed on the role of SA in learners' development of perceptual abilities concerning variable segmental phenomena in L2s. Nevertheless, the findings of Schmidt and Bedinghaus are promising, as they lend support for the idea that greater exposure to more authentic use of the target language—which is particularly important for the acquisition of dialectal and/or region-specific speech variants—contributes to development in learners' perceptual abilities of these variants and of the L2 overall.

Finally, to our knowledge, only one study has addressed development in the perception of suprasegmental phenomena during SA. Goss (2015) investigated the perceptual development of Japanese lexical accent over the course of an academic semester by native English-speaking learners, 16 of whom were enrolled in a second-year Japanese language course in the US and 20 of whom were studying abroad in Japan. Findings from two perception tasks—one that targeted learners' identification of pitch accent and the other their categorization of pitch accent in real Japanese words—revealed that the two groups demonstrated similar gains over a 10-week period; however, gains for both groups were statistically insignificant. Once again, much more research is needed on the role of SA in the perceptual development of L2 suprasegmental phenomena. Ultimately, research of this kind has the potential to improve our understanding of the relationship between learning context and learners' developing perception abilities that, in many cases, are essential for the identification and interpretation of pragmatic meaning in L2s.

Study Abroad and Foreign Accent

Similar to research on the role of SA in L2 perceptual development, investigations of the relationship between SA and foreign accent are few in number. However, unlike research on SA and L2 speech perception, the general pattern of findings across studies examining foreign accent lends more support to the idea that SA is beneficial for phonetic/phonological development. For example, in his study of 25 Danish learners of English, Højen (2003) found that SA learners' foreign accent ratings (as rated by 10 native English listeners) improved following their stay abroad. It should be noted that although the SA learners demonstrated improvement, their rating scores did not approximate those assigned to native English speakers. Additionally, Højen reported a strong positive correlation between length of residence and gains in foreign accent. Avello, Mora, and Pérez-Vidal (2012) similarly found that their 23 Spanish-Catalan learners of English demonstrated decreased foreign accent after a three-month stay abroad. However, unlike Højen's findings, the improvement observed by Avello et al. was statistically insignificant.

Three studies on SA and foreign accent have examined or included younger learners. Muñoz and Llanes (2014) compared the potential impact of a stay abroad on perceived foreign accent for Catalan-Spanish learners of English of two distinct age groups: 28 children between 10 and 11 years old and 27 adults ranging in age from 19 to 33 years. All participants narrated a picture story from which speech samples were taken and rated by 28 native or bilingual speakers of English. Both children and

adults who studied abroad demonstrated slight, albeit insignificant, improvement in foreign accent after the three-month study period, whereas children and adults who did not study abroad demonstrated the opposite trend (also insignificant). Furthermore, three external factors—hours speaking English, hours in class, and hours speaking with native speakers—were found to correlate significantly with gains in foreign accent for both learner groups. Llanes (2016), who examined potential improvement in foreign accent following SA for Catalan-Spanish child learners of English, reported a positive effect of a two-month stay abroad on foreign accent. Finally, Llanes et al. (2016; which also examined voice onset time [VOT], as reviewed in Table 5.1) explored foreign accent ratings for two groups of teenage Catalan-Spanish learners of English: one studying abroad for three weeks in the UK and the other enrolled in an intensive at-home course in Spain. Similar to the findings for VOT, the SA group reduced their foreign accent to a greater extent over the three weeks than did the at-home group.

Although more research is needed on young learners (as well as comparisons of potential gains for young vs. adult learners), at the present we know that, with regard to foreign accent, children or young learners as well as adults can benefit from a stay abroad. Additional research of this kind will contribute meaningfully to scholarly discussion on the interaction between age of learning and L2 phonetic/phonological acquisition in general (see, e.g., Moyer, 2004) by adding to the conversation the important component of context of learning. Additionally, in terms of methodology, future research in this area should continue to carefully consider the nature of speech samples elicited for rating (e.g., reading- or conversation-based), rating techniques (i.e., design of the rating scale employed by listeners), and the profile(s) of the listeners (e.g., naïve vs. “expert”; native vs. nonnative), as all of these factors have been found to influence the perception of foreign accent in L2s (see Piske, MacKay, & Flege, 2001).

Conclusions and Future Directions

Though relatively fewer in number, studies on the L2 development of phonetics/phonology during SA represent a robust and growing subfield of inquiry. At present, we know that a stay abroad has the potential to facilitate gains in pronunciation (i.e., oral production) of segmental and suprasegmental aspects of the L2, perception of variable L2 segments, and global foreign accent but that it may have less impact on learners’ perception of L2 contrasts. We also know that these gains (or lack thereof) may not be consistent across each individual learner; many of the studies reviewed in this chapter have rightly shown that while group gains may often appear minimal, individual gains are quite variable and are linked to specific characteristics of the learning context as well as the learner. Thus, an important lesson and suggestion for future research on this topic is to examine potential changes in L2 phonetic/phonological development at the individual and group levels, as well as the relationship between external factors related to the learning setting, internal learner-specific factors, and any observed changes (be they gains or losses). Future studies would also benefit from documenting learners’ patterns of interaction and language contact in each learning context (abroad and at home) to better understand the nature of phonetic/phonological development in the L2 as a result of contexts believed to differ substantially in terms of opportunities for L2 interaction and use.

Finally, future research would benefit from more investigation of distinct L1-L2 pairings, differing lengths of stay abroad, and a more diverse demographic of learner groups. What we know about the potential impact of a stay abroad on phonetic/phonological development is limited by a selective focus on adult learners of English or Spanish who spend an academic semester abroad and begin their stay with an approximately intermediate level of L2 proficiency. By expanding our participant, program, and language pool, increasing our focus on the individual, and accounting more fully for the inherent variability in experiences both abroad and at home, we will deepen our understanding of the interaction between specific factors of the SA experience and development of L2 phonetics and phonology while abroad.

Key Terms

Speech production
Speech perception
Foreign accent

Segmental acquisition
Suprasegmental acquisition

Further Reading

- Geeslin, K. with Long, A. Y. (2014). *Sociolinguistics and second language acquisition: Learning to use language in context*. New York, NY/London, UK: Routledge. Chapter 8 explores “The role of study abroad on the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence.”
- Pérez-Vidal, C. (Ed.) (2014). *Language acquisition in study abroad and formal instruction contexts*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Benjamins. A volume detailing the SALA Project and many of its findings; Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 explore topics related to phonetics and phonology.
- Regan, V., Howard, M., & Lemée, I. (2010). *The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters. Chapters 7 and 9 examine the use of sociophonetic variants during SA.

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L2 Spanish Intonation in a Short-Term Study Abroad Program

Jorge Méndez Seijas

Introduction

Intonation has garnered increasing attention in the last few decades. This interest is not unwarranted: Through intonation, speakers convey linguistic (e.g., utterance type) and paralinguistic (e.g., irony, happiness) information. In second language (L2) speech, intonation has an added weight because the inability to produce language-specific prosodic features affects comprehensibility and foreign-accentedness (Munro & Derwing, 1995). Research on intonation has grown alongside new technologies that allow for fine-grained analyses of phonetic detail as well as formal frameworks that have made descriptions of prosodic systems possible. Moreover, recent models of L2 intonation, such as the L2 Intonational Learning Theory (LILT: Mennen, 2015), may help make thorough analyses, predictions, and interpretations. Most L2 Spanish intonation data have been collected from native English speakers (L1 English) learning Spanish in study abroad (SA) programs (Craft, 2015; Henriksen, Geeslin, & Willis, 2010; Thornberry, 2014; Trimble, 2013). Data collected in SA contexts are ideal for L2 research because learners are exposed mostly to one dialect and thus to more homogenous intonation. This is a significant asset because intonation varies greatly from region to region (for geolocial descriptions, see Prieto & Roseano, 2010) and, potentially, even from classroom to classroom.

Within frameworks like the Autosegmental Metrical (AM) approach (Ladd, 2008; Pierrehumbert, 1980), intonation has two components: one phonetic and one phonological. The phonetic component refers to the contours (e.g., rises, falls) traced by fluctuations of fundamental frequency (f_0). The phonological component, on the other hand, refers to tonal targets, that is, abstract elements that underlie f_0 fluctuations. For instance, the realization of a sequence of underlying tones L(ow)+H(igh) results in rising intonation. In the phonological component, the tonal inventory is comprised of pitch accents (tones associated with stressed syllables) and boundary tones (edge tones that delimit intonational units). To further illustrate this, Figure 6.1 provides an example of a canonical declarative sentence (henceforth, declarative) in Spanish.

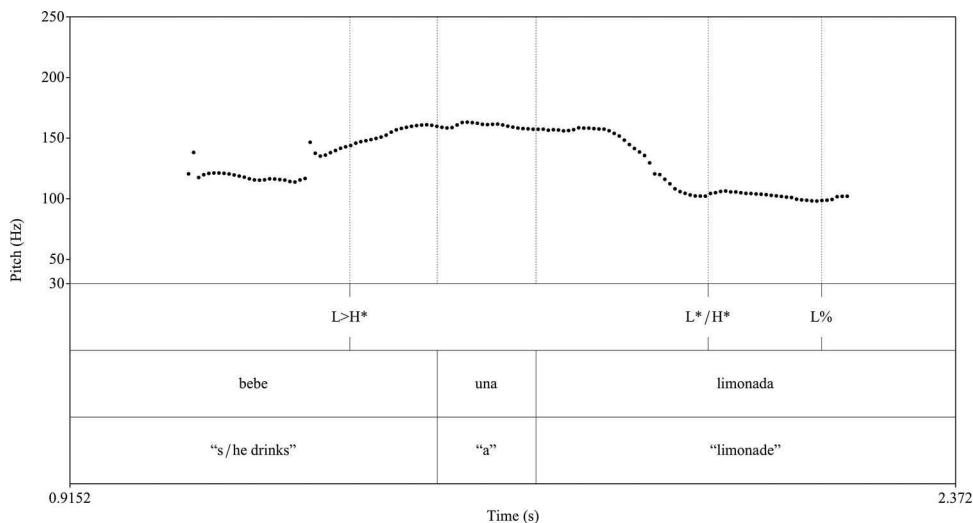


Figure 6.1 Representation of a statement, produced by the author. The f_0 is represented on the y-axis, while time is represented on the x-axis.

The lexically stressed syllable in BEbe is characterized as L>H*: a rise. The star diacritic (*) indicates which tone is more strongly associated with the syllable, while the “greater than” symbol (>) indicates that the highest f_0 point in the contour is not reached within the stressed syllable but rather in posttonic position. This “late peak” is typical of all stressed syllables in prenuclear position. The nuclear position in Spanish intonational phrases is the last stressed syllable. The stressed syllable in limoNAda, therefore, constitutes the nucleus. The annotation provided for this nuclear element is generally L*, but H* has also been proposed (Estebas-Vilaplana, 2008). For this chapter, H* will be the transcription used. Finally, declaratives present downstepping, that is, a progressive downtrend in f_0 , culminating in a low tone: L%, where the percentage (%) symbol indicates that this L is a boundary tone.

Tonal configurations in Spanish and English declaratives are similar yet not identical. They are different in prenuclear position because, unlike Spanish, English has no late peaks. In nuclear position, the configurations are similar because both display the same f_0 trajectory (downstepping) and the same tonal entity in nuclear position: H* followed by L%. These similarities and dissimilarities constitute an interesting point of crosslinguistic comparison vis-à-vis L2 development, and provide an adequate scenario to evaluate the relative ease or difficulty L2 Spanish learners may encounter when developing aspects that are like the L1 and aspects that are not. Based on specific parameters put forth in the LILt, this chapter offers a preliminary analysis of intonational development in L2 Spanish. The data, from four subjects that participated in a five-week SA program in Barcelona, Spain, were analyzed in terms of (i) pitch accents and boundary tones, and (ii) pitch range, that is, the distance between “some topline and some bottomline” (Patterson, 2000, p. 12) in speakers’ tonal space.

Previous Literature

Tonal Targets and Pitch Range in Spanish

Descriptions of Spanish intonation reveal great cross-dialectal variability; however, a relatively common configuration can be observed in some sentence types, as is the case of declaratives. These sentences, in most dialects, present prenuclear accents that are phonologically characterized as L*+>H. Nuclear accents, on the other hand, display some variation: L*/H*, H*L, or H+L*. The first pitch accent, L*/H*, appears to be the most common possibility in Spanish, whereas H*L and H+L* are more circumscribed geographically or pragmatically (Hualde & Prieto, 2015). Finally, declaratives present a progressive downtrend in f_0 leading to L%.

Pitch accents and boundary tones are realized within a limited tonal space, that is, somewhere between speakers' f_0 maxima and minima. Although speakers' anatomical differences are a source of variation, the relative distance between extreme points appears to be constant and language-specific. Empirical evidence of crosslinguistic differences in terms of pitch range had been mostly speculative (Mennen, Schaeffler, & Dickie, 2014), but some research has now been conducted that reveals that distinctions do indeed exist. For instance, it has been reported that American English has a narrower pitch range than Japanese (Hanley, Snidecor, & Ringel, 1966), and British English has a wider range than German (Mennen, Schaeffler, & Docherty, 2012). Two studies have compared English and Spanish, and have come to opposing conclusions: Kelm (1995) indicated that English speakers had a wider pitch range than Spanish speakers, whereas Majewski, Hollien, and Zalewski (1972) found that it was Spanish speakers that had a wider range.

The nature of crosslinguistic distinctions may be more complicated than previously thought as differences can be either “global” or “local” (Mennen et al., 2012). Differences are global if the pitch range in utterances in a language is, from beginning to end, uniformly wider or narrower than utterances in another language (Figure 6.2a). On the other hand, differences are local if they present dissimilarities that are not present throughout utterances. For instance, utterances can exhibit a wider pitch range at the beginning but a narrower pitch range at the end (Figure 6.2b). When L2 learners are confronted with these two scenarios, they must first perceive how the target language diverges from the L2 and where in the intonation phrase this occurs, and then accordingly adjust their pitch range (Mennen et al., 2014).

Some studies in L2 Spanish have mentioned pitch range phenomena: Kelm (1995), for instance, indicated that both L2 Spanish and L2 English learners had a narrower pitch range in their respective target languages, thus suggesting that regardless of inherent crosslinguistic differences, all learners seem to produce a compressed pitch range until they have developed fluency in the L2. More recently, Timble (2013) and Thornberry (2014) noted that some of the learners in their experimental groups showed pitch range expansion from pretest to posttest.

L2 Spanish Intonation in SA

Research on L2 Spanish intonation can be organized into three different types, each based on learners' context of acquisition: in the classroom (Zárate-Sández, 2015), in their homes (Kim, 2016), and in SA programs (Craft, 2015; Henriksen et al., 2010;

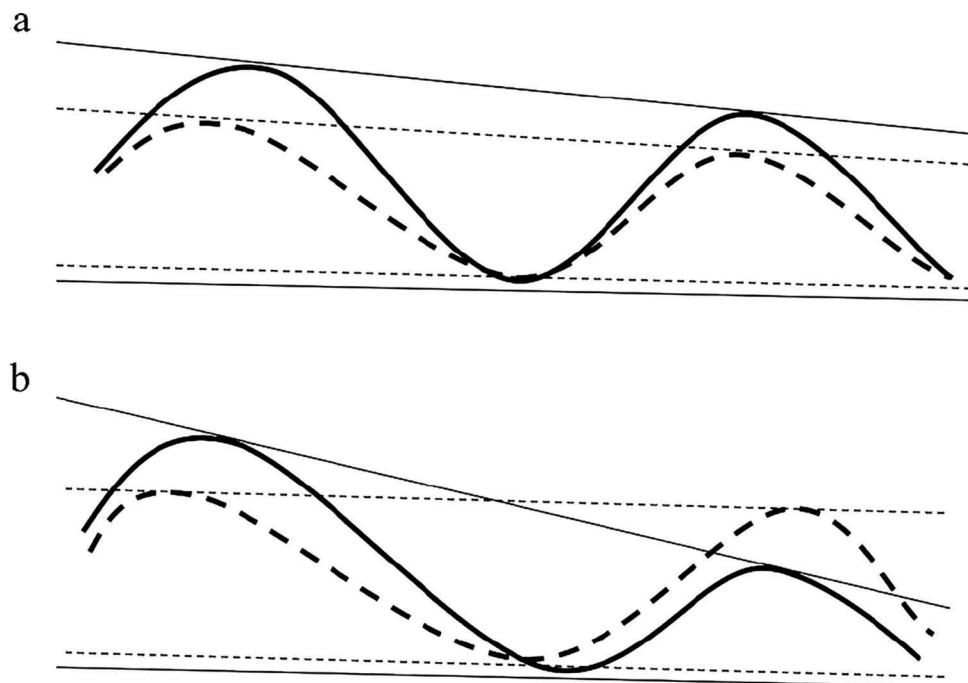


Figure 6.2 Representation of two languages that differ in terms of pitch range. In a, the language represented with the solid line has an overall wider pitch range than the language represented with the dotted line. In b, the language represented with the solid line has a wider pitch range at the beginning of the intonational phrase but a narrower pitch range in the end.

Thornberry, 2014; Trimble, 2013). The conditions in which these last four SA studies took place were different in one way or another. These differences may be related to the amount of time spent abroad, the quality and quantity of input participants received, whether participants had homestays or not, etc. Despite their differences, there are some shared aspects that allow for comparisons and very cautious conclusions. To better understand the results, however, these SA studies must be further divided into two groups: short-term programs, ranging from 6 to 7 weeks (Craft, 2015; Henriksen et al., 2010), and long-term programs, ranging from 15 to 16 weeks (Thornberry, 2014; Trimble, 2013).

In short-term programs, some relevant changes were observed from pretest to posttest. Henriksen et al. (2010) and Craft (2015) reported stabilization in pattern choice in both declarative and interrogative utterances, even if the patterns used were not always nativelike. In other words, some participants were more consistent in the tonal configurations they selected for each sentence type. Of these two studies, improvement was particularly salient in Craft's: Most of her participants seem to have achieved nativelike intonation after only six weeks abroad. Her results, however, must be interpreted with caution because most of her L2 Spanish participants (five out of eight) were in an "instruction group," meaning that they received explicit information on Spanish intonation during their program. The changes observed in Craft's investigation occurred in both prenuclear and nuclear positions. In terms of

declarative sentences, Craft reports attainment of Spanish late peak in prenuclear position and over 80 percent of targetlike utterance-final contours.

In terms of semester-long programs, Trimble (2013) reported similar findings to those of short-term programs, namely that a preferred pattern was developed. Notably, these frequent patterns approximated those of native speakers in the region where this program took place. Thornberry (2014), on the other hand, had differing results: Seven out of the nine participants in his study showed no changes in intonation. The two participants whose intonation did change adopted patterns that moved toward nativelikeness. Importantly, the participants enrolled in this SA program indicated that they had had limited and sporadic interactions with Spanish speakers other than at their homestays, and that these interactions had occurred mostly toward the end of the program.

The L2 Intonational Learning Theory (LILT)

To fully understand developmental phenomena in L2 intonation, an indispensable requirement must be a model capable of crosslinguistic comparisons that provides clear parameters to describe, compare, and evaluate linguistic data. Otherwise, researchers will not be able to make accurate predictions or explain crosslinguistic influences. The LILT (Mennen, 2015) seeks to achieve these goals. To create a basis for comparisons, Mennen states that crosslinguistic intonational data can be analyzed along four different dimensions and that these dimensions can be used when determining what constitutes a relatively easy or difficult feature to develop. Building on Ladd's (2008) dimensions, Mennen proposes (i) a systemic dimension (the inventory and distribution of pitch accents and boundary tones in a language), (ii) a realizational dimension (how tonal targets are implemented phonetically), (iii) a semantic dimension (what meaning each tonal configuration carries), and (iv) a frequency dimension (how frequently specific tones or tonal combinations are used in a language).

The LILT shares many assumptions and hypotheses with models of segmental acquisition, such as the Speech Learning Model (SLM: Flege, 1995) or the Perceptual Assimilation Model L2 (Best & Tyler, 2007). However, LILT recommends an adaptation of these assumptions and hypotheses, so they can be more appropriately applied to intonation. For instance, within LILT, perceptual similarity must make explicit reference to the semantic dimension (Mennen, 2015). In other words, a tonal target may be more easily perceived and acquired if it triggers some change in meaning. Such reliance on meaning is not as critical when perceiving the phonetic difference of segments. Influences that hinder or help perception can originate from, or have an impact on, different dimensions (e.g., systemic and realizational) simultaneously. Another important tenet of this model is that contrasts are position-sensitive, that is, contrasts may be easier or more difficult in certain positions and contexts than in others.

Critical Issues This Study Tries to Shed Light On

The research in L2 Spanish intonation conducted thus far has provided valuable preliminary descriptions of intonational development, both of tonal configuration and, to a lesser extent, of pitch range phenomena. These studies, however, have not couched their results and interpretations within a theoretical framework specially

designed for intonation. Only such a model can allow for systematic and systemic analyses of intonational phenomena. No such analyses have been attempted because L2 intonation has had no “fully-fledged and well-grounded” model of acquisition (Simonet, 2012, p. 741). The Intonational Learning Theory (Mennen, 2015) may help fill this void. The current study represents a first approximation to using the LILT to analyze L2 Spanish intonation, while at the same time providing more data on the development of both tonal configurations and pitch range in Spanish. This investigation sought to describe modifications, or lack thereof, that occurred in the intonation of four L2 Spanish learners (L1 English) after a short-term SA program in Barcelona, Spain, both in terms of (i) pitch accents and boundary tones, and (ii) pitch range.

Method and Procedures

Participants

Two female participants and two male participants ($n = 4$, mean age = 20 years) of advanced proficiency were selected from a pool of 22 participants enrolled in a SA program in Barcelona, Spain, in the summer of 2014. The selection was exclusively based on the quality of their recordings. That is, the four best recordings were set aside for this project. The participants were L1 English speakers who had had no previous SA experiences. This SA program had highly selective criteria: Participants had to have taken at least two advanced courses before the program started and have a grade point average of 2.7 or superior. All participants were from the same university, located in the Northeast of the United States.

The program in Barcelona was a five-week immersion experience. While abroad, all participants committed to speaking exclusively in Spanish by signing a language pledge before the program started. During these five weeks, participants took three content courses that were taught in Spanish, resulting in 12 hours of class per week, in addition to approximately 10 hours that they had to work to complete their homework. Besides classes and homework, participants had to partake in other activities: (i) field trips to historical and cultural sites, (ii) conversation exchanges with native speakers, and (iii) oral diaries, which were weekly recordings about their experience.

Research Instruments

The oral diaries were the source of the spontaneous data used for this investigation. Every week, participants had to self-record their answers to specific prompts, which they did without the help of researchers or instructors. The students themselves made 2- to 5-minute recordings using audio-recording software installed in their personal computers. Once the recordings were made, the participants sent the file to the program assistants. Of special interest were the recordings of Weeks 1 and 5 because they constituted the data used to analyze the participants’ intonation at the beginning and at the end of this SA program. The prompt for Week 1 elicited information about first impressions about the city, program, and classes, whereas in Week 5, participants had to reflect upon their experience in the program.

Procedure

The recordings from the four participants were analyzed using Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2011). First, 10 multiaccented declarative utterances were identified in the audio files of each of the recordings in the oral diaries, thus resulting in 40 utterances per week, for a total of 80 utterances. Second, each identified utterance was saved separately in an audio file. Each file was then stylized using the stylization function in Praat. This procedure helped to identify and measure all the inflection points. These data points were used to calculate the distance between the highest and lowest targets at the beginning and at the end of each utterance. These measurements can provide a clear indication of any modification in pitch range that may have occurred after this five-week stay abroad. Tonal configurations of each utterance were also analyzed within AM and annotated based on Tones and Break Indices in its Spanish version: Sp-ToBi (Estebas-Vilaplana & Prieto, 2008).

Results and Discussion

Prenuclear Configuration: Pitch Accents

In prenuclear position, there is a clear distinction between Spanish and English: In Spanish, native speakers realize a rising tone with late peak ($L+>H^*$), whereas in English, native speakers mostly pronounce a high contour (H^*) with no late peak. What is still unclear is whether this distinction should be relatively difficult to develop or not for L2 Spanish (L1 English) learners.

In the data for Week 1, all participants displayed intonational contours that suggest three underlying pitch accents used in prenuclear position, namely high (H^*) and, less frequently, low (L^*) and rising ($L+H^*$) contours. In learners' realizations of these tonal events, the f_0 maxima were reached within the stressed syllable. Although participants were already of advanced proficiency before the SA program began, there were only few, sporadic cases of the late peak ($L^*>H$). In Week 5, H^* was still the predominant selection for all learners, with some cases of $L+H^*$. There were no notable changes in peak alignment.

This tendency of L2 Spanish learners (L1 English) to produce mostly H^* or $L+H^*$, with no late peaks, in prenuclear position has been reported in other studies (e.g., Timble, 2013). This pattern also indirectly corroborates results for classroom-based intonational development obtained by Zárate-Sández (2015), whose advanced participants had not yet mastered this feature, either. The reason that has been generally suggested is certainly convincing: transfer from the L1. A haunting and more problematic question is why this late peak is so difficult to acquire.

The LILT may provide plausible, preliminary answers as to why. Within this approach, as in models of segmental acquisition, such as the SLM, it is hypothesized that there is an implicational relationship between perception and production. Perception is expected to be easier when contrasting L1-L2 sounds (or tones, in this case) are perceived as different, and harder when they are perceived as similar. Given the difficulty in perceiving categorical distinctions in intonation as compared to other linguistic domains (Gussenhoven, 1999), contrasts may only be discernible if they also trigger semantic contrasts. In terms of Spanish-English prenuclear accents, the contrast is between the underlying pitch accents $L^*>H$ and H^* , that is, a distinction

in the systemic dimension. There are some factors against perceiving this distinction, though. First, the late peak is oftentimes perceived as high even by native speakers of Spanish (Face & Prieto, 2007), so it is conceivable for L2 learners to have the same perception. Even if they perceive phonetic discrepancies between the L1 and L2, Spanish L*>H may be interpreted as being an alternative realization of H*, thus resulting in what a model like the SLM would call “equivalence-classification.” In other words, learners may incorrectly assume that the two different realizations are two possible ways to realize one underlying high tone, a difference that would not be deemed systemic but rather realizational. The second factor is that this distinction in prenuclear position does not generate semantic contrast. Given these factors, a possible interpretation of the data and results is that learners may find it difficult to develop L>H* because it is perceptually too similar to H*, and because failing to distinguish them does not affect the semantic dimension.

Nuclear Configuration: Nuclear Accents and Boundary Tones

In terms of nuclear configurations, Spanish and English have a similar falling contour, which Estebas-Vilaplana (2008) has described as follows: H*-L%. As opposed to prenuclear position, the question here is whether it is relatively difficult or easy to develop contours that are similar crosslinguistically. Importantly, semantic information (sentence type) is mostly encoded at the end of intonation units. Therefore, while prenuclear accents tend to be the same, regardless of sentence type, nuclear accents and boundary tones change depending on what semantic information a person is intending to convey.

In general terms, all four participants displayed tonal behavior that suggests an underlying H* target at nuclear position, both in Weeks 1 and 5. This high tone coincides with Estebas-Vilaplana’s (2008) characterization of these languages’ nuclear accents. This pitch accent was implemented through stable high f_0 for the duration of the syllable carrying lexical stress. As is expected in both English and Spanish, alignment at nuclear position happened within the confines of the lexically stressed syllable. Having no previous data from these participants, two possibilities can explain the targetlike H* pitch accent: Participants acquired it in previous stages of development, or it resulted from direct transfer from the L1. One way to frame these results within the LILT is by hypothesizing that tonal targets are relatively easy to acquire, or easily transferable, when they hold the same relation form-meaning in both languages.

Boundary tones tell a more complicated story. One of the participants showed improvement toward nativelike contours, one already had nativelike final contours in Week 1 and maintained it through Week 5, and the other two participants did not change their contours at all after the stay abroad. These results are illustrated in the box-and-whisker plots in Figure 6.3. These plots are divided into four quartiles, each representing 25% of the data. The data within the boxes represent 50% of scores for the participant, while the other 50% is represented by the whiskers. The middle line in the boxes marks the median quartile, further dividing the all the scores in the group so that half the data are above the median, and the other half are under the median. In those cases in the following figure where there are no whiskers, the maximum point for the participant is equal to the maximum point in the upper quartile.

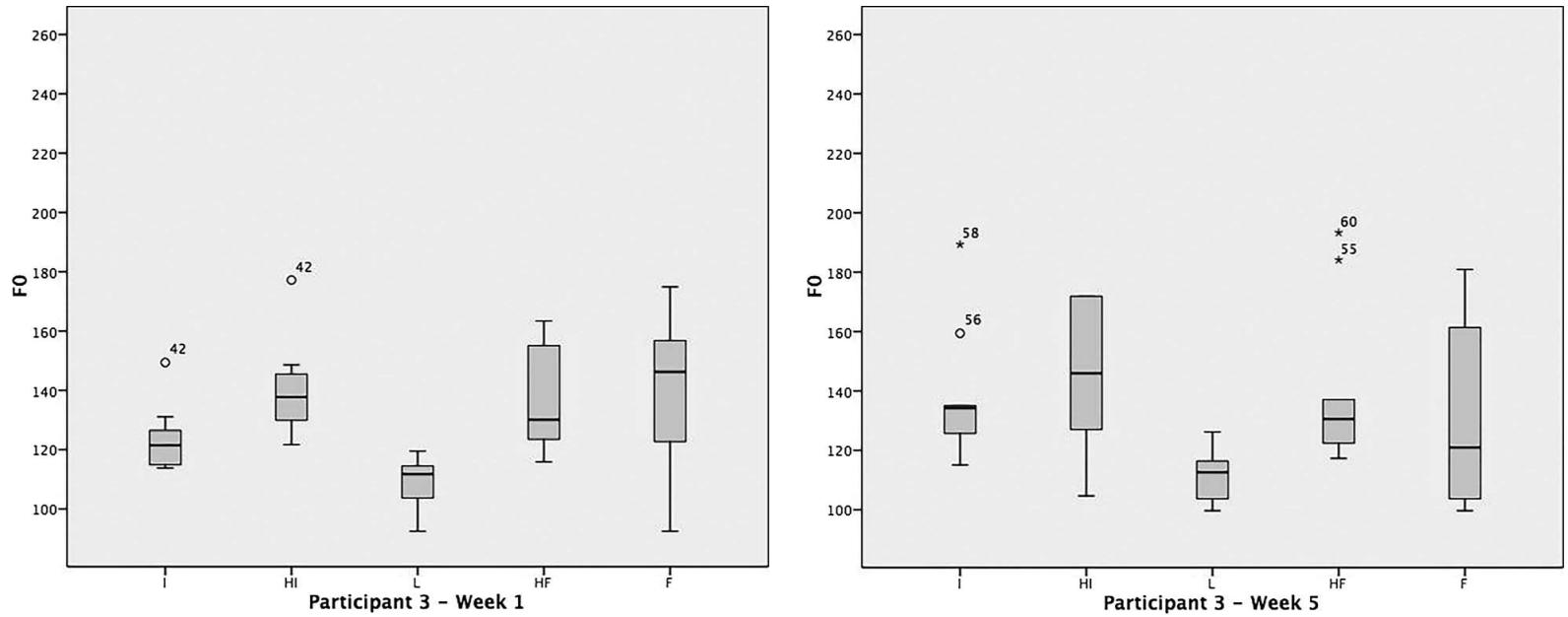


Figure 6.3 Box-and-whisker plots obtained from all the data points of Participant 3 (male) in Week 1 (left) and Week 5 (right). The last two boxes to the right in each week represent the nuclear pitch accent and the boundary tone, respectively.

Participant 3 is the one who did improve. In Week 1, his most common contour was a rising one (H*-H%). The high tone at nuclear position is nativelike. The boundary tone, however, is high instead of the expected L%, characteristic of both Spanish and English canonical declaratives. Although this may appear to be somewhat unexpected, this type of final configuration is not that uncommon in statements in English (Ladd, 2008), a phenomenon referred to as “high rising terminal,” popularly called “uptalk.” Uptalk has been reported in previous L2 Spanish intonation studies (e.g., Craft, 2015; Zárate-Sández, 2015), particularly for Week 1.

In the boxplot for Week 5, although the distribution of data points for the boundary tone is large, particularly in the upper quartile, it must be noted that the median shows that this participant implemented a low tone at least 50% of the times, a marked improvement if compared to Week 1. There were still many instances of uptalk in Week 5, but its frequency is unquestionably much lower. Importantly, the rising contour produced by uptalk is likely to be misinterpreted in Spanish as signaling an absolute interrogative. Given that the nuclear configuration carries so much semantic weight and may even generate misinterpretations, learners may be more likely to notice the distinction and attempt adjustments accordingly. This seems to reinforce the fact that perception of difference may be clearer when it involves the semantic dimension.

Finally, none of the participants in the study displayed downstepping of f_0 , a feature present in both the L1 and L2. This might have been caused by the type of data used in this investigation. That is, not marking clear utterance endings with low boundary tones is not unexpected in spontaneous speech. When constructing their monologues, participants’ speech was characterized mostly by statements that contained incomplete information, which participants would further elaborate in subsequent utterances.

Pitch Range

The only two descriptions of Spanish pitch range (Kelm, 1995; Majewski et al., 1972) that have been done gave conflicting results regarding the crosslinguistic difference between English and Spanish. Their data, however, come from participants who spoke various dialects. Disregarding geolocal variation is undesirable because pitch range differences not only apply to different languages but also to different dialects (Deutsch, Jinghong, Sheng, & Henthorn, 2009). Notwithstanding the lack of descriptions of Spanish that could be useful to establish comparisons, the data in the current study can provide information about the types of changes observed over time. Figure 6.4 shows box-and-whisker plots of one male and one female participant, Weeks 1 and 5.

As it had been observed by Trimble (2013) and Thornberry (2014), learners oftentimes present a reduced pitch range at the beginning of the program, which they then expand by the end. The reduced range can be interpreted as a somewhat natural starting point of learners of any L2 (Kelm, 1995) or a crosslinguistic difference between Spanish and English (Majewski et al., 1972). Regardless of the interpretation, the results in the current study show that all participants made changes in the same direction: from narrower to wider.

The pitch range expansion, however, was not always the same for all speakers. Participant 2, for instance, made rather uniform changes, both at the beginning and at the end of his utterances. Participant 4, on the other hand, made a much more dramatic change at the end of her utterances. The fact that the degree of change was

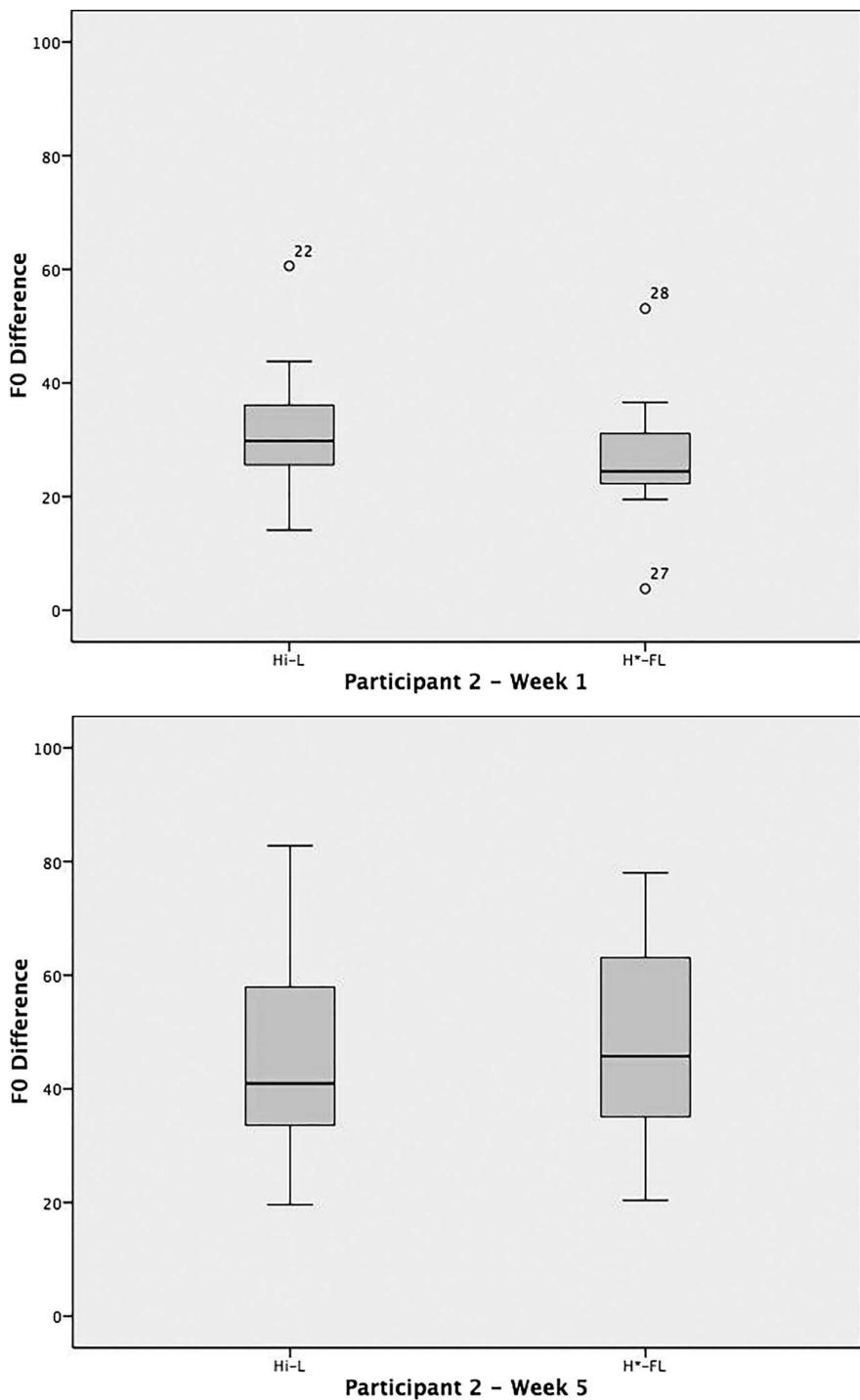


Figure 6.4 Box plots obtained from all the data points of Participant 2 (male) and Participant 4 (female). The boxes represent pitch range at the beginning (left) and end (right) of utterances.

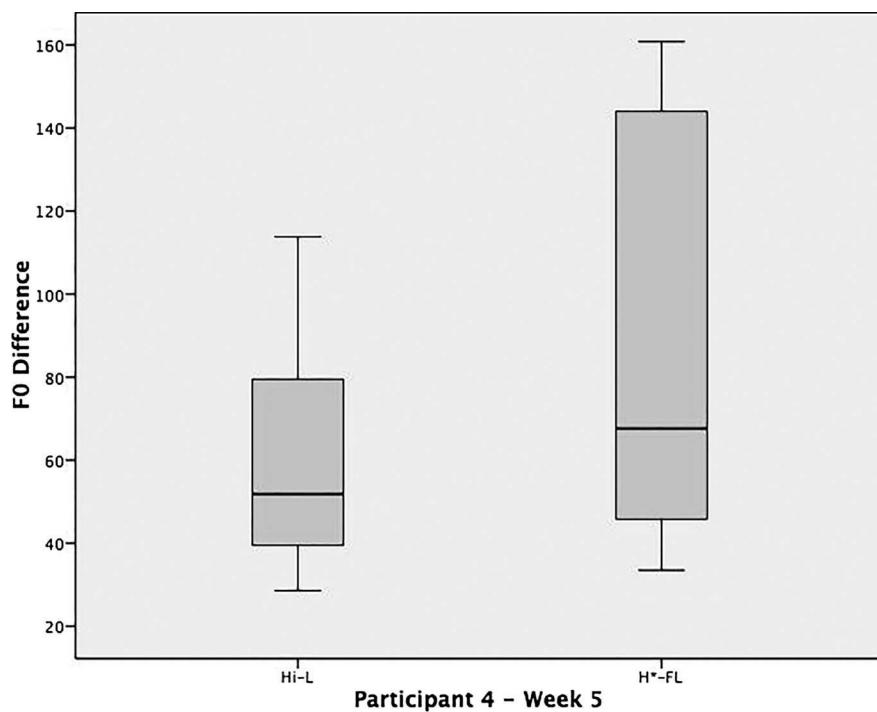
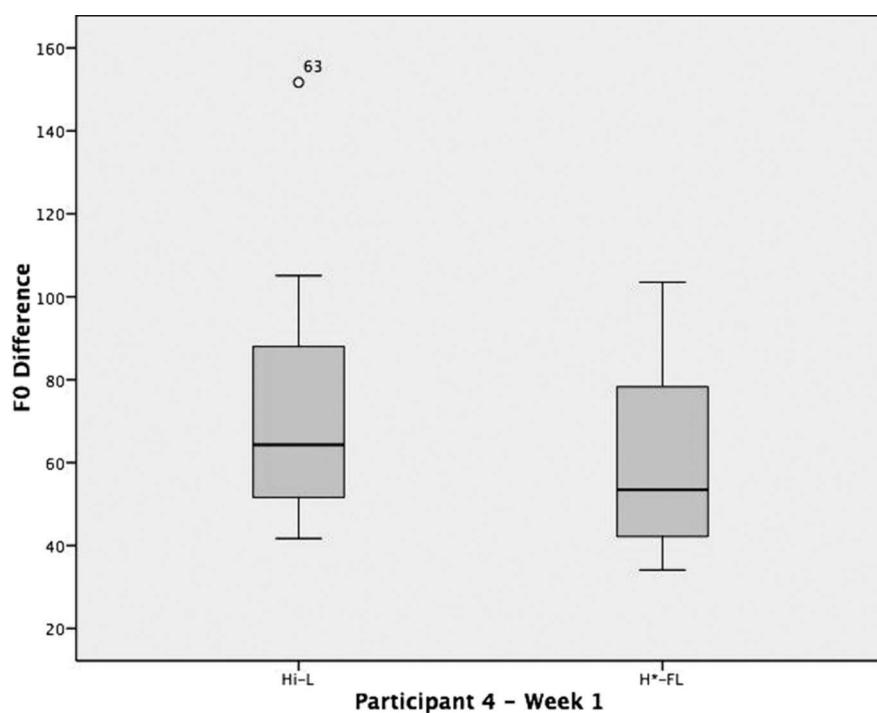


Figure 6.4 (Continued)

enhanced at the end of her utterances might not be fortuitous; rather, Participant 4 might be attempting modification where most semantic information is encoded. Local modifications are expected within LILt, which suggests that changes might be easier in certain contexts or positions, particularly those where there is a clear interaction with semantic information. Although these results are informative, more descriptions are needed before we can thoroughly interpret pitch range developmental data in L2 Spanish. Only then will we be able to determine how difficult or easy it may be to acquire targetlike pitch range in Spanish.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

The results of the current study are preliminary and theoretical in nature; therefore, they cannot be used to elaborate any specific recommendations for practice. As it pertains to L2 Spanish intonation research more broadly, it appears that improvement is more likely to occur when programs maximize interactions with native speakers and minimize the use of the L1. Furthermore, it might be useful to include some type of explicit instructions, particularly for aspects where relevant semantic contrasts exist.

Limitations/Future Directions

Two primary limitations of the current study are the small number of participants analyzed and the fact that the data were self-recorded by the participants. Although case studies are relevant because they shed light on minute yet significant detail, more data would be useful to start identifying clearer developmental trends. As for the second limitation, self-recorded data are often of poor quality, thus complicating segmentation and codification.

Future research should rely more on data from participants' L1 to better distinguish influences of L1 transfer from other factors. In doing so, researchers can avoid relying so heavily on general descriptions of Spanish and English, many of which ignore geolocial variation that may have an impact in developing specific intonational features.

Key Terms

Intonation	Pitch target
Prosody	Pitch range
Crosslinguistic influence	Boundary tone
Acquisition	Study abroad

Further Reading

Mennen (2015), for further information about the LILt.

Simonet (2012), for a general review of L2 acquisition of Spanish phonetics and phonology.

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Pragmatics

Being Polite at the Railway or Bus Station

How a Role-Play Can Illustrate the Differences between Study Abroad Groups vs. Heritage Students and At-Home Groups of Spanish L2 University Learners

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Introduction

Research on the effect of studying abroad in Spanish L2 acquisition (e.g., Lafford & Collentine, 2006; Lafford & Uscinski, 2014; Shively, 2014) has largely focused on the differences caused by the effect that context—studying abroad (SA) or at home (AH)—has on students' pronunciation, grammar, global oral proficiency, lexical development, narratives, and range of communication strategies. Understanding and acquiring the L2 culture, especially its sociopragmatic aspects, is also an important issue (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007; Kramsch, 2000; Shively, 2011), although it is difficult to measure. Nevertheless, the results reported of SA experiences have scarcely reflected the sociopragmatic aspects of oral proficiency acquired during the SA experience, leaving aspects such as politeness in L2 interaction unattended. The same can be said about the lack of comparison of these groups with heritage students' performance. L2 politeness in oral interaction, which is tightly tied to sociolinguistic variables, is wholly understudied in SA vs. AH Spanish context, according to the literature (see the 'Related Work' section).

In order to contribute to bridging that gap, we decided to study the oral production of two groups of university students from the US, performing a simulated pair-interaction task in two different contexts: SA and AH. The SA group consisted of Spanish L2 students from Arcadia University taking a B1 (intermediate-level) course of Spanish in Barcelona. The AH groups were students following a Spanish language B1 course at the University of Houston: One group was made up of Spanish Heritage Speakers (SHS), while the other consisted of English-speaking learners of L2 Spanish. All groups took the same placement test (see the 'Data Gathering for the *InfoTravel Corpus*' section).

The oral task consisted of a role-play chosen from the most frequent interactive situations in everyday life in a Spanish-speaking environment: buying a train or bus ticket and its variants (making a ticket reservation and asking for information about train or bus services). The task selected proved to be suitable for the competence level of B1 learners of Spanish L2, according to the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001). This interactive task, consisting of an asymmetrical transaction (operator/customer), allowed us to test the presence and role of Blum-Kulka's (1989, 1991) and Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's (1991) cross-cultural politeness strategies. Short, direct questions requiring modal verbs (Want/Possibly query in the main speech act) and a range of forms of inflected modal verbs (two of the most frequent strategies reported in the literature) were used as politeness indicators in our study, together with direct commands. In the experiment, all groups performed the task described earlier after 40 hours of regular teaching in their respective environments, without any previous training in the task. In the 'Data Gathering for the *InfoTravel* Corpus' section, the corpus obtained (*InfoTravel*) and the linguistic annotation are described in detail.

The resulting study is cross-sectional and quasi-experimental. A total of 36 English-speaking university students plus 24 native speakers took part in the study. A total of 5,739 tokens, 1,466 types of words, and 2,319 lemmas from this oral production were recorded and processed. Morphosyntactic and pragmatic-functional analyses of targeted structures were conducted on each of the aforementioned sub-corpora in order to describe variation found in cross-cultural pragmatics and to account for the pragma-grammatical variation found.

In summary, our results allow for the identification of the key differences in pragmatic strategies, including politeness, used by both AH and SA learners, and by native, heritage, and non-native speakers, and their implications for teaching practice (see the 'Data Description and Analysis of the Results' section).

Related Work

Politeness across languages and speech acts is subject to large variation (Brown & Levinson, 1987 [1978]). Speech acts related to requests (for services, information, confirmation, etc.) constitute an adequate context for studying crosslinguistic variation in the politeness strategies implemented across languages (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1991; Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989, etc.). Large contrastive analyses of politeness in requests, among other acts, were carried out in the framework of *CCSARP: cross-cultural speech act realization project* (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), whose set of nine descriptive categories was tested widely for many languages, including Spanish (Bataller, 2010; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007; Le Pair, 1996). Speech acts such as apologies, greetings, and requests were the focus of research in L2 pragmatics and, more specifically, in Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) in Spanish in the last decade, together with discursive abilities; terms of address; irony; and, more in the grammatical focus, the expression of hypothesis (conditional, subjunctive). Shively (2014) synthesized the state of the art in both instructed and uninstructed settings (Tables 19.1 and 19.2 in Shively, 2014, pp. 333–336). As she points out, most studies in uninstructed settings employed elicited pragmatics data, with Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT) and role-plays being the most common instruments. Intermediate and advanced proficiency learners are predominant in single-moment studies (like ours),

which also frequently include a Spanish native speakers' (SNS') control group. As she stresses, only a few studies involved SHS. Also scarce are studies conducted in an L2 setting or SA environment. The use of role-plays for studying ILP is a more valid measure of spoken language than DCT and written production questionnaires. Unlike questionnaires, role-play data capture many of the discourse features found in natural speech, such as intonation, pauses, turn taking, and overlap, and they elicit more negotiation, repetition, and supportive moves than written measures (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989).

Concerning requests, Shively (2014, p. 332) signals that these were among the first speech acts targeted in Spanish ILP. Among the earliest researchers to do so Carduner (1998) and Le Pair (1996) established similarities and differences in request production by L2 learners and SNS. Both studies observed that intermediate and advanced learners and SNS used conventional indirectness (namely Can-you strategies, such as *¿Puedes ayudarme?* 'Can you help me?') in requests at a similar frequency. However, learners' repertoire is not as wide as natives', demonstrating a preference of the conventional indirectness strategy based on the verb *poder*, mainly due to negative transfer from their L1 and underuse of other common structures in Spanish (such as *¿Te importa ayudarme?* 'Do you mind helping me?'). Learners in both studies underused conditional verbs. Carduner suggested that the reason for this is that learners had not mastered this complex form. Le Pair and Carduner's studies found negative L1 pragmatic transfer of the structure *¿Es posible que...?* ('Is it possible that...?'), which does not have the same meaning in Spanish and causes inadequate readings in requests. These authors also found that learners employed direct requests (i.e., commands) less frequently than SNS, which the authors also attributed to L1 transfer. Koike's (1989) findings differed substantially. She found that learners produced a relatively large number of commands and requests. She explained the presence of direct commands by their relatively low complexity. They are less complex syntactically than indirect requests. Koike suggested that learners used downgraders (lexical items) in order to mitigate requests, particularly the politeness marker *por favor* ('please').

Félix-Brasdefer (2007) analyzed requests and reported a number of differences between beginner, intermediate, and advanced learners' role-play requests. First, there was a shift from the predominance of direct requests at the beginner level to a greater use of conventionally indirect requests at the intermediate and advanced levels. Félix-Brasdefer argued that more advanced learners were able to produce conventionally indirect requests due to increased grammatical competence, whereas beginners employed direct requests due to less developed grammar. Higher levels reduced the use of politeness markers, such as *por favor* (a compensatory strategy at lower levels). Mitigation strategies, such as conditional verbs or past forms, were found at higher levels. However, they remained nontargetlike in other respects. For instance, advanced learners overgeneralized conventional indirectness with a status equal, whereas SNS were more direct. Pinto (2005) reported similar findings with learners at four different levels.

Pinto and Raschio (2007) compared the request behavior of SHS, Non-NS, and SNS. SHS were Mexican-origin speakers from California, SNS were from Mexico, and the L2 English-speaking group was also from California. In the analysis, they found that the English learner group differed significantly in request directness and number of downgraders, with Spanish requests exhibiting greater directness and fewer downgraders. The SHS in their study fell between the two monolingual groups

(SNS and Non-NS) with regard to the level of directness. The most interesting point in their study was that they concluded that while the linguistic profile of SHS is different from that of L2 learners, they presented some similarities regarding negative transfer, indicating a hybridized pragmatic style.

In pre-/posttest and longitudinal studies looking at production, Bataller (2010) and Shively (2011) analyzed L2 pragmatic development in service encounter requests during SA. Bataller employed role-plays, and Shively employed naturalistic data. Both authors discovered a similar tendency for learners to eliminate the nontargetlike request strategy *¿Puedo tener?* ('Can I have?') when ordering beverages after SA. However, Bataller reported students replacing it with another nontargetlike strategy—Want statements (i.e., *quiero*)—while Shively's participants increased their use of pragmatically appropriate strategies, such as imperatives (*Ponme un café*, 'Give me a coffee') or ellipsis (*Un café*, 'A coffee').

Concerning previous studies on the differences between L2 and heritage learners, Potowski (2014, pp. 407–414) points out that, in general, compared with L2 learners, SHS possess enormous amounts of linguistic knowledge that would take L2 learners' substantial time and effort to acquire. The main difference is the nature of the contact each type of student has had with Spanish. She reports that although in oral tasks (like role-plays), SHS make few or no errors in morphology, number, gender agreement, and tense aspect morphology, they show a greater number of errors in written tasks. The L2 groups show the opposite pattern. Bowles (2011) postulates something similar. SHS's earlier acquisition of Spanish affects several linguistic areas, which creates differences with both L2 learners and monolingual Spanish speakers (Potowski, 2014). Valdés (2005) and Potowski (2014) emphasize the need for more empirical studies.

Considering the aforementioned literature, the need for an oral reference corpus of native, non-native, and heritage data was identified, which made researching ILP and politeness in Spanish L2 (SL2) and Spanish Heritage Language (SHL) particularly relevant. Making requests at the railway/bus station is a commonplace situation in which politeness is required. The variations in the resulting data are useful for detecting the ILP mechanisms encoded in verbal inflection (conditional, past, and subjunctive forms), modal verb selection, the use of direct and indirect questions, direct commands, and repetition (checking devices). All these mechanisms are considered to be politeness indicators in native and non-native interactive requests.

Methodology

Data Gathering for the InfoTravel Corpus

InfoTravel is an oral corpus of Spanish L1-L2 consisting of native (N) and non-native (NN) production by L1 and L2 speakers. It includes 30 dialogues corresponding to 60 speakers of different ages, genders, and sociocultural levels.¹ In these dialogues, a transaction of information about travel issues is carried out: asking for information on fares, schedules, and bus or train type, and the eventual purchase of the ticket. Dialogues always involve two participants in an asymmetrical role, customer and operator, in order to elicit the target (polite) forms. *InfoTravel* consists of two subcorpora: *FerroviELE* and *InfoBusELE*. The former (Caballero, Díaz, & Taulé, 2012, 2014) contains three different groups (N-spontaneous, N-simulated, and NN

L2_SA), covering three important variables: (i) native vs. non-native speakers, (ii) spontaneous vs. simulated, and (iii) SA vs. AH. The latter subcorpus contains only two different groups L2_AH and SHS_AH, covering two variables: AH vs. SA and L2 vs. heritage language. Concerning sociocultural aspects, we should point out that while the native groups were extremely varied, the non-native groups were all undergraduate university students. The SHS of Houston spoke the Mexican-Spanish variant. SNS acting as control groups tended to be older (since they were not students) and belonged to different cultural levels (for example, they were nonsimulated operators, people traveling with families, tourists, etc.), but all spoke Peninsular Spanish. The difference between the two Spanish native groups in *FerroviELE* is that the spontaneous group was recorded covertly. All other groups took part in a role-play-based simulation. All groups gave their consent to data recording, and all personal data were anonymized in the corpus transcription. Table 7.1 presents the main characteristics of each corpus and group.

The students who took part in the study were selected from two different instructional contexts: two AH context groups from the University of Houston (the SHS group and the L2_AH group), and one SA context group in their first SA experience from Arcadia University (L2_SA), which was based in Barcelona at the time of recording. All of them were placed at the intermediate level after taking a placement test.² As for the competence levels mentioned, we use the B1 label, according to the *CEFR*, corresponding to the intermediate level according to the *ACTFL* criteria followed by the Hispanic Studies Department of the University of Houston and by Arcadia University for Spanish L2 speakers and for heritage learners (according to a specific test for heritage groups).³ As for experimental data, all students performed the same task in pairs in their classroom environment as part of a voluntary task and gave their consent to the use of their data (voice recording) for research purposes.

Concerning the participants' language competence profile, the L2_AH students at Houston were all English-speaking university students from the Houston area in their second-level classes (SPAN 2302 course). SHS were all second-generation heritage speakers born in the US, 85% of whom were Mexican-Spanish speakers and 15% of whom were Central-American Spanish speakers, also from the Houston area. As for the Arcadia University SA group, all were monolingual English speakers in an intermediate course (SP201). All subjects took a second placement test in order to verify that level of Spanish was similar across groups in the experiment.

All the AH students had taken 40 hours of Spanish lessons at the intermediate level at the moment of data recording. All the control groups consisted of peninsular SNS, the difference being the simulated/nonsimulated roles (operator/customer).

Data Transcription and Encoding

InfoTravel consists of the orthographic transcription of the recordings encoded with linguistic and extralinguistic information. First, the dialogues were orthographically transcribed and then encoded with communicative functions using *Transcriber* (Barras, Geoffrois, Wu, & Liberman, 2001). Two annotators intervened. The corpus was automatically tokenized and morphologically analyzed using tools from the *Freeling* library.⁴ A manual revision of the automatic processes was also carried out. This morphological analysis was the input for the descriptive statistics presented in the 'Morphological Analysis and Linguistic Competence' section. Regarding

Table 7.1 Main characteristics of *InfoTravel* corpus

<i>InfoTravel</i>	<i>Group/N (Acronym)</i>	<i>Level ACTFL/CEFR</i>	<i>Learning context</i>	<i>L1</i>	<i>Dialogs Time recorded</i>	<i>Data of recording</i>
<i>FerrovIELE</i>	L1-Spanish Natives Spontaneous <i>N</i> = 12 (SNS-spont)		Native	European Spanish	6 10:58 min.	1997
	L1-Spanish Natives Simulated <i>N</i> = 12 (SNS-sim)		Native	European Spanish	6 07:47 min.	2012
	L2-Spanish Learners Simulated <i>N</i> = 12 (L2_SA)	Intermediate/B1	SA	American English	6 12:23 min.	2012
<i>InfoBusELE</i>	L2-Spanish Learners Simulated <i>N</i> = 12 (L2_AH)	Intermediate/B1	AH	American English	6 08:26 min.	2016
	Heritage Learners Simulated <i>N</i> = 12 (SHS_AH)	Intermediate/B1	AH	Bilinguals: American English + Mexican-Spanish	6 12:00 min.	2016
Total	<i>N</i> = 60				50:54 min.	

pragmatic annotation, all communicative functions assigned, e.g., *enquiring about*, *giving information*, *request*, and *paying*, were based on the *CEFR* proposal. Finally, information about the communicative context (spontaneous or simulated) and information about the interlocutors, such as the role (operator or customer), the gender, and the language (to identify native and non-native speakers and his/her L1), were also encoded. See Caballero, Díaz, and Taulé (2014) for a detailed description of the methodology.

Politeness and the Elicitation Task

Based on previous works mentioned in the ‘Related Work’ section, we selected a subset of two categories from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), namely Numbers 5 and 7, which correspond to ‘Want statement’ (‘I would like/want to move your car’) and ‘Query preparatory’ (‘Could/Would you mind moving your car?’), respectively.

The rationale behind our task-design (buying a bus/train ticket) is that any request for a service involves an asymmetrical situation in which power-relations are present, and consequently, potentially threatening speech acts arise.⁵ In these situations, politeness strategies come into play, with ‘Want statement’ and ‘Query preparatory’ as the most commonly used across languages.

Data Description and Analysis of the Results

Morphological Analysis and Linguistic Competence

Table 7.2 shows the information related to the weight of each category throughout the subcorpora of *InfoTravel*. Column 1 shows the morphological categories considered⁶ (Rows 3–14) and the number of tokens, types, lemma, type-token ratio (TTR), and repetition mean (MRep). The following columns show the data obtained for each subcorpus in the following way: The first row identifies the subcorpus, indicating its name, the competence level of the target group, and the (learning) context (AH, SA, heritage, and native). Note that we have split native groups according to experimental conditions: spontaneous vs. simulated. For each target group, we indicate the total number of tokens for each category, the percentage of tokens per category with respect to the other categories (total tokens), and the percentage of errors found per category. The last column shows the total number of tokens, types, and lemmas in *InfoTravel*.

The resulting picture allows us to compare category use in terms of target groups and experimental conditions (simulated/spontaneous; AH/SA and L2/SHS) and competence level (native/non-native), according to the *ACTFL* and *CEFR* standards.

Asking for a Service: Interlanguage Pragmatics

There exist two strategies commonly used to request services: Direct Questions (DQ) and Direct Commands (DC). We focused on these two strategies because they are considered to be the prototypical mechanisms for requests, and they involve the use of politeness devices. The choice of DQ and DC is governed by complex pragmatic-cultural rules. Knowing how to use them properly is not only an indicator

Table 7.2 Morphological categories in *InfoTravel*

InfoBusELE: L2_AH			FerroviELE/L2_SA			InfoBusELE/SHS_AH			FerroviELE/SNS-sim			InfoTren/SNS-spont			
	Tokens	Text (%)	Error (%)	Tokens	Text (%)	Error (%)	Tokens	Text (%)	Error (%)	Tokens	Text (%)	Error (%)	Tokens	Text (%)	Error (%)
Adj.	29	2.87	0.4	56	4.61	12.5	45	3.34	2.22	37	3.39	0	39	2.92	0
Adv.	84	11.2	1.2	111	9.14	4.5	155	11.55	0.65	119	10.89	0	152	11.39	0
Conj.	37	4.93	0.13	88	7.25	7.95	90	6.68	1.11	84	7.69	0	102	7.64	0
Det.	73	9.73	0.53	141	11.61	7.8	128	9.5	4.69	119	10.89	0	170	12.73	0
Interj.	142	18.93	0	36	2.97	5.56	87	6.46	0	36	3.29	0	55	4.12	3.64
N (C)	108	14.4	1.47	222	18.29	4.05	194	14.4	2.06	194	17.75	0	150	11.24	0
N (P)	21	2.38	0	53	4.37	5.66	21	1.56	0	36	3.29	0	75	5.62	0
Pron.	54	7.2	0.4	47	3.87	2.13	91	6.76	2.2	66	6.04	0	86	6.44	0
Prep.	62	8.27	0.93	149	12.27	8.05	146	10.84	2.05	141	12.9	0	203	15.21	0.49
V	122	12.27	1.73	196	16.14	5.1	256	19.01	2.35	198	18.12	0	203	15.21	0
D/T	3	0.4	0	19	1.57	31.58	7	0.52	0	19	1.74	0	59	4.42	0
Nr.	15	2	0.53	65	5.35	6.15	128	9.5	0	15	1.37	0	48	3.60	0
TOTAL															5.739
Tokens	750			1214			1347			1093			1335		1.466
Types	208			314			272			336			336		2.319
Lemma	158			248			209			278			276		
TTR	0.28			0.26			0.2			0.31			0.24		
MRep	3.61			3.87			4.95			3.25			4.03		

of linguistic competence but above all an indicator of pragmatic-cultural competence. The SA learning context could be a determining factor for acquiring these pragmatic strategies in a more native-like way.

A DQ is a direct interrogative utterance that, in the communicative context studied, involves a request for information or a concrete service. In the data analyzed, we dealt with four basic types, according to their communicative function in the specific context of the task:

- a Wh-Questions (Wh-Q) are questions introduced by an interrogative pronoun with or without a preposition (1);
- b Asking/Yes-No questions, which do not contain a ‘Wh-word’ (used mainly by the customer) (2);
- c Checking/Tag-Questions (Tag-Q), which are used to confirm information already mentioned or presupposed. They are discourse-oriented or information scanner interrogatives (used by both interlocutors) (3);
- d Offering/Alternative questions (Alternative-Q), whose purpose is to offer services (used mainly by the operator) (4).

The decision to consider Wh-Q in a group different from Asking, Checking, and Offering was made in order to capture context-relevant communicative functions separately. Depending on the role (O/C), the interlocutors favor one type of question rather than another. For example, customers do not have to offer information, while operators do. Customers tend to use more asking questions since they need information about specifics aspects of the service they request.

- 1 a *¿Cuánto cuesta? ('How much is it?)* (L2_SA)
b *¿De dónde sale concretamente? ('Where does the train depart from?)* (SNS-spont)
- 2 *¿Hay alguno más de Intercity? ('Is there any other Intercity?)* (SNS-spont)
- 3 *¿A las 6h, no? ('At 6 am, isn't?)* (SHS)
- 4 *¿Quieres viajar por un autobús express? ('Do you want to travel by an express bus?)?* (L2_AH)

In a DC, the interrogative modality disappears, and the request for information or service is realized by a volitional verb (*querer, desear*) (5), a ‘necessity’ verb (*necesitar*) (6), or an event verb (*decir, dar*) (7).

- 5 Quiero un boleto. ('I want a ticket') (L2_AH)
- 6 Necesito un boleto ('I need a ticket') (L2_AH)
- 7 Le doy mis datos ('I'll give you my personal data') (SNS-sim)

Direct Questions: Quantitative Approach and Pragmatic Implications

In this section, we present and analyze the data concerning DQs to sketch both the pragmatic rules underlying the selected situation and the interlanguage pragmatic and linguistic differences in competence found across learners. Table 7.3 shows the percentage of DQs from the total of utterances produced, and Table 7.4 shows the percentage of DQs by role: Operator (O) and Customer (C).

Table 7.3 Direct questions

<i>Direct questions (%)</i>	
SHS_AH	46
L2_AH	33
SNS-spont	33
SNS-sim	26
L2_SA	19

Totals by group/condition.

Table 7.4 Direct questions by group and role

	<i>SNS_spont (%)</i>	<i>SNS_sim (%)</i>	<i>L2_SA (%)</i>	<i>L2_AH (%)</i>	<i>SHS_AH (%)</i>
O	16	13	11	25	42
C	17	13	8	8	4

As Table 7.4 shows, the SA condition seems to play a role in targetlike performance for the O role, almost equating L2_SA with Spanish natives under simulated-conditions (SNS-sim) from a quantitative point of view. However, differences in C role (the one you may play yourself in the simulation) for L2 learners cannot be attributed to the SA condition, since AH and SA groups perform in the same way. Even so, the SHS group shows a higher distance to SNS groups. There is a big difference between the SHS and SNS groups. SNS use fewer questions because their linguistic competence and pragmatic knowledge allow them to manage the situation using different mechanisms, meaning that they do not rely so much on questions. Learners ask proportionally more since they lack this pragmatic knowledge. Nevertheless, this seems not to apply to SHS. Therefore, a closer view to O/C interaction as a whole may be useful.

In effect, when analyzing O/C results side by side, a pattern emerges that shows more similitude among Spanish natives and SA, with all three groups keeping a balance on DQs across roles. This balanced patterning seems to characterize pragmatically this type of interaction in a way that only the SA group has been able to grasp in a native-like form, taking advantage of their greater exposure to native inputs in immersion conditions.

The types of DQ used are shown in Table 7.5.

Wh-Q are the preferred type for AH and SNS-sim in the O role. Pragmatic and intercultural components play a relevant role in *offering* and *checking* types. Concerning *offering*, here again the SA group performs like natives (both SNS-sim and SNS-spont) in their avoidance behavior when playing the C role. A different picture emerges from *checking*, another relevant indicator of native-strategic behavior. Capturing the power of checking information in interaction is a skill linked to intercultural and discursive competence. Going some turns back in interaction and dividing information into chunks is a native-like strategy for playing both O and C roles. Nevertheless, only SNS-spont use *checking* as a preferred option in both roles. The rest underuse *checking* in the O role and present different behaviors (going from the first to third preferred forms) in the C role. This fact, in line with zero instances of *asking*

Table 7.5 DQ types by roles

Operator	SA_L2 (%)	AH_L2 (%)	SHS_AH (%)	SNS_sim (%)	SNS_spont (%)
Wh-Q	23	56	37	50	30
Offering	59	24	30	37	16
Checking	20	20	32	6	59
<i>Customer</i>					
Wh-Q	50	25	17	25	26
Offering	0	12	17	0	0
Checking	8	62	17	12	38
Asking ¹	0	0	0	31	34
Want/Possibly-Query	33	0	50	25	2

¹ Asking as a category has no instances in O in the corpus analyzed, since the pragmatic function found in questions by O was *offering* (a service) or *checking* (comprehension or option chosen).

in the C role across non-natives, allows for the identification of teachable aspects of interaction and pattern description.

Finally, Blum-Kulka's fifth and seventh categories were considered together here. Again, avoidance behavior differentiates the L2_AH group from the others. This nonuse can be attributed to a lack of both pragmatic and linguistic competence since modals and inflections are required to use these strategies (see the following section for a detailed analysis and further comparisons related to lexical and verbal modality). This is confirmed by the use of a significant rate of DCs, another non-native strategy, also without past or second-/third-person inflection.

Direct Commands: Quantitative Approach and Pragmatic Implications

DCs are the second preferred option in the strategic repertoire when requesting information or a service. This strategy involves a certain risk given the asymmetry of the roles of O and C, and it is expected to be implemented by the C almost exclusively. In everyday Spanish, it is used infrequently, except in situations in which customers are in a hurry. If this is not the case, politeness devices have to be used in the shape of modal verbs, past forms, or conditional clauses (as *Necesitaría un billete* 'I would need a ticket,' *Quisiera saber el precio* 'I would like to know the fare,' *Si es posible* 'If possible'). Figuring out how these things are perceived in the target culture (pragmatic acceptability) is not a trivial matter in L2; nor is mastering the correct verbal inflection or lexical modality (grammatical acceptability) required for each role. It is also common in the literature to consider DCs to be a basic interlanguage strategy. For these reasons, the ratio of DCs, together with their forms, is analyzed here as an important indicator of L2 pragmatic and intercultural competence.

First, we illustrate in Table 7.6 the presence of DCs across groups and roles in order to detect the pragmatic sensitivity to the foreign culture across groups.

The first fact that emerges from the data is that, as expected, DCs are less used by SNS in a spontaneous context. All the other (simulated) groups more than triplicate DC use with L2_SA and L2_AH on one side, and SHS and SNS-sim (both

Table 7.6 DC across groups and roles

	<i>SNS-spont (%)</i>	<i>L2_SA (%)</i>	<i>L2_AH (%)</i>	<i>SNS_sim (%)</i>	<i>SHS_AH (%)</i>
O	0	0	0	1.6	6
C	3	11	11	14.8	11
Total DC	3	11	11	16	17

unexpectedly using it in the O role) on the other. This leads us to propose a two-edged explanation. First, *cool spontaneity*, that is, using direct questioning without being or feeling rude (Kiesling, 2009), is difficult for SNS-sim and for SHS to simulate. For this reason, competent speakers simulating interaction prefer to use DCs together with downgraders (e.g., modals or checking devices/DQs, such as *¿es posible?*, ‘Is it possible?’) (see the ‘Direct Commands: Quantitative Approach and Pragmatic Implications’ section). This simulation effect explains why the SNS-sim and the SHS group differ from the rest in both roles (O/C). The second explanation is that DCs (without downgraders) are the basic interlanguage strategy: the most frequent strategy before they learn to use any Want/Possibly-query. This fact explains non-native use. So, how can both situations be disentangled? Only an in-depth analysis of the morpho-lexical component (the use of conditional or past forms), the variety of modals (*querer*, *necesitar*, *poder*), and the personal inflection forms (1st, 3rd) across groups can help to establish clear-cut differences. The reason is that these components are strongly linked to linguistic competence.

Modal Verbs and Lexical Modality

Following studies such as Félix-Brasdefer (2007) and Bataller (2010), among others, first, we analyze the grammatical resources related to politeness expressed through morphological markers: (i) verbal inflection—conditional, past indicative, and past subjunctive—and (ii) first-person singular (*yo*, ‘I’) and plural (*nosotr[ol]as*, ‘we’) inflections compared to the second singular person (*tú/usted*, ‘you’). It should be noted that *usted* (a polite form inexistent in English) is used in formal situations using third-singular-person forms of the verb in Spanish. The difficulty of (i) for English L2 and SHS was studied by Gutiérrez and Fairclough (e.g., Gutiérrez, 1996; Gutiérrez & Fairclough, 2006).

Results show that the most frequent form is the first singular person in simple present (*quiero* ‘I want,’ *puedo* ‘I can,’ and *necesito* ‘I need’; 32, 21, and 17 cases, respectively) used by the C to make an information or service request. The second most frequent form is the third singular person, *usted* as a formal second singular person, and the second singular person (the informal *tú*) in present (*usted quiere*, *usted puede*, and *tú quieres*; 15, 10, and 8 cases, respectively) used by the O to request information regarding the C’s preferences and to offer information and services (*enquire_about*, *offering* communicative functional tags).

Main differentiating traits:

- The use of *necesito* by L2_AH playing the role of the C as a common strategy (9/17 cases compared to 5/17 used by SNS in a simulated task; and only 2/17 cases in the L2_SA group and one case in the SHS group).

- The use of *quiero* and *puedo* as a characteristic strategy used by the SHS group (46.8% of cases of *quiero* and 47.6% of *puedo*) in the C role, which differentiates them from the two SNS groups. Another example of this difference between the SHS and SNS groups is the use of *prefiero* (60% of cases by SHS and no cases in the SNS group). It is worth noting that the 40% remaining cases of the use of *prefiero* were produced by the SA groups. This difference between Spanish and heritage Mexican-Spanish speakers is striking, and it would be interesting to observe if it is maintained between Mexicans living in Mexico and SHS in order to discover if it is attributable to the influence of English or to simple Mexican variety (rather than to bilingualism or English interference). The same pattern can be observed in both the SHS (71, 4%) and the SA (28, 6%) groups.
- Students in the SNS-spont group do not use verbs like *gustar*, *preferir*, and *necesitar* or the conditional tense. They rarely used the imperfect past forms (2 cases of *podía* and 1 case of *quisiera* in the data analyzed). Modal verbs are not used to request information or services: They directly ask for the train, the departure time, and the availability of seats, and the interrogative mode is used more frequently than in the other groups.
- SNS-sim is the only group that uses the forms *prefiere* (with *usted*) and *querría* (but only on one occasion).

The simulation effect and the greater linguistic competence of the SHS group place them nearer to the native speakers simulating the task. The differences between the B1 groups are due to the contact effect with L2 in immersion conditions, that is, to the SA effect.

Concerning lexical modality, the most frequent modal verbs are *querer*, *poder*, *necesitar*, and *preferir*. It is worth noting that the modal verbs most commonly used by SNS are *querer* and *poder*, which are practically the only ones used by SNS-spont. The most used modal verb by the L2_SA and SHS_AH groups is *querer*, which they used twice as often (or more) than the SNS groups. However, SHS are closer to SNS in their use of *poder*, while L2_AH and SNS-sim coincide in their use of *necesitar*.

It should be pointed out that the L2_AH group those learners with a lower level of linguistic competence level seems to be in line with the SNS-spont in the use of modal verbs: *preferir*, *gustar*, *desear* ('to wish'), and *interesar* ('to be interested in') are not used by either group. Nevertheless, the reasons behind are different. In the case of learners (L2_AH), they do not have enough competence to use these modal verbs, whereas the SNS-spont group skips modal verbs for reasons of linguistic economy; instead, they produce more direct information requests, which are also more commonly used in a spontaneous (informal) communicative situation.

Conclusion and Further Research

This chapter shows the differences observed between SNS, NNS, and SHS groups when tackling a communicative task involving requests. We focused on politeness strategies within ILP. We discovered differences in fluency—depending on the role (O/C), groups, and conditions (SA/AH)—and in the strategy-type privileged (DQ, DC, verbal inflection, and lexical modality). We detected nonconventionalized strategies, such as the overuse of *necesito* and *quiero*, and the absence of discursive checking mechanisms (for instance, Tag-Q).

Regarding the differences between SHS and SNS, we observed that the former group does not perform like SNS. SHS produce grammatical errors (e.g., N-A agreement, prepositions, determiners) and nonconventionalized pragmatic forms (the wording used to realize the requests is not the NS preferred forms; Le Pair, 1996, p. 654). An example found in the task was the unexpected use of requests and offerings by customers, overusing DCs as a mechanism of cooperation. SHS also used more *quiero*, *prefiero*, and *puedo* forms than both NNS and SNS, which constitutes a singularity of this group. In general, SHS show a more active questioning behavior: They use more DQ and DC than other groups, behaving clearly differently from natives. In spite of these facts, they sound more native-like than L2 groups due to the fact that Spanish is more present in their family life, as pointed out by Potowski (2014). We can support the conclusion by Pinto and Raschio (2007) that SHS fall between the two monolingual groups (SNS and NNS), since their linguistic profile presents some similarities regarding negative transfer, indicating a hybridized pragmatic style. Concerning the Want/Possibly-queries, SHS also show a more polite behavior, even more than natives simulating the task. This fact can be explained by their use of the Mexican variety of Spanish and also by negative transfer from English. This feature constitutes the main difference with respect to the other AH group (L2_AH), which avoids Want/Possibly-queries. It is worth noting that the L2_SA group also uses this strategy, which demonstrates that the SA effect acts qualitatively in their ILP, making them sound more native-like.

The use of DCs and downgraders (such as *por favor*, ‘please’) allows for a clear-cut distinction between all groups simulating vs. SNS-spontaneous (ethnographic data). The results obtained are a challenge for developmental studies of ILP, since downgraders do not seem to play a crucial role in indicating non-native strategic competence. As data show, it is the simulating condition that plays a role, even among native groups. Spontaneous data are a relevant contribution to a fine-grained description of native competence before comparing native and non-native speakers as Valdés (2005) and Shively (2014) have already claimed. Further research should include spontaneous data from Latin-American varieties under both conditions (spontaneous and simulated), as well as data from advanced learners (both L2 and SHS), in order to contribute to a better description of the development of ILP.

Key Terms

Learner corpora	Heritage Spanish
Study abroad	L2 politeness
Study at home	L1/L2 variation
L2 Spanish	

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Notes

1 Unlike native speakers, learners were all university students.

2 www.uh.edu/class/spanish/language-programs/heritage-language/

- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Available at: <http://nlp.lsi.upc.edu/freeling/>
- 5 Potentially threatening speech acts are described by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). For asymmetrical relations, see Goffman (1959).
- 6 The categories and labels used are as follows: *Adj.* stands for Adjective, *Adv.* for Adverb, *Conj.* for Conjunction, *Det.* for Determiners, *Interj.* for Interjection, *N (C)* for Common Noun, *N (P)* for Proper Noun, *Pron.* for Pronoun, *Prep.* for Preposition, *V* for Verb, *D/T* for Date and Time, and *Nr.* for Numbers.
- 7 In fact, the literal translation would be ‘Do you want to travel through an express bus?’, and the learner used the wrong preposition.

Further Reading

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Developing L2 Pragmatic Competence in Study Abroad Contexts

Wei Ren

Introduction

As an important field in linguistics, pragmatics is concerned with

the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication.

(Crystal, 1997: 301)

It investigates “speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions” (LoCastro, 2003: 15). Analogous to other areas in second language acquisition (SLA), the study of second language (L2) pragmatics is another field of SLA as inquiry focuses on learners’ knowledge, use, and acquisition of pragmatic competence in an L2. As a critical component of acquiring an L2, pragmatic competence has been used by different scholars with different meanings and has undergone an evolution of definitions in the last four decades (Taguchi, 2017). In this chapter, it suffices to define pragmatic competence as “the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context” (Thomas, 1983: 92).

A well-accepted distinction within pragmatics is that between sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Sociopragmatics addresses the relations between linguistic actions and social constraints, whereas pragmalinguistics addresses the relations between linguistic forms and their function (Ren, 2014). Following this division, L2 pragmatics researchers classify pragmatic competence into sociopragmatic competence and pragmalinguistic competence. Sociopragmatic competence addresses learners’ competence to choose the appropriate linguistic realization of a particular illocutionary act under the effect of such contextual factors as social status, social distance, and the degree of imposition in a certain social interaction, whereas pragmalinguistic competence refers to the range of linguistic resources available for learners to choose from when they use their L2 to communicate pragmatic intention.

Pragmatic competence plays a key role in interpersonal communication, particularly for learners studying abroad in a target community. In addition to structural aspects of a language (e.g., phonology, vocabulary, and syntax), learners must also develop pragmatic competence if they are to communicate effectively. Considering whether we are talking about learner's productive competence or receptive competence, pragmatic competence can also be divided into productive pragmatic competence and receptive pragmatic competence (Ren, 2015). Productive pragmatic competence refers to the ability to vary one's language uses appropriately according to the context to achieve a specific purpose; receptive pragmatic competence entails the ability to understand language uses in context, including pragmatic comprehension and pragmatic perception.

Study abroad, in which learners study the L2 in the target culture, is widely perceived as an ideal context in which to develop language competence because living in the L2 culture appears to provide the most direct access possible to large amounts of input and interaction with native speakers (cf. Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). It is "characterized by an uninstructed component that may or may not combine with an instructed component" (Sanz, 2014: 1). In line with this commonsense belief, there has been a growing interest in research on L2 pragmatic development during study abroad. However, there are multiple manners in which learners can complete a study abroad experience that includes a variety of goals. Some learners may participate in short-term stays, whereas many others engage in year-abroad programs or choose to further their studies in another country. Taking the complexity of study abroad into consideration, it is not surprising to see different or even contradictory findings in previous literature regarding the effect of study abroad on learners' L2 pragmatic development. This chapter reviews existing research into productive and receptive pragmatic development in study abroad contexts. Following this, the complexity of pragmatic development during study abroad is illustrated. The chapter then discusses limitations and gaps of the field and concludes with directions for future research.

Developing Productive Pragmatic Competence

L2 pragmatics research focuses mainly on the investigation of speech acts (Kasper & Dahl, 1991) and, to a lesser extent, conversational structure and conversational implicature (Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig, 2005). An examination of recent L2 pragmatics literature suggests that there has been no significant change in this situation. Both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies have provided insight into the development of productive pragmatic competence, and recent studies have started to pay attention to learners' pragmatic competence in interaction.

Longitudinal Investigations

Although developmental studies on productive pragmatic competence investigate speech acts, to date, only a few speech acts have been examined longitudinally. The most frequently investigated speech act is requests (e.g., Achiba, 2003; Bataller, 2010; Ellis, 1992; Schauer, 2009; Shively, 2011; Woodfield, 2012). Other speech acts examined longitudinally include refusals (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Barron, 2003; Félix-Brasdefer, 2013; Ren, 2012, 2013), apologies (Warga & Schölzberger, 2007), compliments (Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker,

2015; Hoffman-Hicks, 1999), compliment responses (Jin, 2012), offers (Barron, 2003), and suggestions (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993).

Despite their differences, these longitudinal studies have some common findings. First, learners can develop their L2 productive pragmatic competence in speech act strategies and in linguistic modification devices¹ (Achiba, 2003; Alcón Soler, 2015; Barron, 2003; Félix-Brasdefer, 2013; Ren, 2015; Schauer, 2009; Shively, 2011). Second, learners' L2 productive pragmatic competence may develop in a nonlinear manner (Barron, 2003; Ren, 2013; Warga & Schölzberger, 2007; Woodfield, 2012). Third, the acquisition of morphosyntactic devices may develop slowly (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Barron, 2003; Bataller, 2010; Schauer, 2009; Warga & Schölzberger, 2007; Woodfield, 2012).

Among these longitudinal studies, only a couple studies investigated child learners (Achiba, 2003; Ellis, 1992). The majority studied adult learners, of which most were students at university or graduate levels. The studies have focused predominantly on English as the target language (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Ren, 2015; Schauer, 2009; Woodfield, 2012; just to name a few). Other languages examined include Chinese (Jin, 2012), French (Hoffman-Hicks, 1999), German (Barron, 2003), Indonesian (Hassall, 2015), Japanese (Iino, 2006), and Spanish (Félix-Brasdefer, 2013; Shively, 2011). With respect to countries represented, the studies are skewed toward American students (e.g., Bataller, 2010; Félix-Brasdefer, 2013; Iino, 2006; Kinginger, 2008) and investigated students from countries such as Australia (Hassall, 2015), Austria (Warga & Schölzberger, 2007), China (Ren, 2015), Germany (Schauer, 2009), Ireland (Barron, 2003), and Japan (Achiba, 2003).

The most popular data collection method is still different varieties of Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT), including Multimedia Elicitation Tasks (Ren, 2015; Schauer, 2009), followed by naturalistic data collected by field notes and/or audio recordings. Role-plays are also employed in longitudinal studies (Bataller, 2010; Woodfield, 2012).

The observation period varies greatly. Some studies focus on short-term study abroad from four weeks (Reynolds-Case, 2013) to approximately eight weeks (Félix-Brasdefer, 2013), while others trace learners' development over a semester of approximately four months (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Bataller, 2010; Shively, 2011) or over an academic year of approximately nine months (Barron, 2003; Ren, 2015; Schauer, 2009; Woodfield, 2012). Only a few observe learners' development over a full year. For example, Hoffman-Hicks (1999) reported the pragmatic development of American French students over 16 months. Achiba (2003) examined the acquisition of requests in a Japanese child learner of English over a 17-month sojourn in Australia in a social context. Ellis (1992) investigated the pragmatic development of two teenagers over 16 and 21 months, respectively.

Little research has been conducted to explore whether the positive effect of study abroad can be retained after learners return to their home countries. However, this is an important issue, not only for researchers but also for learners and stakeholders. One exception is Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker's (2015) investigation on the effect of study abroad on learners of Spanish, although only four learners (out of 25) agreed to take a delayed posttest four months after they returned to their home country. The results showed that the learners produced more types and tokens of adjectives than they did in the pretest, and three produced more than they did on the posttest, indicating that some of the positive changes were maintained four months later, after the students returned home. However, the authors did not provide details about whether these learners continued in Spanish classes during those four months,

which is a key point in understanding possible influences on the continued development. More studies implementing investigations after students return home are needed to further explore the issue.

Cross-Sectional Studies

Although cross-sectional designs do not allow for the direct observation of developmental patterns as longitudinal designs do, they still offer insight into development by extrapolating from differences observed across various cross sections (Kasper & Rose, 2002).

To date, only a few cross-sectional studies have explored the effect of study abroad in the L2 community on learners' pragmatic production. They evidenced a positive effect of living abroad in the L2 community on the development of learners' L2 productive pragmatic competence (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Cheng, 2005; Félix-Brasdefer, 2004; Taguchi, 2013; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). For example, Taguchi (2013) conducted a cross-sectional examination of the production of pragmatic routines among Japanese learners of English. The results indicated an advantage for learners with study abroad experience over learners who had not studied abroad. However, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) investigated the effect of proficiency, length of stay, and intensity of interaction on the recognition and production of conventional expressions in L2 English among international students learning English in the US. They concluded that length of stay did not have a significant effect on either the production or recognition of conventional expressions. By contrast, both the proficiency and intensity of interaction had a significant effect on production.

Previous research also indicates that the effect of study abroad on learners' L2 productive pragmatic development might display a nonlinear pattern (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986). In addition, some pragmatic features might be acquired within a short period of stay in the target community, whereas others might require a longer stay (e.g., Cheng, 2005; Félix-Brasdefer, 2004). These findings are in tandem with the findings of the longitudinal studies investigating learners' L2 productive pragmatic development.

The cross-sectional L2 pragmatics studies have focused predominantly on learners of English as the target language from various countries, including China (Cheng, 2005), Japan (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987), and Korea (Han, 2005). Other languages, such as Spanish (Félix-Brasdefer, 2004) and Hebrew (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986), have also been examined as target languages. Two data collection methods are employed in the cross-sectional studies, that is, DCT (written or oral) and role-plays, with DCT used slightly more frequently than role-plays. Unlike longitudinal studies, little research has employed naturalistic data in cross-sectional investigations. Compared to longitudinal studies, cross-sectional studies can more easily investigate students with longer periods of study abroad. For example, Félix-Brasdefer (2004) included students who had studied in Latin America for 18–30 months, while Takahashi and Beebe (1987) and Han (2005) recruited students who had studied abroad for more than five years.

Focus on Interaction

The majority of the aforementioned studies have insufficiently addressed interaction. The last decade has witnessed limited but increasing studies exploring learners' development of interactional competence during study abroad (Cekaite, 2007; Diao,

2011; Dings, 2014; Koike, 2012; Masuda, 2011; Shively, 2015; Taguchi, 2014, 2015b). There are various definitions of interactional competence available in the literature (e.g., Hall, 1999; Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Young, 2011), and a detailed analysis of its definition and components is beyond the scope of this chapter. It suffices here to define interactional competence as the ability to mutually coordinate our actions to successfully participate in interaction. Interactional competence views language knowledge and communication ability as locally situated and jointly constructed by all participations in interaction. An individual's communicative competence is no longer viewed as an independent fixed or stable trait but rather mutually varied in correspondence with coparticipants' performance.

Researchers have different views about the relationship between pragmatic competence and interactional competence. Young (2011: 428) insisted that "the pragmatics of interaction – the relationship between the forms of talk chosen by participants and the social contexts in which they are used – has been considered as fundamental to IC [interactional competence]", implying that interactional competence is broader than pragmatic competence. However, if we consider pragmatics as the field investigating "speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions" (LoCastro, 2003: 15), it becomes certain that interactional competence is an important aspect of pragmatics studies. Therefore, the chapter considers interactional competence as an indispensable element of pragmatic competence.

The studies on interactional competence in study abroad contexts all evidenced a positive effect of study abroad on learners' interactional competence. Only one study focused on child learners (Cekaite, 2007), whereas others focused on university students. All the studies based their analyses on recordings of conversations; some examined naturalistic conversations (Cekaite, 2007; Shively, 2015), whereas others solicited free, informal conversations by asking participants to have conversations with a native speaker (Dings, 2014; Koike, 2012; Masuda, 2011; Taguchi, 2014, 2015b). Probably because the studies needed to include detailed microanalysis, many studies chose to focus on a single case (Cekaite, 2007; Diao, 2011; Dings, 2014). Masuda (2011) and Shively (2015) examined 6 students, while Taguchi (2014, 2015b) recruited 18 students. The observation periods ranged from four weeks in a six-week program (Masuda, 2011) to a semester (Shively, 2015; Taguchi, 2014, 2015b) to a year (Cekaite, 2007; Dings, 2014). In terms of the target language, Japanese was the most frequently examined. Studies have investigated learners' use of the interactional particle 'ne' (Masuda, 2011), incomplete sentences (Taguchi, 2014, 2015b), and speech style (Taguchi, 2015b). Other target languages include Spanish (Dings, 2014; Koike, 2012; Shively, 2015), Chinese (Diao, 2011), and Swedish (Cekaite, 2007). Surprisingly, little research has been conducted on learners' development of interactional competence in L2 English in study abroad contexts.

Developing Receptive Pragmatic Competence

This section reviews studies investigating learners' development of receptive pragmatic competence (pragmatic comprehension and perception) during study abroad. As Kasper and Rose noted, developmental pragmatic research is "heavily outweighed by the proliferation of studies on pragmatic production in a second language" (2002: 117). Since few studies have examined the development of L2 learners' receptive pragmatic competence in study abroad, I will review both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies.

The studies on the effect of study abroad on learners' receptive pragmatic competence have yielded mixed findings. On the one hand, the findings support the facilitative role of study abroad in the comprehension of implicature (Bouton, 1994; Taguchi, 2011) and of offering advice (Matsumura, 2001), the recognition of routine formulae (Roever, 2012), and the perception of speech act appropriateness (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Schauer, 2009). However, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) showed that length of stay did not have a significant effect on recognition of conventional expressions. By contrast, the intensity of interaction had a significant effect on the recognition of conventional expressions. On the other hand, evidence indicates that at-home (hereafter AH) learners may also reach the same level as their study abroad counterparts did in comprehension accuracy of implicature (Taguchi, 2008) and in the perception of speech act appropriateness (Niezgoda & Roever, 2001; Ren, 2015; Rodriguez, 2001). Moreover, some aspects of pragmatics acquisition might begin at a very early stage of study abroad (Matsumura, 2003; Schauer, 2009), whereas some context-dependent or highly culture-specific features might require a long time to comprehend (Bouton, 1994). The pace and size of development among learners might vary from learner to learner due to the different amount and intensity of exposure to the L2 based on their individual preferences regarding interpersonal interaction and motivation to learn the L2 (Matsumura, 2003; Taguchi, 2008).

Except Rodriguez (2001), which compared a group of North American students of Spanish with students who continued their Spanish classes in the US, studies on learners' receptive pragmatic development all focused on learners of L2 English. Little research has explored child learners' development of receptive competence. The length of residence ranged from seven weeks (Taguchi, 2008) to an academic year (Ren, 2015; Schauer, 2009) in longitudinal investigations, whereas the longest residence period investigated in cross-sectional studies was four and half years (Bouton, 1994). Data were often collected by multiple choices or judgment tasks. Ren (2015) also included retrospective verbal reports to obtain information about what the learners actually focused on when they made judgments of the judgment tasks to corroborate the findings of the judgment tasks.

Matsumura (2007) is one of the few studies that explores whether the decrease of L2 exposure after returning home influenced learners' developed L2 pragmatic competence. It is a longitudinal study that used a multiple-choice questionnaire in which Japanese students were tested six times on their ability to offer advice in English. Findings suggest that the positive effect of study abroad contributes to the maintenance of learners' pragmatic development even after return to the first language (L1) community. More importantly, students may develop pragmatic competence even after study abroad by fully utilizing opportunities to reflect on target sociocultural norms.

Complexity of Pragmatic Development during Study Abroad

The majority of L2 pragmatics studies, except case studies, tend to treat study abroad learners (hereafter SA learners) as a homogeneous group. However, individual variation among learners was constantly documented in the literature (Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker, 2015; Hassall, 2015; Kinginger, 2008, 2013; Ren, 2014; Shively, 2013). For example, Hassall's (2015) study was specifically dedicated to showcase two learners' different learning experiences and gains during a short stay in Indonesia. The study reflects that even learners with low initial proficiency can make striking

pragmatic gains of features that are formally simple, frequent in input, and high in perceptual salience, in this case, address terms. Additionally, the study shows concrete ways in which low proficiency can impede L2 learning, while also showing that proficiency effects do not operate in the case of all individuals.

Many studies have explored the quality of study abroad and its interactions with other individual characteristics, such as identity, cross-cultural adaptability, etc. For example, Brown (2013) explored the use of Korean honorifics by four advanced male learners in a study abroad context quantitatively (via DCT) and qualitatively (via recordings of natural conversations and retrospective interviews). Findings indicate that strong pragmatic knowledge (shown by DCT data) and a general desire to speak like a native Korean do not guarantee native-like performance concerning Korean honorifics. Learners' development of honorific uses was influenced by a lack of native input because of the learners' outsider identity and their own agency in adopting native-like patterns of use. The author claimed that identity is pivotal to explaining L2 acquisition, particularly for SA learners. The learner's outside identity was also observed in Iino (2006), which includes an examination of nonstandard Japanese codes (e.g., foreigner talk) that non-native speakers routinely encounter. It was found that the way the Japanese hosts presented Japanese language and culture, and the way they reacted to the American students' language use and behavior were different from those of their native situations.

Taguchi (2015a) explored the relationship between cross-cultural adaptability and learners' development of speech act production during a semester study abroad among learners of Japanese. Cross-cultural adaptability includes four dimensions in this study: emotional resilience, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy. The learners' production data were evaluated by two native speakers of Japanese with regard to speech style and speech act appropriateness. A significant relationship was found between cross-cultural adaptability and gains in the appropriateness of speech act but not speech style.

Rather than investigating learner background factors individually, Roever, Wang, and Brophy (2014) used Poisson regression to explore the relative effect of learners' background factors (including proficiency, length of residence, gender, and multilingualism) on SA and AH learners' comprehension of implicature, recognition of routine formulae, and production of speech acts (requests, apologies, and refusals) in English. It was found that only proficiency significantly affected implicature comprehension, that length of residence and proficiency were significant factors in the recognition of routine formulae, and that proficiency and gender significantly impacted speech act production.

However, the approach taken by previous research often assumes that study abroad is an absolute, static property of a learning context that essentially results in SA learners' pragmatic gains and is equally beneficial to all learners at all times. However, as evidenced by different or even contradictory findings in the literature, study abroad is not a monolithic and static notion but rather a multifaceted and dynamic construct that interacts with a number of factors determining learners' pragmatic development. Study abroad should not be considered a single learning context. Instead, it is "a multidimensional phenomenon" (Coleman, 2013, p. 22). Different arrangements of study abroad should be taken into account to explore its complexity and distinguish different study abroad contexts from learners' pragmatic development. For example, future research needs to consider different learning programs, living conditions, residence periods, and whether the program is only for language learning or also for a degree.

Limitations and Gaps

The research on pragmatic development in study abroad contexts is extensive, such that this chapter can claim to represent only a selected sample of investigations. However, there are several major limitations and gaps in the research base.

L2 pragmatics research is skewed toward learners' productive pragmatic competence, while only a few studies investigate learners' receptive pragmatic competence. Comparing results across studies creates a challenge for researchers because the studies investigate various targets elicited by different tasks and research designs, and measure the outcome in different ways (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). Therefore, more studies focusing on different subcompetences of pragmatic competence (productive vs. receptive) are warranted to better understand the issue of learners' pragmatic development (Ren, 2015; Taguchi, 2010). That said, not only do we need consistency in research design, but we also need consistency in terminology.

It is clear from reviewing previous studies that the literature still favors solicited data. However, more efforts should be invested to explore learners' pragmatic development by analyzing their performance in naturalistic interactions (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012). In addition, studies on learners' productive competence have paid more attention to learners' moment-by-moment online interactional competence, in addition to the traditional investigation into more static pragmatic competence. By contrast, such a shift has not been observed in research on learners' receptive competence.

Although L2 pragmatic development is best described from a longitudinal perspective, apart from Hoffman-Hicks's (1999) over-16-month study and Ellis's (1992) and Achiba's (2003) over-one-year observations of child development, few longitudinal studies have investigated learners' development over one year; many focus on short-term study abroad experiences. This is no surprise, given the popularity of short-term study abroad and the complexities of longitudinal studies and efforts needed for a prolonged observation period. By contrast, cross-sectional studies have shown differences between learners living only a few months or less than a year and learners living for a longer period in both their productive and receptive pragmatic competences. Thus, studies investigating learners in study abroad for a longer period will definitely provide more interesting and illuminating observations.

Grey, Cox, Serafini, and Sanz (2015) argued that the aim of study abroad research is not to investigate the superiority of study abroad over other contexts but to see what study abroad can offer and how variation in learners' individual differences may factor into the effects of such an experience. This argument exactly notes the problems of current literature on L2 pragmatics in study abroad contexts, in which in-depth analysis of individual variation among learners remains lacking. On the other hand, many longitudinal studies in L2 pragmatic development in study abroad imply the superiority of study abroad over study at home in their discussions. Among these studies, some even did not include an AH control group. However, without comparison with an AH control group, "it is impossible to say with any certainty whether the effects were due to the stay in the target community" (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 225). In other words, they failed to show whether these developments were significantly better or worse than the developments that students would have made if they had stayed at home (Rees & Klapper, 2008).

Some studies include an AH group for comparison, but they often assess SA students twice or thrice but AH students only once, assuming that learners' L2 pragmatic

competence in an AH context would remain static. This assumption, however, needs closer investigation in contemporary research. Several researchers have emphasized the matter of the time in which studies are conducted (Coleman, 2013; Sanz, 2014). With spread of globalization and internet, particularly with the popularity of social media, learners in an AH context can also have access to resources that may promote their L2 pragmatic development. Moreover, communication technologies rapidly and profoundly affect the social context of study abroad and have considerable impact on social networks and identities (Coleman, 2013). Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) also discussed the potential of social media and computer-mediated communication to be relevant additional sources of input in conversational registers. It is therefore crucial for these comparison studies to include a longitudinal investigation of an AH contrast group to better understand the effect of study abroad on learners' L2 pragmatic development, if comparison is part of the research purpose. Comparison of SA and AH students' data in similar design can better evaluate whether the SA learners' pragmatic gains are, in fact, due to study abroad or if they are a test-retest method effect. However, with rare exceptions (Félix-Brasdefer, 2013; Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker, 2015; Hoffman-Hicks, 1999; Ren, 2012, 2013, 2015; Rodriguez, 2001), few comparative studies have investigated AH students more than once.

Except for several case studies, the field mostly treats the SA learners as a group, even if individual variation has been constantly observed. It is clear that learners vary in many respects, such as age, mother tongue, initial level of L2 proficiency, and a range of individual characteristics (e.g., interests, motivation, attitudes, and identities). In addition, learners' social networks (Isabelli-García, 2006) and members of the target language community (Brown, 2013; Iino, 2006) also played a decisive and powerful role in providing necessary input and enabling individual participants to become integrated members of the L2 community. Figure 8.1 lists several possible factors influencing learners' pragmatic development during study abroad.

As indicated in Figure 8.1, in addition to various study abroad settings, the L2 pragmatic input (quantity and quality) has significant effects on learners' pragmatic development. Learners' individual differences in cognitive abilities also play a decisive role, particularly language aptitude and its various subcomponents, working memory, and sensitivity to notice (Schmidt, 1993) as well as certain pragmalinguistic forms and the sociopragmatic contexts in which they are used. Other relevant learner factors include the learner's L2 proficiency, and socioaffective and personality

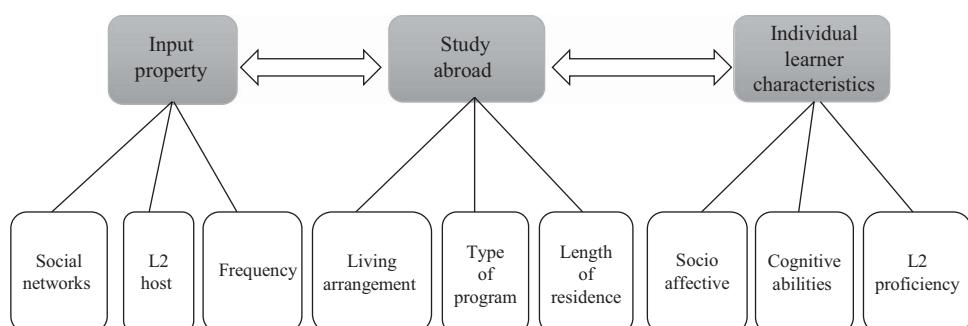


Figure 8.1 Factors influencing learners' pragmatic development.

factors (e.g., motivation, extraversion, identity, agency, and investment). These are core factors affecting learners' study abroad experience and their pragmatic development. The quality of study abroad for L2 pragmatic development resides not in any of these factors in and by themselves but rather in how they interact. The importance of studying such interactions has been stressed by Coleman (2013, p. 29), who wrote that study abroad research should

move from a simplistic and inadequate model of causality and controllable (in) dependent variables ... to a recognition that each variable interacts with every other variable, both singly and in combination, to create individual trajectories in which both person and context are in constant interaction and flux.

So far, however, few studies have responded to this call by investigating how the various factors interact in determining L2 pragmatic development during study abroad and in understanding study abroad as learning contexts (see Roever et al., 2014, for an exceptional attempt). Determining the exact nature and the relative weight of the various interactive factors that contribute to the quality of study abroad for developing L2 pragmatic competence is a task for future research.

Future Directions of Pragmatics Research in Study Abroad Contexts

While the existing studies have shed light on the development of learners' pragmatic competence during study abroad, the gaps addressed in the prior section indicate that as a field, there are many questions about study abroad and pragmatic development that have yet to be fully answered.

One topic to pursue in future research is to include more in-depth analysis of learners' pragmatic performance across multiple pragmatic features and how they evolve over time to trace the developmental pattern of different speech act strategies and modifications to interactions in both production and reception. Future research should also investigate the relationship between different subcompetences of pragmatics in the same learners to facilitate comparisons "in a way not possible across different studies" (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). By contrast, more investigations are needed on the aspects of pragmatic competence that learners do not develop during their study abroad to provide more insights into the complexity of L2 pragmatic development. In addition, assessment based on performance alone is not sufficient (Kinginger, 2013). Methods such as retrospective verbal reports (Ren, 2014) need to be included to triangulate not only what learners can really do but also what motives and meanings are assigned to their pragmatic performance (Kinginger, 2013).

An issue seldom studied in L2 pragmatics is whether the development can be sustained or if there is attrition after learners return from study abroad programs and the reasons underlying such results. Matsumura (2007) and Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker (2015) provided positive results in this aspect, but more studies are definitely needed.

Intervention by instruction or other manners of assistance for students during study abroad is another field not only interesting to researchers but also important to students and stakeholders. Previous literature documented benefits of pragmatics instruction for students during study abroad (Alcón Soler, 2015; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Winke & Teng, 2010). More studies are encouraged to explore the usefulness

of intervention for learners' pragmatic development and how the learning can be facilitated and assessed, particularly if L2 culture contradicts learners' identities or if other factors inhibit their pragmatic learning.

Another interesting topic is to explore the pragmatic development of learners of a third language (L3) (Safont Jordà, 2007) or additional languages. It will be fascinating to explore whether an interactive influence in pragmatic development exists in various languages (L2, L3, etc.). Little research has been devoted to L3 pragmatic development in study abroad contexts and whether learning an L3 in L3 target culture will influence learners' L2 pragmatic development or vice versa.

Last but not least, research in the field should be expanded to include a wider range of target languages. This is an often-repeated issue in many reviews in L2 pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012) and SLA in general. To date, the field is too skewed toward English as the target language, followed by Japanese and Spanish to a much lesser extent.

Key Terms

Sociopragmatics	At home
Pragmalinguistics	Productive pragmatic competence
Pragmatic development	Receptive pragmatic competence
Pragmatic competence	Interactional competence
Study abroad contexts	

Note

- 1 Speech act strategies refer to pragmatic strategies, which in the given contexts carry the force of the speech act; modification devices refer to pragmatic strategies, which modify the speech act but do not in themselves carry the speech act force.

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Morphosyntax

The Development of Second Language Grammar in a Study Abroad Context

Martin Howard and John W. Schwieter

Introduction

While study abroad research in recent years is witnessing burgeoning growth, second language (L2) learners' linguistic development during and as a result of a study abroad experience has long been a focus of investigation. Since Carroll (1967), there has been an extensive body of research that illuminates such linguistic development, both longitudinally and in comparison with learners in other learning contexts, primarily traditional classroom environments but also in other immersion contexts (Collentine & Freed, 2004). This work allows extensive insight into different facets of the learner's L2 linguistic repertoire, such as the grammatical (Juan-Garau, 2014), the lexical (Milton & Meara, 1995), the sociolinguistic (Howard, 2012a), and the phonological (Mora, 2008) as well as various sociopragmatic (Barron, 2000) and interactional (Taguchi, 2015) features, along with fluency (Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004) and communication strategies (Lafford, 1995).

In this chapter, we provide an overview of some of the main trends in L2 grammatical development in a study abroad context. Primarily focusing on French and Spanish as the principle languages investigated in existing studies, we discuss L2 grammatical features that have typically been of interest and the methods and analyses traditionally used to explore their development. We present an overview of findings on grammatical development from the existing body of research by focusing on the relative benefits of study abroad compared to classroom instruction at home as well as in relation to other areas of the learner's linguistic repertoire. We reflect on and offer explanations for previous results, suggesting limited (or negative) development through a commentary on potential factors at play, such as linguistic feature, proficiency, length of sojourn abroad, social networks, meta-awareness, and aptitude, among others. We conclude with some hypotheses that could be fruitfully explored in future research using experimental approaches that control for factors hypothesized to constrain grammatical development during study abroad.

L2 Development during Study Abroad

Early studies investigating the relative benefits of study abroad for L2 learning were based on learner questionnaires, self-reports, and general language tests. This work points to the overall finding that greater gains are made in speaking and listening than in reading and writing (see, for example, Dyson, 1988; Meara, 1994; Watson, Siska, & Wolfel, 2013). For instance, Dyson's longitudinal study among British learners of French, German, and Spanish shows how the learners' self-reports mirrored their test results: Whereas their listening and speaking skills increased significantly, reading skills showed less progress, with relatively little growth evident in the case of writing skills. Notwithstanding the insights that such studies provide, a certain subjectivity characterizes the data on which they are based in terms of the learners' self-assessments of the gains made. Moreover, by capturing development in terms of a single test score, general language tests are subject to ceiling effects in the case of more advanced learners, wherein there is limited scope to capture development at advanced levels of proficiency (for a discussion, see Freed, 1995a). A final drawback is the limitations of general language tests in illuminating the specificity of the learner's linguistic development in terms of the detail of the features that evidence development as opposed to those that do not. In other words, *development* is conceived as a uniform entity, whereas it remains unclear in such studies whether all features demonstrate similar levels of linguistic gain.

Against this background, the publication of the collection of articles in Freed (1995b) saw a change in focus by exploring specific components of the learner's linguistic repertoire. In this regard, findings generally support the relative benefits of study abroad in a number of areas, namely lexical, sociolinguistic, and sociopragmatic development as well as oral fluency. In contrast, two components of the learner's linguistic repertoire show less optimistic benefits: namely pronunciation and grammar development.

L2 Grammatical Development during Study Abroad

With regard to grammatical development, the limited benefits and, indeed, the more beneficial impact of classroom instruction are especially curious given the centrality of L2 grammar in L2 learning and when compared to the potential benefits forthcoming in other areas, even after a short stay abroad. These limited benefits pertain to different morphosyntactic features that have been subject to investigation across various L2s. Collentine (2004) offers an extensive investigation of different verbal, adjectival, and nominal morphosyntactic features relating to the marking of tense, aspect, agreement, and gender in L2 Spanish. The study is based on a comparison of classroom learners and study abroad learners who spent a semester in Spain. Quantitative analyses of the learners' Oral Proficiency Interviews indicated a greater advantage for the classroom learners compared to their study abroad counterparts. The sole difference was that the study abroad learners' narrative abilities gave rise to a greater quality of semantic density in their production.

Isabelli-García (2010) investigates gender agreement on adjectival marking in L2 Spanish among US learners who are spending four months abroad and classroom learners back home. The results of a grammatical judgment test indicated no differences between the learner groups. In the case of L2 French, Freed, Lazar, and So

(2003) explore native speaker evaluations of learners' written production before and after a semester abroad, finding no differences in writing complexity. The authors' qualitative analysis of the learners' use of syntactic subordinators similarly found no differences. In a study of L2 German, Arnett (2013) looks at the use of accusative and dative case prepositions and auxiliary verbs in a picture description task among US learners before and after three months abroad and finds similar levels of development compared to their classroom counterparts, although the study abroad learners did produce more ditransitive clauses.

While such studies focus on grammatical development in terms of outcomes, a limited number of studies have also explored processes of development regarding differences and similarities between learning contexts in relation to underlying patterns of acquisition. On this count, work by Guntermann (1995) and Ryan and Lafford (1992) offers fruitful insights. Ryan and Lafford present a longitudinal investigation of uses of the copulas *ser* and *estar* in Spanish among study abroad learners. They compare these results with VanPatten's (1987) findings for classroom learners. The comparisons point to similar, albeit not identical, acquisition patterns of use of the different forms. Guntermann also focuses on such forms but complements them with an analysis of the order of acquisition of the prepositions *por* and *para* among American Peace Corps volunteers abroad. Again, the findings were similar to those evidenced in Guntermann's (1992a, 1992b) earlier studies of classroom learners. Another study by Howard (2005a) complements such insights by focusing on underlying patterns of use of the past tenses in French across different verb types. The study draws on Vendler's (1967) classification of verb predicates according to their inherent lexical aspect. Four verb types were coded, namely stative, activity, accomplishment, and achievement predicates, for which Andersen (1991) proposes in his Aspect Hypothesis that use of the past tenses is not uniform across verb types, but rather a particular past time form emerges with one verb type before spreading gradually to the other verb types. In a study of Irish advanced learners of French, Howard offers support for such a hypothesis insofar as the learners did not demonstrate equal use of the past time forms across verb categories but rather demonstrated preferences for use of the *passé composé* with dynamic verbs: namely achievement, accomplishment, and activity predicates compared to stative verbs. The latter showed a strong preference for use with the *imparfait* compared to the other verb types. Howard's comparative analyses of study abroad and classroom learners, however, point to similar patterns of use of the past tenses across both learner groups such that study abroad did not lead to any structural change in the underlying patterns of use.

Grammatical Development within the Framework of Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF)

In contrast to focusing on specific morphosyntactic features, other studies of L2 grammatical development are situated within the more general framework of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF). In this regard, findings are more positive, pointing to a larger beneficial effect for study abroad relative to classroom instruction. For example, drawing on the Study Abroad and Language Acquisition (SALA) project's longitudinal investigation of the written productions of Spanish-Catalan bilingual university learners of English, Pérez-Vidal and Juan-Garau (2011) and Pérez-Vidal and Barquin (2014) note advantages for learners who participated in a study abroad

experience. In particular, the learners demonstrated steady gains in written complexity and fluency during their study abroad experience, which were not evident in the classroom context. In contrast, however, gains in written accuracy were not evident. In their oral production, the learners demonstrated increased gains compared to the classroom context across the constructs of fluency and accuracy while showing a tendency toward greater gains in the case of complexity. Godfrey, Treacy, and Tarone (2014) explore writing development in a study that includes a control group of classroom learners. While the number of participants is small at just four learners per group, the findings highlight the complexity of development in writing as a function of the domain of inquiry. Although the study abroad group evidenced greater improvement in accuracy of gender marking, both groups demonstrated increased fluency. In contrast, however, the classroom learners demonstrated greater improvement in syntactic complexity.

In a further study from the SALA project, Juan-Garau (2014) notes the gains in oral accuracy made by the learners, especially compared to their previous development, in which such improvement was less evident. Development was especially apparent in the case of verb usage in which accuracy approached a native-speaking level. Admittedly, such development was not unilateral across all individuals, highlighting the interlearner variation that characterizes many of the trends underlying linguistic development during study abroad. It is further noteworthy that such development in oral accuracy contrasts with findings for the learners' written accuracy in which development was not evident (see Pérez-Vidal & Barquin, 2014, as discussed earlier). A final study by Juan-Garau, Slazar-Noguerra, and Prieto-Arranz (2014) focuses on lexico-grammatical development by means of a cloze test and sentence-rephrasing task. Here, the results again point to the beneficial effect of study abroad in the case of the cloze test, which is especially noteworthy compared to the nonsignificant gains evidenced during the learners' classroom instruction prior to study abroad. In contrast, no significant gains were found in the case of the sentence-rephrasing task.

Llanes and Muñoz (2013) report a more positive effect of study abroad across the CAF components in a comparative study of adults and children over the course of a semester. Their results supported benefits in both age groups but especially so in the case of the child learners, although the instructed context was found to be more advantageous for written complexity. Prior work by Llanes and Muñoz (2009) also suggests that such benefits can accrue relatively quickly, even in the case of short-term study abroad of three to four weeks.

Insights on Grammatical Development during Study Abroad

The Role of Linguistic Feature, Learner Proficiency, and Metalinguistic Knowledge

Taken together, the differential findings suggest the need for caution in drawing any substantive conclusions on the relative benefits of study abroad as opposed to classroom instruction for L2 grammatical development. Given that studies of CAF point to a significant advantage of study abroad compared to classroom instruction, it may be that development emerges at a general level, but some specific features are less impacted than others. On this count, Coleman (1995) argues that "language proficiency, after all, is not a single entity but a multidimensional construct, and progress

in the different aspects—vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and so on—may be expected to take place at different rates” (p. 22). Howard (2005a) similarly notes that “development is not a uniform entity, but may differ across different components of the learner’s grammatical repertoire” (p. 501). Likewise, development may be more evident in the case of less marked features compared to more marked ones. There is some evidence for this in Howard’s (2005a) work on verb morphology in L2 French, in which he finds greater development among study abroad learners on their use of past time forms, with lesser use of the present in past time contexts, giving rise to greater use of the perfective marker of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* (imperfective form) to mark its characterizing value. In contrast, the author notes that development is less evident in other aspectual values of the *imparfait* for the marking of habituality and progressivity. In the case of other markers of tense-aspect-modality, greater development is also evident among the study abroad learners on the future time forms of the periphrastic and inflected future, as well as in the conditional, compared to the classroom learners (see Howard, 2012b). Contrarily, greater difficulty is found in the case of other less frequent forms, such as the subjunctive and the pluperfect for the expression of reverse-order as well as the future and conditional anterior across all the learner participants (see Howard, 2005b, 2012b). Similarly, tense-concordancing in conditional clauses expressing the hypothetical realization of an event poses considerable difficulty, both for the study abroad and classroom learners. Howard (2006) also finds limited development in the case of the use of third-person plural forms of present tense irregular verbs whose forms are phonologically distinct from singular forms (*boit* vs. *boivent* [drink]), unlike in the case of regular verbs (*donne* vs. *donnent* [give]).

Grey, Cox, Serafini, and Sanz (2015) also offer insights into how development may not be a case of ‘all or nothing’ but rather may be more forthcoming on some components of the learners’ grammatical repertoire than others. Their study is based on a grammatical judgment test conducted among US learners of Spanish on a short study abroad program of five weeks. Their findings indicate higher levels of accuracy on word order and number agreement, but not on gender agreement, during that time period. The study also depicts other means of capturing development by using a reaction time test that allows insight into the learners’ speed of processing linguistic items. Findings from this analysis indicate decreasing reaction times over the course of the study, thereby offering fruitful insight into the importance of other means of capturing development in relation to processing, which may be less evident in more traditional production tasks. LaBrozzi (2012) also investigates how study abroad might impact processing patterns. His study is based on a comparison of study abroad learners of Spanish and classroom learners who did not go abroad. Drawing on an eye-tracking task, the study explores how the learners attend to morphological cues as opposed to lexical cues in assigning temporal reference. Since the learners’ first language, English, is poor in verb morphology, the author hypothesizes that Anglophone learners attend to lexical cues over morphological cues but that study abroad may change such a pattern. The findings based on an eye-tracking task support the author’s hypothesis, whereby the study abroad learners demonstrate a transitional phase where they rely on both cue types when processing in the L2, unlike the L1-similar monolingual speaker patterns demonstrated by the classroom learners. The findings highlight the potential for input exposure in a study abroad context to impact the learners’ processing strategies.

Other work explores how development may differ across morphosyntactic features within the same learner cohort. Marqués-Pascual (2011) presents a study that does not find evidence of development on verb agreement among her study abroad learners compared to those in the foreign language classroom, although there was a more beneficial effect for other features, namely the omission of subject pronouns, and subject-verb inversion in the case of the more advanced learners. In a crosslinguistic study of French and German learners of their respective L2s, Möhle and Raupach (1983) report considerable progress in the case of the French learners of German but not in the case of the German learners of French. The authors interpret such differential findings as reflecting an effect for inflectional morphology in German. As we noted earlier, Juan-Garau (2014) also highlights verb morphology as the area where her Spanish-Catalan bilingual learners of English made the most gains.

Such differences across morphosyntactic forms and the conceptual meanings expressed by such forms suggest that grammatical development is far from being uniform. Given that such studies point to a potential effect for the morphosyntactic features themselves, a further factor at play may be the learner's proficiency level. Indeed, Second Language Acquisition research clearly shows that there are underlying stages of development whereby some morphological and morphosyntactic forms are particularly late to emerge compared to others (e.g., Bartning & Schlyter, 2004). In this regard, Lafford and Collentine (2009) propose the Threshold Hypothesis, whereby learners may need to be developmentally ready to integrate those forms in their language system. As such, it may be the case that in those studies that focus on specific forms and find limited development, their learner participants were not advanced enough for development to occur. For example, in the studies by Arnett (2013) and Collentine (2004), the learners had been learning the L2 for only one to two years, calling into question just how advanced they were. This contrasts with the learners in Howard's (2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2012b) work who were advanced learners, having learnt the L2 as specialist learners for 7–8 years, during which time they were exposed to and benefitted from extensive metalinguistic instruction.

To this end, study abroad may have constituted an opportunity for L2 learners to proceduralize their metalinguistic knowledge. Juan-Garau (2014) highlights this factor as key to understanding the gains that her learners made during study abroad compared to their more limited development in oral accuracy prior to their sojourn abroad. In particular, she notes that the type of language activity that typically characterizes the foreign language classroom may not be conducive to the automatization of procedural knowledge in oral production in the same way as it may facilitate development on metalinguistic tasks. DeKeyser (2010) similarly concludes that his North American learners spending six weeks in a Spanish-speaking environment simply did not have the required metalinguistic knowledge to benefit from the input and interaction opportunities available in the target language community. In contrast, however, he does report a more positive effect for accuracy among his more advanced learners, whereby it was initial proficiency level and not aptitude that was found to play a role in distinguishing the learners' gains. Similarly, as noted earlier, Marqués-Pascual (2011) finds that less advanced learners did not show development on subject-verb inversions unlike their more advanced counterparts. However, for subject omission, both intermediate and advanced learners showed development. Notwithstanding, other studies note that less advanced learners evidence greater gains insofar as they

simply have more to gain (see Juan-Garau et al., 2014; Schwieter, 2013). Such a finding may reflect ceiling effects whereby the measures do not allow more advanced learners to demonstrate their development.

Grammatical Development and Duration of Stay Abroad, Communicative Adequacy, and Noticing

Apart from issues relating to proficiency level and metalinguistic knowledge, a further factor at play relates to the duration of stay abroad, whereby a minimal amount of time may be necessary before grammatical gains are evident. Serrano, Tragant, and Llanes (2012) confirm the importance of duration of stay abroad as a factor in the emergence of linguistic gains. Their study is based on a longitudinal investigation of Spanish university learners attending a British university with three data collection points over the course of an academic year. While gains were evident for fluency and lexical richness during the first semester, accuracy in the learners' oral and written production was slower to emerge, only being evident during the second semester of the stay abroad. The authors hypothesize that initial development in some areas during study abroad, such as fluency and lexical richness, may be a prerequisite to subsequent development, such as in relation to accuracy. Jensen and Howard (2014) also found that CAF gains were significantly more evident in the second semester of a stay abroad than in the first in their comparative study of Chinese and French advanced learners of English. Similarly, Isabelli and Nishida (2005) reported significant gains in use of the subjunctive in L2 Spanish for their US learners spending nine months abroad, which is much longer than in the case of other studies reporting no gains. It is also noteworthy that the learners in Howard's (2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2012b) work had spent a full academic year in the target language community, in contrast with other studies whose duration of stay abroad has ranged from a couple of weeks to a semester (e.g., Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 2010; Godfrey et al., 2014). Other studies, however, provide counterevidence to the hypothesis that a longer period of time may be required before grammatical gains emerge. For example, as we noted earlier, Grey et al.'s (2015) study over five weeks reports higher accuracy on word order and number agreement, as well as decreased reaction times. Lennon (1989) found that German L2 learners of English reported increased attention to communicative meaning rather than to form over the course of their six-month stay abroad. A similar explanation can be found in Schwieter and Klassen's (2016) study in which English-speaking Canadian students learning Spanish for three weeks in Spain showed a decrease in production accuracy of morphosyntactic agreement over the limited time spent abroad. The researchers explain this counterintuitive observation as a shift in learning strategy from grammatical accuracy to communicative ease.

Such a finding further raises the issue of whether learners reach a level of communicative adequacy whereby they are not pushed to further develop their use of morphosyntactic forms during communicative interaction. This question is especially important given the difficulties that learners may have in 'noticing' forms and certain types of feedback during communicative interaction in real time. This may support Krashen and Seliger's (1976) remark that classroom instruction is more beneficial "because it offers a structured environment for feedback" (p. 21). It is also noteworthy that explicit instructed training may render it difficult for classroom learners

to utilize the naturalistic input available in the target language community, for the purpose of noticing. In other words, due to processing demands of understanding the meaning conveyed as opposed to focusing on the linguistic forms used, the learner may have difficulty detecting feedback as well as noticing forms in real-time interaction that are not yet part of their L2 linguistic repertoire. Such a hypothesis may explain the difficulty that learners have in developing less frequent, albeit sometimes more salient, forms in the input, such as those reported on by Howard (2005b, 2006, 2012b) in relation to use of the subjunctive, the pluperfect, and third-person irregular plural forms of the present tense. Moreover, the failure to use such forms does not necessarily negatively impact comprehension on the part of the learner's interlocutor, such that the learners may reach a level of communicative comprehensibility beyond which extensive further development is limited.

Krashen and Seliger's (1976) remark concerning the beneficial role of classroom instruction for feedback also has consequences for the role of proceduralization of metalinguistic knowledge during communicative interaction in a study abroad context. That is to say, the foreign language classroom may constitute a more 'protective' environment for practice in a way that the intensity of naturalistic exposure may overwhelm the study abroad learner. Such a hypothesis may potentially explain the finding that more intensive contact with native speakers, such as through more extensive social networks, does not seem to play a role. For example, based on the LangSnap project findings of British university learners of Spanish and French, Mitchell, McManus, and Tracy-Ventura (2015) suggest that the input and interaction activities that they are ordinarily engaged in may be sufficient, with no added benefit found among learners who engage in more extensive contact with native speakers. Serrano et al. (2012), referred to earlier, also fail to find a relationship between accuracy and living arrangements, on the one hand, and language contact, on the other hand. A similar conclusion can be drawn from Juan-Garau et al.'s (2014) study of Catalan learners of English where a more positive effect was found for practice in both the written and oral media but not for more extensive contacts with other speakers. Notwithstanding, the authors note that all the learners reported regular participation in different types of oral activities, making it difficult to distinguish different levels of participation that might discriminate between levels of development. Moreover, Juan-Garau (2014) finds that her learners who reported finding relationships stressful demonstrated less successful performance, which the author interprets as reflecting an effect for anxiety on level of participation in sustained talk abroad.

Further support for such findings can be seen in DeKeyser's (2007) hypothesis on the role of 'practice' as a defining characteristic of study abroad. In this regard, study abroad may be particularly conducive for practice of certain skill types, such as oral production as opposed to written production, reflecting the general finding that gains emerge earlier in the former case than in the latter (Serrano et al., 2012). While it might be expected that study abroad should allow practice of oral grammar abilities, as we mentioned earlier, a number of factors may constrain the potential for the development of abilities in spoken language, such as the communicative adequacy of the learner's spoken language production even when grammatical accuracy is lacking, which renders his/her spoken production non-native-like. On the latter count, in some respects, such non-native-likeness along with the communicative limitations of an underdeveloped L2 grammar should constitute a driving factor to become more native-like at a grammatical level, as has been hypothesized by Klein

and Perdue (1997) in the case of the immigrant adult learners of different source and target languages in the European Science Foundation (ESF) project. However, these authors note that in spite of the non-nativelikeness but communicative adequacy of their learners' language system, not all such learners in the project developed a more targetlike grammar. Indeed, as we have noted earlier, other factors apart from communicative adequacy may also play a role. Notably, the learner's focus on the communicative meaning of his/her interlocutor's input during communicative interaction as opposed to grammatical form (Schwieter & Klassen, 2016), which may not be very salient in real-time communicative interaction, as well as the learner's underdeveloped metalinguistic knowledge, which would allow him/her to productively treat the input available during study abroad at a grammatical level.

In contrast, the more beneficial effect of grammar development in a classroom context may reflect the greater metalinguistic focus on form in that context through the written language. For example, Juan-Garau (2014) notes that classroom instruction may be more conducive to practice in writing, whereas study abroad allows more extensive opportunities for the automatization of the procedural knowledge underlying oral production that learners develop during classroom instruction prior to study abroad. Her work further highlights the correlation between practice in listening and writing, and development on grammatical accuracy in a classroom context, whereby she hypothesizes that the processing demands of such tasks during study abroad require that the learner pay greater attention to the communicative meaning of the language input as opposed to the grammatical form than in the case of classroom instruction. A further conclusion to be taken from such studies relates to the role of the task type that the learner is required to undertake within a research study. For example, classroom learners may develop skills on certain task types that are not available to study abroad learners, as evidenced in focused grammar elicitation tasks, such as cloze tests and sentence-rephrasing tasks, thereby potentially providing an advantage to the classroom learner in a particular research study, irrespective of linguistic ability.

Sociopsychological Factors and Grammatical Development during Study Abroad

A final set of factors at play concerns motivation and attitudes, as well as cognitive capacity and aptitude. In the former case, Serrano et al. (2012) explore the role of positive attitudes toward the English language and English people based on key stereotypical adjectives considered to define the language and its speakers. Results from their study of Spanish learners spending a year at a British university point to a positive correlation with accuracy development. In contrast, in another study of Spanish learners, Juan-Garau et al. (2014) find no correlation between learners' motivation and attitudes and their lexico-grammatical development in English over the course of a semester in an English-speaking country. In relation to cognitive capacity, Grey et al. (2015) find no effect for such a factor on the grammatical gains reported in their study of advanced US learners spending five weeks in Spain where cognitive capacity was measured through L1 working memory, L1 phonological working memory, and L2 phonological working memory. Similarly, as we noted previously, DeKeyser (2010) does not find an effect for aptitude among his short-term study abroad learners. Notwithstanding the insights that these studies offer, there is scope for more wide-ranging studies exploring the relationship between individual factors and

grammatical development in a study abroad context, especially in the context of the wider Second Language Acquisition literature, which highlights individual factors as playing a key role in foreign language learning (see Dörnyei, 2005).

Conclusion

The extensive findings we have reviewed on L2 grammatical development constitute in some ways an embarrassment of riches. While they point to the wide range of findings available, differences across the studies in terms of focus of analysis, proficiency level, and length of stay abroad point to the need for more experimental research in the future that controls for such factors in comparative studies before any definitive conclusions can be drawn on the relation between study abroad and L2 grammatical development. Furthermore, if study abroad is less conducive to grammatical development, it remains to be seen whether other methodologies may lend themselves better to capturing potential differences that may not be evident in the instruments of prior work. In this regard, since the focus of inquiry has generally been conducted through analyses of production data (oral and written, including language tests), there is a need for studies of the learner's grammatical representation that could be investigated through more experimental methods such as reaction time and eye-tracking studies (Grey et al., 2015, and LaBrozzi, 2012, are cases in point). Additionally, future work should attempt to hone in on the specific characteristics of classroom-based instruction that can be introduced into study abroad experiences. Given that some studies have found that learners replicate classroom interaction during their study abroad experiences (e.g., Wilkinson, 2002), pre-study abroad training relating to typical study abroad experiences may be especially fruitful in ensuring that the learner can best benefit from those interactional opportunities for his/her grammatical, and indeed, wider linguistic development. Researchers also need to better understand learners' linguistic needs post-study abroad. Indeed, it may be the case that learners are better equipped to benefit from classroom instruction following study abroad, such that the benefits of study abroad for grammatical development may be more indirect, only becoming apparent subsequent to their sojourn abroad.

While the general consensus is that study abroad benefits areas such as fluency and lexical and sociolinguistic development, the question of why study abroad may be more beneficial in some areas of linguistic development than others still looms unanswered. If learners can make such extensive gains in certain areas, why not also in grammar? In this regard, we have offered a number of hypotheses that might explain the limitations of study abroad for grammatical development. But given that this is held as a context in which "learners can avail themselves of massive and varied exposure to input, interaction and feedback in natural, authentic exchanges" (Pérez-Vidal & Juan-Garau, 2011, p. 157), it calls for research into the learners' grammatical comprehension during study abroad, and its link to grammatical development in their production. That is to say, researchers must understand what it is that learners notice in the input, grammar-wise, and subsequently track their development of enhanced comprehension of those features. This would relate such comprehension to the potential integration of those features in their linguistic repertoire and production. In the case of other components of the learners' linguistic repertoire, it would seem that such a relation is occurring between noticing, understanding, and production. In the case of L2 grammatical development, more fine-grained studies that track such

understanding are required. In particular, if development is limited at a grammatical comprehension level, it may point to grammar as constituting a component that is particularly resistant to development due to the mapping challenge underlying the specificity of grammatical form-function relations in the L2 compared to the learner's L1. In contrast, such a remapping challenge may be much reduced in relation to the lexicon, giving rise to greater gains at a lexical level than at a grammatical level. In sum, several interesting questions remain to be explored before we can conclude that grammatical development is not susceptible to significant development in a study abroad context, as many of the existing studies would seem to suggest.

Key Terms

L2 grammar	Duration of stay abroad
Morphology	Proficiency level
Morphosyntax	Threshold Hypothesis
Grammatical development	Noticing
Complexity	Practice
Accuracy	Sociopsychological factors
Metalinguistic knowledge	

Further Reading

- Mitchell, R., Tracy-Ventura, N., & McManus, K. (2017). *Anglophone students abroad. Identity, social relationships and language learning*. Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge. (Presenting extensive findings from the LANGSNAP Project [Languages and Social Networks Abroad], this monograph explores the relation between second language linguistic development and factors at play in the study abroad participants' experiences abroad, such as social networks and integration, identity, and agency. The project includes British university learners of both second language French and Spanish in a longitudinal study that tracks their development over a full year from prior to study abroad to following their sojourn abroad. The scope of analysis extends to various facets of their linguistic development within a CAF [complexity, accuracy, fluency] framework, offering insights into their fluency, accuracy, and syntactic and lexical complexity.)
- Leonard, K. & Shea, C. (2017). L2 speaking development during study abroad: Fluency, accuracy, complexity, and underlying cognitive factors. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(1), 179–193. (Building on previous studies within a CAF [complexity, accuracy, fluency] framework, this article explores the relation between second language development in such areas and the cognitive variables of linguistic knowledge and processing. The learners in the study were Anglophone learners of Spanish whose development was tracked over the course of three months. While development was not uniform across the components investigated, it was those learners who had higher levels of L2 linguistic knowledge and faster processing speed prior to study abroad who evidenced greatest gains in accuracy and lexical and syntactic complexity during their sojourn abroad.)
- Llanes, Á. & Muñoz, C. (2013). Age effects in a study abroad context: children and adults studying abroad and at home. *Language Learning* 61(1), 63–90. (Based on an extensive comparison study of both children and young adults in a study abroad context and an instructed context 'at home,' this article presents quantitative findings within a longitudinal framework of the relative developmental gains in various measures of complexity, accuracy, and fluency. Focusing on the role of age and its impact on gains in each context, the findings indicate an advantage for the study abroad context, especially so in the case of the child learners, which the authors interpret in terms of an effect for the scope of spoken language practice among such participants.)

Pérez-Vidal, C. (Ed.). (2014). *Language Acquisition in Study Abroad and Formal Instruction Contexts* (pp. 87–109). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. (This edited volume stems from the SALA [Study Abroad and Language Acquisition] project on Catalan/Spanish university second language learners of English in a longitudinal study over two years that includes a semester abroad in an Anglophone university. The volume offers wide-ranging insight into various aspects of the learners' linguistic trajectory, with some chapters, especially those by Maria Juan-Garau and colleagues specifically focusing on accuracy and morphosyntactic development through a longitudinal lens that captures the scope of development from the learners' initial university studies in English, through the stay abroad, to their return to their home university.)

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Benefits of Study Abroad and Working Memory on L2 Morphosyntactic Processing

Nuria Sagarra and Ryan LaBrozzi

Introduction

Inflected languages mark semantic information with lexical cues (e.g., explicit subjects) and morphological cues (e.g., suffixes) (Evans, 2003), but adult second language (L2) learners have difficulty processing the latter. This difficulty is exacerbated in sentences containing both cues encoding the same meaning (Ellis, 2006), in learners with low proficiency levels (Hopp, 2010) or low working memory (WM) span (Sagarra & Herschensohn, 2010), and in native speakers of a morphologically poor or null language (Sagarra & Ellis, 2013). To address this problem, we investigate whether study abroad SA and high WM span can facilitate the processing of inflectional morphemes in low-proficiency adult learners whose first language (L1) is morphologically poor.

Our first independent variable, (SA), refers to temporarily living and studying the L2 in the L2 environment (Collentine & Freed, 2004). It is unclear whether the abundance of inflectional morphemes (input quantity), lack of redundant lexical cues (input quality), and increased communicative opportunities typical of SA contexts facilitate attention to L2 inflectional morphology. Some studies show that SA aids in the processing of L2 morphosyntactic agreement violations (Fareta-Stutenberg, 2014; Sagarra, 2017; Sagarra, Sanz, & Rodriguez, 2016, with behavioral data; Grey, Williams, & Rebuschat, 2015; LaBrozzi, 2009, 2012), whereas others report no SA effects (Fareta-Stutenberg, 2014). The investigation of SA is critical because more naturalistic studies have higher ecological validity than controlled classroom and lab experiments.

Our second independent variable, WM, consists of the activation and maintenance of short-lived memory items while performing sometimes complex and time-consuming cognitive tasks (Barrouillet & Camos, 2007). Studies examining WM and L2 morphosyntactic processing with non-study abroad (NSA) learners are inconclusive. Fareta-Stutenberg (2014), Havik, Roberts, van Hout, Schreuder, and Haverkort (2009), Keating (2010), Linck and Weiss (2011, 2015), Sagarra (2008, 2017), Sagarra and Herschensohn (2010), Sagarra et al. (2016), Sanz, Lin, Lado, Stafford, and Bowden (2016), and Serafini and Sanz (2016, with low-proficiency learners) all report WM effects. In contrast, Foote (2011), Coughlin and Tremblay (2013), Frost, Siegelman,

Narkiss, and Afek (2013), Grey, Cox, Serafini, and Sanz (2015), Sagarra (2000), and Serafini and Sanz (2016, with high-proficiency learners) report no WM effects. According to Sagarra (2017), this variability depends on L2 proficiency and the cognitive load of both the task and the WM test. WM effects with low-proficiency NSA learners are magnified with SA learners as they (i) have little time for planning and self-monitoring (so as to keep the conversation flowing) (Lafford, 2006) and (ii) have fewer attentional resources available to process the L2 because they are already using some to constantly suppress the L1 (Sunderman & Kroll, 2009; Tokowicz, Michael, & Kroll, 2004). Thus, scholars report WM effects in intermediate learners (LaBrozzi, 2009, 2012) but not in advanced learners (Grey et al., 2015) or in intermediate learners performing a taxing task (Fareta-Stutenberg, 2014) (Fareta-Stutenberg's timed grammatical judgment task is cognitively more taxing than LaBrozzi's untimed reading task.) The examination of the role of learning context (NSA, SA), individual differences in WM, and L2 morphosyntactic development is essential to understanding how external and internal factors interact and affect SLA.

In this study, we examine the effects of SA and WM on low-intermediate proficiency-level Spanish learners' sensitivities to adjacent SV number agreement violations. In Spanish and English, verbs agree in person and number with their subjects, and verbs indicate SV agreement via verbal suffixes. However, Spanish is a pro-drop language with a rich morphological structure, whereas English requires an explicit subject and has poorer morphology (e.g., it lacks person markers in the past and only distinguishes between third-person singular and the rest of persons in the present). As a result, English speakers are more lexically biased than Spanish speakers.

To shed light on the role of SA and WM on L2 morphosyntactic processing, we employed eye-tracking methodology. We chose this technique because it measures early and late processing mechanisms (self-paced reading only targets late processing). In addition, it allows participants to read complete sentences at their own pace and make regressions.

Previous Literature

L2 Morphosyntactic Processing

According to Associative-Cognitive Theory, learning that a stimulus is related to a specific outcome makes the later learning of a new stimulus associated with the same outcome more difficult (Kruschke & Blair, 2000). The blocking of later-experienced cues by earlier ones guides attention to L2 cues in the short term (blocking) and long term (transfer), and modulates L2 ultimate attainment (Ellis, 2006). Adult learners focus on reliable cues before available cues (MacWhinney, Pléh, & Bates, 1985) and favor lexical cues when they face difficult structures (Ellis & Sagarra, 2011; Han & Liu, 2013) or have low L2 proficiency (e.g., Ellis & Sagarra, 2010; Parodi, Schwartz, & Clahsen, 2004; Steinhauer, White, & Drury, 2009). Relevant to our study, many studies show that higher-proficiency learners are sensitive to morphosyntactic violations (e.g., behavioral studies: Foote, 2011; Keating, 2010; Sagarra & Ellis, 2013; neurocognitive studies: Rossi, Gugler, Friederici, & Hahne, 2006), but lower proficiency ones are not (e.g., behavioral studies: Sagarra, 2008; Sagarra & Herschensohn, 2010; neurocognitive studies: Morgan-Short, Sanz, Steinhauer, & Ullman, 2010; Rossi et al., 2006).

WM Effects on L2 Morphosyntactic Processing

Studies on WM and L2 morphosyntactic processing are inconclusive. Thus, some scholars find WM effects (Fareta-Stutenberg, 2014; Havik et al., 2009; Keating, 2010; Sagarra, 2008, 2017; Sagarra & Herschensohn, 2010), whereas others report no WM effects (e.g., Foote, 2011; Coughlin & Tremblay, 2013). Longitudinal studies on WM and L2 grammar development are equally controversial, with some revealing WM effects (Linck & Weiss, 2011, 2015; Sagarra, 2017; Sanz et al., 2016; Serafini & Sanz, 2016, with lower, but not higher, proficiency learners) and others revealing no WM effects (Frost et al., 2013; Grey et al., 2015; Sagarra, 2000) (see Mitchell et al., 2015, for a review).

Sagarra (2017) explains these discrepancies in terms of L2 proficiency and the cognitive load of both the task and the WM test. Thus, studies using a taxing WM test (a test with a processing activity performed under time-pressure), and low-proficiency learners reveal WM effects on L2 grammar development (Havik et al., 2009; Linck & Weiss, 2011, 2015; Sanz et al., 2016; Serafini & Sanz, 2016) and L2 morphosyntactic processing (Fareta-Stutenberg, 2014; LaBrozzi, 2009). However, studies with a non-taxing WM test, and low- (Sagarra, 2000) or high-proficiency learners (Frost et al., 2013; Grey et al., 2015; Serafini & Sanz, 2016) show no WM effects on L2 grammar development. Finally, Sanz et al. (2016) did not find WM effects on L2 grammar development with a taxing WM test and a low proficiency level, likely because the task was too easy.

WM and L2 Morphosyntactic Processing in SA Contexts

Research on SA on SLA has produced mixed findings (see Sanz, 2014, and Yang, 2016, for reviews). Off-line studies on SA and L2 grammatical accuracy are also inconclusive, ranging from SA benefiting grammatical accuracy (e.g., Arnett, 2013; Duperron, 2006; Guntermann, 1995; Howard, 2001, 2005; Isabelli, 2007; Isabelli & Nishida, 2005; Juan-Garau, Salazar-Noguera, & Prieto-Arranz, 2014; Linck, Kroll, & Sunderman, 2009; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012; Rees & Klapper, 2007; Yager, 1998) to SA having no improvement (e.g., Arnett, 2013; Cheng & Mojica-Díaz, 2006; DeKeyser, 1991, 2010; Geeslin & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2005; Howard, 2001, 2005) to SA having detrimental effects (e.g., Collentine, 2004; Segalowitz, Freed, Collentine, Lafford, Lazar, & Díaz-Campos, 2004). Of interest to our study, off-line studies on morphosyntactic accuracy show no SA-NSA differences after four months of studying abroad (Isabelli-García, 2010: noun-adjective gender agreement with intermediate learners; Marqués-Pascual, 2011: SV agreement with intermediate and advanced leaners).

Alongside this blurred scenario, online studies investigating SA effects on L2 morphosyntactic processing and WM effects in SA contexts are scarce. Online techniques are crucial to measure subtle changes in real-time processing efficiency that may not be obvious with off-line methodologies. For nominal agreement, Grey et al. (2015) examined the processing of noun-adjective nonadjacent grammatical gender and number agreement in advanced SA English learners of Spanish. The participants studied abroad for five weeks and completed a grammaticality judgment task, a lexical decision task, a reading span WM task (processing + storage), and a digit span short-term memory task (storage only). Relevant to our study, for the WM task,

participants listened to sets of L1 sentences and, for each sentence, memorized the last word (storage), judged whether the sentence made sense (Processing Task 1), and indicated whether it was grammatical (Processing Task 2). For the grammaticality judgment task, participants read L2 sentences and decided as quickly and accurately as possible whether each sentence was grammatical or not. The results indicated that SA increased accuracy on word order and nonadjacent noun-adjective number agreement, but not on gender agreement, and that WM was irrelevant.

Fareta-Stutenberg (2014) examined SA English-Spanish learners' processing of adjacent determiner-noun and noun-adjective grammatical gender agreement with event-related potentials (ERPs), a lower learner proficiency level (intermediate), a longer SA period (one semester), and an additional NSA group. Among other tasks, participants completed automated versions of the Operation Span, Reading Span, and Symmetry Span WM tests, and a grammaticality judgment task with rapid serial visual presentation that forced them to read sentences word by word at a fixed rate. The findings revealed that both groups evidenced some behavioral changes over the course of the semester, but only the SA group showed sensitivity to the determiner-noun agreement violations in the ERP results. Unexpectedly, there was a relationship between change in the response magnitude index and WM in the NSA, but not the SA, group. Interestingly, in a follow-up ERP study examining syntactic processing (noun-infinitive inversion) with the same participants and cognitive tasks, Fareta-Stutenberg and Morgan-Short (2017) found behavioral gains in both groups, processing gains only in the SA group, and WM effects on behavioral and processing gains in the SA, but not the NSA, group.

In a related study, Sagarra et al. (2016) employed eye-tracking and an implicit task (reading sentences and answering comprehension questions) to investigate how intermediate SA and NSA English-Spanish learners, and Spanish monolinguals process adjacent noun-adjective grammatical gender and number agreement. SA lasted one semester, and results revealed that all groups were sensitive to both violations: All looked longer at adjectives in number disagreement than agreement and at the word following the adjectives in gender disagreement than agreement. Also, only the monolinguals looked longer at adjectives in gender disagreement than agreement, but all regressed longer to adjectives in gender disagreement than agreement (longer regressions to number disagreement were unnecessary). This suggests that gender disagreement was more difficult than number disagreement. Importantly, NSA learners regressed more to the word following the adjective and were less sensitive to gender disagreement (the most difficult violation) than the other two groups. This indicates that the SA learners patterned closer to the monolinguals than their NSA counterparts.

Finally, LaBrozzi (2009, 2012) asked intermediate SA and NSA English-Spanish learners to complete a reading eye-tracking task with comprehension questions, a reading span WM test with plausibility judgments, and a Simon inhibitory control test. The target structure was adverb-verb and verb-adverb tense congruency (past adverbs with congruent past verbs or incongruent present verbs). The eye-tracking data showed that both groups were sensitive to tense incongruences, regardless of adverb position (before or after the verb): All looked longer at the word following the adverb in *verb-adverb than verb-adverb, and at the word following the verb in *adverb-verb than adverb-verb, and all regressed longer to the adverbs in *adverb-verb than adverb-verb. However, the SA learners patterned closer to Spanish

monolinguals than the NSA learners because the former relied more on morphological cues than the latter: only the SA group regressed longer to verbs in *verb-adverb than verb-adverb. Critically, WM effects applied to both groups for adverbs (higher WM span learners looked longer at adverbs in all conditions) but only to the SA group for verbs (higher WM span SA learners looked longer at verbs in *adverb-verb than adverb-verb). Finally, there were no inhibitory control effects for any of the groups.

Motivation for the current study

Most of the previous research employs off-line techniques and focuses on L2 grammatical accuracy. There are only four online studies on SA and L2 morphosyntactic processing. However, two employ grammaticality judgments (untimed: Grey et al., 2015; timed: Faretta-Stutenberg, 2014) and may not be measuring implicit knowledge. Of the two studies using a reading task with comprehension questions, Sagarra et al.'s (2016) study lacks a WM test, and LaBrozzi's (2009, 2012) study (i) combines morphosyntactic (adverb-verb tense congruency) and semantic processing (aspect) and (ii) counts PastAdverb-PresentVerb as incongruent when it could be acceptable in the historical present tense. Also, three of the aforementioned studies explore adjacent nominal agreement (Faretta-Stutenberg; Grey et al.; Sagarra et al., 2016) and two nonadjacent verbal agreement/congruency (Grey et al.; LaBrozzi). In addition, some studies focus on high-proficiency learners (Grey et al.), and others focus on low-proficiency learners (Faretta-Stutenberg; LaBrozzi; Sagarra et al., 2016). Finally, Grey et al. have a short-period SA (five weeks) and no NSA group. In sum, online studies about SA effects on L2 morphosyntactic processing show variability in tasks, linguistic structures, SA length, and presence of a NSA group. In the current study, we use eye-tracking methodology to investigate whether the SA benefits obtained in these studies extend to adjacent SV number agreement, which are easier to process than nonadjacent agreement, and implicit tasks.

In addition, we examine WM effects in NSA and SA low-proficiency learners. If WM is important for low-proficiency NSA learners, then it is critical for low-proficiency SA learners. This is because low-proficiency learners often rely on controlled processing, which requires time for planning and self-monitoring, a luxury that SA learners cannot afford. As a result, contextual pressures to keep the conversation flowing hinder learners' WM functions, thereby facilitating the automatization of incorrect L2 forms (Lafford, 2006). Thus, more advanced learners and those with high WM spans may benefit more from SA experiences because many grammatical structures have already been automatized. Conversely, learners with low WM spans or low proficiency will not benefit as much from SA due to their underdeveloped linguistic system and lack of automated processing. In addition, in SA contexts, the L1 is constantly inhibited. Thus, high-WM-span learners can benefit from SA because they can attend to multiple linguistic stimuli simultaneously (i.e., suppress the L1 and attend to the L2), whereas low-WM-span learners are unable to handle the crosslinguistic competition and either revert back to using the L1 or suffer other processing costs (Sunderman & Kroll, 2009). For example, in a single-word translation task, Tokowicz et al. (2004) found that low-WM-span learners and those with less SA experience made more nonresponse than meaning errors, whereas high-WM-span learners with more SA experience made as many nonresponse errors as meaning ones, because SA forces learners to attempt to make meaning instead of

not answering. In another lexical production task, Sunderman and Kroll (2009) reported that high-WM SA learners outperformed low-WM SA learners and high- and low-WM NSA learners, and concluded that low-WM-span learners cannot benefit as much from SA learning contexts. Online processing studies show WM effects with intermediate learners (LaBrozzi, 2009, 2012) but not with advanced learners (Grey et al., 2015) or with intermediate learners performing a taxing task (Fareta-Stutenberg, 2014). Following LaBrozzi, we consider whether the interaction of external factors (NSA vs. SA learning context) and internal factors (low vs. high WM span) shapes L2 morphosyntactic processing at the intermediate proficiency level.

Our research questions are as follows:

RQ1. Are NSA and SA intermediate English learners of Spanish sensitive to adjacent SV number agreement violations? If yes, are the SA learners superior to the NSA learners?

We hypothesize that both groups will be sensitive to the violations and that SA learners will be more sensitive than their NSA counterparts.

RQ2. Is WM capacity associated with intermediate NSA and SA learners' sensitivity to adjacent SV agreement violations?

As Fareta-Stutenberg and Morgan-Short (2017) and LaBrozzi (2009, 2012) found some WM effects with SA learners, but not with NSA learners, and because we are examining adjacent agreement, we only expect WM to facilitate sensitivity to the violations in the SA group.

Participants

Forty-seven native English learners of Spanish (25 SA, 22 NSA) participated in the study in exchange for extra credit and monetary compensation. All participants were right-handed (Oldfield, 1971), had normal or corrected-to-normal vision, began studying Spanish after the age of 12, had no knowledge of other foreign languages, had not lived in a non-English-speaking country for more than three months, completed all tasks, and were at least 75% accurate in the comprehension questions of the eye-tracking task. The original sample pool consisted of 50 participants, but 3 had to be excluded because they did not complete all of the tasks. Also, they were between 18 and 32 years old because processing speed and WM decline after the age of 40 (Park et al., 2003).

Before the program, all participants were sixth-semester Spanish students with a minimum GPA of 2.75 at the same large public American university, and the SA and NSA groups scored similarly in a Spanish proficiency test and in proficiency self-ratings (see the 'Results and Discussion' section). During the program, the SA group lived 16 weeks with a Spanish monolingual host family in a monolingual community in Spain and took 5–6 courses (15–19 credits) at the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES abroad) center in Madrid. The courses were taught in Spanish by teachers from the host institution and included art history, business, communications, economics, film studies, fine arts, geography, history, linguistics, literature, philosophy, political science, Spanish language, sociology, theater, and women's studies.

Materials and Procedure

Participants completed the tests individually in two sessions. First, they signed the consent form, performed an adapted version of the *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera* (DELE) exam, and completed proficiency self-ratings (about 30 minutes). Shortly after the course/program, the two groups completed, in the following order, a language background questionnaire, a language contact profile (SA group), a WM test, an eye-tracking task, a vocabulary test, and a grammar test (about 90 minutes). Statistical analyses showed that the two groups were homogeneous in the WM, vocabulary, and grammar tests (see the ‘Results and Discussion’ section).

Screening Tests

The language background questionnaire was administered in English and contained questions about learners’ experience with Spanish before and after puberty, such as age of onset, number of years they studied Spanish, location and length of time living abroad, contact hours per week with Spanish, and context (in school, at home, with friends, at work). The language contact profile was from Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, and Halter (2004), was given in English, and evaluated the quantity and quality of out-of-class L2 interaction during the SA sojourn. The adapted *DELE* proficiency test measured L2 grammatical knowledge via a 20-item, multiple-choice cloze test. The self-rating proficiency test assessed the four skills using a scale from 1 (minimum ability) to 5 (native-like proficiency). The vocabulary test consisted of a Spanish-English matching task with the target subjects and target verbs in infinitive. Finally, the grammar test was a Spanish-English matching task, with conjugated Spanish regular verbs in third-person singular and plural in the present and the preterit. The vocabulary and grammar tests were included to control for familiarity with the meaning of the target nouns and adjectives, and with the target structure (as a lack of familiarity with these items would increase RTs).

WM Test

This test was programmed with *E-Prime 2.0 Professional* (Psychology Software Tools) and was adapted from Waters and Caplan’s (1996) reading span test. Participants read 80 sentences in English silently at a fast pace, one by one, indicated whether each sentence was plausible by pressing a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ button, and wrote down the final word of each sentence at the end of each set of sentences. Half of the sentences were plausible and half implausible with subject-object animacy inversion. Sentences were grouped into 20 sets of sentences and divided into 5 groups (span sizes 2–6 sentences) of 4 sets each. For accuracy scoring, participants received 1 point if their plausibility judgment was accurate, their recalled word was correct, and their response time was 300–5,000 ms long and 2.5 standard deviations above or below the mean. Because WM comprises simultaneous processing and storage, trials with a correct recall and an incorrect judgment, or correct judgment and incorrect recall were excluded. Response times faster than 300 ms and slower than 5,000 ms were omitted, because college students need 225–400 ms to process single words (Rayner & Pollatsek, 1989), and because unlimited sentence processing time would jeopardize the complexity of the test.

Eye-Tracking Task

The eye-tracker was an EyeLink 1000 (SR Research), with a sampling rate of 1 kHz, a spatial resolution of 0.32° horizontal and 0.25° vertical, and an averaged calibration error of 0.01°, and the experiment was programmed with *Experiment Builder* (SR Research). Participants read sentences in Spanish silently at their own pace and answered a yes-no comprehension question after each sentence. There were 146 sentences: 6 practice, 100 filler, and 40 experimental sentences. The filler and experimental sentences were divided into 10 blocks, and each block contained 4 experimental sentences (one per condition) and 10 filler sentences. Following a Latin square design, randomization occurred between and within blocks. All of the sentences were 9–15 words long. They included 2–4 syllable nouns and verbs that only appeared twice to reduce practice effects, and less than 20% of cognates to minimize lexical priming effects.

The experimental sentences followed a fixed syntactic order and contained animate human subjects and regular verbs in the third person of the present tense (indicative mood). The target subjects and verbs were selected from the Spanish textbook used in the participants' Spanish program. The experimental sentences had two conditions: SV agreement ($k = 20$: 10 S plural, 10 S singular) and SV disagreement ($k = 20$: 10 S plural, 10 S singular). For example, *Las enfermeras creen que los pacientes fuman/*fuma en el baño \ del pasillo* “The nurses think that the patients smoke/*smokes in the hallway's restroom” (\ indicates the break onto the next line). The comprehension questions were based on the content of the previously read sentence, instead of its grammaticality, so as not to draw participants' attention to SV agreement violations. For example, for the previous example sentence, the question was *¿El baño estaba en la habitación?* “Was the restroom in the room?” For all sentences, half of the comprehensions required a yes response and half a no response.

The eye-tracking task produced five scores: accuracy on the questions, gaze durations on S and V (time spent on the target word before moving on or looking back), and total time on S and V (duration of all fixations on the target word, including fixations from regressions). For accuracy, participants received 1 point for correct answers and 0 for incorrect ones.

Statistical analyses

Statistical analyses were divided into analyses comparing the NSA and SA groups to ensure the homogeneity of the group characteristics, and analyses of the eye-tracking and WM data. The first set of analyses included independent-samples *t*-tests (*SDs* are indicated in parentheses) and revealed that both groups were comparable in terms of WM, $t(45) = 0.579$, $p = 0.566$ (Levene = 0.228), NSA: $M = 45.09(13.40)$, SA: $M = 47.12(10.60)$; years learning Spanish, $t(24.14) = -0.165$, $p = 0.871$ (Levene = 0.000), NSA: $M = 6.95(0.95)$, SA: $M = 6.92(0.28)$; vocabulary test score (36 points), $t(45) = 0.090$, $p = 0.928$ (Levene = 0.857), NSA: $M = 35.91(0.43)$, SA: $M = 35.92(0.40)$; and grammar test score (32 points), $t(45) = 0.701$, $p = 0.487$ (Levene = 0.161), NSA: $M = 31.82(0.59)$, SA: $M = 31.92(0.40)$. In addition, both groups showed similar L2 proficiency on the DELE test (20 points), $t(45) = -0.929$, $p = 0.358$ (Levene = 0.348), NSA: $M = 10.27(1.86)$, SA: $M = 9.80(1.63)$; the reading self-ratings, $t(45) = 1.238$, $p = 0.222$ (Levene = 0.348), NSA: $M = 3.36(0.49)$, SA: $M = 3.56(0.58)$; the listening self-ratings, $t(45) = -0.751$, $p = 0.456$ (Levene = 0.213), NSA: $M = 3.45(0.74)$, SA: $M = 3.32(0.48)$;

Table 10.1 Descriptive statistics for WM, years learning

Measure	Group*	Low WM				High WM			
		Disagreement		Agreement		Disagreement		Agreement	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Qu_Acc	NSA	76.19	12.23	81.82	09.24	83.98	07.46	85.71	09.28
	SA	79.76	14.09	79.37	10.22	85.35	07.64	87.55	07.15
Qu_RT	NSA	2132.67	396.70	2066.85	297.87	2017.30	465.44	1923.36	465.63
	SA	2185.77	567.87	2180.62	727.97	2057.56	290.60	1971.51	259.21
S Gaze	NSA	481.38	130.67	442.27	116.94	457.65	168.00	443.16	156.39
	SA	442.07	150.49	462.27	115.16	472.53	128.53	475.77	136.35
V Gaze	NSA	484.64	162.47	453.63	113.42	386.59	95.75	403.09	117.80
	SA	470.65	151.39	440.67	138.39	470.89	113.74	438.73	71.36
V+1 Gaze	NSA	236.66	38.81	246.75	64.06	220.27	37.90	241.13	35.27
	SA	259.48	81.98	247.78	41.11	243.13	53.50	248.18	48.44
S Total	NSA	771.07	301.46	723.85	239.81	720.23	277.21	689.32	259.72
	SA	676.80	265.31	691.10	221.20	740.49	189.92	703.30	158.80
V Total	NSA	705.36	245.95	670.89	229.45	579.30	200.94	557.84	191.98
	SA	625.22	269.12	583.89	265.29	641.93	200.60	560.53	90.83
V+1 Total	NSA	272.78	48.54	298.03	88.65	264.77	82.93	264.61	43.39
	SA	285.90	111.65	274.13	71.55	269.45	76.74	271.16	41.97

*NSA group: $n = 22$: 11 low WM, 11 high WM. SA group: $n = 25$: 12 low WM, 13 high WM.

the writing self-ratings, $t(45) = 1.715$, $p = 0.093$ (Levene = 0.418), NSA: $M = 3.32(0.72)$, SA: $M = 3.64(0.57)$; and the speaking self-ratings, $t(45) = 1.790$, $p = 0.080$ (Levene = 0.371), NSA: $M = 3.05(0.58)$, SA: $M = 3.32(0.48)$ (all self-ratings were out of 5 points).

The second set of analyses included four GLMMs with Agreement (Agree, Disagree), SA (SA, NSA), and WM (high, low), and all of their possible interactions as fixed factors, and Subject as a random factor. These GLMMs' dependent variables were accuracy and RTs on the comprehension questions, and RTs of gaze duration and total time on S, V, and V+1. Participants were divided into high or low WM using the median split. Accuracy data followed a binomial distribution (frequency logit link) and the rest a gamma distribution (frequency log link). Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 10.1.

Results and discussion

This study investigates the effects of learning context (SA, NSA) and WM on the online processing of L2 inflectional morphology in adult intermediate English learners of Spanish. Due to space limitations, only significant main effects and interactions are reported, and results and discussion are presented together.

RQ1: Sensitivity and SA Effects

The first research question explored whether the NSA and SA learners were sensitive to SV agreement violations and whether the SA learners were more sensitive than the

NSA learners. Our predictions that both groups would be sensitive and that the SA group would be more sensitive were supported. Thus, there was a significant main effect of Agreement, $F(1, 86) = 7.197, p = 0.009$, such that both groups were slower processing verbs (Total Time) in SV disagreement than agreement. These results follow online studies reporting that nonbeginning learners are sensitive to adjacent (e.g., intermediate: Sagarra & Herschensohn, 2010) and nonadjacent (e.g., intermediate: Havik et al., 2009; Sagarra & Ellis, 2013; advanced: Foote, 2011; Keating, 2010; Rossi et al., 2006) L2 morphosyntactic agreement violations.

Crucially, the interaction of Group \times Agreement in processing verbs (Total Time), $F(1, 86) = 5.006, p = 0.032$, revealed that the SA group was more sensitive than the NSA group: SA: disagreement > agreement, $p = 0.009$; NSA: disagreement = agreement, $p = 0.253$. These findings indicate that the SA group was more sensitive to morphosyntactic agreement violations than the NSA group. This is in line with existing evidence showing the superiority of SA over NSA learners on adjacent (Sagarra et al., 2016; Faretta-Stutenberg, 2014 with behavioral data) and nonadjacent (LaBrozzi, 2009, 2012) L2 morphosyntactic agreement violations. Grey et al. (2015) lacked an NSA group, but their SA group improved from the pretest to the posttest in noun-adjective number agreement. The absence of improvement in noun-adjective gender agreement can be explained by the numerous studies showing that gender agreement is cognitively more demanding than number agreement (Antón Méndez, Nicol, & Garrett, 2002; Gillon Dowens, Barber, Vergara, & Carreiras, 2010; Rossi, Kroll, & Dussias, 2014; Sagarra & Herschensohn, 2010). Because gender agreement is difficult to acquire and the SA only lasted five weeks, the lack of SA benefits is not only justified but also expected. In sum, the findings reveal that the NSA and SA learners were sensitive to adjacent SV number agreement violations and that the SA learners were more sensitive than the NSA learners.

RQ2: WM Effects

The second research question examined whether WM was associated with sensitivity to SV agreement violations in NSA and SA learners. Our hypothesis that WM would affect SA learners', but not NSA learners', sensitivity to the violations was supported by pairwise comparisons. Although there was not a significant effect of WM in processing V (Total Time), the pairwise comparisons of the interactions of WM \times Agreement, $F(1, 86) = 0.165, p = 0.685$, and of WM \times Agreement \times Group, $F(1, 86) = 0.635, p = 0.428$, revealed promising findings. The two-way interaction showed that high-WM-span learners were sensitive to the violations: high -WM-span learners showed longer RTs in sentences with SV disagreement than agreement, $p = 0.030$, whereas low-WM-span learners showed similar RTs in sentences with SV disagreement and agreement, $p = 0.114$. Importantly, this WM effect applied to an implicit task. These findings are in line with studies reporting WM effects on L2 grammar development (Havik et al., 2009; Sanz et al., 2016) and L2 morphosyntactic processing (LaBrozzi, 2009) with implicit tasks, and demonstrate that WM effects occur independently of the nature of the task (Engle, 2002; Reber, Walkenfeld, & Hernstadt, 1991; Roberts, 2012, among others, propose that WM effects only occur with explicit tasks). Critically, the three-way interaction indicated that, within the high-WM-span learners, only the SA group was sensitive to the violations (disagreement > agreement, $p = 0.012$, compared to disagreement = agreement, $p = 0.212$ in SA

low-WM-span learners, $p = 0.538$ in NSA high-WM-span learners, and $p = 0.318$ in NSA low-WM-span learners). Because the aforementioned two- and three-way interactions were not significant, we should interpret the results of the pairwise comparisons with caution. However, the lack of significance can easily be explained by the trend for disagreement to be higher than agreement applied to both groups. Thus, even though these interactions were not significant, their pairwise comparisons clearly suggest the superiority of SA learners with higher WM span over the rest.

The pairwise comparison findings of the two-way interaction are in line with studies reporting WM effects on L2 morphosyntactic processing (Fareta-Stutenberg, 2014; Sagarra, 2008; Sagarra & Herschensohn, 2010; Sagarra et al., 2016) and L2 grammar development (Linck & Weiss, 2011, 2015; Sanz et al., 2016; Serafini & Sanz, 2016, with lower proficiency learners). In turn, the pairwise comparison results of the three-way interaction are in agreement with studies showing WM effects with SA learners regarding L2 morphosyntactic processing (LaBrozzi, 2009) and lexical comprehension and production (Sunderman & Kroll, 2009; Tokowicz et al., 2004). Noteworthily, Grey et al. (2015) found no WM effects on SA learners' L2 morphosyntactic processing, but there was no NSA comparison group. Moreover, gender agreement is late-acquired, and their adapted version of the reading span WM test was more difficult than the standard reading span test: two processing tasks (plausibility judgment, grammaticality judgment) instead of one (plausibility judgment). In turn, Fareta-Stutenberg (2014) found WM effects with NSA, but not SA, learners; however, the two groups were not compared, and she reported different findings (viz. WM effects with SA, but not NSA, learners) in a 2017 follow-up study with Morgan-Short using the same participants.

In addition to the RT results discussed earlier, there was a significant main effect of WM, $F(1, 86) = 7.393$, $p = 0.008$, in accuracy on the comprehension questions, such that both groups were more accurate answering the questions if they had higher than lower WM span. These findings indicate that WM facilitated semantic processing at intermediate proficiency levels, independently of SA experience. The association between WM and L2 reading comprehension has been widely documented in beginning and intermediate learners, both in cross-sectional studies (e.g., Abu-Rabia, 2003; Harrington & Sawyer, 1992; Leeser, 2007; Walter, 2004) and in longitudinal studies (e.g., Kormos & Safar, 2008; Linck et al., 2012; Sagarra & LaBrozzi, forthcoming). To conclude, the results suggest that higher WM capacity facilitates (i) L2 morphosyntactic processing in SA, but not in NSA, learners, and (ii) semantic processing in both SA and NSA learners.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

The number of university students studying abroad is on the rise. However, SA programs vary widely, and most research on SA effects on SLA employs off-line measures and focuses on oral fluency, pronunciation, sociolinguistic competence, and cultural awareness. This study provides strong evidence for the positive impact of SA on L2 morphosyntactic processing and development. We propose that SA's abundance of nonredundant morphological cues and of opportunities for hypothesis testing facilitates attention to inflectional morphology, and we recommend NSA classroom practices to implement structured input activities lacking lexical cues. Our findings also suggest that WM modulates L2 morphosyntactic processing in SA learners, an

indication that processing of inflectional morphology is cognitively taxing. We advise language instructors to implement pedagogical practices that facilitate L2 processing by reducing attentional demands and cognitive load (e.g., via input simplification and simple tasks) and making suffixes salient (e.g., via input enhancement). Finally, our results suggest that learning context and WM play a key role during sentence processing and should be part of SLA theories (Collentine & Freed, 2004).

Limitations/Future Directions

This study provides strong evidence that a 16-week SA sojourn facilitates adult intermediate learners' sensitivity to L2 morphosyntactic agreement violations during visual sentence comprehension. Future research with nonadjacent violations, oral stimuli, and different SA program durations, linguistic structures, proficiency levels, and target languages will broaden our understanding of SA benefits and help us to elucidate what it is about this experience that accounts for divergent processing strategies between SA and NSA learners. We also found robust WM effects on L2 semantic processing (accuracy on the questions) and weak effects on L2 morphosyntactic processing (RTs). This imbalance could be due to the reading nature of the reading span test (testing reading through reading) and the WM scoring method (recall accuracy). The implementation of nonlinguistic WM tests and additional statistical analyses with processing speed scores (e.g., plausibility judgment RTs) may generate different outcomes.

Key Terms

Study abroad	(Cognitive) Individual differences
L2 processing	L2 development
Eye-tracking	Morphosyntactic processing
Working memory	Semantic processing

Further Reading

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Oral Fluency and Complexity

Effects of Time and Task on L2 Mandarin Chinese Language Development during Study Abroad

Clare Wright

Introduction

This chapter adds to the recent explosion of interest in second language (L2) Mandarin Chinese by focusing on how linguistic proficiency develops during study abroad (SA) in China across a range of written and oral tasks. The research presented here, drawn from one of the first systematic longitudinal investigations of SA in China (Wright & Zhang, 2014), was carried out in order to track written and oral proficiency development in L2 Mandarin Chinese, using an innovative task-based approach that used both planned and unplanned written and spoken tasks. An exploratory approach was taken to explore why improvements in different tasks may be highly varied for participants, despite the apparent similarity of their experience of immersion in the target language.

The focus on L2 Mandarin is particularly timely in SA research; given the rise in interest from students in learning Mandarin and institutions offering Mandarin classes either at home or via SA, there remain relatively few rigorous studies yet available (Wright & Zhang, 2014). Mandarin Chinese is also interesting for comparing written vs. oral language development, given its logographic nontransparent writing system. As SA has generally been found to aid oral proficiency more than other aspects of language, at least for languages with transparent writing systems, it is valuable to test this apparent trend in a Chinese setting to see how much the immersion experience affects development in written compared to oral proficiency.

We start with some key issues arising from SA research, leading to an overview of the literature on SA in China, and then those few already-published studies that are specifically related to language development in L2 Mandarin. Sources referred to use either Mandarin or Chinese to some extent interchangeably, but we use Mandarin here to avoid confusion. We finish by evaluating empirical evidence from the study mentioned earlier, which is part of a wider case-study project involving 10 students from the UK visiting mainland China. The broader pedagogic and personal implications for students preparing for SA are also addressed, as are indications of further research that is needed in this new burgeoning field.

Contextualizing Research into Study Abroad Effects on L2 Mandarin

Research on L2 acquisition spans many disciplines—linguistic, cognitive, pragmatic, sociocultural, attitudinal, pedagogic, and ethnographic, to name but a few—leaving our potential understanding of how different elements of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) interact somewhat fragmented (Wright, 2013). SA research brings together many aspects of these subfields, particularly in relation to contextual effects on language development in adult L2 learners moving from instructed to immersion settings. SA research thus offers the chance to resolve some of the fragmentation noted earlier, yielding crucial longitudinal or comparative data on how language knowledge and language usage change, particularly in interaction, when the type of exposure to input changes. There is additional pedagogic value for SA research, in terms of evaluating the specific linguistic and cultural capital value of SA programs, as the chance to travel abroad for study attracts more and more learners, and more language programs are set up to promote SA (Wright, 2013).

SA is commonly assumed to offer a uniquely valuable environment to trigger significant improvements in language proficiency (Kinginger, 2011). However, the results of many current SA studies question this assumption (see, among others, Mitchell, Tracy-Ventura, & McManus, 2017; Sanz, 2014), revealing much greater variability in SA outcomes than can be assumed. Some research demonstrates clear SA benefits for students' language proficiency compared to other contexts, such as classroom teaching in the home country (e.g., Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1995; Davidson, 2010; Du, 2013). Other studies (e.g., Collentine, 2004; Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004), by contrast, have found less clear effects of SA on language proficiency improvement; they claim that intensive home study can have more effect on certain aspects of language proficiency than SA, such as grammatical development. Collentine (2004) compared stay-at-home students with a comparable SA cohort and found that the at-home students improved more over a semester on a range of grammatical structures, such as tense and subordination. Isabelli-García (2010) focused on acquisition of gender agreement but similarly did not find differences in improvement between at-home students and SA students if measured over a semester. Another aspect of language proficiency is examining SA effects on different language skills comparing writing and speaking, for example. Studies of written language development are not common in SA research, but recent work suggests that more than two semesters in the target setting may be required to show clear evidence of improvement (Sasaki, 2011; Serrano, Tragant, & Llanes, 2012).

By comparison to the mixed findings on grammatical development and written proficiency, oral proficiency seems consistently to improve during SA (see, e.g., Collentine & Freed, 2004; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012; O'Brien, Segalowitz, Freed, & Collentine, 2007). Yet even in SA oral studies, there remains a great deal of variability in outcome, which is sometimes explained as the SA experience not being as deep and effective as expected (Kinginger, 2011; Mitchell et al., 2017) or as due to differences in methods used. Precise operationalization and assessment of L2 oral proficiency remain a debated area within SLA generally, let alone with SA research (de Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen, & Hulstijn, 2012; Pallotti, 2009). Studies using generalized measures of proficiency, such as the standardized Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), are difficult to compare with studies using temporal measures, such as speech rate, pausing, and length of speech run (e.g., as seen

by comparing Freed et al., 2004, with Brecht et al., 1995). The role of quantity and quality of exposure in aiding development is also unclear: Du (2013) claimed that oral fluency is most influenced by time-on-task, i.e., the amount of time that students use the target language every day. However, Moyer (2013) found that quality of L2 experience is more important than quantity as measured in terms of significant context-specific interaction. Meanwhile, Wright's (2013) longitudinal study of oral proficiency among 32 Mandarin learners of English in the UK found no significant effect on improvement associated with qualitative or quantitative differences in target language use by the study participants.

Variability in SA findings is further compounded by methodological gaps or underinformativeness. Many studies are not designed for longitudinal comparisons of individual development; they may not control for differences in length of time spent abroad and level of exposure while abroad or for students' level of proficiency prior to SA. There is a growing awareness of the need to establish clear protocols for SA data collection (see Perez Vidal, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2017, for good examples of clarity). A range of tasks, such as story-retelling and gap-fill, may be used in SA studies (included in, for example, the French Learner Language Oral Corpora, or FLLOC; Myles & Mitchell, www.flloc.soton.ac.uk/), making cross-study comparisons difficult. Additionally, tasks themselves have variable inherent design effects (Ellis, 2005; Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 1998). They can vary in how much planning and preparation time is allowed or degree of cognitive load (Awwad, Tavakoli, & Wright, 2017; Wang, 2014; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). All these factors can impact the measure of proficiency that the task is aimed to capture; yet there seems to currently be little SA research that specifically mentions task-related factors.

Finally, to date, most of the published SA research has focused on the more widely spoken European languages, which can be argued to be linguistically, typologically, and culturally reasonably close to each other (though, of course, to varying degrees). In order to advance our understanding of SA effects on language development, it is important to explore the issues outlined earlier relating to linguistic development, e.g., in grammatical knowledge or writing or speaking abilities under different task conditions, when transferred to non-European languages, such as Mandarin.

Mandarin Chinese SLA in general, and in SA contexts specifically, addresses many interesting issues for linguistic research (see, e.g., Han, 2014), but it also has pedagogic and practical implications, given current increased interest in studying Mandarin. Recent evidence from Chinese sources, such as the China Scholarship Council and the English-language Chinese University and College Admissions System (CUCAS), underscores the rapid recent rise in international students in China. By 2020, there are expected to be over half a million (China Scholarship Council, 2013), nearly doubling the recent levels of around 320,000 students over 180 countries registered either for degree or nondegree courses (CUCAS, 2013). Yet the explosion of interest in learning Mandarin remains relatively underexplored, particularly in specific terms of linguistic development, and somewhat disparately reported in SLA and pedagogic SA literature, at least in English-language publications.

There are new journals promoting Chinese research (such as *Chinese as a Second Language Research Journal* and the *Journal of Researching and Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language*), but they rarely address issues of linguistic interest to SA. Recent papers, such as Shi and Wen (2009, in Mandarin) and Zhao (2011), provide a useful overview of current findings relating to L2 Mandarin acquisition; however, these

have focused on a limited range of specific linguistic features. More general publications on teaching and learning Mandarin (Han, 2014; Lu, 2017; Tao, 2016) also have valuable contributions to our understanding of L2 Mandarin development but do not particularly address the SA context.

General reports on SA progress that have included Mandarin learners may be based in individual institutions, such as Georgetown University (VandeBerg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). VandeBerg et al.'s (2009) study referred to general progress assessed via a standardized Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), but did not report specifically on the improvement of the L2 Mandarin learners. Other SA studies on Mandarin learners have taken a broad interest in questions of sociocultural adaptation (Duff et al., 2013) or socio-affective and pragmatic development, such as Yu (2010) and Jin (2012). Yu (2010) collected questionnaires from 90 L2 Mandarin learners over a period of nine months, including a period of SA. The study found some evidence that SA generated positive changes in attitudes and motivation, and reduced language anxiety, matched by increased self-ratings on language proficiency. However, there was no objective measure of language proficiency reported in the study. Jin (2012) noted SA students' success in learning the use of compliment words but did not report specifically on whether the students' language fluency or grammatical accuracy improved. Yang (2012) investigated patterns in L2 learners' pauses compared to those of native speakers during a short preplanned task and found more pausing during clauses than at clause boundaries—similar to other comparisons of native/non-native speaker speech and pause patterns (e.g., Tavakoli, 2011)—but lacked any longitudinal comparison to gauge SA effect.

In terms of grammatical accuracy or written linguistic development, very little seems to be published to date on Mandarin in SA settings, although work is emerging that has found SA benefits for specific constructions, such as the *ba*-construction (Du, 2016). Liu's (2009) study of Mandarin development on an SA program takes a holistic approach, integrating different tasks in different modes: OPI; Mandarin language standardized assessment tests; a portfolio of general writing tasks; and a survey asking for self-ratings on reading, listening, speaking, writing, cultural awareness, and personal career development. The students all were able to reach advanced level on the OPI scores after 14 months—2 months' immersion at home, then 11 months' academic study, and finally a month's residence in China. But the study does not detail which language features improved the most or at what point in the program they did so or provide a breakdown of how oral and written linguistic development could be compared across tasks.

Du's (2013) study is one of only a handful that focuses on longitudinal change in L2 Mandarin speech in different tasks, finding significant improvements in both planned and unplanned outputs over one semester. Rich data were collected once a month for four months from a cohort of 29 students, using both recorded Chinese-speaking classes for planned instructed output and Labovian-style individual interviews to elicit spontaneous output. Other speech studies can be found in Mandarin (Chen & Wang, 2008; Chen, 2012; Sun, 2008; Zhao & Liu, 2013).

This study therefore adopts an exploratory approach, driven by the gaps in SA literature identified earlier, both in general terms and for L2 Mandarin specifically, assessing UK students' linguistic proficiency before and after two semesters' study in China. In order to give ecological validity to our research, students' actual examination test data from their university end-of-year summative assessments were used

in a pre-posttest design to get a broad holistic picture of their language development. The findings discussed here thus aim to be an innovative exploration of longitudinal individual development of L2 Mandarin in both written and spoken data, in different tasks.

The Study

The study asked the following research questions:

- 1 How does written proficiency change after SA?
- 2 How does oral proficiency change after SA?

In answering these questions, we also addressed the issue of task effects on proficiency in planned or unplanned conditions (Ellis, 2005; Wang, 2014), predicting that most improvement would be seen in planned conditions.

Ten volunteers were recruited from a group of adult English university learners of Mandarin at a UK university; full institutional ethical procedures were followed. The participants (aged around 20 years) had had 2 years' instruction ab initio at the UK institution, receiving typically 6 hours a week explicit language instruction. They had had no previous exposure to Mandarin nor had visited China. For their SA, the students went to one of five Chinese universities (Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an, Chengdu, or Hainan) taking university language courses for two semesters, with formal class language instruction for 12 hours per week; three students stayed on after the end of the university classes for around a month for travel around China. All were in mixed-language residences while studying in China. Diary report data were collected on amounts of interaction out of class at the start of Semester 1, Time 1. Mean hours' daily interaction at Time 1 was reported as 1.45 hours (SD 0.84). A subgroup provided interaction reports midway through at Time 2 (around five months) and at the end of Semester 2 at Time 3 (eight months). Mean interaction was reported at Time 2 as 1.87 hours (SD 0.54), and by Time 3 as 2.49 hours (SD 1.07). The participants were judged, as far as possible, to have had comparable experiences in exposure to Mandarin during SA.

Data were collected as a set of tasks in the context of the students' standard end-of-second-year language assessments in their UK university, which were repeated after the period of SA, using the same assessed task procedures and setting, on the participants' return to the UK university at the start of Year 4 (see Wright & Zhang, 2014, for further details). All students took all tasks at both times; 22 students were initially recruited, but only 10 completed the full set of tasks at both times. We used three written and two monologic speaking tasks, part of the standard end-of-year test battery of coursework and examinations, divided into timed and untimed tasks, and further subdivided into planned and unplanned tasks. The timed unplanned written tasks were (i) a descriptive letter and (ii) a dialogue, both on the theme of daily routines or social activities and completed as part of the students' end-of-year examinations. The untimed planned written task was a short paragraph on expectations of life in China, to be completed outside class, marked as coursework. The speaking tasks, timed to last around two minutes each, were taken from the oral section of the end-of-year examination. They were (i) a planned talk on participants' daily life in China (thinking ahead to what they expected before their SA at Time 1 or reflecting

back after their return at Time 2) and (ii) a description of a photo depicting a group of friends in a typical social setting. All the tasks therefore drew on common themes of daily life and social settings, designed to overlap on required grammatical structures and familiar lexis; however, the tasks were taken to reflect different degrees of planning allowed, and in the writing, any effect of time limit vs. no time limit, to allow us to tease out any evidence of specific task and mode effects.

Variables for the written tasks were as follows. The two timed tasks were assessed for accuracy, including grammatical, lexical, and orthographic accuracy, and combined into a total percent accuracy mark across both tasks. On the untimed task, four specific linguistic variables were used: length (total characters), specified morphemes to reflect increasing knowledge of grammatical complexity (*de*-possessive and *de*-relative), and use of *shi* copula to illustrate knowledge of discourse-level optionality (for a detailed rationale of the variables used, see Wright & Zhang, 2014). The timed task data had been intended to be included in the analysis of length and target morphemes, but too little output was generated to allow this analysis.

For the oral tasks, we report here on five: output (total characters), lexical diversity (Guiraud's index or G, a type-/token-based measure), articulation rate (characters per second during speaking, scored from 0 to 1), phonation-time ratio (what proportion of the whole time was spent speaking or in silence, scored from 0 to 1), and hesitation rate (numbers of filled pauses and repairs divided by total output, scored from 0 to 1). Pauses were set at 250 ms, in line with standard practice in L2 fluency research (see, e.g., Wright & Tavakoli, 2016). These measures together represented key elements of oral proficiency—ease in accessing the knowledge base (total produced, lexical diversity), speech speed (articulation rate), and rate of breakdown (phonation-time ratio and hesitation rate). The oral files were transcribed using both CHAT (MacWhinney, 2000) and PRAAT software (Boersma & Weenink, 2014). For full details, see Wright and Zhang (2014).

There were a number of methodological issues and complex decisions to make in creating analyzable transcripts. First, there is a debate on what constitutes a Mandarin “word” (Du, 2013; Li & Yang, 2009, Yang & Sun, 2015); also, many of the fluency studies on which this research was based use syllables rather than words in their calculations. In view of this, it was decided to transcribe the oral data as single characters. There are autosegmenting technologies available (e.g., in the Lancaster Los Angeles Corpus of spoken Chinese, Xiao & Tao, 2006); however, this proved problematic for our small corpus, which had a lot of “learner noise,” requiring manual segmentation. There are potential challenges in reliability for our lexical measure taking a single-character segmentation approach, but in running an analysis on a sample of two participants’ data, both with single characters and with manually identified two-character word boundaries where required, significant differences were not detected. Most of the characters in this corpus equated to a single monosyllabic item—the most frequent lexical items typically were *wō3我* (“I”), *de4的* (possessive marker), *shì4是* (“be”), *hěn3很* (“very”), *hào3好* (“good”), and *yǒu3有* (“have”). Therefore, following other published work on L2 Mandarin (e.g., Du, 2013, 2016), it was decided that one-character segmentation would be a valid approach for this study. Second, this research is the first, to our knowledge, to combine both PRAAT and CLAN methodologies in transcribing Mandarin—although this was not specifically because of analyzing Mandarin, this approach was chosen as each package had analysis programs that made them ideal for calculating the specific measures

examined here. Combining packages, however, created additional operationalization challenges of matching transcription practice, as we had to ensure that temporal segmentation using PRAAT matched the start of utterance transcriptions using CHAT conventions. Here, it was decided to transcribe and time the start of each utterance as initiated with some kind of lexically meaningful word, and where any following pause was less than three seconds. Finally, we were faced with the challenge specific to Mandarin of how to acknowledge whether repeated morphemes were part of hesitation (in terms of retracing and repair) or intensification, e.g., for the morpheme *zui4*最 (“most”), which when repeated means “very.” To assure reliability and validity of the transcripts, we trained a team of two transcribers; a third researcher then inspected each transcript, producing an interrater reliability of 95%; all three transcribers then discussed any remaining differences till full agreement was reached.

Results

In response to Research Question 1, looking at development in grammatical accuracy in writing, including on three specified morphemes (*de*-possessive, *de*-relative, and optionality of *shi* copula), we found little difference in on the timed tasks but some change on the untimed task. Mean accuracy on the timed tasks (the descriptive letter and dialogue) remained similar. Mean combined scores were 70.61% (SD 10.27) at Time 1 and 71.9% (SD 11.6) at Time 2. There was also considerable individual variation—the highest score was above 80% before and after SA, while the lowest score was around 50% at both times (though this was not the same person). No changes were significant.

By comparison, the planned untimed piece of writing, the out-of-class essay, more clearly improved. In terms of total output, the mean number of characters produced was 660.5 (SD 97.14) at Time 1, rising to 697 (SD 107.89) at Time 2, though this change was not statistically significant. Examining the specific target morphemes, there was a drop-off in use of *de*-possessive, from mean 20.38 (SD 6.34) to 9.45 (SD 4.37); there was a rise in use of *de*-relative, from mean 2.5 (SD 1.38) to 18 (SD 8.17). The reduction in the *de*-possessive morpheme was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$, with a small Cohen’s D effect size of 1.95). The increase in the *de*-relative was also statistically significant ($p < 0.001$, with a medium Cohen’s D effect size of 5.7). The participants’ grasp of the appropriate optionality of the *shi*-morpheme was relatively low at either time (mean at Time 1 was 4.55, SD 2.25; mean at Time 2 was 3, SD 1.86); the slight decrease was nonsignificant.

Turning to Research Question 2, regarding oral proficiency, comparing a planned or unplanned descriptive monologue task, the five key variables selected to index fluency development were total characters produced, lexical diversity (G), phonation-time ratio, hesitation rate, and articulation rate (see Wright & Zhang, 2014, for details on operationalization for each variable).

All the variables on the planned task improved though not all significantly. The findings are summarized in Table 11.1, with effect size shown as Cohen’s D for any significant differences.

As in the written data, there was evidence of individual variation with wide ranges on all measures, but in general, individual variation reduced (in terms of smaller SD by Time 2) on all measures apart from output.

For the unplanned task, again all the variables improved, and more of the changes were significant, though all the effect sizes were very small, as noted in Table 11.2.

Table 11.1 Oral proficiency planned monologue results

	Time 1 Mean (SD)	Time 2 Mean (SD)	Significance (Cohen's D)
Total characters	169.9 (44.2)	290.6 (101.28)	$p < .01$ (1.66)
Lexical diversity	5.56 (.96)	6.07 (.41)	ns
Phonation-time ratio	0.69 (.09)	.075 (.08)	$p < .05$ (1.66)
Hesitation rate	0.14 (.06)	0.13 (.05)	ns
Articulation rate	2.85 (.48)	3.09 (.26)	ns

Table 11.2 Oral proficiency unplanned monologue results

	Time 1 Mean (SD)	Time 2 Mean (SD)	Significance (Cohen's D)
Total characters	120.7 (39.71)	174.4 (78.29)	$p < .01$ (1.08)
Lexical diversity	5.04 (.49)	5.67 (.66)	ns
Phonation-time ratio	0.59 (.11)	0.71 (.11)	$p < .05$ (.84)
Hesitation rate	0.24 (.11)	0.15 (.06)	$p < .05$ (.79)
Articulation rate	2.1 (.27)	2.7 (.89)	$p < .05$ (.84)

Again, there was a wide individual range on all measures; on this task, SD only reduced on hesitation rate.

We noted that overall scores tended to be better across the spread of variables on the planned task at both times. However, the scores on the unplanned task at Time 2 seemed to improve more—i.e., the participants seemed to catch up in performance in the more difficult task by Time 2. We ran Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) on the Time 1 and the Time 2 scores, using Task as group factor to try to confirm this interpretation. We found a significant effect for Task ($F(1,9) = 9.952, p = 0.008$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.869$) at Time 1 but no significant effect at Time 2. Paired t -tests between the task scores at Time 2 showed that participants were indeed not significantly different in performance on the majority of measures for both tasks at Time 2.

Discussion

Our research questions compared L2 development in Mandarin in written and oral tasks, and whether task factors—timed/untimed (for writing) or planned/unplanned (for speaking)—had an effect. We found that SA overall had a clearer effect on the oral tasks than on the written tasks and that there were differences arising from the different tasks, most significantly in the oral data but also in the written data.

The written and oral tasks were not experimentally comparable, due to the exploratory nature of the study design, which used students' standard end-of-year university assessments through coursework and timed examinations. Here, written Mandarin development was evaluated, first, through holistic accuracy on two timed exam tasks (a letter and a dialogue); second, in an untimed coursework essay, through total amount written and also accuracy on specific morphemes—the *de*-possessive, *de*-relative morphemes, and the optionality of the *shi* copula. Due to insufficient data in the timed tasks, the target morphemes could only be analyzed

in the untimed task. Taken together, the evidence of accuracy (holistic or specific) and overall amount written were evaluated for improvement in written proficiency. However, we did not find much evidence of consistent improvement in the written tasks. Overall, it seemed that writing in characters remained particularly challenging even after the period of SA, though there was considerable individual variation. Some participants from the total cohort failed to complete both timed writing tasks, and on the untimed task, some of the essays were markedly shorter than the others, even at Time 2. It was noted in the untimed coursework task that there was a greater grasp of the more complex *de*-relative morpheme, though this did not apparently carry through to more pressured timed tasks—in a post hoc analysis of the timed tasks, this structure was not substantively more evident at Time 2, despite its higher occurrence in the untimed task.

Given the mixed evidence of improvements in written tasks, we suggest that further more systematic empirical evidence is needed to explore further whether the lack of consistent and evident improvement in writing was down to L2-specific problems (using characters, particularly under pressure of time), or amount of writing practice during the SA experience, or more generic problems in foreign language writing, particularly for certain tasks, as has been noted in the L2 English writing literature (e.g., Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Hamp-Lyons, 1991). Nevertheless, we conclude that moving away from a generic assessment of progress measured simply in accuracy or total output in typical summative exam marking schemes obscures more detailed evidence of linguistic progress, e.g., in using increasingly complex morphemes, and we recommend SA research to better integrate linguistic and pedagogic/assessment approaches, particularly given L2-specific issues in developing literacy in Chinese.

In terms of the second research question on oral development, as noted earlier, the study design was intended to capture detailed linguistic insight into how oral production changed over time, by using a wider range of variables than is often used in SA methodology, and which might be obscured within standard summative exam marking scores. We also wanted to look for any task effect of planning time comparing the two spoken tasks, given the evidence from the written tasks of increased output on the untimed task (as we assume that untimed writing includes the benefit of planning time found on speaking tasks).

We found a mix of significant and nonsignificant (but evident) improvements on both the planned and unplanned tasks. This supports other SA literature that time spent immersed in the target language environment has a clear beneficial effect since an increase in opportunities to talk is argued to aid not only in utterance fluency in articulatory terms but also in “cognitive fluency” (Segalowitz, 2010) across both planned and unplanned speech.

We also found a task-related difference, in that task differences at Time 1 were significant on all variables. This is not surprising, given the common benefits on fluency found if planning or advanced preparation time is given (Ellis, 2005). However, we noted that these differences had reduced or were no longer significant by Time 2—in other words, immersion had triggered more development on the unplanned task than on the planned task (although greater variability in improvement was found at individual level in the unplanned task). We assume that Task 1, which the participants planned for beforehand, potentially allowed for participants to memorize and recite their talk. This task factor created a performance advantage on many speech measures at Time 1 and yielded more output at Time 2. We believe that this is due

to planning and rehearsal aiding automaticity in articulation, by reducing any need to construct meaning in real time. This is similar to de Jong and Perfetti's (2011) study, which found that repeating the same story again and again, but under increasing time-pressure, resulted in greater temporal fluency in terms of smoother faster speech. This kind of rehearsed articulatory fluency equates to what we term "performative competence."

Task 2, requiring unplanned, spontaneous speech, created predictable higher hesitation rate and slower articulation rate, but these were less significantly a problem by Time 2. We assume this indicates that the quality and quantity of exposure during SA created plenty of opportunities for participants to experience input and practice their spontaneous spoken output in meaningful interactive contexts both in and out of class, improving the cognitive and articulatory processes needed for spontaneous speech (Segalowitz, 2010). This interaction would help participants to build a greater capacity to manage spontaneously constructed online speech—or what we term here "creative competence." However, the greater variability found in development on the unplanned task suggests that creative oral competence remains challenging even after immersion. It also remains an open question how much quality and quantity of exposure can be achieved during the SA experiences of this group of students and how similar or different this is from other SA experiences (e.g., Mitchell et al., 2017; Perez Vidal, 2014).

In view of the individual variation seen earlier, we wanted to see how far the participants seemed to have similar degrees of exposure during their months of living in China. It could be that there is a linguistic-affective 'threshold' where those with less confidence or language proficiency found it harder to interact and engage, which then affected their individual rate of development (Wright & Schartner, 2013). We had used a self-report diary protocol (Wright, 2013) aiming to map participants' average levels of interaction over the SA period, along with any qualitative evidence of specific experiences that had affected them. Unfortunately, we were unable to get a full set of these reports; therefore, across the group, we could not draw any meaningful qualitative themes or quantitative associations between interaction levels and task scores. We found that the highest scoring student at Time 1 reported the highest levels of interaction throughout the period of SA, while the participant with least self-reported interaction had low scores on all tasks, particularly the speaking tasks, at both Time 1 and Time 2. Further quantitative and qualitative research into the nature of language interaction and experiences in the target country is therefore clearly needed to help clarify the complex interaction of factors that affect individuals' rate of development. In light of the noted cultural and linguistic distance felt by students from US in China (Duff et al., 2013; Kinginger, 2011), the challenges facing other Western students in China also need detailed exploration.

Conclusion

The findings reported here, part of a wider study into the development of L2 language for learners of L2 Mandarin, supported the general view that immersion during SA can significantly help learners' oral proficiency development (Collentine & Freed, 2004). We noted task effects played a role too, in that planning time benefited linguistic development, particularly in oral production. This task effect has been noted elsewhere but not typically examined in an SA context. We suggest

that longitudinal SA studies could include task factors such as complexity (Skehan, 2014) or comparing monologic vs. dialogic oral fluency (Wright & Tavakoli, 2016), given that SA may arguably be the ultimately authentic task-based experience. Comparing oral and written development, we saw that improvements in written tasks seemed to be particularly challenging for UK learners of L2 Mandarin. If written progress in a logographic script seems harder to achieve than oral progress during SA, this is something that institutions may need to consider in their preparation and monitoring of students through their SA. For Chinese SA in particular, the potential effect of differences in writing systems may mean that individual character knowledge and grammatical awareness, apparently secure in untimed and/or planned work, may transfer into timed, unplanned writing as commonly assessed in examinations.

We therefore welcome the recent emergence of volumes aiming to create better theory-pedagogy links between L2 Mandarin teaching and SLA-focused research (e.g., Han, 2014; Lu, 2017; Tao, 2016). We call for these links to be further extended to the SA experience, particularly in evaluating the move from instructed classroom to immersion settings aiming to build up cognitive fluency (Segalowitz, 2010) in terms of spontaneous language use or “creative competence.” Chinese teachers may retain an attachment to traditional values of drilling and recitation, as seen, for example, among Chinese learners of L2 English (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006). We could therefore assume that current expectations of L2 Chinese development may to some extent consist of building up greater skills in producing memorized chunks of language, in speech or writing, where successful reproduction (“performative competence”) is evidence of linguistic development. This hypothesis needs testing empirically: If L2 Mandarin language development in pre-SA stages is based on instructed input, students’ linguistic proficiency would therefore vary depending on which textbook and what input a teacher would use; this input-based view of learning would predict very different individual outcomes during SA depending on the starting point of linguistic knowledge and practice before arrival. Alternatively, it would be interesting to find evidence suggesting that L2 Mandarin follows a more standardized linguistically driven developmental route—if so, how far would SA trigger faster development, and how would written or oral mode, or task-based factors have any effects?

The rapid rise in the appeal of Mandarin as a globally significant language provides an excellent good opportunity to bring theory and practice together to clearly assess what constitutes most effective instruction across different global contexts. L2 Mandarin offers thus myriad new, exciting, and valuable ways of considering the effects of SA on language learning.

Key Terms

L2 Mandarin	Writing development
Tasks—planned, unplanned, timing pressure	Oral development
Mandarin grammatical development— <i>de</i> -possessive, <i>de</i> -relative, <i>shi</i> copula	Interaction (during study abroad)
Monologue, monologic speech	Writing system—transparent, opaque
Dialogue, dialogic speech	Performative competence
	Creative competence

Further Readings

- Han, Z. (Ed.). (2014). *Studies in second language acquisition of Chinese*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters. (Professor ZhaoHong Han has put together a useful collection of six research-focused studies of Chinese language learning and teaching in international settings, including two highly relevant investigations of Chinese development during SA. The broad scope of studies, selected from papers presented at a conference, at Teachers College, Columbia University, covers morphosyntax, pragmatics, interaction analysis, cognitive processing, and explicit learning, including theoretical and empirical approaches, and looking at different levels of proficiency of learners. This collection allows researchers, students, and teachers alike to find useful insights into the mechanisms of Chinese language learning in or out of SA contexts.)
- Lu, Y. (Ed.). (2017). *Teaching and learning Chinese in higher education*. London, UK: Routledge. (Dr. Yang Lu's edited book contains 10 studies by researchers and practitioners relating to Chinese language learning and teaching in different higher education settings in the UK. Although not specifically addressing SA learners, this cutting-edge collection gives theoretically motivated and pedagogically useful insights into current best practices in developing second language Chinese proficiency, from beginner to advanced levels, including challenges in assessment for writing and speaking, and a range of different teaching methodologies.)
- Segalowitz, N. (2010). *Cognitive bases of second language fluency*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Professor Segalowitz's short book gives a readable psycholinguistic perspective on how speech production develops for second language learners, particularly in distinguishing specific factors of utterance fluency [for ease of articulation], cognitive fluency [for ease of speech planning], and the importance of social context for motivating fluency development and how fluency may be perceived. He addresses why fluency development can be a very individual and complex process, and argues that immersion in SA or other settings is essential for driving the kind of cognitive and socially motivated processing required for automatic fluent speech.)
- Tao, H. (Ed.). (2016). *Integrating Chinese linguistic research and language teaching and learning*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Benjamins. (Prof. Hongyin Tao's book is unique in combining insights from theoretical Chinese linguistics and first language acquisition studies of Mandarin with research into teaching second language Mandarin. The selection of 11 chapters, taken from the 27th North American Conference on Chinese Linguistics aims to synthesize research findings and pedagogic practices, which will be useful to teachers and learners of Mandarin. Although there is little specific reference to SA, the discussion of language acquisition in relation to grammar and vocabulary, tones, and prosody, alongside the value of metalinguistic knowledge and strategies, provides a thorough grounding in the range of linguistic challenges facing learners of Mandarin.)

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Utterance Fluency in the Study-Abroad Context

An Overview of Research Methodologies

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Introduction

Research on the development of oral fluency in study-abroad (SA) contexts has expanded considerably since the pioneering work of Lennon (1990). Two central, interrelated factors may explain this phenomenon. First, from a practical perspective, each year, increasing numbers of learners opt to participate in SA programs; this has sparked an interest in researchers, teachers, students, and administrators who seek to better understand fluency development in different learning settings. Second, from a theoretical perspective, SA contexts allow researchers to capture interlanguage development as it progresses at a considerably faster rate than in other learning contexts. It is well documented that SA programs provide more opportunities for second-language (L2) use than traditional learning contexts, thereby promoting faster development of oral skills. L2 data derived from the SA context are therefore ideal for expanding on current models of L2 production.

Research on fluency development integrates the theoretical and methodological approaches of researchers working at the interface of Second-Language Acquisition (SLA) and phonetic sciences, as laid out in Norman Segalowitz's publications on L2 fluency. Segalowitz (2010) offers a theoretical proposal designated as the 'blueprint of the L2 learner' (based on De Bot, 1992; Levelt, 1989, 1999; see also Kormos, 2006), which is aimed at capturing L2 fluency development. In doing so, Segalowitz discusses the importance of understanding the three main interconnected dimensions of fluency: utterance fluency, which is the composite of speed, breakdown, and repair features of oral production (Skehan, 2003); cognitive fluency, which encompasses the processing bases of utterance construction and articulation; and perceived fluency, which is the relationship between a speaker's oral production and a listener's perception of the degree of automaticity with which it is conveyed. In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the methodological dimensions of research on utterance fluency and, in doing so, will survey relevant research that investigates this feature in SA learner populations.

Metrics of Utterance Fluency

The most researched component of L2 fluency is utterance fluency, as described in Segalowitz (2010, 2016). The term ‘utterance fluency’ can be understood as an umbrella term that encompasses Skehan’s (2003) three more precise distinctions. Specifically, Skehan compartmentalizes the assessment of L2 fluency according to speed fluency, which incorporates measures of speech pace and includes features such as temporal characteristics of words (e.g., syllable duration); breakdown fluency, which accounts for the production of hesitation phenomena, such as silent (or unfilled) pauses and filled pauses (e.g., *uh*, *um*); and repair fluency, which encompasses repetitions, restarts and repairs. Most metrics that account for L2 utterance fluency are based on multiple variations of the quantity and duration of words/syllables and hesitation phenomena. A second distinction for classifying fluency metrics relates to unconfounded and confounded metrics, as discussed in De Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen, and Hulstijn (2013). Unconfounded metrics are averages, ratios, and rates that target one fluency component exclusively (e.g., mean syllable duration). Confounded metrics, on the other hand, are averages, rates, and ratios that involve more than one fluency component (e.g., speech rate, which divides the number of syllables by the speaking-time duration).

The following list is a summary of the most commonly used metrics in fluency research. Although these metrics can be applied to first-language (L1) or L2 speech, I frame them within the L2 domain. Individual researchers will need to consider which metrics best respond to their research questions. It may also be beneficial to consider the possibility of reducing the dimensionality of correlated metrics through statistical means (e.g., principal components analysis).

Metrics of Speed Fluency and Spoken Time

1. Total speaking-time duration: This metric includes the time taken to produce speech, including all hesitation phenomena. Duration metrics can be reported in seconds or minutes.

2. Mean length of run, in seconds: This metric quantifies the amount of speaking time (in seconds) during which a speaker can produce speech before resorting to hesitation phenomena. One option is to include *Phonation time* (4) in the numerator, and then include in the denominator either *Number of silent pauses* (12), or *Number of filled pauses* (17), plus one. The addition of one in the denominator avoids a mathematical error if no pauses are produced during an individual turn (for an alternative classification, see Kahng (2014)).

3. Mean length of run, in syllables: This metric targets the number of syllables that a speaker can produce before resorting to hesitation phenomena. The numerator includes *Number of syllables* (9), and the denominator is either *Number of silent pauses* (12), or *Number of filled pauses* (17), plus one. As with *Mean length of run, in seconds* (2), the addition of one in the denominator avoids a mathematical error if no pauses are produced during an individual turn.

4. Phonation time: This metric accounts for speaking time, excluding silent-pause time. Researchers are not consistent in how to operationalize this metric. Whereas some studies calculate this metric by subtracting *Total silent-pause duration* (13) from *Total speaking-time duration* (1), it may be beneficial to subtract *Total filled-pause duration*

(18) as well in order to achieve a metric that accounts for speech time without hesitation phenomena.

5. *Speech rate*: This metric is calculated by dividing *Number of syllables* (9) by *Total speaking-time duration* (1).

6. *Adjusted (or pruned) speech rate*: This metric is similar to *Speech rate* (5), but it targets the essence of the speaker's message by excluding syllables produced in repeated, restarted, or repaired segments from *Number of syllables* (9) in the numerator.

7. *Articulation rate*: This is a speed metric, measured in syllables per second, that quantifies the pace of speech production without including the time taken to produce hesitation phenomena in the denominator. It is calculated by dividing *Number of syllables* (9) by *Phonation time* (4).

8. *Phonation-time ratio*: This metric reports the proportion of speaking time without hesitation phenomena to the total speaking time. It is calculated by dividing *Phonation time* (4) by *Total speaking-time duration* (1).

9. *Number of syllables*: This is a raw count of total syllables that is used to determine the amount of speech produced. Some L2 fluency studies report words instead of syllables. The choice of syllables or words may depend on the language under investigation (e.g., syllable-timed or stress-timed).

10. *Number of pruned syllables*: This metric is the total number of syllables produced, excluding syllables in repetitions, restarts, and repairs. This metric does not include filled pauses or any other vocalization that does not belong to a word in the L2.

11. *Mean syllable duration*: This is calculated by dividing *Phonation time* (4) by *Number of syllables* (9); it is the inverse of *Articulation rate* (7).

Metrics of Breakdown Fluency

12. *Number of silent pauses*: This metric accounts for the total number of silent (or unfilled) pauses, which are stretches of time when no vocalization is produced. L2 fluency researchers have proposed different thresholds for establishing the shortest silent pause worth analyzing. The two most common cutoff points are 250 ms (e.g., Ginther, Dimova, & Yang, 2010; De Jong et al., 2013) and 400 ms (e.g., Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004; O'Brien, Segalowitz, Collentine, & Freed, 2006; Tavakoli, 2011). Some studies consider cutoff points within this range (e.g., 280 ms in Towell, Hawkins, & Bazergui, 1996; 300 ms in Wood, 2001), yet others consider cutoff points as short as 100 ms (e.g., Riazantseva, 2001; Trofimovich & Baker, 2006). Recently, more empirical evidence in support of the 250 ms cutoff point has been provided (De Jong & Bosker, 2013).

13. *Total silent-pause duration*: This metric reports the total duration of all silent pauses.

14. *Mean silent-pause duration*: This metric is calculated by dividing *Total silent-pause duration* (13) by *Number of silent pauses* (12).

15. *Silent-pause rate*: This metric can be calculated in two ways. If the objective is to provide the rate of silent pauses used by the speaker, including silent-pause time, this rate is calculated by dividing the *Number of silent pauses* (12) by *Total speaking-time duration* (1). If the objective is to provide the rate of silent pauses per speaking time (excluding silent pauses), this rate is calculated by dividing *Number of silent pauses* (12) by *Phonation time* (4).

16. *Silent-pause ratio*: This metric provides a ratio of silent-pause time to speaking time. It is calculated by dividing *Total silent-pause duration* (13) by *Total speaking-time duration* (1).

17. Number of filled pauses: This metric accounts for the total number of filled pauses produced by a speaker. Filled pauses are hesitation vocalizations, such as *uh* and *um* (Clark & Fox Tree, 2002; Corley & Stewart, 2008). These are different from continuers (such as *mmm-hmm*), interjections that show surprise (such as *oh/ah*), or repair initiators (such as *huh*).

18. Total filled-pause duration: This metric reports the total duration of all filled pauses.

19. Mean filled-pause duration: This is calculated by dividing *Total filled-pause duration* (18) by *Number of filled pauses* (17).

20. Filled-pause rate: This metric can be calculated in two ways. If the objective is to provide the rate of filled pauses per time used by a speaker, including filled-pause time, it is calculated by dividing *Number of filled pauses* (17) by *Total speaking-time duration* (1). If the objective is to provide the rate of filled pauses by speaking time (excluding silent pauses), this metric is calculated by dividing *Number of filled pauses* (17) by *Phonation time* (8).

21. Filled-pause ratio: This is a durational metric that stands for the proportion of filled-pause time to speaking time (measured in seconds). It provides a ratio of filled-pause time (not silent-pause time) to speaking time, and it is calculated by dividing *Total filled-pause duration* (18) by *Total speaking-time duration* (1).

Metrics of Repair Fluency

22. Number of repetitions/restarts/repairs per speaking time: This metric is a ratio that accounts for the number of repeated, restarted, or repaired segments. There are several versions of this metric, and depending on the feature that is targeted, the units in the numerator may be different (i.e., number of repetitions, restarts, and/or repairs). The denominator is typically *Total speaking-time duration* (1).

23. Rate of syllables in repetitions/restarts/repairs per speaking time: This metric is like *Number of repetitions/restarts/repairs per speaking time* (22), the only difference being that instead of adding the sum of repeated, restarted, or repaired segments in the numerator, this metric uses the number of syllables in each segment. In comparison to metrics of speed and breakdown fluency, metrics of repair fluency have not received as much attention in past research and thus merit closer scrutiny in future work.

L2 Utterance Fluency Research in SA Contexts

Table 12.1 provides an overview of the methodological practices implemented in a number of recent studies on L2 fluency focused on SA learners. In what follows, I will highlight several methodological aspects that make comparisons between studies and outcomes difficult, addressing five aspects in particular: length of time and instructional context, cross-sectional vs. longitudinal designs, data collection methods, tasks, and speech samples.

Length of Time and Instructional Contexts

Regarding the length of SA programs that have been investigated in past research, the chronologically ordered studies from Table 12.1 reveal that the most

Table 12.1 Utterance fluency research

Authors	Focus of study	Participants	Level of proficiency	Length of L2 exposure	Elicitation task	Results
Lennon (1990)	L2 = English Longitudinal	G(group) = 4 German-speaking learners of English	University level	6 months SA	Pre- and posttest narration of picture story in situ	L2 gains in speed, and fewer pauses
Freed (1995)	L2 = French Cross-sec(tional)	G1 = 15 AH G2 = 15 SA English-speaking learners of French G3 = 6 native speakers of French (judges)	Novice to intermediate	G1 = semester AH G2 = semester SA	Pre- and posttest OPIs in situ	SA learners had higher pre- and postfluency rating scores than AH
Towell et al. (1996)	L2 = French Longitudinal	G = 12 English-speaking learners of French	Advanced	6 months SA	Retell of film two times ex situ	L2 gains in length and complexity of ling units
Freed et al. (2004)	L2 = French Cross-sec.	G1 = 8 AH G2 = 12 DIM G3 = 8 SA English-speaking learners of French	University level	G1 = 12 weeks AH G2 = 7 weeks DIM G3 = 12 weeks SA	Pre- and posttest oral interviews in situ	DIM > SA > AH
Segalowitz & Freed (2004)	L2 = Spanish Cross-sec.	G1 = 18 AH G2 = 22 SA English-speaking learners of Spanish	University level	G1 = 1 semester AH at university G2 = 1 semester SA in Spain	Pre- and posttest OPIs in situ	SA > AH; correlations b/w oral proficiency, cognitive abilities, and language contact
Segalowitz, Freed, Collentine, Lafford, Lazar, & Diaz-Campos (2004)	L2 = Spanish Cross-sec.	G1 = 20 AH G2 = 26 SA English-speaking learners of Spanish	University level	G1 = 1 semester AH at university G2 = 1 semester SA in Spain	Pre- and posttest OPIs in situ	SA > AH in discourse abilities but AH > SA in grammar abilities
García-Amaya (2009)	L2 = Spanish Cross-sec.	G1 = 20 English-speaking learners of Spanish G2 = 5 native Spanish speakers	University level (for G1)	G1a = 2.6 semesters AH G1b = 5.6 semesters AH G1c = 2 months OIM (w/ lang pledge) G1d = 10.2 months SA	Sociolinguistic interview ex situ	OIM > SA > AH (but SA group superior to OIM in some measures)
Llanes & Muñoz (2009)	L2 = English Longitudinal	G = 24 Catalan/Spanish-speaking learners of English	University level	3–4 weeks SA	Pre- and posttest oral interviews and narration of picture story ex situ	L2 gains in listening comprehension, oral fluency, and accuracy

(Continued)

Authors	Focus of study	Participants	Level of proficiency	Length of L2 exposure	Elicitation task	Results
García-Amaya (2012)	L2 = Spanish Longitudinal	G1 = 29 AH G2 = 27 SA English-speaking learners of Spanish	University level (for G1) High-school students (for G2)	G1 = 1 semester AH in University G2 = 6 weeks OIM in Spain	6 Video retells distributed across three data-collection times	OIM > AH for speed fluency (i.e., rate of speech)
Llanes, Tragant, & Serrano (2012)	L2 = English Longitudinal	G = 24 Spanish-speaking learners of English	Upper intermediate/ advanced	Semester SA	Pre- and posttest oral narrative ex situ	L2 oral gains after SA; individual differences affect L2 learning
Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012)	L2 = English Longitudinal	G1 = 30 Catalan/Spanish-speaking learners of English G2 = 10 native English speakers	Upper intermediate/ advanced	3 months SA	Oral interview about university life across three data collection times ex situ	Robust fluency gains after SA
Serrano & Llanes (2015)	L2 = English Longitudinal	G = 39 Spanish/Catalan-speaking learners Catalan speaking-learners of English in SA context	Novice to intermediate	3 weeks SA	Pre- and post-test grammaticality judgment and formulaic sequences tests in situ	L2 gains after SA; age and aptitude had significant impact
Di Silvio, Diao, & Donovan (2016)	L2 = Mandarin, Russian or Spanish Longitudinal	G1 = 25 learners of Mandarin G2 = 25 learners of Russian G3 = 25 learners of Spanish (L1 = English for all groups)	Below novice high to advanced high (ACTFL)	Semester SA in country where language is spoken	Pre- and post-test stimulated OPIs in situ	L2 gains across all learner groups
Serrano, Llanes, & Tragant (2016)	L2 = English Cross-sec.	G1 = 58 AH G2 = 54 SA Spanish/Catalan-speaking learners of English	Novice to intermediate	G1 = 4 weeks AH G2 = 3 weeks SA	Pre- and post-test oral narrative of pictures, formulaic sequences test, and elicited sentence imitation task in situ	SA = AH, but SA > AH for oral lexical richness, whereas AH > SA for grammar
Huensch & Tracy-Ventura (2017)	L2 = Spanish Longitudinal	G = 24 in SA context	University level	9-months; however, data were collected over a two-year period	3 picture-based narrations across six data collection times	L2 gains for metrics of speed and breakdown fluency (but signs of attrition after the SA experience); no change for metrics of repair fluency
Llanes, Mora, & Serrano (2017)	L2 = English Cross-sec.	G1 = 22 in AH context G2 = 14 in SA context Spanish/Catalan-speaking learners of English	Intermediate to upper intermediate	G1 = 3 weeks AH G2 = 3 weeks SA intensive study	Pre- and post-test delayed sentence imitation task tasks in situ	SA > AH for pronunciation, esp. improving VOT and reducing foreign accent

recent publications target programs that are the shortest in duration, a fact that mirrors the evolution of the SA programs themselves. For example, the first six studies cited in Table 12.1 (dating from 1990 to 2004) include at least one group of SA learners who participated in a semester-long program. It was not until 2009 that fluency data for learners who participated in an SA experience lasting as short as three weeks was first analyzed by Llanes and Muñoz (2009).

Regarding the instructional contexts of SA programs, research on L2 utterance fluency has focused on a variety of settings within a naturalistic continuum of learning contexts, ranging from settings in which the L2 is merely accessory in class, to contexts where learners communicate almost exclusively in the L2 (see Figure 12.1). I have included four points on this continuum, ranging from the least to the most naturalistic learning contexts.

Moving from left to right, we first find studies on utterance fluency that include L2 learners in formally instructed contexts, also known as ‘at home’ (AH), in which most L2 exposure that learners receive occurs in the classroom (e.g., Temple, 1992, 2000). The second group pertains domestic immersion (DIM) — only a handful of studies have investigated utterance fluency in immersion contexts in which learners live (almost) exclusively immersed in the L2, even though the target language is not the majority language (e.g., Freed et al., 2004). The third group includes studies that examine utterance fluency in different modalities of administratively organized SA programs, ranging between five weeks (French & Beaulieu, 2016; Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz, 2015) and a full academic year (García-Amaya, 2009; Huensch & Tracy-Ventura, 2017). Some SA programs report the use of a language pledge, as in the overseas immersion (OIM) context (García-Amaya, 2009, 2012, 2015). The fourth group involves studies that investigate L2 development for learners who acquire their L2 in the most naturalistic setting by immigrating to a new country through residence abroad (RA) (Coleman, 2015).

L2 learning contexts naturalistic continuum

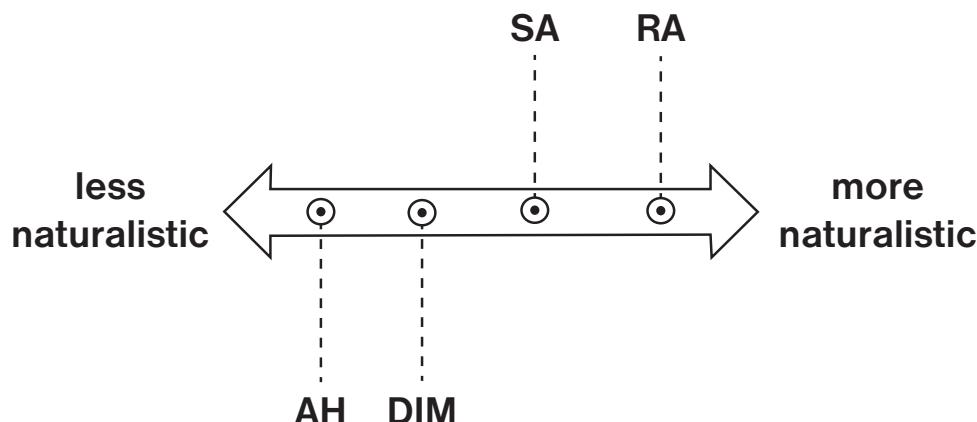


Figure 12.1 Naturalistic continuum of learning contexts.

Cross-Sectional vs. Longitudinal

Another important difference across studies is whether they investigate learners longitudinally or through a cross-sectional design. In Table 12.1, the ‘longitudinal’ label refers to studies that included pre- and posttest designs (and/or multiple data-collection times). I have applied this label to research conducted in SA programs that range from three or four weeks (Llanes & Muñoz, 2009) to a full academic year (Huensch & Tracy-Ventura, 2017). Differing from longitudinal studies, cross-sectional studies have investigated learner groups with different proficiency levels as well as with and without prior experience abroad (García-Amaya, 2008, 2009). From a practical standpoint, cross-sectional studies may be useful for initially identifying a proficiency level at which certain fluency aspects are most susceptible to development. A follow-up longitudinal study would then examine a more limited sample of learners to determine specific cause-and-effect relationships in L2 fluency.

Data Collection Methods

One of the biggest challenges facing SA researchers involves the logistics and protocol for data collection. Not all researchers using a developmental approach collect their data in the SA location. For example, some researchers collect data at the learners’ home institution before and after their SA experience (e.g., Towell et al., 1996). In spite of the logistic challenges it may present, it is strongly advised that researchers make every effort to collect posttest data in the SA context to avoid the possible confound of L2 attrition upon return to the home country. Additionally, collecting data after the SA experience will allow researchers to assess the extent to which there are long-term benefits of SA on L2 utterance fluency. In Table 12.1, I therefore differentiate between studies that collected data while learners were abroad (*in situ*) and those that did not (*ex situ*). As suggested in Segalowitz (2010), it may also be useful to collect learner data in the L1 as well as the L2 in order to establish an L1 fluency baseline for individual learners. However, this is not always possible from an institutional or logistic perspective (e.g., for certain programs with a language pledge).

Tasks

Table 12.1 also includes information about data collection tasks. In L2 fluency research, production tasks often are designed with the goal of eliciting turns of speech in as naturalistic of a setting as possible. Some studies use monologic tasks (i.e., the participant speaks alone), such as picture descriptions or narrations (Lennon, 1990; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009), or short video retells (García-Amaya, 2012; Towell et al., 1996). Other studies have included dialogic tasks in their research designs (i.e., two interlocutors speak, but only the speech of the interviewee is targeted), such as Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPIs) (e.g., Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) or sociolinguistic interviews (García-Amaya, 2008, 2009; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012). Dialogic tasks may be preferred over monologic tasks, since the former are more representative of the type of communicative situations in which learners engage during the abroad experience. Also of interest are elicited imitation tasks (Bowden, 2016; Ortega, Iwashita, Norries, & Rabie, 2002), which have become common given their practicality

and demonstrated validity for distinguishing L2 proficiency levels in AH and SA learning environments (e.g., Llanes et al., 2017; Serrano et al., 2016). Versions of this task for several languages can be found in IRIS (Marsden, Mackey, & Plonsky, 2016).

Overall, one must note the discrepancies that exist among task types used to elicit L2 utterance-fluency data (e.g., interviews, narratives, picture descriptions, video retells). This observed methodological variation across studies creates new space for future studies to explore stylistic and planning effects in learners' production, and whether L2 development operates equally in different speech styles (see Di Silvio et al., 2016). To this end, Segalowitz (2016) raises the question of whether learners' fluency abilities are modulated by the attention-related demands of different speaking tasks (e.g., story recall vs. reading a prepared text). This should be explored in future work.

Speech Samples

Finally, one methodological discrepancy across studies concerns the length of the fragments of speech under analysis. Freed (1995) studied fluency development in L2 learners of French by analyzing two 45-second speech samples, one recorded at the beginning of the semester and the other recorded at the end. Temple (1992, 2005) also used two speech samples of two minutes. Freed et al. (2004) compared the production of 28 learners of French by analyzing two one-minute samples taken from each pre- and posttest OPI (see also Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). As Lennon (2000) shows, fluency scores vary according to topic, speech situation, interlocutor, mental state, etc. Contrastively, García-Amaya (2008, 2009) examined the 10 longest turns in sociolinguistic interviews (ranging between 15 and 20 minutes per participant) and showed that, depending on the topic, learners increased or decreased their rate of speech within a given turn. If researchers choose to use small speech samples, it is thus imperative that topic effects are controlled across all speakers.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of methodologies for researching L2 utterance-fluency data in the SA context. I have also reviewed the most influential approaches for understanding L2 utterance fluency, as well as the primary research methods for assessing the development of utterance fluency in the SA context. When appropriate, I have offered recommendations for practice and laid out possible avenues for future research. Altogether, it will be important to bear in mind the extent to which such practices help to establish a more solid empirical foundation from which to theorize L2 speech development (utterance fluency in particular) in SA contexts.

Key Terms

Articulation rate	Oral production
Breakdown fluency	Overseas immersion
Domestic immersion	Repair fluency
Filled pauses	Silent pauses
Fluency	Speech fluency
Fluency metrics	Speech rate
Hesitation phenomena	Utterance fluency

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Exploring Oral L2 Fluency Development during a Three-Month Stay Abroad through a Dialogic Task

Maria Juan-Garau

Introduction

Research on language learning in study abroad (SA) settings has revealed that not all language areas benefit equally from this learning context (Kinginger, 2009). There seems to be general agreement, however, that oral fluency stands out as the clear winner abroad (see, e.g., Freed, 1995) in comparison with the complexity and accuracy domains. As Housen, Kuiken, and Vedder (2012) remark, ‘fluency’ is a multidimensional construct that can be defined in different ways. In the broad sense of the term, it has often been equated to a learner’s overall language proficiency, indicating smooth and native-like second language (L2) performance. Many L2 researchers, nonetheless, use this term more narrowly to refer to the ease and fluidity of speech (e.g., Lennon, 2000; Segalowitz, 2010). According to Segalowitz (2010, 2016), L2 speakers’ fluency levels can be examined through three interrelated aspects, one of which is ‘L2 utterance fluency’¹ (i.e., the measurable temporal features of speech, such as speed, pausing, and hesitation). This construct has been successfully applied to measure L2 fluency development in SA settings and hence will be used in the present study. Following Tavakoli and Skehan (2005), three subdimensions of L2 utterance fluency can be differentiated:

- a) speed fluency, i.e. speed with which speech is performed, b) breakdown fluency, the pauses and silences that break down the flow of speech, and c) repair fluency, hesitations, repetitions and reformulations that are used to repair speech during the production process.

(Tavakoli, 2016, p. 138)

Thus, fluency in SA learning contexts has been examined with respect to various temporal and hesitation characteristics of speech delivery, revealing that SA learners generally increase the length and rate of their speech runs (e.g., Lindseth, 2010; Llanes & Muñoz, 2013; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) while reducing their pauses and

dysfluencies (e.g., Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004; Isabelli-García, 2003; Towell, Hawkins, & Bazergui, 1996). However, as Tavakoli (2016) remarks, “L2 fluency has largely been investigated in monologic mode, with limited attention to measuring L2 fluency in task types that involve interaction between speakers” (p. 134). The present study will thus contribute to investigating L2 English fluency with oral data gathered through a dialogic task in an SA context. Additionally, we will examine L2 learners’ approximation to native-like fluency norms after a sojourn overseas and the role of predeparture level on fluency development abroad.

Previous Literature

A number of studies have explored oral fluency development abroad, often comparing it with the acquisition of fluency in at-home (AH) learning contexts. In North America, research on fluency during SA sojourns by Freed and colleagues has been highly relevant. In most of their studies, the learners going abroad were at the beginner or intermediate level and hence had considerable room for improvement. Freed (1995) reported on the fluency development of 30 American students, 15 of whom spent a semester in France, while the remaining 15 stayed on campus, based on Oral Proficiency Interview extracts judged by native speakers (NSs). Of the seven ‘factors of fluency’ analyzed, only rate of speech turned out to be significant, indicating that students who had spent time abroad spoke more and faster than those who had stayed AH. It was also found that SA participants exhibited fewer dysfluency features, producing longer speech stretches and fewer unfilled or long pauses. Later on, Freed et al. (2004) examined fluency development in three different learning contexts: namely, formal language classrooms AH, an intensive summer immersion program (IM), and an SA setting. The researchers focused on target-language use in these three contexts, including instructional time as well as time spent speaking with natives and doing literacy-related activities. Participants in the study were 28 English-speaking learners of French for one semester in the case of the AH and SA programs, and for seven weeks in the case of the IM program, which put in place a French-only policy at all times. Freed et al.’s results revealed that AH learners did not improve their fluency from pretest to posttest, while the IM group made significant gains in terms of: the total number of words spoken; in length of the longest turn; in rate of speech; and in speech fluidity, which is defined as “absence of interruptions in the flow of speech” (p. 289) and operationalized through a composite of five fluidity measures (i.e., Hesit-free, Filler-free, Repeat-free, Repair-free, and Fluent-run). The SA group made significant gains only in terms of speech fluidity but to a lesser extent than the IM group. An explanation of these findings might be found in the fact that IM participants reportedly used French more hours per week than their AH and SA counterparts, which underscores the importance of contact, and not so much context, in the development of fluency. For their part, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) investigated the role of context, contact, and cognition in the acquisition of oral fluency, as measured by temporal and hesitation phenomena, through 40 NSs of English studying Spanish over one semester either AH or abroad. Concerning context, their findings revealed that only participants in the SA setting improved their oral performance significantly. More specifically, greater gains were shown in the length of the longest turn, rate of speech, mean length of run free of filled pauses, and longest run of speech free of

silent or filled dysfluencies. Similarly, O'Brien, Segalowitz, Freed, and Collentine (2007) inquired into L2 fluency gains in native English-speaking university students learning Spanish either AH or abroad. Their results showed that both learner groups improved their oral fluency over the course of a semester, but the rate of improvement was higher for the SA learners.

Various other researchers have also addressed the acquisition of oral fluency abroad, sometimes contrasting it with progress made in the domains of complexity and accuracy or other linguistic areas. Towell et al. (1996), resorting to Levelt's (1989) model of language production and Anderson's (1983) model of adaptive control of thought, argued that the proceduralization of linguistic knowledge is crucial in the development of fluency in advanced L2 language learners. Their findings suggested that the 12 learners of French involved in the study became more fluent, as measured by speaking rate, after residence abroad and that this development reflected more visibly in their increased mean length of run. An additional qualitative analysis revealed that participants deployed fillers and formulaic chunks to extend the length of their utterances and sound more fluent. Unlike most SA abroad research conducted on learners of Indo-European languages (mostly English, French, or Spanish), Kim et al. (2015) analyzed the L2 fluency development of 22 learners embarking on Chinese SA. Their results showed significant improvement in all the posttest scores (speech rate, filled pauses, unfilled pauses, and mean pause length), indicating that learners exhibited a faster speech pace and shorter pauses after their sojourn overseas. Focusing on short stays abroad, Llanes and Muñoz (2009) studied 24 Catalan-Spanish bilinguals who spent three to four weeks learning English overseas. They used six measures of oral fluency based on temporal and hesitation phenomena. Significant differences between pretest and posttest scores were found in four of the six measures (i.e., syllables per minute, other language word ratio, articulation rate, and longest fluent run), suggesting that even a short period abroad can have a positive impact on oral fluency. In a later study, Llanes and Muñoz (2013) proved the SA context to be more beneficial than the AH context for the development of the oral skills in general and oral fluency in particular, with young Catalan/Spanish bilinguals learning English being able to benefit more from an SA setting than adults. Similarly, Serrano, Tragant, and Llanes (2012) analyzed the oral and written progress of 14 Spanish-speaking learners of English abroad for a semester. As regards oral performance, their results showed that a few months abroad are sufficient to improve learners' fluency significantly. For their part, Juan-Garau and Pérez-Vidal (2007), with SALA² tertiary-level participants tested at four points in time, found a significant increase in fluency abroad unparalleled by those very same students in their predeparture period at home, where actually, a decrease took place. Their findings showed that, after a sojourn overseas, learners used more and longer clauses, and enlarged their lexical and formulaic repertoires. Moreover, many of the gains accrued abroad were retained after a period without instruction back home, suggesting that SA can have a durable effect on students' fluency. Other SALA researchers have also investigated oral fluency. Trenchs-Parera (2009) analyzed seven dysfluency phenomena. Her findings unveiled SA as a context that can contribute, albeit modestly, to correct learners' disruptions. Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012), in turn, provided evidence of robust gains in oral fluency as a result of SA, captured mostly through time-related aspects of speech production, and lack thereof during formal instruction AH.

All in all, the different studies surveyed herein generally report superior development in oral fluency abroad rather than AH. Nevertheless, most research on L2 development overseas has analyzed oral fluency using interview-based protocols that afford essentially monologic rather than interactional data. Studies based on dialogic tasks, however, which resemble daily conversation and can enhance fluency (Michel, Kuiken, & Vedder, 2012), are sorely lacking (Wood, 2007). This is so both in L2 learning contexts and in SA contexts. In fact, as Tavakoli (2016) has pointed out, “little systematic research has been done to discover the way fluent interaction and effective communication can be defined in interactive tasks, or what similarities and differences distinguish fluency of performance elicited by monologic versus dialogic tasks” (p. 134). L2 acquisition research has generally measured monologic performance through tasks such as oral narratives, although dialogic language is thought to represent the interaction that goes on when people communicate in real life more authentically. The fact that using dialogic tasks entails more difficulties to measure L2 fluency, given their unpredictable nature and interactive characteristics, may account for this. As a result, more research using dialogic task types is badly needed; this is particularly true in SA settings.

L2 fluency research can also benefit from comparing NS and non-native speaker (NNS) fluency, as the recent study by Skehan, Foster, and Shum (2016) attests. These authors highlight, revealing insights can be obtained from research designs in which both NSs and NNSs are asked to do the same tasks. Thus, NNSs’ L2 fluency performance can be examined in light of baseline data gathered from comparable NSs. Trenchs-Parera (2009), for instance, carried out such a comparison. Her study involved 10 NSs and 19 university learners of English, who carried out the same interview task. The SA period helped the latter to enforce a native-like tendency.

Learners’ predeparture level can no doubt influence SA success, and yet this is a variable that deserves further attention (DeKeyser, 2014). A threshold level of initial proficiency for learners to start reaping benefits abroad has been postulated, among others, by DeKeyser (2007), who argues that a certain level of declarative knowledge is needed for learners to be able to proceduralize—and eventually automatize—their L2 skills abroad. Oral fluency is thus seen “as a performance phenomenon of implicit or procedural linguistic knowledge,” which requires fast retrieval from memory and an automatic response on the part of the speaker (Sato, 2014, p. 82). Some SA scholars have found higher gains in the oral skills for learners with lower versus higher initial levels of proficiency (e.g., Freed, 1995; Juan-Garau, 2014; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Valls-Ferrer & Mora, 2014). This might be somewhat surprising considering that SA learners with higher initial levels could be expected to continue to make higher gains overseas than the less advanced students. However, as DeKeyser (2014) remarks, “all practice reaches a point of diminishing returns: a point after which progress is still made for a very long time, but at a much slower pace than initially” (p. 316). This can explain the fact that the more advanced learners may find it harder to reap considerable L2 fluency gains abroad.

The present study examines L2 oral fluency development, with SALA bilingual undergraduate participants, after a three-month SA period, which can be characterized as a midlength program lasting one quarter. Such midlength programs, like short-term programs lasting eight weeks or less, are becoming increasingly popular, and yet research on them is still scant compared to research on six-month

or yearlong SA stays (Grey, Serafini, Cox, & Sanz, 2015). Likewise, very few studies have contrasted advanced learners' L2 fluency levels against comparable NSs, just as little research has been conducted on the role played by SA learners' pre-departure level. The present study intends to contribute to filling these gaps in current literature. More specifically, we seek to answer the following research questions (RQ):

- 1 Which gains in L2 English oral fluency, as measured through a dialogic task, are attained by advanced learners during a three-month stay abroad?
- 2 To what extent does L2 learners' oral performance approximate native-like fluency norms in English during SA?
- 3 Which L2 English learners appear to benefit the most from SA: those with lower or higher predeparture oral fluency levels?

Methods and Procedures

Participants

Two groups of participants took part in the study: a central group of NNSs who were students of English ($n = 31$) and an NS comparison group ($n = 18$). The former group (mean age = 19 years; 26 females, 5 males) included full-time, advanced-level English majors following a Translation and Interpreting degree. English was their L2 as they were bilinguals who had Spanish and Catalan as their first languages (L1s). As part of their curriculum, they experienced a three-month Erasmus exchange in an English-speaking country (see Beattie, 2014) where they attended classes related to their degree conducted in English and interacted mostly in this language. Thus, the SA context made it possible for them to "imbibe the language, soak it in" (Sanz, 2014, p. 1). The NS group was formed by English-speaking undergraduates with very limited knowledge of Spanish on an exchange program at a Spanish university (mean age = 20; 15 females, 3 males; 15 American, 4 British). They provided baseline data with which progress made by the NNS group was contrasted.

Data Collection

Data were gathered following a pretest-posttest design. The pretest (T1) took place prior to the learners' SA, while the posttest (T2) took place right upon return. The NSs were just tested once (T0) upon arrival from their home country.

The dialogic oral production data analyzed were obtained from a problem-solving role-play performed in pairs—by either two NNSs or two NSs—in the presence of a researcher. One student played the role of a householder who needed to decorate a living room and the other one that of a decorator. Learner pairs and role assignments were kept constant over both data collection times for the NNS group. Students were given specifications as to what to sell or buy not shared with their partners, thus creating an information gap. They were also asked to negotiate and reach agreements in an attempt to replicate naturalistic communication. The task was performed in soundproof booths equipped with microphones and high-quality tape recorders.

Data Analyses

Analytical measures have been used in this study, as they are considered highly reliable to operationalize fluency. In order to measure pause time, which was central to calculate several of the measures adopted, a 400-millisecond cutoff point was adopted, following previous studies (e.g., Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). Pauses below that boundary were not considered as they are less dysfluent-sounding and abound in native speech. PRAAT software was used to perform such analyses. The fluency measures applied included temporal and hesitation phenomena that encompass all three subdimensions (i.e., speed, breakdown, and repair fluency) proposed by Tavakoli and Skehan (2005):

Temporal Phenomena

- Speech Rate (SR): number of words per minute including pause time
- Articulation Rate (AR): number of words per minute excluding pause time
- Mean Length of Run (MLoR): mean number of words between dysfluent pauses
- Phonation Ratio (PhonR): percentage of time spent speaking as a percentage proportion of the time taken to produce the speech sample
- Average Pause Duration (APD): mean duration of dysfluent pauses

Hesitation Phenomena

- Self-repetitions (Self-rep.)
- Nonlexical pause fillers of two types:
 - Drawls (i.e., lengthening of the last vowel or diphthong sound in a word)
 - Vocalizations (Voc.) (e.g., er; em)
- Lexical pause fillers of two types:
 - Lexicalized phrases (LP) (e.g., I mean; it's like; you know)
 - Single words (SW) (e.g., so; yeah; well)

In order to analyze the hesitation phenomena, all of the digitized speech was transcribed into text following Computerized Language Analysis (CLAN) conventions. Transcriptions were subsequently codified by the author with the assistance of an experienced native-speaking English teacher. An interrater reliability analysis was conducted on 10 percent of the sample at the start of the study. The percentage of agreement of the coders was 96.8 percent. Discrepancies were found and settled before coding by the author continued. For each of the five hesitation phenomena examined, we calculated the number of occurrences per minute.

Prior to comparing data collection times and groups, we assessed the normality of our data set through a Shapiro-Wilk test. As the assumption of normality was not met, two nonparametric tests, the Wilcoxon signed-rank and Mann-Whitney *U* tests, were used to compare, respectively, (i) mean scores obtained by NNSs on fluency indexes at T1 and T2 and (ii) NS and NNS performance. When reporting effect size estimates, we considered small (0.1), medium (0.3), and large (0.5) size effects. Finally, a linear regression analysis was conducted to ascertain whether lower or higher level English learners at T1 were the ones whose performance on the fluency measures

used improved the most at T2. All statistical analyses were performed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and the alpha level of significance was set at 0.05.

Results and Discussion

In reply to the first RQ, which enquired into gains in L2 English oral fluency following a three-month sojourn abroad, descriptive statistics corresponding to the NNS group are displayed in Table 13.1 for the various temporal and hesitation phenomena examined. These learners' pretest (T1) and posttest (T2) scores were submitted to a Wilcoxon signed-rank test so as to unveil developmental changes. As Table 13.2 shows, paired comparisons of learner performance at T1 and T2 revealed that significant improvement in the fluency domain took place after SA in four of the temporal phenomena under scrutiny, namely SR ($p < .0001$), MLoR ($p = .03$), PhonR ($p = .03$), and APD ($p = .03$), with a large-size effect in SR and medium-size effects in the remaining three variables. These findings indicate that students' speech became faster in terms of the number of words per minute produced, that they were able to put together a longer string of words between dysfluent pauses, and that the percentage of time spent speaking increased, while the duration of pauses decreased. Conversely, AR did not vary significantly, and none of the paired comparisons between pretest and posttest for the hesitation variables (i.e., self-repetitions, drawls, vocalizations, lexicalized phrases, and single words) produced significant differences either, suggesting that NNS performance did not essentially vary for those measures following SA.

Our results suggest that the SA learning context can have positive effects on L2 oral fluency development, probably helping learners to automatize their performance gradually. In this study, though, statistically significant progress applies only to the temporal phenomena considered with the only exception of AR, which evinces no significant change between T1 and T2. The fact that AR does not include pause time, unlike SR,

Table 13.1 Descriptive statistics for NNSs (n = 31) at T1 and T2

<i>NNS mean (SD) and range</i>					
	<i>T1 mean (SD)</i>	<i>T1 range</i>	<i>T2 mean (SD)</i>	<i>T2 range</i>	<i>T1-T2 diff.</i>
Temporal phenomena					
SR	128.07 (29.16)	80.10–180.67	145.63 (25.97)	98.21–194.89	17.56
AR	4.32 (2.32)	1.77–12.11	3.87 (1.77)	2.05–9.29	−0.45
MLoR	7.16 (4.42)	2.60–19.56	9.85 (9.24)	2.65–48.78	2.69
PhonR	57.08 (21.28)	22.76–91.15	67.39 (17.00)	27.58–93.14	10.31
APD	1.10 (0.42)	0.60–2.39	0.91 (0.22)	0.48–1.44	−0.19
Hesitation phenomena					
Self-rep.	2.67 (2.21)	0.00–10.34	2.31 (1.90)	0.00–6.78	−0.36
Drawls	1.59 (1.27)	0.00–4.49	1.14 (1.61)	0.00–8.26	−0.45
Voc.	3.66 (2.53)	0.54–9.58	4.22 (3.48)	0.00–13.54	0.56
LP	0.76 (0.91)	0.00–3.11	1.37 (1.72)	0.00–7.41	0.61
SW	3.53 (2.21)	0.64–8.06	3.69 (2.59)	0.00–10.65	0.16

Table 13.2 Wilcoxon signed-rank test: NNS differences between T1 and T2

	<i>SR</i> <i>T1-T2</i>	<i>AR</i> <i>T1-T2</i>	<i>MLoR</i> <i>T1-T2</i>	<i>PhonR</i> <i>T1-T2</i>	<i>APD</i> <i>T1-T2</i>	<i>Self-rep.</i> <i>T1-T2</i>	<i>Drawls</i> <i>T1-T2</i>	<i>Voc</i> <i>T1-T2</i>	<i>LP</i> <i>T1-T2</i>	<i>SW</i> <i>T1-T2</i>
<i>Z</i>	-3.74	-.86	-2.16	-2.23	-2.20	-.78	-1.90	-.55	-1.54	-.57
<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	<.0001*	.39	.03*	.03*	.03*	.43	.06	.58	.12	.57
<i>d</i>	.48		.27	.28	.28					

* $p \leq .05$.

may explain the different results obtained in these two measures, while underscoring the relevance of pausing behavior in the analysis of oral fluency. Research conducted by SALA members Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012) also reveals SA as a propitious context for oral fluency to develop, outstripping gains in the complexity and accuracy domains. In fact, after the SA period, participants in their study were found to speak faster, with longer speech runs containing fewer and shorter pauses, in line with our results. Similarly, other scholars have reported increased speech rate, longer runs, and reduced pausing (e.g., Freed, 1995; Freed et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2015; Towell et al., 1996). Possibly the fact that a role-play, performed in pairs and with an information gap, was deployed to gather data in this study might have contributed to the positive results obtained, given that dialogic tasks such as role-plays have been shown to have the potential to enhance fluency (Michel et al., 2012). While performing this task, participants had to initiate interaction, express (dis)agreement, and demonstrate turn-taking and negotiation abilities, among others, as they would in real-life exchanges.

As concerns hesitation phenomena, Trenchs-Parera (2009) looked at seven such phenomena (including self-repetitions, lexical and nonlexical pause fillers as in the present study) to find that SA helps NNSs, albeit only slightly, to become more native-like by reducing the number of dysfluencies used, thus creating the impression of more fluent speech. In our case, no significant development was found in the hesitation phenomena explored, which can be at least partly explained by the fact that NNSs were already native-like, when compared with our NS group, in three out of the five hesitation measures considered at T1, before the stay, as we will mention next in relation to RQ2.

Regarding the second RQ, which considered English learners' approximation to native-like oral fluency norms, NNS performance on the 10 oral fluency measures investigated was compared to NS data (see descriptive statistics corresponding to the NS group in Table 13.3). All of the fluency variables under study were submitted to a Mann-Whitney *U* test (see Table 13.4, which presents significant comparisons of NNSs at T1 and T2 with NSs). The outcome of such analyses revealed that four variables exhibited significant differences in fluency between NNSs at T1 and NSs, to the advantage of the latter, namely SR ($p = .001$), APD ($p = .03$), Drawls ($p = .04$), and SW ($p = .04$), with a large-size effect in the case of SR and medium-size effects in the remaining three variables. NS advantage was no longer held by T2. In the remaining six variables, no significant differences between NSs and NNSs were observed. These results suggest that NNSs in the study had approximated, native-like oral performance in some temporal and hesitation measures at the start of the study (T1) and that the remaining differences with NSs had become no longer significant by T2.

Table 13.3 Descriptive statistics for NSs ($n = 18$) at T0

	NS mean (SD) and range			
	T0 mean (SD)	T0 range	T0–T1 diff.	T0–T2 diff.
Temporal phenomena				
SR	164.58 (36.28)	105.85–252.33	36.51	18.95
AR	4.20 (1.07)	2.71–7.70	-0.12	0.33
MLoR	9.43 (6.29)	3.83–27.25	2.27	-0.42
PhonR	68.51 (13.74)	45.79–92.01	11.43	1.12
APD	0.90 (0.24)	0.61–1.49	-0.20	-0.01
Hesitation phenomena				
Self-rep.	1.66 (1.42)	0.00–4.91	-1.01	-0.65
Drawls	1.01 (1.42)	0.00–4.94	-0.58	-0.13
Voc.	4.21 (3.22)	0.00–12.82	0.55	-0.01
LP	0.99 (1.17)	0.00–3.09	0.23	-0.38
SW	2.38 (2.05)	0.00–7.38	-1.15	-1.31

Table 13.4 Mann-Whitney *U* test: significant comparison of NNSs at T1 and T2 with NSs

	Mann-Whitney <i>U</i>	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)	<i>d</i>
SR T1	122.00	-3.26	.001*	.47
SR T2	188.00	-1.89	.06	
APD T1	177.00	-2.12	.03*	.30
APD T2	251.50	-0.57	.57	
Drawls T1	180.00	-2.07	.04*	.30
Drawls T2	252.50	-0.57	.57	
SW T1	183.50	-1.98	.04*	.28
SW T2	194.50	-1.75	.08	

* $p \leq .05$.

Overall, SA appeared to boost learners' fluency in English—particularly in terms of increased speech rate, paired with a reduction in the duration of pauses and the number of drawls, and an increase in the use of single-word fillers—making it more targetlike. Thus, NNSs showed evidence of making progress through their sojourn abroad toward a more automatized oral response, possibly creating an impression of increased fluency. With regard to the temporal phenomena, our results are in line with those by Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012) in that oral fluency was found to spurt after SA in their study, thus approximating NS performance. In the present study, though, NNSs reached native-like values. Nevertheless, NSs still outperformed NNSs in the fluency domain at both data collection times. Turning to the hesitation phenomena, Trenchs-Parera (2009) found just a slight improvement after SA in terms of approximating native-like behavior, as NNSs in her study differed from NSs in five out of the seven phenomena considered before the stay and still in four after it. This is in contrast to our findings, since NNSs' drawls and SW no longer differed by T2 from NS performance. According to Skehan et al. (2016), the ability to draw on formulaic

language—in this case, single-words fillers—constitutes a ‘ladder’ that helps learners to deliver a fluent string of speech. It is possible that the difference between the interview task used by both Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012) and Trenchs-Parera (2009), which mainly considered individual performance rather than interaction, and the interactive task employed in the present study might have somehow affected the results obtained in each case. Research on L2 task performance has revealed that fluency is generally fostered by tasks that involve dialogic—rather than monologic—speech (Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005; Tavakoli, 2016), such as the role-play used herein.

Finally, with regard to the third RQ, which investigated whether learners with lower or higher predeparture fluency levels benefited most from SA, individual fluency rates at T1 and fluency gain scores at T2 were submitted to a linear regression analysis, with the former constituting the independent variable and the latter the dependent one. This analysis was conducted with the four measures that had evinced significant growth following SA, namely SR, MLoR, PhonR, and APD. Figures 13.1, 13.2, and 13.3 graphically illustrate the results corresponding to SR, PhonR, and APD.

The linear model applied was $Y = A + B*X$. It can be readily appreciated from Figure 13.1 that the linear regression analysis performed yielded a significant negative association between oral fluency gains after SA and predeparture SR measured in terms of words per minute. The slope of the regression line was significant ($B = -0.34, p < .005$). The resulting estimated value of A was also significant ($A = 60.66, p < .001$). This finding suggests that NNSs who produced fewer words per minute at T1 (X-axis) were the ones who tended to make more progress in speech rate after SA (Y-axis). The strength of the negative correlation between the two variables examined was moderate ($r = -.49$ and $R^2 = 0.24$). Similarly, a moderate negative correlation was obtained in the MLoR measure ($r = -.44$ and $R^2 = 0.20$). In this case, two outliers were eliminated so that the overall trend could emerge more clearly. Again, both the estimated values of A ($A = 5.33, p = .004$) and B ($B = -0.62, p = .016$) proved significant. These data reveal that English learners

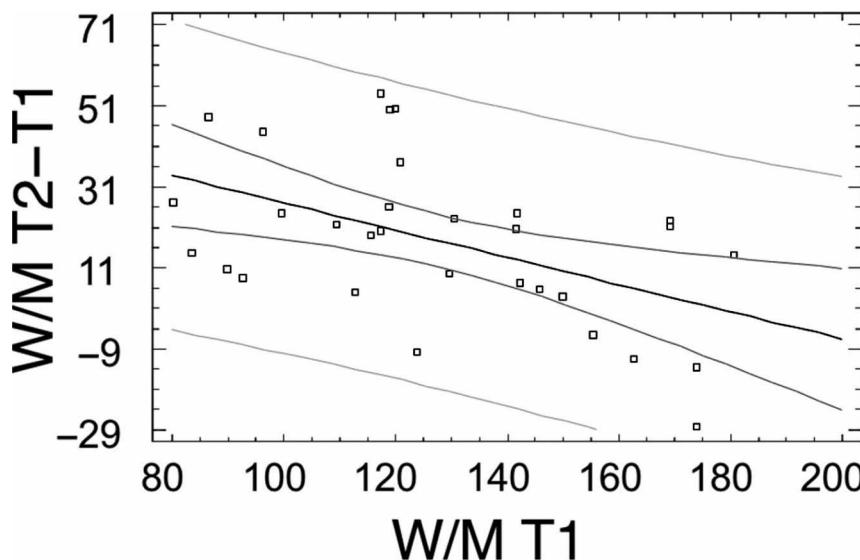


Figure 13.1 Linear regression between SR at T1 and gains obtained at T2.

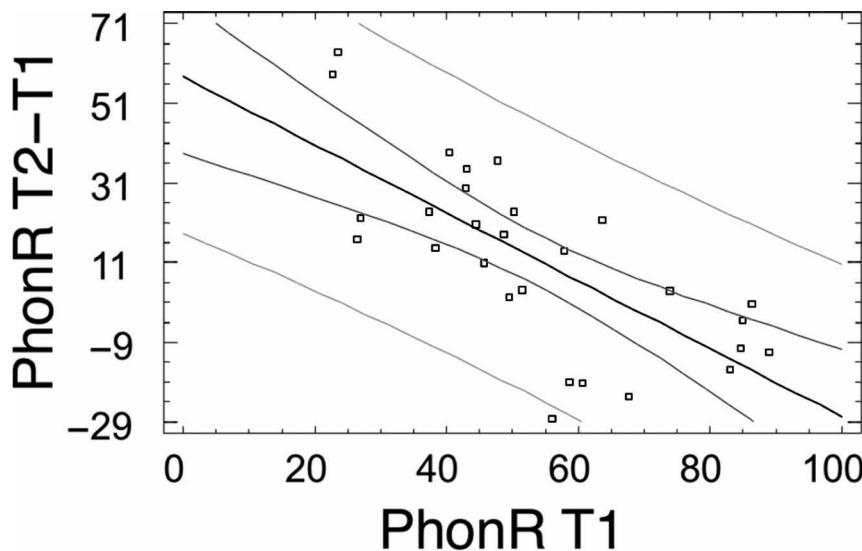


Figure 13.2 Linear regression between PhonR at T1 and gains obtained at T2.

whose runs were shorter at T1 were the ones to increase their mean length of run the most following SA. Figure 13.2 also reveals, even more clearly, a significant negative correlation between oral fluency gains following SA and onset fluency level, measured as the percentage of time spent speaking (PhonR). This result indicates that the participants who spent less time speaking at T1 were the ones to increase the percentage of time spent speaking the most upon return from their sojourn abroad. Both the slope of the regression line obtained ($B = -0.85; p < .001$) and the estimated value of A ($A = 57.58, p < .001$) were significant. In this case, the negative correlation between initial fluency level (T1) and attained fluency at T2 was considerably stronger ($r = -0.71$ and $R^2 = 0.51$). Likewise, Figure 13.3 shows a significant negative correlation in terms of the average duration of pauses (APD), signaling that learners who produced longer pauses at T1 were the ones to diminish the duration of their pauses the most at T2, after SA. Again, both the values of the regression slope (B) and of A were significant ($B = -0.90, p < .001$; $A = -0.80, p < .001$), while the strength of the negative association found was even stronger ($r = -.86$ and $R^2 = 0.74$). In sum, the linear regression analyses performed showed that the advanced learners in the study who performed less fluently prior to departure (T1) were generally the ones who exhibited greater development in the various fluency areas explored upon return from SA (T2).

These findings align with other researchers' who have investigated oral fluency and reported that learners who were less fluent prior to departure were the ones to improve the most following SA (e.g., Dewey, Bown, & Eggett, 2012; Freed, 1995; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012; Towell, 2002). The comparatively greater progress made by participants with lower predeparture levels might be due to the fact that they simply had more room for improvement and consequently they experienced more gains. It might be the case that these advanced learners, endowed with a superior command of English compared to learners at lower proficiency levels, were better equipped to grip opportunities to interact in the target community, thus

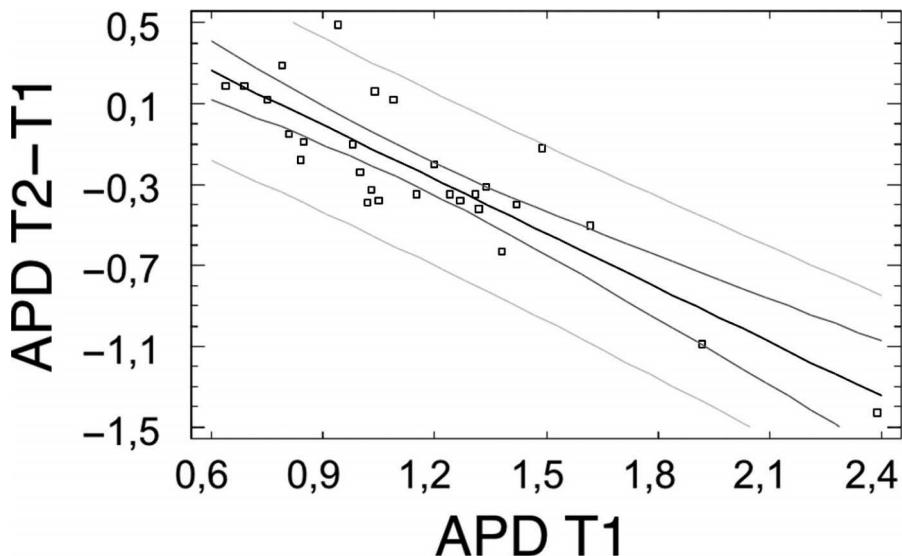


Figure 13.3 Linear regression between APD at T1 and gains obtained at T2.

increasing their L2 speech fluency. On the other hand, the learners whose predeparture performance was more fluent tended not to improve that much as a result of SA, even though more proficient learners are reportedly better prepared to benefit from the opportunities to interact that an SA context offers (see, e.g., Allen, 2002). A possible explanation could be that, in accordance with the power law of practice that characterizes skill acquisition (Newell & Rosenbloom, 1981), progress as a consequence of practice was less obvious in the case of the most advanced students. Other possible explanations, as Dewey et al. (2012) suggest in relation to their study with American undergraduates engaging in L2 Japanese learning abroad, can be provided: (i) the L2 fluency measures used may not have been sensitive enough to capture all of the gains higher level learners made overseas; (ii) these learners' exposure to higher level exchanges that would allow them to develop such abilities might have been insufficient; and (iii) higher level learners, being already able to manage quite well in the target language, may not have been as motivated to learn as participants with lower predeparture levels.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

Our data lend support to previous research that has established SA as a propitious learning context to boost learners' oral performance in general and oral fluency in particular. Nevertheless, a number of studies (e.g., DeKeyser, 2007) have indicated that, ideally, learners should have attained at least a sufficient command of the basic target-language phonological, lexical, and grammatical forms and structures before departure to take full advantage of the SA context, overflowing with potential opportunities for L2 practice.

Another important aspect to consider in the promotion of fluency abroad is the quantity and quality of the interactions in the target language, which no doubt

requires international learners' active engagement and the cooperation of the host community (Kinginger, 2009). Successful learners tend to actively seek access to learning opportunities to interact in the target language. Their participation in local communities of practice can thus promote fluency.

Learners should pursue language acquisition development beyond the confines of their educational institutions back home as far as possible. In this regard, participation in SA programs has the potential to enrich their linguistic capital while fostering internationalization. To make the most out of SA, learners should ideally prepare prior to departure, adopt in-country strategies to adjust to the SA context, and continue the learning experience once back home.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our study has several limitations, which can serve as possible paths to follow in future research. In the present study, we focused on the SA learning context, where reportedly most oral fluency gains accrue, but it would also be of interest to examine the same NNS sample in the AH context that preceded and followed the stay to describe the influence of predeparture formal instruction on oral fluency development and the extent to which SA gains are retained upon return. Some of the measures we used may not have fully captured L2 fluency development. In particular, SR and AR might have benefited from measuring syllables per minute. Another aspect that was not considered in the analysis of L2 oral fluency was the influence of L1 fluency (Spanish/Catalan), as we did not have access to L1 data to assess intersubject differences in individual speaking style. In future studies on fluency, it would hence be useful to gather data on L1 oral fluency performance. Similarly, it could also prove rewarding to contrast our bilingual informants' fluency data with a comparable monolingual group to fathom out the possible specificities of bilingual students. Finally, the investigation of oral fluency abroad would also benefit from a complementary analysis of the complexity and accuracy domains to see whether higher level learners, who did not gain so much in fluency as lower level participants did, exhibited gains, nonetheless, in those two other domains after SA.

Key Terms

Study abroad	Catalan-Spanish bilinguals
Oral L2 fluency	Temporal phenomena
Dialogic task	Hesitation phenomena
Predeparture level	Role-play
Native-like fluency	Automatization
L2 English learners	

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Notes

- 1 The other two aspects of L2 fluency are ‘cognitive fluency’ (i.e., the fluid operation of the cognitive processes that give rise to an utterance) and ‘perceived fluency,’ which is based on native-speaker judgments.
- 2 SALA (Study Abroad and Language Acquisition) is a longitudinal research project carried out at Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona) in collaboration with the University of the Balearic Islands and involving Spanish-Catalan bilinguals learning English in both AH and SA settings (see Pérez-Vidal, 2014).

Further Reading

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- Housen, A., Kuiken, F., & Vedder, I. (Eds.). (2012). *Dimensions of L2 performance and proficiency*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins. (Although not focused on SA, this book offers a good basis on how to define, operationalize, and measure fluency in contrast with the other two dimensions [i.e., complexity and accuracy] of second language performance.)
- Pérez-Vidal, C. (Ed.). (2014). *Language acquisition in study abroad and formal instruction contexts*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins. (This book provides data and analyses from a long-term program of research on study abroad [the SALA project], which looks into the short- and long-term effects of instructional and mobility contexts on language and cultural development.)

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Lexical Development

Vocabulary Acquisition during Study Abroad

A Comprehensive Review of the Research

Victoria Zaytseva, Carmen Pérez-Vidal, and Imma Miralpeix

Introduction

In this chapter, we offer a comprehensive review of the existing literature on lexical development in a second language (L2) as a result of a study abroad (SA) experience. Our aim is to provide a detailed account of the empirical work conducted on L2 vocabulary acquisition in an SA context so as to determine the current situation of the research and end up with some future directions in which to investigate this area.

The importance of vocabulary knowledge in foreign language learning has often been illustrated with reference to learners taking dictionaries and not grammar books, especially when they go abroad. Although this observation may seem outdated with the advent of digital age and global communication technologies, dictionaries and online translators are the most popular reported applications for language learning on students' mobile devices, according to a survey by Simon and Fell (2012). Furthermore, various data sources from international students undertaking exchange programs overseas (i.e., Davie, 1996; Pérez-Vidal, 2014; Zaytseva, 2016) indicate that vocabulary is among the top areas that improve the most after an immersion experience, well above reading, writing, and grammar skills. Many foreign language learners hold SA to be especially effective for the acquisition of new vocabulary and for broadening their lexical repertoire in the target language (Lara, 2014; Zaytseva, 2016).

Despite this evidence supporting vocabulary improvement as a result of SA, empirical research has not yet rendered clear-cut findings. It seems reasonable to believe that the SA environment, which is *a priori* characterized by a massive exposure to authentic input and unlimited opportunities for target language (TL) practice and interaction in a variety of real-life situations (Sanz, 2014), enhances communicative competence and speeds up growth in vocabulary knowledge. However, very few studies have related L2 vocabulary acquisition to the SA learning context, and there is little documented evidence to indicate whether SA favors, for instance, "the acquisition of certain aspects of vocabulary knowledge over others" (Fitzpatrick, 2012, p. 81).

The few existing studies relating SA and vocabulary acquisition have generally examined receptive knowledge, that is, the number of words we understand, as elicited by means of yes/no tests, translation tasks, or even word association tests, to provide an example (Ife, Vives Boix, & Meara, 2000; Jiménez Jiménez, 2010; Milton & Meara, 1995). Taken together, the aforementioned studies point to SA as a context that benefits vocabulary acquisition. At the same time, another important source of vocabulary-related data in the SA literature comes from studies looking into L2 productive vocabulary knowledge. Research of this kind typically analyzes free productive vocabulary, either orally, in writing, or in both modalities. Results from these studies are rather mixed, with some of them finding little change in written lexical richness (i.e., Freed, So, & Lazar, 2003; Serrano, Tragant, & Llanes, 2012) and greater improvement in oral, and vice versa, that is, with some of them finding better lexical diversity outcomes after SA in writing than in speech (Barquin, 2012; Lara, 2014; Pérez-Vidal, Juan-Garau, Mora, & Valls-Ferrer, 2012). It is important to note that the varying lengths of stay programs in these studies (see “The Impact of SA on Vocabulary Acquisition” for a comprehensive discussion) may influence the amount of gains accrued while abroad, which could, in turn, make the comparison between the different samples somewhat questionable. Consequently, a more systematic investigation seems essential to add to our understanding of vocabulary building when living abroad. Similarly, other factors have been identified as the features of SA programs that may impinge on linguistic and extralinguistic outcomes. They will allow us to approach the review of the studies from an SA perspective, and they include initial level of proficiency, predeparture preparation, point in the curriculum during which the stay takes place, work assignments abroad, debriefing practices upon return, and accommodation and living conditions in the foreign country (Pérez-Vidal, 2014, p. 26).

In the following subsections, we review the most prominent SA studies on receptive vocabulary knowledge and productive vocabulary knowledge in written-only, oral-only, and written and oral production, and provide a summary of the state of the art in SA-related research on formulaic language. We will also suggest some methodological considerations when conducting further research on vocabulary in the SA context to end with some concluding remarks.

Before that, however, a working definition of *what is involved in vocabulary knowledge* will allow us to consider the reported research findings from the perspective of language acquisition. Lexical knowledge consists of several dimensions (Meara, 1996): first of all, learning vocabulary involves learning words in different numbers, which is called ‘vocabulary size.’ Learners with larger vocabularies will tend to produce more lexically diverse texts than those with small vocabulary sizes and will probably use more ‘sophisticated’ (i.e., infrequent) words. Second, learning vocabulary also implies organizing the lexical items that are being learned (e.g., making connections between them); depending on how learners structure their lexicons and the associations they establish between words, higher levels of idiomacticity can also be achieved. Finally, a third dimension is that of ‘accessibility’: the quicker and more efficient the access to vocabulary is, the more fluent learners will be. It should also be noted that in the process of learning, lexical errors will be made, and learners’ accuracy will improve as they become more proficient.

Other authors (e.g., Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Schmitt, 2014) talk about a distinction between vocabulary ‘breadth’ (how many words learners know) and ‘depth’ (how well they know these words). Studies also make a difference between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge, that is, whether vocabulary is recognized only with the help of a stimulus (e.g., when listening or reading a word) or whether it can be freely used in speaking or writing without this support (see, for instance, Nation, 2001, p. 27, on what is involved in knowing a word).

Which one of these aspects is examined, how they impact development while abroad, and whether there is any greater improvement in one area over the others is what the following overview will reveal.

The Impact of SA on Vocabulary Acquisition

The study of vocabulary acquisition in the subfield of SA has often been approached in an inconsistent and fragmented way. The very pioneering studies on the effects of periods abroad on vocabulary either involved small sample sizes (DeKeyser, 1991; Lennon, 1990) or were simply based on impressionistic observations of participants’ performance (Davie, 1996). Davie comments on “marked improvement as a result of the year abroad in vocabulary” (p. 75) as inferred from learners’ perceptions that their vocabulary had improved, rather than from empirical measures analyzing the improvements. Later studies on vocabulary acquisition in the SA setting have primarily focused on the domain of receptive vocabulary knowledge, i.e., understanding the meaning of words (Ife et al., 2000; Jiménez Jiménez, 2010; Milton & Meara, 1995), or have analyzed free written and oral productive vocabulary (Barquin, 2012; Lara, 2014; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Pérez-Vidalet al., 2012), generally from the perspective of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). In recent years, with the growing recognition among applied linguists of the relevance of multiword units in lexical knowledge (Wray, 2002; Schmitt, 2010; Schmitt & Carter, 2004), some studies have examined vocabulary development in SA contexts from the perspective of formulaic language (Foster, 2009; Foster, Bolibaugh, & Kotula, 2014; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2008). In the following subsections, we will further review the aforementioned studies as part of the domain of receptive vocabulary knowledge, productive vocabulary knowledge, and formulaic language.

Receptive Vocabulary

One of the first oft-cited and groundbreaking studies on vocabulary growth during SA is that of Milton and Meara (1995). In their study on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) receptive vocabulary, the authors assessed 53 European exchange university students upon entry to a British university and six months later. Students’ vocabulary knowledge in English was measured through the Eurocentres Vocabulary Size Test (EVST), a computerized yes/no test that uses a graded sample of words at different frequency levels and makes an estimate of a learner’s receptive vocabulary size, defined as the quantity of words known by the learner. Results showed that on average, participants acquired new vocabulary nearly five times faster during SA than at home, implying a growth rate of over 2500 words per year—an estimate of first language (L1) vocabulary growth in English-speaking

adolescents (Nagy & Herman, 1987, as cited in Milton & Meara, 1995). The authors also found that not all students benefited equally from the SA experience and reported “a clearly marked tendency for students with small initial vocabularies to make a great deal of progress” as opposed to the students with the largest starting vocabularies who produced the smallest changes (p. 25). The role of initial proficiency level on ultimate vocabulary gains appeared as a key factor in vocabulary development during SA.

Five years later, receptive vocabulary development was reexamined in a study by Ife and colleagues (2000), conducted among 36 intermediate and advanced British university students spending 1 or 2 semesters (4–8 months) away in Spain. The instruments used in their study were a translation test, aimed at measuring their vocabulary size, and the Three Word Association Test (A3VT), permitting the assessment of subjects’ lexical organization knowledge. According to the authors, A3VT was used to overcome the ceiling-effect problem associated with the conventional vocabulary size tests and to capture more demanding aspects of vocabulary knowledge at advanced levels of proficiency. The researchers also looked into the amount of progress made by learners differing in initial proficiency levels and length of stay during SA. The study, with a pre-/posttest design, was constrained by the lack of a control group, as acknowledged by the authors. Results revealed considerable lexical gains during the SA period for both proficiency groups in both types of test and for both proficiency groups, contrary to Milton and Meara’s (1995) findings, which had suggested greater improvement for low-level students. Data also pointed to a trend toward larger vocabulary gains as a result of a longer stay, that is, participants who went on a two-semester SA improved their lexical knowledge three times more than those who went away for only one semester. Therefore, length of stay revealed itself as yet another key factor in vocabulary development.

In order to corroborate the results from Ife et al.’s study and provide more reliable findings by using a more rigorous design, Jiménez Jiménez (2010) examined the development of lexical knowledge in both formal instruction (FI), consisting in conventional language courses taken at home, and SA contexts. He collected data from 51 North American students enrolled in different courses of Spanish at their home university and 30 American graduates who had undertaken an SA program by using a translation test and a word association task. While the former asked learners to provide an English equivalent for Spanish lexical items, the latter tapped into the quality of vocabulary knowledge, that is, *how well* words were known or which other words (i.e., synonyms, antonyms, collocates, metonyms, or metaphors) they were associated with in meaning and not in form. The results of the study indicated that classroom instruction did not foster vocabulary development either in size or in depth of lexical knowledge, unlike the SA context, in which learners experienced gains at both levels. The author concludes that “deeper level of vocabulary knowledge is more likely to be acquired in SA contexts since classroom instruction does not seem to offer the appropriate elements to trigger its development” (p. 122).

A study by Dewey (2008) also provided evidence for significant benefits of the SA context over at-home (AH) classroom instruction. The researcher set out to investigate vocabulary acquisition in 56 intermediate-level adults learning Japanese in three contexts: FI AH ($n = 22$), SA ($n = 20$), and intensive domestic immersion (IM)

($n = 14$) for 9–13 weeks. He administered three tests designed to capture the breadth and depth of learners' vocabulary knowledge before and after each treatment. The three tests consisted of the Vocabulary Matching Test, measuring learners' ability to match a word with its definition; the widely used Vocabulary Knowledge Scale, measuring how well learners knew words (see Wesche & Paribakht, 1996, for the description of the instrument); and the Situational Vocabulary Test, in which learners had to define words frequently encountered in everyday situations in the TL community. Dewey found that SA participants received significantly higher scores on all three vocabulary tests than their AH counterparts, with the IM participants showing fairly similar performance to the SA group (except for the Situational Vocabulary Test, in which they performed significantly worse than for the first two).

Finally, in a more recent investigation, Fitzpatrick (2012) conducted a case study that set out to track developmental changes in the vocabulary knowledge of a Chinese undergraduate studying English in the UK. Using a word association task, Lex30, at six time-points over an eight-month period, Fitzpatrick was able to elicit information on different aspects of the participant's lexical knowledge (i.e., associations and collocations). In her findings, the learner's vocabulary developed in a nonlinear way: while data revealed a gradual growth in some aspects of vocabulary knowledge (collocations, native-like associations), there were uneven striking inconsistencies in others (form-meaning connections, orthography, word form). Although the author explicitly cautioned against extrapolating from a single case study to make generalizations about vocabulary learning, she advocated for future research to focus on the "micro-development" of the lexicon, in which the acquisition process may not necessarily be linear but rather "chaotic and elusive" (p. 92).

As we have seen, then, some of the attempts to measure the amount of words that students learned receptively (either AH or abroad) were complemented in later studies by other indications on how well the words were known (vocabulary depth) or how the lexicon was organized (e.g., by including word association tests in vocabulary assessment). From these studies, it appears that SA fosters better knowledge of receptive vocabulary than the FI learning context, yet both can be confounded by the learners' initial proficiency or the duration of the SA period.

Productive Vocabulary

Due to the multiple foci of most SA research, only limited vocabulary-related data have been generally gathered (Dewey, 2008). In fact, vocabulary was not the main concern of most studies in the SA literature that looked into L2 production. Studies of this kind have typically relied on a few lexical diversity indices while assessing the L2 output from the perspective of CAF, and they have included the vocabulary measure within the complexity domain (Barquin, 2012; Lara, 2014; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Pérez-Vidal et al., 2012) or evaluated vocabulary content from the perspective of formulas (Foster, 2009; Foster et al., 2014; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2008). The findings and implications of these studies are further developed as follows.

Written Production

Unlike the majority of studies assessing lexical development in SA contexts in terms of lexical diversity, a study by Laufer and Paribakht (1998) focused solely on the

development of vocabulary knowledge and used a wide range of measures, such as the Levels Test for receptive vocabulary size, a Controlled Active Vocabulary Test and the Lexical Frequency Profile (LFP) measuring lexical sophistication in learners' compositions. In their attempt to investigate the effects of language-learning context on both receptive and productive vocabularies, Laufer and Paribakht collected data from adult learners of English in Israel ($n = 79$) and in Canada ($n = 103$). The authors provided evidence for different developmental patterns of vocabulary in different language-learning contexts. That is, on the one hand, the authors found that learners following FI in Israel showed significantly higher lexical sophistication (i.e., how many 'rare' or 'advanced' words they used) than learners studying in Canada, as measured through the LFP of their free written expression. Their receptive-productive vocabulary knowledge gap was also smaller. On the other hand, the authors found a clear advantage for SA over FI contexts when the participants' performance was measured through the Levels Test exploring their receptive vocabulary size.

One of the few studies that examined several aspects of lexical competence in writing in the framework of the Study Abroad and Language Acquisition (SALA¹) project is that of Barquin (2012). Following the CAF approach, Barquin considered the development of fluency and lexical complexity of 30 Spanish/Catalan undergraduates studying English before and after a 6-month FI period and a 3-month SA, respectively. She found that learners improved considerably in fluency (as measured by the number of words and sentences that learners used in their essays), producing significantly longer essays after SA than after FI. Results also revealed that learners improved significantly in lexical diversity, as measured through GI—Guiraud's index (the amount of types divided into the square root of tokens)—showing a greater variation in their word choice as a result of SA. No changes, however, were found in any measure of lexical sophistication evaluating learners' use of infrequent words (neither through Advanced Guiraud 1000 nor via noun and verb hyponymy).

Regardless of the differences in SA conditions and linguistic profiles of the participants, Laufer and Paribakht's (1998) and Barquin's (2012) results seem to detect considerable benefits of SA stays at least in the areas of receptive vocabulary size and in fluency and lexical diversity when writing.

Oral Production

Turning to studies examining free oral production, it must be pointed out that early research on SA and word knowledge lies at the interface between lexical and grammatical competence. Ryan and Lafford (1992) and Lafford and Ryan (1995) studied the developmental stages of the Spanish verbs *ser* and *estar* and the prepositions *por* and *para* in learners acquiring Spanish in Granada and compared them to those in learners following classroom instruction. The authors found that the input received in the SA environment accounted to a great extent for the variation in the order of acquisition of these features across groups. Also, in his study of learners' copula choice, as determined through performance on grammar tests and communicative tasks, DeKeyser (1990) showed that those adult learners studying abroad were slightly more accurate than their peers receiving classroom instruction AH.

Although not focused solely on the development of L2 vocabulary knowledge, some years later Collentine's (2004) study illuminated interesting results concerning the acquisition of lexico-grammatical competence. In his comparative analysis of oral discourse, conducted among 46 participants prior to and following a semester-long treatment in either FI at the home university or SA exchange via OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview), Collentine looked at *semantic density*, following Biber's (1988) definition to code features associated with informational richness. He found that the FI group outperformed the SA group in the ability to generate unique word types (adjectives and nouns), but SA participants' speech was more semantically dense (although by virtue of speaking more fluently and thus producing more words in the given time frame). Collentine's findings parallel those of Freed and colleagues (2003), following an analogous population of university students and using the same OPI to elicit L2 speech. According to Freed's results, by the end of the semester, SA students were more fluent: they spoke significantly more and faster than their AH peers.

Another important study comparing SA and AH contexts was that of Segalowitz and Freed (2004), involving American undergraduates studying Spanish in Spain. The authors set out to investigate lexical access in students' speech production. Results showed that SA participants improved significantly from the pretest to the posttest in terms of oral fluency (as measured by speech rate and hesitation phenomena) and speaking turn based on OPI. They also found a significant interaction between oral, contextual, and cognitive variables, such as speed of word recognition and efficiency of word recognition (automaticity), which could potentially account for the vast individual variation in learning outcomes.

Regarding lexical diversity in free oral productive vocabulary, results are somewhat contradictory. Drawing from the aforementioned SALA corpus, Lara (2014) examined the impact of SA programs varying in length (three-month stay vs. six-month stay) on the CAF oral development by bilingual advanced learners of English. She was unable to detect any significant changes in lexical variety of student speech productions, as elicited by means of a role-play task and measured through GI in the case of the three-month program group. However, after SA, GI scores of the six-month stay group approached native-like patterns to the point at which they were no longer statistically distinguishable from native speaker's (NS) scores. Lara's results confirmed previous findings reported by Pérez-Vidal and Juan-Garau (2011) for the same role-play task and analogous participants undertaking a three-month SA period, where the authors did not find any improvement for lexical diversity when it was measured by GI.

Similar findings were reported in Foster (2009), although differing in methodology and participants' demographics. By combining quantitative and qualitative² approaches to gauge the development of productive vocabulary knowledge, Foster used a more innovative measure of lexical diversity D, developed by Malvern and Richards (1997). D takes into account how the type-token ratio changes in a text depending on the number of tokens it contains, thus enabling a reliable comparison between texts of unequal lengths. Foster contrasted two comparable groups of intermediate EFL learners in two learning contexts: the SA group ($n = 40$) from different L1 backgrounds having spent at least one year in the UK and the AH group ($n = 60$) involving L1 speakers of Farsi in Tehran. The groups were aged between 19 and 47. The author also included baseline data from 40 London-based NSs of English and

used cartoon picture prompts to elicit learners' and NSs' speech productions. The results showed that there was a significant effect for group and that not only were the SA participants' productions significantly more diverse than those of the AH group, but their vocabulary was also no less diverse than that of the NSs. The qualitative analysis also showed evidence that the SA learners were to some degree framing their sentences in more native-like ways (we further discuss these issues in "Formulaic language" as it deals with the analysis of formulaic language).

Another study that sheds some light on the domain of oral lexical accuracy in an SA context is that of Llanes and Muñoz (2009). Although originally aimed at evaluating the effects of short stays abroad (3–4 weeks) on the development of EFL listening comprehension, fluency, and accuracy in a general sense, the study looked exhaustively at the number of lexical errors. Twenty-four Catalan/Spanish students of different ages (from 13 to 22) provided the L2 English data pre- and post-SA through oral narratives. Results showed that lexical errors decreased significantly after the SA experience with low-level participants "showing comparatively greater gains in using L2 words (and hence in acquiring vocabulary) and in producing more accurate and fluent speech" (p. 361).

Finally, in their study involving 39 English-speaking undergraduates, Leonard and Shea (2017) explored how multiple dimensions of CAF changed over the course of a three-month Spanish SA period. The authors found that learners incorporated a significantly greater number of low-frequency words into their active vocabulary (thus enhancing their lexical complexity), but this improvement did not lead to a significant growth in their overall lexical variety. They concluded that by investigating not only lexical variety but also lexical complexity, they were able to find some sizable gains in lexis during SA, which would not have come out had they used only one measure of lexical richness.

In sum, the findings of the studies dealing with oral productive vocabulary knowledge and how it is potentially impacted by SA seem to point to the considerable benefits of stays of a trimester and beyond in semantic density, lexical accuracy, and sophistication, yet improvement is less clear when it comes to SA outcomes in lexical diversity. Having provided an account of studies focusing on lexical development in writing and speech separately, what follows is a review of the relevant literature on the benefits of SA (or lack thereof) in both oral and written production modalities. However, it must be noted that studies so far seem to be tapping into one dimension of vocabulary knowledge at a time, leaving the comparison of results in a somewhat fuzzy area, and not allowing for larger generalizations to be made.

Oral and Written Production

Although several studies have addressed the differential effects of learning contexts on vocabulary in either oral or written modalities, there is a paucity of research that combines both production modes and systematically examines lexical development in both writing and speech samples produced by the same participants. One study to combine the two modes of production is that of Pérez-Vidal and colleagues with data from the SALA project (2012). With vocabulary acquisition not being the object of study, the authors aimed to analyze the differential effects of FI and SA on oral and written development from a CAF perspective. In their analysis of writing and speech samples of 29 Spanish/Catalan adult learners

of English through sequential FI and SA learning experiences, they reported significant improvement in written lexical diversity (in the GI measure), as a result of the SA period, while no significant changes were detected in lexical diversity of student speech productions.

Pérez-Vidal et al.'s results are comparable to those mentioned earlier in Freed et al. (2003), who investigated the acquisition of written and spoken fluency in American L2 undergraduates learning French: 15 of them went on SA to France for a semester, and 15 remained on campus AH. Although Freed's team was neither especially concerned with vocabulary acquisition, their study targeted two dimensions that somehow reflected participants' lexical proficiency: the length of compositions and lexical density (the proportion of content words). Freed and colleagues found that the posttest compositions written by the SA group were much longer (though not statistically significant) and slightly denser in lexical use than their pretest compositions, whereas the AH group did not show this change. More recently, Serrano et al. (2012) examined changes in writing and speech in 14 Spanish-speaking young adults studying English in the UK over a course of a year. They found that while one semester abroad was already enough for significant progress to occur in oral fluency and lexical diversity, improvement in written production did not manifest itself until the second semester.

Finally, as part of the SALA project, a more recent study by Zaytseva (2016) comparing the differential effects of two consecutive learning contexts, FI AH and a three-month SA, on L2 vocabulary acquisition in oral and written production reported new findings. By combining both production modalities (an oral interview and a written composition), the author analyzed longitudinal data from a group of 30 Catalan/Spanish advanced learners of English between the ages of 17 and 21 before and after each learning period. These samples were examined in terms of quantitative lexical proficiency measures in the domains of fluency, density, diversity, sophistication, and accuracy, and through qualitative native-like selections, while comparing them to baseline data from 29 NSs of English, elicited through the same tasks. Results revealed that SA was particularly beneficial for written productive vocabulary, and less so for oral, and that progress occurred especially in lexical fluency and diversity, confirming Pérez-Vidal et al.'s (2012) results. FI, in contrast, showed a modest effect on the improvement of oral productive vocabulary and affected namely lexical sophistication. Furthermore, initial level of vocabulary knowledge was found to be a significant predictor of gains in that learners with lower initial levels showed a greater propensity toward gains than their more advanced counterparts. As far as we are aware, this study is one of the first to offer a comprehensive analysis of various features of vocabulary knowledge comparing these two contexts, hence makes a substantial contribution to research on vocabulary acquisition.

Formulaic Language

Investigation of lexical knowledge has also been approached in SA-related studies from the perspective of formulaic language use and idiomacticity, albeit initially in an indirect way. Thus, an array of early studies investigating fluency or morphosyntax in SA environment attributed gains to an expanded use of formulaic sequences rather

than anything else. For instance, a series of studies conducted by Möhle and Raupach in the early 1980s (as cited in Foster, 2009) showed that SA learners, compared to their AH peers, improved in the area of fluency thanks to their ability to sound more natural in the L2, while Towell, Hawkins, and Bazergui (1996) and Regan (1998) reported significant gains in fluency due to the learners making greater use of formulaic sequences. Marriott (1995) and Siegal (1995) also found a greater number of formulaic expressions in SA learners, suggesting that these, rather than syntactic knowledge, accounted for growth in learners' overall morphosyntactic complexity. Similarly, Regan (1995) did not find improvement in morphosyntactic development for SA learners of French, though she did find that learners had acquired an ability to delete the negative particle *ne*, which made them sound more informal and native-like. Broadly, as Foster (2009, p. 93) points out, "these studies are pointing to lexical organisation, especially of the formulaic language kind, as the main area of benefit for SA learners."

In the same study, centered strictly on vocabulary acquisition, Foster (2009) set out to explore productive vocabulary quantitatively (assessing learners' lexical diversity scores through D, as we explained earlier) and qualitatively, describing learners' lexical choices and comparing them to native speech, a linguistic capacity called *native-like selections*.³ Foster was able to show that SA learners were framing their speech in more native-like ways than their AH counterparts: they used more narrowly defined lexical choices instead of broad general vocabulary, more colloquial language, and targetlike word combinations, using support verbs, and multiword verbs (e.g., *they stopped off for a coffee, she went for a swim* versus *they drank a coffee, she swam*). Five years later, Foster and colleagues (2014) retook a similar analysis, although this time tapping L2 receptive knowledge of native-like selections, and found that an early age of exposure to the TL in an immersion situation, in particular, served as a guarantee of native-likeness.

Foster's findings were in tune with those reported by Siyanova and Schmitt (2008) examining native and non-native collocational knowledge. According to the results, "extended stays in an L2-speaking environment lead to a more native-like idiomaticity" (p. 447), as participants who had spent a year in an English-speaking country showed significantly better intuitions of collocation than those who had never been abroad. The authors concluded that whether it is shorter or longer than a year, a prolonged stay in the L2 country (with presumably a great deal of exposure to natural L2) can help learners become more native-like in their perception of collocations than learners without any L2 natural exposure.

As part of her analysis of lexical proficiency in students following subsequent FI and SA learning treatments, Zaytseva approached L2 oral and written productions qualitatively by compiling an extensive account of learners' word choices or native-like selections following Foster (2009). She found that learners approached NS usage gradually, benefiting from both FI and SA, in terms of the use of impersonal forms in writing and greater lexical accuracy (e.g., relying less on false friends) in speech. After SA in particular, their writing also incorporated more idiomatic intensifiers (e.g., adverbs modifying adjectives), and their speech was richer in lexicalized fillers and targetlike adverbs. Some examples of these selections are a decreased use of the false friend "career" to mean "degree" following Spanish/Catalan usage or a greater number of adverbs to avoid pauses and hesitations (i.e., *well, so, basically, actually*).

In light of the literature reviewed, there is substantial evidence to support the benefit of SA in the knowledge of formulas, as together the studies conclude that being immersed in an L2 environment that is abundant in rich native input develops more efficiently networked lexicon and greater idiomacticity.

Further Research

Based on the previous overview, which presents studies with different participant profiles, SA programs varying in length, and a mix of languages and vocabulary features under investigation, generalizations need to be made with great caution (Hessel, 2017). Most studies do confirm that L2 learners acquire vocabulary during SA across the board, yet very often they rely on data examining a very limited aspect of vocabulary knowledge without specifying why a particular measure was selected over others and what implications it may have for the field.

Against such backdrop, we believe that a combination of approaches to target different facets of lexical knowledge may provide a better insight into the nature of vocabulary knowledge in the case of L2 learners and achieve more conclusive findings. By uniting different analyses of vocabulary use (through LFPs, GI and D of lexical diversity, Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latin Cognate indexes, and the analysis of formulas), we may provide a more complete picture of how lexis develops in an SA learning environment. In other words, we should not only concern ourselves with the interpretation of improvement based on results from a type/token equation but also complement our findings with an account of *what kind of words* are associated with this improvement, how well they *collocate* with one another and whether learners approach native-like *idiomaticity* at any point under investigation. Furthermore, combining the strengths of quantitative methods with a qualitative dimension through field notes, reflexive journals, or participant observation could further elucidate previous findings.

In this sense, DeKeyser's (2014) proposal for mixed-method research, incorporating in-depth documentation of students' activities, or the quantity and quality of their interaction, could lay the groundwork for future work and capture new insights into the nature of vocabulary acquisition and the role of factors that best predict the success of SA experiences. An example of such approach is the recent study by Briggs (2015), who uses three different tools (a questionnaire, a computer-based simulation tool—the Opportunities With Language Simulator, or 'OWLS'—and an interview) to investigate the relationship between out-of-class contact, strategy behavior, and vocabulary gain in the SA context. She reports a strong relationship between contextual features and strategic behavior, particularly when there is a strong link between contextual intention and comprehension of a target word/phrase. Therefore, in accordance with Schmitt's recommendation (2010, p. 149), by "triangulating results from more than one approach" in vocabulary assessment, we may be better equipped to determine what is most needed when learning a language abroad, so as to ensure that learners benefit from the experiences and improve their vocabulary knowledge.

Finally, it is also apparent that of the different features that characterize SA programs, only initial proficiency levels and length of stay have been factorized in the existing research. No study to our knowledge has examined the effect of different types of SA accommodation on vocabulary learning and the social networks they generate

or the previous sojourners' preparation AH before departure, the specific academic work assignments they received while abroad, or their debriefing upon return.

In sum, the aforementioned options could have an additional value if undertaken either independently or together and would allow us to make a major step forward in research into vocabulary development while abroad. Needless to say, they may be better accomplished under the umbrella of a large project, with adequate funding. Such efforts should serve a twofold purpose: that of basic research, i.e., try to understand vocabulary acquisition processes and outcomes, and that of applied research, i.e., try to maximize vocabulary gains in the short and the long run, for the benefit of SA programs, and, ultimately, that of learners embarking on SA sojourns.

Key Terms

Learning context	Productive vocabulary
Vocabulary assessment	Formulaic language
Receptive vocabulary	

Notes

- 1 For a detailed description of the SALA project, its goals and design, see Pérez-Vidal (2014).
- 2 By qualitative analysis, such as the one performed by Foster (2009), we mean a descriptive frame-by-frame account of participants' lexical choices, a sort of data-driven corpus analysis.
- 3 The term *native-like selection* was first coined by Pawley and Syder in 1983: 191 and refers to
“the ability of the native speaker routinely to convey his meaning by an expression that is not only grammatical but also nativelike; [...] how he selects a sentence that is natural and idiomatic from among the range of grammatically correct paraphrases, many of which are non-nativelike or highly marked usages.”

Further Readings

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Communication and/or Learning Strategies

Language-Learning Strategy Use by Learners of Arabic, Chinese, and Russian during Study Abroad

Jeffery R. Watson and Gregory Ebner

Introduction

Study abroad (SA) has been described as an almost magical experience in which learners are easily socialized into host communities through nearly limitless access to native speech communities in the target culture (DeKeyser, 2010; Kinginger, 2008). The gains experienced by SA participants, however, are far from magical and can be explored through dedicated analysis of the variables involved. Kinginger (2011) states that these variables “emerge from a complex interplay of students’ dispositions, features of their environments, and host communities’ stances toward their guests” (p. 58). This complex relationship involves the learners’ individual differences and how they choose to interact with the highly contextualized SA environment. This interaction is often effortful and involves routine activities in which the SA learner chooses to participate (Duff, 2008). The degree to which they participate in this interaction and the language-learning strategies (LLSs) that they deploy in order to participate in it lie at the heart of this chapter.

LLSs have been called an “integral” part of the language-learning process (Adams, 2006, p. 261). This is certainly true in the SA context as well, in which such individual differences may be “intensified” by the SA environment (Kinginger, 2011, p. 59). LLSs are also an important part of a language learner’s self-regulation (Oxford, 2011). As an expanded model of LLS, Oxford’s Strategic Self-Regulation Model (S²R) has particular relevance to the SA experience in that it specifically includes a focus on self-management of the learning process through a broader range of metastrategies and sociocultural-interactive (SI) strategies, which seem crucial for meaningful social interaction during SA. Duff (2008) also points out that social interaction is often “contextualized within particular routine activities” (p. 311) in which SA learners choose to participate. Understanding the ways in which SA learners choose to interact and the strategies and tactics they use to gain language proficiency therein is the focus of this study.

This study, then, asks two primary questions about LLS use during SA:

- 1 Does LLS use affect language proficiency gains during SA?
 - a Do high-gainers on proficiency tests report using more LLSs than mid- or low-gainers?
 - b Which LLSs do high-gainers use vs. mid- or low-gainers?
- 2 What routine tasks do SA learners participate in, and which LLSs do they employ in these tasks?
 - c Do high-gainers employ different LLSs and LLS chains than mid- or low-gainers?

Previous Literature

The effective study of LLSs grew from the development of cognitive theories of the 1960s and 1970s. Rubin (1975) was among the first to make observations about her foreign language students, combined with conversations that she had with her fellow language instruction professionals. The result of these efforts became her list of characteristics of “the good language learner.” In this seminal work, she listed the activities of her successful students (in tacit comparison to those less successful students who did not display the same discipline of action) as well as the traits of personality that set them apart from other students. Rubin clearly labels these activities as “strategies” (1975, p. 41).

After some important research in the 1980s to more fully define the LLS landscape and research agenda (Hosenfeld, 1979; O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, & Kupper, 1985), the research of the 1990s appears to be among the field’s most influential and is the genesis of major texts (e.g., Oxford, 1990; O’Malley and Chamot, 1990) on the subject. Cohen’s (1998) text can be assigned to this generation as it accepts LLS theory with its potential shortcomings but remains dedicated to the measurement of strategy use and correlation of that use with success.

Perhaps one of the most influential works on LLSs came in Oxford’s (1990) text *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. The text is of critical importance in that it presented to a large audience Oxford’s *Strategic Inventory of Language Learning (SILL)*, the first significant tool for measuring strategy use among large numbers of students. This instrument, also used in a modified version of this study, has allowed numerous researchers to measure LLS use among vastly greater numbers of students.

Using interviews of students and instructors, O’Malley and Chamot (1990) also measured strategy use among ESL students and students of Spanish and Russian as a foreign language. Similar to other previous studies, they found that, on average, effective students used more LLSs more frequently and to better effect than less successful learners.

Tseng, Dörnyei, and Schmitt (2006) further support the idea that LLS use leads to the development of proactive learners. They argue, however, that the theory of LLS and the tools that researchers have used to measure LLS effectiveness are fundamentally flawed. They, like Rees-Miller (1993) and Macaro (2006), cite the “definitional fuzziness” (p. 79) of strategies as one of the main issues that researchers face. In order to address this deficiency, they propose a movement away from LLS research into more general discussions of learner self-regulation.

In a direct response to Tseng et al., Gao (2006) argues that acceptance of their proposals would be tantamount to abandonment of LLS as a field of research. Instead of a departure from LLSs to follow the more vaguely defined self-regulation, Gao suggests that the LLS field of research has already begun to incorporate self-regulation concepts, albeit on different terms. He cites Wenden (1986), which describes self-regulation in terms of the more familiar metacognition. Gao also counters claims of theoretical fuzziness by pointing to studies such as Hsiao and Oxford (2002) and Macaro (2006), which propose new frameworks of research and task-related measures of strategy use.

Toward this end, the past decade has witnessed even the most dedicated LLS researchers move toward a model of self-regulated learning. Oxford's (2011) *Teaching and Researching Language and Learning Strategies* reimagines her earlier work within the framework of Strategic Self-Regulation of Learning or the S²R Model of Language Learning. This expanded framework moves beyond the cognitive-metacognitive-affective paradigm and views strategic self-regulated learning as a socially mediated or situated construct, in which a strategically self-regulated learner's LLS use is influenced by the sociocultural context. Therefore, Oxford adds a category of SI strategies and more broadly defines metastrategies as being metacognitive, meta-affective, and/or meta-SI strategies (see Oxford, 2011, p. 24). The S²R Model also differentiates between deep processing and surface strategies when describing strategies that better lead to long-term retention and expands the concept of strategy-tactic chains to better describe the often-complex strategy use that takes place in learning environments.

Most LLS research has focused on traditional language learning, usually in a formal classroom environment (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Dörnyei, 2005; Oxford, 1990, 2011). In conjunction with increasing numbers of language students studying abroad, however, researchers have started investigating the effective use of LLSs in an international immersion environment. Paige, Cohen, and Shively (2004) found that students abroad receiving a curriculum intervention in the area of learning strategies make significantly more frequent use of LLS than do SA students who do not receive such an intervention, especially in the category of culture strategies. Similarly, Ma, Wong, and Lam (2015) also found that students in an immersive environment become, likely out of necessity, more strategic learners than they are at home. Finally, Adams (2006) identifies memory, metacognitive, and affective strategies as possibly having the most relevance to language gains during SA. The current mixed-method study builds on this literature to obtain a more complete picture of LLS use in the SA context.

Methodology

Population

The population for this study was 147 foreign language students at the US Military Academy studying Arabic ($n = 42$), Chinese ($n = 55$), and Russian ($n = 50$), who participated in the Semester Abroad Program (SAP) from 2011 to 2015. All SAP participants are typically juniors and seniors at the academy and speak English as a native language, and they must have completed beginning and intermediate foreign language courses (or the equivalent) at the academy before going abroad. Of them, 131 were male, and 16 were female. Arabic students studied abroad in Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan; Chinese students studied abroad in China and Taiwan; and Russian students studied abroad in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Moldova, and Latvia. All

language programs abroad involve intensive language training (5+ hours-per-day of in-class language instruction) and periodic organized cultural excursions. Russian students abroad lived with host families. Chinese and Arabic students lived primarily in school-organized dormitories or apartments.

Procedures

To gather quantitative data on the LLSSs used by SA participants, a modified Skill Inventory for Language Learning (SILL: Oxford, 1990) of 24 items was prepared and administered online. Table 15.1 shows sample items from the modified inventory in three categories: cognitive, metacognitive, and affective LLSSs.

To determine the SA participants' language gains during a semester abroad, they were all tested before and after using the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT), a computer-based test of Listening and Reading proficiency. Additionally, each participant also completed an official Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) through Language Testing International.

To gather further qualitative data for this study, 14 students (5 from Chinese and Russian cohorts; 4 from Arabic cohort) were randomly selected for a 30-minute structured interview. Table 15.2 shows a list of sample questions used in this interview. Before each interview, in order to further facilitate student reflection, each interviewee was asked to complete a written activity grid, outlining the weekly routine interactions with native speakers that the students participated in regularly in and outside of class. A sample activity grid can be found in Appendix 15.2.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Analysis

To facilitate analysis of the data, learners were first categorized as high-gainers, mid-gainers, and low-gainers based on their scores on the language proficiency tests. Since the DLPT is rated on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale and produces a rating of 0, 0+, 1, 1+, 2, 2+, etc., each score was assigned a similar numeric value: 0, 0.5, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, etc. The OPI, however, is scored on the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) scale, which shows further gradation among the levels: novice-low, novice-mid, novice-high, intermediate-low, intermediate-mid, intermediate-high, etc. To codify these levels, each level was assigned a number from 0 to 7: novice-low = 0, novice-mid = 1, novice-high = 2, etc. Using these two methods of codification, Table 15.3 shows the breakdown of proficiency gains for each of the aforementioned gainer types.

On average, the majority of learners departed for their semester abroad with an ILR proficiency level of 0 in Listening and Reading ($L = 0.39/SD = 0.55$; $R = 0.37/SD = 0.46$) and an ACTFL proficiency rating of novice-high (ILR=0+) in Speaking ($S = 2.74/SD = 0.99$). Upon their return, the average gain in Listening and Reading was slightly higher than a half step on the ILR scale ($L = 0.63/SD = 0.64$; $R = 0.72/SD = 0.63$), which corresponds with gains reported in other large-scale studies (Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1995; Davidson, 2010). Gains in speaking were also similar to reported findings, with an average gain of almost two sublevels on the ACTFL scale ($S = 1.81/SD = 1.00$). See Appendix 15.1 for cross-tabulated proficiency scores for this population.

Table 15.1 Sample modified SILL items

Cognitive Strategies (4)

- 25. During the SAP, I regularly took notes during class and would study with them later.
- 33. During the SAP, I kept a notepad of new vocabulary that I picked up from day to day as a way to practice new words and phrases.
- 11. I believe that practice makes perfect but that mistakes are a natural part of the process.
- 18. During the SAP, I was prepared to take risks when learning/using my FL: I would try to express an important idea, even though I didn't know all the necessary words.

Metacognitive Strategies (9)

- 24. During the SAP, when I had an encounter with a native speaker and made mistakes, I would always think about those encounters later and come up with ways I could perform better in such situations in the future.
- 20. I am good at taking responsibility for my own learning, and I did this during the SAP by creating and/or taking advantage of as many learning opportunities for myself as I could.
- 32. During the SAP, I sought out opportunities to interact with native speakers as often as possible because I found that very useful and motivating.
- 19. I set specific goals for myself during the SAP and did my best to achieve them.

Affective Strategies (13)

- 35. During the SAP, I kept a regular journal or diary of experiences I had in and outside the classroom.
 - 13. I am intimidated by the sounds of my FL, and this made me nervous about speaking it during the SAP.
 - 14. When I made mistakes when using the FL during the SAP, I didn't get embarrassed and humiliated.
 - 23. When I was under pressure during the SAP, I was still able to relax, take regular exercise, and get enough sleep.
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Table 15.2 Sample structured interview questions

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- 1 Which of the activities on your activity grid was most challenging? Why? How did you deal with these challenges? How did you assess your success in these activities?
 - 2 How did you deal with the different communication contexts of these activities?
 - 3 Did these activities cause you anxiety? Which ones? How did you deal with anxiety while abroad?
 - 4 What kind of goals did you set for yourself in regard to interacting with native speakers?
 - 5 Did you have difficulty maintaining motivation while abroad? If so, how did you deal with these issues?
 - 6 What cultural differences impressed you the most? How did you deal with them?
 - 7 Did you reflect on your own cultural identity during SA? What did you learn about yourself? Do people in your target culture envision themselves differently than Americans?
-

Table 15.3 Breakdown of high- vs. mid- vs. low-gainers on L2 proficiency tests

High-gainers (HG)	DLPT: > 0.5 gain on ILR scale OPI: > 2 sublevel gain on ACTFL scale
Mid-gainers (MG)	DLPT: = 0.5 gain on ILR scale (Listening and Reading separately) OPI: = 1.0–1.9 sublevel gain on ACTFL scale
Low-gainers (LG)	DLPT: = null gain OPI: 0–0.9 sublevel gain on ACTFL scale

When looking at student responses on the modified SILL's Likert scale, the average of both the reported scores and the number of LLSs that the students reported using were calculated. To determine whether an LLS was reported as being used, any score from 3 to 5 was accepted as evidence of LLS use. The LLSs reported on the survey were also broken down into traditional SILL categories: cognitive, metacognitive, and affective.

Analysis Based on Listening Performance

To analyze the data from the listening proficiency test, both ANOVA and chi-square statistics were used—chi-square for the ordinal Likert-scale LLS ratings and ANOVA for the interval counts of the number of LLSs used. Tables 15.4 and 15.5 show these data for the Listening Comprehension portion of the DLPT. In most cases, high-gainers on average reported higher LLS ratings than other groups for this modality. A statistically significant difference was observed between the groups in the areas of cognitive (ANOVA/chi-square), metacognitive (ANOVA/chi-square), and overall LLS (ANOVA) scores.

A post hoc Tukey statistic determined that the statistical significance observed in the ANOVA findings was primarily between the high- and low-gainers. A similar post hoc Mann-Whitney statistic determined the same for the chi-square findings.

Analysis Based on Reading Performance

Similar analysis was carried out for the Reading Comprehension test, but while the high-gainers still reported higher mean scores throughout, statistical significance between the three gainer groups was not observed in the ANOVA or in chi-square tests. Tables 15.6 and 15.7 show these findings.

Table 15.4 ANOVA data for listening comprehension: number of LLS used

Descriptives		ANOVA				
		N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Number of cognitive LLS used	High-gainers	56	3.77	0.47	3.80	.03
	Mid-gainers	46	3.67	0.52		
	Low-gainers	46	3.41	0.93		
Number of metacognitive LLS used	High-gainers	56	6.80	0.55	3.69	.03
	Mid-gainers	46	6.80	0.65		
	Low-gainers	47	6.34	1.48		
Number of affective LLS used	High-gainers	56	11.07	1.62	1.20	.31
	Mid-gainers	46	11.37	1.51		
	Low-gainers	47	10.77	2.42		
Number of LLS used	High-gainers	56	21.79	2.07	2.20	.12
	Mid-gainers	46	21.96	1.85		
	Low-gainers	47	20.74	4.59		

Table 15.5 Chi-square data for listening comprehension: Likert-scale survey

Ranks		Chi-square			
		N	Mean rank	Chi-square	Sig.
Cognitive LLS	High-gainers	56	87.25	9.27	.01
	Mid-gainers	46	71.51		
	Low-gainers	46	61.97		
Metacognitive LLS	High-gainers	56	81.47	6.79	.03
	Mid-gainers	46	79.57		
	Low-gainers	46	60.95		
Affective LLS	High-gainers	56	72.79	2.92	.23
	Mid-gainers	46	82.97		
	Low-gainers	46	68.12		
Overall LLS	High-gainers	56	86.11	9.74	.01
	Mid-gainers	46	75.32		
	Low-gainers	46	59.55		

Analysis Based on Speaking Performance

Similar analysis was also carried out for the Speaking Proficiency test (OPI). While neither the ANOVA nor chi-square comparisons revealed any statistically significant differences between groups, it was found, in contrast to the other tests, that the high-gainers in this analysis were not the highest-reporting respondents in any of the

Table 15.6 ANOVA data for reading comprehension test: number of LLS used

<i>Descriptives</i>		<i>ANOVA</i>			
		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
Number of cognitive LLS used	High-gainers	63	3.71	0.49	0.73
	Mid-gainers	45	3.60	0.78	
	Low-gainers	39	3.56	0.75	
Number of metacognitive LLS used	High-gainers	63	6.81	0.72	.99
	Mid-gainers	45	6.62	0.81	
	Low-gainers	40	6.58	1.24	
Number of affective LLS used	High-gainers	63	11.33	1.39	.92
	Mid-gainers	45	10.96	1.97	
	Low-gainers	40	10.88	2.33	
Number of LLS used	High-gainers	63	21.95	1.82	.94
	Mid-gainers	45	21.42	3.12	
	Low-gainers	40	21.18	4.06	

Table 15.7 Chi-square data for reading comprehension test: Likert-scale survey

<i>Ranks</i>		<i>Chi-square</i>		
		<i>N</i>	<i>Kruskal-Wallis mean rank</i>	<i>Chi-square</i>
Cognitive LLS	High-gainers	63	79.13	1.69
	Mid-gainers	45	69.10	
	Low-gainers	39	71.37	
Metacognitive LLS	High-gainers	63	81.56	4.16
	Mid-gainers	45	64.87	
	Low-gainers	39	72.33	
Affective LLS	High-gainers	63	81.59	3.75
	Mid-gainers	45	70.39	
	Low-gainers	39	65.91	
Overall LLS	High-gainers	63	81.00	3.11
	Mid-gainers	45	67.22	
	Low-gainers	39	70.51	

eight analyzed areas. In fact, in almost all areas, high-gainers reported the lowest LLS scores for this test. Tables 15.8 and 15.9 show these findings. This seems to suggest that oral proficiency may be more affected by LLSs other than those in the traditional cognitive-metacognitive-affective paradigm, such as those in the SI category proposed by Oxford (2011). This will be discussed in more detail later.

Table 15.8 ANOVA data for OPI: number of LLS used

Descriptives			ANOVA			
		N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Number of cognitive LLS used	High-gainers	30	3.57	0.82	1.50	0.23
	Mid-gainers	48	3.79	0.46		
	Low-gainers	53	3.64	0.56		
Number of metacognitive LLS used	High-gainers	30	6.63	0.72	0.26	0.77
	Mid-gainers	48	6.75	0.81		
	Low-gainers	53	6.74	0.68		
Number of affective LLS used	High-gainers	30	11.07	2.03	0.32	0.73
	Mid-gainers	48	11.04	1.70		
	Low-gainers	53	11.28	1.32		
Number of LLS used	High-gainers	30	21.23	3.19	0.90	0.41
	Mid-gainers	48	21.81	2.36		
	Low-gainers	53	21.94	1.78		

Table 15.9 Chi-square data for OPI: Likert-scale survey

Ranks			Chi-square		
		N	Mean rank	Chi-square	Sig.
Cognitive LLS	High-gainers	30	67.40	.24	.89
	Mid-gainers	48	67.29		
	Low-gainers	53	64.04		
Metacognitive LLS	High-gainers	30	64.78	2.01	.37
	Mid-gainers	48	71.91		
	Low-gainers	53	61.34		
Affective LLS	High-gainers	30	63.30	.22	.90
	Mid-gainers	48	66.17		
	Low-gainers	53	67.38		
Overall LLS	High-gainers	30	66.47	.94	.63
	Mid-gainers	48	69.69		
	Low-gainers	53	62.40		

LLS Preferences Based on Aggregate Performance

To analyze the overall LLS preferences of this population, an aggregate grouping was obtained by summing the total of their group numbers and dividing the results into three groups (high-gainers = Group One; mid-gainers = Group Two; low-gainers = Group Three). If a learner was in Group One in Listening, Group Two in Reading, and Group Three in Speaking, his/her total was four ($1+2+1 = 4$). Student totals ranged from three to eight. Students with a total of three or four were categorized into the

aggregate high-gainer group, those with a five or six were categorized into the mid-gainer group, and those with a seven or eight were categorized into the low-gainer group. Tables 15.10–15.12 show the ranked LLS preferences for each aggregate group of learners.

While statistically significant differences between high-gainers and mid-gainers, and between mid-gainers and low-gainers, were not evident, some interesting differences between high-gainers and low-gainers in the dimensions of metacognitive and affective LLSs were found. Effect size statistics, for example, show that high-gainers reported a higher preference for Number 32: Planning: Seeking Opportunities to Interact with a medium effect size ($d = 0.45$), Number 12: Dealing with Anxiety—Thinking Positively with a medium-high effect size ($d = 0.65$), and Number 31: Motivating Oneself: Making Friends with a medium effect size ($d = 0.53$). Low-gainers, on the other hand, ranked the following three strategies higher than high-gainers: Number 30: Motivating Oneself: Maintaining instrumental motivation (medium-high effect size: $d = -0.65$), Number 15: Dealing with anxiety: Avoiding Discouragement due to complexity of the target language (TL) (medium effect size: $d = -0.41$), and Number 26: Dealing with anxiety: Discussing problems with others (small-to-medium

Table 15.10 Aggregate LLS rankings for high-gainers

<i>LLS rankings—high-gainers (Group 1; N = 43)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
11: Practicing TL: learning from mistakes	4.86	0.35
31: Motivating oneself: making friends	4.67	0.47
30: Motivating oneself: maintaining instrumental motivation	4.53	0.70
18: Practicing TL: approximating message	4.47	0.55
32: Planning: seeking opportunities to interact	4.42	0.73
24: Evaluating: using feedback to improve	4.40	0.69
17: Dealing with anxiety: not losing face in front of peers	4.37	0.66
12: Dealing with anxiety: thinking positively	4.35	0.65
10: Evaluating: using feedback to improve	4.28	0.80
16: Motivating oneself: maintaining integrative motivation	4.26	0.69
23: Dealing with anxiety: getting regular exercise	4.26	0.90
29: Dealing with anxiety: avoiding discouragement when overwhelmed by novelty of TL	4.23	0.78
22: Planning: setting goals	4.23	0.65
33: Practicing TL: keeping a vocabulary notebook/list	4.21	1.19
20: Self-regulating: taking responsibility for learning	4.16	0.75
28: Evaluating: monitoring accuracy	4.14	0.91
34: Planning: organizing time	4.05	1.05
25: Creating structure: notetaking	4.00	1.18
19: Planning: setting goals	3.79	0.91
14: Dealing with anxiety: avoiding discouragement after making mistakes	3.65	1.02
27: Dealing with anxiety: talking positively	3.60	1.00
26: Dealing with anxiety: discussing problems w/others	3.44	1.18
15: Dealing with anxiety: avoiding discouragement due to complexity of TL	2.88	1.28

Table 15.11 Aggregate LLS rankings for mid-gainers

LLS rankings—mid-gainers (Group 2; N = 71)	Mean	SD
11: Practicing TL: learning from mistakes	4.75	0.53
31: Motivating oneself: making friends	4.54	0.75
30: Motivating oneself: maintaining instrumental motivation	4.49	0.79
18: Practicing TL: approximating message	4.32	0.69
24: Evaluating: using feedback to improve	4.32	0.77
10: Evaluating: using feedback to improve	4.31	0.79
23: Dealing with anxiety: getting regular exercise	4.20	0.86
32: Planning: seeking opportunities to interact	4.17	0.86
20: Self-regulating: taking responsibility for learning	4.17	0.81
22: Planning: setting goals	4.15	0.75
12: Dealing with anxiety: thinking positively	4.14	0.93
16: Motivating oneself: maintaining integrative motivation	4.13	0.83
17: Dealing with anxiety: not losing face in front of peers	4.10	0.78
29: Dealing with anxiety: avoiding discouragement when overwhelmed by novelty of TL	4.07	0.68
25: Creating structure: notetaking	3.83	0.89
28: Evaluating: monitoring accuracy	3.82	0.99
34: Planning: organizing time	3.82	0.98
19: Planning: setting goals	3.73	1.03
14: Dealing with anxiety: avoiding discouragement after making mistakes	3.73	0.93
33: Practicing TL: keeping a vocabulary notebook/list	3.66	1.25
27: Dealing with anxiety: talking positively	3.42	1.10
26: Dealing with anxiety: discussing problems w/others	3.39	1.21
15: Dealing with anxiety: avoiding discouragement due to complexity of TL	2.96	1.41

effect size: $d = -0.33$). These findings seem to support Adams's (2006) findings that metacognitive and affective strategies are particularly relevant in the SA environment and the language gains that are a result of it.

Qualitative Analysis

For the 14 structured interviews (5 in Russian and Chinese; 4 in Arabic), each student's oral comments were coded to first identify common routine activities in which LLSs could be observed. Since the identification of these activities was an important part of the interview process, each student's activity grid was used as a vital tool during the interviews. While most students inevitably mentioned in-class interactions in their interviews, it was interesting to note how their activities outside of class were both similar and different. For coding purposes, LLSs observed in the interviews were coded using Oxford's Strategic Self-Regulation (S²R) Model of Language Learning (2011). Using S²R categories as codifications, an LLS profile for each language was created for each of the previously discussed groups in order to identify the differences between them.

In Russian, two learners were classified as mid-gainers, one was classified as a high-gainer, and one was classified as a low-gainer. While these learners were located in Latvia, Kazakhstan, and Moldova, common routine activities were mentioned by most. In addition to in-class activities, learners identified athletic workouts, meals

Table 15.12 Aggregate LLS rankings for low-gainers

<i>LLS rankings—low-gainers (Group 3; N = 17)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
30: Motivating oneself: maintaining instrumental motivation	4.88	0.33
11: Practicing TL: learning from mistakes	4.65	0.49
31: Motivating oneself: making friends	4.41	0.51
24: Evaluating: using feedback to improve	4.35.	0.70
18: Practicing TL: approximating message	4.24	0.83
23: Dealing with anxiety: getting regular exercise	4.24	0.90
16: Motivating oneself: maintaining integrative motivation	4.18	0.64
22: Planning: setting goals	4.18	0.81
17: Dealing with anxiety: not losing face in front of peers	4.18	0.73
10: Evaluating: using feedback to improve	4.12	0.86
20: Self-regulating: taking responsibility for learning	4.12	0.86
32: Planning: seeking opportunities to interact	4.12	0.60
29: Dealing with anxiety: avoiding discouragement when overwhelmed by novelty of TL	4.06	0.66
25: Creating structure: notetaking	4.00	0.94
12: Dealing with anxiety: thinking positively	3.94	0.66
14: Dealing with anxiety: avoiding discouragement after making mistakes	3.88	0.93
26: Dealing with anxiety: discussing problems w/others	3.82	1.13
33: Practicing TL: keeping a vocabulary notebook/list	3.76	1.09
27: Dealing with anxiety: talking positively	3.76	0.66
34: Planning: organizing time	3.76	0.66
28: Evaluating: monitoring accuracy	3.53	1.07
19: Planning: setting goals	3.47	0.80
15: Dealing with anxiety: avoiding discouragement due to complexity of TL	3.47	1.59

outside of home, meals with host families, riding public transportation, nightlife, and cultural excursions as their most significant experiences requiring interaction in the target language (TL). When describing these activities and the strategies they used during them, high-, mid-, and low-gainers reported heavy use of SI strategies, such as interacting to learn, overcoming knowledge gaps, and dealing with sociocultural contexts and identities. As a result, they also reported significant use of corresponding meta-SI strategies, such as paying attention to/planning for/orchestrating strategies for contexts, communication, and culture. For the low-gainer, little evidence, however, was offered for the use of affective strategies with only moderate use of cognitive strategies, such as auditory and haptic memorization and using available resources. In contrast, mid-gainers reported significant use of affective strategies, such as activating supportive emotions, and their corresponding meta-affective strategies, such as paying attention to affect and orchestrating strategies for affect. The high-gainer, while also exhibiting significant use of SI, meta-, and affective strategies, reported heavier use of cognitive strategies, such as auditory and haptic memorization, combining/linking several ideas, activating knowledge, and using available resources. This also corroborates the aforementioned partial findings that high-gainers tend to use more cognitive strategies than the other groups.

Additionally, in terms of LLS-tactic chains, which can be defined as "...organized, sequential, or interlocking strategies manifested in a given situation by

specific tactics” (Oxford, 2011, p. 34), higher gainers seemed to more capably describe these chains than others. For example, while both the high-gainer and low-gainer mentioned public transportation as a context in which they interacted with native speakers, both approached the activity differently. The low-gainer found the use of *marshrutkas* (mini-van group taxis) very irksome and only found them useful for learning basic small talk. In this context, in order to deal with the rate of native speech, he described a largely SI tactic chain of listening carefully (paying attention), then asking for repetition, and clarifying with questions (asking for clarification). The high-gainer, while also describing similar strategies in a similar context, went on to describe other more sophisticated cognitive tactic chains involving noticing cultural contextual cues, memorizing a useful phrase, and then practicing it until it became second nature (using the auditory sense to memorize).

Deep processing strategies are defined by Oxford (2011) as strategies that “facilitate understanding, increase meaningful mental associations, and are the most useful strategies for long-term retention of information” (pp. 29–30). Learners employing these strategies tend to demonstrate more intrinsic motivation and better L2 performance. When describing the aforementioned strategy-tactic chain, the high-gainer also went into detail about a deep processing strategy in which his interactions led to what he called “databanks” in his head which allowed him to associate word meanings and grammatical features with specific contextual cues based on his various social interactions. He mentioned using these databanks both in country during SA and back at home afterward. Neither the low- nor mid-gainer provided evidence of such long-term language retention based on strategy use. In general, the low- and mid-gainers seemed to have more difficulty reflecting on and describing these learning processes than the high-gainer.

In Chinese, three learners were classified as mid-gainers, one as low-gainer and one as high-gainer. Located in both China and Taiwan, these learners also identified athletic workouts, meals out, and cultural excursions as significant sources of routine interaction with native speakers, most of which involved SI strategies similar to those employed by the Russian SA participants.

In contrast to their Russian SA counterparts, however, nearly all of the Chinese SA interviewees reported spending more time on homework during their semester abroad and spent more time in the interview describing homework strategies, such as using the senses to understand and remember and conceptualizing with details. On several occasions, respondents mentioned how this requirement generally led to fewer opportunities for social interaction throughout the SA experience. For example, vocabulary acquisition strategies were mentioned by many of the Chinese SA participants, more so than other learning processes. In this context, the low-gainer mentioned a tactic chain of reading a news story line-by-line (paying attention), writing out new vocabulary (using the haptic sense to memorize), using a smartphone app to create flash cards (obtaining resources for cognition), and then using the flash cards to review and memorize (using the visual sense to memorize). The mid- and high-gainers also mentioned this context but described more sophisticated and detailed tactic chains, such as writing words out in pinyin, then in characters 5–6 times while breaking the characters into parts to memorize (analyzing and decoding), then writing the terms in English, then putting them in a sentence (using the haptic sense to memorize), and then reading them aloud (using the auditory sense to memorize). As with the Russian SA participants, the mid- and high-gainers seemed more capable of reflecting on and describing their learning processes than their low-gainer counterparts.

Once again, the high-gainer in this group also reported more deep processing strategies than their lower gainer counterparts. This manifested itself in more instances of metastrategy use in multiple strategy dimensions. These strategies involved decorating a vocabulary notebook with stationary to increase motivation to learn vocabulary (meta-affective), monitoring success regularly (metacognitive), making lists of goals (various metastrategy dimensions), shaping her relationships with interlocutors (meta-SI), and seeking out specific areas of interaction to gain experience (meta-SI).

In Arabic, one learner was classified as mid-gainer and three as low-gainers. Two of the low-gainers studied abroad in Morocco, while the others studied in Jordan. While the SA environment is significantly different in both locations, a few common routine activities were mentioned by respondents. These included interactions during cultural excursions, interactions with taxi drivers, and interactions with peer coaches. In Jordan, respondents also mentioned interaction with children as part of their service learning component, while respondents in Morocco mentioned the short time spent with a host family at the beginning of the SA immersion. The mid-gainer in the Jordan program differed from the low-gainers primarily in the depth of SI strategies that he employed. These primarily dealt with dealing with sociocultural contexts (small talk vs. discussions of foreign affairs), overcoming knowledge gaps (keeping a notebook of cultural observations), and their associated metastrategies (paying attention, monitoring). Interestingly, the low-gainer, a female, reported similar use of SI strategies but to a markedly lower level due primarily to cultural gender barriers that tended to isolate her from others. While she and the mid-gainer referred to interaction during athletic workouts, she was limited in her interaction and the strategies she could employ by these cultural norms.

Unlike their Russian and Chinese SA counterparts, Arabic SA participants provided minimal evidence for the use of strategy-tactic chains. This could be supported in part by the fact that there were no high-gainers in the group but is likely due to the unique SA environment of the Middle East. According to post-SA surveys, SA participants in the Middle East programs reported speaking English 60–65 percent of their time abroad. Although not ideal, this is partly due to the limited opportunities for interactions in the TL. English-speaking roommates in dorms and less familiarity with the Moroccan and Levantine dialects also played a role. On at least one occasion, a low-gainer reported being made fun of for speaking Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in public. As a result, Arabic SA participants reported using more meta-SI strategies to seek out interaction in their dialect whenever possible. All four of the Arabic SA participants reported taxi drivers as their most significant source of practice in the dialect and only in this context did the one mid-gainer in the group provide an instance of a tactic chain: listening closely (paying attention for communication), answering by trial and error (interacting to learn), memorizing a phrase by sound (using the auditory sense to memorize), and then asking a teacher for help with it later (asking for clarification).

In sum, across all three languages, higher gainers seemed better equipped to describe their own language-learning processes, reported use of longer and more sophisticated strategy-tactic chains, and demonstrated more use of deep processing strategies than their lower gaining counterparts.

Implications and Future Directions

Of particular interest in the aforementioned quantitative analysis were the findings that high-gainers reported the lowest LLS scores in relation to the OPI. This seemingly

unexpected finding, however, points to an important conclusion about the need to move beyond the traditional cognitive-metacognitive-affective LLS paradigm. As confirmed in the qualitative analysis, SI strategies in the newer S²R Model seem to play a larger role in SA communication contexts for all gainer types. Future study of this aspect of LLS use will shed light on which SI strategies are most effective and in which contexts.

Of further interest was the finding that high-gainers in all three languages seemed more capable of describing the strategic nature of their learning processes. Even the activity grids filled out by high-gainers were more detailed. While retrospective self-reporting instruments like activity grids have been shown to have limitations in accurately identifying detailed social interaction behaviors (Fernández & Gates Tapia, 2016), this finding may be indicative of a learner's ability or inability to describe strategic learning. In the future, this characteristic will need to be studied further in connection with the SA context. Is the ability to describe their own strategic language-learning processes an indicator of their ability to self-identify the LLSs they need to use in SA contexts?

Additionally, while the findings of the qualitative analysis support previous research in that more strategically self-regulated learners tend to use more deep processing strategies than surface strategies (Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon, & Deci, 2004 as in Oxford, 2011), this area deserves further study in the SA context. While the immediacy of task-completion needs in the SA context may lead to more surface strategies being used to simply complete the immediate tasks of social interaction, it will be important to investigate whether more strategically self-regulated learners purposefully go beyond this immediacy to focus on the deeper, more meaningful learning that can take place in every interaction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study of LLS use in an SA context sheds light on how individual differences affect language proficiency outcomes during SA. Understanding the complex interrelationship between learners' individual differences, the SA environment, and the social interactions they choose to participate in is crucial in demystifying the magic of SA and the language-learning processes at work in this context. In both the quantitative and qualitative analyses of this study, high-gainers in L2 proficiency reported using more LLSs than their lower gaining counterparts. This level of strategic self-regulation is also seen in the complexity of their strategy-tactic chains as well as their increased use of deep processing strategies compared to their lower gaining counterparts. Variables unique to each SA location also play a role in the opportunities for interaction afforded by the environment and further illustrate the importance of task and context in L2 SA. The cognitive-metacognitive-affective paradigm, while useful, is not enough to fully elucidate the use of LLSs abroad. Sociocultural constraints and interactive dynamics are just as important to obtain a fuller picture of strategic self-regulated learning behaviors in SA.

Key Terms

Language-learning strategies
Study abroad
Self-regulation

Strategic self-regulated learning
Language proficiency
Intercultural competence

Appendix 15.1

Pre- and Post-immersion L2 Proficiency Scores

<i>POST</i>									
<i>Listening (DLPT)</i>	0	0+	1	1+	2	2+	3	<i>Total</i>	
PRE	0	22	27	9	14	2	2	0	76
	0+	5	12	10	12	7	2	0	48
	1	0	1	2	3	2	1	1	10
	1+	0	0	0	4	5	2	0	11
	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2+	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		27	40	21	33	16	7	4	148

<i>POST</i>									
<i>Reading (DLPT)</i>	0	0+	1	1+	2	2+	3	<i>Total</i>	
PRE	0	18	19	14	19	5	0	0	75
	0+	3	14	13	6	8	2	0	46
	1	0	0	4	10	2	3	1	20
	1+	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	4
	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Total		21	33	31	35	17	10	1	148

<i>POST</i>								
<i>Speaking (OPI)</i>	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	<i>Total</i>	
PRE	NM	1	2	4	2	0	0	9
	NH	2	19	20	12	1	1	55
	IL	0	1	15	16	6	0	38
	IM	0	0	3	7	7	3	20
	IH	0	0	1	1	3	3	8
Total		3	22	43	38	17	7	130

Appendix 15.2

Sample Activity Grid

List typical weekly routine interactions with native speakers during your Semester Abroad. Include interactions in- and outside of class, at home, in transit, free time. Include amount of time typically spent in each interaction, where they took place, and who your interlocutor was.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>0800 wakeup →</p> <p>Breakfast →</p> <p>~5 min. w/ cashier, speaking chinese</p> <p>→ chatting online or some hangout w/ friends (1000-1900)</p> <p>w/ some english (very little mixed in)</p> <p>1900-2300 Go out to dinner with only using Chinese.</p>	<p>→</p> <p>chatting online & some hangouts.</p> <p>HuK time. (usually in English)</p> <p>1800-2200 Hang out with friends</p>	<p>→</p> <p>1000-1600 Classes Lunch</p> <p>1000-1600 Classes Lunch.</p>	<p>→</p> <p>Rest & HW time, usually spoke english with some chatting online in chinese.</p>	<p>→</p> <p>1000-1200 Classes in chinese</p> <p>1200-1600 Community Service in chinese</p> <p>1700-2200 Hangout w/ Friends in Chinese</p>	<p>TRAVEL (usually completely in Chinese)</p>	

1900-2200
volleyball practice &
Speaking Chinese.

Further Readings

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understanding communicative competence in SA, and language socialization and identity.)

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Personal Growth

Project Perseverance and Journaling

Toward Creating a Culture of Engagement during Study Abroad

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Introduction/Definitions

Study abroad (SA) is often a time of considerable personal growth. What most students fail to appreciate as they prepare to travel is that this growth is typically the result of overcoming significant challenges. The combination of culture shock and unrealistic expectations all too often leads students to forget their lofty goals. Given that interpersonal communication is inextricably linked with one's sense of identity and well-being (Norton, 2000), language learning and use, especially in intensive SA contexts, can be particularly bruising to one's sense of self-worth (Pellegrino Aveni, 2005). As a result, many fail to fully embrace their in-country learning opportunities and retreat into "home cultural islands," eating, socializing, and sightseeing with fellow students (Wilkinson, 1998). A good deal of recent research points to the need and value of interventions to help students make more of their intensive SA experiences (Trentman, 2012; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009).

Reports of interventions in SA abound, from preprogram training to journaling to training in strategies, all with the goal of facilitating conscious engagement in the target language and culture during SA. Many efforts are aimed at alleviating anxiety and stress, and improving learners' motivation to expend effort over the course of the SA experience.

Project Perseverance (ProjP) is one such intervention. Launched in 2010, it seeks to provide training resources and document their impact. In particular, ProjP addresses the psychological and emotional challenges of language learning, especially in an SA context. The goal is to help students *persevere* in their language-learning efforts, even when the challenges of SA seem overwhelming. Perseverance, as defined by Rebecca Oxford (2016) in a groundbreaking volume on positive psychology in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), is the "continued effort to do or achieve

something despite difficulties, failure or opposition” (p. 29). For her, perseverance entails resilience, hope, and optimism. In this chapter, we examine how journaling may contribute to learners’ persevering and explore students’ narratives for evidence of this.

Previous Literature

Journaling is among the interventions recommended for SA. Plews and Misfeld (2016) indicate that most student journals discussed in SA research are introduced as part of the research study design to gather data on intercultural awareness and not as a pedagogical intervention (in the target language) intended to enhance students’ language acquisition or linguistic awareness. Even when journaling is intended for the benefit of research, it can be an effective intervention that encourages accountability (Cohen & Shively, 2007) and self-awareness (Stewart, 2010).

Journaling has a long and respected history as a technique for achieving therapeutic insight and personal change. Early case-study literature demonstrates how journal writing facilitates processes of self-reflection, self-regulation, and self-guidance (Farber, 1953), which are widely recognized as important to autonomous language learning (Bown, 2009; Dörnyei, 2009). In their handbook for learners, Paige, Andrew, Mikk, Chi, and Lassegard (2009) advise that journaling can help students make more of their SA experience. However, research studies on the effectiveness of journaling during SA are rare. Hunley’s (2008) study focuses on the mental health and functioning of students studying in Rome. She found no correlation between the frequency of journaling and various measures of students’ well-being. However, she did find that focusing on emotions, thoughts, and solutions while journaling correlated with a variety of measures of well-being. She concludes that the *content* of journaling is more important for student functioning than its *quantity*.

Research on journaling and reflective or expressive writing in general psychology literature indicates that certain types of reflective writing are associated with increased well-being. Scholars theorize that expressive writing may facilitate self-regulation (Cameron & Nicholls, 1998) and the adoption of adaptive behaviors to cope with stressors or challenges. Indeed, Hodges, Keeley, and Grier (2005) suggest that reflection, including reflective journaling, can develop resilience in individuals, a key feature of perseverance. Reflecting in writing has the capacity to significantly benefit SA students. However, given the stresses common to SA, the challenge lies in convincing students to use precious time to reflect on their experiences in writing. Stewart (2010) found that six of her eight participants reported that they viewed the journaling requirement positively, but two were less than enthusiastic.

In this study, we examine the extent to which an SA program may be succeeding in creating a culture of reflection and self-awareness. To this end, we examine changes in the *amount* of journaling (total word count) as well as changes in the affective and cognitive content of the journals. We further examine student responses to an exit survey question about the effectiveness of journaling. Qualitative analysis of the students’ journals provides insights into how journaling enhances reflection and self-regulation, and ultimately leads to perseverance.

Methods and Procedures

A variety of data sources, both quantitative and qualitative, document the students' experience and the role that ProjP interventions played (or failed to play) in helping them to make more of their SA experience. Most data sources are regular features of this SA program, part of the institution's commitment to addressing student needs, measuring progress, and constant improvement. For example, the exit survey provides perhaps the best source of data for quantifying the students' view of the effectiveness of ProjP interventions. Student journals, group processing sessions, and interviews provide important additional insight into their perceptions of ProjP and their experiences, and play a significant role in informing the conclusions drawn later.

Data Analysis

In this study, we focus on the journal entries of the 2013–2015 cohorts. These 1167 journal entries were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The number of cognitive and affective words in the student weekly journal entries were assessed using the LIWC2007: Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count software package (Pennebaker, Booth, & Francis, 2007). Originally designed to facilitate inquiry into expressive writing, the software determines the percentage of words in a text from particular categories. In the present study, the causation words category (including such words as think, consider, and know) was used to assess the cognitive content of a text. The affective words category (including words such as happy, love, and worried) was used to assess the emotional content. *NVivo*, software for qualitative and mixed methods research, was used to analyze the journals. The research team identified patterns and themes in the data, and then discussed these together. As they identified themes, they performed member-checks with individual SA participants via e-mail or Facebook messaging.

The Research Setting

Launched in 2010, ProjP was created in response to the needs of learners hoping to achieve "professional-level proficiency" in languages of the Middle East. A pilot study focused on students from one US institution participating in an extended period of intensive study in the Arab world. A variety of substantive changes were made in the SA program thereafter to facilitate student perseverance, including adding ProjP case studies and biofeedback training to the preprogram preparation course, weekly interviews with program staff, group processing sessions, and speaking appointments with trained tutors. These interventions seek to help students achieve their goal of advanced-level proficiency in speaking and reading.

Students attended classes approximately three hours a day, five days a week, in a private institute in Amman, Jordan. They also met one-on-one with tutors to practice speaking three times a week and to review their writing twice a week. Participants are required to speak Arabic with locals outside of class two hours a day, five days a week, and to read articles selected from the newspaper for the same amount of time. They lived in apartments with fellow students. Additional program details can be found in Belnap, Bown, Dewey, Belnap, and Steffen (2016).

Weekly journaling is a key feature. Students report on their language-learning progress online and reflect on the week's successes and challenges, review goals they may have set for themselves, and make new ones, all in order to help them process the emotions they are experiencing and become more self-aware. Though journaling has long been a feature of the program, not all students have viewed journaling as useful, in spite of the fact that journaling has been shown to contribute significantly to the improvement of mental and physical health (Baikie & Wilhelm, 2005).

Participants

A total of 120 undergraduate students (38 females and 82 males) and one male graduate student in Public Administration participated in a 14-week SA program in Amman, Jordan, during the fall semesters of 2013, 2014, and 2015. None were exposed to Arabic spoken in the home, but a few did begin studying Arabic as early as eighth grade. One student was excluded from the study because she was not a full participant. To qualify for the SA program, all students completed four semesters of rigorous Arabic study.¹ All had some ability in Levantine spoken Arabic, given that this is a core part of their home university's curriculum: Levantine for most oral communication and Modern Standard Arabic for reading and writing. Most students were Middle East Studies/Arabic majors, with Linguistics, International Relations, and Political Science being the next most common majors and a variety of others also represented, such as Biology, Civil Engineering, Elementary Education, English, History, and Psychology.

Pre- and Postprogram Testing

The students' oral proficiency in Arabic was assessed with an official Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). 2013 and 2014 students were interviewed over the telephone by Language Testing International testers; 2015 students were interviewed face to face by certified testers in Jordan.

Exit Survey

At the end of each program, an anonymous exit survey was conducted. Students ranked ProjP interventions and other program features on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from "very ineffective" to "very effective." They also responded to open-ended questions, such as "Please comment regarding the effectiveness (or lack of) of any specific activities listed in the previous questions. How did they impact you? Why were they effective (or not effective)?"

Results and Discussion

Over time, the students wrote significantly more in their weekly learning journals, as shown in Table 16.1. Using lexical analysis methods developed by Pennebaker et al. (2007), we found that student use of affective language significantly increased, while their use of cognitive language significantly decreased. *P*-values are from a simple linear regression of each variable over time.

Since the 2011 SA program, each new cohort of students has been trained using case studies primarily drawn from the journal entries of previous participants.

Table 16.1 Quantitative changes in student journaling by year

Metric	2013	2014	2015	p
Average number of words per student	2,086	2,340	2,887	0.01
% Cognitive	19.9	19.6	19.1	0.03
% Affective	5.3	5.6	5.9	0.01
Number of students	29	33	46	

Table 16.2 Results of exit survey

Prompt	N	Average	Standard Deviation
2011 "Submitting regular journal entries"	52	4.1	1.72
2014 "Submitting daily (online) reporting and weekly reflecting and planning"	15*	4.67	1.23
2015 "Submitting daily (online) reporting and weekly reflecting and planning"	46	4.80	1.51

* 2014 ratings may not be representative of the full group, given that fewer than half of the students completed the survey. No survey was administered in 2013. Data from 2011 are included as an alternative reference point.

Students are repeatedly urged, in the preparation course and in Jordan, to learn from the experience and journaling of former students who were unlikely success stories.² These case studies, coupled with an increased emphasis on journaling, likely account for the increase in writing and affective content over time. In response to the end-of-program survey, students have increasingly rated the effectiveness of weekly reporting higher, as found in Table 16.2. In 2011, journaling received the lowest rating of any ProjP intervention (Belnap et al., 2016), and student comments regularly described this program requirement as “busy work.” The 2014 ratings for journaling were a significant improvement over 2011’s, but no student rated this activity as “very effective.” In 2015, five students did so.

Qualitative Analysis

In spite of the quantitative differences between the 2014 and 2015 journals, a thematic analysis of the journal entries did not reveal notable differences between the two groups. The journals reflect a predictable pattern of cultural adjustment: a honeymoon stage, in which the learners found the program exhilarating, followed by a phase many referred to as “hitting the wall” or simply a “mid-semester slump,” during which they found themselves apathetic and discouraged, and finally a period of acceptance, during which they regained their motivation and were able to find satisfaction in the program. There are, of course, variations on this theme: Some students found themselves homesick and anxious upon arrival—especially if their language skills were particularly weak or they had left a spouse at home.

The journal entries do, however, reveal significant buy-in on the part of the students into the SA program in Jordan. Since the inception of ProjP, program directors have made a concerted effort to share the experiences of previous participants, demonstrating the beneficial effects of various program interventions. Additionally, many participants are acquainted with past program participants who tout the benefits

of the program while also talking up its difficulty and the requirement for commitment. Thus, program directors and previous participants engage in a discourse that constructs the Jordan program as a program for serious students of Arabic, offering great rewards to those who embrace it. As a result, many learners have bought into the program's objectives and methods prior to arriving in Jordan.

This buy-in is reflected particularly in journal entries from the 2015 groups, who explicitly described some aspect of faith or trust in the program, or in the promises made by the program directors. In 2013, for example, no explicit references to trust in the program were made. In 2014, only five explicit references were made by four different students. In contrast, in the 2015 journals 12 different students made 17 explicit references to faith in the program or trust in the promises made by the directors. Absence of evidence does not mean evidence of absence, however; the 2013 and 2014 students may have had as much trust in the program as the 2015 cohort, even though they did not explicitly state it. However, the fact that several 2015 participants explicitly stated their faith in the program demonstrates that it was salient to their experience in Jordan and quite possibly to their ability to self-regulate. Indeed, faith in the program gave them hope that they could achieve their goals; hope facilitates perseverance, entailing self-regulation.

For the purposes of this chapter, “faith in the program” is understood as “buy-in”: a firm belief that a particular practice or program will prove useful. In journal entries from both 2014 and 2015, students expressed their belief in the ultimate benefits of the program and in sticking to the requirements, in spite of the difficulty or displeasure that the requirements might entail. For example, Participant 17 expressed his faith in weekly journaling: “To be absolutely frank I don’t like this, as in [writing about] my feelings, but I understand why I need to do it” [9/21/14]. Though he did not enjoy reflective writing, he understood the benefits and thus had “bought into” journaling. This student, who struggled as a language learner, also embraced the biofeedback training (breathing). He wrote about the debilitating stress he was experiencing at the end of the program and how breathing helped him. His preprogram OPI score was Intermediate Low with a final score of Advanced Mid. This score does not represent his typical performance, but the fact that he could speak this well even once underscores the results of his diligence in learning to speak Arabic. He noted in a telephone interview that he found that the journaling helped him to step back, mark progress, and set goals for moving ahead (personal communication 6/1/17).

Five students expressly wrote about their trust in the program as a whole. The quotation below is representative:

As we study about the OPI levels I feel like I’m not where I want to be yet, but I trust [the SA director]’s program to get me where I want to be. So I’m not too worried about it all, I know that I just need to keep pushing myself. It was a great week all together.

[Participant 27, 11/2/14]

This comment is particularly evocative, as the student had not yet seen the rewards associated with the program. Instead, he was expressing trust that the program would yield the promised benefits, helping him to stick with it. His faith proved justified as he improved his preprogram OPI score of Intermediate Mid to a final score

of Advanced Low. On his return home, he became an Arabic second major and later scored Advanced Mid.

Not all program participants were as trusting, recognizing that specific aspects of the program might work for most but not all program participants. For example, Participant 12 (2015) made the following statement about the reading program on 10/4/15:

I mean, I know that the program is designed to work for most people, but I am not seeing fruits for it currently and so do not know if it is for me or not. I know that I need vocabulary and speaking, and yet trust [the SA director] in his words....I'm kinda just stuck/torn.

He did, in fact, make gains similar to most other participants as measured by in-house tests, but, unfortunately, standardized reading scores are not available. Participant 17, discussed earlier, likewise expressed doubts, related more to his inability to perform all that was expected of him:

My faith in the program is somewhat shaky because I am either failing to do it to a 100% or that I can't keep juggling all the balls the program throws at me. Frankly I have loved this program and have seen growth but fail to grasp all of the grammar. I struggle with reading comprehension and fluency.

[10/9/14]

Others expressed overt doubts:

I was feeling disappointed that I will have spent four months in this great country, and at the end of it all would have plenty of memories of struggling through mountains of news articles...alone in my apartment. I couldn't help but feel that my personality, in conjunction with the course load, will have left me completely unfulfilled, and unmotivated by my experience in Jordan to keep learning Arabic.

I wanted this program to be constructed in such a way as to get me completely fluent in Arabic, get me an expansive network of professional contacts, make me life-long friends. [sic] make me better appreciate the Arab World [sic], and many other unrealistic expectations. While I know that most of the people on this program are able to successfully complete all the homework in such a way as to be motivating and exciting to them, get heavily involved in the city, and have plenty of free time to rest and recharge; I am not one of those people. I am realizing more and more, since the two processing sessions we have done with [the SA director], just what this program is and how it has been proven successful. I am understanding more about what it is aiming to do for me, and where I can expect to be level-wise with Arabic by the time I come home. I understand that this is a life-long investment, and I am barely now getting a realistic picture of where I am with Arabic, and where I can get if I do everything that I am personally up for doing in this program.

[Participant 41, 11/8/15]

Yet even this participant, whose goals for the program seem not to match those of others, still retained some faith in the program, recognizing "what it is aiming to do for me and where I can expect to be level-wise with Arabic by the time I come

home.” Even though he may not have felt himself capable of doing everything in the program, he expresses some hope in future abilities if he can “do everything that [he is] personally up for doing in this program.” He struggled before the SA program but ended up with Advanced Low on his final OPI and reported a number of highly satisfying speaking experiences in later journal entries. He scored Intermediate Mid before the program, thanks to having lived in the Arabic House where he was immersed in Arabic before embarking on SA.

Although the program cannot be ideally suited to each learner, students indicate remarkable “buy-in.” In fact, at times when the students’ trust in various aspects of the program seemed unfulfilled, participants tended to blame themselves—either their lack of ability or lack of motivation for the perceived failures.

In addition to trusting the program, the participants were typically willing to trust their mentors’ promises that they *would* learn Arabic. For example, one student twice reported a sense that she was not making progress but countered this by professing faith in an unseen progress:

I sometimes find myself feeling discouraged with the amount of progress I’m making in [formal Arabic], but as long as I keep reminding myself that I have actually made progress, even if I can’t see it all, I continue to feel the desire to progress.

[Participant 3, 10/24/15]

This student exhibited a high degree of self-awareness in her journaling and proved to be a model of perseverance. Her preprogram OPI score was Intermediate Mid with a final score of Intermediate High. Undeterred, she enrolled in an Arabic debate course the following semester where she continued to develop her speaking ability. Video of her performance at the end of the semester indicates that she could speak comfortably about topics such as gun control, but a subsequent OPI still rated her Intermediate High. She graduated and was soon hired to work with refugees and use Arabic on a daily basis.

Similarly, Participant 7 expressed his hope that improvement was just around the corner.

When we do the colloquial assignments..., even after having done the homework, I don’t really understand what’s going on. It’s like I am just teetering on the edge of understanding what’s going on, but just barely not crossing over the threshold, though I feel super, super close. So it can be hard sometimes, but hopefully that just means that with[in] the next few days I’ll be able to feel like I have crossed over that point and will start to grasp the colloquial stuff.

[10/10/15]

This student did persevere, including taking courses for Arabic majors the following semester. His preprogram OPI score was Intermediate Mid with a final score of Advanced Low.

In essence, one of the main themes to emerge from student journals was that of *hope*. Hope is recognized as a powerful force, capable of generating both motivation and resilience (Oxford, 2016). The recent literature on positive psychology offers multiple definitions of hope. One of the best-known theories is that of Snyder (2002). Snyder defined hope as a cognitive set involving individuals’ beliefs in (i) their

capacity to produce workable *pathways* to goals and (ii) their agency, that is their ability and intention to initiate and sustain movement via pathways toward those goals. In this theory of hope, pathways thinking involves the perceived competence to generate routes or pathways to particular goals. Research suggests that when facing challenges, individuals who score higher on measures of “hope” generate more pathways for facing the challenge and express more agency.

According to this theory, agency represents the perceived ability and intention to use strategies or pathways to reach goals. *Agency thinking* involves making positive statements to oneself about the ability to start and continue movement along a pathway and encouraging oneself to act. Agency comprises not only the ability to act by using strategies but the decision to do so (Rand & Cheavens, 2011). Hope, which subsumes agency, is an important component of perseverance, according to Oxford (2016). Though most theories of self-regulation do not account for hope, without hope, students have no motivation for regulating their learning processes.

Agency thinking is clearly indicated in many of the journal responses. For example, Participant 3 in 2015 (discussed earlier) indicated that she could *choose* not to be discouraged:

I'm realizing there are always things to work on and things to choose not to be discouraged by. And that I instead need to be reminded that I am making progress, and that as I continue to notice my mistakes and try to fix them I will continue to improve.

[11/12/15]

Participant 22 in 2015 also explicitly refused to be discouraged:

[This past week] was enlightening because it shows me all of my weaknesses. My lack of vocabulary, slow verb conjugation, and general lack of Arabic ability. This could be rather depressing to learn but... I'm here. And my desire to learn this language will not be dissuaded by an unsatisfactory beginning. I will try and build on the small relationships that I have built and will study to improve my knowledge and ability to discuss one particular topic a week.

[9/6/15]

He relentlessly maintained an optimistic outlook, as he tried to optimize his experiences during the program:

I am diligent in my efforts to maintain an optimistic outlook, constantly telling myself that I am making progress even though I cannot see it immediately. I have been quite tired recently and have started to incorporate short power naps into my daily routine. Difficulties aside, I am thrilled to have this opportunity and seek every day to make the most of it.

[10/3/15]

He had also struggled in his study of Arabic before SA. His preprogram OPI score was Intermediate Low with a final score of Advanced Low.

These students' journal entries reflect agency thinking with regard to *emotion control*. Whereas individuals without hope can feel that emotions are beyond their

individual control, individuals with hope feel that they can be in charge of their emotions. The journal entries from 2014 and 2015 are replete with learners being determined to get over their discouragement and make the next week better. Participant 2 reported feeling demoralized after receiving “tons and tons of criticism.” Her entry continues, “So this week I am determined to have a GREAT week!...It's going to be a great week full of progress” [11/1/15]. She was not well prepared, and her preprogram OPI score of Intermediate Low reflects this, but her final score was Advanced Low.

Similarly, Participant 4 reported some discouragement:

I think this is the first week that I've felt discouraged. Not tremendously, but I think it's because I realized that, starting next week, I only have FOUR MORE WEEKS to get to an Advanced-Low/Advanced-Mid level of speaking....But I'm OVER IT. I'm going to work extra hard on my verb forms over the next few weeks, because I think that'll help me more than anything.

[10/29/15]

She then lists three specific areas of focus for the coming week. In the same journal entry, she talks about how she learned to cope with her negative reactions to the sexual harassment she was experiencing:

Last week I talked a little bit about how the sexual harassment was bothering me, but this week I put up a few scriptures on my wall about not getting angry, about staying cool when I feel heated about something, and seeing those every morning when I pray has reminded me to pray for my own peace, as well as to stay calm in situations that are bothersome to me.

In this case, she decided to control her response and found motivational quotes to help her control her emotional responses. Appealing to a higher power to help her stay calm also demonstrates her own agency thinking—that emotional responses can be controlled even if the situation cannot. Her prayers are not so much that she will not be harassed but that she will find peace and stay calm. Her preprogram OPI score was Intermediate High with a final score of Advanced Low. She graduated as an Arabic second major and scored Advanced Mid.

Other examples of agency thinking are evident in the data. At times when students received negative feedback, many responded by finding the positive in the negative. For example, Participant 16 was crushed by a lower-than-expected exam score but managed to find something positive in the outcome:

My results from the midterm came back and I thought I had done better than the grade I received. I had actually been proud of myself immediately after.... My results changed that perception. Nonetheless, there were things I did well and things I did horribly wrong. I know how I need to improve.

[10/26/15]

He struggled throughout his study of Arabic. His preprogram and final OPI score were Intermediate Low, a reminder that agency thinking and awareness do not guarantee one's desired outcomes.

Participant 5 managed to turn a negative classroom experience into a game of sorts:

I am feeling pretty bad about my issues class and not performing well. This was due to the fact that the teacher always dominated the lessons by constantly talking and seemed to want to grind our Arabic mistakes into our faces. In order to change how I felt this week, I started to make it into a game w[h]ere I try to “fight” here for speaking time. All class I am looking for an opportunity to interrupt her and give my opinion or ideas. By doing this I stay engaged in the class and get need[ed] speaking time.

[9/10/15]

Her preprogram and final OPI scores were Intermediate High, but her initial score was likely not representative. Whatever the case, she was a highly resourceful student who spent a great deal of time speaking Arabic. Though not the most accurate speaker, she was effective in making friends and communicating with them.

Though many of these students may have come to the program with “hopeful” attitudes and a measure of resilience, many journal entries indicate that program resources helped them to maintain their hope. Several students made reference to helpful comments that program directors had made to help them maintain their focus. Some appropriated a faculty member’s metaphor about “looking back down the mountain” to see their progress, rather than looking up to see how much further they had to go.

I took time this weekend to look back down the Mt. Everest that is language learning and appreciate the fact that I have made progress. I can give five minute presentations now on a variety of topics with little preparation or much longer presentations with some preparation. I can write a lot more and a lot faster, I can give comments in class in which I talk for quite a while and offer up more than one basic point. I can also do the basic things a lot easier and a lot better. I have made progress and I am excited about that. I am going to do all that I can to keep up this progress and not lose it these last couple weeks.

[Participant 10, 11/15/14]

He had a preprogram OPI score of Intermediate High with a final score of Advanced Low.

Another student referenced advice she had been given by the program director:

I am grateful for the talk that [the SA director] gave us about backward perspective, because if I didn’t pause and look back at where I was at the beginning of the program in comparison to now, I would be feeling VERY discouraged at this point.

[Participant 39, 11/8/15]

She did not make as much progress as she hoped, moving from Intermediate High to Advanced Low, but she has pushed on and as an Arabic second major enrolled in the debate course twice. In June of 2016, she was rated Advanced High in speaking and in 2017 was selected as a member of a team that participated in an international Arabic debate competition in Qatar.

Students made occasional references to a director's responses to their weekly journals. Participant 22, for instance, reported (mentioned earlier):

Thank you for the feedback, it's nice knowing that these words aren't disappearing into the ether like a bottle being tossed into a vast cosmic sea.

[10/10/15]

And Participant 7 from 2015 (mentioned earlier) reported via Facebook that he wrote so much because of e-mail responses that he received in response:

I wrote as much as I did honestly because it was a task given to me, and so I wanted to do it well.... If it had been an optional thing, I don't think I would have done as much or even anything at all, but since it was required, I wanted to get something out of it. I'm not someone who has previously found benefit in doing writing exercises like that; at least at first I didn't believe that I would benefit much from it. But there were a couple experiences where the writing helped a lot. Well, actually, for me, the writing wasn't what helped a lot; rather, it was some of the responses that you gave. There were a few pretty profound things that you said in addressing some concerns I expressed that made a big difference. To me, that was the most valuable thing about it. To me, the responses that were given, even if very brief, were the valuable part..., and once I started getting those back, it made me more committed to writing good, long, and honest reflections....

(10/14/16)

Feedback from other students confirms that he was not alone in finding greater benefit from writing about his experience than he anticipated. Of the seven students who responded via Facebook and were not accustomed to journaling before their Jordan experience, four reported that they learned a valuable skill in the process. Others mentioned that they were too busy; one preferred to process by talking with good friends.

In essence, most student journals express faith in the program and hope in their ability to learn the language. Their hope primarily involved agency thinking as they looked to find strategies to meet their goals. Support from program directors and teaching assistants, along with positive feedback from local teachers, helped to strengthen the students' hope in their eventual abilities. Hope in one's abilities, including agency thinking, is an important component of perseverance. Without hope for future benefit and a belief in one's abilities to achieve the future goals, learners have no motivation to persevere in their language learning.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

The journaling experience of the students of Arabic reported here indicates that a number of students who were previously not accustomed to processing their emotions and personal challenges in writing learned to benefit from journaling, but we caution that no intervention works equally well for all (Belnap et al., 2016). For example, one student, who benefits from journaling, reported by e-mail that her most effective processing resulted from her roommate's perceptive questions and willingness

to listen. We recommend that students be trained and encouraged to take advantage of a variety of tools to help them process their emotions and become more self-aware. We particularly recommend exposing students to examples of exemplary SA student journaling before and during their SA experience and that they begin to practice such journaling well before they travel. The first days of their beginning language class would be a particularly fitting time for them to practice, given that this is typically a time of higher anxiety (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

Some students are able to benefit from journaling without significant feedback. Others benefit considerably from knowing that someone is paying attention and understands their needs. Students are inundated with demands on their time, at home and abroad, and need to be regularly reminded of the benefits of mindful journaling. Just as the quality or content of their speaking appears to have significantly improved the student experience and outcomes in Jordan (Bown, Dewey, & Belnap, 2015), this study suggests that the quality or content of students' journaling likewise contributes to their ability to persevere and thrive during SA.

Limitations/Future Directions

The journal entries on which this study is based are far from the complete corpus of student writing during the program. Some also wrote in blogs and private journals. One student commented that he would have written more, but he was concerned about the amount of material program administrators had to read. One expressed that she did not write much because she preferred not to share personal details of her struggles. A more comprehensive approach to documenting the student reflection experience or lack thereof is highly recommended. We recommend a preprogram initial survey or interview and the use of a think-aloud protocol during the journaling process.

Conclusion

ProjP was designed to facilitate engagement in SA and to help learners persevere in the face of challenges. This chapter explores the role of journaling in this program. Qualitative and quantitative analyses support two broad conclusions: First, the program is succeeding in encouraging more and more effective student journaling. Second, journaling is implicated in the development of student faith and hope in the program.

Key Terms

Self-regulation	Affect
Hope	Study abroad interventions
Expressive writing	Arabic

Notes

- 1 Course evaluations for Arabic at this institution, for example, indicate that students spend more time studying outside of class than do students of Chinese and Japanese.
- 2 For examples of exemplary journaling, see <http://nmelrc.org/pp/arabic-success-stories/kylie>.

Further Reading

- MacIntyre, P. D., Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (Eds.) (2016). *Positive psychology in SLA*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. (This is the first book in Second Language Acquisition dedicated to theories in positive psychology and their implications for language teaching, learning, and communication. Chapters examine the characteristics of individuals, contexts, and relationships that facilitate learning: positive emotional states, such as love, enjoyment, and flow, and character traits, such as empathy, hardness, and perseverance.)
- Paige, R. M., Andrew, D. C., Mikk, B. K., Chi, J. C. and Lassegard, J. P. (2009). *Maximizing study abroad: A student's guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use*, 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota. (Aimed at students who want to make the most of their SA experience, this flexible and user-friendly guide helps students identify and use a wide variety of language- and culture-learning strategies. A companion teacher volume is available, serving as a useful text for predeparture SA preparation courses.)

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Identity

Identity and Study Abroad

Brandon Tullock

Introduction

In recent years, identity has become increasingly prominent as a construct of interest in study abroad (SA) research. This has occurred for several reasons. First, SA is a type of border-crossing experience involving immersion in a new cultural and linguistic context that brings about identity-related challenges. As Block (2007a) notes, “when individuals move across geographical and psychological borders, immersing themselves in new sociocultural environments, they find that their sense of identity is destabilized and that they enter a period of struggle to reach a balance” (p. 864). Second, since SA often involves a second language (L2) learning component, for many sojourners, it represents an opportunity to transition from learner to user of the target language, which in itself implies identity work. Furthermore, SA is often the first time sojourners are forced to grapple with self-construction through new linguistic and other semiotic means in situated interactions with real-world consequences. Third, SA is assumed to provide ample opportunities for engaging in rich, high-quality interaction with speakers of the target language, which will, in turn, propel learning benefits. However, as has been shown for language learners in such other naturalistic contexts as migration, access to the social networks of target language speakers and opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) within host communities is not a given but must be negotiated within the context of inequitable power structures, and this often requires learners to exercise considerable agency to reframe their relationship to their interlocutors and thereby resist marginalization (e.g., Norton, 2013). Finally, contemporary discourses surrounding international education conceive of identity-related personal growth as a benefit of SA, which overlaps with other expected linguistic, cultural, and professional outcomes (Kubota, 2016). For all of these reasons, SA lends itself well to the study of identity.

The bulk of SA research on identity has been carried out by scholars in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) who are interested in the complex relationship between identity, language learning, and SA. In line with contemporary applied linguistics

research on identity (Block, 2007a; Kinginger, 2009; Norton, 2013), these scholars are informed by poststructuralist understandings of identity and rely on ethnographic and narrative research methodologies. In this chapter, I provide an overview of this literature. First, I trace the emergence and development of identity as a construct of interest within SA research on language learning. Next, I synthesize major findings. Then, I survey the main research methods used to illuminate identity issues in SA. The chapter concludes with some discussion of practical implications and a few directions for future research.

Historical Perspectives

A survey of SA studies making reference to identity reveals that over the past two decades, identity has evolved from an emergent theme to an explicit focus in SA research and has been carried out using increasingly sophisticated theoretical frameworks and methodologies. The field of SA research has always been dominated by quantitative studies focusing on language-learning outcomes, but beginning in the mid-1990s, an increasing number of scholars began turning to qualitative methodologies to investigate SA as a process and focus on the individual and contextual factors shaping sojourners' linguistic and cultural experiences as well as their perceptions of these experiences (Tullock & Ortega, 2017). Within these early qualitative studies, identity emerged as a salient factor affecting the amount and nature of sojourners' interactions abroad and hence their language development (e.g., Polanyi, 1995; Siegal, 1996; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Twombly, 1995; Wilkinson, 1998). These scholars, who largely focused on participants in US-based programs, relied on introspective and observational methods of data collection, including learner narratives, ethnographic techniques, and recordings of naturally occurring interactions, often in combination. The scholars captured glimpses of sojourners who ended up withdrawing from learning after encountering unexpected cultural differences (Wilkinson, 1998) and experiencing racist (Talburt & Stewart, 1999) or sexist (Twombly, 1995) comments from locals as well as others who learned the kind of L2 language that would enable them to respond to such challenges (Polanyi, 1995).

In many ways, the rise of qualitative methodologies and the construct of identity within SA research mirror broader trends related to the social turn in the field of SLA (Block, 2003). It is within this larger context that identity research emerged and evolved into a burgeoning subfield of SLA, beginning with Bonny Norton's pioneering research on immigrant women in Canada (Norton, 2013; Norton Peirce, 1995). Central to SLA identity research are poststructuralist theories of identity, which reject essentialist notions of a biologically or socially determined self, instead conceiving of identity as multiple, contested, dynamic, and socially constructed in the context of inequitable power structures (e.g., Block, 2007a; Norton, 2013). SLA identity researchers investigate questions regarding how learners' evolving senses of self relate to the communities to which they belong or desire to belong as well as how learners exercise human agency to construct and negotiate identities across time and space under varying social conditions and structural constraints (Norton, 2013).

The epistemological and methodological growth within SLA set the stage for the emergence of a new wave of SA identity research, beginning in the mid-2000s. This literature has continued to focus mainly on North American participants

(e.g., Anya, 2016; Dressler & Dressler, 2016; Kinginger, 2004, 2016; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Plews, 2015; Trentman, 2015), but now, it also includes studies of participants in European-based SA programs (e.g., Brown, 2013; Patron, 2007) and students from the Asian Pacific Rim learning English as an international language (e.g., Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, & Brown, 2012; Jackson, 2008). These more recent identity studies continue to employ qualitative designs and ethnographic and narrative methods. However, whereas early SA identity studies tended to be framed in exploratory terms and traced identity as an emerging theme, contemporary SA studies articulate an explicit focus on identity issues from the outset, grounding their research in poststructuralist identity theories, sometimes in conjunction with sociocultural theories of learning. For example, Jackson (2008) combined poststructuralist identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005) with the notions of situated learning and communities of practice (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991). These more recent studies often include a critical perspective by focusing on the way in which conflicting discourses and ideologies give rise to identity-related conflicts in SA. For example, Kinginger (2016) has shown that for three US sojourners in France, perceptions of French gender roles were filtered through US-grounded neoliberal ideologies and postfeminist discourses, which these students drew on to position US gender norms as superior to those of France, thus rationalizing their experiences of alienation from the gender-related images and identity practices they perceived in France as well as their limited engagement with the host culture. Such studies' solid theoretical grounding offers a sharpened focus on the situated structural and agentive forces involved in the complex identity negotiations that take place in SA and the (supposedly) more or less permanent identity changes that occur as a result, including the more dramatic emergence of new "target language-mediated subject positions" (Block, 2007b, p. 7) or more moderate L2-related identity development in such domains as the ability to project desired identities through the L2 or changes in one's self-perception as a language learner and user (Benson et al., 2012). Thus, SA identity research has evolved with a dual emphasis on how identity issues affect the SA experience as well as how SA impacts sojourners' identities.

Synthesis of Major Findings

A number of substantial findings can be gleaned from studies focusing on identity issues in SA. The first is that, in the SA context, which combines border crossing with language learning, sojourners find their sense of self destabilized in multifarious ways. For one, they experience shifts in the saliency and availability of familiar identities. Wilkinson (1998) noted how national identity was foregrounded for a group of US students in France, while other identities and subgroup affiliations that had been relevant back home (e.g., membership in clubs or athletic teams) became less accessible. National identity was also salient for participants in Kinginger's (2008) study of US students in France. The students recounted unsettling incidents in which they were questioned by their French hosts regarding controversial current events related to US foreign policy and frequently found themselves linguistically and intellectually unprepared to deal with such challenges.

Some entirely new subject positions, such as the foreigner identity, also become available to sojourners by virtue of their going abroad. Self-perception as a foreigner often begins immediately upon arrival as a result of encounters with linguistic

and cultural differences in the host context. Variations on the foreigner identity (e.g., exchange student) may be ascribed to sojourners as official roles in institutional contexts or as unofficial labels that are imposed in informal interactions. Thus, the foreigner identity feels like an imposed identity that engenders feelings of vulnerability, marginalization, and stereotyping. Iino (2006) found that US students in Japan complained that as a consequence of being foreigners, their homestay families treated them as “pets” rather than as competent speakers and potential members of Japanese society (p. 102).

The foreigner identity has been particularly salient in studies of white sojourners in East Asian contexts, such as Korea and Japan, where foreigners are stereotypically imagined as always white and where they are not necessarily expected to develop or exhibit advanced linguistic or cultural competence (Brown, 2013; Iino, 2006; Siegal, 1996). These studies have shown that hosts accommodate foreigners by adapting their speech to make it more comprehensible (Iino, 2006) and by relaxing conversational norms, overlooking potential face threats (Brown, 2013; Siegal, 1996). As Siegal (1996) notes, while such accommodation may facilitate interaction, it can also limit exposure to native speaker norms of language use and impede the learning of advanced sociopragmatic knowledge. As a result of this tension, some sojourners may choose to embrace a foreigner identity, while others resist such positioning. This is illustrated in a recent study by Brown (2013) of honorifics use among four male advanced-level sojourners of varied nationalities studying abroad in Korea. One participant, Richard, leveraged his foreigner identity to negotiate patterns of honorifics use that reflected horizontal relationships with interlocutors who would ordinarily be considered his superiors, thereby establishing intimate relationships outside the strict hierarchical boundaries of Korean society. Another participant, Patrick, was offended by Koreans’ unconventional honorifics use with him and resisted being positioned as an outsider through strict adherence to Korean norms.

As these findings illustrate, identity becomes contested for students who go abroad as they find themselves positioned in new and unfamiliar ways. Another substantial finding of the literature is that sojourners orient to such challenges as conflicts in need of resolution, and resolutions vary, resulting in some outcomes that constitute ways of moving forward identity-wise and hence pursuing access to language in new and perhaps better ways, and others that involve withdrawing identity-wise and hence disengaging from the goal of gaining access to language. In SA, the usual identity conflicts that go along with border-crossing experiences are coupled with and complicated by other SA-related stresses, particularly the fact that this is often sojourners’ first real experience using the L2 outside the classroom. One type of conflict experienced by individuals is an inability to project desired identities through the L2. Pellegrino Aveni (2005) refers to a “reduced sense of self” experienced by US students in Russia (p. 18), who reported feeling like children as a result of their limited L2 competence. This threat to their sense of status led many students in the cohort to withdraw from opportunities to use Russian spontaneously, which was the reason they had gone abroad in the first place. Another related type of conflict expressed by sojourners is a disparity between the identities that students strive to project and those ascribed to them by others. When interacting with their hosts, sojourners attempt to present themselves in socially desirable ways. However, students’ success in projecting desired identities may be limited by several constraining

factors. On the one hand, cross-cultural pragmatic failure may result from a lack of sociopragmatic knowledge, including pragmalinguistic knowledge of the relevant language forms and their literal meanings, and the sociolinguistic knowledge of the broader social significance and values attached to different ways of speaking and identifying within hierarchical power structures in the new environment (Thomas, 1983). On the other hand, students with advanced sociopragmatic knowledge may choose to accept, resist, or challenge these norms, as can be seen in the earlier example of Richard.

A sizable portion of SA identity research has focused on the intersectionality between gender and identity during SA, illuminating the negotiation of varied gender-related identity options. Prior reviews of this literature have noted a common theme of reported sexism and harassment of female students in US-based programs in a variety of national contexts (e.g., Block, 2007b; Kinginger, 2009, 2013). Female sojourners are portrayed as struggling to resist local males' positioning of them as sexual objects based on their status as foreign females and to claim more nuanced and powerful identities for themselves (e.g., Polanyi, 1995; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Twombly, 1995). These studies also report on the limited engagement that often results from such occurrences as female sojourners become apprehensive of other local men and, paradoxically, also struggle to establish friendships with local women. Talburt and Stewart (1999) report on how these issues were further complicated by race for an African-American sojourner in Spain.

While there can be no doubt that sexism and other forms of discrimination are present to some degree in all societies, this literature has been criticized by Kinginger (2016), among others, for its emphasis on the topic of sexual harassment over subtler gender-related issues and for its uncritical acceptance of sojourners' accounts, which are inevitably filtered through home-grounded ideologies that influence the perceptions and interpretations of both students and researchers. More nuanced accounts of gender-related issues in SA have shown that difficulties such as those experienced by US female sojourners are often the result of conflicting discourses and ideologies, which influence how identities (gendered and other) get constructed by participants and their hosts. For example, Trentman's (2015) study of gender-related identity negotiation and social network access among female learners of Arabic in US-based SA programs in Egypt also reflects the tension between embracing and rejecting local norms when performing gendered identities during SA. The informants reported that performing traditional female identities in Egypt involved eschewing spontaneous interaction and certain conversational topics and thus constrained learning opportunities, whereas flaunting these norms put them at risk of being positioned as promiscuous and willing sexual partners. Indeed, some reported experiencing behaviors that were considered sexual harassment by the US students and their Egyptian teachers and associates alike. Nevertheless, largely due to the fact that the SA program facilitated access to Egyptian social networks, many of the women were able to negotiate satisfying gendered identities, with some coming to construe their gender as an advantage affording them access to environments and situations reserved for females. In addition to gender, more recently, sexual orientation is also being studied in SA. This is shown in Brown's (2016) recent study of Julie, a 50+-year-old lesbian learner of Korean spending 6 weeks in Seoul. The author recounts how Julie's opportunities for interaction were constrained by experiences of societal hostility based on her sexual orientation and

her marginalization in class as an older student, as well as how she eventually was able to overcome these struggles.

Although it has been infrequently examined in the SA literature to date, race is another area where unstable knowledge of the L2 and varying interpretation of identity categories in the home and host environments may give rise to conflicts between the identities students wish to project and the way these identities are recognized by their hosts. This topic is explored in depth by Anya (2016) in a multiple case study of four successful multilingual black US learners of Portuguese in Salvador, Brazil, a city with a sizable Afro-Brazilian majority. While African-Americans and Afro-Brazilians may both be viewed as black in racial terms, stemming from their different ethnic backgrounds are important differences in the discourses, social meanings, and linguistic and cultural practices associated with being black and performing blackness in the two contexts. Anya demonstrates how race and other intersecting identity dimensions were implicated in the students' investments in learning Portuguese, their decisions to go abroad, their opportunities for interaction with locals, and the perceived value of their SA experiences. While abroad, the sojourners encountered challenges to their identities and ideologies, such as one male participant's navigation of the differences in how heterosexual identities get performed by African-American and Afro-Brazilian men. Over time and through participation in various local communities, the students were socialized into new discourses of race and new resources for performing racialized identities in what culminated in a personally transformative experience for all four sojourners.

Despite the hopes of SA stakeholders that a sojourn abroad will foster the type of L2-related identity development documented by Anya (2016), the identity-related outcomes of individual sojourners portrayed in the SA literature often fall short of these expectations, and there is a well-documented tendency among sojourners from varied national contexts to adopt ethnocentric stances when they encounter identity-related challenges (e.g., Block, 2007b; Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2008; Patron, 2007; Plews, 2015). Block (2007a), following Papastergiadis (2000), refers to the "negotiation of difference" that occurs when individuals struggle to achieve a new moral and emotional balance in the wake of experiences that upset their taken-for-granted views and destabilize their sense of identity. He notes that this is often a painful process characterized by feelings of ambivalence, but it can result in the emergence of new "third-place" identities (e.g., Bhabha, 1994; Kramsch, 2009). The qualitative SA literature exhibits cases of sojourners who are successful in this regard—often with the support of local social networks—as well as those who find themselves unwilling or unable to negotiate difference and for whom identity-related conflicts may come to define the SA experience and whose home-grounded identities are strengthened as a result (e.g., Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2008; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Polanyi, 1995; Twombly, 1995; Talbert & Stewart, 1999).

The most famous successful case of identity development in SA is found in Kinginger's (2004) case study of Alice, a US sojourner who, over multiple sojourns learning French abroad in Quebec and France, was eventually able to achieve the French-speaking identity she sought to develop. Alice's success in the long run turned out to be related to her age, gender, and social class as an older, female student from a working-class background. Alice had been through a great deal of hardship in her life and thus had the experience of persevering through difficult circumstances, which translated into resilience when she found her worldview challenged by her

hosts. Furthermore, her identities and lived experiences made her different from her cohort, which was largely made up of younger, more privileged students. Thus, in contrast to many sojourners, she did not experience a strong pull to withdraw into her conational cohort and was instead pushed to develop local French social networks. Alice's story shows how individuals' multiple identities, as well as life-defining events that are often structured by social identities and social constraints, can have a significant impact on the nature of identity negotiation in SA.

In sum, the qualitative SA research shows that identity and identity-related conflicts play an important role in mediating SA experiences and outcomes. Learners' access to L2 interaction and learning opportunities is constrained by their hosts' perceptions of them as individuals who are worthy of engagement and who are legitimate speakers of the target language. Also, sojourners' willingness to engage with their hosts is related to their own dispositions toward the linguistic, cultural, and identity-related discourses and practices they encounter while abroad. Such perceptions on the part of hosts and sojourners are often filtered through ideologies related to gender, race, social class, national identity, and other social factors. However, sojourner-host relationships are never entirely socially determined; rather, these relations are coconstructed and may be reframed in ways that are advantageous to language learning, provided that sojourners have sufficient knowledge of the semiotic forms, identity options, and links between them that are required to exercise such agency. Identity-destabilizing incidents in SA often cause initial feelings of discomfort, anxiety, and alienation as students' taken-for-granted worldviews are called into question. How such conflicts are resolved influences the degree to which locals extend or rescind interactional affordances, as well as whether such affordances are embraced or eschewed by sojourners. Thus, identity issues mediate sojourners' pursuit of access to opportunities for language use and drive it as well, as sojourners' language-learning efforts through usage are connected to their efforts to (re)claim and (re)negotiate identities for themselves.

Main Research Methods

In line with contemporary SLA research on identity, SA identity researchers have relied on qualitative methodologies, including narrative inquiry, ethnography, and discourse analysis. The number of participants examined in a particular study can range from a single sojourner to multiple cohorts depending on the researcher's aims. Case studies of single individuals, such as Kinginger's (2004) longitudinal study of Alice, permit an in-depth exploration of sojourners' personal histories and the examination of multiple intersecting aspects of identity that become contested through and exert influence on SA experiences. Studies involving comparison within and across multiple cases, such as Anya (2016), are useful for shedding light on both commonalities and variations in the experiences and perspectives of different individuals in response to SA-related identity issues. Finally, studies focusing broadly on one or multiple cohorts can highlight general patterns and trends that can be followed up on in more detailed future studies. The use of such an approach enabled Trentman (2015) to reveal the multiplicity of gendered identity positions afforded to female sojourners in Egypt by their macrosocial context and their SA programs.

SA identity scholars draw on a range of introspective and observational data collection methods, often in combination. Sojourner narratives constitute an

important data source in this domain. As has often been pointed out in the applied linguistics literature, their importance lies in what they can reveal about the private and subjective dimensions of language-learning processes, including identity destabilization and remediation (Benson, 2014; Block, 2007; Pavlenko, 2007). Sojourner narratives are often elicited orally through individual or focus group interviews taking place before, during, and/or after sojourns. Interviews are typically semi-structured, making use of an interview guide and open-ended questions that aim to elicit stories about students' personal background and critical experiences abroad. Written narratives too may be elicited through learner diaries or online blogs either composed spontaneously or in response to a researcher's prompts over the course of a sojourn. As different modalities and elicitation methods yield unique affordances and varying data types, it is common for SA researchers to elicit narratives through multiple means.

In SA research, there has been a tendency to treat sojourners' narratives as factual accounts of events that transpired or of their actual subjective dispositions toward what they experienced. Analysis has often focused on the content of these narratives, and findings have been interpreted and presented in terms of major themes, sometimes interspersed with decontextualized quotations from sojourners that exemplify these themes. Recently, applied linguistics scholars have criticized such approaches as being limited and problematic for failing to acknowledge the narrative as fundamentally social, coconstructed, and generic; not attending to the linguistic means that individuals use to construct identities and impose coherence on their lived experiences; and neglecting multilevel social, cultural, political, and historical influences on how narratives are coconstructed and analyzed by researchers (De Fina, 2009; Pavlenko, 2007; Talmi, 2010). As a result of these important shifts in how the field conceives of narrative data, SA researchers increasingly draw on critical and interactional approaches to narrative analysis (e.g., Anya, 2016; Kinginger, 2016; Plews, 2015). One such example is Plews (2015), whose interview study of Canadian students following a six-week immersion program in Germany uncovered diverse identity positions that reflected a more complex relationship between nationality and interculturality than had previously been portrayed in the SA literature. While some participants' identity positions reflected a widely attested inverse relationship between intercultural development and national identity, others drew on discourses of Canadian multiculturalism to position their emerging intercultural selves as more Canadian than ever before.

SA identity scholars may also turn to ethnographic methods. This may include collecting not only sojourner narratives, as outlined earlier, but also other data, such as audio- or video-recorded interactions; interviews with local hosts and SA stakeholders; field notes based on observations of students in various settings; and artifacts, such as program documents, course assignments, photographs, or social media and blog posts. Studies where the main methodology is narrative inquiry commonly employ ethnographic data in a supplementary role. Such triangulation of information from multiple data sources can be particularly effective in affording more nuanced insights than would have been revealed by one data source alone. This is well illustrated in Brown's (2013) study of identity and honorifics use in Korean. By comparing data elicited through a discourse completion test, sojourners' audio recordings of naturalistic interactions, and retrospective interviews about their attitudes and self-reported patterns of language use, Brown was able to highlight gaps in

and contradictions between participants' underlying competence in honorifics, their behavior in actual conversations, and their perspectives of these interactions. Meanwhile, other scholars ground their studies in ethnography and draw on discourse analytic techniques to examine identity construction in naturally occurring interactional events, such as homestay dinnertime conversations, classroom interactions, or service encounters (e.g., Iino, 2006; Siegal, 1996; Wilkinson, 1998). SA identity studies may use discourse analysis as their central method. One recent innovative study following this approach is Dressler and Dressler (2016), which examined identity construction in Facebook posts by a Canadian teen during two separate semester-long sojourns in Germany taking place three years apart.

Recommendations for Practice

SA research on identity has highlighted some of the challenges that sojourners face abroad, which include encountering limited access to social networks, difficulties with self-presentation through the L2 and with establishing equitable relations with interlocutors, and a tendency to adopt ethnocentric stances rather than negotiate cultural differences. In light of these findings, the question practitioners must ask themselves is, "What kinds of interventions are possible, practical, and effective in order to create maximally positive conditions for successful negotiation of identities during the SA experience?"

Some have argued that sojourners are insufficiently prepared in terms of linguistic, cultural, and strategic knowledge to be expected to cope with the identity challenges documented in the research, suggesting that some form of intervention is necessary to improve upon the qualities and outcomes of SA experiences (e.g., Jackson, 2017; Pérez-Vidal, 2017). On the other hand, they also offer the caveat that interventions must be designed with the particularities of SA contexts and participants in mind and should aim to enable and encourage proactive engagement on the part of the sojourner without constraining individual agency. Since SA participants often find it difficult to integrate into local social networks, particularly within the time constraints of short-term programs, SA program design can include arranging for students to participate in such local communities as clubs, teams, or organizations of which they will be valued members, or matching students to local exchange partners or roommates who will appreciate the exchange as personally enriching and mutually beneficial. Such arrangements might begin well before the sojourn through the use of social networking technology or telecollaborative projects (cf. Allen & Dupuy, 2012). Students' efforts to establish equitable relationships and have their desired identities validated within these networks abroad can be further reinforced within the foreign language curriculum as a whole by focusing explicitly on identity-related dimensions of language use, such as sociolectal variation. Finally, the ethnocentric tendencies of sojourners documented in the literature may be a natural reaction to the kind of identity destabilization that SA entails. However, by carrying out carefully scaffolded reflective ethnographic projects, students may be led to develop more nuanced awareness of cultural differences and reflect critically on their own views. Jackson (2017) provides a detailed account of two such courses that she has taught in Hong Kong with a mix of local and international students with varying degrees of linguistic proficiency and SA experience.

Future Directions

The subfield of SA research devoted to identity is still emerging and has not yet reached full maturity. Nevertheless, this review has highlighted some positive trends that bode well for the future of this domain. First, by embracing the wide range of epistemological and methodological options afforded by the social turn, SA researchers have established strong theoretical grounding for their studies, which are carried out with increasing methodological rigor. These studies are beginning to illuminate the subtle complexities underlying sojourners' identity struggles and are thus poised to enter into dialogue with the broader body of applied linguistics research exploring links between identity, multilingualism, and mobility (Kubota, 2016; Tullock & Ortega, 2017). Second, the demographic scope of this research has begun to expand and increasingly includes participants from a range of national origins and social and linguistic backgrounds who are studying abroad in a wider variety of SA program types in diverse world regions. Such continued expansion is necessary in order to reflect the true diversity of student mobility and arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the particularities of SA experiences.

There is still considerable room for growth, however. If SA research is to inform the design of better SA experiences, there is a clear need for action research such as Jackson's (2017), which brings together research and praxis to develop effective SA interventions. Crucially, despite the aforementioned demographic expansion, the SA research base as a whole remains highly focused on white middle-class US sojourners with European destinations, which both reflects and reinforces the notion that, deep down, SA is an experience almost exclusively reserved for elites (Kubota, 2016). Additionally, as Tullock and Ortega (2017) have argued, this body of research has tended to construe SA participants and the contexts they inhabit as homogeneous and monolingual, despite the highly diverse and multilingual realities of contemporary SA. Related to this is the fact that some dimensions of identity, such as gender and nationality, have received a great deal of attention, whereas others, such as race, social class, and multilingual status, have not. Finally, truly longitudinal studies, such as Kinginger (2004), remain rare. Yet it seems necessary to focus on both the long-term dynamics of identity development abroad and how multiple, intersecting dimensions of sojourners' sociohistorically developed identities interact to influence their lived experiences before, during, and after their sojourns abroad. More such studies may reveal whether short-term sojourns in which little identity development seems to have taken place are in fact the launching points for long-term transnational identities, as is often expected and hoped for by SA stakeholders and advocates of international education. Addressing these and other gaps will contribute greatly to promoting the kind of active engagement in SA that brings about significant growth in terms of language skills, intercultural competence, and global citizenship.

Key Terms

Identity	Poststructuralism
Sociocultural approaches to language learning	Nationality
	Gender

Sexuality
Race
Qualitative research methods

Narrative
Ethnography
Discourse analysis

Further Reading

- Anya, U. (2016). *Racialized identities in second language learning: Speaking blackness in Brazil*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Anya's recent monograph is noteworthy for its sophisticated treatment of race, an underexplored topic in SA research, as well as its innovative use of critical inquiry and multimodal discourse analysis, making it exemplary forward-looking SA identity research.)
- Benson, P., Barkhuizen, G., Bodycott, P., & Brown, J. (2013). *Second language identity in narratives of study abroad*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. (The authors of this volume draw on narratives of sojourners from Hong Kong in Anglophone contexts to argue for conceiving SA outcomes in terms of L2 identity, thus creating a framework for bringing together process- and product-oriented SA research.)
- Kinginger, C. (2004). Alice doesn't live here anymore: Foreign language learning as identity (re)constructions. In A. Pavlenko, & A. Blackledge (Eds.), *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts* (pp. 219–242). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters. (Kinginger's seminal longitudinal study portrays the personal identity journey of Alice, an older female working-class learner of French from the US who underwent significant personal transformation over the course of multiple sojourns in Quebec and France.)
- Kinginger, C. (Ed.) (2013a). *Social and cultural aspects of language learning in study abroad*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. (This edited volume includes several chapters focused on identity and language learning in SA from a variety of epistemological and methodological perspectives. These perspectives reflect the diversity of SA research following the social turn.)

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Part III

The Program: Study Abroad Settings

Length of Stay



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Length of Time Abroad and Language Ability

Comparing Means Using a Latent Approach

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Introduction

The Second Language Acquisition (SLA) field is witnessing a surge of interest in learning context as a determining factor in acquiring a second language. One particular learning context, time abroad in an immersive environment where the target language is spoken, has become a focus of investigation in the SLA literature. This study examined the association between length of time abroad and language ability as measured on a high-stakes language proficiency test. A latent approach was employed to compare English language learners with various durations of time spent abroad, in which measurement errors were directly estimated, and were therefore accounted for, when investigating group differences.

Previous Literature

Since Freed's (1995) early portrait of the linguistic profile of learners who have been abroad, our understanding of language development in a target language immersive context has been greatly enhanced as the result of a rapid growth of research that compares language gains achieved from time abroad to those obtained in other contexts, such as the foreign language setting and the domestic immersion setting. Researchers have attempted to understand how the acquisition of various aspects of language ability differs across learning contexts, such as listening (Cubillos, Chieffo, & Fan, 2008), reading (Dewey, 2004), grammar and vocabulary (Collentine, 2004), oral proficiency (Díaz-Campos, 2004; Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004; Llanes & Muños, 2013; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Serrano, Llanes, & Tragant, 2011), writing (Llanes & Muños, 2013; Sasaki, 2004, 2007; Serrano et al., 2011), and pragmatics (Lafford, 2004; Matsumura, 2001; Taguchi, 2008, 2011).

In a recent overview of the research on language gains resulting from a study abroad experience, Llanes (2011) identified a few areas that demand more research, one of which is the role of the length of staying abroad. To date, very limited research

has focused on the effects of the duration of immersion in the target language on language learning. There are, however, just a few exceptions, whose results are summarized next.

Based on a large-scale study sample that included cohorts of US students of Russian who spent two (one summer), four (one semester), and nine (one academic year) months of study abroad over the course of 15 years, Davidson (2010) found that language gains in listening, reading, and speaking were strongly correlated with length of stay. The yearlong group distinguished itself from the other two groups, especially in the measures of speaking and listening. The results suggested that a yearlong stay is typically needed to achieve an advanced level of proficiency in speaking and listening in the immersion environment. Compared to Davidson (2010), Llanes and Muños (2009) examined the effects of study abroad programs that are shorter in length. The study found that the learners who studied for four weeks abroad performed better on oral fluency and accuracy measures as well as a listening comprehension task than the ones who studied for three weeks. The authors argued that short stays abroad could produce significant gains and that even a one-week difference in length of stay could lead to measurable performance differences.

The relationship between pragmatic competence and length of abroad has been a focus of a few studies. Bouton (1994) compared the development in pragmatic competence of two groups of non-native speakers of English living in the US for different durations: four and a half years for one group and 17 months for the other. Focusing on the learners' ability to interpret conversational implicatures in expressing a message indirectly, the study found that the group with the longer length of stay did not have any serious problems with any specific type of implicature, while the group with the shorter length of stay did not master any type of implicature. Addressing a different aspect of pragmatic competence, Felix-Brasdefer (2004) examined the influence of length of time abroad on the ability to negotiate and mitigate refusals. Comparisons were made across four groups of Spanish learners with different periods of residence: one to one and a half months, three to five months, nine to thirteen months, and eighteen to thirty months. The results showed that the learners' pragmatic behaviors on the target measures approximated the native speaker norm more closely as the length of stay increased, and the identified native-like behaviors appeared to be stabilized with nine or more months of stay. Another aspect of pragmatic competence, learners' ability to identify and produce acceptable utterance, was examined in Xu, Case, and Wang (2009). International students in the US were grouped based on their length of stay at one year or less and above one year, and a significant effect of length of study was found.

Unlike the aforementioned studies that based their analyses on cross-sectional data, Taguchi (2011) used a longitudinal design to examine the associations between language development and length of stay in the target community. Learners were assessed for accurate and speedy comprehension of implied pragmatic meaning at three time points: after they had been immersed for 3, 8, and 19 weeks. A significant development in accuracy was found but only between the first and last collections, indicating that gains in accuracy did not occur in shorter time periods. A different developmental pattern was observed for comprehension speed. The study results showed that significant differences in speed were found for all time contrasts, indicating that comprehension speed improved significantly even when the time intervals were short.

A longitudinal design was also implemented in Matsumura (2003) to monitor the development in pragmatic use of English in various advice-giving situations at three time points: before immersion, at one month of stay, and at four months of stay. This study differentiated itself from other studies by implementing a latent approach with the goal of examining the relationship between time abroad and the underlying nature of the ability construct, that is, whether the learners measured at three different time points were similar in terms of the underlying configuration of their pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence was conceptualized as a latent factor that was measured by multiple observed variables. It was found that the ability construct measured by the test had equivalent factorial representations over time, suggesting that across the time points, the overall factor structure of the construct was equivalent, and the observed variables measured the factors in a comparable way.

A general observation based on the results of these studies is that the length of time abroad has a positive association with the development of language ability. However, as pointed out by Davidson (2010), most of the studies in the literature focused on programs of relatively short durations (e.g., summer or semester-long) due to low numbers of learners who spend time abroad for longer periods. Therefore, our understanding of language gains as a result of extended periods of immersion is still very limited. Furthermore, while the majority of these studies compared groups of learners in terms of their means on the outcome measures, only one study, Matsumura (2003), analyzed the differences in the factorial representations of the latent ability construct across groups of varying lengths of stay. This type of research is important in that it addresses the question of whether, across learners with different time-abroad experiences, an assessment measures the same construct and measures the construct in a similar way. Establishing factorial invariance is a condition that must be satisfied to compare latent group means and ensure meaningful group comparisons (Vandenberg & Lane, 2000). A latent approach to mean comparisons allows for an accounting of measurement errors when investigating mean differences and therefore is superior to approaches (e.g., ANOVA) that compare means based on observed scores.

In this study, these gaps in the literature were addressed by examining, at the latent construct level, how learners who had lived in an English-speaking environment for various lengths of time performed on the *TOEFL iBT*® test, a high-stakes test for admission to institutions of higher education in English-speaking countries. Widely used as an English admissions test, the *TOEFL iBT* test enjoys an extremely diverse test-taking population differing in many background variables, including target language immersion experience. Drawing a study sample from such a heterogeneous population made it possible to include learners who have had extended periods of immersion experience. I first examined whether factorial invariance held across the groups, that is, whether the language abilities developed in different learner groups were similar in terms of their makeup and the relationships among their constituent parts. As explained earlier, satisfying this condition is critical for ensuring meaningful mean comparisons. I then compared group means at the latent construct level, that is, to compare the groups' relative standings on the latent components of the construct. A latent approach to mean comparisons permits a consideration of measurement errors by means of directly estimating errors in hypothesized latent models and, therefore, renders more accurate estimates when investigating mean differences.

The two research questions to be answered were as follows:

RQ1: To what extent does English language ability differ in terms of its latent factorial representation across learner groups who have lived in an English language environment for various lengths of time and those who have not lived in an English language environment?

RQ2: To what extent do the means on the latent components of English language ability differ across learner groups who have lived in an English language environment for various lengths of time and those who have not lived in an English language environment?

Methods and Procedures

Study Sample and Test Instrument

The analysis was based on data from a *TOEFL iBT* public-use data set. This data set contained the test performance of 1,000 test takers, who were drawn from one operational *TOEFL iBT* administration during fall 2006. Within this data set, 370 test takers provided the amount of time they spent living in an English-speaking country and were included for the analysis. Among them, 124 indicated that they had never lived in an English-speaking country. The remaining 246 participants had different lengths of stay: less than six months ($N = 67$), six months to one year ($N = 49$), and more than one year ($N = 130$).

The average age of these test takers was 24 at the time-of-testing. The majority of the test takers (about 85% were between the ages of 15 and 30. They were evenly distributed in terms of gender and were from 56 countries or regions. A total of 38 different native languages were represented in the sample. The five most frequently spoken native languages in order of the number of its speakers were Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic. Native speakers of these five languages made up about 59 percent of the total sample.

The test form had four skill sections: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The listening and reading sections were testlet-based. A testlet is a set of items associated with the same stimulus input. There were six testlets in listening and three in reading. The speaking section contained six tasks, each scored on a 0–4 holistic scale. There were two tasks in the writing section, each scored on a 0–5 holistic scale.

Analysis

Multigroup invariance analyses with a mean structure were performed by using Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Raw task scores were used as the level of measure. A listening or reading task score was the total score summed across a set of items within a testlet. A speaking or writing task score was simply the score assigned for a task. There were six listening scores (L1–L6), three reading scores (R1–R3), six speaking scores (S1–S6), and two writing scores (W1–W2). All task scores were treated as continuous variables. There were 17 total observed variables in the study.

Analyses started with establishing the baseline model that represented the factor structure underlying the test performance for the study sample. Based on the results from previous studies (Gu, 2014; Sawaki, Stricker, & Oranje, 2009; Stricker & Rock, 2008), three competing models was specified as a priori and fitted to the data. A higher order factor model (Figure 18.1) posits that the tasks in each section measure

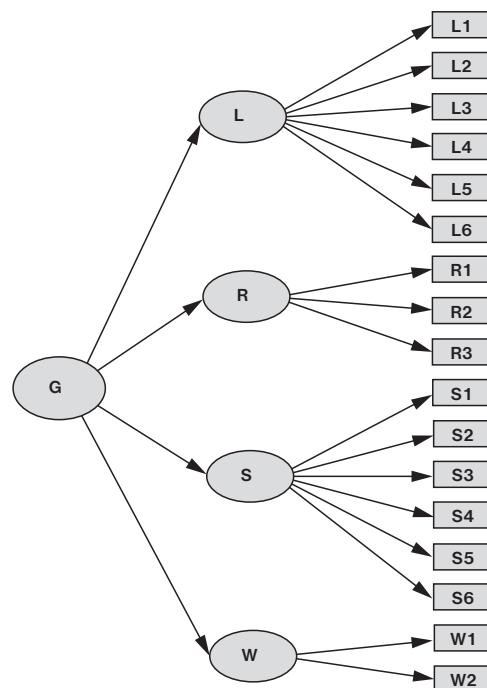


Figure 18.1 Higher order factor model.

their respective skills, namely, listening (L), reading (R), speaking (S), and writing (W), and the four skills are independent conditional on a higher order general factor (G), that is, the correlations among the skills are explained by G. In a correlated four-factor model (Figure 18.2), tasks in each section measure their respective skills, and the four skills correlate with each other. The third competing model is a correlated two-factor model (Figure 18.3) in which the tasks in the listening, reading, and writing sections measure a common latent factor (L/R/W), and the tasks in the speaking section measure a second factor (S).

The best-fitting model was adopted as the baseline model. Using the baseline model as the factorial representation of the ability construct for the entire sample, three series of multigroup comparisons were conducted between (i) 124 home-country learners who had never lived in an English-speaking country and 246 time-abroad learners who had lived in an English-speaking country for various durations, ranging from less than six months to more than one year; (ii) 191 learners with no or less than six months of time abroad and 179 learners with more than six months of time abroad; and (iii) 240 learners with no or less than one year of time abroad and 130 learners with more than one year of time abroad.

The adequacy and appropriateness of models were evaluated using the following criteria. Based on Kline's (2005) suggestions, the following global fit indices were used: chi-square test of model fit (χ^2), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). A significant χ^2 value indicates a bad model fit, although this value should be interpreted with caution because it is highly sensitive to sample size. Suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), a CFI value larger than 0.90 shows that

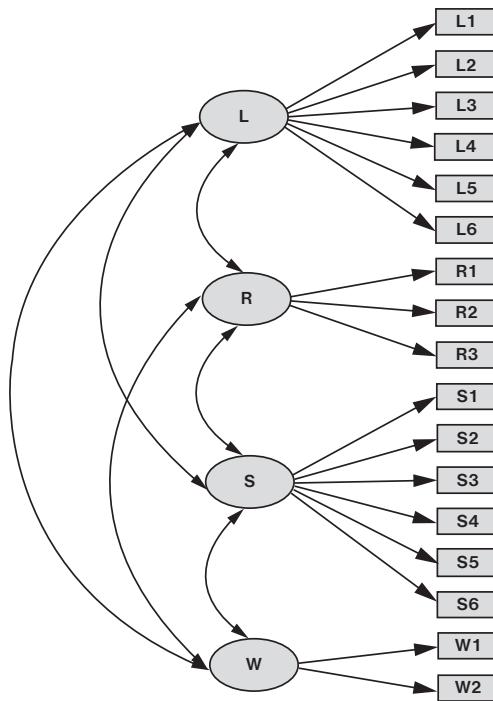


Figure 18.2 Correlated four-factor model.

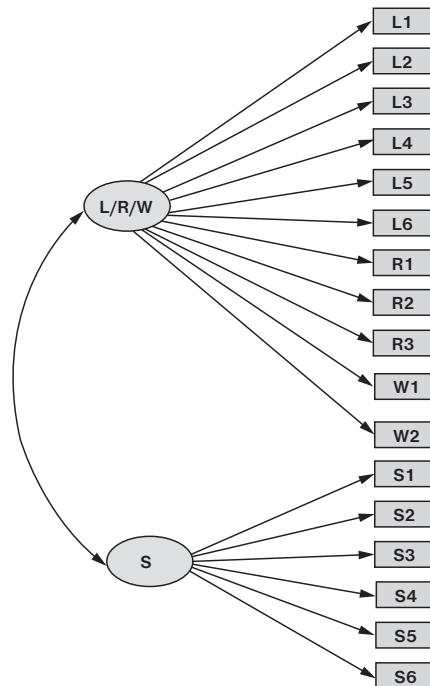


Figure 18.3 Correlated two-factor model.

the specified model has a reasonably good fit. RMSEA smaller than 0.05 can be interpreted as a sign of good model fit, while values between 0.05 and 0.08 indicate reasonable approximation of error (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). A SRMR value of 0.08 or below is commonly considered as a sign of acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Individual parameter estimates were also examined for appropriateness and significance. An interfactor correlation of 0.9 was used to screen out models with linear dependencies among the factors. When choosing between competing models with similar fits, the principle of parsimony favors a simpler model over a more saturated one. Nested models were compared by evaluating chi-square differences ($\Delta\chi^2$) and changes in CFI (ΔCFI). A ΔCFI less than or equal to 0.01 indicates invariance (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

To answer RQ1, the equivalence of the factorial representation of English language ability across the groups was evaluated via two sequential steps. In the first step, configural invariance was tested. The baseline model was imposed on both groups simultaneously without constraining any parameter estimates. The result would tell us whether the test performance could be accounted for by the same factor structure across the groups. In the second step, an equality constraint was imposed on the unstandardized factor loadings of the same variables across the groups to test metric invariance. A factor loading indicates the extent to which an observed variable measures the latent factor. This more constrained model was nested within the more relaxed model in the first step. Chi-square difference testing and changes in CFI were then used to evaluate which model should be kept. A nonsignificant Δc^2 test result and a ΔCFI less than or equal to 0.01 would indicate that the fit of the more constrained model did not deteriorate sufficiently to justify adopting the more saturated model. In this case, the simpler model, the metric invariance model, would be chosen over the more complicated model, the configural model. The result would tell us whether the observed variables measured the factors in a comparable way across the groups.

Provided that the equivalence of the factorial representation held, analyses could proceed with a mean structure imposed to examine whether the two groups in each comparison differed in terms of means on the latent ability components. An additional equality constraint was imposed on the unstandardized intercepts to test scalar invariance. An intercept represents the value of the observed variable for a test taker with zero on the latent construct. The latent factor means in one group (the reference group) were fixed to zero, and the means in the other group (the comparison group) were free to be estimated. The estimated unstandardized factor means were essentially the latent mean differences between the groups. This simpler scalar invariance model was compared to the more saturated metric invariance model to determine which model to keep. Establishing scalar invariance would indicate that any differences in the means of the observed variables are due to differences in the means of the latent factors. Provided that scalar invariance held, the significance of group differences could be examined by inspecting the mean estimates in the comparison group.

The invariance testing was carried out in a hierarchical fashion, in which the decision to impose further equality control was dependent on the results from the previous step. Since there is always a possibility of a Type I or Type II error in hypothesis testing, it must be acknowledged that problematic interpretation of the results from a later step could arise due to errors in the preceding step.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

The distributions of the observed variables were examined so that an informed decision could be made regarding choosing an appropriate estimation method. The descriptive statistics for the observed variables are summarized in Table 18.1. Variable L4 had a Kurtosis value larger than two. The histograms of all the variables revealed that the distributions of Variable L4 and L6 exhibited a ceiling effect. Univariate normality could not be assumed in these two cases, indicating that the distribution of this set of variables could deviate from multivariate normality. A corrected normal theory estimation method, the Satorra-Bentler estimation (Satorra & Bentler, 1994), was employed by using the MLM estimator in Mplus to correct global fit indices and standard errors for nonnormality. As MLM estimator produces a scaled c^2 statistic and the difference between two scaled c^2 statistics cannot be used for Δc^2 testing of nested models, we therefore used a calculating method suggested by Satorra and Bentler (2010) to computer Δc^2 tests of nested models when the MLM estimator is used.

Model estimation problems could arise due to multicollinearity, which occurs when some variables are too highly correlated with each other (Kline, 2005). As suggested by Kline, pairwise multicollinearity was checked by inspecting the correlation matrix. As shown in Table 18.2, dependence among all pairs of variables was moderate (0.32–0.65). No extremely high value of a correlation coefficient was found. Kline also suggested calculating the squared multiple correlation between each variable and all the rest to detect multicollinearity among three or more variables. A squared multiple correlation larger than 0.90 suggests multicollinearity. None of the squared multiple correlations exceeded the value of 0.90. We therefore concluded that there was no need to eliminate variables or combine redundant ones into a composite variable.

Table 18.1 Descriptive statistics for the observed variables

Variable	Range	Mean	Std. Dev.	Kurtosis	Skewness
Listening task one (L1)	0–5	3.33	1.14	-0.26	-0.37
Listening task two (L2)	0–6	3.57	1.38	-0.58	-0.10
Listening task three (L3)	0–6	2.97	1.56	-0.73	0.18
Listening task four (L4)	0–5	4.44	0.89	4.25	-1.91
Listening task five (L5)	0–6	4.37	1.30	-0.26	-0.64
Listening task six (L6)	0–6	4.78	1.38	0.98	-1.22
Reading task one (R1)	0–15	6.94	2.73	-0.34	0.29
Reading task two (R2)	0–15	10.06	3.03	-0.65	-0.39
Reading task three (R3)	0–15	9.98	3.06	-0.96	-0.12
Speaking task one (S1)	0–4	2.51	0.76	-0.34	-0.03
Speaking task two (S2)	0–4	2.62	0.81	-0.51	-0.02
Speaking task three (S3)	0–4	2.50	0.76	0.07	-0.09
Speaking task four (S4)	0–4	2.39	0.83	-0.03	-0.04
Speaking task five (S5)	0–4	2.58	0.81	0.17	-0.15
Speaking task six (S6)	0–4	2.53	0.86	-0.11	-0.13
Writing task one (W1)	0–5	3.23	1.15	-0.69	-0.29
Writing task two (W2)	0–5	3.46	0.82	-0.17	-0.02

Table 18.2 Correlations of the observed variables

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	R1	R2	R3	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	W1	W2
L1	1.00																
L2	0.35	1.00															
L3	0.38	0.50	1.00														
L4	0.33	0.31	0.28	1.00													
L5	0.41	0.39	0.40	0.40	1.00												
L6	0.41	0.42	0.44	0.49	0.46	1.00											
R1	0.36	0.43	0.45	0.31	0.36	0.44	1.00										
R2	0.36	0.49	0.48	0.39	0.43	0.55	0.54	1.00									
R3	0.37	0.44	0.49	0.38	0.41	0.51	0.56	0.65	1.00								
S1	0.38	0.42	0.42	0.37	0.43	0.45	0.40	0.32	0.40	1.00							
S2	0.34	0.36	0.36	0.39	0.32	0.38	0.39	0.33	0.33	0.58	1.00						
S3	0.39	0.37	0.38	0.45	0.38	0.43	0.35	0.37	0.40	0.56	0.57	1.00					
S4	0.34	0.35	0.40	0.39	0.37	0.45	0.36	0.33	0.42	0.63	0.55	0.57	1.00				
S5	0.38	0.37	0.41	0.45	0.42	0.46	0.44	0.38	0.44	0.56	0.58	0.57	0.60	1.00			
S6	0.41	0.39	0.41	0.48	0.45	0.49	0.38	0.39	0.37	0.62	0.64	0.61	0.57	0.64	1.00		
W1	0.50	0.46	0.51	0.43	0.50	0.54	0.53	0.59	0.58	0.48	0.46	0.51	0.43	0.55	0.52	1.00	
W2	0.45	0.49	0.48	0.44	0.48	0.48	0.50	0.50	0.54	0.57	0.60	0.56	0.52	0.63	0.56	0.61	1.00

Table 18.3 Fit indices for the three competing models

	χ^2_{S-B}	df	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Higher order factor model	215.13	115	0.97	0.05	0.04
Correlated four-factor model	185.88	113	0.98	0.04	0.03
Correlated two-factor model	268.49	118	0.95	0.06	0.04

Establishing the Baseline Model

A series of confirmatory factor analyses were performed to compare the three competing models. As summarized in Table 18.3, at the global level, all three models demonstrated a reasonable fit to the data. However, an examination of the individual parameters exposed model specification problems. In the higher order model, the estimated residual variance of the W factor was negative, and the estimated correlation between the G factor and the W factor was larger than one. In the correlated four-factor model, several factor correlations were estimated as high as, or larger than, the 0.90 acceptance level, indicating that the factors were not distinct enough to be considered as separate. Hence, these two models were regarded as inadmissible.

Standardized parameter estimates for the two-factor model are shown in Figure 18.4. All factor loadings were significant ($p < 0.01$). The estimated correlation between the two factors did not exceed 0.90. Taking all criteria into consideration, this model provided the best fit to the data and was accordingly adopted as

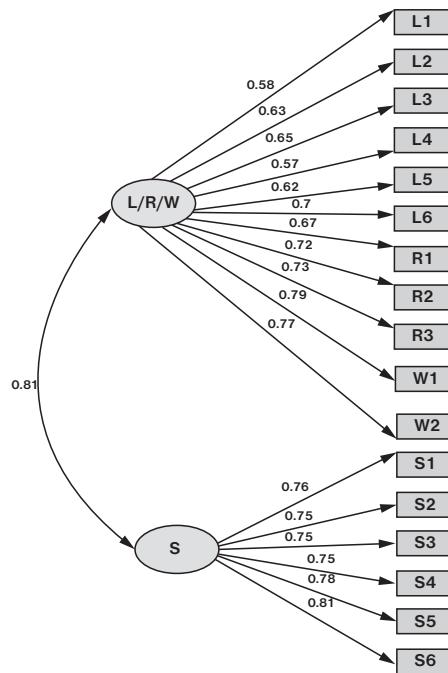


Figure 18.4 Correlated two-factor model with standardized estimates.

the baseline model for the multigroup invariance analysis. According to this model, the performance on the listening, reading, and writing sections could be accounted for by a single common factor, while the performance on the speaking tasks could be explained by a different, yet related, factor.

Multigroup Invariance Analysis

Three series of multigroup comparisons were conducted using the baseline model. In all comparison, the former group was treated as the reference group. The first multigroup comparison was conducted to examine whether the language abilities of home-country learners ($N = 124$) and time-abroad learners ($N = 246$) differed in terms of factorial representation and construct means.

As the results in Table 18.4 show, the more constrained metric invariance held just as well as the more relaxed configurational invariance because the result of the Satorra-Bentler chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2_{S-B}$) test was not significant ($\Delta\chi^2_{S-B} = 13.87$, $\Delta df = 15$, $p = 0.54$), and the change in CFI was less than 0.01 ($\Delta CFI = 0.00$). Accordingly, the metric invariance model was chosen over the configurational one, suggesting that the factorial representations of the latent construct could be considered equivalent.

After the scalar invariance was imposed, it was found that the $\Delta\chi^2_{S-B}$ between the scalar and the metric invariance models was significant ($\Delta\chi^2_{S-B} = 38.80$, $\Delta df = 15$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that not all intercepts could be held equal. However, the change in CFI was no larger than 0.01 ($\Delta CFI = 0.01$), which indicated intercept invariance. No change in RMSEA or SRMR was found, further confirming that there was no substantial deterioration in model fit. Taking all into consideration, the more parsimonious scalar invariance model was accepted.

Table 18.4 Multigroup analysis I

Invariance	χ^2_{S-B}	df	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2_{S-B}$	Δdf	p	ΔCFI
Configural	404.01	236	0.95	0.06	0.05				
Metric	417.69	251	0.95	0.06	0.06	13.87	15	0.54	0.00
Scalar	456.49	266	0.94	0.06	0.06	38.80	15	<0.01	0.01

Table 18.5 Multigroup analysis II

Invariance	χ^2_{S-B}	df	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2_{S-B}$	Δdf	p	ΔCFI
Configural	371.63	236	0.96	0.06	0.05				
Metric	396.39	251	0.96	0.06	0.07	24.76	15	0.05	0.00
Scalar	423.02	266	0.95	0.06	0.07	26.68	15	0.03	0.01

Having established invariance at the configural, metric, and scalar levels across the groups, the significance of group mean differences was inspected. The mean difference of -0.09 for the L/R/W factor was insignificant ($p = 0.23$), indicating that the time-abroad group did not perform differently than the home-country group on the items associated with the ability to listen, read, and write. The mean difference of 0.02 for the S factor was also insignificant ($p = 0.77$), showing that the time-abroad group did not perform differently than the home-country group on the items associated with the ability to speak. In a statistical sense, the two groups did not differ in terms of the mean on either latent factor.

The second multigroup invariance analysis compared 191 learners with no or less than six months of time abroad to 179 learners with more than six months of time abroad. The results in Table 18.5 showed that neither of the chi-square differences was significant ($p < 0.01$), and the difference in CFI was no larger than 0.01 in either cases. With invariance holding at all levels, further examination of factor mean differences was conducted. The estimated mean difference of 0.07 for the L/R/W factor was insignificant ($p = 0.34$), while the estimated mean difference of 0.18 for the S factor was significant ($p < 0.01$) with an effect size of 0.53 . These results indicated that the group with longer time abroad demonstrated significantly better performance than the other group on speaking but not on listening, reading, and writing.

The third multigroup invariance analysis was performed between 240 learners with no or less than one year of time abroad to 130 learners with more than one year of time abroad. As the results in Table 18.6 indicate, invariance held at all levels of testing. The difference of 0.17 in latent mean was significant ($p < 0.05$) with an effect size of 0.41 for the L/R/W factor, and the difference of 0.23 in latent mean was also significant ($p < 0.01$) with an effect size of 0.73 for the S factor. These results indicated that the group that spent more time abroad performed significantly better on speaking ($p < 0.01$) and also better, but to a lesser degree ($p < 0.05$), on test sections related to the other three modalities than the other group.

To summarize, the two-factor representation of the latent construct held equivalent across groups in all three comparisons. The home-country and the time-abroad groups in the first comparison demonstrated equivalent standings on the latent components of the ability construct. In the second comparison, the groups were different in terms of their ability to speak but not their ability related to listening, reading,

Table 18.6 Multigroup analysis III

Invariance	χ^2_{S-B}	df	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2_{S-B}$	Δdf	p	ΔCFI
Configural	390.28	236	0.95	0.06	0.05				
Metric	420.24	251	0.95	0.06	0.07	30.12	15	0.01	0.01
Scalar	435.96	266	0.95	0.06	0.07	15.56	15	0.41	0.00

and writing, and the group with more than six months of time abroad outperformed the group with no or less than six months of time abroad on speaking. In the third comparison, the group with more than one year abroad was significantly stronger in both latent ability components than the group with no or less than one year of time abroad. It must be remembered in interpreting these findings that the groups in the three comparisons were not independent of one another. For example, the group that spent more than six months of time abroad in the second comparison included those learners with more than one year of time abroad.

Discussion and Implications

In this study, I investigated whether and to what extent the length of time living in an English-speaking environment differentiates language learners in terms of the factorial representation of their language ability construct and their standings on the latent ability components.

The results showed that the language abilities developed in learner groups with different immersion experiences shared a common underlying structure, which could be characterized by a two-factor model with a speaking factor and the other factor associated with listening, reading, and writing. According to this model, all groups possessed a distinct speaking ability indicated by their responses to the speaking tasks. They also exhibited an ability that could be captured by their responses to the listening, reading, and writing tasks. This outcome indicated that the moderating effect of immersion on the underlying structure of English language ability was minimal.

One possible explanation for being able to fit the same two-factor model across all learner groups could be that these learners' classroom language-learning experience had a much stronger impact on the configuration of their language ability than their immersion experience did. According to their self-reported background data, the majority of the test takers (about 64%) had studied English for at least five years, and a third of the test takers had studied English for ten years or more. Compared to their experience abroad, their language training in a formal classroom setting was much more extensive in terms of length. As suggested by Stricker, Rock, and Lee (2005), in a traditional classroom context, the training of listening, reading, and writing skills often receives more emphasis than the development of oral proficiency. The distinctiveness between a speaking factor and a nonspeaking factor could be attributed to instruction, or lack thereof, across all learner groups.

The results also indicated that the test takers with time-abroad experience as a whole did not perform statistically differently on the test from the ones without such experience. However, by using different grouping methods, it was found that the length of time abroad did differentiate learner groups with varying durations of time-abroad experiences. The difference in speaking was significant between

learners with and without more than six months of time abroad, and the differences in both latent abilities were significant between learners with and without more than a year of time abroad.

Grouping test takers with different lengths of time abroad together in the first comparison might have diluted the impact of immersion on language development. Learners who sojourned for a relatively short period of time in the target language context may not have had the chance to immerse themselves fully, and therefore may not have benefited from the experience abroad as much as the ones with longer time abroad. The results from the second and third comparisons, however, indicated the role of the length of time abroad on the development of different aspects of the language ability. The effects of immersion were observable in speaking after about six months of living in an English-speaking country, and the effects of time abroad on listening, reading, and writing were measurable after a full year of living in an English-speaking country.

These results suggest that a considerable amount of time may be needed for the benefits of time spent abroad to become detectable at the latent construct level in test performance. This finding is consistent with previous literature. For example, Davidson (2010) recommended a full year of studying abroad in order to reach an advanced level of proficiency in speaking and listening. Felix-Brasdefer (2004) concluded that nine months or more abroad were typically needed for learners' pragmatic behaviors to approximate native-level performance. In the current study, I found that it can take about a year for the benefits of immersion to become evident in listening, reading, and writing.

The results also suggest that there is a differential impact of the duration of time abroad on different language skills. Different development patterns for different aspects of language ability were also observed in Taguchi (2011). In this study, it was found that the benefits of spending time abroad appeared in speaking earlier than in the other skills. This finding could be attributed to the uneven language profile of the learners whose speaking skill could be underdeveloped in comparison to the other skills due to lack of instruction or practice in oral proficiency in the home country. The ample opportunities to interact with the target community in a time-abroad context may have driven their speaking skill to develop faster during the early months abroad than the other skills, which might have already been further developed.

To summarize, this study demonstrated the benefits of time spent abroad on the development of language ability, especially after long periods of time abroad. The study also made a unique methodological contribution to the relevant literature by demonstrating how a latent approach could be implemented to enable more meaningful group mean comparisons.

Limitations and Future Directions

A few limitations must be pointed out. First, the analyses were based on cross-sectional data. Although a cross-sectional design was sufficient to answer the proposed research questions, it was not able to address language development over time. A longitudinal design would further an understanding of how language ability configures and develops in learner groups with varying time-abroad experiences. Second, data utilized in the study were purely observational. Without a controlled experimental design, causal statements could not be made with confidence, which prohibited

making inferences about the factors responsible for the differences among the groups. Carefully designed experimental studies are recommended for the future to help fully understand the impact of learning contexts on language development. Third, due to the hierarchical nature of the invariance testing, the results of a later step should be interpreted with caution because of a possibility of a Type I or a Type II error in the preceding step. Fourth, the test takers in the groupings for the three comparisons were not independent, so the results of the three comparisons cannot be interpreted as independent of one another. Fifth, group membership was decided based on self-reported time-abroad data, which was categorical in nature. Different grouping methods should be considered by future researchers. Last, the use of the *TOEFL iBT* test as the research instrument and the small size of the study sample limit the generalization of the study results to a population of learners living abroad in an immersive environment. Furthermore, due to a lack of data on learners' engagement in instructed language learning during time abroad, a direct generalization to study abroad learners cannot be made based on the study results.

Key Terms

Multigroup invariance analysis
Latent mean analysis
Confirmatory factor analysis

Factorial invariance
Length of stay
Language ability

Further Reading

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A Short-Term Study Abroad Program

An Intensive Linguistic and Cultural Experience on a Neighboring Pacific Island

Diane de Saint-Léger and Kerry Mullan

Introduction

In 2015, the authors—two French teacher-researchers from two universities in Melbourne, Australia—ran an inaugural two-week intensive study abroad program to New Caledonia for 13 undergraduate students of French (average age 22) enrolled in their departments. The intensive in-country part of the program followed 10 hours of preparatory lectures and workshops, and two hours of general travel and cultural information. The aim of this program was to explore the unique historic, economic, political, and cultural aspects of this French territory through the exploration of language and culture.

Despite being one of Australia's closest neighbors in the South Pacific, New Caledonia remains relatively unknown to the Australian general public. As indicated in the latest figures released by the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (January 2017), Fiji is the destination of choice in the region, with 104,491 Australian tourist arrivals in the 2016 September quarter as opposed to 7203 tourist arrivals in New Caledonia during the same period. However, the parallels between New Caledonia and Australia (indigenous populations colonized by Europeans; former penal colonies; modern multicultural societies; and important mining industries that involve land rights, environmental considerations, and deeply divided views on the redistribution of wealth and power between and within groups) make New Caledonia an especially interesting destination for our students. Its unique sociopolitical trajectory in the region offers opportunities for reflection on self and other, on La Francophonie (French-speaking regions around the world), and on postcolonialism more broadly. New Caledonia is also reaching the end of the Noumea Accord when it will need to decide on new models of government by 2018, including possible independence from France. This study abroad program diversifies the French language subjects in our respective universities by offering students an opportunity to experience firsthand a French-speaking nation as it undergoes a historical

and important transition, and to understand what that might mean economically, politically, and socially—not only for New Caledonia but also for Australia as an interested neighbor.

While anecdotal evidence suggested that the program was well received by the students, it is important to examine the kind of learning that such a short program can realistically foster as research has shown that language gain and cultural understanding can vary in important ways between learners, even in the case of lengthy durations (Kinginger, 2011).

Previous Literature

Student mobility is becoming increasingly popular in higher education: In 2011, 4.3 million students worldwide undertook some form of mobility, double that of a decade before (OECD, 2013). Figures for Australia are equally impressive, showing a marked increase from approximately 7,500 to 35,000 outbound students in the period from 2005 to 2014 (Malicki, 2016, p. 13).

The aims of mobility are varied, such as fostering intercultural awareness in students, encouraging them to become global citizens, and internationalizing the curriculum. Of these overseas programs, short-term mobility programs (STMPs)—or study tours—are becoming increasingly popular alternatives for students with limited time and resources. In addition, they are often offered as intensive courses between semesters, which allow students to fast-track their degrees (Williams & Best, 2014). While the educational value of STMPs has been questioned, in fact, they have been found to offer equally valuable learning experiences as longer-term study abroad and exchange programs (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2009; Ritz, 2011). As Chieffo and Griffiths point out, it is not the length of the stay but the organization and learning objectives of the program that contribute to student learning: Structured interaction with the host culture, even over a short period, will achieve more than a semester-long exchange with minimal contact with the locals (2009, p. 368).

In the specific context of language education programs conducted abroad, quantitative outcome-driven studies have repeatedly shown that language gain can vary markedly between learners, regardless of the time spent abroad (from a few weeks to full-length semesters), and a range of psychological, socio-environmental, and linguistic factors may be at play in the learning process. As Kinginger (2011) describes, “language learning in study abroad is a complex, dialogic, situated affair in which the subjectivities of students and hosts are deeply implicated” (p. 64). In other words, learner-related and local variables interact in a dynamic fashion, suggesting that studies that focus on individual differences may not always pinpoint the salient variables at play if important aspects of learning are not taken into account from the outset.

In order to address this gap and move away from psychometric elements traditionally scrutinized, such as motivational orientations and the attitudes of second language (L2) learners (Gardner, 1985), Hessel (2017) draws on the vast literature on learner self-conception in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and L2 learning motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 2005) to explore these concepts in the specific context of study abroad. Hessel found that aspects such as students’ self-efficacy (their belief in their ability to successfully use the L2 while abroad) and “moderate levels” of L2 use anxiety in interactions with other L2 learners were significantly associated

with L2 development. Drawing on findings from a range of recent studies, Hessel hypothesizes that the latter, rather counterintuitive, finding is linked, among other things, with the fact that informal everyday interactions with other L2 learners provide an important space for language development. Learners tend to speak more in the L2 when interacting with L2 peers; they also tend to receive more corrective feedback from each other and are more likely than L1 speakers to explicitly flag misunderstandings. A moderate level of L2 use anxiety, the author suggests, may have a “promotional rather than a debilitating or no effect” (p. 50) on language learning in study abroad contexts.

Self-efficacy has long been shown to be a strong predictor of task engagement (Bandura, 1986), and a number of qualitative-oriented studies identify peer and instructor scaffolding as well as meaningful engagement in the practice of their host communities as key to L2 development (Kinginger, 2011; Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001). As Jackson (2008, p. 218) describes,

For too long, educators have naïvely assumed that language and cultural learning will occur simply by placing students in the host speech community, but this is clearly not the case. Successful outcomes require a substantial amount of time, effort, and expertise on the part of SA [study abroad] planners and a significant investment on the part of the learners themselves.

The present study was designed to build on this recent research by seeking to establish the extent to which the promotion of meaningful learner engagement may be fostered in short intensive programs. Of particular interest was the importance of the group in fostering L2 development because, unlike the majority of studies reporting on offshore L2 language proficiency development, our students were not in homestay settings. They instead traveled and stayed as a group for the duration of the tour. The tour was carefully designed to provide learners with daily opportunities for interaction with host communities, although it was up to students to take these up in their day-to-day activities. Students were encouraged to use public transport, do their own grocery shopping, and interact with students on the host university campus. In keeping with Roberts et al. (2001), the course was developed with the view that cultural understanding needs to be taught explicitly, and the development of learners' critical awareness about the self and others is paramount in this exercise in meaning making at both linguistic and cultural levels. In fact, the whole course was conceived as an enquiry-based ethnographic project in which learners were encouraged to explore for themselves and critically appraise the various tensions and contradictions that this territory affords in its cultural, economic, political, and social domains, many of which are also encountered in Australia. Students—as individual learners and as a group with shared cultural understanding and assumptions—were to consider New Caledonia as their classroom, a privileged space for linguistic and cultural trial and error based on active observation, mindful participation, and ongoing (self-)reflection (Kinginger, 2011).

While the students reported that they appreciated the program, it is important to examine the actual learning that such a short program generates and the extent to which cultural understanding can be fostered beyond superficial levels. Could learners have developed similar insights (whatever these may be) had they traveled independently to New Caledonia? What is the role of the group (if any) in promoting

language and cultural development in the L2? What other key factors might generate growth? What is the role of individual factors, such as motivation for taking the tour and engagement with the host communities?

Description of the Program

As mentioned, the study tour was designed from the outset to be different from traditional language study tours that incorporate in-country language lessons and from other international study tours in which students do not speak the local language (e.g., business study tours, such as Williams & Best, 2014). The aim was not to recreate the same learning environment as experienced in Australia, i.e., delivering French language classes overseas. New Caledonia was explicitly construed as the classroom for our two-week stay. In this way, the language was seen as a means to facilitate cultural understanding, a vehicle to reach a destination, not an end in itself. Our learning objectives were thus articulated in terms of processes rather than of specific outcome-based linguistic gain:

- reflect on and describe in oral and written French diverse aspects of New Caledonian history, politics, culture, and society;
- analyze the notion of “common destiny” and debate the implications of this notion for the various peoples of New Caledonia;
- compare and contrast the colonial and convict pasts of Australia and New Caledonia;
- demonstrate skills in public speaking and confidence in self-expression through seminar participation and class presentations and interaction with the local population;
- show awareness of new aspects of French and Francophone culture.

The program consisted of 10 hours of preparatory lectures and workshops over 12 weeks prior to departure on the basic history and other important aspects of New Caledonia, including student presentations on a chosen relevant topic.

The course was offered as an elective, and interested students were required to apply by lodging an expression of interest. The selection process was based on academic results and individual interviews conducted by the coordinators. The interview was a means of gauging student motivation for undertaking the tour as well as flexibility and adaptability to group life and unforeseen change. The expression of interest submitted prior to the interview also provided insights into the students’ travel experience and initial motivation to join the tour. The interview was an opportunity to stress that the level of comfort together with access to services that tend to be taken for granted in Australia (e.g., Wi-Fi, hot showers) was not guaranteed at all times and that students should think carefully before committing to the tour. Sixteen students applied, and thirteen participated.

While abroad, our stay was organized around three locations: Days 1–6 on a university campus in Noumea, Days 7–9 in a Northern Province Kanak community, and Days 10–12 in the touristic area of Noumea. Students attended their choice of eight hours of university lectures (scheduled for local students) on domestic politics, society and history, and the Kanak language and culture, and participated in a number of guided site visits in Noumea and the Northern Province, and daily debriefing sessions.

Our students majored in disciplines such as French, geology, linguistics, art history, film, and animation, and the final assessment was designed to enable them to find a project of relevance to their own field of study and to allow for reflection on a particular aspect of New Caledonia that they experienced.

Methods and Procedures

Three male and ten female undergraduate students aged between 19 and 27 participated in the tour, all in at least their second year of university. The proficiency level varied; all had achieved a minimum B1 level on the Common European Framework (CEF) of Reference for Languages, however.

The data for this study come from an anonymous online questionnaire administered three months after completion of the tour. The 10-question survey required students to retrospectively reflect on their experience of the tour, from their initial motivation (pretour reporting) to their perceived improvement in a number of domains as a direct result of the tour (posttour reporting). They were also asked for their suggestions for improvement and their perception of the various assessment requirements. Despite the well-known limitations attached to self-reporting methods (e.g., Dörnyei, 2003), a pre-/postperceived change approach was favored over a pre-/posttest method because students were no longer in a dependent relationship with the teacher-researchers and because research has produced evidence in support of retrospective methods over the more conventional pre-/posttest (Lam & Bengo, 2003).

The questionnaire combined open-ended and multiple-choice items. Unlike conventional psychometric approaches in which quantitative measures of change are key to the validity of the findings, the present study combines frequencies gathered in the questionnaire with qualitative data from the open-ended sections of the same survey. It also draws on teacher observation, assessment data, and findings from the automatically generated (and generic) online course evaluation that students complete for each subject at university. These combined approaches were a means of exploring the dynamic and situated aspects of learning while abroad and further shedding some light on the saliency of the group as a suitable space to generate learning and learner engagement in the host country.

Twelve of the thirteen students on the tour completed the survey.

Results and Discussion

Students' Motivations for Undertaking the Tour

Data from the questionnaire (multiple-choice item requiring students to select their top four reasons) suggest that the students' main motivation to take the tour was to practice their French (11). Besides this strong linguistic focus, students also considered the tour as a good opportunity to fast-track their degree by earning credit points during the semester break (7). The affordability of the tour compared to a more expensive stay in metropolitan France (significantly further from Australia) also proved an important consideration for over half of them (7). For two respondents, the warmer climate of New Caledonia was also enticing. In addition to these practical considerations, the opportunity to learn about the country (8), the culture (5), and to interact with the locals (5) were also relevant factors. Drawing on

Gardner's (1985) motivational model, which differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic orientations in relation to L2 learning and related attitudes, answers are conceptualized below according to their intrinsic or extrinsic orientation to learning (Figure 19.1). As illustrated, strategic and (inter)personal gains were equally important for students, with the motivation to practice French language skills midway between the two.

This trend is confirmed when answers are explored from the perspective of individual students. Although some students displayed a more extrinsically oriented motivation (e.g., gain credit over the winter break), and others oriented more toward the learning experience that the tour would afford, most answers displayed a range of motivations.

It is worth noting though that no student enrolled based on a prior recommendation to visit New Caledonia (Table 19.1).

It was clear from the predeparture seminars that students had very limited knowledge of or connection with the Pacific region. Student ranked learning about the country (8) higher than learning about the culture (5) and interacting with locals (5), which suggests that students' initial engagement with the subject was rather conceptual or intellectual than personal.

Learners thus saw in the tour an opportunity to practice their French without spending too much money and to gain extra credit during the winter break while getting a chance to learn about a new place that happens to be a French-speaking neighbor in the Pacific region.

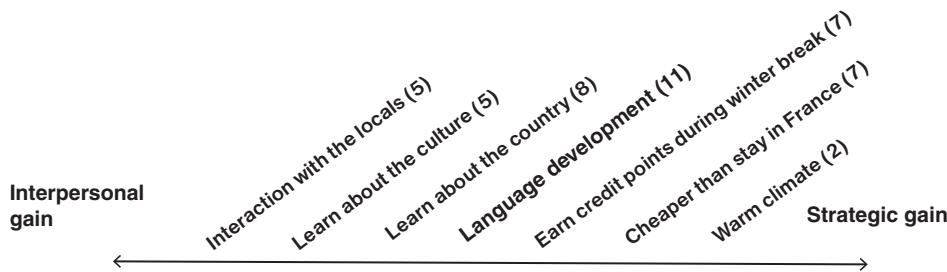


Figure 19.1 Student motivation for undertaking the tour.

Table 19.1 Please select from the following list your top four reasons for initially participating in this study tour ($n = 12$)

Answer options	Percent (%)	Frequency
Opportunity to practice your French	91.7	11
Opportunity to learn about the country	66.7	8
Earn credit points over the winter break	58.3	7
A more affordable option than going to France	58.3	7
Opportunity to learn about the culture	41.7	5
Opportunity to have meaningful interactions with locals	41.7	5
Interest in traveling to warmer climates over the winter period	16.7	2
Recommendation to visit New Caledonia	0.0	0
Travel independently without family	0.0	0
Other (please specify) and/or additional comment	1	

Learning Gain 1: Learner Perception of Growth

Learning gain was explored in the questionnaire across three interrelated domains: perceived language proficiency development, cultural and historical awareness and critical understanding of place, and confidence to travel abroad/in the Pacific region. As shown in Table 19.2, students unanimously declared that the tour fostered greater awareness of the local culture (12) as well as an understanding of the historical and cultural complexities of New Caledonia (12). This is hardly surprising considering that students knew very little at the outset, although such unanimity suggests that regardless of their initial motivation, they all took a genuine and active interest in the place once on site.

Learners' perception of L2 development was framed for a majority of them (9) in terms of an increased confidence to speak. Increased comprehension of spoken French and increased confidence in communicating with locals were also important (8 each). The development of speaking skills was also identified by just over half of the students (7). It is interesting to note that increased confidence in their oral skills is reported slightly more than an increased proficiency in their speaking skills per se. Despite the subjective nature of their appraisal, personal confidence and spontaneity are perhaps easier for students to gauge than actual language gain; this might require more formal or external modes of assessment or be better judged after a longer period spent abroad. It seems then that regardless of their initial proficiency level, the tour afforded students an opportunity to strengthen their confidence to speak. This confidence issue is also apparent when students were asked to name the most challenging aspect of the tour: Five students identified the ability to communicate spontaneously with local speakers (Question 3, $n = 11$, open-ended response) as their biggest challenge. Regardless of initial motivational orientation toward learning, this increased confidence reinforces the centrality of affective aspects of L2 development in study abroad contexts and suggests, in keeping with Hessel (2017), that learner self-efficacy is perhaps a more salient parameter in L2 learning motivation and engagement in study abroad contexts than initial motivation orientation (see also Roberts et al., 2001).

Because the questionnaire was anonymous, it is not possible to determine whether it is the most linguistically advanced students who felt they made the most progress with their spoken French, or the weaker students, or perhaps a combination of both.

Table 19.2 In which of the following specific domains do you think you have improved as a direct result of the tour (multiple-choice answer)? ($n = 12$)

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Speaking in French	58.3	7
Understanding French	66.7	8
Confidence in communicating with the locals	66.7	8
Understanding jokes/humor in French	33.3	4
Appreciating the local culture/greater cultural awareness	100.0	12
Understanding the historical and cultural complexities of New Caledonia	100.0	12
Confidence to speak in French	75.0	9
Confidence to travel in the Pacific region	66.7	8
Confidence to travel in foreign countries in general	50.0	6

The question of language proficiency development is also interesting to explore from the point of view of the students' achievement in French. When asked the rather ambitious question as to whether the tour had influenced their future study and/or career choices (Question 9, $n = 12$), seven students reported an increased motivation to pursue their studies of French or to continue to travel in French-speaking regions and use their French outside their formal studies.

The program met students' initial (inter)personal expectations in terms of practicing (and improving) their French, learning about the country and the culture, and interacting with the locals. Interestingly, over half the students also declared that the tour increased their confidence to travel in the Pacific region and to travel in foreign countries in general (eight and six students, respectively). Considering that 11 students reported in the predeparture questionnaire that they had traveled before, this is a somewhat unexpected outcome, although other studies have also found an increased confidence to travel in students following STMPs (e.g., Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). This highlights the fact that for many, the Pacific region is an unfamiliar destination, despite its proximity to Australia. In keeping with Che, Spearman, and Manizade (2009), this finding also suggests that study tours to less familiar destinations can contribute to the development of student core competencies and confidence to engage with the world. The development of such global citizenship attributes is a key value in the Australian tertiary education sector.

Learning Gain 2: Factors That Contributed Most to Learning

Both formal (e.g., assessment task, course requirements, content of tutorials) and informal aspects of the tour (e.g., discussions between tour participants, local students) were considered. According to the students, the factors that contributed most to their learning were the more informal components of the course.

Assessment

Of the three formal assessments (predeparture class presentation, reflective diary, and research paper, see Table 19.3), seven students identified the diary (the most open and informal) as the most useful. Class presentations completed during predeparture seminars were selected by two students and the research paper submitted after the tour selected by three. According to students, the diary afforded them a space to engage in informal ethnography inquiry through the daily recordings of observation about the language (new words or expressions, quirky anecdotes), and the practices of their host communities. It also acknowledged their own status as peripheral

Table 19.3 Out of the three "formal" types of assessment, which one was the most useful to your learning and why? ($n = 12$, multiple-choice with single-answer item)

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Reflective diary	58.3	7
Research paper	25.0	3
Presentation	16.7	2

Table 19.4 Which aspects of the tour helped you most with your learning? ($n = 12$, multiple-choice item, multiple answers permitted)

Answer options	Percent (%)	Frequency*
Informal discussions with peers/teachers	83.3	10
Group discussions while on tour	75.0	9
Interaction with the locals	50.0	6
Assessment tasks	41.7	5
Predeparture seminars	16.7	2
Other (please specify) and/or additional comment		2

* Students could select more than one answer.

participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in these practices and the need to observe and reflect in an ongoing, dialogic fashion. The students who selected the class presentation or the research paper perhaps preferred a more structured, in-depth, independent, or less intuitive engagement with a topic of their choice.

When taking into account other aspects of the tour, assessment tasks as a means to foster learning are relegated to second-last (Table 19.4). The informal but consistent and ongoing learning space that the study tour provided stands out as a critical opportunity for learning, by way of sharing ideas, reflecting and reacting to what was seen or heard.

The Group

The group acted as a form of a collective recipient of knowledge and as a privileged interlocutor when interacting with the various social actors we met. The group was also a space for meaning making and provided a critical form of scaffolding for many aspects of the students' learning and traveling experience. When asked to identify the one key element that contributed to the success of the tour, the excellent group cohesion was spontaneously mentioned by all students ($n = 12$, open-ended question). As students describe in the following, the cohesion of the group in which they were all dynamically and unequivocally involved was paramount to the learning experience:

The group environment, with each student supporting each other's learning and ensuring everyone had an enjoyable and productive experience.

(Student 2)

Definitely the group of students and teachers that were on the tour. Everyone was so caring and respectful of each other and it created a fantastic environment to learn in.

(Student 6)

In-group peer discussions took place either in English or in French. The language of interaction of the group with various social actors while on tour was French. Many students took every opportunity to practice their French, and the group was also a formidable source of motivation and experimentation:

The key success of the tour was the encouragement of all students to speak with each other in French (at meals, in public – many students even chose French

audio tours at museums etc.). The fact that we were such a small group meant that everyone understood each other's level of French and could practise together/with the lecturers.

(Student 4)

Although the two teachers interacted almost exclusively in French with students and also expected students to take every opportunity to interact in French with the people they met (this expectation was made clear at the time of the selection interview and maintained from the outset and throughout the tour), it is important to stress that at no time did the teachers impose a particular language for the group members to communicate with each other. As detailed earlier, the group generated a safe place where students could build on each other's strengths. As a result, students started to experiment with the French language in a playful fashion, explore new expressions (pronunciation, context, and appropriateness of use), or invented games to recycle new, old, or 'bizarre' terms.

Group cohesiveness has long been acknowledged in the literature as key to L2 development (e.g., Dörnyei, 1997), but these findings in the context of study abroad settings support Hessel's (2017) hypothesis that informal day-to-day interactions with other L2 learners can increase learner self-efficacy, which, in turn, generate overall growth and a sustained (and somewhat playful) engagement with the host communities.

Students did not know each other prior to enrolling in the subject, and two students mentioned that getting to know members of the group was their biggest challenge while on tour. Successful integration was therefore not a given from the outset, and although it is always difficult to pinpoint the key ingredients of a good group dynamic, some suggestions will be proposed in the conclusion.

Learning Gain 3: Study Tour vs. Independent Travel— Access and Engagement with Host Communities

Eleven respondents (one student did not answer) agreed unanimously that they would not have had a similar learning experience if traveling independently. Several reasons were put forward for this, the first being a lack of confidence to travel outside the tourist areas. Five students mentioned that had they been on their own they would have stayed in tourist areas and the cultural aspect of the tour would have been lost.

It is unlikely that I would have travelled to the North Province independently. I would probably also have felt uneasy in Noumea without a good deal of background information of the context and the peace of mind knowing that things were well organised.

(Student 8)

One student even suggested that they simply would not go to New Caledonia on their own.

This lack of confidence is coupled with access and opportunities that the tour afforded, which students felt they could not have reproduced or even thought of doing on their own. Access is clearly linked with learning:

I may not have been able to create, for myself, such a varied and interesting trip. We had so many opportunities that I wouldn't have been able to find for myself.

I may not have thought so deeply about the cultural aspect of the trip or had access to the university.

(Student 5)

The key to the learning was the access we had (through the tour program) to local people, the [university] and its students, the people of Tiendanite [Kanak community in Northern Province] etc. For example if I had gone to NC on my own I would never have known to go to Tiendanite or the right questions to ask.

(Student 10)

It seems that the objectives of the tour had been fully integrated by students, which also facilitated the learning experience and generated a deeper level of engagement than what is possible in a similar two-week touristic exploration of the place:

Although we had meaningful contact with the locals I believe this was possible because of our situation and the networking made by the lecturers etc. and the understanding that we were all there to learn about the culture and history rather than being here in a tourism context.

(Student 3)

Finally, the centrality of the group is again evident here: For some, independent travel would have led to a reduced opportunity to speak in French and interact with the locals:

If I had travelled on my own to NC, I would've probably resorted to speaking in English and would've had little opportunity for others to help me practise and improve my French.

(Student 2)

... it really helped to have several avenues to approach for help: professors, locals for clarification, students in French or worst case scenario for it to be explained in English.

(Student 1)

This is interesting as popular opinion suggests that total immersion where a student travels alone to a country where the L2 is spoken is key to the development of their language skills.

However, this study clearly demonstrates that group study tours can provide a formidable space for growth. The group became key to supporting intercultural communication rather than a hindrance to learning or speaking the target language.

The group provided learners with the confidence to expose themselves and interact with locals; it acted as a safety net and legitimized their interaction with local actors by reinforcing their status as peripheral participants keen to engage in the local practices of their hosts:

I may not have been as confident to go "out there" to talk to people and get involved in the same things, had I not been with the group.

(Student 4)

This dynamic and interactive process with outsiders benefited all group members and also generated important learning opportunities:

Being with the other students and the teachers meant we learned heaps more because we all had different perspectives and all had different questions to ask so we learned from each other.

(Student 9)

'Aha' Moments

When students were asked if they had 'aha' moments (Ritz, 2011) during the tour, two of the ten responses focused on language insights gained while on tour, one was neutral and seven focused on cultural aspects, which mainly had to do with the history and relation of the indigenous Kanak people with the Caldoche (New Caledonians of European French descent) and the French government. The links that students were able to make between conceptual knowledge, factual understanding (as gained in class during seminars or other institutional settings, such as museums), and lived experience while abroad seemed to generate a deeper level of learning and understanding. For one student, that insight was gained during our stay in Tiendanite, the tribal village of Jean-Marie Tjibaou (a key figure in the Kanak independence movement):

Definitely in relation to their history between the French and the Kanaks. It was particularly at the tribe that all the information came together and made sense.

(Student 5)

Another student describes the moment where the "penny dropped":

In the JM Tjibaou room at the Centre Culturel, reading the information about him and his quotes – in conjunction with the experience en tribu ('in the tribal stay').

(Student 7)

This quote refers to a return visit to a cultural center visited together earlier in the study tour before the tribal stay. Over half of the students chose to use their one free day to return to the center in order to see it "with new eyes." On this return visit, students reached new levels of understanding of the exhibits previously seen and realized that a series of portraits of important Kanak figures included elders of the tribe students had interacted with in the Northern Province:

It really made everything we had learnt real.

(Student 4)

This kind of dialogue going back and forth between large-scale history and microlevel narratives based on individuals' experience is probably best articulated in the following comment:

I had a lot of aha moments while talking to the university students during "le rallye" ('treasure hunt') and to other locals, just learning about their lives and

the way they had grown up. Another big aha moment was during the trip to Hienghène [near Tiendanite], while talking to the tribe members and learning about the embuscade ('ambush'), their village's history, and what it really meant for them, and what happened from their point of view, after having learnt about it in class from a different point of view/style of learning.

(Student 4)

These comments suggest that although the seminars were retrospectively viewed by students as least useful for their learning (Table 19.4), without them they would most likely not have appreciated or understood the various voices of the people they encountered in New Caledonia sharing their views and experience. Once there, however, learners reached a deeper and more meaningful level of learning and understanding, which in turn perhaps also lowered the perceived value of these seminars. Furthermore, the ability to speak French was absolutely critical to the students' understanding and appreciation of the people they met, places they visited, and their learning in general.

It is also important to note two other 'aha' moments recounted by students during the trip but not mentioned in the answers to the questionnaire. These include one student experiencing a bus ride on her own and later commenting that she had suddenly understood what it was like to be a minority when she was the only "white person" on the bus and everyone had looked at her when she got on. Another student commented that the tribal stay had really made her reflect on the circumstances of some of our indigenous Australians. While perhaps not at the forefront of students' minds when subsequently completing the questionnaire, these comments demonstrate an even wider learning experience for these two students. This is the type of learning referred to by Ritz (2011, p. 168) when she says that "new experiences that contest held beliefs and promote acknowledgement of and reflection on these experiences are foundations for ... opportunities for transformative, emotional, and social learning to occur." Experiences and reflections such as these are invaluable for developing intercultural understanding and global citizenship.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

This study makes a compelling case for the viability of study tours conducted as a group of L2 learners as it provided an invaluable source of motivation, support, and ongoing engagement for students. The study demonstrates that good group cohesion can scaffold learning and provide support and a sense of security to students to embrace their status as peripheral participants and engage in the practices of the host communities. This in turn boosts self-efficacy, allowing learners the confidence to go outside their comfort zone and interact with the local population, which in turn generates learning and a sense of personal and collective achievement. The group also provides a safe space for students to reflect on their own engagement and practice, and that of others but also to debrief, to laugh at cultural mishaps and awkwardness, to discuss any difficulties experienced, and to embrace the multilingual and global citizen they are learning to become.

Although it is always difficult to pinpoint the key ingredients of a good group dynamic, clear course objectives as well as clear expectations around learning and

attitude facilitated the learners' adherence to the program. In addition to the basic expectation of L2 interaction whenever/wherever appropriate, punctuality and participation in all activities, appropriate and respectful clothing (and behavior), and a buddy system were discussed at length prior to and during the tour. As such, the preselection interview phase was critical: Selected students enrolled in the course fully aware of our expectations. A good sense of humor on the part of the tour leaders and the students also proved useful to remind one another of the tour rules while abroad.

Students appreciated that the program provided insights about the host communities that would not have been available to them had they traveled on their own. They found that the tour was stimulating and structured but that it also provided opportunities for them to take their own initiative in terms of choosing some site visits, finding their own way to a location, interacting with locals to purchase tickets, do their shopping, etc. free time was also factored in to allow for reflection, debriefing, and bonding. The predeparture seminars were essential for laying the foundations for the learning that took place in-country but also for the group to begin to connect. A group dinner was held prior to departure, and a Facebook group was created by students to exchange questions and advice before departure and to communicate while abroad.

Overall, the success of the study tour was largely due to three main factors: the importance of relationships and good communication in the group, good planning and organization of the framework of the program (assessment, destination, duration, accommodation, support available to students, predeparture seminars, etc.), and the development of a reliable local network of people who understood and facilitated the realization of our objectives. While in-country, the advantages of two teachers, a local support network, and a well-organized and structured itinerary fostered a relaxed and positive atmosphere among the group where friendships and mutual trust were able to blossom among this small but enthusiastic and committed group of students.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study provides a model that is easily replicable and adaptable to particular needs and circumstances, and makes a compelling case for the pedagogical benefits of short-term small group study tours for L2 learners. More studies are required that involve L2 learners from other regions and different destinations, to explore learning gain in nonhomestay settings over short periods of time. The saliency of parameters such as group size, cohesiveness, and learning gain in particular should be scrutinized further to help tour leaders and administrators establish a group environment most conducive to learning while abroad.

Key Terms

Short-term mobility program	French
Study abroad	New Caledonia
Immersion	Pacific Island
Undergraduate	

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Family vs. Dorm Stays

Interactional Development through Dinnertime Talk

The Case of American Students in Chinese Homestays

Wenhao Diao, Yi Wang, Anne Donovan, and Margaret Malone

Introduction

Study abroad (SA) is often believed to provide plentiful opportunities for students to speak. But in everyday conversations, listening is also an integral part of the communication process. Listeners are neither silent nor passive. They provide verbal and nonverbal cues to show support to the speaker and/or their orientation toward what is being said. They may nod or verbally say, *uh huh*, *yeah*, or *wow*. Signals of the latter type, the verbal signals that indicate active listening, constitute a crucial component of verbal behaviors in everyday interaction. Conventions for using them can vary greatly across languages (Young & Lee, 2004), but there is little research examining the learning of such listening strategies among second language (L2) learners (Shively, 2015; Tao & Thompson, 1991). In this chapter, we focus on the learning and use of such verbal signals among a group of Mandarin learners interacting with their Chinese host families over the course of one semester.

Previous literature has used different terms to refer to the interactional phenomenon of using such verbal signals as a listener (see a review in Young & Lee, 2004). Since these verbal signals often constitute a brief turn, they are referred to as reactive turns (RT) in this study. As research has shown, the use of RTs is embedded in specific linguistic and cultural systems. For example, Mandarin Chinese speakers use RTs less frequently than English speakers, and they also prefer different forms of RTs (Clancy, Thompson, Suzuki, & Tao, 1996; Deng, 2008; Tao & Thompson, 1991). These differences can be reflective of different cultural orientations to interpersonal relationships. In their analysis of speakers of American English, Mandarin, and Japanese, Clancy et al. (1996) observed that frequent use of RTs was disfavored by Mandarin speakers, which the researchers attribute to the Chinese cultural perspective that frequent RTs are rude interruptions. L2 learners often do not have the opportunity to learn or engage in the strategic use of RTs in the target language

without studying abroad because students usually do not verbally coconstruct turns when they are not the primary speaker in classroom discourse, though they may be using nonverbal behaviors, such as gaze or gesture. However, for students who go abroad and interact regularly with the local hosts, they presumably need to know how to react to the speakers effectively and appropriately to jointly accomplish the interactional work.

To understand students' learning of RTs, we draw on the theory of interactional competence as our framework. Interactional competence is the ability to utilize linguistic and interactional resources to construct and manage turns in conversations, interpret behaviors, and jointly accomplish the interactional work in communication (Hall & Doehler, 2011; Young, 2008). The use of RTs is an important aspect of interactional competence because it is a strategy to jointly construct turns, demonstrate alignment, and manage interpersonal relationships in cultural contexts (Young & Lee, 2004). SA researchers have investigated the development of L2 interactional competence by focusing on learners' turn management skill in Spanish (Dings, 2014), the use of the Japanese alignment particle *ne* (Ishida, 2009), and joint completion of otherwise incomplete turns in Japanese (Taguchi, 2015). Focusing on six L2 learners' RTs in Spanish, Shively's (2015) is the only study to date that examined interactional competence development in the SA setting by examining students' use of RTs, which she termed "listener response." However, this aspect of interactional competence continues to be an under-researched area within the SA literature, especially for learners studying in contexts that are linguistically and culturally distant from those of their home country.

The focus of this chapter is the learning of Mandarin RTs among American students in Chinese homestays. China is currently the fifth most popular destination among American SA students (Institute of International Education, 2016). Researchers are starting to focus on the language- and culture-learning processes among American students in China (Di Silvio, Diao, & Donovan, 2016; Diao, 2016; Du, 2013; Kinginger, Lee, Wu, & Tan, 2014). Furthermore, because Mandarin and English speakers demonstrate apparently different preferences in their use of RTs (Clancy et al., 1996), the learning of Mandarin RTs can be a potential benefit for those students who interact with their Chinese hosts regularly.

In what follows, we begin with a brief review of literature on interactional competence, RTs, and L2 learning in the homestay setting. We then present our study and the findings, which show some but limited development among a group of students living with Chinese host families. We conclude this chapter by providing implications for future researchers and language educators interested in SA.

Literature Review

RTs as Interactional Competence

The term "interactional competence" was first coined by Kramsch (1986) in her critique of conventional approaches to understanding students' L2 proficiency, which tend to focus on aspects related to students' linguistic knowledge or their oral performance in decontextualized environments. As Kramsch (1986) pointed out, interaction in ecological settings requires much more than simply the linguistic knowledge

to decode or produce utterances, and therefore, only examining aspects of students' linguistic performance is inadequate to uncover students' L2 development in actual interactions. Scholars have since developed the notion further. In their preface to a volume dedicated to interactional competence, Hall and Doehler (2011) define interactional competence as "the context-specific constellations of expectations and dispositions about our social worlds that we draw on to navigate our way through our interaction with others." Interactional competence thus includes the use of "prosodic, linguistic, sequential and nonverbal resources" to construct turns and repair problems in order to maintain a "shared understanding of the interactional work we and our interlocutors are accomplishing together" (Hall & Doehler, 2011, p. 2). Young (2008) further theorizes interactional competence as the skillful use of not only linguistic resources but also interactional resources (e.g., turn management and marking boundaries in conversations) and identity resources (e.g., the management of roles in a conversation).

RT construction is the use of lexical or other verbal forms to signal active and supportive listenership at or around the boundaries of turns (Young & Lee, 2004). It involves the linguistic knowledge of appropriate forms as well as the ability to recognize and utilize the available interactional resources (e.g., talk sequence and turn boundaries). Appropriate use of RTs can also signal the roles of the primary speaker and the listener. For example, in a formal lecture in North America, when the speaker has the floor, frequent uses of RTs are typically interpreted as unwelcome interruptions. Thus, the appropriate and effective use of RTs is a crucial component of interactional competence (Shively, 2015).

RTs in Mandarin and English Conversations

Research examining RTs typically combines a quantitative examination of the forms being used and their frequency of occurrence with a qualitative conversation analysis of the placement of specific RTs in discourse. Mandarin speakers demonstrate several unique features in their use of RTs. First, they use RTs rather infrequently compared to speakers of other languages. Clancy et al. (1996) show that English and Japanese speakers use almost twice as many RTs as Mandarin Chinese speakers. Various studies confirmed that Mandarin speakers are rare users of RTs (Deng, 2008; Günthner, 1993; Tao & Thompson, 1991). This low frequency of RT use, furthermore, is due to the Chinese cultural orientation that places "high value on personal autonomy" and "avoids putting oneself above others" (Clancy et al., 1996, p. 382). Frequent RTs can therefore be deemed interruptive and rude.

In addition to frequency, the forms that Mandarin speakers use to construct RTs also differ from those used by speakers of English. Previous research has identified five major categories of forms (Clancy et al., 1996; Deng, 2008, and examples are from Clancy et al., 1996):

- 1 Backchanneling, such as the use of nonlexical vocalized forms *uh*, *huh*, and *oh*.
- 2 Lexical forms, i.e., the use of often simple words, such as *yeah*, *okay*, and *really*.
- 3 Repetition, i.e., the listener's use of a part or the entirety of an immediately preceding turn. For example,

A: ((my insurance)) is eleven hundred a year.

B: **eleven hundred.**

- 4 A resumptive opener is when a full turn follows a short vocal signal, such as backchanneling or occasionally a single lexical form. In the example, the bold part shows that *oh* is used as the resumptive opener (note the difference between it and a simple backchanneling).

A: ... How are you doing with the house.

B: ... Oh, got it all uh ... primed, ... just about,
....except two sides [of it].

A: [Oh you shoot a] primer stuff.

- 5 Collaborative finishes refer to situations in which the listener helps the primary speaker complete a sentence, usually by helping the primary speaker find the most appropriate vocabulary. However, SA students rarely seem able or comfortable helping their hosts speak their native language. In fact, Taguchi (2015) shows the opposite as her participants used more incomplete sentences when they were the primary speaker so that they could draw on their hosts' linguistic expertise. Since the focus here is students' use of RTs when they are the listener, this category is excluded from the analysis and not discussed at length.

Among the first four types, Mandarin first language (L1) speakers demonstrate a preference for nonlexical vocalizations, such as *hm* and *oh* when speaking Mandarin, while English L1 speakers tend to prefer lexical expressions, such as *yes* or *that's right*, in English conversations (Table 20.1).

This difference may be due to the different resources that are available in the two language systems. While nonlexical expressions in English mainly serve as signals requesting the speaker to continue, in Mandarin, they—especially *hm*—often function to signal confirmation or interest, or claim understanding (Tao & Thompson, 1991). These functions are usually achieved in English through lexical expressions.

However, researchers have also cautioned great variations in terms of the use of RTs among individual speakers of the same language (Clancy et al., 1996; Deng, 2008). In fact, the use of any interactional resource, which includes RTs, relates to specific settings/individuals and thereby is not generalizable (Young, 2013). Therefore, in order to understand the development of interactional competence over time, we have to focus on the same individuals in comparable settings.

Table 20.1 Usage ratios of RTs by Mandarin and English speakers

<i>Language</i>	<i>Mandarin</i>		<i>English</i>	
	<i>Clancy et al. (1996)</i>	<i>Deng (2008)</i>	<i>Clancy et al. (1996)</i>	<i>Deng (2008)</i>
Backchanneling (%)	47.2	44	37.9	22
Lexical (%)	31.1	29	34.2	63
Repetition (%)	5.8	4	1.3	2
Opener (%)	14.5	17	10.4	11

Note: The fifth category "collaborative finishes" is omitted, and therefore the total is not 100%.

Homestay as a Site of Interactional Competence Development

The setting of interest in this chapter is the homestay. Previous investigations of SA students' interactional development have elicited conversations by arranging conversational partners for the students and artificially assigning them conversational tasks (Dings, 2014; Taguchi, 2015). While conversation elicitation allows the researcher to control the setting, it obscures students' interactional competence development in spontaneous conversations when they study abroad. Shively (2015) examined spontaneous conversations, but two types of social interactions (age peers and host family) were mixed in her analysis. Interactional competence is jointly constructed (Hall & Doepler, 2011). For SA students, their hosts—either host families (McMeekin, 2006) or age peers (Fernández-García & Martínez-Arbelaitz, 2014)—can play a critical role in facilitating and shaping conversations. Therefore, it is still necessary to investigate students' interactional competence development with the same interactant(s) and in comparable settings.

Homestays are a frequently examined type of social interactions within the SA literature. Wilkinson (2002) reported that students often transfer their classroom discourse when interacting with their host families, which she termed the "omnipresent classroom" phenomenon. But more recent studies show a complex picture. While McMeekin (2006) demonstrates how Japanese host families construct conversations with students and contribute to their pragmatic development, Cook (2008) shows that, despite the opportunities available to learn the Japanese conversational norms at the dinner table, students may not be fully aware of the Japanese plain/polite forms or the social identities they index. Iino (2006) argues that dinnertime conversations with Japanese host families provide students with an opportunity for mutual linguistic and cultural exchanges. Kinginger et al. (2014) further show that mealtime conversations allow even novice learners to socialize with their Chinese hosts and become more able to participate in family interactions, such as teasing.

Based on these studies, the homestay setting seems a potentially rich site for students to learn to jointly accomplish interactional work and manage their roles in conversations, but how such learning may take place remains unclear. Therefore, we seek to understand if and in what ways students' interactional competence may change by focusing on the use of RTs. More specifically, our research questions are as follows:

- 1 In terms of frequency, in what ways have the students' use of RTs in dinnertime conversations changed over the course of their semester in China?
- 2 In terms of forms, in what ways have the students' use of RTs in dinnertime conversations changed over the course of their semester in China?

Methods and Procedures

Participants

Data came from the Center for Applied Linguistics project on how to optimize the linguistic development within the homestay setting. Because the use of RTs is a language-specific phenomenon, this chapter reports on the subset of Mandarin learners. These students came from multiple cohorts who studied in semester language programs in China from fall 2011 to fall 2012. Of the students who consented,

Table 20.2 Profiles of participants and their host families

<i>Student</i>					<i>Host family</i>		
<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Birth country</i>	<i>L1s</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Composition</i>
Adam	18	Male	US	English, French	Shanghai	3	HM, HF, 1 adult son*
Claire	23	Female	US	English	Shanghai	3	HM, HF, 1 adult daughter
Ethan	21	Male	US	English	Beijing	2	HF, 1 young daughter*
Greg	20	Male	US	English	Nanjing	3	HM, HF, 1 adult daughter
Sam	20	Male	US	English, Japanese	Shanghai	3	HM, HF, 1 adult son
Thomas	21	Male	Israel	Hebrew, English	Beijing	1	Host grandmother
Walt	20	Male	US	English	Nanjing	2	HM, HF
Ysabel	21	Female	US	English, Spanish	Shanghai	3	HM, HF (only weekends), 1 young daughter
Zora	20	Female	US	English	Shanghai	2	HM, host grandmother

* Adult son/daughter = children between the ages of 17 and 25. Young son/daughter = children under the age of 16 (including 16).

nine submitted multiple audio recordings that were long enough for analysis (see the ‘Procedures’ section). These students and their host families became the participants of this study (Table 20.2).

Based on the Simulated Oral Proficiency Interviews (SOPI) administered to the participants, all nine students had their initial performances rated at the Intermediate to Advanced levels. They were each assigned a pseudonym (Table 20.2). These students’ ages ranged from 18 to 23 years old. Six of them were male, and three were female. With the exception of Thomas, who was born in Israel, the rest were all born in the U.S. The size of their host families was all small, ranging from one to three members. Due to China’s one-child policy, seven of the students lived with a host family that had only one child. Many of these host siblings were adults, who were not present in their recorded conversations.

Procedures

The primary data source for this chapter was recorded student-host family conversations. Each student was given an audio recorder and instructed to record their dinnertime conversations with the host family. They were asked to record a total of seven conversations, four at the beginning and three at the end of the semester. Because the recordings were of varying lengths and quality, two recordings from the beginning and another two from the end of the semester that were both longest and of the highest audio quality were selected for analysis (referred to as pre 1, pre 2, post 1, and post 2).

Table 20.3 Length of recordings and transcribed recordings from each participant

Pseudonym	Length of recordings (min)				Transcribed length (min)			
	Pre 1	Pre 2	Post 1	Post 2	Pre 1	Pre 2	Post 1	Post 2
Adam	51	27	45	62	20	20	20	20
Claire	27	21	16	25	20	19	14	20
Ethan	31	42	41	25	20	20	20	20
Greg	26	44	20	23	20	20	18	20
Sam	24	20	28	22	20	18	20	20
Thomas	61	57	53	50	20	20	20	20
Walt	34	35	38	28	20	20	20	20
Ysabel	54	18	24	31	20	16	20	20
Zora	46	43	48	21	20	20	20	19

This selection resulted in 36 recordings that totaled 1,261 minutes. Approximately 20 continuous minutes that were most audible and without long pauses were selected from each of these recordings for transcription (Table 20.3). A total of 704 minutes of recordings were transcribed using the same conventions (Appendix 20.1).

Analysis

The transcripts of these recordings were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Each turn produced by students was categorized as either an RT or nonreactive. An RT was coded as “an utterance produced by an interlocutor who is playing a listener’s role during the other interlocutor’s speakership” (Clancy et al., 1996). Students’ responses in an adjacent pair were not coded as RTs because these responses are expected by their immediately preceding turns rather than self-nominated as a listener reaction (Deng, 2008). For example, in the following excerpt, the question “right?” and the answer “right” form an adjacent pair:

1 Host father: **dui budui?**

Right?

2 Adam: **dui.**

Right.

The numbers and percentages of RTs were calculated to answer the first research question.

Then, based on the categorization in existing research (Clancy et al., 1996; Deng, 2008), all students’ RTs were grouped into four types:

- 1 **Backchanneling** refers to a vocalized, nonlexical turn. Table 20.4 shows typical backchannel forms in students’ RTs from our data.
- 2 A **lexical form** refers to the use of lexical words/phrases such as *dui* (“right”) and *hao* (“good”). Table 20.5 shows typical lexical forms in students’ RTs.
- 3 A **repetition** was coded as a turn in which the student repeats a portion or the entirety of the text from the previous interlocutor’s turn.
- 4 A **resumptive opener** is an RT that the student begins with a vocalized form or a simple lexical form but continues with a full turn immediately after.

Table 20.4 Typical backchannel forms in students' RTs

<i>oh (oh oh)</i>	<i>uh</i>
<i>Um</i>	<i>ah ha ha</i>
<i>ah (ah ah)</i>	<i>hm (mm-hmm)</i>

Table 20.5 Typical lexical forms in students' RTs

<i>dui/dui de/ dui a/dui dui dui/ hen dui</i> ["right"]
<i>ni shuo de dui</i> ["what you said is right"]
<i>hao/hao hao hao/hen hao/hao ba/bucuo hm</i> ["good"]
<i>shi/shi ah/shi shi</i> [copula]
<i>na ge shi</i> ["that + copula"]
<i>tongyi/wo tongyi</i> ["(I) agree"]
<i>dangran</i> ["of course"]
<i>zhende ma/zhende</i> ["really"]
<i>keneng</i> ["maybe"]
<i>wo zhidao/mingbai mingbai/mingbai/wo dong/zhidao le</i> ["(I) understand"]
<i>hen you yisi</i> ["very interesting"]

English Lexical Forms:

<i>yeah</i>
<i>okay</i>

After an initial round of coding, the first two authors (both native speakers of Mandarin) refined the coding criteria. The transcripts were then checked again using the refined criteria. After the coding was completed, the percentages of turns in each category over total RTs were calculated.

Since interactional competence is local to specific individuals and contexts, simply quantifying students' RTs cannot adequately reveal the changes in their interactional competence. These quantitative analyses were followed by a qualitative conversation analysis of selected individuals and their representative excerpts.

Results and Discussion

RQ 1: In terms of frequency, in what ways have the students' use of RTs in dinnertime conversations changed over the course of their semester in China?

In their first recording, the students produced a total of 667 RTs, accounting for 51.15% of all their turns. The number of RTs decreased to 561 (43.73% of all turns) in the second recording, 442 (33.95%) in the third, and 401 turns (31.43%) in the final recording.

This decrease was observed consistently across all participants. Figure 20.1 shows the percentage changes of RTs in participants' first and final recordings.

These decreases, however, do not necessarily mean that the students were becoming infrequent users of RTs or learning the Chinese cultural norm. In their final recordings, an average of 31.43% of the turns produced by these students were RTs, which is much closer to the English norm (37.3%) than that of the Mandarin speakers (10%) reported by Clancy et al. (1996). The decreases in their RTs were, in fact, due to the very

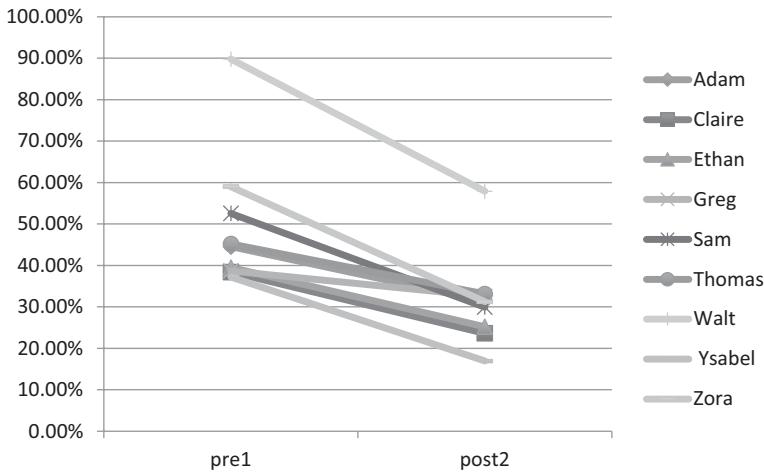


Figure 20.1 Percentage changes of RTs for each student.

Table 20.6 Distribution of forms used for RTs in Mandarin

Form	Pre 1	Pre 2	Post 1	Post 2	L1 speakers	
					Clancy et al. (1996)*	Deng (2008)*
Backchanneling (%)	46.73	45.07	44.43	45.12	47.2	44
Lexical (%)	24.68	21.84	24.34	26.03	31.1	29
Repetition (%)	14.42	15.72	11.59	11.35	5.8	4
Opener (%)	14.17	17.38	19.64	17.50	14.5	17

*Note: The fifth category "collaborative finishes" is omitted.

frequent use of RTs in their first recordings (an average of 49.43%). This high frequency is indicative of their roles in homestay conversations at the beginning of their time in China. Even when the students were speaking, half of the turns they produced were not turns produced as the primary speakers. After a semester in China, they became able to produce more turns as the primary speaker rather than simply the listener. Yet the frequency still resembled English norms rather than the Mandarin norms.

RQ 2: In terms of forms, in what ways have the students' use of RTs in dinnertime conversations changed over the course of their semester in China?

With the only exception of repetitions, there is little difference across recording sessions in the average percentages of almost every category (Table 20.6). The percentages of repetitions in students' RTs were much higher than those of Mandarin native speakers. In fact, such frequent use of repetition is neither a trait of their L2 nor a transfer from their L1 (English). For English L1 speakers in English conversations, the percentage of repetition is even lower than Mandarin speakers, with an average of around 2% (Clancy et al., 1996; Deng, 2008).

There were also great individual variations among the participants. Figure 20.2a shows the distribution of the RT forms by students in their first recordings:

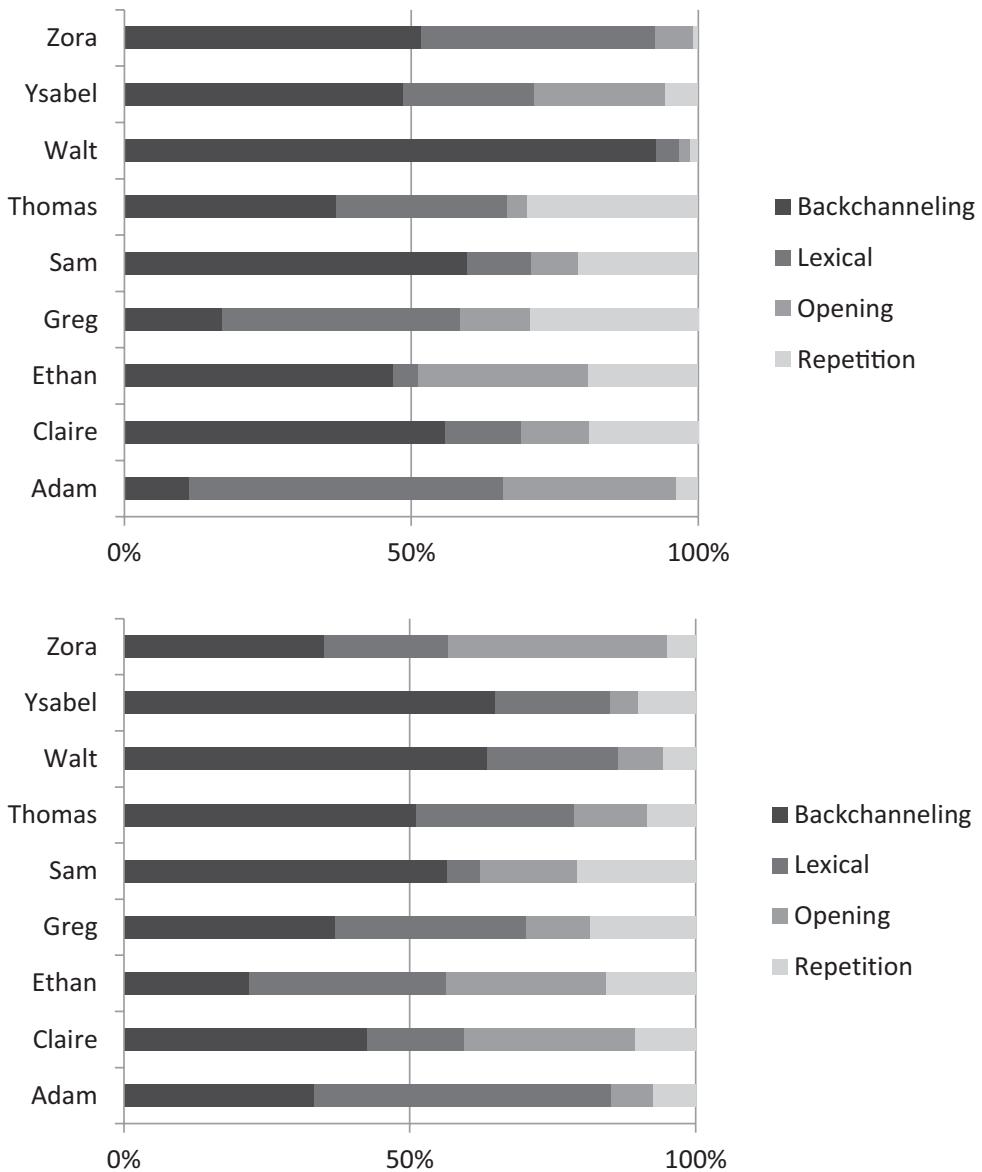


Figure 20.2 (a) Distribution of reactive responses in the first recordings (Pre 1). (b) Distribution of reactive responses in the last recordings (Post 2).

After a semester, there were still great individual variations in the distribution of RT forms in their final recordings (Figure 20.2b). These great individual differences observed were not surprising. They were found among native speakers as well (Clancy et al., 1996; Deng, 2008). As Young (2013) points out, interactional competence is always local to individuals rather than a group (Young, 2013).

When we compared the changes across participants, over time there was not a one-fit-all pattern. However, there was one pattern that several student participants

shared. Four students (Claire, Sam, Walt, Zora) used backchanneling extremely frequently in their first recordings, with over 50% of their RTs being backchanneling (Figure 20.2a). Sam continued to use backchanneling frequently in his all four recordings, which perhaps was due to his background in Japanese, as Japanese speakers have a strong preference of backchanneling (Clancy et al., 1996). But the other three students all showed decreases in backchanneling in their final recordings.

Qualitative analysis may better demonstrate how these students engage in the use of RTs in context. The qualitative cases were selected based on the observed numerical changes, namely the changes in the use of repetition, backchanneling, and the lack of change in lexical forms.

Repetition: From Simple Repetition to Meaningful Interaction

Repetition was the only category in which consistent numerical changes were observed in the group in the final two recordings compared with the first two recordings. This finding also seems unique to our study, as Shively (2015) reported quantitative increases in repetition and no qualitative changes among Spanish L2 learners in Spain.

Thomas was selected as a representative case for a closer analysis of the phenomenon. In his first recording, 29.76% of his RTs were repetitions. When examining these repetitions in context, it became clear that he was often repeating to simply practice the pronunciation of the word rather than engaging in meaningful interactions. The following is an example:

Excerpt 1: Use of Repetition by Thomas (Pre 1)

(HM = Host mother. TS = Thomas.)

- 1 HM: **zhe ge shi suanmiao chao jidan**
This is garlic sprouts with scrambled egg.
- 2 TS: **jidan dui=**
Egg yes
- 3 HM: **=jidan [he- zhege]**
Egg and- this
- 4 TS: **[jidan]**
Egg.
- 5 HM: **lü de shi suanmiao**
The green stuff is garlic sprouts.
- 6 TS: **zhe jidan dui=**
This egg yeah
- 7 HM: **=hm chang yi chang**
Hm. Have a taste.

Thomas constructed three RTs here, all of which were repetitions of the same word first uttered by the host mother (“egg”). After Thomas’s first repetition, the host mother acknowledged and went on to describe the dish. But Thomas repeated the word for a second time, overlapping with the remainder of the host mother’s turn (Line 4). When

the host mother started to talk about the garlic sprouts, Thomas did not recognize the transition in discourse and instead repeated the word for a third time. His repetitions in this interaction demonstrate the omnipresent classroom phenomenon (Wilkinson, 2002), as in traditional language classroom discourse, students often repeat after the teacher's (or the cassette player's) modeling of the pronunciation.

Thomas still used repetition in his final recording, but the percentage has decreased to 8.51%. These repetitions were also no longer simply repeating the pronunciation.

Excerpt 2: Use of Repetition by Thomas (Post 2)

(HM = Host mother. TS = Thomas.)

- 1 HM: **shi bu shi na ge xie cuo le**
Was that ((the address)) written wrong?
- 2 TS: **bushi wo keyi wo keyi [keneng keneng]**
No I could I could might might
- 3 HM: **[keyi shi-] keneng xie cuo le=**
Could is- Might have written wrong
- 4 TS: **=keneng (in English (yeah yeah))=**
Might. Yeah. Yeah.
- 5 HM: **=oh meiyou shou dao um mei guanxi eh bu yong na [me zhaoji]**
Oh I didn't receive it. Um that's okay. Eh, no need to worry about it.
- 6 TS: **[wo keyi]**
May I

Thomas misused the word (*keyi* instead of *keneng*) (Line 2), but he immediately self-repaired, which overlapped with the host mother's recast of the error. His repetition occurred immediately after the recast (Line 4). The repetition here signals his acknowledgment of the correction and his confirmation that the letter was missing. It contributes to the conversation and moves it forward, as evidenced by the host mother's quick response in the following turn. In this instance, Thomas's use of repetition shows that he became able to engage in interactions meaningfully instead of continuing to rely on L2 classroom discourse patterns.

It is also important to point out that Thomas's repetition in the final recording occurred as an acknowledgment of error correction, which is still a characteristic of the talk between an L2 learner and a language instructor in the classroom. Despite his self-repair, the host mother was ready and quick to provide such error corrections. Indeed, while host family members are not trained language teachers, they often see themselves as expert users of students' target language and may expect students to repeat after such error corrections. The high frequency of repetition among these students in dinnertime conversations, therefore, also needs to be understood in this context.

Backchanneling: Making vs. Solving Comprehension Problems

Three students showed a decrease in backchanneling use in their final recordings. Claire was selected to represent the group. Her backchanneling dropped from 55.88% and 57.73% in her first two recordings to 42.62% and 42.55% in her final two recordings. These numerical changes may not seem drastic, but her rates of backchanneling

became very similar to L1 Mandarin speakers (47.1% in Clancy et al., 1996, or 44% in Deng, 2008). Qualitative analysis reveals this change in more depth.

Claire's most frequently used backchanneling form was *hm*. While *hm* can signal attention, interest, or understanding to preceding talk in Mandarin spoken discourse (Clancy et al., 1996), as a vocalized sound it lacks a lexical form. Thus, it is a rather passive and vague signal (Deng, 2008, p. 309). Overusing it can sometimes cause misunderstanding, which was the case in Claire's first recording. For example, in the following excerpt, the host mother and Claire were discussing the phone that Claire purchased the day before and was already broken.

Excerpt 3: Claire's Use of Backchanneling (Pre 1)

(HM = Host mother. CL = Claire.)

- 1 HM: **wo jiu suo buhao wo jiu pa zhe buhao ni zhidao ma**
I said it was not good. I feared it was not good. You know?
- 2 **tamen gei ni huan hai keyi**
They let you exchange. That's okay.
- 3 CL: **hm**
- 4 HM: **ruguo tamen bijiao keqi gei ni huan**
If they are polite, they let you exchange
- 5 CL: **hm**
- 6 HM: **hai keyi fanzheng ni yong san ge yue si bu si a**
That's okay. You only use it for three months, right?
- 7 CL: **hm**
- 8 HM: **ze ge jiaqian dian li si mai bu dao de ni zhidao ba**
This price is not available in stores you know.
- 9 **suoyi zuotian ni yao mai wo jiu jiao ni buyao mai**
So yesterday you wanted to buy, I told you don't buy it.
- 10 **wo jiu buxiang rang ni jiao ni buyao mai wo jiu pa ziliang buhao**
I just didn't want to let you- told you don't buy it. I feared the quality was bad.
- 11 CL: **hm**
- 12 HM: **ting de dong ma**
Can you understand?
- 13 CL: **ting de dong keshi wo juede shi hao de**
I can understand but I thought it was good.

Claire and the host mother had a disagreement here over the quality of the phone. Disagreement is difficult in a second language, but it cannot be simply replaced by backchanneling. Claire's use of the passive, vague backchannel form *hm* in her RTs failed to convey her disagreement. Consequently, the host mother wondered if what she had said was comprehensible to Claire. Claire's exclusive use of backchanneling here was thus ineffective, as it made what was actually comprehended appear to be incomprehensible.

In her final recording, Claire's use of RTs seemed more strategic, and she participated in the conversation more effectively. In Excerpt 4, she and her host parents solved a communication problem using backchanneling effectively.

Excerpt 4: Claire's Use of RTs (Post 2)

- 1 HM: **meiguo ren zenme xiaoshun fumu de ne?**
How do Americans take care of their parents?
- 2 CL: **um meiguo ren bijiao duli.**
Um, Americans are more independent.
- 3 HM: **oh.**
Oh.
- 4 CL: **bijiao xihuan du- duli tamen xihuan duli.**
More like inde- independent. They like being independent.
- 5 HM: **dui wo zidao xihuan duli.**
Yes I know they like being independent.
na- na tade baba mama laole zenme ban ne?
Then- then what do you do when one's dad and mom are old?
((Omitting 10 turns in which they were talking about food.))
- 16 CL: **um fumu lao de shihou keneng wo yao bangzhu tamen.**
Um when the parents are old, maybe I will help them.
keneng tamen yao qu yige laoren de jiating.
Maybe they will go to an old people's family.
- 17 HM: **yang- yanglaoyuan a.**
Retirement home.
- 18 CL: **hm.**
- 19 HM: **oh.**

Here, Claire takes up an active speaker role, and the host mother is producing mostly RTs. In Claire's response to the question about how Americans take care of their senior parents, she did not know the expression for the retirement home in Mandarin and rephrased it as "an old people's family." The host mother provided the Mandarin form, to which Claire used a backchanneling to signal her confirmation (Line 18). While Excerpt 4 illustrates how Claire's ineffective use of RTs creates comprehension problems, Excerpt 5 shows how strategic use of them can remedy problems.

So far, we have shown two types of qualitative development in students' use of RTs in dinnertime conversations—repetition and backchanneling. But such changes were not as clear in students' use of RTs in the other two categories—especially the lexical forms.

Lexical Forms: Interactional Competence as a Mutual Construct

Adam frequently and consistently used *dui* ("yes" or "right") to construct RTs. In his first recording, 54.72% of his RTs were constructed using *dui*. This percentage hardly changed in his final recording, remaining to be over half (51.85%). A closer look at his interactions reveals that such frequent use of the simple lexical form was sometimes inadequate in achieving interactional work. For example, the following excerpt came from Adam's first recording, in which his host mother was trying to verify a story she had heard about fishing salmon in America.

Excerpt 5: Adam's Lexical Forms (Pre 1)

(HM = Host mother; AD = Adam.)

- 1 HM: **wo you yige tongxue- daxue tongxue ta xianzai zai meiguo**
I had a classmate- a classmate from college. He now lives in America.
- 2 **ta yiqian gen wo shuo a ta jingchang qu- qu nali diaoyu**
He used to tell me, he often went somewhere to fishing.
- 3 **ta shuo diao chulai jiushi zhege sanwenyu zhende haishi jiade wo bu queding**
He said what he fished was this salmon. Whether it was true or false, I'm not sure.
- 4 AD: **dui**
Yes.
- 5 HM: **ni zhidao ma tingdong wo shuo de le ma**
Do you know? You understand what I said?
- 6 AD: **dui=**
Yes.

Adam's first "yes" is not a meaningful RT in this context, which led the host mother to check his comprehension. But following the comprehension check question, Adam again responded "yes." This response semantically answered the question ("you understand what I said?"), but pragmatically, it did not. As a result, it was never clear to the host mother, or the research team or the readers, if Adam in fact understood the story or the question.

After a semester in China, Adam still frequently utilized this simple lexical form—along with an increased percentage of the passive backchannel form *hm*, but sometimes, his host parents were able to make sense of Adam's RTs. For example, in the following excerpt, the host parents asked if he had seen any Chinese film in the US, and if the film he had seen was dubbed in English, subtitled in English, or subtitled in Chinese.

Excerpt 6: Adam's Lexical Forms (Post 2)

(HM = Host mother; AD = Adam.)

- 1 HF: **=kan de na ge dianying shi fanyi de haishi**
Was the film you watched dubbed or
- 2 AD: **hm**
- 3 HF: **shi zimu de a**
Subtitled?
- 4 AD: **um shi zhong- zhongwen de**
Um it was Chin- Chinese.
- 5 HM: **zhongwen de**
Chinese?
- 6 AD: **dui mei- meiyou fanyi**
Yes no- no translation.
- 7 HF: **xiamian shi zimu**
Subtitles below.

- 8 AD: **mm dui**
Mm yes.
- 9 HM: **[zi]**
Sub-
- 10 HF: **[zi]mu yingwen zimu**
Subtitles. English subtitles.
- 11 AD: **hm**
- 12 HM: **ta shangci kan me- yi jiu si er ma dou you de=**
The last time he watched-1942, has it all.
- 13 AD: **=hm=**
- 14 HM: **=shuode he ((inaudible)) yi xiamian zhongwen yingwen dou you**
What's spoken and ((inaudible)) translation. Below had both Chinese and English.

After Adam's vague explanation in Line 6, the host father directed the discussion toward the subtitles. Adam used *dui* ("yes") as his RT, leading the host parents to further highlight the focus of their discussion: the subtitles (Lines 9 and 10). Adam's response was again simple, this time using an even more vague backchannel form *hm* (Line 11). But the host parents were now able to make sense of Adam's reactions and repair the problem by drawing upon their existing knowledge of the film that Adam watched in China, 1942.

Therefore, while there were some numerical changes in Adam's use of RTs (e.g., more backchanneling), they can hardly be interpreted as meaningful development in his interactional competence. Instead, after having Adam for a semester, the host parents had more shared knowledge and experience with him, which they were able to draw on to make sense of his vague RTs. Adam's recordings demonstrate the role that host families can play in shaping conversations (McMeekin, 2006), and they highlight interactions as jointly constructed.

Implications/Limitations

Our findings show that these students had difficulty actively participating in homestay conversations when they first arrived in China. They were mostly only as listeners, reacting to what was spoken instead of being the primary speakers. But over time, they all became able to participate in these conversations more actively and less as only listeners, though they still used RTs very frequently in the final recordings and seemed unaware of the Chinese cultural concept regarding the use of RTs. Qualitatively, there were numerous instances in which these students' (mis)use of their RTs created problems for communication, particularly at the beginning of their time in China. After their semester in China, some students seemed able to use RTs more effectively (e.g., Thomas and Claire). In other cases (e.g., Adam), the RTs remained ineffective at times, but the host families had learned to make sense of the responses through their shared experiences and/or knowledge.

These findings have several implications for language educators. First, there needs to be more awareness of this interactional phenomenon and more explicit training to facilitate learner's development of such an awareness in classroom teaching (Shively, 2015). In addition to focusing on what is produced by the primary speaker, the teacher can also guide students to attend to what the listener is doing. Classroom discourse

can be limited in its structure and roles, but perhaps teachers can introduce students to authentic daily discourse with the goal of making the listening behaviors more explicit to the students. These authentic practices may come from, for example, conversations on media (e.g., films, talk shows) before and during students' sojourns abroad. There can also be more classroom discussions about cultural differences in the use of RTs.

When abroad, students can be guided to become more aware of what RTs they produce in their everyday discourse. What we have used in this research project, i.e., asking students to record their dinnertime conversations, can also become incorporated in classroom pedagogy as a way to bring what is happening outside of class into the language classroom. Students can learn to analyze their own recordings and reflect on their use of RTs.

Finally, this article has only focused on verbal reactive behaviors. Listeners do not always resort to verbal cues to signal attention and support for the speaker; they may also use resources, such as facial expressions, gestures, body movements, gaze, and so on. Both future research and pedagogical development need to pay more attention to the variety of listener behaviors in different languages and cultures, and to what extent SA may serve as an opportunity for students to become aware of such linguistic and cultural differences.

Key Terms

Interactional competence	Mandarin Chinese
Turn taking	Host family
Listener response	Mixed-method

Further Readings

- Churchill, E., & DuFon, M. (Eds.) (2006). *Language learners in study abroad contexts*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters. (This edited volume provides a collection of studies, many of which address issues related to interaction and identity among study abroad students and their hosts.)
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- Van Compernolle, R., & McGregor, J. (Eds.) (2016). *Authenticity, language, and interaction in second language contexts*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters. (This edited volume offers a more recent discussion about how to conceptualize authenticity. Although not all studies included in the volume focus on SA, many of them utilize data from the SA setting. The findings, therefore, can provide useful insights to further our understanding of interactions in the SA setting.)
- Young, R. (2008). *Language and interaction: An advanced resource book*. New York, NY: Routledge. (This book provides a thorough explanation for students and scholars to understand what interactional competence is, as well as resources to analyze it. It shows how interactional competence, as a theoretical construct, differs from more traditional approaches to defining competence in the field of Second Language Acquisition [SLA].)

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Appendix 20.1

Transcription conventions

[]	overlap
(())	author's notes
-	elongated articulation
=	latched talk
bold	original talk
regular	English translation

Sheltered Programs, Direct Matriculation Programs, Hybrid Programs

Making a Difference through Talk

Spanish Heritage Language Learners as Conversation Partners in a Hybrid Study Abroad Program

Silvia Marijuan

Introduction

Program structure has been argued to be one of the crucial factors that determine the learning outcomes of a study abroad (SA) program (Dewey et al., 2014). This can be especially relevant for short-term SA programs (i.e., programs lasting 8 weeks or less) since there has been some debate as to their efficiency. SA research focused on the impact of short-term SA programs on second language (L2) development suggests that specific programmatic features, such as the inclusion of language exchanges between L2 learners (L2Ls) and native speakers, can foster the likelihood of L2Ls' benefiting from the immersive experience (Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz, 2015; Marijan, 2015; Nagle, Morales-Front, Moorman, & Sanz, 2016). Moreover, literature on SA pre-sessional courses taking place before students begin their academic program, and including language exchange partners to promote L2 language preparation (Dewaele, Comanaru, & Faraco, 2015), have shown that language exchanges not only seem to lower L2Ls' level of foreign language anxiety (i.e., negative emotional reactions when using an L2) but also tend to increase L2Ls' willingness to communicate (i.e., the propensity to engage in communication).

Conversation partners usually belong to the same host institution, are of the same age group as L2Ls, and share similar interests with the students taking part in the program. Language exchanges between L2Ls and conversation partners have the potential to strengthen short-term SA programs by ensuring the quality and quantity of the linguistic input for L2Ls and by providing L2Ls with another point of reference as they learn about the target culture's perspectives, attitudes, and values. In other words, language exchanges equip L2Ls for opportunities to engage in spontaneous conversations outside of the classroom, to negotiate for meaning, and to clarify certain aspects of the target language and culture that they do not yet fully understand. Additionally, conversation exchanges tend to create a nonthreatening, enjoyable environment that allows for relationship building and discovery of the self and others (Shively, 2016).

As part of the growing market phenomena of short-term SA programs in the US (DeKeyser, 2014; Kinginger, 2010), postsecondary institutions have started to develop hybrid short-term study-at-home/SA programs in order to offer more affordable SA options, especially in the public university system, and to create a sense of community among L2Ls before they go abroad. The “study-at-home” (AH) component of a hybrid SA program, which typically consists of about 50% of the program, frames the immersion experience in a similar manner to a pre-sessional course, with the difference being that the AH component of a hybrid SA program takes place at the learners’ home institution and forms an integral part of the program of academic study itself. That is, the AH section of a hybrid SA program serves as the foundation for the language and content courses that learners will continue taking at the host university.

The present qualitative study has the goal of investigating the potential perceived benefits of including language exchanges between L2Ls and heritage language learners (HLLs) of Spanish in the design of a hybrid SA program in a public university in California. Using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), data from two focus groups conducted among L2Ls and HLLs of Spanish are reported. The study provides an overview of the characteristics that can make HLLs a strong fit to fulfill the role of conversation partners in SA hybrid programs, and it discusses why giving HLLs the opportunity to work as conversation partners can positively influence their linguistic skills, their perception of self, their sense of belonging in the college institution, and their professional prospects. Finally, the type of framework that can be used for these type of language exchanges (e.g., “macro-based” tasks that relate to the curriculum) is examined.

Previous Literature

Characteristics of Spanish Heritage Language Learners

HLLs are characterized by exposure to early language learning experiences in a naturalistic setting (primarily in the home/community) (Valdés, 2001); this translates into significant linguistic advantages (e.g., Correa, 2011; Montrul, Foote, & Perpiñán, 2008) and cultural knowledge. Carreira and Kagan’s (2011) national survey of Spanish HLLs in college has shown that a significant majority (68%) rated their listening skills as advanced or native-like and that an even larger percentage (82%) rated their speaking skills as intermediate or above. In addition, Carreira (2016) has argued that Spanish HLLs can be helpful to L2Ls since the former tend to have a performative orientation toward language, that is, they “adopt a functional orientation to communication and meaning” (p. 165). Whereas L2Ls are accustomed to rehearsing language in oral production, and they do not have a family connection to the target language and culture, Spanish HLLs have greater facility with the informal register, including knowledge of idiomatic expressions, and they have family and identitarian connections to the heritage language (HL) and culture (Carreira, 2016). Since HL identity requires constant (re)negotiation between two (or more) languages and cultures (Val & Vinogradova, 2010), HLLs’ bi-/multicultural point of view can improve L2Ls’ ability to understand the cultural values of others. In other words, HLLs can promote cultural sensitivity among their L2 peers, which at the same time has the potential to transfer to the L2Ls’ interactions with the host culture abroad. Evidence of

how previous language/cultural exchanges between L2Ls and native speakers/HLLs in the home country might influence future language/cultural experiences in new contexts abroad can be found in Shively (2016). In this case study, an L2L from the US described speaking “kitchen Spanish” with Mexicans in the US before going to Spain. When he later found a native-language conversation partner with whom to practice his Spanish while abroad, Shively’s participant noted that the informal exchanges he shared with this conversation partner brought him back to the “ORIGINAL comfort zone” established by earlier interactions with Spanish speakers in the US (p. 72). This is to say, participating in language exchanges in both contexts allowed the L2L to engage in an informal interactional style and search for common ground with Spanish native speakers. This, in turn, led to enjoyment and “camaraderie” and was, in this L2L’s view, the most important factor for his being able to learn the L2.

Even though HLLs are a nonhomogeneous group (e.g., their generation of immigration or the degree with which they have been in contact with the HL and culture varies), they nonetheless may contribute to hybrid SA programs in an innovative way, not only by helping L2Ls grasp important differences between the first language (L1) and the L2 but also by strengthening L2Ls’ transcultural competence.

Spanish Heritage Language Learners in the Workforce

Scholars have argued that it is important to recognize HL learners’ sophisticated expertise in the HL as well as their knowledge of culture and have claimed that their bilingual abilities should be considered an asset in a growing global community and marketplace (e.g., Blake & Zyzik, 2003; Carreira & Armengol, 2001; Quintanar-Sarellana, Huebner, & Jensen, 1997).

Carreira and Armengol (2001) included education as one of the arenas in which HLLs have the capacity to thrive professionally. Likewise, Quintanar-Sarellana et al. (1997) documented the ability of Spanish HLLs to make valuable contributions in an educational setting. In their study, Spanish HLLs were trained and employed as tutors and oral language proficiency proctors for Spanish L2Ls. The authors found that this professional opportunity refined Spanish HLLs’ oral and written skills (e.g., as a result of preparation before tutoring), redefined their relationships within the school community, and empowered them since they discovered they possessed skills that were of cultural and economic value.

HLLs’ expertise can be expected to similarly enrich the curriculum at the university level. The inclusion of HLLs in the design and implementation of hybrid SA programs can be seen as a way to recognize these students’ value and enhance their academic/professional prospects. Even though “instrumental motivation” (i.e., the motivation to study a language to fulfill professional goals) (Ducar, 2012) seems to contribute to HL maintenance and development, there is currently a dearth of research studies examining how HLLs may be empowered through professional opportunities to work with other members of the campus community in a way that might result in HL transformation (e.g., language change) and HL identity (re)negotiation (e.g., He, 2006; Parra, 2016; Potowski, 2012), such as a boost of confidence in their bilingual abilities (Blake & Zyzik, 2003).

At the institutional level, recognizing HLLs’ bilingual abilities as a valuable resource can also contribute to campus administrators’ efforts to enhance diversity and inclusivity in college, especially in an era of social and racial tensions as well as

inequity (Burnim, 2017). A recent report shows that, of the 325,339 U.S. students who went abroad for credit between 2015 and 2016, only 9.7% were of Hispanic or Latinx origins (Institute of International Education, 2017). Employing HLLs as conversation partners for L2Ls in the AH section of a hybrid SA program has the potential to tackle some of the potential reasons that are argued to be affecting HLLs' low enrollment in SA programs: family background (lack of foreign travel experiences, perception of SA as unnecessary and interruptive for college study), lack of encouragement/information about SA programs offered, and lack of financial support (Institute for the International Education of Students Abroad, 2009).

To summarize, offering HLLs a professional opportunity to work as conversation partners in a hybrid SA program can help them to develop and maintain their HL. Lastly, such an experiential learning opportunity can potentially improve the likelihood that HLLs might participate in SA programs themselves.

A Framework for Conversation Exchanges

Since language exchanges between peers are communication-oriented, task-based language teaching (TBLT), an approach that "aims to facilitate language learning by engaging learners in interactionally authentic language use" (Ellis, 2013) may be the approach most suited to the goals of such exchanges. In line with this, Carreira (2016) has observed that whereas a "micro-approach" to language builds competence by isolating the elements of the language (vocabulary, grammar) to later engage learners in authentic tasks (bottom-up approach), a "macro-approach" to language is discourse-oriented, that is, it builds on learners' initial abilities in speaking and listening, and grammar and vocabulary as dictated by function and context (top-down approach). Task-based research studying the interactions of pairs of L2-HLLs of Spanish (Blake & Zizik, 2003; Bowles, 2011; Bowles, Adams, & Toth, 2014; Henshaw, 2015) has shown that both can benefit through negotiation of meaning in a wide array of tasks (e.g., oral/written information-gap tasks), although HL speakers tend to assist their L2 partners more often.

In short, a TBLT approach or, in terms of Carreira (2016), a "macro-approach" to language is more likely to encourage spontaneous conversations between L2Ls and HLLs who have the functional skills to engage L2Ls in everyday interactional activities.

Method

The present study was designed as a qualitative focus group study. Focus groups can be used for exploratory purposes and are particularly useful for obtaining in-depth information in understudied areas (Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004).

Participants

Participants were 18 college students from a public university in California. L2Ls ($n = 7$, mean age = 21.5, female = 7) had completed at least one upper-level course in Spanish (e.g., Introduction to Spanish Linguistics). HLLs ($n = 11$, mean age = 20.7, female = 8, male = 3) had all completed the sole course available at the university for Spanish HLLs, an upper-intermediate course, and all but two of the HLL

Table 21.1 Self-rated proficiency for L2Ls and Spanish HLLs

	L2Ls				HLLs			
	Native	Near-native	Advanced	Intermediate	Native	Near-native	Advanced	Intermediate
Speaking	0	3	3	1	4	3	1	3
Reading	0	3	4	0	3	2	5	1
Writing	0	2	4	1	3	0	4	4
Listening	0	5	2	0	8	2	1	0

Note: This question consisted of a six-point Likert scale; since no participant selected “basic” or “beginning,” both categories were excluded from this table.

participants were also enrolled in an upper-level Spanish course. As seen in Table 21.1, most of the L2Ls and HLLs self-rated their Spanish linguistic skills in the advanced-(near) native range.

Procedures

Participants were informed that the goal of the study was to gather their ideas concerning the development of a hybrid on-campus/SA program in Costa Rica and the inclusion of Spanish HLLs as conversation partners in that program. After giving their consent, participants completed a background questionnaire and were asked to take part in either a focus group conducted with (i) Spanish HLLs or (ii) L2Ls. The decision to separate L2Ls from HLLs was based on the fact that “group dynamics and flow of discussion can be influenced by individuals’ demographic characteristics and diverse personal experiences” (Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004, p. 262). Each focus group session, which lasted approximately 40 minutes, was organized according to a set of questions that participants answered orally (see Table 21.2). To encourage free thinking and expression, participants were allowed to answer the questions in either English or Spanish, or in both languages. HLLs opted to answer mainly in Spanish or code-switched between Spanish and English; L2Ls opted to answer mainly in English.

Data Analysis

The recordings of both focus groups were transcribed and imported into *NVivo 11.2.2* for posterior analysis. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), the data were re-reviewed and coded in recursive phases. In the first phase, an initial coding scheme was developed, guided by two overall research questions:

RQ1: What are the perceived potential benefits that Spanish L2Ls and HLLs see in including language exchanges between L2Ls and HLLs in a hybrid SA program?

RQ2: What format do Spanish L2Ls and HLLs prefer conversation exchanges to have?

In the second phase, both transcripts were analyzed based on the initial coding scheme. In the third phase, the coding scheme was readjusted. Finally, during the

Table 21.2 Focus group questions for L2Ls and Spanish HLLs

Focus group with L2Ls	Focus group with Spanish HLLs
When you're in Spanish class, what do you most like to practice with your classmates when you do group-work or pair-work?	Same question as for L2Ls.
If you were going to take part in an SA program in Latin America, what might be the benefits of getting to know your classmates by taking classes with them before you go on your SA trip together?	Same question as for L2Ls.
Imagine that you were to take part in an intensive Spanish SA program that consists of two weeks of study on campus (in the US) and three weeks of SA. The two weeks on campus would include regular conversation exchanges with Spanish heritage speakers. In what ways, if any, might these conversation exchanges be beneficial to you?	(Same introduction as for L2Ls) What benefits do you think these conversation exchanges would have for the English-speaking students?
What aspects of your Spanish do you think might benefit from practicing Spanish on a regular basis with a Spanish heritage speaker?	What specific aspects of the Spanish of the English-speaking students do you think might benefit from conversation exchanges with Spanish heritage speakers?
In what other ways do you think having regular conversations with a Spanish heritage speaker could help you prepare for your SA trip?	In what other ways do you think the English-speaking students participating in the SA trip might benefit from the conversation exchanges with Spanish heritage speakers?
How do you think having conversation exchanges with a Spanish heritage speaker in the US would compare with having conversation exchanges with a native speaker in the country where you will be traveling to?	How do you think conversation exchanges between English-speaking students and Spanish heritage speakers in the US would compare with conversation exchanges between English-speaking students and native speakers of Spanish in the country the students will travel to?
Is there something else you would like to add about the potential benefits of taking part in conversation practice with a Spanish heritage speaker before you go on an SA trip?	In what ways could the Spanish heritage speakers who work as conversation exchange partners benefit, in terms of their own professional development, from their work with English-speaking students of Spanish?
Of everything that we have discussed today, what is most important to you?	Is there anything else you would like to add about the potential benefits of conversation exchanges between Spanish heritage speakers and English-speaking students who will be studying abroad?

fourth phase, the researcher applied the revised coding scheme to the transcripts and identified themes. Even though “the ‘keyness’ of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures—but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p, 82)—the threshold to consider a theme prevalent was determined to be a minimum of three instances made by different participants (either L2Ls or HLLs).

Results and Discussion

This section is organized according to the research questions addressed. The themes identified in the qualitative data are discussed and illustrated with excerpts from both focus groups.

Perceived Benefits of L2-HL Conversation Exchanges for L2 Learners

Both Spanish L2Ls and HLLs agreed that a hybrid SA program would be beneficial for L2Ls' language development. Two related themes in the data were the *comfort* and *support* that getting to know their classmates before going abroad would create—a connection that would facilitate learner adjustment to the host country:

Excerpt 1, Participant 7, HLL: “Será como un ambiente de *cohort* y estarás estableciendo una confianza con tus compañeros.” [There will be a cohort atmosphere, and you'll be building trust with your classmates.]

Excerpt 2, Participant 8, HLL: “Va a haber una conexión con tus compañeros y especialmente si no has ido a un país latinoamericano. Vas a estar con gente que conoces, va a ser confortable.” [There is going to be a connection with your classmates especially if you haven't gone to a Latin American country. You're going to be with people you know; it's going to be comfortable.]

Excerpt 3, Participant 12, L2L: “I think it'd be good because, just like having other classes with your classmates you've seen before, like, that sense of familiarity and comfortability... and you have just like a sense of community with each other.”

In the context of error correction, *comfort* and *support* also emerged as critical facets of language exchanges between Spanish L2Ls and HLLs:

Excerpt 4, Participant 14, L2L: “It's just like they [Spanish HL speakers] just have more ability to correct people.”

Excerpt 5, Participant 10, HLL: “Siento que también puede ayudar a relajarse estando con una persona que hable español o el idioma que sea y así vemos cómo hacen errores y así mismo ellos sienten que les estamos dando ayuda si necesitan decir algo.” [I feel that it can also help them relax to be with someone who speaks Spanish or whatever language, so we can see what mistakes they're making and so they feel like we're helping them if they need to say something.]

Excerpts 4 and 5 show that not only did L2Ls perceive their HL peers as a source of substantial, corrective feedback, but HLLs also believed that they could help L2Ls improve their linguistic skills by helping them examine their errors. At the same time, HLLs acknowledged that error correction should take place in a relaxed environment:

Excerpt 6, Participant 13, L2L: “In a classroom, maybe a teacher is less inclined to call you out for every mistake you make but if you're having a conversation with somebody that's comfortable with you then they can point out things in your sentence and not feel like one person's more dominant than the other.”

Excerpt 7, Participant 13, L2L: “And then you learn new vocabulary, too, because you'll explain what your idea is. And you're like: YES, THAT'S IT.”

Excerpt 8, Participant 16, L2L: “It helped for me to be able to hear because I was like, is that a word or is that whole thing a word? So, you get more practice with that.”

Excerpts 6–8 continue to support the idea that learning opportunities in L2L-HLL language exchanges would be derived out of the opportunity to take part in pleasant conversations that offer opportunities to negotiate for meaning. Excerpt 6 points to the existence of a horizontal power relationship in such exchanges. Even though HLLs were perceived to have more linguistic expertise than L2L peers, the goal of the exchanges was nonetheless seen as the promotion of mutual communication and understanding, and, ultimately, friendship (Shively, 2016). Excerpts 7 and 8 show that L2Ls recalled having made improvements in the areas of vocabulary and comprehension through previous interactions with HLLs. These data support research investigating the nature of L2-HL interaction that indicates that L2Ls are more likely to initiate preemptive feedback (i.e., request assistance) and HLLs are more likely to provide corrective feedback (Henshaw, 2015).

In relation to *comfort* and *support*, L2Ls believed that conversation exchanges during the AH section of a hybrid SA program could lower L2Ls’ level of *foreign language anxiety* at the same time that the exchanges could also increase their *willingness to communicate*; these themes reflect Dewaele, Comanaru, and Faraco’s (2015) and Shively’s (2016) findings:

Excerpt 9, Participant 12, L2L: “You might be a little bit uninhibited and practice more and be more willing to make mistakes maybe and then when you go abroad, you know it’s just like, kind of a process of experiencing it in levels.”

Excerpt 10, Participant 12, L2L: “It lowers the affective filter so, you know, you’re more open to making those mistakes and, you know, everyone’s kind of on the same page.”

Excerpt 11, Participant 13, L2L: “If you can practice with somebody, then it will make you more confident for when you are abroad to reach out to locals there.”

Both L2Ls and HLLs highlighted the *common ground* that linked them. These data point in the same direction as Shively (2016), with some minor but important differences. Here, both focus groups made particular references to their shared culture:

Excerpt 12, Participant 12, L2L: “It might be less intimidating to have this precursor in your own country. Even though it might be like interacting with someone who speaks Spanish, they [Spanish HL speakers] have this shared culture, so that it’s like more of a buffer.”

Excerpt 13, Participant 11, HLL: “At least for us, we have that common ground in how we’re like, you know, we know both cultures, and so we can draw on what we think we should talk about and what we think it’s important that they [L2 learners] know.”

This unique intersubjectivity between Spanish L2Ls and HLLs was perceived by HLLs as a “hallmark” distinguishing them from Spanish native speakers abroad. As seen in Excerpt 14, they perceived themselves as being more empathetic:

Excerpt 14, Participant 7, HLL: “Yo creo que el intercambio va a ser más crítico; nosotros que somos *native speakers* y con nuestros amigos que NO hablan español

somos más comprensivos.” [I think that the exchange [with native speakers abroad] is going to be more critical; we who are native speakers are going to be more understanding with our friends who DON’T speak Spanish.]

The “interactional style” that Shively (2016) attributed to peer conversation exchanges can also be seen here, when learners in both groups emphasized that the informal and vernacular code would predominate in conversations between Spanish L2Ls and HLLs. Both *colloquial* and *dialectal awareness* were recurrent themes in participants’ responses:

Excerpt 15, Participant 5, HLL: “Van a poder practicar su español con gente que ya lo sabe porque ellos sólo saben el español del libro NO como la gente lo habla.” [They’re going to be able to practice their Spanish with people who already know how to speak it, because they only know Spanish from a book, NOT like people who actually speak the language.]

Excerpt 16, Participant 10, HLL: “Pienso que están más expuestos a una manera como muy coloquial de hablar porque cuando aprendes en una clase el profesor tal vez no hable igual de rápido o no use los mismos *figures of speech* o así, entonces cuando hablas con hispanos de manera coloquial, aprendes a hablar más rápido.” [I think they’re going to be more exposed to a colloquial manner of speaking because when you learn in a class, the professor maybe doesn’t speak as quickly or doesn’t use the same figures of speech or things like that, so when you talk to Spanish speakers in a more colloquial manner, you’re going to learn to talk more quickly.]

Excerpt 17, Participant 14, L2: “You get to hear more colloquial speech instead of textbook ways of saying stuff.”

Excerpt 18, Participant 15, L2: “I just think it would be beneficial because you would have a taste of what the language would be like when you got there. Like when I studied abroad I went to Chile and I didn’t really expect like how fast the language would be going. So, I was very unprepared.”

Excerpts 15–18 clearly illustrate how both groups of learners perceived textbook content to be unnatural and unrelated to the interactional style they expect to encounter in conversation exchanges between Spanish L2Ls and HLLs. For these learners, being exposed to authentic interactions better prepares them for interacting with real people abroad at a more natural pace.

Lastly, *cultural awareness* was also a prevalent theme; both groups of learners thought that Spanish HLLs could facilitate a cultural understanding of the host country, even though their heritage culture might not be exactly the same as the culture of the host country:

Excerpt 19, Participant 12, L2L: “If you speak with a Spanish heritage speaker here it’s going to be different than you know, someone from Spain or Chile or Argentina, but I think you can still get an idea.”

Excerpt 20, Participant 14, L2L: “Maybe if I’m worried about something, like how do I greet my host mom respectfully, it might be good to have someone like a reference of the cultural conditions.”

Excerpt 21, Participant 1, HLL: “Yo creo que también pueden aprender like the social customs of the culture because obviously they’re different from the American

culture they're just like, being, getting them exposed to that, making sure they understand something's NOT socially acceptable."

Excerpt 22, Participant 5, HLL: "Yo pienso que sería bueno y también para conocer la cultura. Like you'd be that middle person kind of filling in the English speakers. OK, so, now this is going to happen. Like mentally preparing them." [I think that it would be good and also so that you could get to know the culture....]

Excerpt 23, Participant 7, HLL: "Sensitividad de cultura, siendo más conscientes que existe una cultura prestigiosa o respetuosa o ser más respetuosos con la cultura de hispanohablantes de herencia. Yo creo que van a entender que hay una intersección entre las identidades de Latinoamérica y los de aquí los Estados Unidos." [Cultural sensitivity, being more conscious that there is a prestige culture or being respectful or more respectful to the culture of Spanish heritage speakers. I think that they're going to understand that there's an intersection between the identities of Latin America and the identities of those who are in the United States.]

Excerpts 19–22 show how identifying cultural conventions and the “expected” way of behaving in specific situations is part of the cultural knowledge that Spanish HLLs possess and would be of value for L2Ls. As shown in Excerpt 23, cultural awareness was considered to promote respect and cultural sensitivity to the values of others, which includes the bicultural point of view of HLLs themselves.

Perceived Benefits of L2-HL Conversation Exchanges for HL Learners

Spanish HLLs observed that being offered the opportunity to work as conversation partners in a hybrid SA program would have an impact on their *heritage language maintenance* since they would not only feel more motivated to use their HL but also encounter a space in which to practice it.

Excerpt 24, Participant 2, HLL: "Sería bueno porque hay personas que no practican tanto su español en casa o personas. Creo que ir ahí les ayudaría como agarrar más rapidez en hablarlo, más fluidez." [It would be good because there are people who don't practice their Spanish at home so much, or with other people. I think that going there would help them gain more speed in speaking, more fluency.]

Excerpt 25, Participant 7, HLL: "Más incentivo." [More incentive.]

A related theme that emerged from the data was *heritage language transformation* and *identity renegotiation* in the context of professional development. For HLLs, the professional opportunity to use the HL and to be “socially recognized” for mentoring L2Ls (Quintanar-Sarellana et al., 1997) would tap into HL transformation (HLLs feel motivated to refine their linguistic skills to fulfill a professional goal) (e.g., Ducar, 2012) and self-perception. As in Blake and Zyzik (2003), for these HLLs, mentoring could result in a boost of confidence in their bilingual abilities:

Excerpt 26, Participant 7, HLL: "Yo creo que hay un beneficio porque vas a crecer en un sentido profesional y también te da confianza que puedes estar en esa relación de mentorship." [I think there's a benefit because you're going to grow professionally, and it also gives you the confidence that you can be in that kind of a mentorship relationship.]

Excerpt 27, Participant 8, HLL: “Yo también cuando hablo con mis amigos americanos y me preguntan algo, “cómo se dice esto en español.” a veces no sé claramente la respuesta, como “divertirse” la palabra, entonces, pienso que puede beneficiarnos a nosotros también a mejorar nuestra lengua también.” [I also, when I speak with my American friends and they ask me something like, “How do you say that in Spanish?”, sometimes I don’t know the exact answer, like, for example, the exact word for “to have fun,” so I think it could benefit us, too, in helping us improve our own language skills as well.]

Interestingly, while HLLs themselves indicated that they saw potential benefits for both L2 development and their own HL development by participating in L2-HL conversation exchanges, L2Ls saw little potential for benefits to HL speakers’ development:

Excerpt 28, Participant 12, L2L: “But not so much like grammar unless like maybe there’s a word they don’t like, a more advanced word or, they KNOW IT, but they just can’t think of it as quickly. So then we’ll be like: Oh! But that rarely happens, I feel like.”

Excerpt 29, Participant 13, L2L: “I’ve never heard someone [a Spanish HLL] talk and I’m like, whoa, they have bad English. That’s also the same with Spanish. I feel like it’s kind of a one-way street as far as helping.”

Excerpts 28 and 29 support the idea that L2Ls tend to have a weaker sense that HLL interlocutors can benefit from a task in the same way as they themselves do (Bowles et al., 2014).

Conversation Exchange Format

In relation to the format of conversation exchanges, the theme that emerged was *situation-based*. Both group of learners tended to agree that they would prefer to engage in tasks that resemble authentic situations that can be encountered in the target culture, which, in turn, can have different levels of complexity:

Excerpt 30, Participant 7, HLL: “Yo creo que es útil eso, tener una conversación entre los dos estudiantes y, um, incluir como una crisis como un escenario donde pueden tal vez complicar las cosas como en un mercado donde le pisas los pies a alguien.” [I think that’s useful, having a conversation between two students and, um, including like a crisis, like a scenario in which they can maybe face a complication, like in a market where they step on somebody’s feet.]

Excerpt 31, Participant 12, L2L: “I think that you shouldn’t be strict about having them adhere to it, but sometimes when you get together with someone and you’re just told to talk, you’re like, Oh, so what do we talk about now? If you had a general kind of I don’t know, my German class will have a dialogue of what you would like to say on the phone and then she’s like, recreate this in your own kind of dialogue and go off of this model. If they’re beginners, too, they don’t know where to start.”

Excerpt 32, Participant 13, L2L: “And you could propose questions and make them choose.”

As to how language exchanges should be structured, L2Ls believed that a certain amount of structure should be provided—through, for example, the provision of

models—but they also felt that there should be room for improvisation in any given task. As Excerpt 31 highlights, language proficiency is perceived to be a factor when determining the degree to which conversation exchanges should be structured.

In sum, in order to give L2Ls and HLLs the opportunity to engage in authentic situations, a TBLT approach or, in terms of Carreira (2016), a “macro-approach” to language seemed to best meet learners’ needs and preferences. Meaningful authentic tasks were seen to have the potential to (i) enhance L2 development and better prepare L2Ls for their future language exchanges with native speakers abroad and (ii) expand HLLs’ bilingual range or command of multiple registers (e.g., Blake & Zizik, 2003).

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

The qualitative data analyzed here suggest that including conversation exchanges in the AH section of a hybrid SA program could provide potential benefits to both L2Ls and HLLs. First, the data suggest that L2Ls would be able to start building/strengthening their linguistic skills and broadening their understanding of the views of others in a relaxed, nonthreatening environment, prior to going abroad. Second, Spanish HLLs could further enhance L2 language development by engaging L2Ls in authentic, communication-oriented tasks, which, in turn, could allow L2Ls to better connect with Spanish native speakers and the target culture during their time abroad. On a social level, not only would L2Ls be given the opportunity in the AH section of the SA program to build a sense of community with their classmates in the SA program, but they would also form a sense of community with HLLs, minority students on their home campus.

Adopting a hybrid SA program that includes HLLs as conversation partners entails giving HLLs an opportunity to benefit as well—linguistically, socially, and professionally. The language exchanges have the potential to promote HL maintenance and HL transformation, and at the same time, they have the potential to empower HLLs to recognize their HL as an asset in higher education. In addition, by being given the chance to work as conversation partners on an international program and form part of an SA community, HLLs would also be given further exposure to information on SA program and related opportunities, including funding sources. Increasing the participation of minority students, such as HLLs, in SA is necessary to close the “SA gap” that currently exists in term of access.

Finally, the data indicate that hybrid SA participants may benefit from having the freedom to engage with Spanish HLLs on a wide array of topics, while also being given guidelines in relation to possible topics of conversation. Other factors that may influence how to structure, or semi-structure, conversation exchanges between Spanish L2Ls and HLLs include the level of proficiency of the L2Ls and the specific needs and characteristics of the group involved.

Limitations and Future Research

This study covered the planning stages of a hybrid SA program, and it therefore was not able to offer data from the conversation exchanges themselves. Future research would benefit from analysis of sets of conversation exchanges between Spanish L2Ls and HLLs in the AH component of a hybrid SA program in order to determine the degree to which those exchanges (i) help L2 and HL development and (ii) help L2Ls better

connect with the target culture and Spanish native speakers abroad. Triangulation of data with surveys, interviews, and data collection on learning gains (i.e., quantitative data) would also enrich such an analysis. Lastly, it would be interesting to analyze program designs that allow HLLs to also participate as student-assistants in the SA section of the program, in addition to participating in an AH section of the program. It would be relevant, when examining such a program, to study whether and how the nature of L2-HL language interactions changes in the immersive context.

Key Terms

Hybrid short-term study abroad program	Cultural sensitivity
Conversation partners	Language development
Spanish heritage language learners	Foreign language anxiety
Heritage language maintenance	Willingness to communicate
Identity renegotiation	Colloquial Spanish
Instrumental motivation	Task-based language teaching

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Service Learning Programs, Professional Programs

Curricula Crossing Borders

Integrating Multicultural and Multilingual Teacher Education Courses in Study Abroad

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Introduction

This chapter examines curriculum integration (CI) efforts to adapt teacher education courses from the University of Texas at Austin (UT) to a study abroad (SA) context in Antigua, Guatemala. UT is a top public research institution in Texas, a state where approximately 33% of children (2.3 million) live in families with one parent born outside the US, with about 80% coming from Latin America (Texas Kids Count, 2015). Texas' unique cultural and linguistic landscape means that all new teachers need to be prepared to work with immigrant Emergent Bilingual (EB)¹ students and do language teaching, regardless of their assigned grade level or subject matter.

For preservice teachers at UT, two required courses meant to develop their understanding of the needs of immigrant EB students are Sociocultural Influences on Learning (ALD 327) and Acquisition of Languages and Literacies (ALD 329). Since 2011 and 2014, respectively, ALD (Applied Learning and Development) 327 and 329 have been offered as part of the “Language, Diversity, and Education” (LDE) SA program at UT’s Casa Herrera in Antigua, Guatemala. In this chapter, we provide a history of curriculum development for these courses and explore the challenges and opportunities of adapting Texas-based courses to the social, cultural, linguistic, and economic contexts of Guatemala. Although research on SA has debated the goals of CI, few have provided an in-depth look at CI in practice. Our analysis of the process of integrating both courses reveals that faculty leaders considered CI on two levels: (i) a programmatic (or external) level that referred to their efforts to align the SA curriculum with university-based goals and requirements and (ii) a thematic (or internal) level that involved creating cohesive assignments and experiences that accomplished the goals of the SA program. Additionally, we demonstrate how pragmatic attention to both levels of CI better allowed the program to engage with multilingual students and students of color, both categories of students who have traditionally been underrepresented in SA.

Background and Literature Review

In the context of SA, CI has been characterized as “a variety of institutional approaches designed to fully integrate SA options into the college experience and academic curricula for students in all majors” (Parcells & Woodruff, np, 2013). To this end, the faculty leaders of the SA program have strived to ensure that the LDE curriculum and activities promoted the mission of their home academic programs: Cultural Studies in Education and Bilingual/Bicultural Education, both within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the UT. These programs are generally aligned with the following core principles of Multicultural Teacher Education (MTE): “to frame education in a larger sociopolitical context, and to use a systemic rather than (or in addition to) an interpersonal level of analysis...[with] a determination to prepare teachers to resist, and to prepare their students to resist oppression” (Gorski, 2009, p. 316). A key goal of MTE is to help prospective teachers understand how factors related to language, race, class, gender, sexuality, and immigration status can marginalize students; another goal is to encourage educator dispositions that view sociocultural diversity as an asset rather than a deficit. Both of these aims were central to our program.

In addition to supporting the goals of their home academic institutions, the two professors who designed the LDE program, coauthors Urrieta and Palmer, not only ensured that students could meet requirements at UT but also that all aspects of the curriculum were well integrated with each other. This pedagogical focus connects to the authors’ prior training as teachers in the US K-12 system. In elementary and secondary education, CI usually refers to the unification of classroom activities in different subject areas around common themes (Shanahan, 1997). As Misco (2014) writes, this approach should lead students to investigate “questions that are problematic, lack conclusive answers, [and] contain disagreement” (p. 245). These authors argue that multidisciplinary inquiry is particularly promising for the development of critical thinking and communication skills needed for active engagement in citizenship (Cipollone, 2006), global or otherwise. In applying these principles to our MTE goals, we designed the curriculum to facilitate students’ critical examination of sociocultural factors in education and specifically their own positionalities as diverse US students abroad.

Finally, a key goal of the development of UT’s home academic programs and the LDE SA program is to diversify the teaching workforce by recruiting and supporting students and prospective teachers of color. Although the SA literature frequently decries the underrepresentation of students of color and multilingual students (Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2011) and includes some case studies of students of color (e.g., Chang, 2015; Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kesner, & Lundahl, 2014), there has been little research on programs that have made successful efforts to recruit underrepresented students. With a few exceptions (e.g., Menard-Warwick & Palmer, 2012a; 2012b), recent articles about education-focused SA programs have explored the experiences of white students (e.g., Marx & Pray, 2011).

One exception to the focus on white SA participants is the work of Sweeney (2013), who writes that students of color are more likely to participate in SA programs that are integrated with their majors, that are led by faculty of color, that are outside of European contexts, and that foster explicit reflection on racial/ethnic issues rather than generalized “cultural competence” or global citizenship. In this chapter, we

detail a program design that is, in keeping with Sweeney's recommendations, well integrated with the curriculum of its home institution and that has been generally successful in recruiting students of color and multilingual students. Few SA articles have detailed the ways in which specific programs grapple with the challenges and promises of CI; fewer still address CI as a way to support the educational experiences of students of color abroad. This study attempts to fill these gaps. Our data show that improved attention to CI can also support recruiting and engaging diverse students.

Methods and Procedures

The design of this program was many years in the making, with its first iteration taught by Dr. Palmer in Mexico in 2007. Analysis of student journals from the 2007 program resulted in three published articles (e.g., Menard-Warwick & Palmer, 2012a, 2012b; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012). In 2008, Dr. Urrieta led the program and collected further data on the experiences of students of color. This initial research into student learning through SA also informed subsequent program design, clarifying the benefits and pitfalls of redesigning "the same" course taught at the home campus for an abroad setting. However, no further research was conducted on the program until summer 2015, by which time it had moved to Guatemala. Our research project in Guatemala was broadly focused on how preservice teachers participating in an SA program construct translingual identities. However, in reflecting on the development of the program over several years, we added the following subresearch questions: What was the process of CI for the LDE SA over time? What is the impact of LDE curricular integration for goals such as the development of critical consciousness and recruitment of students of color?

In summer 2015, the LDE program was led by Dr. Urrieta and Dr. Palmer, and built on their CI efforts since 2007. It consisted of two six-week sessions, each centered around a core class from the College of Education: ALD 327—*Sociocultural Influences on Learning*, taught by Dr. Urrieta—and ALD 329—*Acquiring Languages and Literacies: Connections to ESL Teaching*, taught by Dr. Palmer. Chapter coauthors Bybee and Kehoe served as teaching assistants for each of these courses, respectively. Students could attend either or both sessions. Additional activities were described on the program website as follows: "Outside of the classroom, students visit schools, develop and deliver ESL lessons to Maya children, explore Maya villages, and take a second course in either Spanish or a Mayan language taught by a local faculty." We found it valuable to focus on Maya languages and cultures as well as Spanish, given that the position these indigenous languages occupy within the linguistic ecology of Guatemala is similar to the place of Spanish in Texas: widely spoken but undervalued. The website specifically listed six levels of Spanish and one level of Kakchiquel Maya that students could take, each identified by its UT course number (e.g., Spanish 327G: Advanced Grammar and Composition I). Language courses were taught by Guatemalan instructors at Proyecto Lingüístico Francisco Marroquín (PLFM), an indigenous language school with a long history in Antigua. The schools where LDE program students delivered English lessons were run by a nongovernmental organization (NGO) focused on educating children in poverty. A total of 35 UT students participated in one or both of the 2015 sessions. The following demographic table shows the race and ethnicities of students who attended the program for one or both of the six-week sessions as well as numbers and percentages of students who spoke home

Table 22.1 Attended sessions by demographic categories

Demographic categories	Attended session 1 only	Attended session 2 only	Attended both sessions	Total	Percent (%)
White	6	3	5	14	40
Latino/a or Hispanic	4	7	2	13	37
African-American	1	0	1	2	6
Middle Eastern	0	0	1	1	3
Asian	2	2	1	5	14
Total attendance across ethnic categories, by session	13	12	10	35	
Home language other than English	2	9	2	13	37

languages other than English (Spanish, Persian, Malayalam, Vietnamese, Chinese,² and Thai). This information was self-reported by students on an initial survey.

We applied for and received permission from the Institutional Review Boards of our home universities to document program activities, with the permission of students. Data collection was carried out by the following coauthors: Menard-Warwick (Sessions 1 and 2), Degollado (Session 1), and Kehoe (Session 1). Post program interviews were conducted by coauthors Degollado, Kehoe, and Bybee. All meetings of ALD 327 and 329 were audio-recorded by the researchers, with language classes recorded on a rotating basis. Researchers wrote ethnographic field notes following all observations and program field trips. With student permission, researchers also collected student writing products and students' own recordings of their language classes and homestay conversations. The researchers conducted interviews with students, professors, and teaching assistants. Initial interviews focused on linguistic and cultural life histories, while follow-up interviews with students covered their perspectives on program experiences. The two professors were additionally asked about the history of the program, their pedagogical decision-making, and the negotiations with the UT academic departments and SA office that resulted in the LDE program.

To maintain a focus on CI, this chapter is informed by a thematic analysis of the 2015 initial interviews and 2016 follow-up interviews with both professors on their curriculum development process. To this end, we additionally draw upon program documents, including syllabi and the faculty-led SA proposal, which were used to develop categories for coding. Thematic analysis was carried out by Bybee, Kehoe, and Degollado, and involved a process of descriptive coding, grouping larger domains of data into categories identified in the research questions, and distilling themes through analytic memoing and "triangulating" from across multiple types of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To provide an illustrative example of the professors' curricular approaches, we include representative excerpts from one student's final essay. Our aim is not to evaluate the program but rather to detail the CI processes by presenting narrative descriptions of the development of each course in Texas and Guatemala. Our central goal is to demonstrate how the LDE curriculum provided students not only with the UT coursework they needed to meet graduation requirements but also with a holistic understanding of critical issues in education and language, in Texas as well as in Guatemala. We argue that both of these curricular aims work well together

and that integrating both of these goals serves not only prospective teachers but also the diverse students who have been traditionally underrepresented in SA programs.

Results and Discussion

In this section, we discuss our process of revising specific coursework from the UT context to the Guatemala SA context and provide an illustration of the steps involved, the challenges faced, and specific opportunities found. We do this so that other faculty members who wish to revise coursework from their institutions for future programs can locate points of commonality or difference and thus have a better idea of how to proceed.

Developing ALD 329 in Texas and Guatemala

ALD 329 emerged from a generalized Second Language Acquisition course (ALD 325) that was phased out due to changes in the UT Education degree. The description of an on-campus section of ALD 329 provides a good overview of the course as it is taught in Texas and illustrates its alignment with MTE principles, as discussed in the introduction:

This course focuses on the complex and dynamic relationship among language, literacy, and education. We will explore how children acquire and use language and literacy across multiple contexts throughout the course of their everyday lives. In the process, we will examine issues of linguistic diversity and variation, bilingualism and multilingualism, first and second language acquisition, language ideologies, literacy acquisition, the development of academic literacy skills, and patterns of classroom discourse.

Dr. Palmer described the rationale for offering a language acquisition course in SA, specifically for Texas teachers who needed to develop skills for working with EB students:

[It was] to have students learn the theory while trying themselves to learn a second language in a different culture...I figured [this]... would give them not only the theory they needed but also a first-hand experience that would help guide them into being more sensitive and more aware educators, critically and culturally aware.

(Dr. Palmer, Interview, 8/8/16)

She first implemented this approach during the 2007 Mexico program, in which students stayed with local families and received their language instruction in a school that emphasized political and cultural awareness. This original combination of progressive language instruction paired with family home stays was preserved when the program transferred to Guatemala in 2011. The shift in location came partly due to safety concerns in Mexico but also in order to take advantage of the resources at UT's Casa Herrera. At that time, Dr. Urrieta substituted ALD 327 (see the following section) as the Education course for the six-week program in 2011.

When the program expanded to 12 weeks in 2015, ALD 329 was offered in the second 6-week session. The new version of ALD 329 in Guatemala contained crucial elements of the Texas-based course, including a focus on literacy, bi/multilingualism, and the linguistic components of phonology, morphology, and syntax. However, this version particularly focused on “the role of English in US society and internationally (i.e. relationships between language, power, and identity)” with the stated goal of helping students “understand the sociopolitical and historical contexts of languages in the US and Guatemala” (ALD 329 Syllabus, Summer 2015). Students in ALD 329 took Spanish or Kakchiquel classes at the PLFM, served as volunteer English teachers at an NGO school, and participated in field trips and assignments in the local community. As a final project, students completed a “Language Ecology Self Study,” using a digital audio recorder and camera to document their own process of learning to communicate in the multilingual and multicultural contexts of Antigua. In this way, the ALD 329 class leveraged the unique Guatemalan environment to promote students’ critical and cultural awareness as they experienced and learned about the process of acquiring a new language.

Developing ALD 327 in Texas and Guatemala

ALD 327 is a companion course to ALD 329, and it exists in part due to a history in which several multicultural education and educational foundations courses were merged into a single course over the years. According to a recent syllabus, the purpose of the course is

to reveal the complex relationship between schools and the larger society of which they are a part.... and consider how issues related to language, race, gender, sexuality and other factors operate in and exert an influence on the teaching and learning process.

(ALD 327 Syllabus, Fall 2014)

This broad focus on learning and sociocultural diversity, and thus with MTE, has led to its inclusion as a requirement across a number of colleges and departments. Along with its role in education and youth-related fields, ALD 327 meets a university-wide “cultural diversity” general education requirement as a course that examines the experiences of historically marginalized, minoritized groups. This emphasis also provides the opportunity to cross-list the course with other departments at UT, such as Mexican American and Latino Studies and African and African Diaspora Studies.

Teaching ALD 327 as an SA course created opportunities for in-depth explorations of Guatemalan history and culture that were not possible in the previous language acquisition course. According to Dr. Urrieta, the switch to a broader topic class “opened up” the curriculum in a variety of ways, as students “started reading more Guatemalan history, studying more about migration...and some of the things that Central American migrants go through as they go through Mexico...” (Dr. Urrieta, Interview, 8/8/16). This expanded focus on the historical context of Guatemala and migratory processes justified cross-listings with Mexican American and Latin American Studies courses, leading to higher enrollment in the SA program. The change also connected the course to the Texas context and to the imperialist and colonialist

history of the US, including the current context of neoliberalism—an ideology that seeks to apply free-market principles to schools and other social institutions, including SA programs (see Zemach-Bersin, 2009). This critical perspective was reflected in a number of areas, including Dr. Urrieta's proposal to reauthorize the program for the 2015–2017 period, which stated as one goal of the Guatemala program:

[to] deepen students' knowledge of the social and cultural dynamics that inform the relationship between the US, specifically Texas and Latin America, including the process of migration itself, while also demonstrating to student participants the value and importance of a transnational perspective on educational issues, and indeed a global perspective generally.

(Antigua Faculty-Led Proposal, 2015)

This critical, transnational perspective was also apparent in the description of the course and assignments in the Guatemalan version of the ALD 327 syllabus. Much like the Guatemalan version of ALD 329, this course was geared toward helping students “reflect on [their] experience with a new culture and language, making connections between [their] experience and that of our Latina/o immigrant students in Texas” and to help them “learn about Latin American, but especially Guatemalan history, culture, and political/social/economic realities through readings, field trips, and conversations/lectures” (ALD 327, Syllabus, Summer 2015). Reading topics for the course overlapped with those of the Texas version, but a focus on migration and transnationalism was reflected in class sessions on the “Social, Economic & Cultural dimensions of Im/migration” and “Transnational Existences” (ALD 327 Syllabus, Summer 2015). Field trips included visits to a variety of local schools (public, private, NGO-run, etc.), a women’s weaving cooperative, and indigenous communities in the Lake Atitlan region. A particularly memorable experience was the tour of the National Police Archives in Guatemala City, which detailed human rights abuses committed by the US and Guatemalan governments during the 1960–1996 Guatemalan armed conflict. Special course lectures were also delivered by local experts on Guatemalan culture, the educational system, and indigenous rights.

As in the ALD 329 class, students volunteered to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at a local school and took concurrent language classes at the PLFM. ALD 327's key assignment was the “Field Project,” a semester-long project similar to the aforementioned “Language Ecology Self Study” in that it required students to collect data in the local community. Specifically, students completed 12 hours of observations with accompanying field notes and photographs, an interview with a local adult, a log of new words learned, a self-reflective analysis paper, and a final PowerPoint presentation (ALD 327, Syllabus, Summer 2015). Through the field project and related readings, excursions, and lectures, the class was designed to meet MTE goals by expanding students’ understanding of the sociocultural factors that influence learning within and across the borders and cultural contexts of Texas and Guatemala.

Integrating ALD 327 and 329

As mentioned in the ‘Background and Literature Review’ section, our analysis of LDE program data reveals the importance of curricular integration on two levels for the Guatemala program: programmatic (or external) integration and thematic (or

internal) integration in keeping with the tenets of MTE (Gorski, 2009). In the following subsections, we provide key examples of programmatic and thematic integration in both the ALD 327 and ALD 329 classes.

Programmatic Curricular Integration

Programmatic integration refers to efforts to align SA curricula with the pedagogical goals of the home institution. We characterize programmatic integration as “external” in that it looks outward to strategically align curricula with university-based goals and requirements. Our notion of programmatic curricular integration builds on Brewer and Cunningham’s (2009) suggestion that universities work toward “campus internationalization” of undergraduate curricula with SA across all institutional levels (pp. 210–211).

Perhaps the most significant instance of programmatic integration occurred with the aforementioned shift from ALD 325 (Second Language Acquisition) to ALD 327 (Sociocultural Foundations of Education) in 2012. As previously indicated, ALD 327 is cross-listed and has wide relevance across a number of departments and colleges, and this factor made it a better choice for an SA program than ALD 325, which had struggled to attract enough students to the Mexico program. Although the shift in course offerings was partly based on professor research and teaching interests, it was also a strategic way to boost enrollment. As Dr. Urrieta explained,

Part of it was because also we had a hard time recruiting students. It [ALD 325] was a very particular course and it fulfilled very particular requirements...and so I thought that ALD 327 since it was broader and it had a cultural diversity flag that adds some weight across campus, that it was a course that could more easily be cross-listed with other departments and would have more of an appeal for students across campus.

(Dr. Urrieta, Interview, 8/8/16)

Though program enrollment numbers have continued to fluctuate since the switch to ALD 327, the strength and diversity of the 2015 session indicate that the program had succeeded in broadening its appeal. In that year, 70% of students came from a range of non-education-related majors like Latin American Studies, Social Work, Biology, Religious Studies, Psychology, Engineering, and Humanities. This increase in student interest was generated by adding a second six-week session of ALD 329 and by offering 600-level Spanish classes—courses that were highly sought-after because they fulfilled requirements for many majors across campus. The resulting enrollment boost in the 12-week program was high enough to fund a professor and Teaching Assistant (TA) for both classes. Thus, the alignment of the SA course offerings with the graduation requirements for a greater number of majors was a key factor in programmatic integration that allowed the program to grow and flourish. We recommend this as a strategy to faculty at other institutions.

The transition to ALD 327 also helped fortify and increase the relevance of its home department and other university programs. According to Dr. Urrieta, the Cultural Studies in Education program is controversial because of its focus on issues like racism in education, and for this reason, it “always has to justify why [it] exists.” Including ALD 327 in the Guatemala program became another way to create pride in the program and justify its continued existence (Dr. Urrieta, Interview, 8/8/16).

The focus on racial issues also helped make the course more appealing to students of color, as suggested by Sweeney (2013). Another university unit strengthened by the course was the Casa Herrera, which was founded by the UT College of Fine Arts. Though the Casa had achieved world-renown as a research center and gathering place for scholars and artists, its semester-long courses have suffered from low enrollment. By seeking better alignment with external factors like university graduation requirements and the institutional objectives of the Casa and the Cultural Studies in Education program, the Guatemala SA program worked to achieve the goals of a wide range of stakeholders through programmatic curricular integration.

Thematic Curricular Integration

Thematic (or internal) integration contrasts with programmatic integration in that it involves aligning the curricular components with each other in order to accomplish the goals of the SA program. We characterize this type of thematic integration as “internal” in that it looks inward to ensure that assignments, activities, and assessments are cohesive and consistent with program objectives. Our notion of thematic integration comes out of our experience as K-12 classroom teachers and teacher educators, and draws from Beane’s (1997) schema that nests a central theme within a web of related concepts and activities (p. 11).

The Guatemala program worked toward thematic integration in a number of ways, and one of the most important was through the creation of interconnected learning experiences. As projects that combined community-based research with self-reflection, the aforementioned “Language Ecology Self Study” in ALD 329 and the “Field Project” in ALD 327 exemplify interrelated learning activities that provided consistency within and across both courses, especially important for those students who stayed for both sessions. Dr. Palmer explained that this focus on alignment was due in part to her collaboration with the director of the language school during the original version of the program in Mexico, which then informed subsequent iterations in Guatemala:

Our outings and our visits were all aligned and Jorge helped me do this with a critical orientation towards language and culture and community so that we met with teachers in the teacher’s union, learned about the teacher’s union in Mexico and how powerful it was, and movements going on to counter neoliberal education reform in Mexico. We met with parents from different strata. We visited public schools, private schools, parochial schools...

(Dr. Palmer, Interview, 8/8/16)

As Dr. Palmer describes, the critical, community-based format of the SA existed from its earliest iteration and further developed as the program transitioned to Guatemala.

In addition to enabling programmatic integration, students’ exploration of the Guatemalan context helped build appreciation for the cultural riches that exist in marginalized communities, which is an important part of MTE. As Dr. Palmer explained, this fundamental objective of the ALD 327 course was significantly strengthened through SA in Guatemala, and specifically through field trips, coursework, and teaching internships in Maya communities:

the ALD 327 course is able to get students to go out into the community and find strengths and understand from the perspective of communities. [To see] what's offered, what's *there*, rather than what's *lacking*. Often in teacher [education], there's a focus on the needs that our students have and that they bring to school. Of course, we try to do the same thing on campuses in the United States proper, but when you're there and you yourself are in the minority and the Guatemalan communities and cultures that surround you are the dominant discourse, it's easier to get that across, I think. It's easier to get students to listen and look in positive ways. That lesson, I think, gets carried back.

(*Interview, 8/8/16*)

An overriding theme of ALD 327 is challenging deficit thinking regarding minoritized students, families, and communities (Gorski, 2009; Valencia, 2010), and the cross-cultural setting of the course made it easier for participants to engage in asset-based thinking. Furthermore, the Guatemalan context provided opportunities to conduct observations and “to work with community organizations, work with defense projects and other organizations” instead of just going into schools and helping students prepare for standardized tests as often happened in Texas (Dr. Urrieta, Interview, 8/8/16). Thus, the activities and assignments described earlier aligned with each other and were strengthened by the Guatemalan context.

Moreover, the LDE program in Guatemala maintained the focus on developing critical consciousness and critiquing neoliberal policies that had been developed during the Mexico iterations of the program, as explained by Dr. Palmer earlier, and as supported by MTE literature (e.g., Gorski, 2009). This goal was strengthened by expanding recruitment beyond preservice teachers to include students with a wide range of academic backgrounds. However, as Dr. Urrieta noted, bringing in students from other majors created interesting tensions:

I'm very aware of the power imbalance sometimes between education majors and majors in other programs, other departments. Especially how other students are positioned, and position themselves, as being more critical or more well-read in theory. I think that the practicum part, the in-the-classroom part, is a good space to actually position, literally and deliberately, the education majors as the ones who know about the pedagogy and put them in charge of the groups and leading and guiding the lessons. That has always balanced out both power imbalances in the classroom.

(*Interview 8/8/16*)

In this way, students from varied backgrounds contributed to different aspects of the program and learned from each other. While preservice teachers were experts in pedagogy and working with children, participants from other majors often had a stronger background in social theory.

The unique diversity of the course content and participants was appreciated by students like Jasmine, a Latina preservice teacher, who recognized differences between her ALD 327 class and other Education coursework:

I expected that our ALD [327] class would be a lot like the others I have already taken, but it was definitely not. It was very much outside my comfort zone, but

I was incredibly engaged by the diverse perspectives of my classmates. I really enjoyed being in such an intimate class with other people who were not all Education majors. Often times in class they would make comments or ask questions that I would never have thought, but they were thoughts and questions that were very relevant and insightful.

(Jasmine, Final Reflective Essay)

Jasmine's comments reflect her positive experience in the class, but they also demonstrate the way that programmatic and thematic curricular integration influence each other. The diversity of perspectives in her ALD 327 class accomplished the consciousness-raising objectives of the program (thematic integration), but this was only possible because of efforts to help the program align with a wide range of majors (programmatic integration).

Another way that the instructors made the program applicable to this diverse student population was by combining education-related SA experiences (like volunteering in the NGO schools) with readings and perspectives that interrogate those experiences. Dr. Palmer described how this aspect of the curricula accomplished Misco's (2014) aforementioned approach of helping students investigate "questions that are problematic, lack conclusive answers, contain disagreement" (p. 245):

It's also been a challenge because of the very readings we're giving them that talk about the ways in which American saviors pretend to go down and fix things in Latin American schools and the neo-liberal discourses that surround English language teaching in Latin America. We're giving them these critical perspectives and then we're telling them to go ahead and go teach English to these children in this school. The students notice that contradiction, which I think is really great.

(Dr. Palmer, Interview, 8/8/16)

The deliberate tension that the instructors created between volunteer experiences and critical readings allowed both the benefit of having a cross-cultural experience and the opportunity to reflect critically on it in a structured way. Jasmine again explains the powerful learning opportunities created by this juxtaposition of readings and experiences:

Lastly, our time at [NGO school] was a mix of emotions for me. After taking this class and even after our initial visit, I tried to have a much more critical consciousness of how NGOs work. I still believe that they do great things, but I am more critical of how they go about them. We don't always need to save the day and tell people the ways that we think they should be living. There is still value in the things that they teach their children and the way that they live. Some of these things we lack in the States, such as senses of community in neighborhood, the value of work, strong family bonds, respect and constant acknowledgment of others. These are things that [I] experience[d] or observed here that I wish we did/ had more of in the states.

(Jasmine, Final Reflective Essay)

Jasmine's perspective on the benefits and drawbacks of NGOs and the strengths of the local community corresponds with the thematic goals of ALD 327, the larger SA

program, and MTE in general: to raise student consciousness about issues of equity and neoliberalism in Guatemala and to orient them toward the assets (as opposed to deficits) of students and their communities.

Of course, the outcomes of this thematic integration were not uniform across the program, and not all students described the profound experience that Jasmine did. However, the instructors expressed hope in at least having planted seeds for new perspectives in all the students. From Dr. Urrieta's viewpoint, with all the options that UT students have to explore places like "London, Australia, [or] Italy," it takes a special kind of "disposition" to choose Guatemala: "that you would want to come to the poorest country in the hemisphere on the mainland. Second poorest, if we count Haiti" (Dr. Urrieta, Interview 7/2/15). Through internally consistent activities, assignments, and experiences that corresponded with broader thematic objectives, the LDE program offered students a framework for dispositional change toward equity and social justice.

Implications for Practice

Similar to Gorski (2009), Picower (2011) contends that "teacher educators must provide students with preservice and in-service experiences in which they both learn how to critically recognize injustice and have opportunities to engage in activism to transform the conditions perpetuating inequality" (p. 1130). By integrating the university curriculum with the SA program, in keeping with the tenets of MTE, the faculty provided an opportunity for students to not only meet core degree requirements but also explore critical reflection through CI of assignments, readings, and program activities. In short, furnishing preservice teachers with well-designed SA experiences can be an excellent way to develop the critically conscious and justice-oriented teachers needed to teach in increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse schools.

Integrating the curriculum to fit the Guatemalan context profoundly enhanced this program, exposing students to the myriad challenges faced by the educational system there. Students were taken on a historical journey, interacted with local communities, visited a variety of schools, and listened to talks by local experts on issues faced by Guatemalans. Moreover, course materials and activities encouraged students to take a critical perspective on their SA experiences and to compare the educational systems of Guatemala and the US. While SA provides rich opportunities to get to know an unfamiliar context and engage in cross-cultural comparison, professors who tailor their syllabus to fit the local context even within the US can profoundly influence any program's effectiveness.

To ensure the maximum participation of students, we further recommend increased integration with the university curriculum. In designing the LDE program, the professors ensured that participants would take courses aligned with the teacher preparation program and broader university graduation requirements. This allowed for the inclusion of more students because they could fit the program into their degree plan. Specifically, this emphasis on CI increased enrollment of students of color who are traditionally underrepresented in SA programs (Salisbury et al., 2011). Given the challenges that students from minoritized communities often face in completing their educations, it is crucial to design SA programs that facilitate students' completion of degrees in a timely fashion; this means engaging with the major and General Education requirements that lead to graduation.

Limitations and Future Directions

A strength and a limitation of this chapter is that it focuses on the curriculum for a single SA program. To complement our findings, we invite other researchers to likewise detail processes of curriculum development in other SA programs in a wide range of contexts. Moreover, we recommend that future CI research compare the time to graduation of students enrolled in programs well integrated with requirements at their home universities with that of similar students in programs generally focused on language and culture learning. Such time-to-degree research would need a much larger sample of students.

Another limitation of this chapter is that it does not explore the extent to which our curricular goals were met in terms of student learning outcomes. In future research, we plan to more closely analyze student experiences of the LDE program to determine which aspects of our program were most valuable for helping students reflect deeply on issues of power in education. We will be looking for evidence of students' deepening understanding: in their writing, in reflective interviews with the researchers, and in the transcripts of class discussions. Additionally, through follow-up interviews, we are examining how SA participation has affected students' academic and professional goals, as well as their understandings of social and educational issues, over the course of the following year. We encourage other researchers to likewise examine student learning outcomes beyond language and culture learning as a result of SA.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have detailed our processes of CI within successive iterations of an education-focused SA program. As the courses have evolved, we strived to ensure that students received the academic credit they need in order to make timely progress toward graduation at their home institution. Equally important, through thematic integration, we sought to facilitate student reflection on intersections of race/ethnicity, language, and education. In these endeavors, our twin goals were to promote the educational attainment of academically and ethnically diverse students, and to help a wide range of future professionals understand influences of power and privilege on education—and to thus develop a stronger commitment toward promoting social inclusion in schools and other institutions.

Key Terms

Curriculum integration	Critical pedagogy
Curricular design	Equity
Teacher education	Neoliberalism
Multicultural education	Latin America
Multilingual education	Students of color
Bilingual education	Diversity in study abroad

Notes

- 1 Students who enter school primarily speaking a language other than English, and who learn English in school. The state of Texas refers to these students as English Language

Learners (ELLs); however, in line with García and Kliefgen (2010), we choose to use EB instead as it highlights students' bilingualism rather than merely their acquisition of English.
² Of the two students who reported Chinese as a home language, one specified Mandarin. The other stated that she spoke both Chinese and Vietnamese at home. One student who attended both sessions declined to state a home language.

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Development of Critical Intercultural Communicative Competence and Employability in Work Abroad Programs

A UK Perspective

Sandra Y. López-Rocha

Introduction

Student immersion in a different country during the required Year Abroad (YA) in Modern Languages degrees in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) represents an opportunity for program participants to expand their linguistic competence and develop key intercultural skills. Moreover, the experience of living abroad significantly broadens the students' perspectives in terms of various economical, sociopolitical, and cultural issues. The ability for students to utilize the language(s) they learn as part of their degree provides a myriad of benefits for those who study or work abroad. In the case of the latter, it is possible to identify a new dimension of positive attributes that increase the students' work-readiness, encompassing not only Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) but also transferable skills associated with planning and organizing, time management, verbal and written communication, tolerance, negotiating and persuading, initiative, and independence, among other things. The European Commission (EC, 2015) highlighted these skills as a priority and part of the expected outcomes of the implementation plan for 2016. Based on the importance attributed to these specific skills, it is necessary to understand, first, how the experience of working abroad, as part of degree requirements, relates to the development of ICC and employability skills. Second, it is crucial to identify the ways in which HEIs may further support students in developing those skills and consequently reaping concrete benefits from their experiences abroad that provide a competitive edge in the job market after graduation.

Working Abroad: Beyond the Internationalization of the Student Experience

In Europe, among members of the European Union (EU), there are visible efforts to foster the internationalization of HEIs through the establishment of the European

Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS—granting students the ability to earn credits toward their degree when studying abroad), together with an enhanced communication across European HEIs, the launch of the Bologna Process, and the implementation of the Erasmus program in 1987. The Bologna Process introduced equivalent and compatible study degrees, thus harmonizing university degrees and postgraduate studies and facilitating student exchanges as well as grades transfer, although some of the latter still represent a work in progress (cf. Adamson & Flodström, 2013). The Erasmus program (EuRopean Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) was rebranded Erasmus+ in 2014 to include all the different EU programs, and it is considered the EU's flagship education and training program (EC, 2014). At its inception, it included 11 member states, involving 3,200 students traveling abroad during its first year (EU, 2012). The outstanding success of Erasmus was celebrated in 2012 on the 25th anniversary of its launch; during those years, 2.7 million students benefited from the immersion in a different cultural environment. Since 2014, the Erasmus+ program combines the EU's schemes for education, training, youth, and sport, which is expected to reach more than 4 million people by 2020 (European Commission, 2016).

HEIs in the UK system offer the opportunity to students in different programs to take a YA during their third year of study. In some degree programs, students go abroad during their second year (York St John University) or are involved in an 18-month period abroad (Sheffield-Hallam University). In some degrees, such as Modern Languages, spending a YA is a requirement; students who specialize in two languages (*joint honors*) spend the YA in two countries where the languages they study are spoken; if they specialize in only one language (*single honors*), students spend the year in one or two different countries with the same language. The latter is comparable to the degree requirements of programs in the Humanities that include the study of a single language (*joint schools*). It thus falls upon students to decide whether to study at another university, taking courses that are relevant to their degree, to work as paid or unpaid interns (involving journalism, translation, office work at a legal firm, financial services, and teaching assistantships, among other professions), or to participate in institutionally approved voluntary projects. As an example, students of Spanish who opt to study abroad may enroll in universities in Spain where there are established exchange agreements (Erasmus study) or in Latin American universities that have agreed to accept UK students in their programs (non-Erasmus study). Those who work during all or part of their YA may choose to live in any city in Spain (Erasmus traineeship) or in Latin America (non-Erasmus traineeship). UK universities generally offer support finding approved work placements to students who decide to work during their YA. The EC highlights the benefits of studying and working abroad, and emphasizes the need “to ensure skills for employability and innovation and to promote active citizenship,” taking into consideration societal and economic challenges (European Commission, 2015, p. 9). Moreover, one of the objectives of the program is to promote linguistic diversity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural dialogue (*ibid*, p. 7), while the policy priorities and key actions list the development of intercultural competences, social inclusion and nondiscrimination, and active citizenship (*ibid*, pp. 13, 16, 20, 28, 40, 52).

Student mobility is of paramount importance in the development of Europe's skilled labor force. Beyond having the opportunity for students to immerse themselves in a

different culture, living abroad as part of a university requirement enhances students' career possibilities (Teichler, 2007) and international competences (Bracht et al., 2006). Over the years, the body of research in terms of study abroad has grown exponentially, embodying determinants of student mobility flows (Rodríguez González, Bustillo Mesanza, & Mariel, 2011), models for intercultural training and reflective intercultural competence (Biagi, Bracci, Filippone, & Nash, 2012; Henze, 2007), the life of Erasmus students (Teichler, 2004), socioeconomic factors influencing study abroad participation (Messer & Wolter, 2007), and studies on the transition of former Erasmus students into work (Teichler & Maiworm, 1994). However, the possibility for students to work abroad has created a shift in the research focus, requiring further attention to variables encompassing work abroad motivators, preparedness, and outcomes; this is of relevance as working abroad comprises the evolvement of professional and transferable skills, and global citizenship through the development of ICC, all of which are areas promoted by the EC and supported by program objectives in UK HEIs.

Historical Perspectives

Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence

The extensive literature in intercultural communication has seen a shift between functional and essentialist tendencies (Hofstede, 1980; Gudykunst, 1985) to more interpretive (Byram & Feng, 2004; Hammer & Rogan, 2002) and critical approaches (Halualani, Mendoza, & Drzewiecka, 2009; Starosta & Chen, 2003). This shift responds to different understandings of the individual and the critical approach to culture as flexible and changing, resulting from political, economic, educational, and social factors influencing each context. Consequently, there is currently a stronger integration of discourse involving, for example, the construction and negotiation of cultural identity, transnational mobilization (Bailey, 2005; Block, 2006; Dervin, 2012), field-specific intercultural education (López-Rocha & Arévalo-Guerrero, 2014), and the relationship between intercultural and transferable skills developed in the YA and employability (Gómez-Cash, 2016; Organ, 2016). Over the past decades, models focused on the development of intercultural competence, and the interactional dynamics involved, became widely popular. Some of the more influential approaches share common elements, but they may also differ in their theoretical basis.

Models that were traditionally used as the cornerstone of intercultural training programs, to illustrate the individual's progression in another culture, have more recently been criticized for their essentialist perspective, derived from developmental psychology. For instance, Bennett's (1986) *Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity* comprises a series of stages that lead the individual from ethnocentrism (i.e., denial, defensiveness, and minimization of cultural differences) to ethnorelativism (i.e., acceptance, adaptation, and integration), which seems to emphasize a unidirectional approach to explaining culture learning but does not directly address factors such as interactional strategies, social context, identity, and reciprocity. Similarly, Gullahorn and Gullahorn's (1962) *U-curve model of intercultural adjustment* explains stages of high and low satisfaction upon entering (or reentering) other cultural contexts based on people's experiences. This model offers a useful illustration of the psychological adjustments individuals undergo, namely culture shock and reentry

shock, but fails at considering crucial factors (e.g., intercultural readiness and preparation, and development of intercultural communicative (IC) skills, attitudes, and identity, among others) that influence interactions and, therefore, outcomes.

Other approaches to intercultural competence evoke a process of adaptation that can be extrapolated to societal outcomes. This is the case of Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujaki's (1989) *Acculturation model*, which describes processes resulting in integration, assimilation, segregation, and marginalization. Furthermore, there are models that seek to integrate elements previously included in other frameworks in order to provide a more comprehensive view of the development of intercultural competence, such as Ting-Toomey's (1999) *Multilevel process change model*, which considers antecedent factors (e.g., socioeconomic conditions, cultural distance, motivation, and personal attributes), change process factors (e.g., the ability to manage culture shock and developing new relations), and outcome factors (e.g., interpersonal and identity-change outcomes).

In contrast, integrative approaches that commonly appear in the literature of student preparation for an overseas stay include Deardorff's (2006) *Process model* and *Pyramid of intercultural competence*, which emphasizes the idea that knowledge, comprehension, skills (e.g., observe, analyze, interpret, and relate), and attitudes (e.g., respect and openness) enhance higher or more complex elements directly related to desired internal and external outcomes (e.g., adaptability and ethnorelative view in addition to behaving and communicating effectively). Similarly, Byram's (1997) influential *Model of intercultural competence* focuses on interactional processes giving prominence to communication and understanding across speakers, thus highlighting sociolinguistic elements. In addition, Byram's model accentuates the negotiation of identity and the individual's perspective, also establishing a distinction between the bicultural and the intercultural person. In his model, Byram clearly identifies observational skills (to interpret and relate), knowledge (social groups in the local and foreign cultural context), interactional skills (to discover and engage), critical cultural awareness, and attitudes (openness, curiosity, and readiness). This model is broadly utilized in higher education (HE) programs in which the objective is to enhance linguistic performance and intercultural competence. It is here that the distinction between intercultural competence and ICC must be established to specify the approach to culture, interactions, communication, and outcomes. Thus, *intercultural competence* refers to a person's "ability to interact in their own language with the people from another country and culture," whereas *ICC* specifically centers on the "ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language" (Byram, 1997, pp. 70–71). This last approach to intercultural competence should constitute the basis of an intercultural program for language students due to its comprehensive nature and emphasis on the development of critical intercultural, language, and transferable skills, stripped from the superficiality of simple comparisons and cultural capsules.

Employability in HE

In the UK, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) recognizes that the transition from HE to employment is not without challenges, being primarily centered on a fierce competition for what have been considered traditional positions in graduate employment (Fallows & Steven, 2000); in addition, "the range and variety of jobs into

which graduates are moving is becoming increasingly diverse" (ibid, p. 4). Furthermore, Wolf (2002) claims that there is evidence indicating that the students' academic credentials do not necessarily correspond with labor market positions. In relation to this, Fisch (2014) suggests that current students are being prepared for jobs that are yet to be created; for instance, the top 10 in-demand jobs in 2010 did not exist in 2004, but they emerged as a result of globalization and technological changes. These challenges address the types of jobs for which students are expected to apply after graduation. However, the obstacles they face reach beyond labor market tendencies and often relate to the conscious development of employability skills and the recognition of such skills by graduates and employers alike.

Over the past two decades, the approach to employability moved away from what the HEA describes as demand-led skill sets, and it is now moving "towards a more holistic view of 'graduate attributes' that includes 'softer' transferable skills and person-centered qualities, developed in conjunction with subject-specific knowledge, skills, and competencies" (Cole & Tibby, 2013). Moreover, Waters (2009) suggests that since the late twentieth century, "much of the motivation underlying attempts to widen access to HE can be linked to policy discourses around 'employability' and the knowledge-based economy" (p. 1865). Employability thus seeks to highlight achievements, understandings, and interpersonal attributes that enhance students' "suitability for graduate employment" (Knight & Yorke, 2004, p. 9). The role and development of such attributes and skills have achieved an important place across HEIs as a response to employer's requirements and the need for students to more accurately understand and actively use the transferable skills developed in academic contexts and during the YA.

A study by Brook and Waters (2009) on HE and mobility in the UK found that some university students are indeed responding to UK market demands and the relevance of a high quality of education; however, this research also suggests that students do not seem to actively pursue an overseas placement (specific to HE) motivated by the development of employability skills. It has become necessary for HEIs, and in this specific context, language programs, to make students aware of the skills they will develop in relation to their YA and the way to present these to employers who may still have a limited understanding of modern language graduates' skill sets. Language learners and specialist linguists are in greater demand, and employers are becoming more interested in the skills developed by transnational graduates. This notion is reflected in Holmes's (2015) *Born global* research project, highlighting that executive directors of global talent use a complex matrix of skills to select a successful recruit. They prioritize sector- or industry-specific knowledge and a range of transversal and soft skills. Cultural agility is an essential attribute of the global graduate, as they will be expected to work in multilingual and culturally diverse teams face to face and virtually. The ability to approach a problem from multiple perspectives and to take into account different cultural expectations in finding solutions is key to effective transnational cooperation (p. 10).

In the same report, Holmes indicates that UK graduates who worked and studied abroad have indeed acquired international experience, constructed knowledge and skills by means of the utilization of a different language (i.e., developed ICC), and have an increased cultural and cognitive flexibility. The ability to apply knowledge and skills in a professional context places those students with experience working abroad at advantage over other graduates; in other words, a candidate who fulfills

the requirements specified by the job and in addition demonstrates competencies involving “an international outlook and a global mind-set, together with fluency in more than one language and culture, is likely to be selected over the candidate with few or no language skills, whose only experience outside of the UK was on holiday” (*ibid*). This fact is echoed in the Subject Benchmark Statement by the UK’s Quality Assurance Agency for HE (2015), highlighting the importance of language and its utilization in different linguistic and cultural contexts.

Current Contributions and Research

Developing ICC in YA Work Placements

Current degree programs in UK HEIs have implemented projects to enhance students’ experience during the YA, which range from predeparture modules to transforming the student into a researcher while immersed in a different cultural context. In some instances, these stem from established credit or survey modules for international students in the UK fostering the development of academic and intercultural skills (e.g., HEA Intercultural Competencies for teaching international students, 2014; tandem learning for incoming Erasmus students at the University of Sheffield, in Woodin, 2001). The increase of modules intended to provide a more comprehensive preparation of students for the intercultural challenges of living abroad, as part of their program, indubitably responds to trends in HE in a globalized medium. The following examples illustrate some practical projects that support the development of ICCs in the YA.

Predeparture preparation ahead of the YA involves logistic issues (usually presented in a session and in digital briefs) and modules promoting the development ICC. As part of the former, students usually receive a guide to completing the required documentation (e.g., the training agreement between the employer, the student, and the university), links to consular pages, emergency contacts, and other travel and practical matters (e.g., opening a bank account, finding accommodation, purchasing insurance, and joining a university country-specific group via a blog or Facebook). In addition, modules aimed at introducing issues in intercultural communication fostering the development of ICC may vary in length but pursue similar objectives. For instance, the School of Modern Languages at the University of Bristol implemented a four-part module for second-year students ahead of the start of their YA (López-Rocha & Vailes, 2017a). The module combines different theories and is specifically based on Deardorff’s (2006) *Process model of intercultural competence* and Byram’s (1997; Byram, Nichols, & Stevens, 2001) *Components of intercultural competence*. The weekly one-hour sessions integrate theory and practice while incorporating student experience and perceptions as part of an open-class dynamic (seminar-workshop). The main topics include intercultural and self-awareness, approaches to culture and ICC, nonverbal communication (Andersen, 2000), deconstruction of stereotypes (Spreckels & Kotthoff, 2009), considering different perspectives, value differences and tendencies (Hall, 1997; Hall & Hall, 1990), intercultural adaptation, country-specific scenarios, as well as expectations upon return. In 2017, the module expanded to five weeks, where the last session involved additional members of staff and was exclusively dedicated to addressing issues by country in a more comprehensive way. Two significant findings in a survey with students participating in the latest module indicate they have a greater understanding and clearer expectations ahead of their YA (77 percent)

and highlight the study of value differences in context as particularly useful (85 percent). Other positive attributes stressed are the interactive element of the sessions, final-year students' contributions, and students' ability to express their own views and ask questions without being judged (López-Rocha & Vailes, 2017b).

Similarly, Sheffield-Hallam University's Modern Language department, housed in the Humanities or Business Schools, incorporates language and culture modules to eliminate mistaken representations of cultures while teaching intercultural theories, encouraging the development of an interculturally sensitive identity, meta-cognitive knowledge, and mindfulness (Louis, 2016). The predeparture module takes place in the first semester of the second year at university, ahead of a six-month Erasmus study abroad placement followed by a twelve-month work placement. This module encompasses Bennett's (1993) stages of intercultural development, Kim's (2001) cross-cultural adaptation theory, Deardorff's (2006) model of intercultural competence, Hall's (1976, 1997) high- and low-context cultures, and Hofstede's (1980) study of cultural dimensions. Part of this module includes a coaching element in which returnee students hold some support sessions with students preparing for their period abroad utilizing the GROW model (Goal, Reality, Options, Way forward) developed by Whitmore (1992), and it addresses issues involving social isolation, language-related matters, and dealing with intercultural misunderstandings. Louis (2016) reports that feedback on this aspect was positive, as it provided a clear and tangible transformation from negative (anxious or nervous) to positive (calm and in control) feelings.

Integrating intercultural competencies and a more engaging research into the culture is gaining support across HEIs in the UK. An example of one such initiative is the Ethnographic Encounters project at the University of Southampton's Department of Modern Languages. Building on the objectives of acquiring a broader understanding of language and culture while spending a YA, the project aims at engaging students "more deeply with the use of ethnographic methods for their Year Abroad projects" and helping them "reflect on their research processes, and their processes of cultural engagement, so as to document the progress they made abroad, not just linguistically, but also in terms of intercultural and academic research skills" (Bernasek, 2015). The project involves ethnographic methods training sessions and digital literacy skills assessment in addition to intercultural preparation, which is deployed during the semester ahead of the start of the YA (Demossier, 2016). Students identified significant benefits from the research process, writing up, and the overall experience. Furthermore, Demossier (2016) indicates that "this project is particularly important for modern languages as the residence abroad needs not only to facilitate employability, but also to become a meaningful stage in the knowledge and awareness of other cultures." Other successful examples of ethnographic research involving the YA were collected by Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, and Street's (2001) volume on *Language learners as ethnographers*, in addition to Jordan's (2002) work on cultural translation, highlighting the ethnographic projects as opportunities for the development of global competencies, communication, and global interconnectivity.

Developing Employability in Year Abroad Work Placements

According to Biasini, Bohm, and Rabadán-Gómez (2016), work abroad placements indubitably place graduates at an advantage compared to other graduates due to the acquisition of skills they would otherwise develop later in their first job; in addition,

they claim that “what makes placements an ideal transition between University and work is that employers provide positions that balance support and responsibility, offering the students the opportunity to put theory into practice” (p. 40). This argument is widely accepted, although it seems necessary to account for work placements abroad where there is a potential decrease in the support provided by the employer; however, this also represents a reality of jobs after graduation, forcing students to adjust to the situation and develop a stronger on-the-job initiative and independence.

HEIs have made considerable efforts to facilitate the transition to postgraduate work and to foster awareness and recognition of skills while enrolled in a language program with a YA requirement. At the same time, the UK HEA has developed a framework for embedding employability in HE as well as a tool kit comprising pedagogic research, resources, case studies, and audiovisual materials intended to support the planning and deployment of elements of employability in HE (HEA, Employability toolkit, n.d.). In addition, Wyburd (2011), in collaboration with other colleagues and the University Council of Modern Languages, developed a comprehensive resource intended “to assist students in identifying the skills and attributes they have gained during their studies and beyond. It should assist with their reflection on their own personal development as adults and members of society” (p. 1). The resource lists skills and attributes encompassing competencies, such as the linguistic, intercultural, intellectual, employment-specific, and personal aptitudes. This extensive collection of skills has become an invaluable source for students as well as personal tutors and career support personnel.

Some HEIs have adopted a formal approach to student employability by offering a more targeted preparation. Lancaster University, for instance, offers a second-year module on Professional Contexts for Modern Languages based on Cole and Tibby's (2013) framework for the development of a specific approach to employability. Part of the rationale to create this module was to allow students “to explicitly articulate their development of skills and attributes that enhance employability” (Gómez-Cash, 2016, p. 61). The module requires the production of a curriculum vitae and contacting employers, and involves a component of academic reflection using self-evaluation tools, online psychometric testing, and a self-audit of key skills students should develop. The objective behind these tests is to allow students to identify the areas they need to develop, addressed in a workshop on employability lead by the university's Career's staff (*ibid*). Key to this multimodal program is the more cohesive collaboration across different university bodies, involving staff at the department of Modern Languages, careers center, the students' union, and employers.

There are further efforts in UK HEIs to support the development of students' employability prior to the YA as well as in modules offered after students return to complete their final year of study. This is done via workshops or short courses, as well as through the production of materials available online, such as Leeds Beckett University's (2015) *Skills for learning*, collating professional, IT, academic, cultural awareness, reflection, and research skills. Similarly, Newcastle University delivers a *Career management module* (2016) engaging students in seminars, lectures, practical workshops, and study groups aimed at developing a greater awareness of strengths, learning to plan and approaching employers, and so forth. Finally, there are support-based schemes, such as Bangor University's *Employability Award* (BEA, 2016), which offers professional development, expert career advice, employability-enhancing activities, and participation in conferences and social activities.

In addition to the aforementioned projects, final-year students in UK HEIs, returning from the YA, are offered the opportunity to enroll in specialized courses that incorporate a combination of skills to enhance language production, employability, intercultural competencies, and advanced academic content, all of which enhance the work abroad experience. These courses tend to attract students according to the type of work they carried out while abroad or students who want to gain knowledge or develop specific skills for work after graduation. Examples of these modules include the University of Bristol's School of Modern Languages' specialist options, such as Language for Business, Linguistics, Translation and Interpreting Practice, as well as Teaching Modern Languages as a Foreign Language.

Recommendations for Practice

The period of time students spend abroad working in an office Germany, teaching in France, translating and interpreting in Mexico, volunteering in Brazil, or assisting a news editor in Italy indeed provides an opportunity for them to develop linguistic and intercultural competence before they return to continue their degree program; however, this does not automatically transform participants into competent speakers with an expertise in intercultural matters. Scholars coincide in the importance of an appropriate preparation for the experience abroad in order to encourage the development of awareness, skills, knowledge, as well as to better understand the new context and prevent the reinforcement of negative perceptions as the result of misunderstandings (Byram, 2012; Byram et al., 2001; Killick, 2015; Sample, 2013). In addition, intercultural encounters are not limited to the period of residence abroad, as, in fact, transnational mobility and virtual channels of communication create opportunities for further interactions when students return to the UK.

The formal development of ICC should be required alongside the study of modern languages. Predeparture programs involving intercultural issues offer a glimpse into the field, and some UK HEIs have been pioneers in the integration of ICC into language or business studies, but there is more that needs to be done across modern languages, and related, degree programs. In addition, it is necessary to ensure that those in charge of designing ICC programs provide a comprehensive study of intercultural theory, ultimately moving away from essentialist perspectives, enhancing integrative views considering a multiplicity of factors (historical, social, political, economic, and educational) and context-based learning (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values at work, and so forth). This should be done taking into consideration that cultures are multilayered and no amount of preparation will result in students becoming expert interculturalists. Finally, a program that can synthesize elements drawn from anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics, and cross-cultural psychology will provide a wider and more grounded context for the study of culture, mediation, and communication.

Similarly, employability should have a prominent place in the preparation of students, regardless of whether they are involved in a work placement in their YA. This is because HEIs are indeed identified as responsible for the enhancement of a general and field-dependent skills fostering employability (HEA, Employability, 2016). The HEA's Framework for Embedding Employability in Higher Education (2015) can be utilized in the design and implementation of modules or support materials for diverse audiences that function as a strategy to increase graduate student employability.

Future Directions

There is a significant influx of programs supporting the development of ICC in HE and a continuous development of successful projects implemented in the past decade, but there is more that needs to be done across UK HEIs. Students cannot be expected to acquire an in-depth understanding of what transpires in their YA or be able to identify the skills they are developing simply as part of the experience. They need to be prepared beforehand in order to maximize the experience and the development of key skills and competencies, at the same time that this needs to be followed up upon return.

Although much current research focuses on the importance and need to enhance intercultural competencies and employability, further research is required in terms of comparative attitudes and skills before and after spending a required period working abroad. There is a need for longitudinal or case studies that focus on learning more about how students adapt while being abroad, how they develop social support networks, the way they approach intercultural challenges, and the strategies used to become active participants in the host culture. In addition, although there is research addressing returnees' experiences starting on their final year, there are gaps in this area with respect to the best way to support this readaptation period. Finally, one of the emerging challenges developing intercultural competencies involves assessment, which has triggered debates due to the potential criteria that could be used to evaluate students' progress in such a complex issue. Consequently, there is a lack of consistency in terms of the way this could be approached as discussed by de Witt (2011) and Hall, Ainsworth, and Teeling (2012), but there is also an urgent need to develop clearer and more standardized criteria for assessing ICC in Modern Languages.

A final word should be dedicated to Brexit, following the referendum in June 2016 where UK nationals voted to leave the European Union, and the uncertainty created around what is likely to negatively affect student inward-outward mobility, international collaboration with other European countries, and interinstitutional research partnerships. Faculty members and senior university representatives have widely voiced their concerns with regard to the effects of Brexit on Modern Languages; for instance, the Board of the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages at the University of Cambridge released a statement that reflects the collective sentiment across UK HEIs: "In the 'Brexit' debate, politicians frequently mobilised xenophobia and employed nativist rhetoric with particular reference to immigrants and migrants from the countries we study" (sic); furthermore, the board also recognizes that "Now more than ever, it is the study of language and culture that can combat stereotypes and foster the communicative skill and cross-cultural understanding needed to ensure peaceful and prosperous relations between European states" (Board of the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages, n.d.). It is possible that students' opportunities to move across borders and participate in study placements will be affected to a lesser or greater degree; at the same time, work placements will likely continue to be offered, albeit involving some restrictions. Although there is incertitude surrounding Brexit, more efforts will need to be channeled toward the development of intercultural competence and employability to account for the potential reduction of students' possibilities to fully experience a culture and to achieve a better understanding of what it means to develop ICC in the global arena.

Key Terms

Intercultural communicative competence	Year abroad
Global citizenship	Foreign language and intercultural competence
Employability	
Work abroad placements in HE	

Further Reading

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Language Program Components

Interaction and Corrective Feedback in Study Abroad

Lara Bryfonski and Alison Mackey

Introduction

It is a commonly held assumption that a study abroad setting is the ideal environment in which to learn a second language (L2). These ‘folklinguistic’ (Miller & Ginsberg, 1995) beliefs about study abroad stem from the assumption that learners abroad have wider access to interactions with native speakers (NSs) than they do in their home contexts. While some previous research has uncovered larger gains for certain linguistic domains after studying abroad when compared with learners who stayed home (e.g., Collentine, 2004), the link between language gains and the amount and frequency of contact that learners have with NSs while abroad has not yet been firmly established (e.g., Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004). Since the interaction hypothesis first posited a connection between conversational interaction and L2 development (Long, 1981, 1981, 1996), a long line of empirical research has supported and bolstered the importance of interaction for Second Language Acquisition (SLA; see Cobb, 2010; Keck, Iberri-Shea, Tracy-Ventura, & Wa-Mbaleka, 2006; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Ziegler, 2016 for meta-analyses). However, our understanding of the access that study abroad students have to the kinds of interactions known to promote language development is still emerging. Do learners make the most of their interactions with NSs while abroad? What kinds of interactions benefit learners abroad the most? What has been done to document the types of interactions learners engage in abroad?

This chapter provides an overview of the growing body of research that has examined language learning in study abroad under the interactionist tradition of SLA research. The chapter first provides a brief overview of the interaction approach to SLA and its links to L2 development. The following sections highlight the features of study abroad contexts, such as homestays and informal conversation groups, that promote key aspects of the interaction approach, including access to input, opportunities for output, modified output, negotiation for meaning, and corrective feedback. The chapter ends with implications both for the field of SLA and for study abroad practitioners, and suggests future directions for the research of study abroad through the lens of the interaction approach.

Interaction in Study Abroad

The assumption that the immersive nature of study abroad contexts will enable learners to achieve more in their target language as they engage and interact with NSs is an understandable one. This idea that interactions between language learners and more proficient speakers are what drives language learning is the basis of the interaction approach (Gass, 1997; Gass & Mackey, 2006; Long, 1996). Founded on the principles of the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1981, 1996), this approach to understanding how language learning progresses posits that the combination of access to comprehensible input, output, and opportunities to negotiate for meaning and receive corrective feedback are essential elements of L2 development. Research in the interactionist tradition has uncovered casual connections between interaction and language acquisition, and its effects on a variety of linguistic features (e.g., articles: Sheen, 2007; questions: Mackey & Philip, 1988) and for a variety of languages (e.g., Korean: Jeon, 2007; Spanish: de la Fuente, 2002). However, the majority of this research has taken place in either classroom or laboratory settings in the home countries of the learners (Gass, Mackey, & Ross-Feldman, 2005), with fewer investigations into the effects of interaction on language learning in naturalistic settings, such as the ones learners can encounter during study abroad.

Key Aspects of the Interaction Approach

The interaction approach highlights several key aspects as integral to L2 development: access to quality input, opportunities to produce output and modify output, and opportunities to negotiate for meaning and receive corrective feedback. Input is the positive evidence learners are exposed to about the target language (Gass, Mackey, & Pica, 1998), and it is often adjusted by the interlocutor to render it more comprehensible. Reformulating words or phrases, providing examples, or otherwise making aspects of the input more salient to the learners are all strategies interlocutors might use to provide comprehensible input (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996). Output, or the language that learners produce themselves during interaction, is also key for learners to listen to their own productions and compare these to their perceptions of the interlocutors' model (Swain, 2005). Learners may even correct their nontargetlike utterances given the opportunity from their interlocutor and test out new constructions.

One way in which learners receive input that is adjusted to be more comprehensible and in which they are provided the opportunity to adjust their own output is through negotiation for meaning. Negotiation for meaning can be defined as the adjustments, checks for understanding, and other processes that learners and their interlocutors engage in as they try to understand one another (Long, 1996). A variety of studies have examined how negotiating for meaning benefits learners in language classrooms by facilitating learner comprehension (e.g., Pica, 1992) and learner modification of output (e.g., Silver, 1999). However, studies of learners negotiating in nonclassroom contexts, such as with a host family abroad (e.g., Iino, 1996), have painted a complex picture, with some settings' offering fewer opportunities to negotiate due to the learners' and interlocutors' desires to save face or for other context-specific reasons (Richardson, 1997).

When a learner makes an error or there is a breakdown in the communication process, the learners' interlocutor sometimes provides corrective feedback, either

directly or indirectly. Corrective feedback can be negative evidence that enables the learner to compare their own production to that of their interlocutor, thus promoting a process known as ‘noticing the gap’ between their interlanguage and the targetlike form. Corrective feedback ranges from explicit (or direct), such as a metalinguistic explanation of the learners’ error, to implicit (or indirect), such as a simple repetition of the learners’ error or reformulation of the learners’ utterance so that it is targetlike (a recast). A large body of research has investigated the effects of the various forms of corrective feedback on L2 learning (see Brown, 2016; Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Plonsky & Brown, 2015 for meta-analyses), including the effects of explicit vs. implicit feedback (e.g., Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006) as well as factors such as the linguistic target of the feedback (e.g., Egi, 2007). While recasts are the most common form of corrective feedback provided in language classrooms (Brown, 2016), less is known about the types of corrective feedback learners encounter in naturalistic settings, such as during study abroad. However, access to corrective feedback has also been examined in study abroad contexts (Bryfonski & Sanz, 2018; Fernández García & Martínez Arbelaitz, 2007, 2014).

Context Features in Study Abroad

The majority of research in the interactionist tradition has investigated the effects of interaction on L2 development in traditional classroom contexts or in controlled laboratory experiments. Fewer studies have examined learners interacting in naturalistic settings (but see McDonough & Hernández González, 2013; Polio, Gass & Chapin, 2006; Ziegler et al., 2013). Study abroad settings often offer unique opportunities for learners to interact both in traditional classroom settings and in structured naturalistic settings, or “conversations-for-learning” (Kasper & Kim, 2015), in addition to the natural encounters they might have while living in the host country. These conversations-for-learning might be required elements of a program and could include conversation groups with other language learners, or with NSs, in which they interact and discuss natural topics. Collentine and Freed (2004) refer to this as the “hybrid communicative-learning context” because learners must adapt to both formal and informal communicative contexts at once. Natural communicative contexts, such as buying groceries or other service encounters, integrate the use of explicit knowledge and learning strategies for study abroad students. Navigating these various learning contexts allows learners to engage with different opportunities for input, output, and negotiation for meaning with natives.

Previous studies of learners interacting abroad have argued that learner engagement with the host community is key to success due to the fact that qualities of interactions can vary depending on learning approaches and host culture practices (DuFon & Churchill, 2006). This has led many researchers to investigate learners’ interactions with their host families and the subsequent effects on learning outcomes (e.g., Di Silvio, Donovan, & Malone, 2014) as well as ethnographic and case studies investigating the connection between learner perceptions of the homestay and quality of interactions (Kinginger, 2008; Wilkinson, 1998). Fewer studies have examined learners interacting with their same-age peers, who are either NSs they encounter in the community or other study abroad students. Previous work examining non-native peer interactions has found that advanced learners are able to provide as much input, feedback, and output to their peer interlocutors as NSs (García Mayo & Pica, 2000).

Peers who interact under a language pledge while abroad have shown positive effects on fluency measures (Du, 2013). However, little is known about the effects of non-native peer interaction in study abroad contexts on linguistic gains. In the following sections, we examine how the various naturalistic contexts that learners encounter while abroad, homestays and conversation groups, can potentially promote or hinder the aspects of the interaction approach known to facilitate acquisition.

Negotiation for Meaning Abroad: Classrooms and Homestays

Of the previous research that has examined natural interactions in study abroad settings, the majority has compared traditional classroom settings abroad with the natural interactions that occur in homestays. Some of the earlier work in this area uncovered contradictory results. Long and Sato (1983) argued that nonclassroom settings provide learners with more opportunities to negotiate for meaning and receive comprehensible input than formal classroom settings. However, Iino's (1996) investigation of foreigner talk in Japanese host family interactions found that there was less negotiation for meaning in these nonclassroom conversations as NSs avoided calling attention to learner errors in order to save face. This result has also been seen in other studies (Richardson, 1997), leading researchers to conclude that informal conversation may not always facilitate negotiation or modification of output in abroad contexts.

In her study of five Japanese-as-a-second-language learners interacting in host family and classroom settings abroad, McMeekin (2006) sought to shed light on this debate by analyzing learners' opportunities to negotiate for meaning and how setting (homestay vs. classroom) affected these opportunities. McMeekin collected video- and audio-recorded conversations between the language learners and their interlocutors (host family and classroom teachers), focusing exclusively on NS-non-native speaker (NNS) interactions (peer interactions were not investigated) at the beginning, middle, and end of an eight-week summer program. Data were additionally triangulated with informal interviews and student journal entries. Findings indicated that host family members provided about twice as much comprehensible input as instructors in the classroom setting. However, in the classroom setting, students made more attempts to modify their output than they did in the host family setting. The author suggests that members of the host family made a greater effort to make themselves understood by using a variety of strategies, such as reformulations and repetitions, and by providing examples reflecting their role as caregivers to the study abroad student. In the classroom setting, the teacher more often opened the floor to other students to provide reformulations or pushed students to resolve comprehension problems themselves. In terms of modified output, host families typically provided reformulations when they thought they understood most of what the learner had said, mitigating the learners' opportunity to produce modified output. This suggests that the host family interactions were more focused on communication and meaning making. In the classroom, learners were expected to modify their output following corrections and incorporate feedback, and teachers encouraged self-repair strategies.

McMeekin's findings also indicated that learners engaged in more negotiations with their host families than in the classroom setting. The author suggests that the topics of conversation in the homestay setting were more abstract or culturally

focused than in the classroom forcing students to rely on negotiation strategies in order to make meaning in the conversations. Turn-taking was also more balanced in the homestay; therefore, learners had more opportunities to exchange information and participate actively in conversation. In the classroom, the students' first language (L1), English, was used more often as a strategy to resolve communication breakdowns, lessening the need to negotiate for meaning. However, the study did not examine the learners' negotiations with each other in the classroom, and instead only focused on the teacher-student negotiation opportunities, which may have affected the results described here.

Similar results were found in Shively (2010), which followed one student's development of L2 humor over the course of a semester abroad in Spain. While this study utilized a case-study approach to examining how the learner was socialized into the language practices of his community rather than an interactionist approach, results indicated that when compared to interacting with an NS friend at school, the learner had fewer opportunities to produce output with his host family and therefore developed less L2 humor in the homestay context. With his NS friend, the learner developed more native-like humor practices and increased his use of revoicing as a strategy of integrating targetlike expressions, words, and ways of speaking into his humor. With his host father, on the other hand, the learner occupied less floor time and had fewer opportunities to develop his L2 humor through output. The author suggests that perhaps the host family abroad is not the sine qua non of social interaction that is purported to be.

Utilizing a similar conversation-analytic approach to Shively, Wilkinson (2002) collected recordings of conversations from four American students studying abroad in France. Each participant provided recordings of conversations before their departure, during their sojourn, and upon returning to the US. The data revealed that the French interlocutors relied on classroom-instructional norms when speaking with the study abroad students in their homestays. Interview data indicated that when host family members and study abroad students adopted the familiar roles of teacher-student, both parties felt more comfortable and some learners even pushed for classroom talk in their interactions with host family members. This classroom talk also included episodes of corrective feedback at the homestay. When host families provided explicit corrective feedback to their host students ("*C'est pas français ça.*" [That's not French.]), it was met with frustration on the part of the learners who stated that their host family's members seemed to be on a "mission to teach" (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 162). However, implicit, or meaning-based, corrections were perceived as more useful to the learners, and learners indicated that they more readily adopted those corrections. Wilkinson concludes that "perhaps immersion in a target-language community during study abroad does not always take students as far beyond the classroom as one might intuitively believe" (p. 169).

While McMeekin's (2006) study is the only homestay study thus far that adopted the theoretical perspective of the interaction approach to analyze homestay interactions, the results from the studies summarized earlier suggest that learners do engage in and are provided opportunities to negotiate for meaning, obtain comprehensible input, and modify their output in this setting. However, as McMeekin (2006) and Shively (2010) point out, host family interactions do seem to support fewer opportunities for modified output production as learners and their host strive to focus on meaning making in conversations. Wilkinson's (2002) study demonstrates how

classroom interactive norms, such as explicit corrective feedback, are often carried over into host family interactions as well. However, host family talk is only one type of the vast array of interaction learners are exposed to during their time abroad.

Informal Conversation Groups Abroad

The interactions learners have in informal settings while abroad have been less widely studied than interactions in homestay settings. However, preliminary findings seem to debunk the perspective that natural conversations abroad offer fewer opportunities for negotiation for meaning and modified output than classroom interactions, and instead, they highlight the range of opportunities learners have to engage in negotiation for meaning and corrective feedback when interacting “in the wild” (Hutchins, 1995) of the host country.

In two studies of learners interacting with NS peers in outside-class informal conversations, Fernández García and Martínez Arbelaitz (2007, 2014) identified opportunities the conversations provided for comprehensible input, negotiation for meaning, and corrective feedback. Eight university learners of Spanish studying abroad in the Basque Country, Spain participated in English-Spanish conversation exchanges with eight NS university students from the local university. Data were collected in the form of audio-recorded conversations of the study abroad students and NSs interacting in pairs. In the first study (2007), the researchers analyzed the data in terms of the quantity of negotiations of meaning that occurred in the conversations and NSs reactions to communication breakdowns. The results from the first study indicated that negotiations for meaning were common in the conversations and that NSs used a wide array of strategies to resolve communication failures and make their input more comprehensible including rephrasing, repetition, expansion, and use of the L1 (English).

In the second study (2014), the researchers analyzed the same data in terms of the amount of corrective feedback moves present in the conversations and quantified how often corrective feedback resulted in modified output. The results showed that recasts were the most frequent moves during these interactions (36% of total feedback), followed by other moves that the researchers termed lexical assistance (NS supplies an unknown word), form assistance (NS supplies correct form), and completion (NS fills in for NNS). Most feedback moves were learner-initiated in their study, where learners prompted their interlocutors for input. Learners modified their output most often after receiving assistance on form (73.7%) followed by lexical assistance (61.9%) and then following recasts (56.6%). The finding that recasts, the most common corrective feedback move used by teachers (Brown, 2016), were also a common form of feedback in these informal conversations lends further support to Wilkinson’s (2002) claim that learners retain classroom discourse norms even in informal conversation. However, unlike in classrooms, the NNSs initiated the majority of the feedback, which may have been due to the conversation-exchange nature of these interactions, where participants switched off being the “expert” NS.

One additional study has adopted an interactionist perspective to analyze informal conversation groups in a study abroad context. In a study of US university students in a short-term summer abroad program in Barcelona, Spain, Bryfonski, and Sanz (2018) investigated the changes in quantity of corrective feedback produced by NSs and peer learners in conversation groups. Nineteen Spanish language learners interacted with 10 NSs in small groups and recorded themselves at the beginning, middle, and end of

their six-week stay. Results indicated that the amount of corrective feedback provided by both natives and non-natives decreased significantly by the end of the study abroad program with similar amounts of implicit and explicit feedback provided throughout. Data triangulated from tailored quizzes post-study abroad, in which learners were asked to translate words or phrases that occurred during a corrective feedback episode, revealed a 48% success rate in terms of remembering the target word or phrase. This result, coupled with the overall decrease in feedback moves over the course of the abroad experience, was interpreted as a sign of development, as learners gradually required less feedback to maintain the conversation as the sojourn continued.

Analysis also revealed that some study abroad students provided corrections to each other throughout the conversation groups, although the majority of the feedback originated from the NSs. Data from stimulated recall interviews indicated that learners utilized a variety of strategies to support a peer when there was a misunderstanding or if the peer was struggling to be understood. Learners often scaffolded each other, jumping in to provide translations and reformulations until the NS in the group understood the intended meaning. The study also tracked the students' occasional use of their L1 (English) in the conversation groups, finding that when the L1 was employed, it was used judiciously to encourage the flow of meaning making in the conversations. However, instances where L1 use was not understood by the NS resulted in more episodes of negotiation for meaning and scaffolding among the group of learners than instances when use of the L1 immediately resolved a misunderstanding.

The studies that have employed an interaction approach to understanding informal conversations abroad (Bryfonski & Sanz, 2018; Fernández García & Martínez Arbelaitz, 2007, 2014) have demonstrated how informal conversations offer rich opportunities for learners to continue to develop their language skills by receiving modified input, and opportunities for negotiation for meaning and corrective feedback. These studies additionally offer study abroad practitioners a window in the conversations their students have with NSs during their stay in the host country.

Implications and Future Directions

Research that has examined learners interacting abroad from a cognitive-interactionist perspective is still new, and there are many questions still to answer. For SLA researchers, there is still much work to be done to extend the findings from domestic classrooms and laboratories to informal contexts (abroad and otherwise). Study abroad practitioners will then be able to utilize this body of research to improve programs and better prepare students for the interactions they will encounter while abroad. Previous researchers in the field of study abroad have suggested that learners may need interventions to encourage them to engage with NSs while abroad (Kinginger, 2011). Practitioners might consider developing predeparture workshops to help learners develop strategies for interaction in their particular study abroad context. There are many questions SLA research and study abroad practitioners might pursue, including the following:

- What can programs do to facilitate a homestay experience that is conducive to interaction-driven learning?
- How can programs design requirements, such as conversation groups with NS peers, to be conducive to language learning?

- When and how can using the L1 be effective during conversations abroad?
- How does the language pledge interact with opportunities for feedback and input?
- Can learners be trained to maximize their interaction opportunities while abroad? If so, how? What kinds of interventions are most effective?
- How can learners make the most of the corrective feedback they encounter while interacting with NSs and other study abroad students?

Along with many more possibilities. However, the body of research that exists now indicates that study abroad students and programs can have confidence that learners who interact in various settings, such as homestays, service encounters, or through informal conversation groups, will encounter the kinds of interaction known to be essential for L2 development.

Key Terms

The interaction approach	Implicit feedback
Input	Explicit feedback
Output	Conversation groups
Modified output	Homestays
Corrective feedback	Peer interaction
Negotiation for meaning	

Further Reading

- DuFon, M. A., & Churchill, E. (Eds.). (2006). *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (Vol. 15). Multilingual Matters. (This volume includes a collection of empirical studies that examine the experiences of language learners in diverse study abroad contexts. A chapter by Iino, as well as McMeekin's chapter, investigates interaction and negotiation for meaning in homestay and classroom settings abroad.)
- Gass, S. M., & Mackey, A. (Eds.) (2012). *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition*. Routledge. (This handbook covers a wide range of topics related to second language acquisition. Chapter 1, The Interactionist Approach [Mackey, Abbuhl, and Gass], gives a more detailed overview of this approach to investigating second language learning. Chapter 2, The Role of Feedback [Loewen], provides a more detailed historical view of research pertaining to corrective feedback for second language learning in particular.)
- McDonough, K., & Mackey, A. (Eds.) (2013). *Second language interaction in diverse educational contexts*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. (This volume is a collection of studies that investigate the effects of oral interaction on second language learning in a wide range of educational settings. Chapters by Ziegler et al. and McDonough and Hernández González specifically examine oral interaction in informal conversation group settings.)

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Part IV

The Person: Individual Differences

Aptitude, Motivation, Anxiety,
Working Memory



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Study Abroad and L2 Learner Attitudes

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Introduction

Across recent studies, one of the most puzzling findings related to Second Language Acquisition in the study abroad context is that in the very same learning context, some learners improve and others do not (Kinginger, 2008; Lafford, 2006; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009, 2013; Nagle, Morales-Front, Moorman & Sanz, 2016; Serrano, Llanes & Tragant, 2011). These differences may be linked to a host of individual differences, such as aptitude, motivation, and proficiency level at the start of the abroad experience (e.g., Dörnyei, 2005; Grey, Cox, Serafini & Sanz, 2015; Hernández, 2010; Lord, 2009; MacIntyre, Baker, Clement & Conrod, 2001), and to patterns of behavior, such as the degree to which learners choose to use the second language while abroad and the types and depth of their social interactions (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Díaz-Campos, 2004; George, 2014; Isabelli-García, 2006). These findings are attested for abilities related to overall language proficiency and fluency (e.g., Carroll, 1967; Freed, 1995; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004); to knowledge of a particular structure in the second language grammar (e.g., Isabelli-García, 2004); and for variable features of the language that are optional but indicate membership in social groups defined by geography, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and the like (e.g., Isabelli-García, 2004).

Within this context of differential outcomes and individual learner differences, the current chapter presents original research on the role of language attitudes in Second Language Acquisition and the manner in which this individual trait interacts with study abroad experiences during the process of acquisition. We begin with an overview of research on the role of attitude toward a target language and culture in the process of Second Language Acquisition and then narrow our discussion to the exploration of this factor in the study abroad context. Of essential importance to this field of research is the methodology that is used to examine language attitudes, both conscious and subconscious, and we pay special attention to the methodological challenges that research on language attitudes must address, providing a model of multi-method approaches for future research. The chapter concludes with the presentation

of original research findings on the relationship between language attitudes on the one hand and overall individual experiences with the second language on the other. This empirical study contributes to our present understanding of learner attitudes toward different varieties of the same language, using a multimodal methodology combining qualitative profiles that account for lifelong experience, both academic and through study abroad, with established quantitative measures of subconsciously held language attitudes. This cross-disciplinary study connects the existing research on the role of language attitudes to our understanding of the importance of study abroad experiences in Second Language Acquisition.

Previous Literature

Language Attitudes and Second Language Acquisition

The role of learner attitudes toward the target community, and by extension the target language, has been studied extensively and under several frameworks.¹ Early models that sought to explain the less-than-ideal outcomes of particular L2 learners often cite motivational and attitudinal factors as explanations. For example, Schmidt's (1983) study of Wes, a Japanese speaker learning English in Hawaii, and Schumann's (1978) study of Alberto, a native Spanish speaker learning English in California, both note that these individuals reached a level of functional competence but did not appear to make progress beyond a certain level of grammatical accuracy. Both investigators identified a lack of desire to integrate socially (in Schumann's language, to *acculturate*) in the target community in the individuals they studied. Norton Pierce (2001) provides contrastive case-study examples of learners who did not progress beyond a certain level as a result of negative social interactions on the one hand and others who succeeded as a result of positive social interactions with speakers of the target language on the other. By her account, positive interactions are worth personal investment, and this leads to further interaction, through which identities are constructed and, in turn, more language is acquired (see also Aveni, 2005, for research on identity). To be sure, there are important differences between the constructs of motivation, attitude, and identity, and each has its own history of measurement and study. Nevertheless, these studies and the many investigations of individual differences that have followed (see Dörnyei, 2005, 2006; Ellis, 2004; Gurzynski-Weiss, 2014, for overviews) all point to the importance of the role of the individual in the process of Second Language Acquisition.

Looking specifically at the role of individual differences in the study abroad context, we see evidence of differential outcomes that have been attributed to individual differences. Some of these differences are directly related to the study abroad experience and may include the academic and housing options a student elects, the length of the program, and program-internal requirements, such as having pledged to speak only in the target language (e.g., Alvord & Christiansen, 2012; Geeslin, García-Amaya, Hasler-Barker, Henriksen & Killam, 2010, 2012; Kanwit & Solon, 2013). Additional sources of difference may stem from learner choices while abroad, such as the quantity of contact and interaction the learner has with native speakers in the host community (George, 2014). Clearly, each of these factors has direct implications for learning because they influence key elements, such as quantity of input and access to interaction in the target language across a full range of settings.

There are also several important factors related to the traits of individual learners, such as motivation, willingness to communicate, extroversion (also subsumed under personality or cognitive style in some approaches), and aptitude (e.g., Dörnyei, 2005; Hernández, 2010; MacIntyre, Baker, Clement & Conrod, 2001). Another trait that has received considerable attention is proficiency, including discussion of whether there is a threshold proficiency below which learners might benefit less from study abroad (Lafford, 2006; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). Language attitudes generally fall within this body of work on individual traits, but these must also be viewed as ongoing and socially constructed. To achieve this, we define attitude as the evaluative orientation a learner has toward a particular language and/or speech community (i.e., a group of speakers of that language), noting that this orientation is built from and modified through contact and interaction with speakers of the language. We acknowledge that this may overlap with and be influenced by factors such as motivation, experience with the target community, willingness to communicate, and so on as these may affect initial orientation toward learning as well as changes in perspective over time. We further note that a single target language usually encompasses many different speech communities (e.g., middle-class women in Caracas, Venezuela), and attitudes likely differ for the same language (e.g., Spanish) from one speech community to another, especially as experiences grow.

As stated previously, learners' goals for acquiring a second language and their attitudes toward speakers of that second language influence the process of acquisition. Learners may (not) wish to become part of the target-speaking speech community. This, in turn, is likely to guide the type of interactions a learner seeks and, consequently, dictate the range of contexts in which she has access to the target language. Less input and interaction are likely to have a negative impact on measures of overall competence, such as proficiency, comprehension, and fluency, and it will also limit the range of forms to which a learner is exposed, causing slower development in these areas or a failure to acquire forms that are linked to a given context (e.g., informal interactions) when compared to those who have greater access to input and interaction (e.g., Regan, Howard & Lemée, 2009; Tarone & Swain, 1995). Likewise, for categorical properties of the grammar, such as native-like production of a given phone (e.g., Díaz-Campos, 2004) or appropriate (non)use of overt subject forms (Isabelli-García, 2004) at a minimum, less interaction means less input and a slower process of acquisition. In this way, language attitudes can be seen to have a direct link to the quantity of input a learner receives.

Language attitudes may also influence the quality of input a learner receives, and this is especially evident in the Second Language Acquisition of variable structures. These properties of target grammars vary to reflect the social characteristics of the speaker and his or her geographic origin (for a review, see Geeslin & Long, 2014). These variable structures also reflect situational facts, such as audience and formality (e.g., Bell, 1984). In the nearly 40 years since Canale and Swain (1980) began the discussion of what it means to possess full communicative abilities in a language, including not only grammatical competence but also sociolinguistic competence, we have learned a great deal about the many challenges that second language learners face. One of these is that learners do not always have access to the full range of formal and informal situations in the target language and thus receive more limited input (Tarone & Swain, 1995). One reason that study abroad is believed to be beneficial for learners is that it provides the opportunity to overcome issues related to

access to input beyond the classroom. Because it appears that the Second Language Acquisition of variable structures, in particular, requires access to a range of interactional contexts, the study abroad context has been a profitable area of study for researchers working on second language variation.

To date, research on the Second Language Acquisition of variable structures² has shown that learners come to perceive, identify, and interpret more accurately with experience in the target environment (e.g., Bedinghaus, 2015; Schmidt, 2009; Schoonmaker-Gates, 2012). In the area of morphosyntax, we see that learners are able to adjust the frequency of use of variable forms as well as the constraints on that use during study abroad and that learners can and do move toward regional targets (e.g., Geeslin et al., 2010, 2012; Salgado-Robles, 2014). Nevertheless, movement toward local norms is not categorical, and it appears to vary by learner and by structure (Kanwit, Geeslin & Fafulas, 2015; Kanwit & Solon, 2013; Linford, 2016).

The differences in learner patterns of use and the potential role that attitude plays are exemplified by the body of work on the use of the interdental fricative /θ/ associated with, for example, Northern and Central Spain. The primary social correlate of this phone is geographic rather than social. This phone is used in the graphemic contexts <ci>, <ce>, and <z>, and is contrastive with /s/, which is realized when the grapheme <s> is present. One might predict that time in Central Spain through a study abroad experience would lead to production of this phone. However, Geeslin and Gudmestad (2008) showed that this was not always the case, and, in fact, of the 130 learners in their study, a total of 32 had experience studying in Spain, and only 7 produced /θ/. In contrast, Willis, Geeslin, and Henriksen (2009) showed that most of the second language learners in their study did increase their use of /θ/ over the course of a summer in León, Spain. Additionally, all learners who produced /θ/ improved in accuracy of when to use this phone (i.e., in the appropriate graphemic contexts). Nevertheless, one of the learners who started with a relatively high frequency of use actually decreased this rate during her stay abroad, despite her instructors' perception that she thrived while there. The authors suggest that individual differences, such as language attitudes, were likely at play.

Knouse (2012) examined this same phenomenon using an interview task to measure production together with a questionnaire to survey learner attitudes and found that these two factors—pronunciation and language attitudes—were indeed related. Like others, she attested very low rates of production of /θ/, but those who indicated a strong desire to improve pronunciation were more likely to do so. Ringer-Hilfinger (2012) was the first, to our knowledge, to use a matched-guise task to explore attitudes toward this phone before and after study abroad. She compared rates of production on an open-ended interview task, which were low—as in previous studies—to levels of awareness of the distinction between /θ/ and /s/, and attitudes toward this distinction. Her findings suggest that some learners preferred to align their production with friends and acquaintances who spoke other varieties of Spanish. Thus, her analysis showed that attitudes are central to learner production, even as awareness of the phonemic contrast develops over time.

George (2014) studied the production of /θ/, showing that several individual differences play a role in its production. Her 25 participants were students on a one-semester study abroad program in Toledo, Spain, and completed three tasks, a guided oral conversation, the reading of a passage, and the reading of a word list, at three points during the semester. Although frequency of production of /θ/ increased over time, rates remained low, and the greatest gains were seen during the first six weeks rather

than toward the end of the stay abroad. Using a modified language contact profile (e.g., Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz & Halter, 2004) and a modified social networks questionnaire (e.g., Qui, 2011), she examined factors such as language attitudes, motivation, and degree of contact with Spanish and English during the stay abroad and showed that several of these factors, including the quantity of contact with the language and the strength of social networks, influence the rates of production of these regional variants. Together, these studies document progress in the field as we come to understand the importance of attitudinal and social components that influence learner acquisition as well as the choice to (not) produce a particular regional phone, even in cases in which perception and comprehension of that phone are acquired. Nevertheless, several authors (e.g., Knouse, 2012) noted that learners' nonproduction of this phone may be linked not simply to attitudes toward the target variety but also attitudes toward /θ/ in particular, which is sometimes perceived as a lisp by those with limited contact with this variety of Spanish (George, 2014, p. 107). Thus, one remaining challenge for research across areas that seeks to explore Second Language Acquisition in the study abroad setting and the link to language attitudes is investigating attitudes toward specific varieties of the target language while maintaining the same level of linguistic detail in the research design. The current study is a step toward addressing this issue.

Methods of Inquiry in Attitudinal Research

Given the widespread differences in learner outcomes, even in the study abroad context, the role of language variation in expressing and interpreting social information, and the importance of learner differences, such as attitudes toward a regional target, researchers have developed a variety of measures to explore these factors. A good deal of research in the study abroad context makes use of oral or written questionnaires to explore learner experiences and attitudes. A basic written background questionnaire may elicit information about a learner's experiences abroad and the extent of contact with the target. To get more directly at learner attitudes, researchers may extend these instruments or supplement them with additional measures. These additional measures often ask directly about learner experiences, social connections, and challenges during the stay abroad (e.g., Hernández, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2006). Attitudinal measurement questionnaires may also employ less direct formats, such as a Likert scale on which learners indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with positive and negative statements about the target language and/or culture (e.g., Baker, 1992; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). For example, George (2014), described previously, measured several different individual characteristics to examine their relationship with the pronunciation of the Castilian Spanish interdental and the uvular fricatives. Her questionnaire covered constructs such as instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, desire to speak Castilian Spanish, dialect awareness, and pronunciation anxiety. Four such statements from the attitudinal measure are shown in (1) (George, 2014, pp. 112–113).

- (1) Attitude toward Castilian Spanish and its people
- 1 Toledo, Spain is a good place to study abroad.
 - 2 Spaniards from Toledo are friendly.
 - 3 I like the Spanish accent from Toledo.
 - 4 The more I get to know the people from Toledo, the more I want to be fluent in their language.

The Likert-scale format along with a balance between positive and negative statements is believed to be more effective at tapping into subconscious attitudes and beliefs than direct questioning about those same attitudes; indeed, Likert-based measurements have been shown across many studies to be reliable and valid (e.g., Fernandez-Berrocal, Extremero & Ramos, 2004; Maurer & Pierce, 1998). Statistical analyses can be used to examine the degree to which each item (or a subset of the items) correlates with a particular behavior, such as amount of interaction in the target and, thus, serve as a useful tool for exploring the role of learner attitudes in the process of Second Language Acquisition.

Several studies have explored the role of listener attitudes in the form of expectations that influence perception. Some studies have explored how activation of knowledge of a speaker's regional origin, either by labeling the speaker explicitly or by creating contextual cues about that origin, can shift perception of stimuli that are held constant (e.g., Hay, Warren & Drager, 2006; Niedzielski, 1999), and others have shown how information about speaker ethnicity (e.g., Casasanto, 2008) or speaker social class (e.g., Squires, 2013) can influence perception. The converse is also true, such that certain variants can lead listeners to form ideas about the ethnicity or social status of a speaker. In every case, these studies find that native speakers of a language associate certain variants with speakers from particular social groups, revealing underlying language beliefs. To our knowledge, this technique has been underutilized in L2 research but could contribute to our understanding of the Second Language Acquisition of socially meaningful variation in the second language.

Perhaps the best-known technique for tapping subconscious attitudes about a group is the matched-guise task (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum, 1960). This task incorporates matched "pairs" of language samples and asks participants to evaluate the speakers on a series of personal traits, such as kindness or likeability on the one hand and intelligence or employability on the other. The general premise behind the task is that higher ratings of kindness or likeability indicate that a participant shares a degree of solidarity with the speaker, whereas higher ratings on intelligence, for example, are taken to indicate the believed prestige of the language variety in the language sample. This technique can be adapted to match a single speaker (video or photo image) to two different speech samples, containing differences in socially meaningful variants, or it may take a single speech sample and match it with two different speakers, in this case, generally represented in photos with clear visual cues to the social differences between speakers.

One of the best-known applications of this task is Campbell-Kibler (2006), who showed that use of *in* (vs. *ing*) as in *swimmin'* in English was more likely to be attributed to speakers from the southern US and that this group of speakers was also evaluated as having less professional promise. Díaz-Campos and Killam (2012) used this same technique to examine subconscious attitudes toward Venezuelan Spanish, and Ringer-Hilfinger (2012), described earlier, has applied this technique to evaluate learners' attitudes toward Spanish in central Spain. In every case, for native speakers and non-native speakers, we see that individual ratings of personal traits vary as a function of the presence of these variants. There are some weaknesses with the matched-guise task as it was originally conceived (see Agheyisi & Fishman, 1970), and more recent studies have modified the implementation, using multiple voices, for example, rather than a single speaker producing variants that may or may not occur naturally (known as the "verbal guise" paradigm, Cooper, 1975), or by using

digitally manipulated or synthesized speech to control for other phonetic variants (e.g., Squires, 2013), and thus, the matched-guise task, or modified versions of this task, such as the one used in the current study, continue to be an effective measure for studying linguistic attitudes.

Methods and Procedures of the Current Study

We now present the results of original research that investigated the relationship between language attitudes and overall experience with the second language, specifically, experience through a study abroad program. We posited the following research questions:

RQ1: When language learners hear different regional varieties of Spanish, do they differentiate (a) levels of prestige afforded to each and (b) levels of likeability of the speakers of those varieties?

RQ2: If so, how do individual learners vary in language attitudes held toward different regional varieties of the target language as a result of a study abroad experience?

To answer these questions, a variation of the matched-guise task, the verbal guise technique, coupled with a language background and dialect contact questionnaire, was administered to a group of US-based learners of Spanish. The 110 learner participants (43 males, 67 females) were native speakers of North American English, between the ages of 18 and 24, and enrolled in one of four levels of undergraduate Spanish classes (further description found later). The learners were presented with 24 sentence stimuli spoken by male, university-educated speakers from four different Spanish dialectal regions (two speakers per dialect), and rated each individual stimulus on a six-point semantic differential scale for either kindness (Version A) or prestige (Version B) adjectives, depending upon the version of the task to which the participant was assigned. In Version A (kindness attributes), listeners rated the speakers according how *simpatico* ‘nice’ and how *cariñoso* ‘kind’ they perceived a speaker to be (see Figure 25.1 for the six rating options available for each kindness adjective, for example, from *extremely caring* to *not caring at all*). In the same way, in Version B (prestige attributes), the L2 listeners rated the different speakers according how *inteligente* ‘intelligent’ and *rico* ‘rich’ they perceived each speaker to be.

The stimuli included four Spanish regional varieties: Castilian Spanish (Valladolid, Spain), Rioplatense Spanish (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Caribbean Spanish (San Juan, Puerto Rico), and Mexican Spanish (Mérida, Mexico). These four dialectal regions were selected because they represent several of the major macrodialect areas of Spanish spoken throughout the Spanish-speaking world (Fernández de Molina & Hernández-Campoy, in press), and they exhibit variation from one another at various linguistic levels (e.g., different phonetic, morphosyntactic, lexical, and pragmatic features). In the task, listeners rated two male speaker voices from each of the four dialects (thus, a total of eight voices); multiple speaker voices were presented (i.e., the verbal guise technique) rather than a single voice, as the goal was to compare multiple speech varieties, and a single speaker would not be capable of producing the different regional guises. The ratings were based on three sentence-long stimuli read by each of the speakers, stimuli that had been carefully constructed so as to include particular phonetic contexts that elicited regional phonetic features characteristic of each of the four dialects (see Table 25.1).

A2. ¿Cómo clasificarías a este hablante?

Símpatía



Cariño



Figure 25.1 Matched-guise task interface, Version A (kindness adjectives).

Table 25.1 Dialectal features targeted in speech stimuli

Feature	Example	Dialect-specific pronunciation	Formal pronunciation in other varieties
Apical-/s/	postre 'dessert'	[ˈpos-tre] (Castilian)	[ˈpos-tre]
Aspirated-/s/	postre 'dessert'	[ˈpoh-tre] (Rioplatense)	[ˈpos-tre]
Glottalized-/s/	postre 'dessert'	[ˈpoʔ-tre] (Caribbean)	[ˈpos-tre]
Interdental fricative /θ/	nación 'nation'	[na-θiɔn] (Castilian)	[na-ˈsion]
Assibilated palatal /j/	calle 'street'	[ˈka-ʃe] (Rioplatense)	[ˈka-je]
Lateralized-/ɾ/	norte 'north'	[nol-te] (Caribbean)	[nor-te]
Velarized-/n/	nación 'nation'	[na-ˈsion] (Caribbean)	[na-ˈsion]

Only one dialectal phonetic feature was present in each sentence stimulus, and this individual feature appeared twice within the sentence. For example, in the sentence stimulus *Pedro pidió un postre de chocolate para la fiesta* ‘Pedro asked for a chocolate cake for the party,’ the L2 raters heard the apical-s realization of “postre” and “fiesta” for the Castilian speaker voices (e.g., [ˈpos-tre]), the lenited-s realizations

of these tokens for the Rioplatense and Caribbean voices ([*poh-tre*] and [*po?*-*tre*], respectively), and the laminal-s realization for the Mexican voices ([*pos-tre*]). In this way, we were certain that the L2 listeners were presented with several of the regional phonetic features of each dialect in the speech stimuli rated, all the while holding constant other linguistic and extralinguistic information (i.e., lexical, morphosyntactic, and pragmatic variants).

Along with the quantitative measures of the learner language attitudes calculated through the scalar ratings of the learners toward the four target language dialects, qualitative profiles were developed to account for the lifelong experiences of the learners, based on their overall academic and study abroad experiences. These profiles were construed based on information provided by the L2 participants in a language background and dialect contact questionnaire, completed following the matched-guise task, which included biographic and background information, such as age, degree program, timeline of places lived, details regarding Spanish language training and other languages spoken, and length and location of all study abroad experiences.

The findings for the learner language attitudes that we present in the following section are based on the responses from a total of 110 American English-speaking learners of Spanish, spanning four university enrollment levels, from first-year Spanish to fourth-year Spanish literature and linguistics classes designed for Spanish majors. As seen in Table 25.2, approximately half of the learners at each level were asked to rate the speakers according to kindness adjectives, and the other half according to prestige adjectives.

The Spanish learners came to the task with a variety of prior study abroad experiences. Slightly more than one-fourth had studied abroad ($N = 29$), and while these learners reported studying in a variety of Spanish-speaking regions, the most common study abroad host country was Spain ($N = 16$). The other study abroad locations included Central America ($N = 6$: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica), Puerto Rico ($N = 2$), Argentina ($N = 2$), Chile ($N = 2$), and Ecuador ($N = 1$). The average duration of the study abroad programs completed by the learners was two and half months ($SD = 11.681$ months), although experiences abroad ranged from one week to one year in duration.

For the data analysis, individual learner ratings of dialect kindness (Version A) or prestige (Version B) were calculated from responses on the six-point semantic differential scales, by averaging either the kindness or the prestige ratings for each dialect group (i.e., averaging across the ratings for the three sentence stimuli spoken by each of the two speakers representing each dialect group). As individual L2 participants

Table 25.2 Four enrollment levels of Spanish L2 learner participants

<i>Enrollment level</i>	<i>Version A (kindness)</i>	<i>Version B (prestige)</i>	<i>Total N</i>
First-year Spanish	10	9	19
Second-year Spanish I and II	15	18	33
Third-year Intro to Spanish Linguistics	15	14	29
Fourth-year Spanish Literature and Linguistics	14	15	29
Total	54	56	110

could vary in their use of the scales (i.e., the range of the scale used, or in how an individual would interpret different values on the scale), the raw scores were transformed to standardized scores (*z*-scores) so that we could make direct comparisons of rating scores across listeners. In this way, the *z*-scores allow us to determine how a particular dialect is rated by the listener in relation to ratings of the other dialects, and to compare the ratings across individual listeners. The sign of the *z*-score (+ or -) identifies whether the value is above (+) or below (-) the mean overall rating score of the four dialects, and the numerical value of the score reflects the distance of the score from the mean (the number of standard deviations between the score and the mean). In the presentation of the results that follows, we start by examining the overall learner ratings of the four Spanish dialects according to kindness and prestige attributes for the L2 group as a whole. Then, we consider how individual experiences of study abroad contribute to the development of these language attitudes.

Results

Overall L2 Language Attitudes toward Spanish Varieties

The overall L2 standardized mean ratings of the four Spanish regional varieties for kindness (left-hand side) and prestige (right-hand side) are presented in Figure 25.2. As a whole, the L2 learner group does indeed perceive differences between the speakers and does rate the different Spanish dialects differently. Mixed model statistical analyses were conducted with kindness and then prestige rating as the dependent variable, speaker dialect as a fixed effect, and participant as a random effect, to determine differences in the ratings of the four dialects. In terms of kindness, the L2

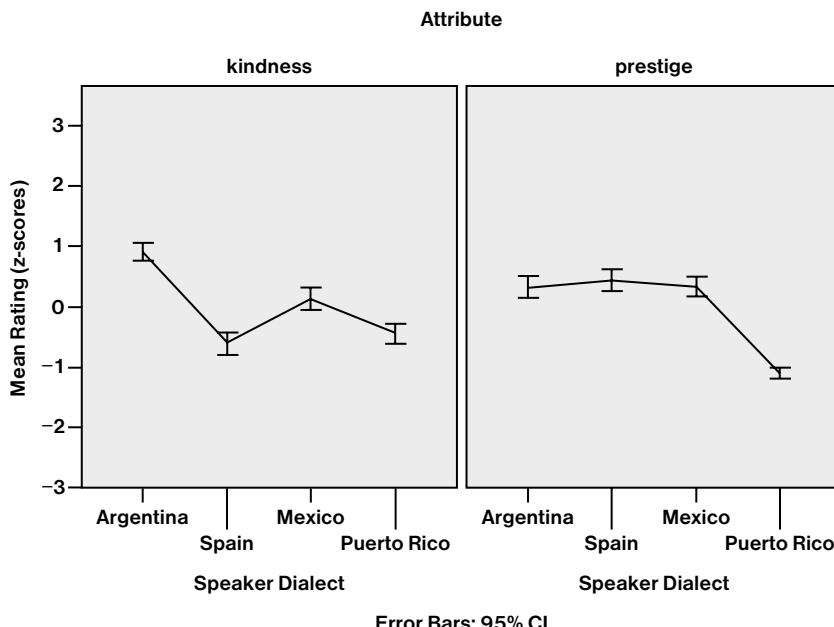


Figure 25.2 L2 group dialect ratings according to attribute.

learners rate Argentine Spanish as most kind, followed by Mexican Spanish, and rate Puerto Rican and Castilian (Spain) Spanish as least kind, $F(3, 212) = 32.184$, $p < 0.001$, with all post hoc pairwise comparisons significant except between Puerto Rican and Castilian Spanish. In terms of prestige, only Puerto Rican Spanish was rated significantly differently from the other Spanish dialects, $F(3, 220) = 38.067$, $p < 0.001$: Argentine, Castilian (Spain), and Mexican Spanish were rated equally prestigious, while Puerto Rican Spanish was rated as having lower prestige by the L2 group overall.

Thus, using the method of the matched-guise task, we were able to tap into subconscious³ attitudes held by the learners toward different regional varieties of Spanish. Specifically, we see that language learners are indeed capable of differentiating between speech varieties based on phonetic differences, and that learners hold differing attitudes, or evaluative orientations, toward particular varieties of the target language. While the motivations for these variations in kindness and prestige evaluations are not clear given that language learners come to the task with different linguistic and personal experiences, a language system already in place with language attitudes tied to variants and varieties of the L1, and different types and degrees of exposure to variation in the target language than native speakers, we begin to explore these potential motivations through an examination of individual differences in experiences with the target language and target language speaker communities through study abroad.

Study Abroad Experience and Developing Language Attitudes

We first considered how previous experience in the study abroad context in general shapes language learners' language attitudes toward the developing target language (i.e., study abroad [in any location] vs. no study abroad). The standardized kindness ratings and prestige ratings for the four Spanish dialects are presented as follows for those learners with prior study abroad experience vs. learners without.

First, for kindness, there is very little or no difference in how each of the four dialects is rated according to study abroad experience.⁴ As revealed in Table 25.3, the four dialects were ranked in terms of kindness in much the same way by both those learners who had some prior study abroad experience and by those without.

However, as shown in Table 25.4, there appears to be a shift in the ratings of the four Spanish dialects for evaluations of prestige for the study abroad variable; chiefly, the Castilian (Spain) variety was rated as having higher prestige in comparison to the other varieties by learners who had had any prior study abroad experience than by those learners who had never left the home institution.

Table 25.3 Kindness ratings according to study abroad experience, M (SD)

<i>Speaker dialect</i>	<i>No study abroad experience (N = 37)</i>	<i>Study abroad experience (N = 17)</i>
Argentina	0.92 (0.536)	0.92 (0.467)
Spain	-0.60 (0.636)	-0.64 (0.833)
Mexico	0.11 (0.739)	0.18 (0.635)
Puerto Rico	-0.43 (0.634)	-0.47 (0.520)

We recall that while more than one-fourth of the language learner participants in the current study had had some type of prior study abroad experience, the majority of these experiences took place in Spain. We may ask, then, if this shift in ratings of prestige for Castilian Spanish is an effect of immersion in that particular host speech community. Thus, we examined how learners with study abroad experience in each of the targeted dialect communities (Spain, Argentina, Puerto Rico) varied from the larger L2 group overall in the ratings assigned to speakers from their host communities (with the exception of Mexico, as no learners from our sample had prior study abroad experience in this host country).

When we consider only those with study abroad experience in Spain (Table 25.5), we observe the same overall pattern for study abroad seen earlier: Learners with immersion experience in Spain do not vary in ratings of kindness of Castilian speakers, but they do increase in their ratings of prestige of Castilian Spanish as compared to ratings of the other three dialects. In other words, the host variety is believed to hold greater prestige than other Spanish varieties by learners who had studied there.

For the three individual learners who studied abroad in Argentina, a different pattern is found (Table 25.6). Prestige ratings are lower (likely reflecting an overall increase in prestige of Castilian Spanish at the expense of the other three dialects), but kindness ratings increase. In other words, L2 learners who studied in Argentina appear to display a greater degree of solidarity with Argentine speakers (i.e., higher kindness ratings) than does the overall L2 group as a whole.

Finally, Table 25.7 presents the ratings of the Puerto Rican variety for the two individual learners who had studied abroad in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rican Spanish was evaluated as less kind by the individual learner who had studied in Puerto Rico than by the group of L2 learners on a whole (i.e., greater social distance and lesser degree of solidarity as reflected in the lower kindness ratings). This is somewhat surprising, given that in the language background questionnaire, for the question regarding dialect preference, this individual stated a preference for the Puerto Rican dialect when speaking Spanish. However, we also note that the duration of his study abroad experience was on the shorter end of a typical program length (only two weeks duration) and that it took place three years earlier. Thus, recognizing the fluidity and dynamic nature of language attitudes, it is possible that the individual learner's evaluations of dialectal varieties of the target language shifted with increased experience with other varieties (including the classroom varieties) in the at-home learning context.

Interestingly, however, the second individual learner who had prior study abroad experience in Puerto Rico rated the Puerto Rican speech as more prestigious than did the L2 group overall (see Table 25.6)—going against the trend discussed earlier that found that general study abroad experience resulted in lower prestige ratings of all non-Castilian varieties. As such, exposure through study abroad to a variety of the target language previously evaluated on the lower end of the prestige scale may result in increased ratings of prestige of the variety, first, because the learner may come to recognize that this new speech variety is also used in contexts deemed as prestigious, such as in professional or educational environments, and second, with exposure to a variety that differs more greatly from the standard or classroom variety first presented to the learner, comprehensibility and intelligibility of the new variety may improve, which, in turn, may affect how the variety is rated by the learner.

Table 25.4 Prestige ratings according to study abroad experience, M (SD)

<i>Speaker dialect</i>	<i>No study abroad experience</i> ($N = 44$)	<i>Study abroad experience</i> ($N = 12$)
Argentina	0.34 (0.729)	0.28 (0.497)
Spain	0.40 (0.627)	0.58 (0.842)
Mexico	0.35 (0.636)	0.28 (0.503)
Puerto Rico	-1.08 (0.369)	-1.14 (0.338)

Table 25.5 Ratings of Castilian Spanish according to prior study abroad in Spain, M (N , SD)

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>L2 group overall</i>	<i>Study abroad in Spain</i>
Kindness	-0.61 (54, 0.696)	-0.62 (10, 0.753)
Prestige	0.44 (56, 0.675)	0.79 (6, 0.223)

Table 25.6 Ratings of Argentine Spanish according to prior study abroad in Argentina, M (N , SD)

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>L2 group overall</i>	<i>Study abroad in Argentina</i>
Kindness	0.92 (54, 0.511)	1.29 (2, 0.304)
Prestige	0.33 (56, 0.682)	0.17 (1)

Table 25.7 Ratings of PR Spanish according to prior study abroad in Puerto Rico, M (N , SD)

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>L2 group overall</i>	<i>Study abroad in Puerto Rico</i>
Kindness	-0.44 (54, 0.868)	-0.78 (1)
Prestige	-1.10 (56, 0.868)	-0.82 (1)

In summary, the current study has shown the effectiveness of the matched-guise task as a methodological approach that includes multiple measures of learner beliefs and characteristics. It further demonstrates the importance of language attitudes in understanding learner orientation toward particular language-learning contexts and the value of investigating this dynamic more thoroughly as a key element of understanding the complex process of Second Language Acquisition. In the Spanish-speaking world, we see that learners do not treat Spanish as a pan-dialectal monolithic entity, but rather learners are able to distinguish between different regional varieties, and these are evaluated differentially, both at the group and individual levels. As we will discuss in the remaining sections, this work has important implications and considerable more ground to cover in the future.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

The present study, and research on attitudes more generally, has implications for language learners and for researchers, each of which will be discussed in turn. For the learner, there are a range of possible outcomes because individual attitudes influence the quality and quantity of language produced. L2 speakers may choose to adopt the local variety or to maintain an outsider stance toward local norms, or toward

native norms in general. The L2 learner who adopts local varieties must do so in accordance with native norms for additional social factors, such as age and level of education, in order to project her intended personal image. Likewise, the L2 learner who rejects local norms may inadvertently miss opportunities to express solidarity or friendship and limit future access to opportunities for interaction. In sum, one's attitude toward a particular variety may directly influence learner outcomes.

For the researcher, we see that there are implications for theories of language learning, for language pedagogy, and for research methodology. A theory of learning that ignores the role of individual and social facts about the learner and the learning context will fail to explain the differential outcomes so widely attested (see the Introduction to the current chapter), even in contexts of intense access to input. For language instructors, we see the importance of identifying our own conscious and subconscious attitudes toward language and creating a positive environment for learners with diverse identities and experiences. Perhaps most importantly, we see the value in ensuring that learners have access to multiple, diverse voices in the target language in order to overcome biases that result from issues of exposure or comprehensibility, rather than direct interpersonal experiences. For example, a phonetics course could include dialect-specific analyses, and language courses could include information on sociolinguistic variation. In fact, there are growing examples of courses and programs that include exactly these types of instruction. Finally, L2 researchers will note that language attitudes, and learner characteristics more broadly, must be measured and included in analyses of development and learner outcomes. Researchers must distinguish between the abilities to perceive a social or regional variant and to interpret its meaning from the sometimes-conscious choice of whether or not to produce that same variant. From these insights, we continue to see the value of multifactorial analyses.

Limitations and Future Directions

In this chapter, we presented original research on the study of language attitudes using a multimethod approach, to investigate how individual learner experiences through study abroad contribute to the development of attitudes toward different regional varieties of the target language. One limitation of the study presented here is that as the learners were tested in the home institution and had a variety of study abroad locations and experiences, resulting in a small number of participants having studied in some of the dialect regions that were considered (or none for the case of Mexico). An important future direction for the research would be to conduct a longitudinal study of language attitudes in the study abroad context—specifically, to follow a group, or groups, of learners throughout the course of their program and to examine how language attitudes develop and change over the duration of the study abroad experience. Furthermore, this research should examine how the individual, social, and personal experiences of learners during the study abroad program (such as individual motivation, interest in integrating into the host culture, types and depth of social relationships constructed with target speakers during the program, and so forth) may contribute to the development of language attitudes held toward the host variety and other varieties of the target language. Finally, future research would do well to explore the variety of adjectives used with the matched-guise technique and the attitudes with which they are associated (e.g.,

“intelligent” to measure linguistic prestige) because little is known about how the patterns attested through these adjectives through native speaker research correspond to learner evaluations. Despite these limitations, there are several aspects of the research methodology that were successful and should be carried into future research. For example, using multiple measures—such as proficiency tests, background questionnaires, and the matched-guise task—allows for a deeper exploration of the relationship between the factors examined through each. Likewise, the speech samples employed in the current study represent multiple real-life voices that reflect native speakers in the target environment and, thus, the attitudinal measures are more likely to reflect overall attitudes than measures that focus on a single phone or lose important dialectal cues through synthetic manipulation. Certainly, such future investigation that incorporates the research methodology presented in the current chapter will continue to shed light on the important issues discussed here related to the role of study abroad in shaping language attitudes, and ultimately, language acquisition.

Key Terms

Dialectal variation	Learner identity
Individual differences	Matched-guise technique
Input	Multimethod approach
Language attitudes	Variable structures

Notes

- 1 The study of language attitudes originates in the field of social psychology, dating back to the 1930s, with early studies of personality profiles of speakers’ voices (e.g., Pear, 1931), and has also become an important area of study in the field of sociolinguistics, with the advent of Labov’s work on perceptions of prestige (e.g., Labov, 1966). Language attitudes continue to be an important area of study in both of these fields (see Baker, 1992; Garrett, Coupland & Williams, 2003; Garrett, 2010).
- 2 The term “variable structure” is predominant in the L2 literature, where it is used to denote any grammatical structure that exhibits variation among native speakers. The term is intended to be sufficiently broad to encompass variation across areas of the grammar, including phonetics, phonology, morphosyntax, pragmatics, etc.
- 3 We agree with a helpful reviewer’s comment that some attitudes may be conscious as well. However, our dialect identification data suggest that this is not the case with these particular learners and these particular varieties.
- 4 The remaining analyses are solely descriptive as the number of participants in the study abroad subgroups were too small to reliably conduct inferential statistical analyses.

Further Reading

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- research that connects sociolinguistics [and sociolinguistic variation] to the study of Second Language Acquisition.)
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The Role of Cognitive Aptitudes in a Study Abroad Language- Learning Environment

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Introduction

Study abroad is an important training context for language learning and has been considered crucial for reaching advanced levels of language knowledge (Freed, 1995). Studies have shown superior performance by students who studied abroad compared to those who only studied at home across different skills and abilities (Llanes, 2011). Greater increases for participants who studied abroad have been shown in several studies for foreign language oral fluency (Freed, 1995; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) as well as vocabulary (Dewey, 2008; Foster, 2009). Many factors have been implicated in students' language-learning success during study abroad, with proficiency gains found to be heavily dependent on time in country (Davidson, 2010; Larson-Hall & Dewey, 2012) and other noncognitive predictors, including gender, age, starting proficiency, and knowledge of other foreign languages (Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1993; Davidson, 2010). Aptitudes, defined as individual differences in learners' stable cognitive abilities, may also relate to the effectiveness of a study abroad experience; however, the research on the role of aptitudes (Llanes, 2011) is inconclusive, and what has been conducted is limited by the sample size and breadth of aptitude constructs that were investigated. In this study, we examine the relationships between oral proficiency gains during study abroad and a wide range of aptitude constructs, as measured by the High-Level Language Aptitude Battery (Hi-LAB) of 10 cognitive measures.

Previous Literature

One area of interest in the study abroad literature is the role of individual differences in cognitive aptitude in determining students' success in language learning. This literature suggests that there is a relationship between learners' cognitive aptitudes and linguistic gains in the study abroad context, though the results thus far are mixed. A group of predictor studies used aptitude, as measured by the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT; Carroll & Sapon, 1959), in an effort to identify factors affecting

linguistic gains resulting from study abroad. For instance, using data from many years of study abroad programs in Russia, Brecht et al. (1993) examined predictors of foreign language gain during study abroad (including gender, prior language experience, knowledge of grammar, and skill proficiency) and scores on three sections of the MLAT. Regression analyses of 658 students' data showed that MLAT Sections 3 (English vocabulary and phonetic coding) and 4 (grammatical sensitivity) did predict gains in reading and listening scores; however, MLAT tests did not predict students' Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) scores.

More recently, Larson-Hall and Dewey (2012) studied 44 learners' language proficiency in Japanese during mission trips abroad. The aptitude tests included subtests from the MLAT and LLAMA (Meara, 2005), and a nonword repetition task as a measure of phonological short-term memory; the outcomes were a Simulated OPI and an elicited imitation task in which learners repeated Japanese sentences. In a regression model that included the aptitude tests, motivation, and the time spent on the mission, results showed that for both outcome variables, time spent on the mission accounted for the greatest variance, but the phonological short-term memory aptitude measure still accounted for 14%–15% of the variance in learners' outcomes. Although MLAT and LLAMA measures were predictive in a basic analysis, only the nonword repetition measure was also predictive in the complete analysis. Thus, while this study and prior research showed a limited relationship between MLAT and study abroad outcomes, other cognitive measures of aptitude, such as working memory, have proven more likely to predict success in study abroad/immersion contexts.

A recent meta-analysis showed that working memory plays a supportive role in both second-language processing and development of proficiency (Linck, Osthuis, Koeth, & Bunting, 2014). Several studies have examined more specifically how individual differences in this ability interact with the demands that the study abroad context places on processing real-time language input. For instance, O'Brien, Segalowitz, Freed, and Collentine (2007) investigated the role of phonological memory in Second Language (L2) oral fluency development in study abroad and at-home contexts. Students, who had at least two semesters of Spanish coursework, were assessed on their ability to retain phonological elements in the short term with a Serial Non-Word Recognition (SNWR) task. Results revealed that study abroad students made greater oral gains than at-home students. However, after controlling for the effect of learning context, SNWR scores also accounted for a significant amount of variance in five of the six measures of oral proficiency gains. That is, beyond the proficiency gains attributed to learning context, students with greater phonological memory made greater gains in oral production than students with lower phonological memory in both contexts.

In another study that investigated working memory in a study abroad context, Tokowicz, Michael, and Kroll (2004) studied individual differences among students who had relatively more (15 or more months) or less (8 or fewer months) of study abroad experience. Tokowicz and colleagues proposed that learners with varying amounts of study abroad experience make different types of errors when completing a translation task from their first to second language: either nonresponse errors or meaning-based errors in which they give a related but incorrect word. Working memory was measured using an operation word task in which participants had to keep sets of words in memory while judging the accuracy of mathematical expressions. The results revealed a three-way interaction between type of error, amount

of study abroad experience, and working memory capacity. Specifically, the more study abroad experience/higher working memory capacity subgroup showed a different pattern than the other groups; they had equal nonresponse and meaning-based errors rather than more nonresponse than meaning-based errors. This finding suggested that students with higher working memory could take advantage of their ability to practice a particular communicative strategy in the study abroad context.

In a study of the effects of short-term study abroad experiences, Grey, Cox, Serafini, and Sanz (2015) examined L2 lexical and grammatical development, in relation to working memory, in advanced students studying Spanish in Spain for five weeks. Students completed grammaticality judgment and lexical decision tasks at the beginning and end of their program as well as two tests of working memory: sentence span and phonological working memory. While students did improve in judging the grammaticality of Spanish sentences and making decisions about whether lexical items were actual Spanish words, these improvements were not correlated to their performance on the working memory tests.

Faretta-Stutenberg and Morgan-Short (2017) also did not find a relationship between working memory and behavioral gains for intermediate-level Spanish learners who spent 12–15 weeks abroad in Spain. They found that individual differences in procedural learning (i.e., serial response time task) predicted changes in the behavioral L2 measure of grammaticality judgment, but individual differences in working memory (i.e., operation span) predicted neurocognitive processing changes.

Another consideration proposed in the aptitude literature is whether students need a certain level or “threshold” of aptitude ability to succeed in study abroad. Sunderman and Kroll (2009) examined working memory resources in relation to learning for 48 students, 14 of whom had studied abroad for 3.8 months on average. Working memory was measured using a reading span task, and L2 measures consisted of a comprehension measure of Spanish-English translation recognition and a production measure of picture naming. Using regression analyses, they found that study abroad experience and working memory resources affected comprehension, but there was no interaction between the two factors. For production, learners with study abroad experience had greater speed and accuracy; further, the authors argue that the threshold hypothesis was supported in that without a “minimum threshold of working memory, the benefits of study abroad experience, in terms of production accuracy at the word level, are lost on these learners” (p. 93).

Considering cognitive abilities beyond working memory, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) compared students’ learning during study abroad and at home with respect to individual differences in L2 lexical access and attentional control. University Spanish students completed a pretest OPI and cognitive tests at the beginning of the semester and again 13 weeks later. Participants’ oral proficiency was evaluated based on four-minute excerpts of their OPIs. Overall, students in the study abroad condition showed significant gains on four of the seven oral measures, and the pretest cognitive measures of lexical access speed and efficiency were positively related to oral fluency. However, there were no interactions between learning context and cognitive abilities affecting oral gains such that these abilities were more related to gains in one learning context than in another.

Overall, the results of empirical studies are mixed regarding the role of cognitive aptitudes in students’ proficiency gains from study abroad. Several studies showed

a relationship between memory abilities and students' oral proficiency, particularly at lower proficiency levels. However, other aptitude abilities may play an important role in learning in the immersion context. Thus, testing a broader range of potential aptitude predictors within the same, larger, sample of students may shed light on the relative contributions of distinct cognitive constructs.

Research Question

This study addressed the following questions: Do students make significant gains in oral proficiency during their study abroad? Are there relationships between cognitive aptitudes measured by Hi-LAB and linguistic gains during study abroad? If so, what is the nature of these relationships? In order to address these questions, data were collected with university students learning Arabic on a semester-long study abroad program sponsored by an American university. Students were hypothesized to improve on their OPIs after their study abroad experience. We further explored the role of aptitude by analyzing whether their scores on cognitive and perceptual tasks predicted changes in their OPI scores.

Methods and Procedures

Participants

Over two fall semesters, 76 students of Arabic who participated in a study abroad semester in Amman, Jordan, were enrolled in the study, which was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. All the students were L2 Arabic learners and had completed four semesters of college Arabic prior to their departure to Jordan. Three students were excluded for having prior Arabic immersion experience, and two others were excluded for not having outcome OPI scores. Therefore, 71 students (30 female, 41 male; mean age: 24 years [SD: 4.7]) were included in the final analysis. The students were experienced language learners and had studied on average two (range: 0–5) foreign languages other than Arabic; 37 students had also spent significant time abroad (three months or more) immersed in another language.

Procedures and Program

Two cohorts of students participated in the study in two consecutive years of the program. Prior to departure to Jordan, participants took the Hi-LAB (see the following) and OPI speaking pretest.¹ The postprogram OPIs were given to students at the end of their study in Jordan.

Students were in class for 2 hours a day 5 days a week over 14 weeks. The classes consisted of a review of current events and student presentations and discussion. Students were assigned to read newspaper articles for about two hours per day, some for general comprehension and some for specific information. They also spent two hours per day speaking with native speakers in Arabic outside of class, either in the community or with an assigned native speaker partner. They lived in apartments with the other students and were not asked to sign a language pledge. See Belnap et al. (2015) for more details on the study abroad program.

Materials

Oral Proficiency Interview

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) OPI is a protocol for assessing spoken proficiency through an approximately 30-minute face-to-face or telephone interview conducted by certified ACTFL OPI testers. The test is based on the ACTFL proficiency scale, which includes five major levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished. The Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced levels are divided into three sublevels: Low, Mid, and High. Because the scale is considered to be an “inverted pyramid,” such that progression between adjacent levels is easier at the bottom of the scale than at the top, the proficiency levels of the ACTFL scale are ordinal in data analysis.

Language Aptitude Measures

The Hi-LAB (Doughty, 2013; Doughty, Bunting, Campbell, Bowles, & Haarman, 2007; Linck et al., 2013) consists of 10 tests of various aptitude constructs relevant for language learning: explicit learning, implicit learning, working memory, executive function, and phonological perception. The tasks that were administered are described in the following, grouped broadly by aptitude construct.

Explicit Learning

PAIRED ASSOCIATES (PA)

In this task, participants must learn 20 word pairs, each an English noun paired with a nonword. The score is the number of correctly recalled words out of 20. The test is adapted from Carroll and Sapon’s (1959) test of associative memory and represents learning new vocabulary words in a foreign language.

LETTER SETS (LSET)

In this multiple-choice test adapted from Ekstrom, French, and Harman (1979), four of five sets of letters obey the same pattern, and participants select the set that violates the pattern. The score is the number of correctly chosen items out of 15, indicating the ability to consciously derive patterns and rules, such as grammar, from examples.

Implicit Learning

AVAILABLE LONG-TERM MEMORY (ALTM)

This test measures associative priming of long-term memory (Was & Woltz, 2007). There are two tasks, a priming task and a comparison task, that are interleaved throughout the test. In the priming task, participants listen to a list of five English words and are then shown two topic words, one of which is a synonym for two of the words in the list and one of which is a synonym for three of the words in the list. The participants indicate which word had more synonyms in the list. Following each list

of the priming task is the comparison task, in which pairs of words are presented on the screen simultaneously, and the participant indicates whether the words have similar or different meanings. The score for the ALTM tasks depends on the rate of correct responses to primed sets of word comparisons vs. unprimed sets of words. This score may indicate a person's ability to efficiently process words with related meanings, which would help with understanding words in a foreign language.

SERIAL REACTION TIME (SRT)

In this task, adapted from Willingham, Nissen, and Bullemer (1989), four horizontally arranged boxes are shown on the screen, indicating the four positions in which an asterisk will appear. On each trial, an asterisk appears in one box and the participant must press the corresponding button on the keyboard. In blocks two, three, four, and five, the asterisks appear in a repeating pattern of length 12. This score shows how much a person adapts (speeds up) their processing of stimuli with increasing practice on the test.

Working Memory

NONWORD SPAN (NWS)

In this task, phonotactically plausible nonwords are presented. At the end of each list, participants are prompted with nonwords and must indicate whether the word was on the most recent list. The score is the number of correct answers, with a maximum possible score of 210. This test of phonological short-term memory was adapted from Gathercole, Pickering, Hall, and Peaker (2001), and shows how a person remembers information for short periods of time, even when the meaning is unclear, similar to remembering new foreign language words.

RUNNING MEMORY SPAN (RMS)

This test measures the updating subcomponent of working memory (Bunting, Cowan, & Saults, 2006; Miyake, Friedman, Emerson, Witzki, & Howerter, 2000). In this task, participants listen to lists of 12–20 letters. At the end of the list, the participants must recall the last six letters in the list, in order. The score (out of six) is the average number of letters correctly recalled in serial order per list. The score shows the ability to keep information in memory while updating that information without making mistakes, as is particularly important during interpretation from one language to another.

Executive Function

ANTISACCADE (AS)

This test was developed by Unsworth, Schrock, and Engle (2004) to measure inhibitory control (Miyake et al., 2000). In this task, visual cues are presented, indicating the location of a letter that is displayed after the cue disappears. Participants must indicate which letter is shown. In the prosaccade phase, the cue and letter appear

on the same side; in the antisaccade phase, the letter appears on the opposite side of the screen. Thus, in the antisaccade phase, the participant must inhibit the tendency to look toward the cue in order to see the letter. Scoring is based on accuracy in the antisaccade phase, with higher scores indicating greater levels of ability to inhibit automatic responses, such as interference among a person's dominant and other known languages.

TASK SWITCHING (TS)

This test measures task switching (Miyake et al., 2000); participants identify whether a digit is (i) odd or even or (ii) lower or higher than five. For each set of pure blocks, participants perform the same judgment for each trial. For mixed blocks, the participants switch between performing the judgment types, based on the color of the background box. We computed a Mix Cost score, by taking the difference between the mean reaction times for mixed blocks and for pure blocks, representing the overall slowdown exhibited by the participant due to the demands of task switching. The score indicates the ability to switch between different, but related, tasks and in a foreign language context, the ability to switch between different languages. A processing speed measure is also derived from this measure by simply computing the mean reaction time in pure blocks.

Phonological Perception

PHONEMIC DISCRIMINATION OUTLIER (PDO)

There are two forms of the PDO task based on Silbert et al. (2015). For each trial, participants listen to a set of three spoken syllables; two of the sounds are examples of the same syllable, and one (the “outlier”) is an example of a different syllable, which varies according to a speech sound contrast that is meaningful in a non-English language. After hearing the three sounds, participants indicate the outlier sound. In PDO 1, the two different syllables are taken from Hindi where the boundaries along the voice-onset time continuum differ from English. In PDO 2, the syllables differ according to a tonal contrast in Thai. The scores for the PDO tasks depend on the participant's accuracy in identifying the “outlier” sound in each trial and indicate the ability to hear subtle speech sound differences that do not exist in English.

Results

Proficiency Gains

We first examine the pattern of oral proficiency gains made by the students over the course of the study abroad program. On the pretest OPI, participants in the study obtained scores ranging from Novice Mid to Advanced High, but most students (62 out of the 71 in the analysis) were in the Intermediate range. The first result is that overall, there were significant proficiency gains. The pattern is displayed graphically in Figure 26.1, which gives the number of participants in each cell for each combination of pre- and posttest OPI scores in the observed ranges. The labels on the axes are abbreviations such that the first letter indicates N(ovice), I(ntermediate), or A(dvanced),

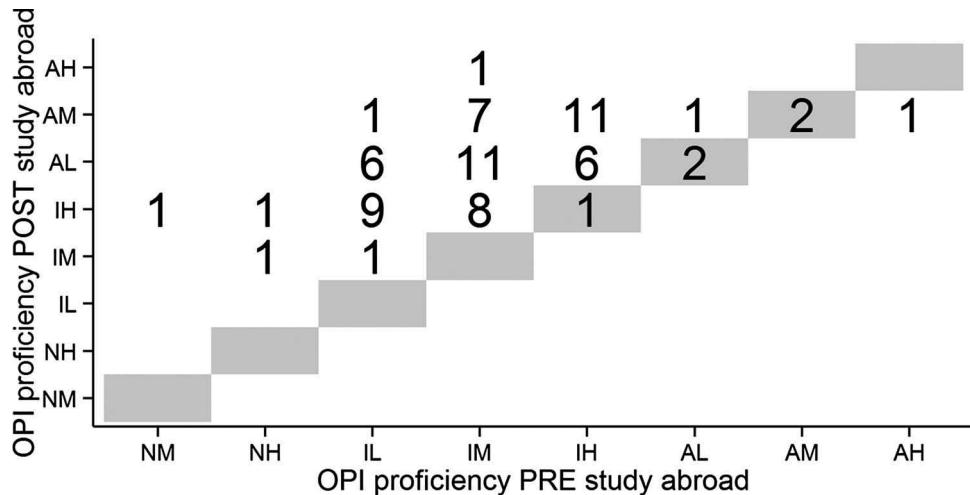


Figure 26.1 Pattern of OPI pre- and posttest scores.

while the second letter indicates L(ow), M(edium), or H(igh) within a level. The diagonal of gray-background cells represents maintenance of the same level, cells above the diagonal represent improvement, and cells below represent loss.

Clearly, the dominant pattern is gains, and the largest clusters of students are concentrated around gains of two sublevels. Only 5 out of the 71 participants (7%) maintained the same score, and only 1 lost a sublevel. Another notable pattern is that while 20 students (27%) began with an ACTFL rating of Intermediate Low or lower, every student scored above that range on the posttest. We fit an ordinal logistic mixed-effects model,² and the difference between pre- and posttests was significant ($\beta = 5.29$, $SE = 0.69$, $z = 7.63$, $p < 0.001$). These results suggest that this study abroad program is highly effective in enabling students to make substantial gains in proficiency, in the Intermediate to Advanced range of proficiency levels.

Prediction of Gains

The focus of this study is whether differences in aptitude can predict variability in oral proficiency gains on the ACTFL scale. Our approach to the issue of predicting gains using an ordinal scale was to fit models in which we predicted posttest OPI scores but included pretest OPI scores as a predictor. By adding aptitude predictors to this model, we are able to test whether aptitude contributes to prediction of final scores, above and beyond starting score and base rate of improvement. To address the issue of having 12 potential aptitude predictors with only 71 individuals' data, we applied a stepwise model selection procedure based on the corrected Akaike Information Criteria (AICc) fit statistic (Burnham & Anderson, 2002). We started with a "base" model, with no aptitude predictors, only an intercept and the pretest score as predictors. We then fit all other models that included one additional aptitude predictor (i.e., Hi-LAB test score) and compared the models using AICc. Each of the models that were better than (i.e., had a lower AICc than) the "base" model was then considered as the new "base" model, initiating the procedure again for each of these

Table 26.1 Pooled coefficients from ordinal regression for aptitude predictors

Predictor	Coefficient estimate	Standard error	t (df)	p
Running Memory Span (RMS)	.92	.30	3.08 (53.8)	.003
Paired Associates (PA)	.68	.29	2.31 (53.5)	.025
Serial Reaction Time (SRT)	-.83	.29	-2.89 (53.4)	.006
Task Switching (TS Mix Cost)	.45	.28	1.62 (53.8)	.112

better models. This recursive procedure was carried out until no additional predictors added any improvement over the current “base” model, ultimately resulting in a single “winner” model.

To address the issue that some participants were missing one or more Hi-LAB measures (eight participants were missing at least one measure due to computer or other error), we employed a multiple imputation by chained equations approach (van Buuren & Groothuis-Oudshoorn, 2011). In this approach, observed variables were used to provide (noisy) predictions for each missing data point, which preserved observed multivariate relationships in the data, thus reducing the potential for biased imputations. This was iterated to produce several complete imputed data sets, and analysis was carried out separately for each imputed data set. Finally, the results from each imputation were combined, according to standard algorithms (Little & Rubin, 2014). We performed this procedure using the “mice” package (van Buuren & Groothuis-Oudshoorn, 2011) in the R statistical software package (R Core Team, 2015) to produce 20 imputed data sets.³

We ultimately ran the model selection procedure described earlier on each of the imputed data sets. The model described was the “winner” for 19 out of the 20 imputations. We report the pooled results across imputations, as per Rubin’s rules. The standard errors for the following coefficients therefore incorporate both within- and between-imputation variability. The final model coefficients for the aptitude predictors are given in Table 26.1.⁴ The predictors were standardized prior to model-fitting, so the effect sizes of the coefficients are on the same (logit) scale and are thus comparable.

In this model, working memory updating (RMS) and associative memory (PA) were both implicated as significantly positive predictors, while implicit pattern learning (SRT) was a significant negative predictor. Task switching (TS Mix Cost) was positive and led to an improved model fit, but it did not reach the standard criterion for statistical significance.

Discussion

The primary goal of this study was to explore the relative contributions of a wider range of cognitive aptitudes in predicting L2 oral proficiency gains during a study abroad immersion experience, especially since prior results in the literature have been mixed. Our primary findings support working memory as the single most robust predictor of proficiency gains, consistent with previous work by O’Brien et al. (2007) and Sunderman and Kroll (2009). Interestingly, the construct of working memory updating, as measured by the RMS task, appeared more important than phonological working memory capacity, as measured by the NWS task. Whether this is a result of measurement issues or a true reflection of the specific constructs

involved is a question for future research, but the result does suggest that not all measures of working memory are equal when it comes to predicting gains in oral proficiency during study abroad.

Greater ability on the RMS task, which measured the ability to continually update working memory, may have aided students in managing the real-time processing demands when interacting with native speakers. That is, students may be better able to hold in mind new words and phrases, while deciphering them and producing responses. In particular, this study abroad program placed an emphasis on interaction and required students to spend two hours per day speaking in Arabic with native speakers. Thus, an advantage in working memory may compound over time in allowing more successful and meaningful conversations that lead to learning, though more research is needed to support this interpretation. Prior research that examined advanced learners such as Grey et al. (2015) did not find a relationship with working memory capacity in the context of a short-term period abroad, and some of the same authors (Serafini & Sanz, 2016) found that the role of working memory capacity may diminish as learner proficiency increases in relation to classroom instruction. These findings could be considered in line with ours in that capacity-style span measures of working memory may not be tapping the most relevant aspects of phonological working memory for these learning environments since in the present study, our measure of working memory *updating* (RMS) was a very robust predictor, while our measure of working memory capacity (NWS) was not.

The other significant positive predictor of gains was associative or rote memory, as measured by our PA task. As this construct is typically associated more with explicit learning, we were somewhat surprised to see it emerge as a predictor in the study abroad context. Its presence suggests that at least in the context of this particular study abroad program, the ability to learn new words via conscious, rote memorization is still a strong asset, possibly because students do spend time focusing on texts in their newspaper reading class and developing vocabulary skills using apps such as Anki. The size of the effect was somewhat smaller than the effect for working memory updating, though, suggesting that it may be of secondary importance.

We also found effects for other cognitive measures that have not been previously examined in the study abroad context. A positive effect of cognitive control, as measured by the TS task, is not surprising in the study abroad context, given the exertion of cognitive control when operating in both first and second language over several months. However, the effect was fairly small and did not reach statistical significance, again suggesting that its role is likely secondary to other abilities, such as active working memory updating.

The negative effect of implicit pattern learning, as measured by the SRT task, is counterintuitive given that one of the prime benefits of study abroad is thought to be the greater amount of language input, which should provide an environment amenable to implicit learning. This negative result suggests that greater implicit learning abilities are a liability, or that lesser abilities are an asset, in the context of this study abroad program. On closer examination, the task itself appears to be measuring the ability appropriately, demonstrating the classic pattern of reaction time speed-up due to the repeated stimulus sequence as observed many times in the literature on the SRT task (Willingham et al., 1989). A replication effort for this effect would be extremely helpful as it is possible that this effect is simply a statistical anomaly, and it is highly unexpected from current theories about the role of implicit learning.

Another result from our study speaks to the question of a “threshold” effect where students need a certain level of aptitude ability to benefit from a study abroad experience, as discussed by Segalowitz and Freed (2004) and Sunderman and Kroll (2009). We performed a similar extrapolation to that used by Sunderman and Kroll (2009) to estimate a “threshold” of aptitude needed for gains.⁵ The model estimated that a student roughly four standard deviations below the mean RMS score would achieve one sublevel less at posttest. Four standard deviations is an extreme outlier, less likely than 1-in-10,000. Moreover, the average gains were close to two sublevels in this program. In other words, the present model of our data predicts that only an extraordinarily low ability in working memory would be enough to reliably offset the apparent benefits of this particular program. It is possible that some kind of minimum threshold could exist that is less extreme, but our results here do not show any indication of such a threshold.

Our work suggests that in addition to other factors, such as time in country and starting proficiency, which can contribute to whether or not a student achieves proficiency gains, aptitude clearly can provide information about which students are expected to benefit more than others from the experience. We explored a wide range of aptitude constructs with a large sample size and found that working memory updating, rote memory, and task-switching abilities were positively related to proficiency gains; in contrast, implicit learning skills showed a negative relationship. More research is needed to understand the processes by which these abilities may influence learning in the immersion context, but our work represents a first step in examining the relative contributions of a variety of cognitive abilities.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

Given these results, we draw the following implications from this study. First, the fact that we found an impact of individual differences in cognitive aptitude on gains in study abroad contexts suggests that some students are better cognitively equipped to make greater gains during a study abroad experience than others, all else being equal. Thus, testing students’ cognitive aptitudes prior to going abroad can be an effective practice, the results of which can be used to (i) inform student selection to competitive study abroad programs, (ii) tailor study abroad experiences for learners, and (iii) adjust student behaviors while abroad.

Second, while aptitude does appear to make a difference, we observed substantial proficiency gains virtually across the board, even for those with the lowest aptitude. This suggests that while aptitude information may be useful in projecting who may make the greatest gains, in a good program that provides immersion in the target language and culture coupled with intensive classroom study and out-of-class immersive activities, even students with very low aptitude may still make significant gains.

Third, while our results most strongly implicate aspects of memory, both working memory and associative rote memory, how these constructs are measured may matter in terms of how predictive they are. More generally, if students are to be tested for aptitude, the measurement matters. In particular, it may be the case that measures of working memory updating are better predictors than span tasks that measure working memory capacity, though this is an area that needs further investigation.

Taking these findings together, we suggest that implementing educational interventions that are matched to students’ aptitudes prior to studying abroad may further

improve their outcomes. The strongest predictor of gains out of the aptitude measures was the updating component of working memory, measured using the RMS task; this strong result makes it a good target for interventions in order to maximize impact. Thus, one possibility is that targeted production practice for students with lower working memory, via text chat, conversation groups, or other means, prior to studying abroad may support their speaking gains while abroad. Another possibility might be that students with lower working memory could be given alternate strategies for interacting with native speakers while abroad, such as trying to discuss more familiar topics while building speaking skills, in order to alleviate the task-based demands on working memory. In this particular program, students could be assigned to speaking partners who can adjust their interactions based on students' proficiency and aptitude profiles (Bown, Dewey, & Belnap, 2015).

Limitations/Future Directions

One limitation of the present study is that it examines aptitude only in relation to global proficiency measures, which may not fully capture students' language gains. Future studies should consider how, in addition to global proficiency measures, analyses relative to more fine-grained measures, such as fluency and complexity, can inform which aptitudes are relevant for study abroad. In a preliminary analysis of these students' semantic fluency and spoken production, Lancaster et al. (2016) have examined how fine-grained measures related to the Hi-LAB tests. Another limitation of this study is that we did not use the aptitude information to tailor the study abroad experience for learners. In the future, we wish to use these profiles to inform opportunities for tailoring study abroad experiences based on cognitive aptitudes. In addition, we propose that aptitude-by-treatment interaction (ATI; see Vatz, Tare, Jackson, & Doughty, 2013 for a review) studies be conducted to match different aptitude profiles to different study abroad approaches. As a result of this research, learners would be able to use aptitude information diagnostically and find out the best strategies to use in order to optimize learning, which may, in turn, improve linguistic gains during study abroad.

Key Terms

Study abroad	Implicit learning
Immersion	Executive function
Aptitude	Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)
Hi-LAB	Speaking proficiency
Working memory	ACTFL
Explicit learning	Arabic

Notes

1 Hi-LAB testing was conducted using an online research platform; some students completed these tasks in a proctored session and others completed it self-proctored, depending on external factors. Oral Proficiency Interviews were completed by phone for the students tested in the first year and in-person for the students tested in the second year.

2 A random intercept by participant was included in this model, to reflect the repeated-measures nature of this analysis, in order to model the fact that participants started at a

range of levels. A random slope of time by participant was not able to be fit with this data in this kind of model, given that there is only one data point for each combination of participant by time. This analysis uses the number of sublevels gained as an ordinal dependent variable. We argue that this measure is not sufficient for the full aptitude analysis, but it suffices here, since the pattern of gains is so clear, even without a statistical test.

- 3 It is more typical to use a smaller number of imputations, such as five, but a larger number was used here in order to provide more stable results.
- 4 Due to space constraints, the parameters for the ordinal cut-points and the ordinal pre-test scores are not included. The effects of pre-test scores were, as expected, significant and generally increase from lower to higher levels.
- 5 In the final ordinal regression model, the average logit “distance” between the estimated cut-points in the dependent measure is four times the coefficient of the RMS predictor.

Further Reading

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Contributions of Initial Proficiency and Language Use to Second- Language Development during Study Abroad

Behavioral and Event-Related Potential Evidence

Mandy Faretta-Stutenberg and Kara Morgan-Short

Introduction/Definitions

Study abroad (SA) experiences are widely considered to be beneficial to second-language (L2) development. Investigations into learner outcomes, however, reveal significant variability in terms of which aspects of L2 abilities improve (e.g., fluency, accuracy, efficiency of processing) and in terms of who improves, with some learners experiencing greater gains than others. Two factors that may lead to differential levels of development among learners during SA are predeparture proficiency and amount of L2 use while abroad. Despite a number of studies that have examined these factors, there is a lack of consensus around their relative importance to L2 development in SA. The present longitudinal study examines the role of these factors in behavioral development, as assessed with judgment and production tasks, and examines whether these factors also play a role in the development of L2 processing signatures, as assessed with event-related potentials (ERPs) derived from learners' electroencephalogram (EEG; Luck, 2012). In order to understand the processing elements of the study, it is important to note the following definitions: EEG is the signal from electrical potentials continuously produced by the human brain, which can be detected and recorded using electrodes placed near the scalp. ERPs are a measure of online cognitive processing derived from an amplified EEG signal that reflect the average processing signal time-locked to a particular cognitive event (e.g., processing words or grammar). In general, the study presented in this chapter aims to contribute behavioral and neurocognitive evidence regarding the development of L2 Spanish grammatical gender agreement during SA by examining relationships with predeparture proficiency and L2 use.

Previous Literature

Empirical work reveals that L2 acquisition during SA, like learning that takes place in at-home or laboratory settings, is complex, with variation evidenced both in terms of which aspects of L2 improve and which learners experience the greatest gains. For example, although there is substantial evidence for development in measures of speaking abilities and fluency (e.g., Hernández, 2016; Magnan & Back, 2007, Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), there is less consensus around measures of grammatical accuracy (e.g., Collentine, 2004; Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz, 2015; Isabelli-García, 2010). The magnitude of improvement also varies greatly among learners: Whereas some learners show substantial improvement, others experience minimal gains, even after a full semester abroad (e.g., Freed, 1998).

In an attempt to identify and understand the factors that may explain variability in linguistic development during SA, previous research has examined a number of issues, including pre-SA proficiency level and during-SA L2 contact (exposure to and use of the target language). With regard to the relevance of initial proficiency to learner outcomes, some research reports that lower proficiency learners, who are able to make more obvious gains, have an advantage over their more advanced counterparts (Regan, 2003). Other work reports greater behavioral gains among learners with higher predeparture language skills (e.g., DeKeyser, 2010; Golonka, 2006), perhaps because they are more likely to engage in use of the L2 while abroad (Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1995). Indeed, increased contact with the L2 is often credited as holding the “key to success” in linguistic development during SA (e.g., Freed, 1998).

Despite the commonsense value of increased L2 contact, empirical studies that have directly examined relationships between L2 contact and linguistic development yield inconclusive results. Some research has found positive relationships between L2 contact and development (e.g., Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004; Hernández, 2016), but studies have also found no relationship (e.g., Isabelli-García, 2010; Magnan & Back, 2007) and even a negative relationship between L2 contact and behavioral development (e.g., Magnan & Back, 2007; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). One challenge in examining L2 contact is ensuring that reports are accurate. In a majority of these studies, learners completed a standard “language contact profile” (LCP; Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004) after returning from their SA programs and provided retrospective reports of the average number of days per week and hours per day in which they engaged in various activities in the L2 during the preceding months. One step toward better understanding the role of L2 contact may involve asking participants to report their L2 contact weekly during SA (Hernández, 2016) in order to obtain more accurate information accounting for their changing experiences.

In this study, we address the relative importance of initial proficiency and L2 contact during SA with regard to development of gender agreement in L2 Spanish. The Spanish language has a two-gender system in which determiners and adjectives agree with the noun they modify. Spanish has (i) distinct canonical endings that mark a noun or adjective as either masculine (-o) or feminine (-a) and (ii) masculine and feminine forms of the determiner (singular forms *el* and *la*, respectively), although there are also deceptively marked and irregular forms (e.g., *la mano* ‘the hand_{fem}’, *el lápiz* ‘the pencil_{masc}’). Grammatical gender agreement is widely known to be difficult for late L2 learners to master, particularly in spoken production (e.g., Montrul, 2004; Montrul, Foote, Perpiñán, Thornhill, & Vidal, 2008), making it a target structure that may allow for the observation of development among learners with substantial

L2 knowledge and experience. Furthermore, existing evidence of interlearner variation in mastery of this structure (Montrul, 2004) makes it an appropriate target to evaluate individual differences among learners in the SA context. Behavioral development of L2 gender agreement during SA has been examined by two previous studies, both of which failed to find evidence of significant gains on grammaticality judgment task (GJT) performance between pre- and post-SA (for advanced learners, see Grey et al., 2015, and for intermediate learners, see Isabelli-García, 2010). In the present study, we further examine L2 development of gender agreement during SA with grammaticality judgment performance and production accuracy, and, additionally, examine L2 processing development.

Measures of online language processing, such as ERPs, can serve as a powerful and informative complement to behavioral data in L2 studies. ERPs provide an index of electrophysiological brain activity associated with a particular event or stimulus and can be used to quantify real-time neurocognitive processes underlying language comprehension. Morphosyntactic processing among different groups, in both native language (L1) and L2, is fairly well documented in ERP literature, with groups of L2 learners of sufficient proficiency generally evidencing an “N400” or “P600” effect in response to a violation of gender agreement between a noun and article or adjective (e.g., Gillon Dowens, Barber, Vergara, & Carreiras, 2010; Morgan-Short, Sanz, Steinhauer, & Ullman, 2010). When present, both effects are detected in the centro-posterior region of the scalp, with the N400 appearing as a negativity (neural response to violations has a more negative polarity than the response to correct stimuli) between 250 and 600 ms poststimulus (e.g., Kutas & Hillyard, 1980) and the P600 detected as a positivity (neural response to violations has a more positive polarity than the response to correct stimuli) between 500 and 1000 ms poststimulus (e.g., Steinhauer & Connolly, 2008). Very generally, the N400 is understood to reflect lexical-semantic or memory-based processing, whereas the P600 is posited to reflect grammatical or combinatorial processing (e.g., Osterhout, Kim, & Kuperberg, 2012). For an in-depth review of these components in L2, see Morgan-Short, Faretta-Stutenberg, and Bartlett-Hsu (2015).

For the purposes of the analyses presented here, it is important to note that the group-averaged N400 and P600 effects may obscure interlearner variability in the processing of agreement violations. Such variability has been evidenced both in the *magnitude* of ERP effects—where a larger effect may be understood to reflect greater sensitivity to the violation—and in the *type* of effect—where the elicitation of an earlier negativity (N400) or later positivity (P600) would indicate reliance on a different processing strategy (e.g., Tanner, Inoue, & Osterhout, 2014). Indeed, previous studies have found within- and between-group variability in processing L2 gender agreement that can be partially accounted for by a variety of factors, including L2 proficiency (e.g., Gabriele, Fiorentino, & Alemán Bañón, 2013; Morgan-Short et al., 2010) and amount of exposure to the L2 (Gillon Dowens et al., 2010), both of which are examined in the present study.

Motivated by the extant literature, the present study sought to explore development that occurs during SA and the factors that may relate to variability in that development. Specifically, we posed the following research questions with regard to intermediate learners of Spanish participating in semester-long SA programs:

- RQ1a: Do learners evidence changes in behavioral performance from pre- to post-SA, and if so, for which linguistic measures?
- RQ1b: Is variability in initial proficiency and/or L2 contact associated with variability in L2 behavioral development from pre- to post-SA?

RQ2a: Do learners evidence changes in neurocognitive processing from pre- to post-SA, and if so, what type of change is evidenced?

RQ2b: Is variability in initial proficiency and/or L2 contact associated with variability in L2 processing development from pre- to post-SA?

Methods and Procedures

The study employed a longitudinal design in which participants completed measures of L2 linguistic abilities immediately before and after a semester abroad (pre- and post-SA test sessions). Online processing of article-noun and noun-adjective gender agreement was also assessed during these sessions. Additionally, participants completed a weekly L2 contact questionnaire during their time abroad. In order to address the research questions, changes in behavioral performance and processing from pre- to post-SA testing were calculated and examined with regard to initial proficiency and L2 contact.

Participants

Twenty native speakers of English studying Spanish as an L2 (fifth semester of college or above) were recruited. During the semester of SA, participants completed four or five university-level courses taught in Spanish (e.g., Spanish grammar, linguistics, literary analysis, history, culture) through 12- to 15-week-long SA programs in Spanish-speaking countries (Spain, Argentina, Dominican Republic). The average number of days between the pre- and post-SA test sessions was 151.8 ($SD = 32.6$). A total of nine participants were excluded from analysis either for failure to complete the post-SA session ($n = 5$) or for excessive artifacts in EEG data (greater than 25% rejection in the experimental condition during either session, $n = 4$). Thus, data from 11 participants (all female) were included in analyses.

Language Contact Questionnaire

Over the course of the semester, participants were sent a weekly language contact questionnaire (adapted from the LCP; Freed, Dewey, et al., 2004) via e-mail to probe time spent using the L2 for various activities or interactions. For all items, participants were asked to select (i) the number of days during the preceding week and (ii) the average number of hours per day during which they engaged in each activity. Responses to all surveys were combined to calculate the average number of hours per week each participant reported speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish. The sum of weekly averages across the four language skills provided the metric used in primary analyses: a participant's overall average weekly L2 contact hours.

Measures of L2 Spanish

During the pre- and post-SA sessions, participants completed a series of L2 Spanish tasks to assess overall proficiency and gender agreement knowledge and use. Participants first completed a spoken proficiency test and an oral production task. Next, a written proficiency test was administered, followed by the GJT, during which time EEG data were collected.

An elicited imitation task (EIT) and the *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera* test (DELE; ‘Diplomas of Spanish as a Foreign Language,’ Spanish Embassy, Washington, DC) served as the spoken and written measures of overall proficiency. The EIT is a sentence repetition task designed to provide a measure of aural/oral proficiency (see Bowden, 2016, for discussion of task validity). Two versions of the task were created by adapting the stimuli in Ortega, Iwashita, Rabie, and Norris (1999) so that participants could complete different versions at pre- and post-SA testing. During this task, participants listened to 30 Spanish sentences, which increased in length and complexity (7–17 syllables). Sentences were presented one at a time, followed by a pause and a tone to cue repetition; participants were instructed to try to repeat each sentence exactly as they heard it and to repeat as much of each sentence as possible. Digitally recorded responses were transcribed and scored following a protocol from Ortega (2000) such that each sentence earned a score of zero to four points based on the accuracy of the repetition. Due to a tone-playback issue for one sentence in one version of the EIT, participant responses for the corresponding sentence in both versions were eliminated, yielding a maximum score of 116. The written measure of overall proficiency was a 50-point version of the DELE test (Montrul, 2005). Again, two versions were utilized, each comprising a “cloze” passage with four options per answer (20 points) and a multiple-choice vocabulary and grammar portion (30 points). Participant scores reflect the number of items correct (maximum score of 50).

To measure use of gender agreement in oral production, participants completed a communicative, information gap task (Info Gap; adapted from Leeman, 2003) designed to elicit gender agreement on articles and adjectives. Participants were given a picture of a kitchen containing items of varying sizes and colors. The researcher, in turn, had a matching, blank kitchen, along with nine options for each item in the participant’s kitchen. Participants were instructed to describe their kitchen aloud to the researcher, using complete sentences in Spanish, so that the researcher could make her kitchen match theirs. When necessary, the researcher prompted the participant to specify more information about a particular item without providing extra clues regarding the grammatical gender of the item (e.g., *¿Cuál gato?* ‘Which cat?’). No feedback was given at any point during the task. Each kitchen contained 12 experimental items drawn from a bank of 16 canonical Spanish nouns (8 masculine/feminine). The critical adjectives comprised five canonically agreeing colors and three sizes, two of which have canonical endings and a third that is invariable (*grande* ‘large’). Four versions of the participant kitchen were created, with different versions used during pre- and posttesting. Digital recordings from the task were transcribed and coded for use and accuracy of articles and gender-marked adjectives with target nouns. Proportion of correct usage scores were calculated separately for both article-noun and noun-adjective agreement.

The second behavioral measure of gender agreement was a GJT. During this task, participants read Spanish sentences and indicated via mouse click whether each sentence was “good” or “bad.” The GJT included five violation types: Two experimental conditions (article-noun and noun-adjective gender agreement) and three distractor conditions (subject-verb agreement, semantic, and phrase structure), each contributing 60 violation and 60 matched, correct sentences. Two stimuli lists were created using a Latin square design such that (i) only one version (violation or correct) of each sentence was included in each list, and (ii) participants read and judged 300 sentences during each session (half correct, balanced across all conditions). In order to maximize participant familiarity with the vocabulary, all words used in the stimuli sentences appeared

Table 27.1 GJT experimental stimuli

Condition	Experimental stimuli
Article	<i>Según Montse *el / la falda que lleva cuando hace frío es de lana.</i> 'According to Montse *the _{masc} / the _{fem} skirt _{fem} that (she) wears when it is cold is made of wool.'
Adjective	<i>Beatriz se pone su falda *largo/larga cuando hace frío.</i> 'Beatriz puts on her *long _{masc} / long _{fem} skirt _{fem} when it is cold.'

Note: **Bold** typeface marks the critical word (the word where violation becomes evident in each sentence). ERPs are time-locked to the onset of the critical word. The word that constitutes the violation is indicated with an asterisk '*' (note that for article condition, the article is the word that constitutes the violation, but the violation is not apparent until the target noun). For demonstration purposes, the target noun is underlined. All experimental stimuli sentences ranged from 7 to 15 words in length.

in at least one of two introductory Spanish language textbooks that are commonly used during the first three semesters of university-level Spanish study.

The experimental conditions were designed to assess participant sensitivity to gender agreement violations on articles and adjectives, respectively. In these two conditions, half of the target nouns (i.e., nouns that trigger agreement on critical articles and adjectives in the stimuli sentences) were masculine and half were feminine. Following previous studies of gender agreement (e.g., Gabriele et al., 2013), all target nouns were singular, inanimate, and had canonical endings. Aspects of the stimuli for both conditions were controlled to eliminate the possible influence of nonexperimental gender agreement cues on GJT responses, including the following: (i) In the adjective condition, the invariable (not gender-matched), third-person possessive determiner *su* 'his/her' was used in place of the gender-matched article, and (ii) in both conditions, no additional adjectives that encode grammatical gender were included such that the only gender agreement cues present in a stimuli sentence were the target noun and the critical article or adjective. The same 30 target nouns were included in the two experimental conditions, and each noun is used twice per condition (sample stimuli provided in Table 27.1). For each participant, accuracy and *d'* scores were calculated based on responses to each sentence; analyses were based on *d'* scores, which account for potential response bias (e.g., Stanislaw and Todorov, 1999). For all measures of L2 Spanish (EIT, DELE, Info Gap, GJT), in addition to performance at the pre- and post-SA sessions, each individual's change in performance was calculated in order to provide a measure of behavioral development.

Measure of L2 Neurocognitive Processing

EEG data were collected while participants completed the GJT. Sentences were presented visually through E-Prime (Psychology Software Tools, Inc.) one word at a time. Each word appeared in the center of the screen for 400 ms, with a 400 ms blank screen between words. After the end of the sentence, the screen was blank for 1000 ms, followed by a question mark to prompt participants to provide their judgment. The 300 stimuli were presented over five blocks (approximately 10–12 minutes each), with a short break after each block.

Scalp EEG was continuously recorded in DC mode at a sampling rate of 512 Hz. Participants were fitted with a cap comprising 32 Ag/AgCl electrodes placed according to the extended 10–20 system. The impedance for each electrode was reduced to below 5 kΩ, and scalp electrodes were referenced online to the average of all electrodes.

The signal was amplified with a gain of 22-bit. Vertical electrooculogram (EOG) was recorded from electrodes above and below the right eye, and horizontal EOG was recorded from electrodes on the left and right temples. The EEG data processing involved (i) extracting epochs from the continuous EEG (200 ms pre-critical word to 1200 ms post-critical word), (ii) off-line re-referencing to the mean of the left and right mastoids, (iii) filtering using an IRR Butterworth filter with a high pass of .10 Hz and a low pass of 20.0 Hz, and (iv) stepwise artifact detection on both EEG and EOG channels to identify eye blinks and other artifacts (with less than 4 percent of experimental trials detected as containing artifacts for the 11 participants). ERPs time-locked to the onset of critical words were averaged off-line for each participant, at each electrode site, using a 200 ms prestimulus baseline and including all artifact-free trials, regardless of behavioral responses, following previous research with L2 learners (e.g., Gabriele et al., 2013; Morgan-Short et al., 2010). For additional details regarding the EEG and ERP methods, see Faretta-Stutenberg and Morgan-Short (2017).

For analysis, two time windows of interest were selected based on previous research: 300–600 ms to examine the N400 effect and 600–900 ms to examine the P600 effect. Mean voltage amplitudes for correct and violation stimuli were calculated within these two time windows for each experimental condition. As an index of individual processing, the difference between the neural response to violation vs. correct stimuli (violation minus correct) for both conditions was calculated for each electrode and then averaged for each time window over an a priori centro-posterior region of interest (C3, Cz, C4, P3, Pz, P4) where the N400 and P600 effects are typically maximal.

Results and Discussion

Our first research question asked whether learner performance on behavioral measures would improve from pre- to post-SA. Descriptively, this group of learners evidenced behavioral gains across all metrics (see Table 27.2). A closer examination of the behavioral change scores allows us to address the more fine-grained question of

Table 27.2 Descriptive results for behavioral measures

	Pre Mean (SD) Range	Post Mean (SD) Range	Change Mean (SD) Range	Pre to Post Comparisons		
				t(10)	p	Cohen's d
DELE ^a	20.36 (4.46) 12–26	27.18 (7.24) 19–41	6.82 (6.65) −2–16	3.40	.007	1.03
EIT ^b	46.73 (20.79) 11–84	67.27 (15.86) 38–97	20.55 (6.95) 8–30	9.81	<.001	2.96
Article-GJT ^c	.47 (.85) −.50–2.12	1.25 (1.13) 0–2.68	.78 (.50) .27–1.80	5.20	<.001	1.57
Article-Info Gap ^d	.87 (.13) .69–1.00	.95 (.07) .80–1.00	.08 (.10) −.07–.26	2.79	.019	.84
Adjective-GJT ^c	.48 (.99) −.44–3.12	1.03 (.96) −.39–2.94	.55 (.93) −.52–2.70	1.95	.080	.59
Adjective-Info Gap ^d	.67 (.17) .34–.94	.80 (.18) .52–1.00	.13 (.21) −.34–.46	2.07	.065	.62

Note: ^aMaximum score = 50, ^bMaximum score = 116, ^c*d*-prime scores, ^dProportion accurate production.

which L2 skills improved most during SA. Among these intermediate-level learners, paired-samples *t*-tests reveal significant improvement of medium-to-large effect in both measures of overall proficiency. (Note that interpretation of effect sizes follows Plonsky & Oswald, 2014.) Furthermore, we see significant improvement of large effect in article judgments (GJT) and of small effect in article production accuracy (Info Gap). For adjectives, small effect sizes indicate improvements in judgments and production accuracy, although these gains do not reach statistical significance. These data corroborate previous work that has found learner improvement in measures of general proficiency, speaking abilities, and L2 grammatical abilities after a semester abroad (e.g., Collentine, 2004; Magnan & Back, 2007; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). The lack of significant gains for noun-adjective gender agreement is also parallel to previous research (Grey et al., 2015; Isabelli-García, 2010), although note that we did find evidence of large, significant gains for article-noun gender agreement. Taken together, these results suggest that noun-adjective agreement is more difficult to improve than article-noun agreement, and that intermediate-level learner performance on both spoken and written measures of overall proficiency is likely to improve during SA, with greater effects seen for spoken proficiency improvement.

An examination of the change score ranges for each of the behavioral metrics revealed substantial variability across learners. Research Question 1b asked whether initial proficiency and L2 contact are related to variability in performance change. In addition to a range of initial proficiency scores (Table 27.2), the wide spectrum of average weekly hours reported for each aspect of language use (see Table 27.3) indicates substantial variability in the amount and type of L2 contact experienced by these learners. Correlational analyses with initial proficiency measures, overall L2 contact, and behavioral change on the experimental assessments (GJT and Info Gap; Table 27.4) revealed multiple relationships. (Note that interpretation of correlation sizes follows Plonsky & Oswald, 2014.) First, a strong correlation that approached statistical significance between both initial proficiency measures (EIT and DELE) and GJT change indicated that learners with higher initial proficiency made the greatest improvements in article judgment accuracy. A small, nonsignificant correlation between DELE and Info Gap change indicated that higher proficiency learners made larger improvements in use of gender-marked articles in spoken production. A strong, statistically significant correlation between overall L2 contact and Info Gap

Table 27.3 Weekly L2 contact data

	<i>Average weekly hours</i>
	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
	<i>Range</i>
Speak	24.53 (9.12) 7.73–33.85
Read	5.46 (3.63) 1.50–11.37
Listen	23.30 (7.48) 11.47–35.00
Write	3.67 (2.31) 1.00–7.50
Overall	56.96 (18.55) 30.27–82.56

Table 27.4 Correlations examining initial proficiency, L2 contact, and behavioral change from pre- to posttesting

	<i>Behavioral change</i>			
	<i>Article</i>		<i>Adjective</i>	
	<i>G/JT</i>	<i>Info Gap</i>	<i>G/JT</i>	<i>Info Gap</i>
L2 proficiency				
DELE-Pre	.67 [^]	.35	.06	.17
EIT-Pre	.68 [^]	-.06	-.01	-.06
L2 contact				
Overall	-.12	-.14	.21	.78*

Note: Values are Pearson's *r*. Statistical significance determined with Bonferroni-corrected *p*-values: **p* < .017, [^]*p* < .05.

change indicated an association between greater L2 contact while abroad and improvement in correct use of gender-marked adjectives in spoken production.

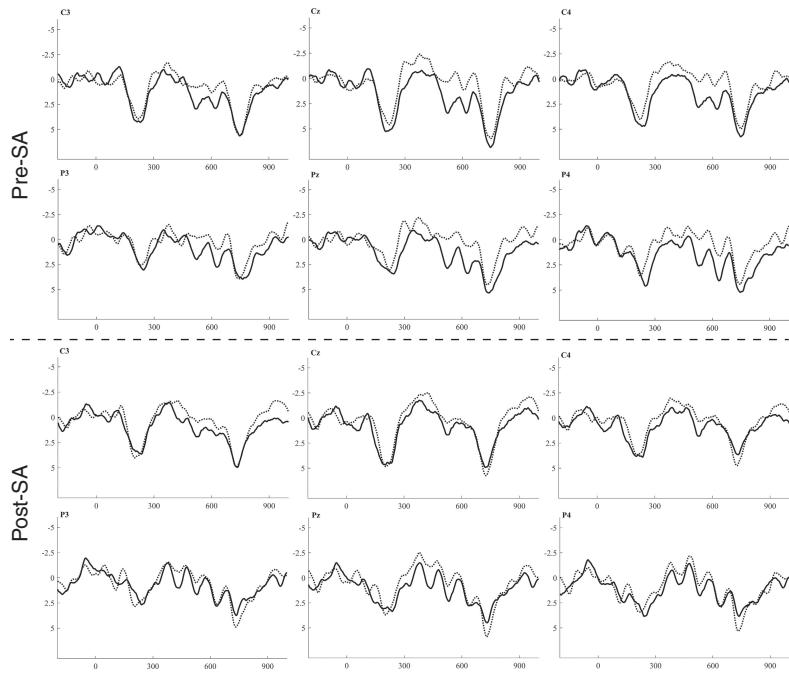
Overall, through the use of multiple measures of L2 performance, we found that various L2 abilities improved from pre- to post-SA among these intermediate-level learners. We observed large improvements in measures of overall proficiency, as well as in sensitivity to and accurate spoken production of gender agreement on articles. Judgment performance and production accuracy for adjectives also improved, but to a lesser degree. Further, we found a positive relationship between initial proficiency and article judgment gains, whereas no such relationship was found with L2 contact (in addition to a lack of correlation between L2 contact and article judgment gains, post hoc correlations between initial proficiency measures and L2 contact were nonsignificant, suggesting that higher proficiency learners did not report greater L2 contact while abroad). L2 contact, in turn, was related to gains in production accuracy for gender-marked adjectives. Although most learners in this study appear to have had a sufficient L2 knowledge base to enable them to benefit from SA, these data provide partial support for

Table 27.5 Descriptive results for processing measures

	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Pre to post comparisons</i>		
	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>t(10)</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
	<i>Range</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Range</i>			
Article						
N400	-.87 (1.69) -2.6–3.38	-.85 (2.30) -3.82–3.28	.02 (3.07) -5.38–5.25	.03	.98	.01
P600	-.18 (2.24) -4.66–2.74	-.03 (1.53) -2.20–3.00	1.14 (2.44) -3.53–4.37	1.56	.15	.47
Adjective						
N400	.12 (2.13) -2.52–4.99	-.48 (1.47) -3.03–2.56	-.60 (2.65) -6.31–3.02	-.75	.47	.23
P600	-.14 (2.82) -5.67–5.05	.33 (1.90) -1.88–2.76	.47 (3.49) -3.48–7.16	.45	.67	.13

Note: Unit of measure = microvolts, μ V.

(a) Article



(b) Adjective

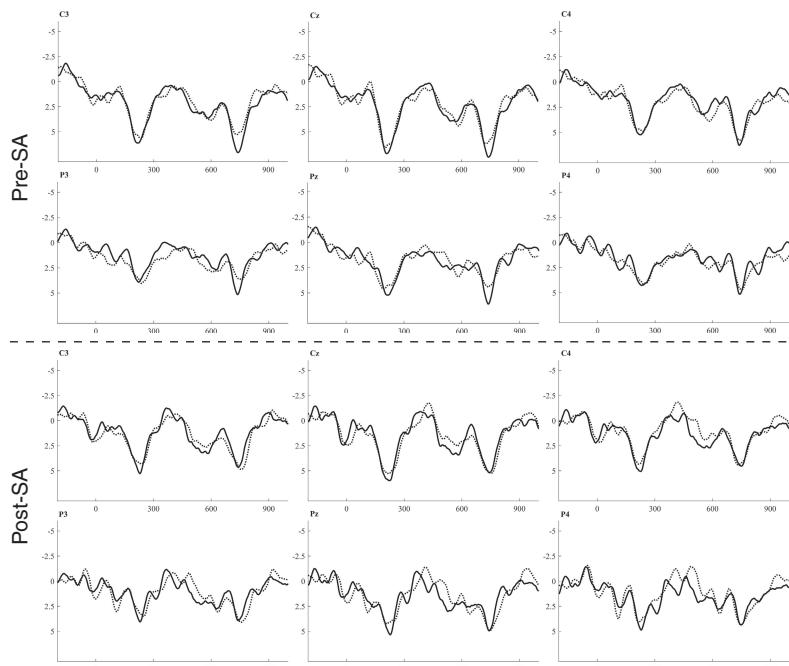


Figure 27.1 ERP waveforms representing group-level data for all electrodes in the region of interest used for analyses for (a) Article and (b) Adjective gender agreement. Solid line represents processing of correct stimuli; dotted line represents processing of violation stimuli. Time is represented on the x-axis in milliseconds (ms); voltage is represented on the y-axis in microvolts (μ V).

the assertion that learners with higher predeparture proficiency make greater linguistic gains while abroad (e.g., DeKeyser, 2010). Further, the relationship between L2 contact and adjective production accuracy improvement, where we did not see substantial gains across all learners, suggests that exposure to and use of the L2 may be associated with oral development for frequent but difficult forms (e.g., gender agreement on adjectives).

Our second research question sought to add information about L2 processing to our data set. Descriptively, we see minimal development in neurocognitive processing for either condition based on changes in the N400 and P600 from pre- to posttesting (Table 27.5) and on visual inspection of ERP data (Figure 27.1). For articles, there is a positive shift, from a more negative to a less negative response, for both the N400 and P600, although neither change is significant nor of notable effect size. (Note that interpretation of effect sizes follows Plonsky & Oswald, 2014.) For adjectives, we see a negative shift for the N400 and a positive shift for the P600, but again, neither change is significant nor of notable effect size. The fact that change is not detected clearly over the group may not be too surprising given that substantial individual variability is evidenced both for ERP effects in general (for L2: Tanner et al., 2014; for L1: Tanner & van Hell, 2014) and for the change values in our data (see Table 27.5). For example, note that for the article N400, some learners experienced fairly large negative shifts (e.g., $-5.38 \mu\text{V}$), whereas other learners experienced fairly large positive shifts (e.g., $5.25 \mu\text{V}$). Thus, although significant change may have occurred within individuals, it may be obscured by averaging across learners for group-level processing changes.

Research Question 2b asked whether predeparture proficiency or L2 contact was associated with variability in neurocognitive processing changes. Correlational analyses did not reveal any significant or sizable relationships between initial proficiency and processing change for either articles or adjectives (see Table 27.6; note that interpretation of correlation sizes follows Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). The same general pattern is true for L2 contact, although a positive, medium-strength but nonsignificant relationship with adjective N400 change indicated that more L2 contact was associated with a positive change in the N400. In other words, learners who reported more L2 contact evidenced a reduced (less negative, more positive) N400 effect at posttesting compared to pretesting. Thus, overall, there was no evidence of a relationship with initial proficiency, and a limited indication that L2 contact might be related to the variability in L2 processing development evidenced among these SA learners.

Table 27.6 Correlations examining initial proficiency, L2 contact, and processing change from pre- to posttesting

	<i>Processing change</i>			
	<i>Article</i>		<i>Adjective</i>	
	<i>N400-magnitude</i>	<i>P600-magnitude</i>	<i>N400-magnitude</i>	<i>P600-magnitude</i>
<i>L2 proficiency</i>				
DELE-Pre	.02	.18	-.08	.16
EIT-Pre	.06	-.09	.13	.08
<i>L2 contact</i>				
Overall	.16	-.00	.40	.03

Note: Unit of measure = microvolts, μV .

In sum, for L2 processing development, we did not find evidence of a statistical change from pre- to post-SA for either condition. Furthermore, we did not find that predeparture proficiency or L2 contact was associated with individual differences in L2 processing development, although a medium (nonsignificant) relationship was found between L2 contact and a reduced N400 for adjectives. In terms of examining longitudinal development of processing signatures during SA, there is little previous research with which to compare. Faretta-Stutenberg and Morgan-Short (2017) investigated changes in neurocognitive processing of syntactic violations from pre- to post-SA within largely the same group of participants that are reported here and found evidence of (i) neurocognitive processing changes from pre- to post-SA and (ii) an association between procedural memory and working memory and positive shifts in processing changes. In the present study, we observe a similar range of changes in processing signatures among learners that are associated with individual differences. For example, despite the general visual trend of an increased N400 to adjective violations (see Figure 27.1 and Table 27.5), learners who reported more L2 contact evidenced a positive shift in their processing (less N400-like). Thus, there is at least suggestive evidence that learner-related individual differences may be associated with developmental changes in L2 processing.

Although the current study was interested in individual differences in L2 processing *development*, previous ERP research that has investigated individual differences in L2 processing has examined these factors at particular points in time, rather than measuring change from one time to another. Therefore, in order to increase comparability with previous research, post hoc correlational analyses were run to explore whether relationships between proficiency and processing at a discrete point in time (specifically post-SA proficiency and post-SA processing) as well as between L2 contact and post-SA processing would be present in this data set. Indeed, post hoc analyses revealed several relationships. First, large, negative relationships between post-SA DELE scores and N400 effects for both article and adjective violations ($r = -.611, p = .046$ and $r = -.739, p = .009$, respectively) suggest that higher levels of overall proficiency were related to larger (more negative) N400 effects. This finding parallels that of Tanner et al. (2014), where larger ERP effect magnitude was related to higher proficiency. Second, large, positive relationships were evidenced between L2 *speaking* contact and article N400 and P600 effects ($r = .652, p = .030$ and $r = .590, p = .056$, respectively), suggesting that L2 contact was related to smaller (more positive) N400s and larger (more positive) P600s. Thus, although the current study only detected a hint of a relationship between proficiency, L2 contact, and processing *changes*, future research may want to examine these factors further in terms of processing at discrete points in time, especially for L2 use, which, to our knowledge, has not been previously examined.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

This study examined relationships between L2 proficiency and contact and L2 behavioral and processing development among semester-long SA participants; we therefore propose practical recommendations with regard to these aspects of SA. First, in regard to predeparture proficiency, our study offers some evidence to support the claim that learners benefit most from SA when predeparture proficiency is sufficiently high (DeKeyser, 2010): In the present study, group-level data indicated behavioral development overall, with higher proficiency learners experiencing greater behavioral gains in terms of sensitivity to violations of gender agreement on articles. Indeed, we did not

find evidence of an advantage for lower proficiency learners for any metric in terms of a relationship between predeparture proficiency and development, even when there was considerable room for improvement (Regan, 2003). Thus, in practice, it may be advantageous for students to participate in SA programs after they have reached an adequate level of proficiency, as suggested by DeKeyser (2010). Second, with regard to the importance of L2 contact during SA, we found that learners who reported more L2 contact made greater improvements in adjective production accuracy. This is particularly noteworthy when one considers that gains on this task did not reach statistical significance for the group, suggesting that L2 contact may be particularly beneficial for development of structures that are more difficult to master. Additionally, for article-noun agreement, our processing results suggest that learners who reported more time speaking the L2 experienced a more positive shift in their processing development that would be consistent with the development of a less N400-like, more P600-like response, which is reflective of combinatorial-based and/or grammatical processing for L1. If gains in linguistic abilities and L1-like processing are the primary goal of the individual or the program, our findings suggest that SA learners should be encouraged to engage in as much use of the L2 as possible, perhaps through language pledges, conversation partner programs, and living and study arrangements that promote target-language use. In all, SA programs that are developed so as to foster target-language use might be expected to lead to development in grammatical abilities and processing among intermediate-level learners.

Limitations and Future Directions

The results of the research presented here should be considered in light of its limitations. First, it is challenging to conduct longitudinal research with SA participants. Thus, the findings are limited by the assumedly low power, and the lack of statistically significant findings cannot be definitively interpreted as evidence for no relationship or effect. Replication and extension are needed. Second, the current study consisted of learners enrolled in several different SA programs. In order to examine specific interlearner differences, such as L2 contact, without introducing additional variability inherent to distinct immersion programs, future work should attempt to recruit cohorts of students from a single program over multiple years. In addition, work with larger groups of learners at various stages of proficiency will aid in determining the relationship between predeparture language knowledge and experience and linguistic gains during SA. A final, important issue is related to obtaining an accurate measure of L2 contact, which is a methodological challenge. Future work should assess the validity of L2 contact reports and explore additional options to improve data quality and avoid retrospection. One promising direction might be to ask learners to report total weekly hours engaged in various L2 activities (as opposed to estimating the number of hours and the number of days), which, although still retrospective in nature, may be simpler to report and to code (Hernández, 2016). Another direction would be to include technologies that would allow for researcher-initiated sampling of quality and type of L2 contact throughout the program. Improvements in these areas will allow us to discover which factors can explain the behavioral and neurocognitive changes that occur over time among L2 learners in SA and other contexts.

To conclude, the current study examined how predeparture L2 proficiency and L2 contact during SA were related to L2 behavioral and processing changes. Substantial behavioral development was evidenced, and certain aspects of development were associated with L2 proficiency and contact. Group-level neurocognitive processing

development was not evidenced, although there was a lot of variability among learners, and we detected only a hint of a relationship between L2 contact and the variability in processing change. Future research into which individual difference factors account for L2 performance and processing changes over time is warranted.

Key Terms

Study abroad	L2 contact
Grammatical gender agreement	Proficiency
Event-related potentials	Individual differences

Further Reading

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**Experienced Learners (Bilinguals),
Heritage Language Learners**

Spanish Heritage Language Learners in Study Abroad across Three National Contexts

Tracy Quan, Rebecca Pozzi, Shannon Kehoe, and Julia Menard-Warwick

Introduction

Despite the increasing number of US students in study abroad (SA) programs (Institute of International Education, 2016) and the growing population of Spanish heritage language learners (SHLLs) in the US, little is known about how SHLLs experience and internalize the SA experience. According to Shively (forthcoming), the percentage of US Latino/a students who are expected to embark on SA in order to connect with their heritage—linguistic, cultural, religious, ethnic, and/or national—is expected to grow in upcoming years. SA research has often focused on Anglo-American, middle-class students who are assumed to be L2 learners of a ‘foreign’ language with no personal or familial connection to the target language (TL) or culture (Kinginger, 2013). Meanwhile, the ways in which SHLLs interact with the SA context given their heritage language (HL) proficiency and linguistic identities have been under explored. Very little research has considered whether it makes a difference for SHLLs to study in their family’s country of origin as opposed to another Spanish-speaking country. As such, further inquiry into SHLLs’ experiences abroad in both heritage and nonheritage contexts is necessary in order to meet the needs of this growing population.

This chapter presents case studies of three SHLLs—Juan, Nicole, and Maria—from US universities studying abroad in Argentina, Guatemala, and Spain, respectively. They fall under the common definition of a Spanish *heritage speaker* in the US: an individual who grew up in a home where Spanish was spoken and who speaks and/or understands Spanish in addition to being bilingual in English (Valdés, 2000, p. 1). Further, since Juan, Nicole, and Maria wish to maintain and improve their Spanish through academic instruction, we refer to them also as Spanish *heritage language learners* (SHLLs) throughout the chapter (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007, p. 382).

This study illustrates the process by which SHLLs interpret and internalize the SA experience through and for their own ethnolinguistic identity formation. By comparing the experience of SHLLs in different national contexts, we examine the potential

of SA to reaffirm SHLLs' identities as Spanish speakers of different varieties, to deepen SHLLs' Spanish language awareness, and to encourage SHLLs' in their processes of linguistic self-determination.

Review of Previous Research

Heritage Language Learner Identity

Identity refers to one's sense of self and relationship to the world; identities are multiple, fluid, sociohistorically shaped, and constrained by ideologies (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Learners may negotiate, reject, or reaffirm differences between the identities they claim and the identities ascribed to them. This process of identity negotiation and construction affects language learning, choice, and attitudes in a variety of contexts, including SA for SHLLs (Kinginger, 2013).

As Leeman (2015) points out, the ideological presumption that heritage language learners (HLLs) “(re)claim an ethnonational identity embodied in [learning] the heritage language” (p. 114) tends to essentialize a single experience for SHLLs by ignoring the diversity of learners who share Spanish as a home language yet vary remarkably in terms of family histories, national origins, affective ties, language proficiency, racial/ethnic identities, and social class backgrounds. Furthermore, this ideology often positions HLLs as individuals who should know a standard variety of the TL in order to claim a heritage speaker identity. In response, HLLs may question the legitimacy of their identities (e.g., Mexican) while privileging prestigious language varieties (e.g., academic Spanish). Nevertheless, studying abroad in a Spanish-dominant country has the potential to encourage SHLLs' reflection and negotiation of their HL use and subject positioning. In fact, Leeman (2015) and Parra (2016) explore SHLLs' agency to transform their HL practices and reconstruct their identities for their own purposes. Still, further research regarding “the processes through which [HLLs] are socialized into particular communities and how their subjectivities change over time” is needed (Leeman, 2015, p. 115).

Spanish Heritage Language Learners in Study Abroad

The limited literature on SHLLs abroad presents mixed experiences with host country nationals and post-SA outcomes. On the one hand, host country nationals may ascribe in-group status to SHLLs, which provides learners with access to local social networks. While such in-group membership may help SHLLs' language development, it may also be problematic for SHLLs who face harsh criticisms by locals who expect them to demonstrate monolingual cultural and linguistic norms given their ethnicity. This may be especially true when SHLLs study in a heritage context. In Riegelhaupt and Carrasco's (2000) study, Lidia, a Mexican-American bilingual teacher, spoke a Spanish variety she had learned in Arizona, which her Guanajuato host family criticized as “un español mocho” ('a broken Spanish') (p. 174). SHLLs may experience racial, social class, and linguistic discrimination from host country nationals for not speaking a standard or local variety, thereby being perceived as unintelligent or of a lower socioeconomic class (Shively, 2016). Moreover, locals may not legitimize the bilingual and bicultural identities that SHLLs perceive for themselves, which may spark a process of identity reflection and negotiation (Shively, 2016). Some SHLLs

were shocked when they were identified as ‘gringos’ (e.g., Gorman, 2011), while others embraced being labeled ‘American’ in order to lessen the expectation from hosts that they should speak Spanish proficiently (e.g., Moreno, 2009). In response to this varied positioning, SHLLs return home with different language and identity outcomes.

Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for SHLLs to return from either heritage or nonheritage contexts with reconciled identities and increased metalinguistic and sociolinguistic awareness. One of Moreno’s (2009) participants, Louis, returned from Guatemala, where his family is from, with a renewed recognition of how his Guatemalan and American backgrounds were important aspects of his identity. Chang (2015) found that US Latinas in Guatemala embraced the cultural dissonance between themselves and their Anglo-American peers abroad in order to reclaim a Latin American identity they believed was devalued in the US. The Mexican-American teachers in De Félix and Cavazos Peña’s (1992) study returned with an awareness of ethnic self-concept, an empowered US Latino identity, and improved linguistic confidence. In McLaughlin’s (2001) study, the SA experience allowed SHLLs to resolve and merge their English and American cultures with their ‘Mexican-ness.’

Meanwhile, in becoming aware of Spanish language variation, some SHLLs choose to reposition themselves and modify their language use as a result of their SA experience, while others benefit from improved comprehension of local varieties. Several students from Moreno’s (2009) and Riegelhaupt and Carrasco’s (2000) studies noticed dialectal features and registers that they then integrated into their own Spanish. Kinginger (2011) lists such language awareness as a desirable outcome of SA in general. Moreover, understanding language variation can be particularly valuable for HLLs (Leeman, 2005) since becoming more conscious of the diversity of Spanish can help heritage speakers challenge the negative messages regarding their own varieties of Spanish that they have received in the past.

By expanding their Spanish repertoires and renewing their pride in their integrated cultural identities during SA, SHLLs return home with stronger HL proficiencies and enhanced linguistic awareness. These outcomes allow them not only to improve their relationships with Spanish-dominant family and community members but also to enhance their professional aspirations. Regardless of linguistic development, the SA context offers an opportunity for SHLLs to reexamine their identities and determine how they wish to position themselves and index those identities through their language choices.

This literature demonstrates that the SHLL experience abroad is (i) subject to individual variation and (ii) influenced by context. Nonetheless, there remains a need to theorize the commonalities and differences in the ways that SHLLs perceive, evaluate, and represent themselves across SA settings, particularly in nonheritage countries. By comparing case studies of SHLLs in different national contexts, this chapter argues that a sojourn abroad in a Spanish-speaking country allows SHLLs to situate themselves within the diverse and evolving *mundo hispano* (‘Spanish-speaking world’), and helps them better understand their own developing linguistic and cultural practices within this larger context. To this end, we examine the following research questions:

- 1 How did SHLLs evaluate and internalize their SA experience?
- 2 How did they interact with the abroad context to reconcile, recreate, and/or index their ethnolinguistic identities?

- 3 How did they benefit, personally and educationally, from studying abroad?
- 4 To what extent did this vary across national contexts?

Methods and Procedures

The three focal students—Juan, Nicole, and Maria—studied abroad in Argentina, Guatemala, and Spain, respectively, between 2013 and 2015. The authors of this chapter each accompanied one of their SA programs as researchers to collect data on student learning (see Table 28.1). The researchers' role in the SA context shaped participants' retelling of events and the information they provided. Although none of our studies focused exclusively on SHLLs abroad, we all had interest in this population. Aware of each other's work, we decided to unify our SHLL data into a single chapter after returning to our US universities.

The qualitative data that we use for each case study include (i) a background questionnaire completed prior to or early in the SA program; (ii) interviews conducted before, during, and after the program; (iii) participant observation and field notes; and (iv) biweekly journal or blog entries. Juan and Maria completed biweekly journal entries describing their experiences, learning strategies, TL speaker contact, cultural differences, and use of dialectal features. Nicole completed biweekly blog entries, which included reflections on course readings and experiences in Guatemala, focusing on language use and development. The background questionnaires and field notes were in English, while the journal and blog entries were primarily in Spanish. Juan's interviews were in Spanish because the second author was interested in his language use. While the interview questions were in English, Nicole and Maria determined their language use. All data collection was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). See Table 28.2 for a summary of data collection procedures.

Table 28.1 Researcher roles and contexts

	SA context	Role in SA context
Quan	Spain	Researcher
Pozzi	Argentina	Instructor, researcher
Kehoe	Guatemala	Teaching assistant, researcher
Menard-Warwick	Guatemala	Researcher

Table 28.2 Data collection procedures

Preprogram or early in the program	During the program	Postprogram
1 Background questionnaire (English)	1 Interviews (English or Spanish)	1 Immediate postprogram interview (at the end of the program or immediately following its conclusion)
2 Initial interview (Spanish or English)	2 Biweekly journal or blog entries (Spanish) 3 Participant observation and field notes (English)	and/or delayed interview (4–6 months following the conclusion of the program) (English or Spanish)

All of these data forms were coded deductively and analyzed for recurring themes across participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For the first question, regarding how SHHLs internalized their experiences abroad for their desired identities, two themes were identified: (i) linguistic awareness (including awareness of and negotiation between the target variety and their home variety) and (ii) self-awareness (particularly regarding learners' perceptions of their identities and the identities ascribed to them by others at home and abroad). For the second question, we determined that learners' agency over language choices was a crucial part in exploring the ways in which they interacted with the abroad context to reconstruct or reconcile their ethnolinguistic identities, regardless of national context. Defining agency as the socioculturally mediated capacity to act (Ahearn, 2001), we considered SHLL agency to be related to the ways in which learners (i) transformed their language practices; (ii) negotiated the legitimacy of their identities and the Spanish varieties they spoke or grew up with; (iii) broadened their linguistic repertoires; and (iv) rejected, affirmed, reconstructed, and/or reclaimed their Spanish heritage speaker identities. To answer the third research question, we synthesized across cases, and to answer the fourth, we compared between cases.

Case Studies

The following are Juan, Nicole, and Maria's case studies. Summaries of each participant's background and SA context are listed in Table 28.3. Names used are pseudonyms. Interview, journal, and blog quotations have been recorded, transcribed, and translated to English (when necessary) by the authors. Direct quotations in Spanish and English were taken verbatim from the data.

Table 28.3 Background information on case-study participants

Pseudonym	Birthplace	State of residence	Heritage	Home language use	SA context	Program duration
Juan	California	California	Mexican American	Parents: monolingual Spanish speakers; Juan: English dominant	Mendoza, Argentina	11 weeks
Nicole	Belize	Texas	Belizean/Honduran	Parents: bilingual; Nicole: bilingual; Spanish is language of communication	Antigua, Guatemala	6 weeks
Maria	California	California	Mexican American	Parents: bilingual; Maria: English dominant	Córdoba, Spain	16 weeks

(Continued)

Juan

Juan studied abroad with an 11-week program in Mendoza, Argentina, in fall 2013. He was a 20-year-old double major in international relations and Spanish from a university in California. He was born in Los Angeles to Mexican parents who did not speak English; therefore, his first language was Spanish. When he started kindergarten, he was placed in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, where he internalized that Spanish was ‘bad,’ and English was ‘good.’ His experiences in these classes led him to believe that, due to his upbringing in Spanish, he was “un poco más atrasado que los demás” (“a little further behind than everybody else”) (Delayed postprogram interview, April 8, 2014). Due to these negative messages regarding Spanish, he made a conscious effort to speak more English and less Spanish throughout his school years. Consequently, Juan’s English became better than his Spanish.

Before leaving for his SA program in Mendoza, Juan spoke English with his friends and siblings and only spoke Spanish with his parents and in his Spanish classes for SHLLs at his US university. At the beginning of his time abroad, Juan stated that he wanted to study Spanish for cultural reasons and because of his roots. He also pointed out that studying abroad was a requirement for his international relations major with a focus on Latin America. Because of his concentration, he chose to study in Argentina instead of the other department-run program in Spain. Moreover, considering that he regularly visited family in Mexico, he did not feel it was necessary to study there.

Throughout his time in Argentina, Juan increased his awareness of Argentine Spanish as well as different registers of Spanish, and he exercised increasing agency over his language choices. Toward the beginning of the program, he commented that he wanted to make an effort to speak like an Argentine while in Mendoza in order to embrace the culture and the SA experience. For example, he was interested in learning how to use the singular informal address form *vos* and corresponding conjugations as well as vocabulary typical of Argentina; however, as he began to interact with native speakers, he found it difficult to do so. Juan explained that it was hard to “be himself” in Spanish in Argentina because he had trouble keeping up with conversations, particularly with his age peer host brother and friends, since he was not familiar with Argentine slang and he felt he was not proficient enough in Spanish to make jokes the way he would in English. For this reason, although Juan spent a great deal of time with his host family while abroad, he did not actually speak much to them during the program but rather found himself “nada más escuchando” (“just listening”) (Immediate postprogram interview, December 7, 2013).

This situation led Juan to a crucial moment in which he had to come to terms with his Spanish abilities and his identity. This occurred toward the end of the program, when he decided to stop sitting out of conversations and to make a concentrated effort to interact, even if it meant that he might not be able to express himself fully or “be himself” in Spanish. Feeling this way led him to reflect on what it meant to “be himself,” whether he was in Mexico, the US, or Argentina. Juan explained that when he visits Mexico, people often refer to him as Mexican,

but he likes to emphasize that he is also American. When he is in the US and people refer to him as Mexican, he points out that he is from Los Angeles. During his time in Argentina when people would ask if he was Mexican, he decided to describe himself as both Mexican and American, not one or the other, thus reaffirming the equal importance of both backgrounds in his hybrid identity. Juan reclaimed this dual Mexican-American identity through his language choices while in Argentina. For example, at times during the sojourn when he would recognize an Argentine tone in the way he spoke, he would stop himself and think “así no hablo yo” (I don’t speak like this) (Midprogram interview, November 1, 2013). Over time, Juan found himself rejecting the Argentine way of speaking and returning to the way he had always spoken Spanish, hence aligning his language choices, his Mexican-American heritage, and his hybrid identity.

After completing the program in Argentina, Juan reported coming to recognize the importance of the Spanish language through spending time in a Spanish-dominant country. He described it this way:

Estar en un lugar donde se habla, pues, solamente español y, pues, es la lengua oficial, me dio un poco más, un sentido más orgulloso de ser hispanohablante [...] no importa donde crecí porque, pues, el español es importante aunque pues mis experiencias me han decidido que no.

‘Being in a place where only Spanish is spoken and, well, it’s the official language, gave me a little more, a feeling of pride about being a Spanish speaker [...] it doesn’t matter where I grew up because, well, Spanish is important even though my experiences have told me otherwise.’

(Delayed postprogram interview 4, April 8, 2014)

As seen here, Juan’s time in Argentina showed him that his ability to speak Spanish was a positive attribute that would allow him to communicate with people beyond the environment in which he was raised, which was a valuable asset that his heritage had given him. In addition, Juan reported increasing awareness of the different varieties of Spanish thanks to his time in Argentina. He explained that prior to the SA program, he had always thought he knew Spanish, but due to his time abroad, he learned about different varieties of the language and came to appreciate the beauty of the linguistic diversity of the Spanish language. Thus, Juan’s positive experiences and personal growth in Argentina increased his awareness of and appreciation for the linguistic diversity of the Spanish-speaking world, deepened his understanding of the importance of the Spanish language, and instilled pride in his Spanish skills and identity as a Spanish speaker. Moreover, the experience gave him a greater sense of agency in his linguistic choices and led him to reflect upon and reaffirm his Mexican-American identity.

Nicole

Nicole studied for six weeks in Antigua, Guatemala during summer 2015. She was a 21-year-old bilingual/bicultural education major at a Texas university.

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Born in Belize to a Belizean father and a Honduran mother, Nicole knew a limited amount of English in early childhood, but her family spoke Spanish at home. When Nicole was five, she immigrated with her parents and two brothers first to California, and then to South Texas. Despite living in predominantly Latino areas, Nicole described growing up as an isolating experience. She felt disconnected from her Central American background and family, whom she was unable to visit due to her undocumented status (Initial interview, July 18, 2015). Nicole's English language education also contributed to her feeling distanced from her culture. Though Nicole was initially placed in a bilingual kindergarten, she was moved into an ESL class a week later. The school requested that Nicole attend summer school due to her level of English proficiency. Eventually, Nicole and her family became fluent in English, and with the exception of her mother, they transitioned to speaking to each other primarily in English. Later, when Nicole was studying bilingual education in college, she and her father agreed to try to only converse with each other in Spanish to help her improve.

Prior to the SA program in Guatemala, Nicole had taken a Spanish course for SHLLs in high school and one advanced Spanish course at the community college. The latter was a “real eye opener” for Nicole because although she generally used correct grammar and verb tenses, she did not know how to label or describe what she was doing (Initial interview, July 18, 2015). After gaining US resident status and eligibility for financial aid, Nicole transferred to her current university and began an advanced Spanish grammar course, but her difficulty naming the verb conjugations and grammar rules provoked anxiety and intensified her insecurities about her language abilities, leading her to drop the course. Though Nicole expressed that she was “always comfortable with Spanish,” the experiences in her Spanish classes caused her to consider that “maybe [her] Spanish [wasn’t] where it need[ed] to be to be a bilingual teacher” (postprogram interview, March 9, 2016).

The Guatemala program was appealing to Nicole due to its Central American location, and it aligned with her professional development goals by providing Spanish language classes and an opportunity to teach English to Guatemalan students. There was no similar program in Honduras or Belize. Due to curriculum integration between her SA program and her university’s Spanish department, Nicole was able to enroll for the same advanced Spanish course she had previously dropped. On the first day of class in Guatemala, remembering that earlier negative experience, she felt she “wanted to cry when the teacher started talking” (Initial interview, July 18, 2015). However, her instructor adjusted the syllabus to support Nicole in learning about grammar, which increased Nicole’s confidence in her academic Spanish and affirmed her identity as a legitimate bilingual educator.

Outside of class, Nicole gradually felt a sense of agency over her Spanish language practices and the ways she chose to identify herself in relation to her circumstances. For example, in the market, she would speak “naturally” using her Central American dialect “para que me distinguen de los ‘americanos’ aprendiendo español” (so that they distinguish me from the “Americans” learning

Spanish') (Midprogram interview, August 13, 2015). Nicole reflected that back in Texas, as the only Central American among her Mexican-heritage friends, she felt pressured to speak their variety of Spanish. According to Nicole, being in Guatemala, surrounded by Central Americans, “[me] [...] ha ayudado mucho más ser cómoda con mi lengua nativa” (“[...] has helped [me] be much more comfortable with my own native tongue”) (Blog, August 10, 2015). During the program, when Nicole did not want to identify with the US, she would say she was from Belize or Honduras. Nicole did not feel like she was “just one nationality” (Midprogram interview, August 13, 2015). She explained,

I definitely have Belizean and Hondureña. And even though I don't have any Mexican or much American in me, I would still classify myself like, “oh yes, I am American, and I am Mexican because how I grew up with that culture.”

(Midprogram interview, August 13, 2015)

Nicole's SA experience also raised her awareness of the linguistic and cultural differences of Central American countries and provoked reflection on her ethnolinguistic identity. In her words,

Even though I can say I'm from Central America and stuff, it's a whole different culture in a way. And the way they [Guatemalans] communicate with each other, it's just a different insight into a different culture.

(Postprogram interview, March 9, 2016)

Furthermore, Nicole's Guatemalan neighbors in Texas connected her to Roberto, their relative living in Antigua, and the two began spending a lot of time together. Roberto taught Nicole Guatemalan slang, and she taught him English. Nicole also learned Guatemalan Spanish from her host family and her students. She recorded and analyzed many of these conversations for a SA linguistics course assignment that helped her integrate and make explicit the language awareness she had been developing throughout her sojourn. Specifically, this process of applying linguistic theory to instances of actual language use increased her awareness of pragmatics and Guatemalan Spanish, and notably expanded her linguistic repertoire.

In addition, Nicole became more conscious of her relative privilege in Guatemala as a US resident, noting the differences between the challenges her family had experienced as Central American immigrants in the US and the extreme poverty confronted by many Guatemalans. This experience strengthened her commitment to advocating for, and at some point, teaching in “a country that needs more resources” (Postprogram interview, March 9, 2016). Nicole attributes her raised consciousness and interest in advocacy to the Guatemalan context, expressing that she would have been dissatisfied if she had studied in more privileged countries like Spain and Italy, because “(in Guatemala) there's

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people who actually [...] need help" (Postprogram interview, March 9, 2016). Additionally, studying in Guatemala helped Nicole build confidence in her academic Spanish and supported her construction of a bilingual teacher identity. For Nicole, Guatemala was a unique space in which she had more agency over her linguistic practices and how she positioned herself than she had in Texas and potentially elsewhere. Learning Guatemalan Spanish in Guatemala broadened Nicole's linguistic repertoire and raised her awareness of the cultural and linguistic similarities and differences between Central American countries.

Maria

Maria embarked on a 16-week SA program in Córdoba, Spain in spring 2015. Maria was a 19-year-old sociology major from a university in California. She was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area to Mexican parents who were bilingual. While her parents primarily spoke to her in Spanish, she preferred to communicate in English because she felt "really uncomfortable speaking Spanish," even though her pre-SA Spanish proficiency level was advanced low, according to an oral pre-SA proficiency exam (Preprogram interview, February 11, 2015). In fact, Maria decided to SA with a language acquisition program in Córdoba in order to become a more confident Spanish speaker. She stated,

to get over my anxiety of speaking Spanish with my family and friends, [...] to learn formal Spanish so that I will be able to use it in my career and beyond and also I wanted to feel connected to my Mexican heritage.

(Background questionnaire)

According to Maria, the reasonable cost and the language-learning focus of the program made her choose to study in Spain rather than in Latin America. Prior to Córdoba, Maria made efforts to maintain and advance her Spanish; she had taken three years of high-school Spanish and a semester of Spanish for SHLLs at her university.

According to Maria's background questionnaire and initial interview, she wished to claim a Spanish-speaker identity yet her insecurities about her language abilities prevented her from doing so until she studied abroad. While in Cordoba, she took a Spanish grammar class and she also signed up for an *intercambio* ('language partner') through her SA program. Through her interactions with her *intercambio* and her language teacher, Maria gained confidence in her Spanish and an awareness of the linguistic diversity within *el mundo hispano*. During Maria's grammar class, she explained,

I would say something in Spanish and then my teacher would say, 'oh, that's correct, but [...] we don't say that here.' So when I want to say something in the Spanish that I know, I catch myself, wait [...] I should use this word so the communication is more clear.

(Midprogram interview, April 14, 2015)

Maria expanded her linguistic repertoire by recognizing the legitimacy of the California Mexican Spanish variety that she speaks, as confirmed by her instructor, while acknowledging that she was learning an additional Andalusian Spanish variety.

Moreover, given her expanding linguistic knowledge and self-confidence, she realized that she could determine how and what to say in order to best meet her communicative needs in Spanish and to modify how listeners perceived her. While she did not use *vosotros* (informal second-person plural, used only in Spain), she occasionally incorporated Castilian vocabulary (e.g., *echar de menos* ‘to miss’) and pronunciation (e.g., word final *-s* deletion) because she believed it made her seem more Andalusian and therefore affiliate more closely with locals. She often noted that when she modified her speech as such, Andalusians understood her better and did not question her Spanish ability. Furthermore, Maria felt that her practice and knowledge of Castilian Spanish would help her in the future since she would be able to communicate with a range of Spanish speakers.

Halfway through her program, Maria forged a close friendship with her *intercambio* partner, Jorge. Through their conversations, Maria recognized that her hybrid Mexican-American identity was a difficult concept for Jorge and other Spaniards to grasp because of their perception of Spain as ethnically homogeneous. In fact, Maria had “gotten used to being an outsider en [su] propio país” (‘gotten used to being an outsider in [her] own country’) because she was often asked in the US where she was from. In contrast, Spaniards either assumed she was Andalusian due to her physical characteristics or Latin American based on how she spoke Spanish. Maria had never reflected, until she was abroad and forced to confront her identities, on how her feelings of otherness and her bicultural and bilingual background were actually advantages (Journal entry, April 20–May 4, 2016). Compared to her American peers, Maria believed she was able to adapt to Spanish culture easier because she was accustomed to cultural differences from having traveled to Mexico. Additionally, she was comfortable with living in a non-English-dominant environment, like the one she grew up in. Finally, being in Spain helped her recognize that her American upbringing afforded her privileges in the global context, such as native English skills and a US passport. As such, Maria proudly positioned herself as both Mexican and American throughout her stay in Spain. She indexed this hybridity through code switching between English and Spanish:

Before I studied abroad podía escribir un mensaje entero en inglés sin tener the urge to use a frase o palabras [...] en Spanish, now, es mucho más difícil NO usar español at all. I have to think about it and actively STOP MYSELF from inserting Spanish. There is something dentro de mi que quiere mezclar los idiomas en vez de nada más hablar en solo un idioma.

(Emphasis in original)

‘Before I studied abroad I would be able to write an entire message in English without having the urge to use a phrase or words [...] in Spanish, now, it is a

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lot more difficult NOT using Spanish at all. I have to think about it and actively STOP MYSELF from inserting Spanish. There is something within me that wants to mix the languages instead of only speaking in one language.'

(Journal entry, April 20–May 4, 2016)

Maria's language use illustrates her eventual shift, after SA, from feeling uncomfortable using Spanish to naturally wanting to fluidly alternate between English and Spanish in order to express herself. Maria's code switching represents an act of linguistic self-determination and a reaffirmation of her Mexican-American identity, while this journal entry demonstrates her growing language awareness as a result of SA.

Studying abroad in Spain strengthened Maria's comfort and confidence in speaking Spanish and in claiming a Spanish-speaker identity. Moreover, her positive experiences with her language teacher and Jorge broadened her awareness and appreciation of the linguistic diversity within *el mundo hispano*, legitimizing her California Mexican Spanish and providing her with an opportunity to learn and speak another variety of Spanish. Lastly, Maria recognized the benefits of being Mexican American, which encouraged her to embrace her hybrid identity and her language practices, which she expressed through code switching.

Discussion

These case studies illustrate how, despite initial challenges, SHLLs translate and internalize the overseas experience for their own desired ethnolinguistic identities, while also heightening their Spanish language awareness. In Argentina, Juan struggled to interact with Argentines due to his limited knowledge of the target variety, which led him to perceive himself as an outsider, to reject Argentine Spanish, and to reaffirm his hybrid identity as Mexican American. In Guatemala, Nicole reaffirmed her roots by choosing to use her Central American Spanish variety and gained a new sense of solidarity toward challenging injustices in Guatemala. In Spain, Maria attributed her smooth transition into Spanish culture to her Mexican-American upbringing and her commitment to becoming a better Spanish speaker. Regardless of the national context in which they studied, these individuals reinforced their relationship with their HL and their identities according to how they positioned themselves and were positioned in their target communities. Juan's inability to connect with Argentines led him to reject the Argentine way of speaking and embrace his Mexican-American Spanish variety. Meanwhile, Nicole and Maria both developed relationships with target community members—Roberto and Pablo—who influenced their language learning and identity development.

The three students also broadened their sociolinguistic awareness and recognized their agency over their language choices. In Argentina, Juan became aware of the different varieties and registers of Spanish as well as the importance of the language in a Spanish-dominant country. Similarly, Maria became more confident and proud of her hybrid Mexican-American identity and increased her desire to index herself as such through code switching. Nicole's experiences abroad reinforced her vocation as a bilingual and bicultural teacher and her confidence to develop academic Spanish in

pursuit of that goal. For all three learners, their greater awareness of language variation as a result of SA reestablished their identities as legitimate Spanish speakers within *el mundo hispano*.

Indeed, across all three national contexts, the students' growing awareness of linguistic diversity and self-determination strongly supported their development of positive HL identities. Regardless of program duration and national context, the SA experience reaffirmed these SHLLs' ethnolinguistic identities and their agency over their language choices and attitudes. The enhanced language awareness gained through immersion in linguistically diverse and Spanish-dominant contexts was an important factor for these outcomes. In fact, their SA-driven reflections on language and identity impacted their professional and academic pursuits, as well as their relationships with their families and communities back home. While the findings of this study were positive, this is not the case for all SHLLs (e.g., Riegelhaupt & Carrasco, 2000), who bring a wide array of backgrounds and linguistic abilities to the SA context and who construct and negotiate their identities in diverse ways (Leeman, 2015). These contrasting results lend further support for the need to continue to conduct cross-national studies of SHLLs abroad.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

The positive results of the case studies presented in this chapter offer implications for the design of SA programs that are inclusive of HLLs. First, the individual variation between Juan, Nicole, and Maria exemplifies how SHLLs choose to study in different locations for various reasons and how their reactions to and interpretations of the SA experience differ. Educators in the SA context must seek commonalities among SHLLs without disregarding the subtle yet essential differences that characterize them (Parra, 2016). As such, SA instructors should ensure that their pedagogical practices and discourses validate and expand upon the Spanish varieties SHLLs already speak and identify with when they arrive to their host destination. For example, Juan and Maria's instructors positively reinforced their home varieties, while Nicole's instructor modified the syllabus to support her academic Spanish learning. Second, all three students broadened their sociolinguistic awareness as a result of SA and felt more confident interacting across different Spanish varieties and registers. This suggests the value of incorporating a sociolinguistics course (or at least an orientation module) that informs students of dialectal differences they will encounter as part of their SA experience. Understanding the legitimacy of multiple Spanish varieties is particularly important for SHLLs, who often struggle with the sense that their Spanish is "wrong" because it is different.

Third, when advising HLLs regarding which country and program to study in, SA advisors should listen and take into consideration HLLs' goals. While Maria benefitted from studying in a language acquisition program in Spain, Nicole was seeking an SA experience that would support her aspirations of teaching English to bilingual immigrant children. As a result of studying in a program geared toward prospective teachers in Guatemala, Nicole became more conscious of social justice issues and gained a deeper commitment to working with underserved populations. Lastly, the SA context served as a site of identity reflection and negotiation for all three participants, whereby they all reaffirmed their bicultural and bilingual identities post-SA. With this in mind, SA programs should encourage opportunities for such reflection to occur through journals, interviews, and/or blogs.

Limitations and Future Directions

While these cases provide insights into the identity and HL development of SHLLs, there are gaps that warrant further research. This chapter presented SHLLs who chose to study in Spanish-speaking countries with which the participants had no immediate familial ties, with the partial exception of Nicole, who had Central American roots. As Shively (forthcoming) points out, it would be fruitful to compare and contrast how SHLLs interact and interpret the SA context when they study in a country with familial ties vs. one without, particularly since host country nationals may react differently toward HLLs in these distinct contexts. Moreover, choosing to study in a country of ancestry vs. one where HLLs have no ancestral ties may also be an enlightening individual difference to study in the future. Further, this study presented qualitative data regarding each participant's interpretation of his or her Spanish development and sociolinguistic awareness. Future studies may wish to administer language awareness pre- and posttests (see Kinginger, 2008), conduct HL assessments, or analyze speech samples in order to provide empirical support of use of regional features alongside qualitative data. As Parra (2016) recommends, more case studies like this one need to be conducted in order to understand the differences among HLLs abroad and to avoid preconceived notions of why HLLs SA. Indeed, researchers, educators, and administrators need to continue listening to HLLs' voices in order to understand how they respond, perceive, and position themselves in the SA context.

Key Terms

Spanish heritage language learner
Spanish heritage speaker
Study abroad

Case study
Identity
Language awareness

Further Reading

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Proficiency Levels

Proficiency Levels in Study Abroad

Is There an Optimal Time for Sojourning?

Bernard Issa and Janire Zalbidea

Introduction

One of the myriad factors that may influence second language (L2) development during study abroad (SA) is learner proficiency at the outset of the sojourn. The variable of predeparture proficiency, as discussed by Collentine (2009), makes for an attractive topic of inquiry as compared to other individual difference variables (e.g., aptitude, working memory) because it is “controllable from a preprogram perspective” (p. 222) as learners have agency in deciding when to go abroad in their learning trajectory. Given this, a better understanding of the role of predeparture proficiency in L2 development is of interest to various stakeholders, including L2 learners, L2 instructors (at secondary and postsecondary levels), and SA advisors and program directors. However, surprisingly, preprogram proficiency has received relatively little attention in the SA literature as compared to other factors (e.g., program length).

In this chapter, we examine the role of predeparture proficiency on linguistic development during SA. As discussed later, studies have tested preprogram proficiency using an array of objective assessments, ranging from global measures to more targeted measures that assess fine-grained linguistic knowledge in various linguistic domains and skill areas. Although we have limited our discussion here to the role of proficiency in determining linguistic outcomes during SA, it is important to note that proficiency may also interact with other types of development, such as sociolinguistic competence and intercultural awareness. In what follows, we discuss historical perspectives on the role of predeparture proficiency in L2 development before moving on to discuss critical issues in the measurement of proficiency. Next, we discuss current research that has investigated the role of initial proficiency in L2 linguistic gains, and lastly, we provide pedagogical recommendations based on findings from current research as well as suggestions for future directions for further examination of the role of predeparture proficiency in SA.

Historical Perspectives

Interest in the role of students’ predeparture proficiency dates back to some of the seminal work on SA published in the 1990s. Notably, in most of these early studies,

the primary goal was not to explore the effects of learners' preprogram linguistic abilities but rather to gauge the potential of SA for global linguistic development. As such, the role of initial proficiency was frequently explored post hoc (cf. Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1995), often as a means of providing possible explanations for the variability observed among learners' pre- to postprogram linguistic gains.

One of the earliest references to the role of proficiency in SA can be found in Opper, Teichler, and Carlson (1990). As reviewed in Collentine (2009), this study surveyed students from more than 80 different programs across Europe and found that those learners with lower preprogram proficiency were more likely to self-report higher degrees of improvement after their sojourn. A similar finding was reported by Lapkin, Hart, and Swain (1995), who investigated development among 119 L2 French learners enrolled in a homestay program in Quebec using a battery of tests that tapped specific skills as well as general proficiency. Overall, their findings supported the notion that learners with lower proficiency at the start of the program made greater gains. However, those learners who started the program with an extremely low command of reading did not gain as much as others with a slightly higher command at the beginning of their sojourn.

Further evidence for a role of predeparture proficiency in SA was provided by Brecht et al. (1995) (see also Brecht & Robinson, 1993), where development among 658 L2 Russian learners participating in American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) programs was assessed using several standardized measures of proficiency (Oral Proficiency Interview [OPI], listening and reading tests, and a qualifying grammar test). Consistent with Opper et al. (1990) and Lapkin et al. (1995), findings revealed that learners with lower preprogram scores experienced higher improvement on all tests. Crucially, however, the study also showed that higher initial proficiency in reading and grammar skills promoted larger gains in speaking, reading, and listening, suggesting that control of basic grammar and reading prior to departure plays an important role in aiding development during SA.

In general, early findings were taken to suggest that students who were less proficient at the start of their programs made larger gains. However, findings also appeared to indicate the need for a baseline degree of preprogram L2 proficiency to support meaningful linguistic development during SA. This state of affairs opened up an interesting discussion about the mechanisms under which initial proficiency might mediate learners' linguistic growth during SA. Furthermore, the seemingly contradictory findings across studies highlight methodological concerns about the measurement and interpretation of L2 development across proficiency levels, as we discuss in the following section.

Critical Issues and Topics

Why Does Initial Proficiency Matter in SA?

There are a number of accounts in the literature as to how initial proficiency level may moderate the development of linguistic abilities while abroad. By and large, these accounts assume that from a cognitive resources perspective, more proficient L2 speakers are 'better prepared' to benefit from the often demanding L2 interaction opportunities offered by the SA context. This is partly because "high-level oral

performance in the L2 requires a cognitive processing system that functions quickly and efficiently" (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004, p. 193).

Linguistic development during SA has been claimed to be, at least in part, dependent on students' preprogram efficiency and speed in accessing L2 words (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) as well as their overall working memory (Sunderman & Kroll, 2009). As discussed by Lafford and Collentine (2006), higher L2 proficiency (i.e., stronger lexis and grammar command) is assumed to also entail higher cognitive capacities, which is why more advanced learners are expected to do better during SA. Less proficient students, on the other hand, may have fewer cognitive resources available to simultaneously attend to linguistic form and meaning while coping with social interaction demands during SA.

Expanding on this account, DeKeyser (2010) proposed that students ought to have adequate grammatical knowledge prior to departure to be able to effectively monitor their own linguistic output (and compare it with available L2 input) while abroad. Specifically, DeKeyser posits that students' conscious command of grammar is a necessary component on which to ground L2 practice or proceduralization abroad. His account is consistent with the importance of preprogram metalinguistic knowledge that was highlighted early on by Brecht et al. (1995).

Finally, a number of authors have also suggested that higher proficiency learners are more likely to speak in the L2 more frequently (Brecht & Robinson, 1993) and pursue more L2 contact (Freed, 1995; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), thereby increasing their production and exposure to the target language and its community.

Measurement and Interpretation of Proficiency in SA

As mentioned earlier, studies have used a wide array of measures to assess proficiency in SA research. Given this variability in measurement, there are a number of methodological considerations that merit discussion when investigating whether linguistic development abroad differs (either quantitatively or qualitatively) across various proficiency levels.

First, the assessment measure employed ought to be able to capture gains at different developmental stages because what learners can do linguistically at lower and higher proficiency levels looks very different (Ortega & Iberri-Shea, 2005). Otherwise, "if assessment instruments are unable to capture progress made by more advanced students, we will always have the impression that it is the lower-level students who made the greatest gains" (Freed, 1995, p. 20). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) OPI, arguably the most widely used proficiency measure in SA research, has been criticized in this regard for being too broad and not sensitive enough to capture gains among higher proficiency learners (Brecht et al., 1995; Lafford & Collentine, 2006). This is because the OPI has not only served to categorize students' preprogram proficiency into one of five major levels (ranging from *Novice* to *Distinguished*) but has simultaneously been employed as an outcome measure within the same study. At the same time, when studies used unstandardized measures unlike the OPI, it is important to note that proficiency is being regarded as a relative construct. Consequently, students who may be labeled as "low proficiency" in one study may not necessarily be comparable in their linguistic abilities to students labeled as "low proficiency" in a different study.

Although the validity issues related to test interpretation and use discussed here are important in all types of empirical L2 research, they become particularly crucial when pursuing questions about the role of proficiency in L2 development. We will revisit some of these issues as we review current contributions and research in the following section.

Current Contributions and Research

As evidenced in the earlier research described previously and elsewhere (e.g., Collentine, 2009), it appears that linguistic outcomes after SA are sensitive, at least to some degree, to learners' predeparture level of proficiency. To further examine this claim, we have identified eight primary research reports that have investigated the effects of predeparture proficiency on linguistic gains during SA (see Table 29.1 for a summary of these studies and their findings).¹ Although the majority of these studies find an effect for predeparture proficiency, the directionality of the effects differs. That is, a subset of studies revealed a negative relationship between initial proficiency and linguistic gains (Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, Bown, & Martinsen, 2014; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009), suggesting that learners with a lower predeparture command of their L2 make greater gains than those with higher predeparture proficiency. On the other hand, there is another subset of studies that show the opposite effect: a positive relationship between predeparture proficiency and linguistic gains (Davidson, 2010; DeKeyser, 2010; Faretta-Stutenberg & Morgan-Short, this volume; Golonka, 2006; Li, 2014), indicating that learners with higher proficiency prior to SA evidence the largest gains. In what follows, we will describe these studies and their implications.

Evidence for a Beneficial Role for Lower Predeparture Proficiency

In order to examine oral fluency, oral accuracy, and listening comprehension gains during SA, Llanes and Muñoz (2009) recruited Spanish/Catalan bilinguals learning English in a 3–4-week SA program. Participants ($n = 24$) had at least five years of prior experience studying English, with a range of predeparture proficiencies. Participants' SA experiences varied, ranging from homestays to living in dorms with the majority of participants taking classes. Participants' listening comprehension as well as fluency and accuracy in an oral picture narration task was measured one week before and one week after their sojourn. Fluency measures included the number of syllables per minute, other language word ratio (ratio of L2 words to words in the first language (L1) or another language), and silent pauses per minute, among others. Accuracy was assessed as error-free clause ratio; the average number of errors per clause; and the number of lexical, morphological, and syntactic errors. Participants' predeparture proficiency was determined based on "the principle component" (Llanes & Muñoz, 2009, p. 358) of one oral fluency variable (number of syllables per minute) and one oral accuracy variable (average number of errors per clause). Results suggested that learners with lower predeparture proficiency made greater gains in two of the oral fluency measures (syllables per minute and other language word ratio) and one of the oral accuracy measures (lexical errors); however, no relationships were evidenced for listening comprehension.

Table 29.1 Investigations of predeparture proficiency in study abroad

Author	L2	N	Linguistic skill	Initial proficiency	Proficiency measure	Linguistic outcome measure	Results
Llanes and Muñoz (2009)	English	24	Listening comprehension, Oral fluency, Oral accuracy	Varied	Oral picture narration task	Oral picture narration task, Listening comprehension task	-
Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige (2009)	Varied	830	Oral proficiency	Varied	SOPI	SOPI	-
Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, Bown, and Matinsen (2014)	Varied	102	Oral proficiency	Varied	OPI	OPI	-
Golonka (2006)	Russian	22	Oral proficiency	Intermediate-high	ACTR grammar test, OPI	OPI	+
Davidson (2010)	Russian	1881	Speaking	Varied	ACTR grammar test, OPI, Reading proficiency test, Listening proficiency test	OPI, Reading proficiency test, Listening proficiency test	+
DeKeyser (2010)	Spanish	16	Oral proficiency	Intermediate	MLA placement test	Oral interviews	+
Li (2014)	Chinese	31	Pragmatics	Intermediate, Advanced	Predeparture placement exam	Oral discourse completion test	+
Fareta-Stutenberg & Morgan-Short (this volume)	Spanish	11	Oral proficiency, Accuracy on grammatical gender agreement	Intermediate-high	EIT, DELE	Oral information gap task, GJT	+

Note: -: Negative relationship between initial proficiency and linguistic gains; +: Positive relationship between initial proficiency and linguistic gains.

In a large-scale, multiyear, and multiprogram study, Vande Berg et al. (2009) collected data from students ($n = 830$) studying abroad in various locations, learning one of the following L2s: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, or Spanish. The authors examined the influence of individual factors (e.g., predeparture oral proficiency and L2 experience) and program-related variables (e.g., program duration, language of instruction abroad) on L2 oral proficiency during SA. Oral proficiency was measured by pre- and post-SA Simulated Oral Proficiency Interviews (SOPI; similar to the OPI but administered via prerecorded prompts and a testing booklet rather than by an interviewer) within the first and last weeks of the programs. Due to the large-scale, multiprogram design of this study, participants' predeparture proficiency was varied, with group averages (grouped by L2) ranging between novice-high and intermediate-high on the ACTFL scale. Results indicated that learners with lower levels of predeparture proficiency made greater gains. The authors interpreted this relationship as a "ceiling effect" (p. 13), suggesting that the results from the ACTFL SOPI do not allow for capturing the development of learners who initially scored at the advanced-low through superior levels at the outset of their SA experience.

In another large-scale study, Baker-Smemoe et al. (2014) collected data from learners ($n = 102$) studying one of five L2s (Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, or Russian) in various locations to ascertain the effects of a host of variables on L2 oral proficiency gains during SA. These variables included (i) L2 competence (i.e., predeparture proficiency and intercultural sensitivity), (ii) individual characteristics (i.e., age, gender, and personality), and (iii) L2 contact (i.e., social-network development and L2 use abroad). Participants completed an ACTFL OPI prior to departure and within one month of their return. Predeparture proficiency for this sample fell in the intermediate or advanced level of the ACTFL guidelines. To examine the effects of proficiency on L2 gains, the authors divided participants into two groups: (i) gainers—participants who increased one ACTFL sublevel from pre- to post-SA OPIS—and (ii) nongainers—participants who did not make such gains. Results indicated that gainers started out with lower proficiency than nongainers. Similar to Vande Berg et al. (2009), the authors concluded that it may be more difficult for learners to move up one sublevel on the ACTFL proficiency scale if they started out at a higher level to begin with.

Taken together, these findings seem to suggest that learners with lower proficiency at the outset of their SA experience may make greater gains than learners who go into their sojourn abroad with a higher level of proficiency. However, it is worth noting that two (Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014; Vande Berg et al., 2009) of the three studies relied on the ACTFL proficiency guidelines as a way to gauge both proficiency and development. As Vande Berg et al. (2009) argue, this proficiency scale is operationalized as an inverted pyramid, with novice-level proficiency at the narrow tip of the pyramid and more advanced levels of proficiency at the wider base of the pyramid. Thus, learners who start out at the novice or intermediate levels have a more constrained path to move through in order to achieve a significant gain in proficiency. Conversely, learners who start out at the intermediate-high or advanced levels have a much wider set of linguistic skills to improve upon for said improvement to be considered significant. Therefore, although it appears that the current literature offers support for the idea that lower proficiency learners benefit most from a study abroad, this claim, to a certain extent, is tempered from a methodological standpoint as the effect may be an artifact of the proficiency measure employed in these studies.

Evidence for a Beneficial Role for Higher Predeparture Proficiency

As noted earlier, another subset of studies have revealed opposite findings, namely that learners who depart for their sojourn abroad with a higher level of proficiency will make greater gains than those with a lower level. In an extension of Brecht et al. (1995), Davidson (2010) examined data from L2 learners of Russian ($n = 1,881$) participating in ACTR-administered SA programs of varying lengths (two, four, and nine months) between the years of 1994 and 2009. As described by Davidson (2010), the ACTR SA programs are a mix of sheltered and unsheltered programs that required participants to speak in the L2 and provided participants with experiences, such as homestays, internships, and volunteer opportunities. Proficiency was measured via a series of tests including the ACTFL OPI, the ACTR qualifying grammar test as well as reading and listening proficiency exams. Results revealed that predeparture proficiency (as measured by the qualifying grammar test and the listening comprehension test) was a strong positive predictor of gains on the OPI. The author notes that the combination of these two predictors was “particularly significant” (Davidson, 2010, p. 18) for participants to move into and beyond the advanced level on the ACTFL guidelines. As suggested by Davidson, it is likely that learners who have a strong command of L2 grammar and strong listening comprehension skills prior to SA make the largest gains while abroad due to their ability to monitor their own language output and comprehend complex utterances by native speakers.

Golonka (2006) also examined data from the ACTR database, selecting pre- and post-SA OPIs from 22 L2 learners of Russian studying abroad for a semester in Moscow or St. Petersburg between the years of 1987 and 1995. All participants’ predeparture proficiency was found to be intermediate-high on the ACTFL scale. In addition to the OPI, participants completed a qualifying grammar test developed by the ACTR. Similar to Baker-Smemoe et al. (2014), participants were divided into two groups: gainers—participants who moved to the advanced level on the ACTFL guidelines—and nullgainers—participants who either exhibited no change in level or moved down a level on the ACTFL guidelines. Results indicated that learners were more likely to make gains during SA if they (i) were more accurate on the qualifying grammar test and the pre-SA OPI, (ii) had higher vocabulary sizes on the pre-SA OPI, and (iii) exhibited more self-monitoring as measured by their ratio of self-corrected errors and sentence repairs in the OPI.

DeKeyser (2010) draws similar conclusions about learners’ predeparture command of grammatical knowledge and their abilities to monitor their own language output. Participants in his study were intermediate L2 learners of Spanish studying abroad in a six-week sheltered homestay program in Argentina. Predeparture proficiency was assessed with the Modern Language Association (MLA) placement test (a fill-in-the-blank grammar test), and pre- and post-SA oral interviews rated for grammatical accuracy by trained native speakers. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between performance on the MLA placement test and scores on the post-SA oral interview. Additionally, a strong positive relationship was found between the pre-SA and the post-SA oral interview scores. Taken together, these results suggest that learners with higher predeparture proficiency were able to make the most improvements as a result of their SA experience. Additionally, based on a qualitative analysis of data from interviews and stimulated recalls with participants, as well as interviews with native speakers who interacted with participants during

their sojourn, the author concluded that “The students who knew the most already could monitor the most efficiently, and these were the students who were the happiest with their progress” (DeKeyser, 2010, p. 90).

Focusing on a different linguistic domain, Li (2014) examined the effect of pre-departure proficiency on the development of L2 pragmatic knowledge and processing ability during SA. Participants were English-speaking L2 learners of Chinese ($n = 31$) participating in a 15-week program in Beijing, China. Students were placed into either intermediate- or advanced-level coursework at the outset of the program based on scores from a placement exam and an oral interview. In order to assess learners’ pragmatic knowledge and processing abilities, participants completed a computerized oral discourse completion task at the beginning and end of their sojourn. Participant responses were rated on the appropriateness (assessing pragmatic knowledge) and the speech rate of their responses (assessing processing abilities). Although no effect for initial proficiency was found for appropriateness of participants’ responses, a significant effect for initial proficiency was revealed for speech rate, such that the advanced group made greater gains on the posttest (producing responses at a faster rate of speech) than the intermediate group.

Lastly, Faretta-Stutenberg and Morgan-Short (this volume) investigated changes in the knowledge and processing of grammatical gender agreement in a group of L2 learners of Spanish ($n = 11$) studying in semester-long programs in various Spanish-speaking countries. Proficiency was measured by two tasks administered pre- and post-SA: (i) an elicited imitation task (EIT), a global measure of oral/aural proficiency, and (ii) the *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera* (DELE; ‘Diplomas of Spanish as a Foreign Language,’ Spanish Embassy, Washington, DC), a cloze and multiple-choice grammar test. Participants exhibited a wide range of scores on these two measures prior to SA. Learners’ knowledge of grammatical gender agreement was assessed via two independent measures that tapped either production or interpretation of gender agreement between articles and nouns as well as between adjectives and nouns: (i) an oral information gap activity and (ii) a grammaticality judgment task (GJT). Processing of gender agreement was measured using event-related potentials (see Chapter 27). Results revealed a significant positive correlation between learners’ initial proficiency (as measured by the EIT and the DELE) and gains in accuracy on GJT sentences that targeted gender agreement on articles. Additionally, regarding linguistic processing, results revealed that learners’ initial DELE scores were positively correlated with the magnitude of the N400 component elicited by grammatical gender agreement violations on articles and adjectives. This suggested that learners with higher proficiency exhibited greater change in their L2 neural processing after their SA experience.

Taken together, the findings from this subset of studies show that learners’ pre-departure proficiency appears to have a robust, positive influence on linguistic development during SA. Notably, initial proficiency appears to predict gains in various linguistic domains and skills, i.e., oral fluency and accuracy; the processing of pragmatic information; accuracy on targeted linguistic structures, such as grammatical gender agreement; as well as language processing as revealed by neural measures. Furthermore, DeKeyser (2010) and Golonka (2006) highlight the importance of developing metalinguistic monitoring of both form and meaning predeparture, as these skills seem to allow learners to take advantage of the wealth of opportunities for social interaction with native speakers in a variety of communicative contexts

uniquely afforded to learners on an SA program. These studies corroborate claims by Lafford and Collentine (2006), such that learners with higher proficiency may also have higher cognitive capacities, or at least access to additional cognitive resources due to a lessened cognitive load in the immersion environment as compared to lower proficiency learners.

In broad strokes, the current literature that has focused on the role of predeparture proficiency in linguistic development during SA has revealed that benefits for L2 development are evidenced for learners at various levels of predeparture proficiency. That is, studies have found that learners at both lower and higher level proficiencies show gains in oral fluency and accuracy. However, it appears that higher predeparture proficiency learners may show greater and also more subtle L2 linguistic development, such as changes in pragmatic processing speed and changes in neural processing.

Recommendations for Practice

As revealed by current research, both lower and higher level proficiency learners can take advantage of participating in SA experiences. Although our review was limited to studies that have examined linguistic gains as a result of SA, it is worth noting that the impact of SA experiences can go well beyond promoting gains in linguistic knowledge. As discussed in Ife, Vives Boix, and Meara (2000), “linguistic gains are not the only motive for study abroad: there are many cultural, educational, and motivational benefits to be gained too” (p. 55). Thus, when deciding whether a particular moment in a learners’ developmental trajectory is optimal for studying abroad, it is important to first consider the goals and desired outcomes of the learner.

That said, if linguistic gains are the intended goal at the outset of an SA experience, current research suggests that learners’ experience and preparation are crucial for making said gains from a cognitive and linguistic perspective. Based on the findings from studies such as Golonka (2006) and DeKeyser (2010), we recommend that in order for learners to take advantage of their surroundings in the immersion context (i.e., plentiful L2 input as well as plentiful opportunities to produce the L2 in meaningful, communicative contexts), learners should take steps to hone their command of metalinguistic knowledge in the L2, both at earlier and later stages of their preparation. Equally important, however, is the amount of engagement with the host community and host culture during the SA (Kinginger, 2011), which has been shown to be influenced by predeparture proficiency and experience (Freed, 1995).

Future Directions

Given the state of current research, there are still avenues to explore before a clear picture can emerge regarding the role of initial proficiency in SA. To address methodological challenges outlined earlier, future studies should employ independent proficiency measures as well as assessment measures that can capture linguistic development across proficiency levels. Furthermore, in order to move toward a holistic view of the role of initial proficiency, future research should strive to combine outcome-based measures—which allow us to determine whether linguistic gains differ—with measures about the “qualities of the in-country sojourn” (Kinginger, 2011, p. 60)—which can help us better understand how gains differ. Finally, as single

institutions might not offer SA programs directed at different curricular levels, encouraging multisite research projects conducted among partner institutions (see, e.g., Vande Berg et al., 2009, for a large-scale, multisite sample study) may be greatly beneficial to the field of SA research.

Key Terms

Initial proficiency	Linguistic development
Predeparture proficiency	Oral proficiency
Preprogram proficiency	Second Language Acquisition
Study abroad	

Note

- 1 Two additional studies were identified that have examined predeparture curricular level (rather than proficiency). Findings suggest that learners with more extensive previous coursework gain more in oral proficiency (Magnan & Back, 2007) and that learners at different curricular levels make qualitatively different gains in vocabulary (Ife et al., 2000).

Further Reading

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- Kinginger, C. (2011). Enhancing language learning in study abroad. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 58–73. (This article provides a critical overview of recent research, with sections dedicated to proficiency development in SA and its relationship to learners’ in-country activities.)

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Age

What Do We (Not) Know about the Effects of Age on L2 Development When Learning Occurs in a Study Abroad Setting?

Àngels Llanes

Introduction and Rationale for the Present Study

Both age and learning context have been identified as crucial factors when learning a second or foreign language (L2). The role of age in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has long been investigated, and age has been found to play a key role because it determines the rate of L2 learning as well as the ultimate level of proficiency attained (Muñoz, 2008). The role of learning context has also been investigated, although to a lesser extent. Studies examining the impact of learning context on L2 development have mostly found that the study abroad (SA) context usually leads to significant L2 gains and that the SA setting is usually more effective than other settings, such as the at-home (AH) one, especially when the AH setting does not involve intensive exposure to the L2 (Llanes, 2011).

However, whereas learning context has been the focus of research in the field of SLA, very few studies have been conducted with participants other than adults (namely college students), and even fewer studies have examined the role of age in an SA context, including participants of different ages and asking them to perform the same tasks under the same conditions. Although most SA participants are adults, there is also a large number of teenagers engaging in SA programs, especially in the summer (yet with a growing number of teenagers engaging in yearlong SA experiences), but little research has been conducted with teenagers in an SA context. Children are not a common population among SA participants either, but the little existing research suggests that SA children experience more significant gains than adults. Hence, the role of age in an SA context should not be undermined since parents, or participants themselves, could decide to go (or send their children) abroad at a younger age to make the most of the SA experience, given its educational and economical implications.

Types of Learning Contexts

L2 acquisition usually occurs in one of four basic contexts (Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004). The first context is the *naturalistic* setting, and this occurs when a

person moves to a destination country for an indefinite period of time. This context supposedly provides unlimited exposure to the L2 and multiple opportunities to practice it at different levels, and the input it provides is authentic and varied. Another context is *SA*, which shares the main characteristics with the naturalistic setting but with one main difference: SA participants move to the host country for a definite period of time, which usually goes from two weeks to one academic year. Despite this major difference regarding time spent in the host country, theoretically, SA participants also have multiple opportunities to practice the L2, they are also massively exposed to the L2, and the input they receive is also authentic and varied. The third learning context is the *foreign language instructed* setting, which occurs in the participants' home country and in the students' institution. This context offers very limited exposure to the L2 and few opportunities for regular interaction in it since exposure to it is usually restricted to the hours assigned to its teaching, which usually occurs for three to four hours per week. The quality of the input is varied since it mostly depends on the L2 teacher, who is often the sole provider of input in this context. The last learning context is the *immersion* setting, which also takes place in the participants' institution in their home country, but in this case, the L2 is used as a vehicular language. In this context, students use the L2 with more than one teacher and not just the L2 teacher. The characteristics of these learning contexts are important because previous research shows that L2 development is positively affected by the intensity of exposure (Muñoz, 2012).

Preliminary Considerations on Age and Learning Context

Age

The role of age on L2 acquisition has been one of the most researched topics in SLA. Most of the studies that have documented the impact of age on L2 learning have mostly evolved around two learning contexts: the naturalistic setting and, to a lesser extent, the instructed setting. An important clarification is in order here: Studies that have examined the impact of age on L2 acquisition in a naturalistic setting have often examined the participants' ultimate attainment (the ultimate level of proficiency acquired in the L2), whereas studies examining the effects of age in an instructed setting have mostly explored the participants' rate of acquisition (speed at which the L2 is acquired) (Muñoz, 2008). This distinction is important because in order to examine ultimate attainment, participants must have spent a considerable amount of time in the host country.

Studies examining the impact of age on ultimate attainment usually include participants who immigrated to the host country at different ages, and after years of living in the host country, participants are submitted to several tests in order to examine their ultimate level of proficiency in the L2. The results of these studies mostly show that an earlier age of arrival in the destination country usually results in a higher L2 attainment, and this is true for pronunciation (Asher & García, 1969; Flege, Munro, & MacKay, 1995), grammar (Hyltenstam, 1992; Johnson & Newport, 1989), and vocabulary (Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978a, 1978b). Studies that compare younger learners with older learners in a naturalistic context usually support the claim that Krashen, Long, and Scarcella (1979) made based on the review of the literature regarding the effects of age, which is that older learners learn faster than younger learners in the short run, but younger learners usually catch up and even surpass older learners in the long run.

Nonetheless, when learning takes place in an instructed setting, the results are different. Studies that document the effects of age on L2 acquisition in an instructed setting usually include participants that started learning the L2 at different ages (García-Mayo & García-Lecumberri, 2003; Muñoz, 2006), and results of these studies have found that older learners usually outscore younger learners. This is true for pronunciation (Fullana, 2006), vocabulary (Miralpeix, 2006), oral skills (Cenoz, 2003; Muñoz, 2003), and writing skills (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2003; Torras, Navés, Celaya, & Pérez-Vidal, 2006). In short, studies examining the impact of age on L2 acquisition when learning occurs in an instructed setting show that older learners outperform younger learners, and this is true across skills.

Learning Context

The popularity of the SA context has boosted in the past few years, probably because globalization has imposed the need to master an L2 in order to communicate internationally and because the SA context is believed to be one of the most efficient contexts to improve or learn an L2 (Collentine, 2009). There are several studies that document the impact of SA on L2 development, and they have mostly found that spending some time abroad has a positive impact on oral skills (Freed, 1995; Martinsen, 2010; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012), vocabulary (Dewey, 2008; Foster, 2009; Milton & Meara, 1995), listening comprehension (Allen & Herron, 2003; Llanes & Prieto, 2015; Rodrigo, 2011), and pronunciation (Højen, 2003; Stevens, 2011). However, the effects of the SA context on other L2 domains, such as reading, yield unclear results because there is very little research, and some one of the studies has found that the SA setting positively affects L2 reading (Kinginger, 2008; Li, 2014), whereas others have not (Dewey, 2004). Another area on which the effects of SA are controversial is writing. Whereas some studies have found that participating in an SA experience leads to significant gains in writing (Pérez Vidal & Juan-Garau, 2009; Sasaki, 2004), others have not (Freed, So, & Lazar, 2003). Notwithstanding, these apparently contradictory findings might be explained, among other factors, by participants' individual differences, such as age, since Llanes and Muñoz (2013) found that child participants studying abroad significantly improved several oral and written measures, whereas child participants studying AH did not; nevertheless, a different pattern was found for the group of adults: SA adults did not improve significantly any writing skills, but AH adults did, indicating that learning context effects are mediated by the participants' age. Therefore, Llanes and Muñoz's study highlights the crucial role that age may play when learning occurs in an SA setting.

The Role of Age in a Study Abroad Setting

Despite the decisive role that age possibly plays when learning in an SA context, all the studies mentioned in the previous section, with the exception of Llanes and Muñoz (2013), include adult participants, namely college students participating in a mobility program. There are very few studies that have documented the effects of an SA experience on L2 development with younger participants, and the lack of research with adolescents in an SA context is surprising given the popularity of SA programs among this population. One of the studies that reports on the impact of an SA experience on adolescents is that by Evans and Fisher (2005). These authors

examined the effects of a very short exchange program (6–11 days) that a group of British adolescents (aged 13–14) carried out in France. The participants were administered a battery of tests targeting speaking, writing, listening, and reading in French (L2), and they found that after a few days in the host country, participants significantly improved their listening comprehension and their writing performance. Another study that documents the effects of a short SA experience on adolescents is Llanes and Muñoz (2009), although these authors focused on a slightly longer SA experience (3–4 weeks) and with a wider range of ages (13–22, with only two adult students aged +18, namely 22). These authors focused on the development of oral skills and listening comprehension during an SA experience and found that a short SA experience had a positive impact on listening comprehension and several oral skills measures, such as fluency, articulation rate, and accuracy, among others. Studies focusing on writing skills development as a result of an SA experience also yield positive results. Llanes, Tragant, and Serrano (2015) examined the impact of a three-week SA experience on participants' writing skills. Llanes et al.'s participants (aged 12–17) were asked to write the story depicted in a blank comic strip that was shown to them before and after their SA experience. The authors found that participants significantly improved in most of the domains examined, namely fluency, lexical complexity, grammatical complexity, and accuracy. Hence, so far, the few studies conducted with adolescents suggest that going abroad, even for a short period of time, is beneficial for the improvement of oral and written skills as well as listening comprehension.

However, when the L2 development of adolescents participating in a mobility program is compared to the L2 development of adolescents taking an intensive course AH, the advantage of the SA program is not so clear (in line with what has been found with SA adult participants). In a study conducted with adolescents aged 13–17, Serrano, Tragant, and Llanes (2014) compared the L2 writing development of two groups, one participating in an SA program and the other one taking an intensive course AH. The SA program lasted three weeks, whereas the intensive course AH lasted four weeks. Participants in the intensive course received instruction in English 4.5 hours-per-day from Monday to Friday. All the teachers in the intensive course were native speakers of English, and they taught grammar and vocabulary as well as communicative practice; these classes also included games and listening exercises. After comparing the L2 development of the SA and intensive AH groups, the authors found that both groups showed similar gains. In a more recent study, Serrano, Llanes, and Tragant (2016) also compared the L2 development of the same participants as Serrano et al. (2014), but this time, the authors focused on different language areas, such as grammar, formulaic sequences, and written and oral production. The authors found that SA participants outscored intensive AH participants in formulaic sequences and lexical complexity but that the intensive AH participants outscored SA participants in the Grammaticality Judgment Test (which measured the explicit knowledge of English grammar). Finally, Llanes, Mora, and Serrano (2016) compared the Voiced Onset Time (VOT) and the degree of Foreign Accent (FA) of two groups of adolescents aged 14–17, one learning English in an SA setting and the other one in an intensive AH course. The authors found that SA participants significantly improved their VOT and reduced their FA to a greater extent than their AH counterparts. Thus, when the L2 development of adolescents in an SA setting is compared to those in an intensive AH setting, results suggest that the SA context is superior

for the development of pronunciation and vocabulary but not for the development of grammar and writing skills, for which the AH context seems to be as good as, or better, than the SA one.

If studies examining the impact of an SA on L2 development with adolescents are scarce, studies documenting the L2 development with children in SA programs are even scarcer. One of the first studies do so was Park (2005), which documented the L2 learning experiences of five children (aged 6–11) studying in the US for periods that ranged from 4 months to 1.5 years. However, this study focused on the participants' self-perception of their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, and not on real L2 development. Park found that most participants perceived significant improvement in most of the L2 areas, but this finding was not surprising given the relatively long periods of time spent in the host country for some of the participants. A few years later, Llanes (2012a) reported on the L2 development of two groups of 11-year-old children: one group studying abroad for two months and the other studying in their regular school in Spain. The author found that SA children significantly improved all the oral and written measures from the pre- to the posttest, whereas AH participants did not. Moreover, the author found that these gains obtained by SA children were long lasting (gains were kept one year after the participants' return from the host country). Finally, in a more recent study, Llanes (2016) compared the degree of FA of two groups of 11-year-old children: one group studying abroad for two months and the other remaining in their regular school in Spain (AH). Again, the author found an advantage for SA participants, who significantly reduced their FA from the pre- to the posttest as opposed to their AH counterparts, who did not show any significant improvement. However, these last two studies by Llanes include a rather low number of participants (in the former study, nine students went abroad and seven AH, and in the latter, eight studied abroad and six AH).

The studies mentioned so far have examined the potential benefits of different learning contexts of participants of different ages (mostly adults but also adolescents and children, to a lesser extent), but there are extremely few studies that have explored the effects of learning context including participants of different ages performing the same tests and under the same conditions. One of these studies is Llanes and Muñoz (2013), who compared the L2 development (measured through several oral and written measures) of a group of children (aged 10–11) and a group of adults (aged 19–33) learning the L2 in two different contexts, SA and AH. The authors found that the SA context was more beneficial than the AH context, that SA children outscored the remaining groups in oral fluency and accuracy, that SA adults outscored the remaining groups in oral lexical complexity, and that AH adults outscored the remaining groups in written fluency and complexity. Thus, Llanes and Muñoz's study shows that learning context effects are mediated by the participants' age. In a later study, Llanes and Serrano (2014) replicated Llanes and Muñoz's (2013) study, but the authors included a third age group: that of adolescents (aged 12–15). Their results show that adolescents are usually in between adults and children for most of the measures.

In a more recent study, Muñoz and Llanes (2014) also compared participants of two different age groups (children vs. adults) learning in two different learning contexts (SA vs. AH), but the authors focused on degree of FA. The authors found that the SA context was superior to the AH context for FA reduction, and although they did not find any significant interaction between age and learning context, SA children experienced the greatest gains. In a more in-depth analysis of accuracy, Llanes

(2012b) compared the patterns of improvement of different types of errors made by four groups of students (SA children, AH children, SA adults, and AH adults). The author found that the SA children group reduced oral lexical errors and the ratio of errors per T-Unit the most, whereas SA adults was the group that reduced oral and written morphological errors the most.

Finally, Montero, Serrano, and Llanes (2013) also examined the effects of age and learning context, but the authors focused on the use of effective communication strategies. After comparing the use of L1-based strategies and a general measure of communication strategies effectiveness before and after an SA experience, the authors found that after the SA experience, children significantly decreased L1-based strategies and improved their effectiveness in communication, but its effects on adults were not so clear. Thus, the few studies that have examined the effects of age in an SA context show that whereas the SA context clearly has a positive impact on children, its impact is not so clear on adults.

In short, the studies mentioned in this section show that SA experiences also have a positive impact on different L2 areas when the participants are children or adolescents but that when the L2 development of SA adolescents is compared to the L2 development of adolescents taking an intensive course AH, the clear advantage of the SA context blurs. Additionally, the research included in this section suggests that SA experiences might benefit children the most.

Future Directions

It is clear that the effects of age on L2 development in an SA context deserve further investigation, first because there are very few studies that have tried to document the impact of these two crucial variables, and second because the little research available reveals that age plays a decisive role when learning occurs in an SA setting. Some of the studies mentioned in this chapter show differential effects of the learning context depending on the participants' age, since SA child participants tend to improve their oral skills, whereas AH adult participants tend to improve their writing skills. This suggests that SA children might learn the language more implicitly (oral skills are claimed to tap into implicit knowledge more than into the explicit knowledge given their immediateness; moreover, the gains attained by children are long lasting, another characteristic of implicit learning) and that AH adults might be making use of their explicit learning mechanisms as they improved their writing skills, some of them related to grammar (i.e., morphological errors).

Despite the efforts of the aforementioned scholars to document the effects an SA setting, several limitations must be listed. First of all, some of the studies that have examined the impact of learning context and age on L2 development in a unified comparative way come from the same cohort of participants. Given that these participants studied in a private school and belonged to upper-class families, further research with child participants is needed, if possible with children with different backgrounds (e.g., middle-class children studying in a public school). Moreover, some of the studies with children have been conducted with few participants, so results cannot be generalized.

Since there are few studies that examine the relationship between age and learning context, there are still some gaps to be filled in this area. One of them is the type of learning that each context and/or age triggers. In other words, previous studies

suggest that SA children might use implicit learning mechanisms, whereas AH adults might use explicit learning mechanisms to a greater extent. However, these studies were not designed to measure the type of learning used in each context, so further research should attempt to fill this gap by designing a study that tries to cater for the type of learning used by participants of different ages learning the L2 in different contexts. Given that contexts that promote intensive exposure to the L2 are reported to facilitate L2 development (the few studies that have compared L2 development occurring in an SA and in an intensive context AH have obtained comparable results), more research comparing the effects of an SA setting to the effects of other contexts involving intensity of exposure to the L2 is needed. Hence, it would be interesting that future studies compared, for example, the L2 development in an SA setting and in L2 summer camps in the participants' home country, as summer camps involve intensity of exposure to the L2, and at the same time, they are very popular among children and adolescents, but their effects on L2 development are rather unknown. Finally, another gap to be filled is the impact that SA experiences in countries where the L2 is not the official language but is used as a lingua franca have on L2 acquisition. There are extremely few studies that document the L2 impact of an SA experience in non-English-speaking countries but where participants use English (L2) as a lingua franca, and the results suggest that this type of SA experience, very common in Europe, is as positive as traditional SA in a native-speaking country for the development of the L2 (Koylu, 2016). However, there is no study that does that with younger participants, such as adolescents (the few existing studies include university students), so further research should try to fill this gap as European adolescents' participation in mobility programs in countries where the L2 is not the official language but where the L2 is used as the vehicular language (e.g., L1-Spanish adolescents engaging in an SA in the Netherlands) is increasingly becoming more popular.

Key Terms

Age	Adolescents
Learning context	Children
Study abroad	SLA
At home	

Further Readings

- DeKeyser, R. M. (2003). Implicit and explicit learning. In C. Doughty & M. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing. (In this chapter, the author explains the different types of learning, and he also includes a relevant section on age and context differences.)
- Pérez-Vidal, C. (2014). *Language acquisition in study abroad and formal instruction contexts*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins. (This book is very rich because it provides information on the long- and short-term effects of a study abroad experience on different third language domains.)
- Serrano, R., Llanes, Á., & Tragant, E. (2011). Analyzing the effect of context of second language learning: Domestic intensive and semi-intensive courses vs. study abroad in Europe. *System*, 39(2), 133–143. (In this article, the authors compare the acquisition of English as an L2 in two different contexts, in a study abroad context and in an intensive course AH. This study is one of the first studies to compare the effects of intensity of exposure on L2 development.)

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Intercultural Sensitivity

Unpacking the Study Abroad Experience

An Intercultural Process

Kacy M. Peckenpaugh

Introduction

Merely being abroad is not enough to ensure language or culture learning (Kinginger, 2009). While a number of researchers have examined what can be done to prepare students for studying abroad and to support them during their stay abroad (Dupuy, 2006; Jackson, 2006; Vande Berg, 2009), there are surprisingly few research studies examining the process of developing intercultural competence once students have returned.

In the abroad phase, a student may be faced with a number of cultural differences, changes, and even conflicts, yet if the element of reflection is absent, they may fail to discern the meaning of such events. Montrose (2002) wrote, “it is not the activity of leaving one’s homeland that creates learning, but the subsequent analysis of that activity where the real learning begins” (pp. 6–7). The unpacking of one’s experience upon return can be the crucial step in moving study abroad from a cocurricular endeavor to a meaningful portion of a student’s education and life.

Previous Literature

Szkudlarek (2010) completed an exhaustive survey of reentry literature spanning 1945–2009, concluding, “Unfortunately, these publications rely on anecdotal evidence, mostly drawn from the personal experiences of the authors” (p. 13). Moving toward a research-based inquiry, Downey (2005) warned that for students, viewing their experiences as “achievements” is largely egocentric and doesn’t transfer “into an understanding of the place or people who often served as the ‘obstacles’ in the achievement narrative” (p. 119). He concluded his contribution by noting that

Instead of ‘closure,’ I would like to suggest that re-entry education using research can be a further opening that students might not otherwise perceive.... I think that they are looking for *meaning*.

(p. 120)

In *Integrating Study Abroad into the Curriculum*, which presents efforts to “bridge the (artificial) separation of academic learning from experiential and intercultural learning,” Brewer and Cunningham (2009, pp. xi–xii) dedicated only one chapter to discussing the post-study abroad experience of reflection.

In this chapter, Anderson and Cunningham (2009) trained and required students to conduct an ethnographic study to explore a religious, intercultural setting in their home campus community. After completion of the course, the authors coded the students’ final set of reflections; yet contrary to popular belief, they found that the post-study abroad students were all in the group that demonstrated the “lowest amount of [intercultural] learning” (p. 77). This study is extraordinarily helpful in understanding what many students need upon return to campus:

[The post-study abroad students] need to process and continue their intercultural learning when they return... not another cross-cultural experience; rather, they need a different kind of course – one that is more focused on processing and extracting the learning from the experience they just had.

(pp. 80–81)

By using a research-based inquiry to understand how students succeed or fail in drawing meaning and applicable skills from their study abroad experiences, educators can shape intervention strategies and techniques to benefit students. This moves beyond anecdotal evidence to systematically address both the success stories and the failures, examining what students *do* when unpacking their experiences in order to better assist them in making meaning out of their experiences.

Framework for Examining Intercultural Development

The present study examines the process of developing cultural competence as a result of unpacking one’s experiences abroad. It combined three models often used in study abroad literature in an attempt to capture how students develop intercultural competence: the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS), experiential learning theory (ELT), and transformative learning theory (TLT).

The DMIS (Bennett, 1986) was developed into the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003) and is a quantitative measure often used in study abroad literature to document the outcomes of intercultural learning at various stages (cf. Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012). The IDI, based on the DMIS, describes how individuals deal with cultural differences at six defined stages. In the ethnocentric stages (denial, defense, minimization), individuals circumvent cultural differences by foregrounding their own culture as fundamental in experiencing reality, whereas individuals in the ethnorelative stages (acceptance, adaptation, integration) explore cultural difference by experiencing their own culture in the context of other cultures (p. 14). The ELT can supplement these stages to help describe the process of how change came about, particularly in the context of study abroad.

In the ELT model of learning, an individual will begin the learning process by progressing through stages: having a concrete experience, which is followed by observation and reflection, and then forming new knowledge or concepts. In the fourth and final stage, a learner will test out this new knowledge or concept in a new situation, thus restarting the cycle. Passarelli and Kolb (2012) noted that “Further iterations

of the cycle continue the exploration and transfer to experiences in other contexts. In this process learning is integrated with other knowledge and generalized to other contexts leading to higher levels of adult development” (p. 146). This viewpoint is particularly useful in a post-study abroad course as students can take the experiences that they have had, reflect on them in a new light, and potentially apply them to a range of new intercultural settings.

The third stage, described by Montrose (2002) as the “conceptualization stage,” is where students generalize and interpret events (pp. 5–6), and it is precisely the point at which students may need additional support to prevent stereotyping and generalizing. Einbeck (2002) noted that “While [some students’] cultural abilities served for negotiating their basic needs for life... they repeatedly got into cultural trouble, because they were behaving in ways that they did not yet recognize as culturally inappropriate” (p. 59). Although it might be ideal for colleges and universities to have a cultural mentor on-site to help guide students through this process closer to “real-time,” it is not possible, given the abundance of diverse study abroad programs. As such, a more feasible solution could be to provide students with the structures to examine underlying differences on their home campus either before or after their program abroad. This is where Mezirow’s (2000) model of TLT aids in understanding how to convert an intercultural experience into intercultural learning.

TLT has been used in many study abroad publications (e.g., Brewer & Cunningham, 2009). Mezirow (2000) writes,

Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. Transformative learning involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action decision based on the resulting insight.

(pp. 7–8)

Transformative learning adds to experiential learning at the level of reflective observation by examining what is entailed in the critical reflection of one’s frame of reference. Transformative learning manifests itself in one of the following ways: “by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind” (p. 19). While studying abroad, a student typically encounters a number of different frames of reference, but transformative learning only takes place if one can shift a frame of reference. This is the crux of Mezirow’s (2000) TLT: “The most personally significant and emotionally exacting transformations involve a critique of previously unexamined premises regarding one’s self” (p. 21). While it can never be assumed that a student abroad will have all, or even any, of these encounters, the TLT is particularly helpful in examining the process of unpacking the study abroad experience because it encourages students to examine their own frames of reference, which “often represent cultural paradigms... or personal perspectives derived from the idiosyncrasies of primary caregivers” (pp. 16–17).

In experiential learning, it is necessary for students to have the initial experience, but in order for this experience to become meaningful, students must have “reflective observation.” Intercultural learning can begin to develop as a result of a transformative

experience, but considering Taylor's (1994) conclusion that intercultural competence is a transformative learning process, it is relevant to understand the process as the transformation of an intercultural experience to encourage an ethnorelative worldview.

Methods and Procedures

Course

The basic outline of the three-credit course offered at a large southwestern US university entitled "Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad" covered the textbook *Experiencing Intercultural Communication* (Martin & Nakayama, 2011), which familiarizes students with the theoretical frameworks of intercultural communication and integrates practical examples connected to the theoretical frameworks. The objective of the course assignments was to have students connect the theoretical paradigms presented on intercultural communication with real-world examples and critically examine their own frames of reference toward cultural practices.

Online discussions were an opportunity for students to critically examine the intercultural concepts presented and respond to their classmates' posts. Group presentations were largely in the form of leading cultural simulations, e.g., Rocket (Hirshorn, 2009), but they also included examples of cultural encounters, e.g., the failure of Walmart in Germany. Cultural simulations were an opportunity for students to experience what it feels like to be in a different culture or to unexpectedly have different cultural rules, e.g., Barnga. There were four critical reflection papers, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

Although this course was conceived as a predeparture course, third- and fourth-year students had priority registration, thus opening up the course to students who had previously studied abroad.

Participant Selection and Data Collection

Total enrollment in the two semesters offering this course was 54 students: 26 in fall 2010 (cotaught by the researcher and the Director of the Study Abroad Office) and 28 in fall 2011 (exclusively taught by the researcher). There were 10 post-study abroad students across both semesters and 6 who consented to the study. Four of these six were disqualified from this portion of the research because they grew up in bicultural homes or had attended international schools abroad as children. Two consenting students, Liz and Patrick (fall 2011), were selected for the study. As such, an attempt was made to better understand how these students used a course designed to foster intercultural competence to process and unpack their study abroad experiences. Data for the study were gathered from electronically submitted assignments and a self-reported quantitative measure (see the following). Additionally, students filled out a survey that documented their age, major, cultural background, and experience abroad.

Measures and Data Analysis

Measuring cultural competence in its range of forms is not an easy endeavor. Deardorff (2006) found that intercultural experts and administrators largely agreed that

the best way to assess intercultural competence was through a mixed-methods approach, including both qualitative and quantitative measures.

This study used the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI; Kelley & Meyers, 1995) as an indirect, quantitative assessment measure. CCAI self-reported scores were collected at the beginning and end of the course. The CCAI was designed to measure four different dimensions of cross-cultural adaptability: emotional resistance, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy. While some doubt has been cast on the reliability of the CCAI (cf. Davis & Finney, 2006), Nguyen, Biderman, and McNary (2010) responded, noting that the instrument may need further refinement, but also found that two of the CCAI subscales (emotional resilience and personal autonomy) were particularly valid and show an individual's readiness to interact with or adapt to different cultures. Additionally, while shortcomings in self-reported measures of cultural competence have been raised, Sinicrope, Norris, and Watanabe (2007) countered that this "factor may not apply in post-study abroad" because students who have studied abroad do not need to respond in a hypothetical manner but can do so based on their own concrete experiences (p. 34). As such, this study used a self-reported measure of cross-cultural adaptability in measures of emotional resilience and personal autonomy in post-study abroad students to examine some aspects of the "difficult-to-pin-point nature" (Sinicrope et al., 2007, p. 12) of cultural competence.

Data in this study were coded using the frameworks of ELT, TLT, and the DMIS to determine the ethnocentric/ethnorelative worldview of students when they were examining their experiences abroad or existing frames of reference. For example, any instance was included in which students reflected on 'why' or 'how' culture manifested itself in a certain way. Contrastingly, instances in which students made a judgment on the way in which culture manifested itself or on their own or others' cultural perspectives were also included. After these instances were selected, a thematic analysis was done to observe how the students' reflections did, or did not, relate to the theoretical frameworks described (ELT, TLT, DMIS). The examples discussed analyze the qualitative data representative of both the beginning and end of the course.

Hypothesis

The question presented in this study was "How does intercultural competence develop in post-study abroad students over the span of a semester-long course focused on the development of intercultural communication skills through critical reflection?" It was hypothesized that as a result of this intervention strategy/course, the two post-study abroad students would score higher on the posttest measures on the CCAI, that they would use their studies abroad as concrete experiences, and that the coursework focused on understanding intercultural communication would incite observation and reflection, enabling them to form abstract concepts that could be tested in new situations as described in Kolb's (1984) ELT. Additionally, it was hypothesized that critically reflecting on their experiences and positionality with regard to their existing frames of reference would ultimately lead students to transform their frames of reference, which are often cultural paradigms (Mezirow, 2000, p. 16), to include an ethnorelative perspective.

Results

Throughout the course, both Liz and Patrick used course topics and themes to reexamine not only their experiences abroad but also their relation to their own frames of reference. Through using ELT, TLT, and the DMIS, both students became more interculturally competent. Interestingly, Liz and Patrick's scores on the CCAI decreased from their pre- to their posttests; a breakdown of their scores is included in Table 31.1. This contrasts with their coursework, which showed a very rich and detailed progression in a number of different areas outside of their experiences abroad. This dichotomy will be discussed later with demonstrative examples.

Liz

Liz entered the course as a 20-year-old junior majoring in art history. She self-identified as a monocultural Caucasian/non-Hispanic. Liz had amassed quite a bit of experience abroad, having traveled on vacation with family, participated on a two-week high-school exchange program in France, and participated in two college credit-bearing study abroad programs: one five-week program in London, England, and one five-week program in Orvieto, Italy.

In the first half of the course, Liz reflected limitedly on her experiences abroad, choosing, instead, to focus on experiences of cultural consciousness, notably identity. As a part of the first online exercise, students were invited to reflect on their experience in the first cultural simulation: 5-Tricks, a nonproprietary, online-accessible game, similarly styled to Barnga, a proprietary card game designed for Doctors Without Borders participants to experience the disorientation often felt when traveling abroad. Liz equated this experience with her study abroad program in Italy that summer by noting that she felt “defeated” both in the game and on her studying abroad when she could not follow the cultural rules demanded of her. She went on to describe particular incidents during which she felt like a “fish out of water” and her attempts to adapt to Italian cultural practices to overcome this:

I joined the Italian 201 and 202 classes and went into full Italian emersion [sic] mode! I began to speak expressively using hand gestures! I enjoyed the Italian siesta and lenient work hours even if it had originally seemed strange compared to my Western ‘time is money’ mentality! I, an organically strict white chocolate mocha drinker, even began to look forward to the rigorous Italian rule of

Table 31.1 Participant scores on CCAI

	<i>Liz</i>		<i>Patrick</i>			
	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	% Change	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	% Change
Emotional resilience	73	66	-10%	94	82	-8%
Flexibility/openness	65	68	+5%	70	71	+1%
Perceptual acuity	46	48	+4%	51	47	-8%
Personal autonomy	26	21	-19%	40	34	-15%
Totals	210	203	-3%	255	234	-7%

cappuccino at breakfast and espresso after lunch and dinner! I feel like I came home from my trip as a little bit of an Italian myself. Now when I see a stray cat on the side of the road, my first instinct is to try and pet it regardless of if it looks mean or dirty. And when I go into a church without my shoulders covered and showing too much skin for Italian standards, I still feel like God himself will somehow show his wrath for my disgrace.

(Online Discussion, 8/30/2011)

This quote exhibits that although Liz employed strategies in an attempt to adapt to the new culture and language, her reflection is largely descriptive. She demonstrated having learned factual knowledge about Italy, a willingness to accept cultural differences, and even a willingness to try new things, yet her descriptions of her experience do not represent a change in any of her frames of reference. She referred to her experience as “the biggest culture shock of my life” but only elaborates further that she felt like a fish out of water without any linguistic background and the extent of her “feeling Italian” was wanting to pet stray cats upon return to the US or cover her shoulders at church.

At this point in the semester, Liz did not appear to use her experience as a starting point for experiential learning. However, near the midpoint of the semester and poignantly at the end, Liz related coursework to her experience abroad as a starting point for critical reflection and her reflections become dramatically more in-depth and insightful.

Liz’s reflection in her fourth critical reflection paper, submitted the last week of class, is a meaningful demonstration of Kolb’s (1984) cyclical model of experiential learning. In reference to the textbook, Liz highlighted the author’s notion of work ethic in relation to cultural values, specifically the “live to work” vs. “work to live” framework, where European and Mexicans tend to gravitate toward the former, and Americans gravitate more toward the latter. Rather than accepting this ipso facto, she took this insight as an invitation to examine this phenomenon, outside of the course requirements, from the perspective of other members of these cultures by interviewing her uncle John, as well as her best friend Luis, a bicultural Mexican American raised in Tucson, AZ. Describing her uncle, she wrote that he was a fairly well-known CEO and owner of a company, whose “occupation [is] his source of self-worth and value, with each promotion and raise he felt as if he was somehow proving his self-respect to the world” (Fourth Critical Reflection Paper, 12/1/2011). Yet she noted that this led to a divorce from his wife. Luis, who was the subject of many related reflections throughout the course, worked at a clothing store and often treated his friends and family to meals at his home and restaurants, refusing compensation, saying, “What else is a job for?” Liz moved beyond this relation to work and life, writing,

The manners in which both my Uncle [primarily vocation] and my best friend [nationality, familial background, personality, leisure activities, and lastly employment] described themselves demonstrate not only the divergence of their work-related values, but also the importance that these principles can have on a person’s self-identity and therefore their methods of intercultural communication.

(Fourth Critical Reflection Paper, 12/1/2011)

Liz took a newly learned concept, tested it out in other arenas, and then, ultimately, brought this back to her concrete experience in the context of studying abroad in Italy:

I originally was shocked by the Italian store hours. A majority of the Italian “negozi” closed during the mid-day afternoon hours for a “siesta”.... In utter contrast to my American standards of appropriate store hours... the Italian siestas bewildered me beyond belief!... [T]he Italian siesta seemed at first to be a product of laziness and unreliability. My closed minded attitude, which prized the American value of living to work as the proper and correct means of business, lead to unjust prejudice and discrimination of Italian culture and society. However, after learning more about the true valued work-ethic of Italian culture, which prides itself on allowing for a life outside of employment for workers, I realized that my misconstrued signs of laziness was in actuality a form of self-respect for workers.... In short, Italians simply worked to live, while Americans live to work. Neither being wrong.

(Fourth Critical Reflection Paper, 12/1/2011)

Liz's response demonstrates how she used a combination of concrete experiences, reflection, new frameworks, and the testing of new ideas—which became further grounded in a concrete experience—to shift her frame of reference and adopt an ethnorelative point of view in place of her initial ethnocentric point of view. Moreover, Liz acquired the cultural concepts to interpret her experience as well as the ability to use these concepts to create meaning. Her learning did not stop there, however.

While Kolb's model implies that the next tangible experience to apply learning to will takes place in the future, in this situation, Liz relied on her past experiences, key for post-study abroad learning, to serve as reflection points. Liz took her experience and reconstrued its potential meaning from an Italian perspective and then further tested these new theories in other contexts. In the second reflection, she went much further to investigate not only her initial “bewilder[ment]” but also her negative judgment that Italians were lazy. She was able to move beyond the previous nondescript interpretations by using work-related value dimensions to explain why she experienced a cultural conflict. Liz demonstrated a complete cycle of experiential and transformative learning resulting in an ethnorelative point of view.

In contrast to the marked development of intercultural competence over the semester, Liz's CCAI scores were not as remarkable. Overall, Liz's CCAI score shows a decrease of only seven points (3%). However, her scores on the submeasures of emotional resilience and personal autonomy (cf. Nguyen et al., 2010) show a seven-point (10%) and a five-point (19%) decrease, respectively. This inconsistency will be discussed later.

Patrick

Patrick entered the course approximately two weeks late as a 21-year-old junior majoring in accounting. He considered himself a monocultural Caucasian/non-Hispanic and a member of the Jewish faith. In this survey, and elsewhere, Patrick spoke of his extensive travels to Mongolia, Europe, Singapore, and Israel with and without his family. Just before this course began, Patrick had completed an eight-week program abroad in Bangalore, India, through the business school.

Patrick also shifted his frames of reference and was able to talk about cultural differences in a more substantial manner over the course of the semester. Examining two instances that surfaced both at the beginning and the end of the semester, his case is representative of the process of experiential and transformative culture learning.

In Patrick's first critical reflection paper, he used a number of theories presented in the first three chapters of the book to reflect on his experiences in India:

After applying Hofstede's theory [of power distance, masculinity, uncertain avoidance, and long-term versus short-term orientation] to my stay in Bangalore, India, I immediately noticed the significant power distance that exists there. Individuals who hold power in India will wield their power over others in every means possible. The police hassled me several times for bribes, getting tourist information from the government required a bribe, and even the school teachers there... required complete blind obedience from their students. Students were really discouraged from asking their teachers questions or commenting on the lecture. This obedience extended beyond the classroom as well. The students there were subject to a strict set of life dictating rules such as curfews, dress codes, and restricted interactions between male and female students....

Another approach to comparing cultures is to focus on the society's values instead of their ideology. Kluckhon and Strodtbeck's value orientation compares cultures by asking questions regarding human nature, preferred personality, time orientation, and the relationships among humans and nature. I noticed the Indian culture to have present-minded time orientations. The Indian people generally use a cheap and temporary quick fix mentality for everything. For example, if a window breaks they tape the glass together, or if the sidewalk cement is breaking apart they simply pour more cement on top of the cracks. This time value orientation differs from the American culture's future-oriented approach where everything that breaks is thrown away and replaced with something new.

(First Critical Response Paper, 9/19/2011)

Concluding his paper, Patrick did note that comparing can result in stereotyping and that "not every person in India exercised their power over others or has a present-minded time orientation" (First Critical Response Paper, 9/19/2011). In these examples, Patrick appeared to be making a judgment about how he viewed the differences in Indian culture through the lens of value dimensions and value orientations. However, he attempted to 'cover' his interpretation by noting that while this is what he experienced, it might not be valid for all Indians. Patrick displayed an ethnocentric point of view when he said that the police "hassled" him for bribes, that professors do not consider the opinions of their students but rather demand "blind obedience," and that Indians had a "quick-fix" approach to repairs. It is of note that he did not appear to be viewing American culture as superior regarding this "quick-fix mentality," yet he did not consider that his own point of view toward American culture is ignorant of the fact that many Americans either do not have the financial means to throw broken items away or that some place value on the repair itself. Although one cannot expect a full interpretation on every detail in such an undergraduate paper, Patrick did not appear to consider differences present in American culture. Overall, he did attempt to use newly learned frameworks to interpret his experiences, yet his conclusions were largely ethnocentric.

The reflections provided in his final exam, however, reflected a much more interculturally competent individual with an ethnorelative point of view:

Martin and Nakayama [2011] discuss the connection between perception and culture in their book. They define perception as "...ways of looking at the world," and describe culture as, "...sort of lens through which we view the world." This description of culture completely resonated with my previous experiences. While in India I immediately recognized the difference in time orientation between Americans and Indians. Americans typically have a future-oriented time orientation, while Indians have a present-minded time orientation. They use the "quick-fix" approach for everything.... Perhaps the Indian people prefer a quick fix solution when it comes to their belongings because they don't measure their success in life through the products they acquire?

[...] this semester has helped me digest my previous experiences while traveling abroad. Throughout the semester I was able to associate what I was learning in class with my attempts at intercultural communication in India. In one paper I discussed the differences between American and Indian universities with emphasis on the power distances. Learning about power distance helped me understand why the teachers in Bangalore behaved the way they did. They did not ignore any questions or comments we had during class because they did not care about my opinions as I originally thought, but rather because they had a bigger distance of power between students and teachers.

(Final Exam, 12/2/2011)

In the final exam, we see the result of Patrick processing his experience and, ultimately, a shift in frame of reference. Whereas Patrick used the same theories to ground his experience in regard to the "quick-fix" approach and the power distance in the classroom, he did not judge these situations negatively. Instead, he came to new conclusions, reexamined his interpretations, and even attempted to hypothesize why Americans and Indians have different value dimensions by bringing a world-view based on materialism into question by ending his statement with an unrequired question mark, which seems to imply that it would require further evidence to substantiate on his part.

Patrick used his experiences abroad as a subject of investigation. Further, he also applied a new cultural awareness to his "perception of normally regular activities" in the US:

My parents and I went to Temple for my grandfather's yahrzeit, which in Yiddish means anniversary of death.... I could not help but recognize the religious culture associated [with] temple. For example everyone was praying in Hebrew, and all the guys wearing kippahs (small hats). My brother brought his wife with him to Temple, who has never been to a synagogue before. I could tell that she was exercising culture shock, but everyone else was oblivious to this.

(Final Exam, 12/2/2011)

It is unclear what Patrick did with this information, e.g., if he helped his sister-in-law adjust, but his awareness of cultural differences is indicative of potentially taking the next step toward reexamining his interpretations of an otherwise-normal occurrence.

Patrick was not only able to use the new knowledge learned in class to critically reflect on his experiences abroad, but he also completed the learning cycle by re-evaluating his original conclusions about Indian culture and applying this new perspective on culture differences at home. Through guided coursework reflection, he was able to critically examine his underlying beliefs about his experiences abroad and transform his frame of reference into a more inclusive, ethnorelative point of view.

Overall, Patrick's score on the CCAI showed a larger decrease than that of Liz dropping from 255 to 234 (7%). On the measures of emotional resilience and personal autonomy, Patrick's scores decreased 12 points (8%) and 6 points (15%), respectively. This difference is much more pronounced than Liz's and is of note in consideration of the participants' marked qualitative intercultural learning.

Discussion and Implications

In a pre-/postanalysis, the qualitative data used in this study documented progress in becoming interculturally competent in post-study abroad students as a result of taking a course focused on intercultural communication. It would be expected that intervening in student learning through the course would have led to similar changes in both qualitative and quantitative data. However, contrary to the hypothesis, the quantitative data expressed overall decreases in the CCAI and decreases more notably in the scores of emotional resilience and personal autonomy. The changes in the qualitative vs. quantitative data bring up three discussion points.

First, one must discuss the CCAI's use, itself, as a "self-assessment profile" and its ability to accurately measure changes in intercultural competence. The following guidelines are given to the user for interpreting the graph-plotting of the four dimensions of the CCAI: "The score that is closest to the outer edge indicates your strongest area, and the score that is closest to the center of the profile indicates your weakest area." Further guidelines are not included in the self-assessment, leading one to question how to "do" anything with these strengths/weaknesses if one were self-guided. The researcher chose to use the strategies of the ELT, TLT, and the DMIS noted earlier to guide critical reflection. One hypothesis to account for the discrepancy is that while shown to be predictive in nature to one's ability to adapt cross-culturally (Kelley & Myers, 1995; Nguyen et al., 2010), perhaps the CCAI is not well suited for measuring one's changes over time. Although the de facto scores changed, there were no effective changes in the evaluation of the four subscales as a strength or weakness; the strengths remained strengths, and the weaknesses remained weaknesses. Perhaps the main goal of the CCAI is to simply identify these and, beyond that, perhaps they stay consistent relative to each other.

A second point to consider in the differences between the qualitative and quantitative data is that perhaps the qualitative data in this study, which focused on experiential and transformative learning, do not align with the cross-cultural adaptability measured by the CCAI. Savicki and Selby (2008) write that there are many avenues to understanding study abroad (e.g., psychology, sociology, language learning) but that "a key to more comprehensive understanding of study abroad lies in the study of intercultural competence, growth and transformation..." (p. 346). Perhaps the CCAI is simply not well suited to describe the nature of the changes inherent in intercultural competence, growth, and transformation. Or, perhaps the ability to adapt

cross-culturally can only come from increased time and experience in cross-cultural situations, not as a result of reflection thereupon after returning home.

An interpretation of the data from a third vantage point is based on the few studies that have looked at individuals returning home. A common reflection about returned students is that they have a heightened sense of personal achievement (Downey, 2005; Meyer-Lee, 2005; Savicki & Selby, 2008), but Adler (1981), who examined the cross-cultural transitions of returned business workers, noted that while the transition abroad is expected to be difficult, few expect the return home to be difficult. In fact, she found that “Contrary to this implicit assumption, returnees in the present study found re-entry slightly more difficult than the initial entry transition” (p. 344). Adler noted that there was a high period during reentry but that it typically lasted for less than one month and returnees’ lowest periods were during their second and third months. This could help to explain the discrepancy between the qualitative and quantitative data. Perhaps, upon returning home, Liz and Patrick overestimated their ability to adjust cross-culturally because they were in the honeymoon phase of returning home or perhaps they were still experiencing a heightened sense of accomplishment upon reentry when they first took the test. Further, the subscore of Personal Autonomy, which showed the largest drop for both participants, includes “the ability to maintain one’s own personal values and beliefs... People with high personal autonomy feel empowered. They know how to make and act on their own decisions while respecting the decisions of others” (Kelley & Meyers, 1995). Thus, while it is possible that the CCAI might not reflect changes over time well, it is equally plausible that after critically reflecting upon the difficulties they encountered abroad, Liz and Patrick moved from feeling empowered to act based on their own personal values and beliefs immediately after returning home to having a more realistic and self-critical perception of the challenges inherent in adapting to another culture.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are a number of limitations in this study. First and foremost, this study only examined two participants. Larger studies could address the generalizability across more sources of data in an attempt to uncover any latent variables that may have affected the degree of reflection represented by the qualitative data. Additionally, it is unclear how the CCAI relates to these students’ experiences, whether the measure should no longer be used, or whether it is validly addressing the changes in students’ perceptions of their ability to adapt cross-culturally. In light of these limitations, using a number of batteries, such as the IDI or other psychological measures instead of or in addition to the CCAI, could better address personality differences or changes over time to better understand the reentry process of returning home from studying abroad.

Insight into the intercultural learning process underscores the irrefutable necessity to give students strategies and a forum for unpacking their experiences abroad so that they may refrain from ethnocentric stereotyping and apply their intercultural skills to a wider range of settings more thoughtfully. Future studies should examine what effect prestudy preparation, in-study intervention, and poststudy reflection have on the development of intercultural competence and including an instrument, such as the IDI to track development between the stages of the DMIS. This could help ensure that the process of developing intercultural competence aligns with intercultural outcomes.

To end this piece, Patrick's own words are most insightful for what a course of this nature can do for students:

I had previously thought that all my success in intercultural communication was a direct result of my conscious knowledge and my extensive traveling. With each chapter I read in the book however, I soon realized that they were merely a product of my traveling companions, luck, and my subconscious.... The first thing I learned in this class was that I merely knew the "what" behind cultural communication. I had never methodically or analytically thought about my previous experiences. I had never considered if my experiences would have panned out differently had I used a set of skills or strategies to communicate across cultures.

(Final Exam, 12/2/2011)

While many students may succeed as a result of luck, the academy holds responsibility for ensuring that students learn as effectively as possible while abroad on credit-bearing programs including pre-, during, and post-study abroad pedagogical interventions designed to maximize transformative learning. To be successful in a globalized world, our students will need more than content knowledge; they will need the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to approach "conscious competence" (cf. Martin and Nakayama, 2011).

Key Terms

Reentry	Study abroad
Intercultural competence	Transformative learning
Post-study abroad	Experiential learning

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Part V

Applications

Preparing Students for Study Abroad



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The Role of Individual Factors in Students' Attitudes toward Credit-bearing Predeparture Classes

Implications for Practice

Lisa M. Kuriscak and Kelly J. Kirkwood

Introduction

It is well documented that intercultural learning outcomes from a sojourn abroad are accomplished by challenging how students see themselves in the world, approach situations, and interact with others. Despite the benefits that the literature ascribes to them, credit-bearing enrichment courses have not seen widespread adoption. Although a few US universities (e.g., University of Minnesota, University of the Pacific) have comprehensive, long-standing programs that require students to undertake credit-bearing, predeparture coursework, formal courses may be entirely unrealistic for most institutions (or, where they do exist, be only optional) due to implementation barriers (e.g., resources, program diversity, emphasis in academia on growth metrics, state/university pressure for students to graduate in four years, lack of administrative/faculty support, academic infrastructure).

A recent review of the literature showed that no comprehensive report exists that catalogs the presence/absence of formal credit-bearing study abroad enrichment courses at higher education institutions. In an online survey that we distributed in 2012 to the SECUSS-L LISTSERV for education abroad professionals, only a handful of our 26 respondents' universities offered predeparture ($n = 5$), returnee ($n = 4$), or in-country ($n = 9$) courses. They were mostly private (63% private, 37% public) and had been offering these courses, which were taught on-campus only (face-to-face), for five or more years; about half of the courses were required, and half were optional, and credit hours ranged from one to four.

In cases where courses are offered but optional, recruitment is not simply a matter of marketing or advising but is more about understanding (i) the barriers (perceived or real) to enrollment (e.g., biases and expectations; monetary, time, credit, or graduation constraints), (ii) how students perceive the interaction between their identities (as members of a specific generation, as males and females, as US-Americans) and the host culture, and (iii) students' attitudes regarding the study abroad preparation

process. Our research speaks specifically to this last point: students' attitudes regarding credit-bearing enrichment courses. Many students have little meta-awareness of their own cultural lens, visible and invisible cultural traits of the host cultures, and the means by which to grasp and navigate the differences. Students may not realize what they could gain, putting the onus on faculty and practitioners to recruit students strategically.

In the present study, the term *Intercultural Enrichment Course* (IEC) refers to a credit-bearing course for predeparture study abroad students, designed to help students maximize their overseas experience. Typical IEC topics include culture shock; living with host families; adjusting to a new educational system; intercultural etiquette; and learning concrete ways to connect experiences abroad to academic, professional, and personal goals. To date, no known study has explored students' attitudes toward this type of learning intervention. If we, as a field, can become more aware of how barriers may arise from students' attitudes toward engagement, we can craft better interventions and target our recruitment strategies more effectively. To begin to fill this gap, the present empirical study examined the relationship between (i) students' attitudes toward IECs and (ii) differences in individual (gender, level of engagement abroad) and program characteristics (length, language of host region). By providing insight into the university student population, we hope to help faculty and practitioners recognize study abroad students as equally relevant stakeholders in the curriculum process. Understanding how students feel about IECs—and if their attitudes are affected by individual-difference variables and/or program variables—is of benefit as we seek to improve upon and promote formal learning interventions for study abroad.

Previous Literature

Recent statistics on study abroad participation, presented in the Institute of International Education's (2016) *Open Doors Report*, revealed that 313,415 US-American students studied abroad in 2014–2015. This figure represents a 2.9% increase over the prior year. Yet, as overall participation increases, trends continue toward shorter overseas experiences. The majority (63%) of participants in 2014–2015 were abroad for a summer or up to eight weeks. Comparing these students to those who spent a full academic or calendar year abroad, the rate of participation dropped by half: from 6.2% in 2004–2005 to 2.6% in 2014–2015.

While a steady increase in study abroad participation (in programs of any length) continues to be the focus of US institutions, some research has shown that shorter programs may not result in intercultural growth (e.g., Dwyer, 2004; Kurt, Olitsky, & Geis, 2013; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). Furthermore, Lemmons (2015) found that students on short-term programs spent a small portion of their in-country experience engaged in meaningful interaction in the field, tending to stay in large groups with other US participants due to their level of unfamiliarity and tendency to take the cultural path of least resistance.

Recent literature in the field of international education revealed that student learning outcomes for any program length can be significantly enhanced by the presence of formal interventions before, during, and after a sojourn abroad (e.g., Engle & Engle, 2003; Paige & Goode, 2009; Vande Berg et al., 2012). Combining immersion experiences, reflection opportunities, and intentional cultural mentoring

increases student intercultural development. It is generally accepted that such interventions might mitigate students' tendency to resist local engagement. Thus, emerging literature has focused on the development of intercultural competence from these learning interventions (e.g., Deardorff, 2011). Goldoni (2013) recommended that

study abroad program directors, course coordinators, and instructors could take roles as facilitators, guides, and coaches who assist students before, during, and after the study abroad experience in developing increased levels of language proficiency and in acquiring knowledge and awareness of, as well as sensitivity and empathy toward, both home and host cultures.

(p. 373)

Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige (2009) also noted, "findings suggest that the presence or absence of a well-trained cultural mentor who meets frequently with students may be the single most important intervention to improve student intercultural learning" (p. 25).

Prior studies on US students' attitudes regarding study abroad participation are limited to investigation of their motivation to participate in an overseas program (e.g., Richart, 2015) and their postprogram evaluations (e.g., Mendelson, 2004). Early literature on student preparation for study abroad suggested that students' lack of preparation for intercultural engagement abroad begins with the incongruence with the home-campus experience. First, college students are not routinely exposed to experiences that equip them with the necessary emotional, behavioral, and intellectual skills for successful cross-cultural interactions abroad (La Brack, 1986). Second, study abroad is most often disconnected from the traditional academic experience, with a lack of access to relevant cross-cultural curriculum (Martin, 1989). Thus, students tend to enter the overseas experience with limited exposure to the kinds of campus experiences (coursework and otherwise) that might better prepare them for learning abroad. Where such coursework exists, research has demonstrated positive outcomes. For example, Bathurst and La Brack (2012) described a student who studied abroad for one year and resisted taking the IEC reentry course; two months into the course, he stated, "What I've realized...is that I wasn't really in Japan, even though I lived there. That is, I didn't really learn anything about Japanese culture" (p. 281). This illustrates the transformative power of formal intervention and how unaware students are of its potential.

Methods and Procedures: Surveys and Focus Groups

The research questions that guided this study and the methodology of the data collection are as follows:

- 1 Is there a difference in males' and females' attitudes toward IECs?
- 2 Is there a difference in the attitudes toward IECs of students who studied in English-language vs. non-English regions?
- 3 Is there a relationship between program length and attitudes toward IECs?
- 4 Is there a relationship between students' efforts to maximize their own learning abroad in various ways and their attitudes toward IECs?

Table 32.1 Descriptive statistics: Participant and program information*

<i>Variables and values</i>	<i>Pretest-only</i> <i>n</i> = 191 <i>n</i> (%)	<i>Posttest-only</i> <i>n</i> = 474 <i>n</i> (%)	<i>Matched cases</i> <i>n</i> = 140 <i>n</i> (%)	<i>Focus groups</i> <i>n</i> = 13 <i>n</i> (%)
<i>Age</i>				
18–20	88 (60)	46 (12)	66 (47)	–
21–25	57 (39)	337 (84)	70 (50)	13 (100)
≤ 17 or ≥ 26	2 (1)	18 (4)	4 (3)	–
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	51 (27)	134 (28)	32 (23)	7 (54)
Female	140 (73)	340 (72)	108 (77)	6 (46)
<i>Program length</i>				
1–2 weeks	13 (9)	43 (10)	22 (15)	–
3–8 weeks	61 (41)	177 (42)	85 (61)	2 (15)
One semester	55 (37)	158 (38)	30 (21)	10 (77)
Academic year	13 (8)	18 (4)	1 (1)	1 (8)
Other	8 (5)	23 (6)	2 (1)	–
<i>English = primary language of destination (Overseas Language)</i>				
Yes	57 (37)	230 (55)	37 (26)	5 (38)
No	84 (55)	155 (37)	88 (63)	8 (62)
English and non-English	0 (0)	34 (8)	12 (9)	–
Unsure	12 (8)	–	3 (2)	–

*Percentages are Valid Percent. Totals do not always equal the *n* due to missing values. There was essentially no overlap between survey and focus-group participants; only one focus-group participant completed a survey (pretest-only).

Participants and Procedures

Quantitative data came from 805 undergraduates (in a variety of majors) at a mid-sized, public, Midwestern university that sends approximately 500 students abroad annually and does not offer IECs. Qualitative data came from 13 undergraduates at the same institution. Descriptive statistics for all participants are shown in Table 32.1. Variable names appear in italics in all tables and text.

Quantitative Data

The quantitative data were collected over 18 months from undergraduates who earned academic credit on a variety of study abroad programs. All students in the institution's study abroad database were invited to complete the pretest before studying abroad and the posttest upon return. Given that the surveys were voluntary, not everyone answered both, thus yielding 805 total cases: 140 matched (pre- and posttest), 191 pretest-only, and 474 posttest-only.

Qualitative Data

Since some of the quantitative results did not allow us to draw meaningful conclusions, we chose an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2009) to delve further into the story behind the numbers by adding data from gender-specific, returnee focus groups. Those who had returned to the US no more than one year prior to the focus groups were invited by email, and two groups were formed (one for males and the other for females). Each focus group lasted one hour and was run by one or two matched-gender moderators.

Table 32.2 Descriptive statistics: IEC question*

<i>Variables and values</i>		<i>Pretest-only</i> <i>n</i> = 151	<i>Posttest-only</i> <i>n</i> = 404	<i>Matched cases</i> <i>n</i> = 140
		<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Do you think you could benefit from an IEC? (<i>IEC Attitude Pre</i>)	YES	124 (82)	–	108 (78)
	NO	27 (18)	–	31 (22)
Do you think you would have benefitted from an IEC? (<i>IEC Attitude Post</i>)	YES	–	278 (69)	78 (57)
	NO	–	126 (31)	59 (43)

*Percentages reported are Valid Percent. Totals do not always equal the *n* due to missing values.

Instrumentation

Quantitative Data

Qualtrics survey software was used to create and distribute the online surveys, and SPSS was used to analyze the data. Question types included binary and scalar response styles informed by Dillman (2014). The primary analyses reported here are two-way ANOVAs and Fisher's Exact Test. In addition to the demographic information indicated in Table 32.1, students were also asked to report on other variables, including their predeparture preparation; the value they placed on various program features; their satisfaction with predeparture advising, internships, or similar experiences abroad; and attitudes toward specific features of IECs (format, topics, credits, etc., which were described in the surveys), among others that go beyond the scope of the present study. Descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables appear in Tables 32.1–32.3: students' inclination or disinclination toward IECs (dependent variable—Table 32.2), gender and select program details (independent variables—Table 32.1), and students' self-reported efforts to maximize their learning abroad (independent variable—Table 32.3). Furthermore, Table 32.3 includes two scales created in the analyses to combine similar items (one primarily dealing with engagement and the other dealing with use of a second language [L2] for those who went to non-English regions).

Qualitative Data

The focus group questions related to students' perceptions of their confidence and anxiousness before and while abroad, what they wished they had known (phrased as "What would you tell your previous self *before* studying abroad about how to prepare for study abroad?"), who their mentors were, their perception of an IEC's ability to help them overcome challenges and get the most out of their experience abroad (along with their opinion of potential aspects of course design), and the salience of their gender identity while abroad. To identify common themes, the data were transcribed and then coded using an open-coding analysis technique within a Grounded Theory framework (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Results and Discussion: Surveys and Focus Groups

First, we discuss the results for our four research questions. Most quantitative analyses reported here come from matched cases; when the matched cases approached

Table 32.3 Descriptive statistics: maximizing question (posttest only)

Maximizing items	Overseas language	Male		Female		Combined male and female	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
All items below preceded by: "How would you rate your own efforts to maximize your learning while abroad?" 5-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree	Posttest All cases <i>n</i> = 614						
I actively participated in my classes while abroad. (<i>Actively Participated in Classes</i>)	English Non-English Combined	4.72 4.74 4.73	0.49 0.48 0.48	4.72 4.75 4.73	0.52 0.47 0.50	4.72 4.75 4.73	0.51 0.47 0.49
I made friends with locals while abroad. (<i>Made Friends with Locals</i>)	English Non-English Combined	4.12 4.13 4.12	0.96 1.06 1.01	4.07 3.83 3.97	1.10 1.17 1.13	4.08 3.91 4.01	1.07 1.14 1.10
I made friends with other international students while abroad. (<i>Made Friends with International Students</i>)	English Non-English Combined	4.02 4.12 4.07	1.16 1.17 1.16	4.03 4.08 4.05	1.21 1.23 1.22	4.02 4.09 4.06	1.20 1.21 1.20
In my daily activities, I was completely immersed in the host culture while abroad. (<i>Completely Immersed</i>)	English Non-English Combined	4.28 4.34 4.31	0.93 0.88 0.90	4.32 4.28 4.30	0.90 0.85 0.88	4.31 4.30 4.30	0.91 0.85 0.88
I spoke the foreign language with my closest friends while abroad. (<i>Spoke L2 with Closest Friends</i>)	English Non-English Combined	2.38 3.22 3.12	1.60 1.31 1.36	2.69 3.05 3.01	1.44 1.28 1.31	2.62 3.10 3.04	1.46 1.29 1.32
Outside of class, I spoke MORE ENGLISH than the foreign language. (<i>More English than L2</i>) [*]	English Non-English Combined	1.88 2.31 2.26	1.36 1.30 1.30	1.46 2.35 2.23	0.71 1.32 1.29	1.56 2.33 2.23	0.89 1.31 1.29
At the end of my program, I felt confident I could appropriately handle most social situations in the foreign language. (<i>Social Confidence</i>)	English Non-English Combined	3.50 3.71 3.69	1.41 1.21 1.22	3.62 3.88 3.85	1.24 1.27 1.26	3.59 3.83 3.80	1.26 1.25 1.25
<i>Engagement scale</i> ^{**}	English Non-English Combined	4.29 4.33 4.31	0.64 0.59 0.61	4.29 4.23 4.27	0.61 0.64 0.62	4.29 4.26 4.28	0.61 0.63 0.62
<i>L2 Use/Confidence scale</i> ^{**}	English Non-English Combined	2.67 3.11 3.06	0.92 1.09 1.07	2.64 3.13 3.06	0.85 1.06 1.05	2.65 3.12 3.06	0.85 1.07 1.05

^{*}Reversed in coding.^{**}The first four items in this table were combined to make up the *Engagement* scale. The last three were combined to make up the *L2 Use/Confidence* scale.

The scales' internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha, was 0.513 (*Engagement*) and 0.748 (*L2 Use/Confidence*). In a future study, we hope to raise the Alpha by expanding the number of items in the *Engagement* scale to have a higher internal consistency coefficient.

but did not reach statistical significance, the data were analyzed again with all of the cases to see if any patterns surfaced. Statistically significant outcomes were found for all questions. Second, we discuss insights from the focus group data, particularly as they relate to students' gender and L2 use.

Quantitative Findings

The dependent variable for all analyses was students' attitudes toward the perceived benefits of an IEC (hereafter referred to as *IEC Attitude*)—that is, whether they responded yes or no to the following:

- Pretest (*IEC Attitude Pre*): Do you think you could benefit from an intercultural enrichment course?
- Posttest (*IEC Attitude Post*): Do you think you would have benefitted from an intercultural enrichment course?

As shown in Table 32.2, more students saw benefit in an IEC before departing than upon return to the US: 78% were inclined toward an IEC before going abroad, but only 57% were inclined after returning. To attempt to discern the reason for this decrease, we examined the relationship between students' answers to these two questions and the independent variables indicated in Tables 32.1 and 32.3.

Research Question #1: Is there a difference in males' and females' attitudes toward IECs?

Tests of association using Fisher's Exact Test were conducted (because the variables were categorical) on the matched cases, yielding one significant finding: In the pretest (see Table 32.4), more females than males had positive attitudes toward IECs: 83% of females (89 of 107) vs. 59% of males (19 of 32) answered "yes" to the IEC question ($p = 0.019$). In the posttest, the difference was not statistically significant, but both males and females dropped in their "yes" percentages (Table 32.4 again), the females proportionally more than males.

Thus, there does seem to be evidence in support of Research Question #1: In the pretest, females and males were different in their attitudes toward IECs (with females leaning more toward IECs than males). However, by the posttest, there was a leveling off of this effect; they seem to become more similar after the sojourn abroad.

Table 32.4 Crosstab: matched cases: *IEC Attitude* by *Gender*

IEC Attitude by Gender		Males		Females	
		Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Do you think you could benefit/ would have benefitted from an intercultural enrichment course?	Yes	Count	19	16	89
		% within gender	59	50	62
	No	Count	13	16	83
		% within gender	41	50	59
Total Count		32	32	107	105

*Note: Pretest = "Do you think you could benefit..."; Posttest = "Do you think you would have benefitted...". Incomplete data are responsible for the discrepancy in the *n* (where students chose not to answer the IEC question).

Research Question #2: Is there a difference in attitudes toward IECs of students who studied in English-language vs. non-English-language contexts?

Tests of association using Fisher's Exact Test were conducted (because the variables were again categorical) on the matched pre/post cases, yielding one significant finding for *Overseas Language*: In the pretest, more students who went to non-English-language regions (84%: 76 of 91) felt they could have benefitted from an IEC vs. those who went to English-language regions (67%: 32 of 48), $p = 0.032$. No similar effect was found in the posttest, but their percentages did drop (from 67% to 56% for English-language regions; from 84% to 57% for non-English regions).

Research Question #3: Is there a relationship between program length and attitudes toward IECs?

From the tests of association using Fisher's Exact Test, no significant relationship was found between *Program Length* and *IEC Attitude (Pre or Post)* in the matched cases. However, a significant finding emerged ($p = 0.037$) when all cases were run for the pretest. The longer the sojourn abroad, the higher the response rate for "yes" to the *IEC Attitude Pre* question: 75% (134 of 178) of students who participated in short-term programs (8 weeks or less), 87% (74 of 85) of students in midlength programs (1 semester), and 93% (13 of 14) of students in long-term programs (academic year).

Research Question #4: Is there a relationship between students' efforts to maximize their own learning abroad in various ways and their attitudes toward IECs?

Students were asked questions to gauge their efforts to maximize their learning abroad. We wanted to examine the results while controlling for the influence of *Gender* as well as for whether they went to English- or non-English-speaking regions (*Overseas Language*), so we ran separate sets of two-way ANOVAs for each item, first by *Gender* and then again by *Overseas Language*. For *Gender*, we found significant effects for the variables of *L2 Use/Confidence*, *Spoke L2 with Closest Friends*, and *Actively Participated in Classes*: two significant interaction effects and two main effects. *Gender* specifically impacts the outcomes, as noted by these two interaction effects (*Gender* by *IEC Attitude Post*):

- 1 Females with higher *L2 Use/Confidence* ($M = 3.28$) also thought they would have benefitted from an IEC. Those who thought they would *not* have benefitted from an IEC had lower means for *L2 Use/Confidence* (3.06). Males showed the inverse pattern; those who did not see benefit in an IEC had higher means (3.67) on *L2 Use/Confidence* than males who saw benefit in an IEC (2.89): $F(1, 84) = 4.17, p = 0.044$.
- 2 Females with higher means (3.26) for *Spoke L2 with Closest Friends* also thought they would have benefitted from an IEC. Those who thought they would *not* have benefitted from an IEC had lower means for this variable (2.81). Males showed the inverse pattern; those who did not see benefit in an IEC had higher means (3.55) on *Spoke L2 with Closest Friends* than males who saw benefit in an IEC (2.69): $F(1, 94) = 4.14, p = 0.045$.

These interaction effects essentially show that the perceived benefit of an IEC varied depending on participant gender. Continuing on to the main effects for *Actively Participated in Classes*, we found the following:

- 1 Males and females were different in this variable, regardless of whether they thought an IEC would have been beneficial: $F(1, 122) = 6.08, p = 0.15$. Females had

- slightly higher means than males for *Actively Participated in Classes* (Females' M : 4.84; Males' M : 4.63).
- 2 Their attitudes toward IECs, regardless of gender, made a difference in this variable: $F(1, 122) = 6.08, p = 0.015$. Participants who thought they would not have benefitted from an IEC had slightly higher means ($M = 4.84$) than their counterparts (who did see benefit in an IEC, $M = 4.63$) for *Actively Participated in Classes*.

Thus, for the analyses involving *Gender*, there is evidence in support of Research Question #4, in particular from the interaction effects: There is a relationship between students' efforts to maximize their learning abroad and their attitudes toward IECs. Specifically, females who maximized their experience abroad through more L2 use (i.e., *L2 Confidence/Use* and *Spoke L2 with Closest Friends*) also had more positive attitudes toward IECs, whereas males who similarly maximized had less positive attitudes toward IECs. The two-way ANOVAs for *Overseas Language* showed multiple significant effects: two interaction effects and one main effect, which also support Research Question #4 when the language of the destination is considered. That is, *Overseas Language* specifically impacts the outcomes, as noted by these two interaction effects (*Overseas Language* by *IEC Attitude Post*):

- 1 Students who went to English-language regions and had higher means (4.35) for *Engagement* saw benefit in an IEC. Those who did not see benefit in an IEC had lower means (4.16) for *Engagement*. For students who went to non-English regions, the inverse was found (although the difference in means is small): Those with higher means (4.34) for *Engagement* did not see benefit in an IEC; those with lower means (4.22) for *Engagement* saw benefit in an IEC: $F(1, 511) = 7.24, p = 0.007$.
- 2 Students who went to English-language regions and had higher means (4.24) for *Made Friends with Locals* saw benefit in an IEC; those who did not see benefit in an IEC had lower means (3.77) for this variable. For students who went to non-English regions, the inverse was found again: Those with higher means (4.08) for *Made Friends with Locals* did not see benefit in an IEC; those who saw benefit had lower means (3.82) for this variable: $F(1, 519) = 13.05, p = 0.000$.

Furthermore, the significant main effect (*IEC Attitude Post* on *Actively Participated in Classes*) revealed that students who differed in *IEC Attitude Post* were also dissimilar in *Actively Participated in Classes*, regardless of *Overseas Language*: $F(1, 507) = 4.51, p = 0.034$. Those who saw benefit in an IEC had slightly lower means (4.70) for *Actively Participated in Classes* than those who did not see benefit in an IEC (4.80). That is, participants who said "no" to the IEC question also reported participating less in classes abroad. The inverse was found for the second main effect for *Gender* (i.e., those who were more active in class said "no" to the IEC question).

Thus, the results involving *Overseas Language* suggest that there is a relationship between students' efforts to maximize their learning abroad and their attitudes toward IECs: Those who went to English-language regions, were more engaged overall, and made local friends, had more positive attitudes toward IECs. For participants who went to non-English regions, the inverse was true: More engagement and making local friends were associated with not seeing benefit in an IEC.

To bring together the findings from the four research questions, we draw the following conclusions:

- 1 Significant differences were more frequent in the pretest: Females overall, students who went to non-English regions, and students who chose longer programs all had more positive attitudes toward IECs than their counterparts.
- 2 Students' efforts to maximize their learning abroad revealed these differences:
 - a Gender: Females with a higher level of engagement and who spoke the L2 with friends had more positive attitudes toward IECs.
 - b Overseas language: Positive attitudes toward IECs were found for students in English-language regions who were more engaged/made friends with locals.
 - c Engagement: Students who were less active in class had positive attitudes toward IECs (regardless of *Overseas Language* and regardless of *Gender* [Research Question #1]).

Therefore, several individual-difference variables do correlate with positive attitudes about potential IEC benefits. The variables in Table 32.3 that did not yield significant outcomes (i.e., *Made Friends with International Students*, *Completely Immersed*, *More English than L2*, and *Social Confidence*) may be reflective of program differences (e.g., opportunities for local immersion, group vs. individual program structure, linguistic emphasis) vs. individual student differences and should be further explored through research. In sum, students with positive attitudes toward IECs tended to be (i) females who maximized their learning abroad by speaking the L2 more and (ii) males and females in English-language regions who maximized their learning by being more engaged and making local friends.

Qualitative Findings

Our focus group data reveal the complex and often-contradictory feelings and thoughts that male and female students have toward preparation for a sojourn abroad. Males generally rejected IECs (e.g., one stated that an IEC would “cheapen” the experience; Quote #1 echoes this belief). Females were open to IECs but wanted primarily logistical, practical skills/information to navigate universities/cities abroad and considered IECs more important if studying in non-English regions (Quote #2) because that is where they perceive culture shock happens (Quotes #2 and #3). What our research suggests, and the following quotes illustrate, is that there are notable differences in the males' and females' attitudes toward predeparture preparation (its overall importance and what aspects merit their attention), and host country language may impact these attitudes:

- 1 “I don't think there should be a class for it. I think that's kind of a stupid idea... most people are going to study abroad for just the experience of being in another country not having to take a class for it and then go already knowing everything” (male, semester in Japan).
- 2 “I believe it all depends where do you go to study. Because...if you go to a foreign country with completely foreign language—like cuz most of us...were based on English. So it wasn't that big of a cultural shock. But if someone leaves to

- Italy or Spain or France or somewhere where the language is so much different from English, that's where they really need the preparation" (female, semester in Australia).
- 3 "I didn't have a culture shock when I went to England but I'd been to Sweden...in a small town...And I had culture shock because they all spoke Swedish, and they speak English, but it's like I was nervous to go anywhere by myself because...—even though they know English—I don't want to seem like a stupid American" (female, semester in England).

To better explore gender differences that surfaced in the quantitative analyses, we asked the focus group participants to share sources of, and changes in, confidence and anxiousness at two points: before departure and upon arrival. Both males and females indicated an overall comfort with their language abilities (for both first language [L1] and L2 destinations) and a readiness to operate independently abroad. All but one of the males expressed experiencing a reduction in confidence when overseas. However, the males indicated that their anxiousness (which came from expectations from others, traveling alone, not making friends) dissipated with experience in-country. Females reported that their initial feelings of confidence remained relatively unchanged abroad, and the sources of their predeparture anxiousness (academics, money, food, embarrassment) were resolved in-country.

Of particular note was the male focus group's discomfort with the moderator's use of the word "anxious" (e.g., One said, "Yeah I think that question's not worded right" [male, summer in Argentina]). Several males were outspoken about their discomfort and expressed a need to delineate sources of anxiousness vs. nervousness, seeming to base it on whether they wanted to do something or not: "Anxious is like you're—you anticipate something that you're like excited for it..." (male, semester in Germany). Conversely, nervousness comes into play when they do *not* want to do something. When this definition was probed, males reported that predeparture nervousness/anxiousness was related to concerns about belonging (not making friends abroad, traveling alone) and esteem (not meeting the expectations of others). Females also reported predeparture anxiousness about belonging (getting along with roommates, potential of embarrassment from intercultural gaffes). However, the females said they were most nervous about how they would meet their basic needs while abroad (food, having enough money, academic differences on-site).

These focus group interviews indicate, and the survey data appear to support, that females might be somewhat more anxious before departure than males. Yet this gap mostly resolves during the overseas experience. This pattern could explain the matched predeparture survey results (Table 32.4), where a higher percentage of females than males felt they could benefit from IEC participation. Matched postprogram surveys (Table 32.4) showed that the male cohort was equally divided about potential IEC benefit, and female "yes" answers dropped markedly, bringing them more in line with the males.

When asked to share their experiences as a male or female abroad, both groups chose to highlight their identities as US-Americans, placing gender alongside nationality. For example, females spoke of host nationals' stereotypes of their identity as an "American girl" (doing well in school, being outgoing, liking to party), and males described how they sometimes "passed as not being American." These were somewhat consistent with the female-reported sources of anxiousness (i.e., academics,

interpersonal relationships) and the male-reported sources (belonging). Nationality was more salient to them than gender. However, when participants talked about their experiences as a racial minority in the host country, race eclipsed nationality and gender and would be a worthwhile area of future study.

Synthesis of Findings

The main pattern that emerges in these data is that students came to view the IECs as less useful from pre- to posttest. This decline is not without nuances, however. Although 78% of students saw IECs as valuable at the pretest and only 57% at the posttest (Table 32.2), it is notable that specific subpopulations within the participant pool realized after they returned that they had even more to learn and thus were *more* open to an IEC at the posttest than the pretest. The engaged females and the engaged language learners (i.e., those who maximized their learning in specific ways) were more open to the idea of IECs, perhaps realizing how much more they had to learn. This aligns with prior research on student perceptions of language learning in study abroad destinations, wherein postprogram interviews with L2 students revealed that, after the experience abroad, they had a heightened awareness of the work required to make linguistic and intercultural gains abroad (Mendelson, 2004). That said, it is also interesting to note that students in non-English regions who were similarly engaged and who made friends with locals did *not* see benefit in an IEC. Perhaps they saw their local engagement as a sufficient indicator of successful immersion and thus discounted the need for an IEC at the posttest. Overall, this pattern characterizes our data: There is a certain leveling-off or normalizing effect revealed in the survey data (in terms of students' perceptions of what they need): Males and females were significantly different in their attitudes toward IECs in the pretest but not in the posttest; those in non-English programs had more positive attitudes toward IECs at predeparture, but upon return to the US, their attitudes were more aligned with their peers who had gone to English-language regions (and who saw less benefit in an IEC); and program length no longer had an effect on IEC attitudes in the posttest, though it did in the pretest (for all cases). Some of these same patterns materialized in the focus groups, the most notable of which is that the males rejected IECs, whereas females were more open to them. Through the focus group data, it is clear that males and females reported somewhat different concerns before going abroad (i.e., they both have concerns about belonging/fitting in, but females expressed more concern about meeting basic needs than males). It is important to remember that, as described in the literature review, IECs have demonstrated benefit for student learning outcomes, regardless of whether students' attitudes toward IECs immediately align with that research. Furthermore, it is precisely this disconnect that merits attention in future research, and the present study suggests that it will be particularly important to pay attention to individual and program differences.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

IEC Curriculum and Structure

Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning may be a particularly useful framework for understanding the nature of student knowledge creation before, during, and following

study abroad. Kolb's theory involves a cyclical process of transforming experiences into knowledge. It is comprised of four sequential elements, with no distinct beginning or end. These elements include (i) concrete experience, (ii) observation and reflection, (iii) formation of abstract concepts from this reflection, and (iv) active experimentation. The experiential learning cycle continues with subsequent, more informed, experiences. Thus, meaning making emerges from iterations of this cycle.

Our findings suggest that there may be gender differences in how male and female students engage in the experiential learning cycle. In group interviews, males reported a strong desire to begin with concrete experience in-country and were comfortable making mistakes abroad, whereas females were more willing to engage in classroom-based learning and theory before active experimentation in the host country. When discussing potential IEC content in the focus group, several males indicated that IEC topics should not be taught in advance of concrete experience, for example:

I would be directly opposed to that because I think kind of the experience is learning to do that stuff yourself and learning the mannerisms through failure. But I'm a big person who likes to dwell on my failures and push myself through that. So like every time I would make a cultural error like you say for example you go for the wrong cheek first or something in a greeting. I would—immediately know I made a mistake....I feel like that kind of cheapens the effect... And I think that there's a lot of pragmatic value to maybe teaching people to book train tickets or plane tickets, or god knows whatever. But at the same time, I don't. I feel like it's a more organic learning experience without saying 'Alright. We're all gonna sign up for this class' and you're gonna sit here for however many hours, however many weeks. Or even a session. And we're gonna go through all this stuff.

(Male, semester in Spain)

Similarly, other focus group insights suggest that students who go to non-English-language regions (regardless of whether they take classes in their L1 or L2) may benefit from specialized IEC curriculum designed around language "survival skills," such as basic L2 (for students taking classes in their L1) or enhanced vocabulary/dialect training (for students taking L2 classes). One way to potentially operationalize this training and create more experiential learning opportunities is through the use of service learning components or other community engagement activities (e.g., Lardner & Malnarich, 2008; Tarrant, 2010).

Kolb's model dovetails well with prior literature, which recommends the combination of immersion, reflection opportunities, and intentional mentoring for study abroad students (e.g., Paige & Goode, 2009) and prompts us to consider more the order of the elements. Predeparture IEC curriculum might be strengthened by taking into account individual differences (including gender, given the findings of our study) in how and where students enter the Kolb experiential learning cycle. One way this could be accomplished is by providing IEC students with concrete activities (especially for students with limited cross-cultural or L2 experience) and reflection opportunities (for those with prior L2 experience) before introducing theoretical models of culture. Furthermore, to empower students as stakeholders in the process, we recommend that returnees engage in IEC curriculum development, alongside educators, and panel discussions for predeparture students, where possible.

Promoting IECs to Students

When promoting IEC opportunities, international educators should take into consideration individual student benefits for participation. From our focus group data, what motivates males to participate in an IEC (academic credit, satisfying a degree requirement, ability to preplan travel) appears linked to immediate and tangible personal benefits. Conversely, females were more likely to consider the abstract potential for future in-country benefit (improved L2 communication, reduced anxiousness/embarrassment, increased immersion). This is consistent with literature regarding male perceptions of study abroad, wherein male students sought investment in activities with concrete relationships to academic or career outcomes, rather than activities that were perceived as having abstract benefits (Thirolf, 2014). Therefore, IEC descriptions should provide clearly articulated information about the immediate benefit to the student as well as information regarding how participation may enhance the overseas experience and reentry. Understanding these differences can help instructors and practitioners to more effectively promote IECs to different populations and make informed decisions about requirements for specific subpopulations. As previously noted, students' unawareness of or resistance to the benefits of IECs does not invalidate their proven benefit but rather suggests avenues for future research and practices that are more tailored to take into account individual differences.

Limitations and Future Directions

As Sutton and Rubin (2004) noted, "the field of international education is moving forward to confront the challenges of a data-driven evidentiary-based articulation of the values gained from study abroad" (p. 76). It is no longer enough for educators to tout the benefits of study abroad; rather, we must provide empirical evidence of this benefit. Nor is it enough to simply tell students that predeparture preparation is important. We must show them why it is beneficial to their learning and demonstrate how it can enhance their overseas experience. The premise of "if you build it, they will come" will not sustain IECs. Students should have a clear understanding of the intended IEC outcomes in advance, and practitioners and faculty who recruit for and teach IECs can make a greater impact by tailoring their efforts to students' needs.

There is no single best way to design an IEC. Diverse learners have diverse needs and will be motivated differently by varied forms of intervention. We suspect that our research is just beginning to uncover the nuances and complexity that underlie students' approaches to preparing for a study abroad sojourn. Therefore, assessment must be a critical component of the process. Ongoing evaluation (formal and informal) can aid faculty and international educators as they explore IEC topics and delivery methods. Lou, Vande Berg, and Paige (2012) provided recommendations for interventions, and the present study particularly connects with their second recommendation to identify learning outcomes and subsequently design programs (p. 414). With learning outcomes that specifically take into account students' gender and choice of program (L1 or L2 region), students will have a better chance of success. This is not to say that IECs should "cater" to students but rather that, by understanding what they bring to the table, we can better push the envelope in a way that will be effective at making a difference in their intercultural learning before, during, and after studying abroad.

Future investigations would benefit from examining whether there is a correlation between students' learning styles and the variables examined here; for example, the preference for classroom engagement vs. more immersive engagement could prove to surpass some of the *Gender* and *Overseas Language* effects observed in this study. Additionally, in a future survey, we plan to expand the questions asked of students to gather more information about the language of instruction and the types of interactions/conversations they have with locals in their L1 and L2. Given the granularity that the focus groups provided for this study (complementing the quantitative component), we also plan to expand our methodology to include individual interviews with students and conduct more focus groups to further explore students' attitudes toward how to best leave the metaphorical fishbowl of their culture and navigate the one of the host country.

Key Terms

Study abroad	Orientation programs
Gender	Intercultural training
Student attitudes	Academic programs

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Educating Teachers and Administrators on Study Abroad

Linking High-Impact Immersion to Study Abroad Design

Higher Education Faculty and Staff Make Connections

Delane Bender-Slack and Diane Ceo-Difrancesco

How might academia harness the transformative power of experiential global learning through immersive study abroad? This can be accomplished through global immersion experiences, intentionally planned to provide participants with high-impact learning opportunities and spaces for reflection before, during, and after the immersive experience. Establishing successful student study abroad immersion experiences places demands on higher education faculty and staff regarding the time, resources, and particularly the knowledge involved in program design and implementation. To that end, establishing a community of learners, a Faculty Learning Community (FLC), to explore the topic of immersive study abroad and to personally experience the high-impact learning opportunities that study abroad has to offer provides the context for this study.

Establishing a community of colleagues and a supportive environment encourages engagement in new experiences. Global immersion is a place of dissonance, and therefore, a supportive collegial network is critical. Moreover, establishing relationships with community partners is a vital component of immersion experiences. Due to the existence of a well-established university and community collaboration, Nicaragua was chosen as the site of a short-term, international immersion program for a group of faculty and staff from Xavier University. Xavier University is a Midwestern, Jesuit university and is part of the global network of approximately 189 Jesuit universities. Founded in 1831, Xavier is a university rooted in the liberal arts tradition; its mission is to educate each student intellectually, morally, and spiritually by creating learning opportunities through rigorous academic and professional programs integrated with cocurricular engagement. Driven by a commitment to the common good and to the education of the whole person, the Xavier community challenges and supports students as they cultivate lives of reflection, compassion, and informed action. In an inclusive environment of open and free inquiry, the goal is to prepare students for a world that is increasingly diverse, complex, and interdependent.

Increased globalization requires increased intercultural competence. Hall's (1976) iceberg theory of culture can be used as a foundation for understanding intercultural

competence. Hall (1976) theorized that there are various levels of the cultural iceberg, representing the levels of culture. For example, food, dress, music, and celebrations are external—easily seen, observed, and studied. The internal, or subconscious, part of culture—including shared values, common beliefs, and ways of thinking—is below the surface of the water. These often unspoken and even unconscious rules address such concepts as eye contact, touching, courtship practices, attitudes toward elders, tolerance of physical pain, and concepts of self.

Cultural encounters during an immersion experience are part of one's personal, firsthand, experiential learning. The goal of the cultural encounters is to develop intercultural competency. Although a definition for intercultural competency continues to be negotiated, for the sake of this chapter, intercultural competencies consist of the following core competencies (Bennet, 2008, pp. 18–21): mind-set, or cognitive competencies, such as cultural-specific knowledge and cultural self-awareness; skill set, or behavioral competencies, such as the ability to empathize and resolve conflict; and heartset, or affective competencies, such as curiosity, risk-taking, and cultural humility. These competencies involve what one thinks, what one can do, and how one feels. “Attitudes lead to acquisition of knowledge and skills, which helps to reshape internal frames of reference that then influence external behaviors” (Dear-dorff, 2006, p. 39). Faculty and staff can continue to build intercultural competencies through immersive study abroad experiences.

Increased intercultural competence leaves us better able to live in solidarity with others. Solidarity pertains to human beings living and working together in order to meet the challenges we all confront (Traub, 2008). Social justice and solidarity played a central role in our design and implementation of the FLC and its exploration of immersion:

As educators... we are a generally curious crowd. Acquiring knowledge (i.e. developing our multicultural competency) about oppression, privilege, and power and being an ally is the easiest part.... What tends to be more difficult is increasing our comfort level with some of these issues and with different identity groups.

(Neumann, 2009, p. 68)

Teaching is an ethical enterprise because educators must

know and care about aspects of our shared life - our calling is to shepherd and enable the callings of others. Teachers, then, invite students to become somehow more capable, more thoughtful and powerful in their choices, more engaged in a culture and a civilization.

(Ayers, 2004, p. 4)

The world changes—and students and faculty need to change. Increased globalization requires increased intercultural competence. Increased intercultural competence leads one to be better able to live in solidarity with others. Solidarity “means the extending of care to those...who have been ignored or abandoned... [and] also means a commitment to change the economic, political, and social structures that enslave, dehumanize, and destroy human life and dignity” (Traub, 2008, p. 185). Social justice, solidarity, and strong Jesuit values were foundational to the goals and processes developed during an examination of immersion—what it means, what it might look like locally and globally, and how we reflect on it.

In this chapter, the authors will share the process of establishing a learning community of faculty and staff who engaged in a yearlong study of intercultural immersion, including an eight-day study abroad immersion experience in Nicaragua. The authors will offer specific details regarding the learning community's goals, the immersion program design and implementation, the incorporation of social justice issues and solidarity within the context of immersion, and techniques to promote reflection in order to foster transformational learning.

Previous Literature

Study abroad programs have long been a valued element of higher education. In 1923, the first American study abroad program was launched at the University of Delaware. Despite funding and logistic issues, key faculty and administrators as well as prominent political figures recognized the relevance and benefits of study abroad in higher education: promoting cross-cultural awareness, producing well-rounded students, training future language teachers, and preparing students for international careers (Institute for Global Studies, 2015). Moreover, service learning and civic engagement programs have a lengthy history in higher education. In addition to faculty and school-led programs, fraternities and sororities, religious groups, and other student organizations have created opportunities for students to be involved in immersive service experiences.

The 2012 Open Doors Report issued by the Institute of International Education (2013) indicates that the number of US students participating in studying abroad has tripled over the last 20 years, and nearly 275,000 US students studied abroad for credit in 2010–2011. In addition, the number of international students studying in the US reached a record high of more than 750,000 students. Clearly, not all study abroad programs are equally immersive, and they include a spectrum ranging from the so-called “island” programs to “integrated” programs. Consequently, we believe that the goals of transformative immersive experiences can be achieved through a careful model of experiential learning in order to develop one’s intercultural competence.

There is currently a philosophical shift with regard to study abroad experiences in higher education. While an increasing number of students are demanding study abroad experiences, their goal may no longer be cultural acquisition but rather “knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences necessary either to compete successfully in the global marketplace or to work toward finding and implementing solutions to problems of global significance” (Lewin, 2009). An immersive study abroad experience demands that students focus on all of these goals. One must be engaged in cultural acquisition or cultural competence in order to understand and acquire the necessary skills, attitudes, experiences, and knowledge that will be required in the workplace and needed to confront contemporary global challenges. In effect, intercultural competence can help students understand and then shape their world.

We believe that short-term global immersion can be impactful, even transformational—if properly designed and implemented. The best way to accomplish this is through experiential learning. According to Kolb (1984), experiential learning occurs as a cycle, starting with concrete experience; processed through observation and reflection; adapted to new understandings, skills, and affective reactions; and then tested for effectiveness to generate a new concrete experience. “Repetition of this experiential learning cycle throughout the immersion

experience is critical for the development of intercultural skills, not the least of which is an emergent understanding of how the student's own identity is socially constructed" (Lou & Bosley, 2008, p. 278). The critical issue is for those in higher education to learn about and then implement quality global immersion experiences. Faculty and staff who have personally experienced immersive study abroad can better facilitate student learning in order to optimize the transformative possibilities of immersion.

Providing those rich, immersive, transformative experiences will help students to recognize the space that globalization has opened up between them and cultures, offering a place for new and constructively critical ways to read the world. "The democratization of study abroad may allow us finally to carry out the work of the enlightened university and replace magic with reason, absorption with critical distance, and consumerism with citizenship" (Lewin, 2009, p. xvii).

Methods and Procedures

The global immersion experience described in this chapter was part of an FLC, a professional development endeavor, which was offered and funded by the Center for Teaching Excellence at Xavier University. The FLC required a one-year commitment, involved shared decision-making among members, and culminated in the creation of individual immersion projects related to each participant's particular discipline or area of interest. The FLC specifically provided a space for interested faculty and staff to organize, implement, and experience a short-term international immersion program while exploring aspects of the pre-immersion, immersion, and post-immersion experiences, considering the role of our Jesuit heritage in such programs, and contributing to university-wide planning and the implementation of immersion experiences with a new core curriculum. The key questions that guided the FLC were as follows:

Defining and Identifying Questions

- 1 As Jesuit educators committed to *cura personalis* and solidarity near and far, how do we design and implement immersion experiences differently?
- 2 How do immersion programs differ from other experiential learning programs? What elements of such programs are essential, preferred, and "nice to have" in order to be consistent with the university mission and the Jesuit and Ignatian missions?

Integration with Course Work Questions

- 1 How can existing and future immersion experiences be better integrated into students' academic programs and with the core curriculum?
- 2 What mechanisms/activities (academic, social, professional, personal) effectively promote integration?

Personal Transformation Questions

- 1 What makes an immersion experience transformative? What mechanisms/activities (academic, social, professional, personal) effectively promote transformation?
- 2 How can current and future programs better incorporate the elements needed for a transformative experience pre-, during, and postimmersion?

Other Considerations

- 1 How can we best meet the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of our students during their immersion experiences? What activities will help them prepare for and reflect on justice and solidarity issues?
- 2 What makes an immersion experience sustainable? What mechanisms/activities are effective in measuring and promoting sustainable practices related to immersion experiences?
- 3 How do technology and social media enhance or detract from an immersion experience? How can positive impact be encouraged? How can negative impact be mitigated?
- 4 How can we maximize our connections with other Jesuit institutions in and outside the US?
- 5 How can we best provide immersion experiences for certain student populations: minorities, international students, and veterans?
- 6 Through research, discussion, and collaboration, can we enhance existing immersion experiences or design new immersion experiences that will be integrated and transformative, and that will meet our mission?

These key questions were aimed at the FLC participants themselves as they were learning about immersion, with a focus on implementing a program in the future. It was designed so that the FLC participants' experiences would mimic those of students.

Once the theme of immersion was chosen for the FLC, a call for proposals was disseminated, and faculty and staff submitted applications. Participants for the FLC were recruited via the Center for Teaching Excellence weekly newsletter. Interested colleagues completed an application and then submitted to the Center for Teaching Excellence. The application included a description of the topic, the time commitment, and the guidelines for FLCs. Applicants were asked to answer the following six questions:

- 1 What do you believe you can gain from participating in this community?
- 2 What do you think you can contribute to the group?
- 3 How do you see yourself dealing with the stress of being out of your comfort zone during the immersive experience?
- 4 How would participation in this FLC likely affect a course or courses you are teaching? (This is a preliminary response.)
- 5 What are the questions or issues you are most interested in learning about?
- 6 Do you have any experience with this topic? If so, please describe it.

Applicants were accepted based on their responses to the questions as well as their availability to meet during a common time throughout the semester. Participants in the FLC represented a variety of departments and offices across the university, including both faculty and staff. Each participant was either directly or tangentially engaged in the teaching of students, whether in the classroom or by facilitating learning experiences. There were eight participants and two faculty leaders of the FLC. Faculty included a literacy professor, a Spanish professor, a Montessori lab school teacher, and an instructor in social work. Staff included a librarian, one instructional designer, two staff from the Office of Faith and Justice, and one staff member from the Center for International Education.

The FLC met every three weeks during the fall semester in order to discuss and organize the experience while examining members' beliefs about the pre-immersion, immersion, and post-immersion process. There were two guest speakers, one who provided some history of Nicaragua and the other who offered various definitions of immersion. The immersion experience occurred in early December. It was strategically placed in the middle of a yearlong FLC in order to dedicate the fall semester to the pre-immersion process and the spring semester to post-immersion processes, such as reentry, reflection, and identifying how the immersive experience impacted participants both personally and professionally. As a culminating activity, each participant created a project to share at a final presentation to colleagues and staff invited from across the university.

During the pre-immersion stage, participants were assigned an "adopted" family from the community in Managua where they would go for some meals and conversation. The purpose was to provide a cultural immersion experience that included the opportunity to become acquainted with a local family, share meals and conversation, and attempt to communicate, despite the language and cultural barriers. During the immersion stage, activities and meetings were planned and implemented with a focus on social justice and solidarity. For example, participants attended a religious celebration in a Christian-based community, heard testimonies from women who worked in and lived near the Managua city dump, and attended the *Gritería*, a holiday for the Virgin Mary only celebrated in Nicaragua. Moreover, in order to share facilitation responsibilities, FLC participants rotated leading the reflections at the end of each day. Following is the itinerary for the global immersive experience.

Saturday

- Arrival of the delegation of Xavier University
- Transfer from the airport to the guest house in the barrio
- Lunch in the guest house
- Tour of Managua Part 1 (cathedrals, central plaza, port)
- 5:00 PM Meeting with the families (1 hour)
- 6:30 PM Dinner
- Night: reflection—Shannon
- Night 1 in the guest house

Sunday

- 6:45 AM Breakfast in the guest house
- 7:30 AM Mass in Nicarao (community-base church)
- Tour of Managua
- Lunch
- 5:00 Dinner and charla (talk) with Irene in the guest house
- 6:00 Gritería (with families)
- Night: reflection—Josh
- Night 2 in the guest house

Monday

- Breakfast in the guest house
- 8:00 AM Leave for Masaya
- Masaya: Volcano (and hike); Artisan Market

- Lunch in Masaya
- Granada (plaza, boat ride of Lake Nicaragua, discussion of environmental issues)
- Dinner in the guest house
- Night: reflection—Wendy
- Night 3 in the guest house

Tuesday

- 7:30 AM Breakfast in the guest house; leave 8:15 AM
- 8:30 AM School visit
- Meeting with Yamileth in her house near the dump
- Visit Guadalupe (barrio) and La Chureca (the dump)
- Visit Fair Trade Shop Esperanza en Acción Almuerzo for a charla by Yamileth
- Return to the barrio to rest
- Charla with Doña Nieves regarding her involvement in the Sandinista Revolution
- Dinner
- Night: reflection—Dominique
- 7:00–8:30 PM Dance class in the barrio
- Night 4 in the guest house

Wednesday

- Breakfast in the guest house
- 8:30 or 9:00 AM Visit Universidad Centroamericana, meetings with colleagues in similar fields for networking and collaboration possibilities
- Lunch at the university
- 4:00–6:00/6:30 PM Charla with Jesuit Priest Fernando Cardenal, champion of the poor and director of the 1980 National Literacy Crusade
- Dinner with the families in the barrio
- Dance class in the barrio
- Night: reflection—Michelle
- Night 5 in the guest house

Thursday

- Breakfast with families
- 10:00 AM Leave for Matagalpa
- 12:30/1:00 PM Lunch in Selva Negra
- Hike in Selva Negra
- Charla with Martín
- Night: reflection—Jill
- Night 6 in Selva Negra

Friday

- Visit Vicente's organic coffee farm
- Lunch with the family of Vicente and charla by Vicente
- Waterfall at Santa Emilia
- Dinner in Selva Negra
- Night: reflection—Shelagh
- Night 7 in Selva Negra

Saturday

- Return to the airport/leave for Cincinnati

It should be noted that the guest house in the barrio is owned and operated by one of the families who is considered a community partner to our university.

We collected data throughout the yearlong FLC. Immediately before and after the short-term global immersion experience, the participants completed a pre- and postsurvey regarding their knowledge of key aspects of the target culture, as well as self-ratings pertaining to various aspects of intercultural competence. The survey results were entered into SPSS. A comparison of means was conducted (Table 33.1). Open-ended pre- and postsurvey questions permitted participants to share qualitative responses to questions regarding immersion, culture, global learning, and intercultural competence as well.

Additionally, the FLC participants completed one midpoint and one final survey, both administered by the Center for Teaching Excellence (Figure 33.1). Moreover, artifacts in the form of faculty and staff summary slides of their individual projects were examined to see what themes emerged. Group facilitators also took notes during the meetings and during the international immersion program. Verbal feedback from participants was ongoing throughout the immersive study abroad experience.

Results and Discussion

Results showed growth in intercultural competence and the impact of a carefully planned short-term immersion experience. For example, one participant explained her growth as follows: “I’ve always thought that teachers should help transform students both personally and professionally. This FLC has given me the confidence to work with the student as a whole person, pushing them to learn about new people and different, unknown organizations.” Another participant recognized, “The importance of reflection was a focus during the FLC, and so I want to be more reflective in and out of the classroom.” Table 33.1 shows a growth in cultural competence.

Well-designed, short-term immersive experiences can be impactful and provide many opportunities for faculty development. It also prepared faculty and staff for future work with students.

Participants understood immersion differently after the international immersion program and were able to identify necessary components of short-term immersion

Table 33.1 One-sample statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>
Cultural competence [pre]	5	3.2250	.90312	.40389
Cultural competence [post]	6	6.5000	.88741	.36228
Change in cultural comp.	4	3.2188	1.43387	.71694

experiences. As previously mentioned, open-ended pre- and postsurvey questions permitted participants to share qualitative responses to questions regarding immersion, culture, global learning, and intercultural competence as well. Specifically, when asked what three things are needed for immersion to occur, participants' responses included the following: interaction, openness, support of others experiencing it with you, an open mind and heart, a willingness to engage others, pushing out of your comfort zone, ongoing reflection, critical analysis, a connection to local community, comprehensive historical context, basic language understanding, willingness to be uncomfortable, a leader who has personal connections, a place that is open to meeting and engaging with outsiders, disorientation or feeling unsettled, community engagement, and sharing formal and informal spaces.

Moreover, participants expressed a desire to engage in additional immersion experiences in the future and considered themselves better prepared to design immersion experiences for students (Figure 33.1). One of the participants said what she most valued was "first-hand experience of immersion and how authentic learning experiences can be coupled with traditional learning experiences for greater learning impact." Another participant claimed that "the sense of community and the opportunity to participate in a short-term immersion as this experience has greatly impacted my work."

When asked what they accomplished during the immersion, all but one of the participants responded that they had attempted to learn new vocabulary and to converse in Spanish even if it meant pushing themselves out of their comfort zone. Other personal accomplishments were expressed as "re-opening myself," "learning and taking in information and experiences," "allowing myself to be genuine," and "confronting discomfort." Others mentioned specifically that they had gained a deeper understanding of Nicaraguan culture.

At the end of the immersive experience, the participants provided the following positive feedback: They had experienced high levels of dissonance but felt safe and supported; they liked the balance of locations (urban vs. rural) and the balance of the planned activities (war stories vs. a visit to an organic coffee farm or university meetings vs. breakfast with families in the barrio); they enjoyed the collaboration with colleagues, especially the blend of faculty and staff; and they benefitted from ongoing, quiet, and group reflections. This was especially helpful when reflecting on the design, preparation, and implementation of the actual immersive experience. Figure 33.1 demonstrates high ratings regarding the immersive experience itself and the professional growth it provided.

Only five participants are represented because two participants left the university and one did not complete the survey. As previously mentioned, we believe that short-term global immersion can be impactful, even transformational, if properly designed and implemented.

Finally, faculty and staff recognized the need for increasing the number of study abroad immersion opportunities for students, and the essential role of second language, social justice, and solidarity as they relate to global learning. This was evident in their planned projects. For example, a social work instructor planned to integrate immersion pedagogy into field education and to develop a module on this to be included as part of the field instructor training. A communications faculty member planned a local immersion lasting from several hours to a weekend for her students. She would provide preimmersion training, research, organization, and then

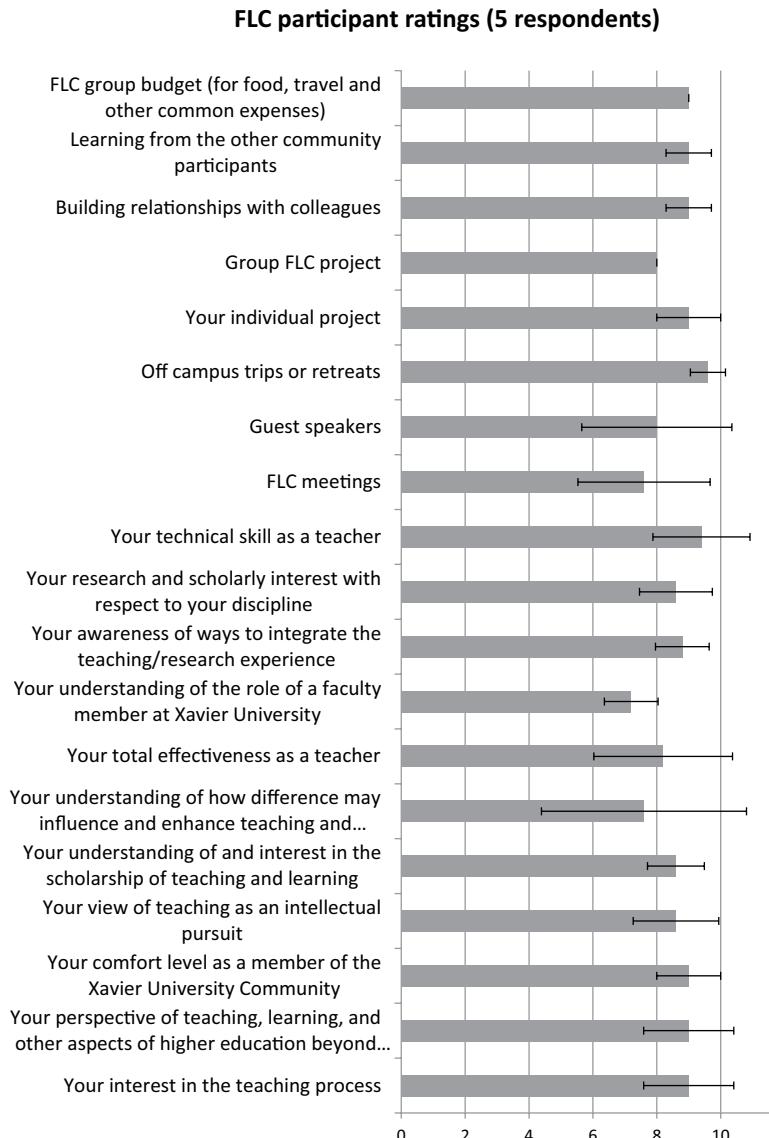


Figure 33.1 Participant ratings.

debriefing and a reflection assignment after the immersive experience. A member of the library staff explored how the library resources could be used to support immersive experiences. For example, the library staff could locate digital books or scan resources and place them on thumb drives, provide photocopies, or even load them onto e-readers that students could add to and take with them without needing an internet connection. Planning and facilitating effective immersive experiences were part of each participant's project.

Planning the experiences can be accomplished through curriculum integration, which "refers to a variety of institutional approaches designed to fully integrate

study abroad [and immersive] options into the college experience and academic curricula for students in all majors” (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2008). There are a variety of ways to engage in curricular integration. Pinar (2006) suggests that because the field of curricular studies is “simultaneously theoretical and practical,” it “provides the pivotal site for scholarly efforts to understand educational experience both in and outside the school” (p. 56). Linking immersive study abroad programs to curricular design engages students in a curriculum that is both inside and outside of the traditional classroom. Additionally, Pinar’s notion of “currere,” like Freire’s (2000) critical pedagogy, suggests that teaching should be about encouraging thought-provoking processes more than knowledge dissemination and skill acquisition. Curriculum, as it is used here, is the sense of purpose and direction that is established by educators around which all texts, classroom discussions, and pedagogical activities are centered (Applebee, 1994, 2002).

By engaging in a short-term study abroad immersive experience, the faculty and staff participants experienced firsthand the demands placed upon the learner as one is pushed out of one’s comfort zone to negotiate a new cultural learning context. In so doing, participants explored ways to scaffold immersion experiences for students and to develop well-planned experiences that include the critical components of global immersion. Participants’ individual projects related to advancing the awareness of global learning across the university, enhancing existing courses, or designing new immersion experiences.

In Byram’s (1997) model of intercultural competence, he differentiates between tourists and sojourners. A tourist is interested in enriching one’s life through travel to other places but is not interested in fundamentally altering it through the experience. However, a sojourner engages with another culture in a deeper way such that one’s beliefs, practices, and values may change through the process of discovering and making sense of this new knowledge. According to Byram (1997), the sojourner has the ability to become a true intercultural speaker, someone who can step back from—and critically evaluate—their own values in light of getting to know a new culture and even mediate between the home and new cultures. And as those walking in solidarity, one can use immersion to explore the social implications as well. Solidarity is “the practical awareness that only by working together can the human family meet effectively the challenges of worldwide hunger, ignorance, disease, and violence” (Traub, 2008, p. 185). Solidarity can be intimately linked to immersion, in the truest sense of the word. Walking with others in order to gain a deeper understanding of one another and ourselves while creating and developing relationships is solidarity and was the basis of our global immersion. Using the lens of social justice assured that we consistently worked to be sure all parties were benefitting. As previously mentioned, social justice and solidarity were foundational during our examination of immersion—what it means, what it might look like locally and globally, and how we reflect on it.

Numerous learning activities contributed to the experiential nature of the immersion experience and the transformative potential for participants. However, reflection was the key component of immersion and postimmersion process that served to transform. “Experience alone is insufficient to be called experiential education, and it is the reflection process which turns experience into experiential education” (Joplin, 1995, p. 15). For example, one of the participants analyzed the power of reflection

during the short-term immersion. She claimed that the benefits of the daily group reflections were that they accomplished the following:

- Changed group dynamics and built community,
- Allowed for processing and meaning making for participants,
- Deepened learning and connection to experience for participants,
- Created high-impact, short-term experience.

In order to facilitate a reflection that shared ownership, the group rotated facilitators. She believed that this allowed authorship for all of the participants, created buy-in for the group, shared responsibility for collective learning, and highlighted different voices, perspectives, and facilitation styles. The reflection process demonstrated a socially just sharing of power and decision-making.

Our program involved careful planning of an international immersion experience, which encouraged faculty and staff to move beyond their cultural comfort zone in order to gain an understanding of the types of learning activities that lead to integration and transformation through immersion. Once experienced, faculty and staff could be able and willing to design and implement their own immersive study abroad experiences with students.

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

College students are clamoring for opportunities to learn and develop so that, whatever career they choose, they can make a difference in the world. In order to help students reach their goals, we suggest the following recommendations for practice.

Prioritize Faculty and Staff Global Immersion Experiences

Faculty and staff must participate in various types of immersive experiences at various levels of immersion in order to best scaffold students in similar experiences. These global immersion experiences can help faculty to develop in ways that will positively impact student growth and learning. Faculty and staff immersion experiences can build community among its members, providing a space for people to collaborate and support each other personally and professionally. Engaging in experiential learning equips faculty and staff to design effective and quality student immersion experiences. What they learn, what they know, will inform how they can best facilitate transformational student learning.

Garner the Support of Deans and Chairs to Engage in Curricular Integration

Curricular integration is based on the willingness of faculty to align curriculum by examining their purpose and direction, and identifying the texts, discussions, and pedagogical activities that will drive them.

The curricular foundation is essential to any global education program. The specialist care and passion that have long gone into immersive global learning experiences is wasted if the preparation and ensuing coursework are not appropriately designed, and we need similar nurturing passion for the curricular components themselves.

(Stearns, 2009, p. 63)

All components of a carefully crafted program lead to the engagement of students in a linguistically and culturally rich, experiential, global endeavor that demonstrates the potential for powerful, transformative learning. It is critical that students do not see global immersive experiences as being outside of or disconnected from their academic and career goals. Consequently, linking high-impact learning experiences with more traditional classroom learning is essential and demands a flexibility with regard to course design. For example, at our university, we have embedded a student short-term study abroad to Peru into a Spanish course from one college and a multi-cultural literature course offered in another college. Students can opt to take one or both courses, and we travel during spring break, which is midway through the spring semester.

Teach About and Develop Intercultural Competence

Faculty and staff in higher education are diverse and, therefore, are at various places with regard to developing their own intercultural competence and where they might be on the continuum of development. In this way, they can relate to students. Some are willing to visit a mosque for the day, while others are willing to travel to Nicaragua for a week. The goal is to move people along the continuum of intercultural competence by providing opportunities and gently nudging them in the direction of further developing the skills and dispositions needed to increase intercultural competence. Having an intellectual and emotional understanding can open the door for helping faculty and staff confront their own resistance and discomfort.

Place a Value on Reflection

Reflection should be a key component in every course, but it is especially necessary during experiential learning experiences. Faculty and staff participating in the FLC ventured out beyond the confines of the traditional university classroom and partook in an experience where members were challenged to come to terms with language deficits and cultural differences, physical and emotional adaptations, social injustices, and the realities of human struggles and joys. The carefully constructed FLC provided a safe environment from which to set each member free to explore and interact, yet also to be received at the end of an emotional and sensory-filled day in order to decompress and debrief as a community. Participants alternating as facilitators during group reflection empowered learners to trust in their strengths, to demonstrate compassion, and to come to terms with their insecurities. Reflection, a key element in Ignatian Pedagogy, is the necessary component for transformational learning. Without it, the dissonance and discomfort experienced through immersive study abroad become suppressed rather than incorporated into one's thoughts and actions. Furthermore, providing a quiet space for deep reflection and an open forum for sharing unique insights is the key to making sense of potentially profound and deep learning experiences.

Limitations and Future Directions

The limitations of such an endeavor is that, like students, faculty and staff are at various entry points with regard to where and how they are willing to grapple with

immersive learning experiences. Those who need to develop intercultural competence the most may be those who are unwilling to embark on such an adventure. Consequently, for future planning, it is important to provide faculty and staff with immersive experiences at various places on the continuum. For example, we are planning local, national, and global immersion experiences. Due to time, familial commitments, or fear, some faculty and staff will only commit to a local immersive experience. For some, that will be a beginning, and they will aspire for deeper, more complex immersive experiences.

A second limitation is resources. In order to engage higher education faculty and staff in global immersive experiences, there has to be institutional support, ranging from money and release time to support curricular integration and prioritizing student immersive experiences. The Center for Teaching Excellence has supported three immersion FLCs. Typically, FLC participants earn professional development funds for participating, and they can be spent on conference travel, books, or additional resources. The FLC immersion participants, as well as the faculty leaders, chose to dedicate their funds to partially pay for the immersive experience itself.

Conclusion

If educators are to keep the pedagogical process dynamically alive, as well as encourage social transformation and student participation through intercultural learning and internationalization, it is necessary to emphasize the thinking part of the teaching and learning process. Pinar (2006) calls academics and practicing educators to a new awareness of their own biases and perceptions of curriculum. Immersion offers opportunities for learning experiences that take faculty, staff, and students beyond their comfort zone, pushing them to reexamine and reinterpret their own behavior, with the attending cultural implications, as well as their initial impressions regarding the social realities of others:

Taking students out of the classroom and empowering them with the responsibility of their own learning is key in turning a common experience into a transformative one. Students need to ask questions and become researchers for their own inquiries, and educators must open the doors of the classroom and lead their students out.

(Dean and Montoya, 2014, p. 34)

Faculty and staff must be provided the same experiences if they are to facilitate transformative, experiential learning.

As part of the immersion, faculty and staff participants examined the cultural iceberg model (Hall, 1976) and the juxtaposition of the tourist vs. the sojourner (Byram, 1997). Both models foster global learning and the development of intercultural competence by encouraging the analysis of our own cultural practices, products, and perspectives. This is where true learning occurs. “Learning should involve deepening our understanding of our own assumptions” (VeLure Roholt & Fisher, 2011, p. 61). Developing our own cultural understandings will help us to better know ourselves. The global immersion program provided opportunities for reexamination of assumptions and experiences, and a reconfiguration of these to allow for new interpretations and possibilities (Finn & Jacobson, 2003). Higher education faculty and staff can use

these new interpretations and possibilities to design and implement high-impact immersion study abroad that is tied to curriculum and that develops students' intercultural competence so that they are better able to read their world, challenge injustices, and work for transformation.

Key Terms

Global immersion	Short-term study abroad
Internationalization	Reflection techniques
Faculty development	Higher education
Intercultural competence	Curricular integration

Further Reading

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Where Study Abroad Fits in the Foreign Language Curriculum

When Some Study Abroad

How Returning Students Realign with the Curriculum and Impact Learning

Paula Winke and Susan Gass

Introduction and Definitions

Studying abroad benefits almost every aspect of learning a second or foreign language, even when students perceive difficulties integrating or learning while studying abroad (Kinginger, 2011). Researchers have long investigated what makes study abroad successful for some and not so successful for others as well as why some study abroad, while others do not. For example, researchers have used focus groups to understand students' choices and decisions on study abroad (Doyle et al., 2010; Foster, 2014); how study abroad changes students' various perceptions on culture, learning, and the world (Bacon, 2002; Forsey, Broomhall, & Davis, 2012); and how study abroad contributes to the language development process (DeKeyser, 2010; Mitchell, 2015). Although it is readily accepted that study abroad is only part of what makes language learning successful (see Winke & Gass, 2018), there is an implicit assumption that post-study abroad, students will continue to study the language and learn.

The extensive literature on study abroad includes recent books (e.g., Byram & Feng, 2006; Kinginger, 2013; Mitchell, Tracy-Ventura, & McManus, 2015) and even a journal (*Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*). An important area that needs to be researched is the reentry process, focusing on the transition students must make from studying abroad to being learners of the language in their home country again. The research that has been conducted on reentry has focused on cultural and emotional readjustments (reverse culture shock) and related issues (e.g., Gray & Savicki, 2015), not on how individuals who have returned from study abroad bridge their language-learning-development path across the two academic learning landscapes: abroad and back at the home institution. Nor has there been a robust summary or discussion of how college-/university-based language programs¹ can best integrate study abroad coursework into their home language programs. In sum, there appears to be a lack of information on how students reintegrate and realign themselves within the college foreign language curriculum after residence and study abroad. That realignment is necessarily embedded within the options that the language programs have for reentering students. Thus, reentry issues that deal with the overall academic program

must be researched *in context*, with the context being the architecture of the language program itself. Lord and Isabelli-García (2014) put it this way:

Overall, SA [study abroad] programs that are carefully aligned to stateside learning goals benefit language programs in a number of ways: they foster global citizenship, provide high-impact practices of experiential learning, and help to meet the MLA's (2007) call for transcultural and translingual competence.

(p. 159)

It is important to recognize that study abroad can take place at any point in a student's language study, and it can be for a short (e.g., summer) stay or a longer (e.g., semester/full-year) period of study. When the students return, they may enter into the second-, third-, or fourth-year courses at the home institution (again, depending on how the home institution counts the credits from the study abroad courses).

As explained by Davidson (2010, p. 23), learning a language through study abroad meets the needs of a global, 21st-century education, but "to function effectively, it [study abroad] must be properly integrated into the undergraduate curriculum." With this study, we focus on that particular issue: We attempt to understand why integration and articulation/alignment is so important. To do that, we focus on the returned study abroad students at a particular institution (ours) to better understand curricular reentry processes.

Previous Literature

Reentry into the home foreign language program post-study abroad can be difficult for college students. First and foremost, they must adjust to the changes in culture and readapt to life at home. This reentry issue for study abroad students is real, and it can be problematic. One of the most robust studies on this issue was conducted by Gray and Savicki (2015). They surveyed 81 study abroad students who had returned to their home universities in the US from stays that were a median length of 16 weeks. Gray and Savicki were interested in any type of study abroad, not just language-learning programs, and so they included students who had studied in countries such as Australia and New Zealand (which they labeled as *low cultural distance countries*) as students who had studied there were relevant in addressing their main research question, which was whether difficulties in readjustment to home post-study abroad would be related to the students' overall psychological well-being. They also wanted to see if cultural distance (of the study abroad country) would play a part. Their research involved giving students the Reentry Adaption Scale, a questionnaire that contained 18 five-point Likert-scale items on students' adaptive behaviors upon return post-study abroad. The authors created this scale by modifying the Sociocultural Adaption Scale (SCAS) developed by Ward and Kennedy (1999), which they used to investigate acculturation during study abroad. Because Gray and Savicki focused on reentry, they changed the items to focus on life back at home and included items on how difficult it was to, for example, *readapt to the pace of life at home or leave the pace of life in the study abroad country*.

Gray and Savicki found that reverse culture shock influences students' reentry post-study abroad. They identified half of the students in the study as having problems readapting to the home culture. Most interesting, they found that cultural

distance played a significant role in reentry acculturation and well-being. Students who had been in countries that Gray and Savicki labeled as being culturally distant from the US (and these were all countries in which English is not the native language) had major difficulties in reentry, regardless of how positive or negative their study abroad experience was. More interesting to us were the individual contributors to students' general problems in readapting. Looking at Gray and Savicki's Reentry Adaption Scale, only one of the 18 items dealt with reentering into the academic environment. The item was how difficult it was to *reenter school life in the United States*. Gray and Savicki did not discuss the outcome of this item in particular as it was not the focus of their study, but the individual item had an average score of 3.78 out of a possible 5, with 5 meaning that students found it "highly difficult." We believe Gray and Savicki's study shows that reentering the academic environment is an important issue for post-study abroad students. And it is an issue that has not been explored robustly or in isolation with in the field of foreign language education.

In another study, Ingraham and Peterson (2003) investigated the impact of study abroad at Michigan State University (regardless of the specific programs) on students, faculty, and college budgets. The authors mailed surveys to 1,104 students who had participated in study abroad between 1999 and 2002. The survey had 31 questions on a five-point Likert scale. Of some interest to us was the question about academic performance post-study abroad. The statement to which the students agreed or disagreed on the Likert scale was "My study abroad experience has led to an improvement of my academic performance." This question was one of two "academic performance" questions, and the authors found a strong positive correlation between agreement with this factor (labeled as *improved or enhanced academic performance*²) and length of study abroad, meaning that the longer a study abroad stay was, the more positively one viewed his or her academic performance overall post-study abroad. Most interesting, the authors noted that university data on time-to-graduation and the number-of-terms-enrolled were informative in relation to study abroad students. On average, study abroad students enrolled for more terms before graduating, but they, on average, took less time to graduate than the average university student. For example, by studying abroad in the summer, students took an extra term, but they reduced their overall average time to graduation. These data debunked the myth, the researchers stated, that study abroad delays graduation. By looking at Grade Point Averages (GPAs), the researchers found that students who studied abroad had, on average, higher GPAs than students who did not study abroad. They speculated that (i) students who choose to study abroad have higher GPAs or (ii) grading on study abroad programs may be less rigorous than grading in courses on the home campus (resulting in high GPAs during the study abroad term), but these were just their speculations: They did not have data to support the notions.

The benefits of study abroad on language programs and individuals in the programs seem incontestable (see Dwyer, 2004; Ingraham & Peterson, 2003; Mitchell et al., 2015), and as expressed earlier by Lord and Isabelli-García (2014), the benefits are greater when there is alignment with stateside language programs. With a closer lens on language learning, researchers have stressed the notion that the impact of study abroad can be magnified if certain conditions are met. For example, DeKeyser (2010) found in a small-scale study with 16 Spanish students that the students with higher proceduralized grammar knowledge (learned during their second year of college Spanish before study abroad) benefited more from study abroad. This was because, DeKeyser speculated, those with a stronger proceduralized Spanish grammar

foundation (acquired through practice in using complex grammar during classroom speech tasks) could better process input from native speakers, which led them to be more comfortable in speaking with native speakers, which led to acquisition gains. On the other hand, those with little to no proceduralized grammar knowledge did not gain much while abroad for six weeks: These students disclosed during interviews that they tended to avoid contact with native speakers while abroad because it was too difficult to interact with them. DeKeyser stressed that “students cannot benefit very much from a stay abroad if they have not acquired adequate knowledge in the classroom on which to base their practice abroad. The better prepared students are often the ones that gain most from study abroad” (p. 89).

In a large-scale investigation on study abroad, Davidson (2010, also reported on by Davidson in 2007) investigated 1,881 students who studied abroad in Russian-speaking countries. He looked at whether program duration affected Russian language gains, how initial (before study abroad) proficiency affected gains stemming from the program, and how age and gender affected gains. He showed that age and gender did not come into play but, more importantly, that students’ initial (before study abroad) proficiency had a positive and significant impact on gains, as did the length of the study abroad program. In his earlier 2007 summary of the data, he noted that there is a “clear relationship between second language gains and other variables such as program duration, initial level of proficiency, and control of language structure” (p. 277). He concluded both in the 2007 summary and in the 2010 paper that when study abroad programs were short (1–6 weeks), linguistic and cultural proficiency were very unlikely to increase because the program was just too short. (Dwyer [2004] found that shorter programs were not as beneficial as longer ones for qualitative reasons as well.) Language learning takes a long time, and 1–6 weeks is insufficient for there to be noticeable linguistic changes, although there most likely will be some qualitatively measurable positive affects (Dwyer). Davidson stressed that the pre-study abroad proficiency has a significant effect on learning (both linguistic and cultural) but stopped short of suggesting a minimum proficiency level before studying abroad.

Critical Issues Our Study Sheds Light On

As we reviewed earlier, there is a dearth of research on how programs can best reintegrate students into the home tertiary foreign language curriculum post-study abroad. We learned from Gray and Savicki’s (2015) study that reentry into the academic program at home is a reentry issue, but to our knowledge, researchers have not focused on this issue. Ingraham and Peterson (2003) noted that when students study abroad, they increase the number of academic terms they take, but on average, they do not increase their time to degree, showing, as the authors noted, that the extra study abroad terms are beneficial from a college financial standpoint (more tuition paid yet no deduction in time-to-degree), but they did not investigate how the extra term-courses are integrated into the home academic language programs. And DeKeyser (2010) and Davidson (2007, 2010) demonstrated that study abroad gains are best when students start their study abroad with a higher level of proficiency, which should have implications for study abroad programs, speaking to *at what point* students should be advised to go abroad, but the researchers did not give specific recommendations. None of them had a comparison (no study abroad) group, nor did they directly address the major question we have: How can programs best reenter students into the home language curriculum

post-study abroad? Only one researcher to our knowledge seemed to address this topic. Kanno (2003) investigated how young, long-term sojourners readapted to life in Japan after being away from the Japanese education system for three or more years. After remarking that the sojourners indeed had difficulties readapting to life in Japan, Kanno noted that “there is a conspicuous dearth of information on how to support those students who return to their home country after a prolonged sojourn abroad” (p. 139). She stated that researchers tend to focus on returning students’ psychological adjustments rather than their educational reintegration (as Gray and Savicki did). Even though Kanno was investigating how Japanese nationals return to Japanese educational systems after living abroad for a number of years (which is different from studying abroad), her questions are pertinent and mostly unanswered.

The problem of reentry that we address in this chapter is particularly acute in language programs with small enrollments without many faculty members to teach courses. When course offerings are limited, students have little choice as to which courses to take upon return, and, as a result, they are put into classes with other students with preparation that differs from their own.

In this context, we explore issues that relate to the topic of study abroad students’ reentry into a language program’s curricular plan. In particular, we are interested in understanding the impact of study abroad students (compared to non-study abroad students) on a language program’s ability to meet stated proficiency objectives. We also explore ways in which specific language programs reintegrate study abroad students into the curriculum. And, finally, we investigate students’ perceptions of the processes of reintegration and realignment within a college-level foreign language program post-study abroad.

Methods and Procedures

We investigated these questions with data from four different language-learning programs³ (Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish) at Michigan State University. Each program has one or more study abroad opportunities, and each program reintegrates students back into the college-level language classes post-study abroad in different ways. Each program has stated ACTFL-based proficiency objectives (French, Spanish, and Russian: ACTFL Intermediate low at the end of two years of study; Advanced low for majors completing four years. Chinese: ACTFL Intermediate low at the end of 2.5 years of study; Intermediate high for majors completing four years). The data, part of a larger data set, reported on in this chapter come from various sources, as outlined later.

Standardized Proficiency Test Scores (From Official ACTFL OPIc Test Administrations)

In the spring of 2015, we had 1,384 students learning Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish take ACTFL proficiency tests at Michigan State University (speaking, listening, and reading). From that pool of test takers, we constructed a data set of 546 students (Data Set A) who recorded on a background questionnaire their gender, major, year in college, and study abroad information. We then filtered out any students for whom we did not have oral test scores. This was the case because some students either opted not to take the oral test or received a score of “below rate.”⁴ Out of the

546 students, 494 students had no missing data (which we called Data Set B). Of those 494 students, 170 had returned from studying abroad (18 Chinese, 45 French, 2 Russian, and 105 Spanish). This formed the database used for analysis in this chapter.

One-on-One Interviews with the Directors of Each of the Four Programs

We interviewed the language program directors to outline how post-study abroad students are reintegrated. Among other topics, we learned what classes students normally finish before going abroad, what classes they return to, what classes within the program they are allowed to skip, and whether the allowance to skip a class or classes is tied to performance while- or post-study abroad.

Focus Group Data

Following in the footsteps of Bacon (2002), Doyle et al. (2010), Forsey et al. (2012), and Foster (2014), we conducted focus group sessions with returned study abroad students. In total, we administered five study abroad focus group sessions across two phases of the larger research project (further descriptions on each phase of data collection are presented later). As can be seen in Table 34.1, a total of 17 individuals (5 males; 12 females) participated in the focus group sessions. The scope of the sessions was narrowed down from the first round in spring 2016 to the second round in fall 2016. More specifically, we conducted the latter focus group phase by building upon the responses from the first ones, in which the primary theme of post-study abroad was discussed.

Focus Groups Phase 1

During the spring semester of 2016, we conducted three focus group sessions with students who had studied abroad. Our aim was to probe into the pre-, during, and post-study abroad experiences of the returned study abroad students. To recruit, we first asked the study abroad coordinators of each target language department at the university for a complete list of all students who had participated in their study abroad programs during the spring semester or the summer term of 2015. Then, we looked in our test database for those students (to see if we had ACTFL test scores from them as administered as part of the larger project). We were able to identify

Table 34.1 Participants in the focus group sessions

Phase (semester, year)	Focus group session	Gender		Language				Total
		M	F	Ch.	Fr.	Ru.	Sp.	
1. (Spring 2016)	1	2	4	3	0	0	3	6
Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish	2	0	4	0	1	0	3	4
	3	0	2	1	0	0	1	2
2. (Fall 2016)	4	2	1	0	0	3	0	3
Chinese and Russian only	5	1	1	2	0	0	0	2
<i>Subtotal</i>		5	12	6	1	3	6	17

Note: M = male, F = female.

57 students for whom we also had ACTFL test scores. We sent a recruitment email to these individuals, and in the end, we had 12 returned students participate in the focus groups. The first study abroad focus group sessions were led by an external interviewer from the Center for Applied Linguistics, while the remaining two sessions were led by a graduate student research assistant who had assisted the interviewer in session 1. The focus group leaders asked the same list of 10 questions each time to tap into participants' (i) motivations for studying abroad, (ii) living and learning situations during their time abroad, (iii) their progression in language during study abroad, and (iv) their reentry experiences back into the language classrooms at the university. Each session took approximately one hour and was audio recorded.

Focus Groups Phase 2

We conducted two final focus group sessions during the fall of 2016 with a more specific aim of uncovering the returned students' reintegration into their language classes at the university. We took a similar approach in Phase 2 to identify and recruit students, except this time we focused on the Chinese and Russian language programs. The Chinese focus group had two Chinese language students, and the Russian group had three. We used the same list of discussion questions as in the study abroad focus groups conducted in Phase 1 yet made adjustments to them when necessary during the sessions.

Results and Discussion

In this section, we first present the data related to how study abroad students (compared to non-study abroad students) impact the language programs' ability to meet stated proficiency objectives. Second, we outline how the programs reintegrate study abroad students into the curriculum. Third, we discuss how students in those programs perceive the processes of reintegration and realignment.

The Impact of Study Abroad vs. No Study Abroad on Proficiency Objectives

We wanted to look at the ACTFL OPIc test score data to understand how study abroad impacts oral proficiency (outcomes and objectives) because all four language programs under consideration state their proficiency objectives in terms of oral skills. To account for the demographic differences in students who had not studied abroad from those who had, we created equivalent groups from the former Data Set B of 494 students. We matched the study abroad group's major demographic features with a subset of non-study abroad students using the case-control matching function in SPSS 23.0. Because all the demographic variables were categorical in nature, we set the match tolerances to zero. In other words, for each case ($n = 170$) in the study abroad group, a matched case in the no study abroad group was randomly selected by SPSS among all the cases that shared the same gender, year of study, and language. If a match could not be found, SPSS discarded the unmatchable case from the study abroad group. Accordingly, the remaining cases left from the matching process were removed by SPSS from the no study abroad group. In total, we lost 20 study abroad cases when creating the paired data set, which we call Data Set C. Descriptive statistics for the resulting data set (Data Set C) are in Table 34.2.

Table 34.2 Paired demographic information by year of study, language, OPIc scores, and gender (300 participants)

		Chinese Ns (M/F)	OPIc M (SD; CI upper, CI lower)	French Ns (M/F)	OPIc M (SD; CI upper, CI lower)	Russian Ns (M/F)	OPIc M (SD; CI upper, CI lower)	Spanish Ns (M/F)	OPIc M (SD; CI upper, CI lower)
Year 1	SA	7 (4/3)	3.14 (0.69; 2.60, 3.67)	10 (2/8)	3.90 (1.60; 2.86, 4.86)	1 (1/0)	4.00 (0; 4.00, 4.00)	24 (6/18)	3.83 (1.34; 3.29, 4.38)
	No SA	7 (4/3)	2.86 (0.69; 2.33, 3.38)	10 (2/8)	2.60 (0.97; 2.00, 3.18)	1 (1/0)	3.00 (0; 3.00, 3.00)	24 (6/18)	3.29 (1.33; 2.77, 3.84)
	Total	14	3.00 (0.68; 2.67, 3.36)	20	3.25 (1.15; 2.64, 3.87)	2	3.50 (0.71; 3.00, 4.00)	48	3.56 (1.34; 3.21, 3.92)
Year 2	SA	6 (4/2)	5.00 (1.27; 3.83, 6.00)	14 (3/11)	4.14 (1.29; 3.50, 4.78)			16 (6/10)	3.56 (1.55; 2.83, 4.33)
	No SA	6 (4/2)	2.33 (1.03; 1.50, 3.25)	14 (3/11)	3.57 (1.16; 3.00, 4.17)			16 (6/10)	2.94 (1.44; 2.27, 3.67)
	Total	12	3.67 (1.78; 2.60, 4.67)	28	3.56 (1.42; 3.25, 3.89)			32	3.25 (1.50; 2.76, 3.77)
Year 3	SA	2 (1/1)	2.50 (0.71; 2.00, 3.00)	9 (0/9)	4.22 (1.20; 3.44, 5.00)	1 (1/0)	4.00 (0; 4.00, 4.00)	22 (4/18)	5.14 (2.17; 4.22, 6.00)
	No SA	2 (1/1)	2.50 (0.71; 2.00, 3.00)	9 (0/9)	2.67 (1.00; 2.00, 3.33)	1 (1/0)	4.00 (0; 4.00, 4.00)	22 (4/18)	2.86 (1.42; 2.25, 3.50)
	Total	4	2.50 (0.58; 2.00, 3.00)	18	3.44 (1.34; 2.84, 4.05)	2	4.00 (0; 4.00, 4.00)	44	4.00 (2.15; 3.34, 4.65)
Year 4	SA			6 (2/4)	4.17 (1.94; 2.75, 6.00)			32 (10/22)	5.03 (1.84; 4.45, 5.69)
	No SA			6 (2/4)	3.00 (1.79; 1.75, 4.75)			32 (10/22)	3.56 (1.70; 3.00, 4.19)
	Total			12	3.58 (1.88; 2.50, 4.73)			64	4.30 (1.91; 3.85, 4.78)
Total	30	3.20 (1.27; 2.74, 3.67)	78	3.56 (1.42; 3.25, 3.89)	4	3.75 (0.50; 3.00, 188 4.00)		3.86 (1.81; 3.61, 4.12)	

Notes: N = number, M = mean, SD = standard deviation, CI = confidence interval. M/F/O = male/female. The 95 percent CIs in this table were obtained using a bootstrapping method. For the OPIc mean, 1 = Novice Low, 2 = Novice Mid, 3 = Novice High, 4 = Intermediate Low, 5 = Intermediate Mid, 6 = Intermediate High, 7 = Advanced low, etc.

To formally test the overall significance of the mean difference on study abroad vs. no study abroad groups, we conducted a paired-sample *t* test. The result of the *t* test supported a hypothesis that the speaking scores achieved by those who had studied abroad were significantly higher than those who had not, after accounting for the differences in gender, language, and year of study ($t [149] = 6.767, p < 0.001; d = 0.554$). While the small *p* value informs us that the finding is statistically significant, what is more striking is the large effect size (0.554) associated with participating in study abroad. This means that there is a great practical contribution that study abroad programs make in terms of improving students' speaking skills, which is a result that should not be surprising, as other researchers (such as Davidson, 2010; DeKeyser, 2010) have attested to the potential benefits of study abroad on speaking. But we were surprised by the size of the effect. Given the fact that there are only 10 levels on the ability scale and that the average speaking skills of the entire group were relatively weak, the 0.55-level advantage granted by study abroad programs translates into a substantial difference in oral abilities in the real-world context. On average, students who studied abroad reached Intermediate low or higher on the ACTFL proficiency scale, while those without study abroad averaged Novice high. Thus, one can project that the ability to reach the stated proficiency goals, Intermediate high (Chinese) or Advanced low (French, Russian, Spanish) in speaking after four years of study, may depend greatly on whether one has studied abroad. To investigate this notion further and at the individual program level, we ran *t* tests on study abroad vs. no study abroad students' OPIc scores within the three programs that had enough participants to warrant statistical comparison; Chinese, French, and Spanish (see Table 34.3⁵). After controlling for year of study and gender, studying abroad resulted in meaningful and significantly higher differences in speaking skills within each of the three programs as measured by the ACTFL OPIc. All three effect sizes were large, but the largest effect of study abroad on oral proficiency (0.78) was on students in the Chinese program.

By looking at the Chinese language program's overall OPIc means for those who studied abroad (3.80 = approaching Intermediate low) and those who did not (2.60 = above Novice mid), it is clear that by studying abroad, students in the Chinese program became closer to meeting the program's proficiency goal of Intermediate high by the end of four years of study. Similar results can be seen within the data from the French and Spanish programs. With study abroad, students in the French program were averaging just slightly above Intermediate low, while in Spanish, they were solidly above Intermediate low, and approaching Intermediate mid. In French and Spanish, the study abroad students averaged more than a full ACTFL proficiency level higher than their non-study abroad peers.

Table 34.3 Paired data by language *t* test results

	N (OPIc M, SD)		<i>M diff.</i> (SD)	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	SA	No SA		Upper	Lower			
Chinese	15 (3.80, 1.37)	15 (2.60, 0.83)	1.20 (1.98)	0.11	2.29	2.36	.033	0.78
French	39 (4.10, 1.41)	39 (3.03, 1.22)	1.08 (1.93)	0.45	1.70	3.49	.001	0.59
Spanish	94 (4.50, 1.87)	94 (3.22, 1.51)	1.28 (2.35)	0.80	1.76	5.27	<.001	0.55

Reintegration Post-Study Abroad

To address the second area of exploration that deals with placement of study abroad students into the curriculum, we interviewed the directors of the four language programs. The Chinese and Russian language programs have at least one individual who is familiar with (and in the case of Russian oversees) the entire language program from first through fourth year. Thus, it was rather easy to investigate reentry within those language programs. However, the French and Spanish programs do not have a single individual overseeing all language courses. Hence, there was not an easy way to gather information about post-study abroad reintegration for the French and Spanish programs other than to interview the undergraduate advisor for those language programs, who advises students returning from study abroad but does not teach in the language program themselves. Thus, in this section, we describe the Chinese and Russian programs' reintegration plans and policies in full. We gathered data from two Chinese instructors who oversaw the Chinese program that year and one Russian program director who oversaw the Russian study abroad students and their return to the program. Both the Chinese and Russian language programs offer a full summer of study abroad every year. Thus, we asked about how the summer 2016 study abroad students were reintegrated back into the Chinese and Russian language programs.

Chinese

The Chinese language program at Michigan State University is quite straightforward. There are two main courses at each level (101, 102; 201, 202; 301, 302; 401, 402), and because the program is relatively small, the courses are not offered off-sequence. That means that Chinese 101 is only offered in the fall, and Chinese 102 is only offered in the spring, etc. When a student is in the upper level (third and fourth years) of coursework, he or she can enroll in theme-based courses, such as Chinese 366: *Chinese Culture: Tradition & Modernity*. Selections of these special content and topics courses are offered each year, but it is not always the case that they are all offered, and sometimes some of them are taught in English (especially Chinese 466: *Modern Chinese Literature & Films*), depending on who enrolls. Every year the students in the Chinese program may opt to study abroad in the summer; in 2016, the program was in Chengdu (it rotates year to year between Chengdu and Harbin). The Chinese language program allows students to go abroad at any point in the curriculum after the first year of study. The program's main policy on reentry is to award the returning student an entire academic year of Chinese credit (8–10 credits) and to exempt the student from taking those credits at Michigan State. For example, Tom (a pseudonym for a real student we had in the Chinese post-study abroad focus group) finished Chinese 102 before going abroad. When he came back, he received 8 credits for Chinese 201 and 202, and thus in the fall, after returning home, he entered into Chinese 301. The Chinese program does not test students post-study abroad. Thus, placement into the home curriculum post-study abroad is more or less determined by the student him- or herself, with guidance from the program director or the undergraduate advisor who knows about the one-year-of-credit policy. In practice (by inquiring specifically about the nine students who studied abroad in summer 2016), we learned that most

students go abroad after the second year in the program. While abroad, they earn credits for the 301, 302 sequence, and thus upon return, they have completed the requirements for a minor in the language. Thus, many students discontinue their Chinese studies post-summer abroad and do not reintegrate into the curriculum at the home institution because they have completed a minor in the language while abroad, and that was their goal.

Russian

The Russian language program is somewhat similar to the Chinese language program. It too offers a sequence of first- and second-year courses in Russian (101, 102, 201, 202), and these are not offered off-sequence. Because the program is small, when students finish the first two years of coursework, they are combined into a single set of upper-level course offerings (400-level courses). Thus, Russian 440: *Contemporary Russian Life & Culture* may have both third- and fourth-year students enrolled. There is only one study abroad option for students in the Russian program: six weeks of study in Volgograd. Different from the Chinese program, however, is that the Russian language students, post-study abroad, are given seven credits for language courses that are not offered at the home institution: The courses are only transcriptible for students who study abroad. Thus, when students return to the home institution and return to the language classroom, they have not skipped any part of the home curriculum, and they are not exempt from taking any of the courses at the home institution. Like Chinese, the Russian program does not test students post-study abroad, and placement into the home curriculum is fairly automatic. In Russian, the student continues the sequence of courses he or she would have taken had he or she not studied abroad. Like in Chinese, many Russian students complete their studies of Russian while abroad (they do not take Russian post-return). This is because after study abroad, they have amassed enough credits to minor in the language, and a Russian minor may have been their only goal. But some do reenter the Russian program after study abroad. Returning study abroad students contribute to what may be a very heterogeneous Russian 440 course: Russian 440, like the other upper-level Russian courses, can have students post-study abroad who have completed Russian 202, or students who have completed Russian 202 but did not study abroad. Likewise, Russian 440 could have students who completed 420 or 421 the year prior, and those students may or may not have studied abroad.

In an interview with the Russian program director, it became apparent that creative curriculum development for classes on campus like Russian 440 was needed because of the heterogeneity of the class. From the outset, he makes it clear to students in that class that they are being judged on their own achievement and their own engagement with the material. In his words, “I try to design assignments with discrete pieces of work that are going to be accessible and useful to everybody.” One way he does this is through films because he can more easily create materials and discussion questions that can be useful for a range of proficiency levels. A principle that must be kept in mind is that whatever exercises and assessment mechanisms are created, they must work for everyone and cannot privilege some over others. His “goal is to make students really unaware of [what I am doing], and to really get them to focus on the content and not the fact [that materials are being adapted to different levels].”

What we have seen with this particular language program is a creative and innovative solution to a logistical problem that arises in language programs with few majors⁶ and few faculty members.

The larger language programs (French and Spanish) have several different study abroad and internship programs available, and the classes into which the students can be placed post-study abroad are likewise broad and numerous. The French and Spanish programs at this particular university also (perhaps problematically) do not have any one individual who supervises the architecture of the entire four-year sequence of course offerings; thus, the role of helping students realign to the curriculum post-study abroad is in the hands of the undergraduate advisors. The programs themselves do not have reintegration plans or policies per se; rather, these are determined on a case-by-case or program-by-program level. The smaller programs, Chinese and Russian, reintegrate students into the language program very differently. The Chinese program exempts the student from a full academic year of course work, while the Russian program does not; instead, students take coursework abroad that translates into credits that are only offered while abroad. Next, we report on the focus group sessions with the students to explore how they felt about their reintegration post-study abroad.

Returning from Study Abroad: The Students' Perspectives

We transcribed all five focus group sessions and coded them for themes related to the questions we asked. We asked students what their motivation was for studying abroad; the recurrent themes were to (i) travel and learn about the host country and to (ii) push their language-learning experiences to what one student described as "the next level." As described by another student, she wanted to study abroad to "finish up the minor" and to improve her speaking and listening, as she thought that reading and writing were the focus of the classes at the home institution. Successes were described as (i) becoming (through travel and by the experience of living abroad) more independent as a person, (ii) growing more confident in using the target language conversationally, (iii) learning more vocabulary, and (iv) learning subtle cultural aspects of the language, country, and people. Challenges while abroad included going "back" to dorm-living situations, having a curfew, adjusting to small quarters or living with a host family. The students noted that sometimes it was a struggle to stay in the target language while abroad, especially if they lived in dorms with other English speakers, and when they had a host family, they noted that sometimes cultural differences made life a little "awkward." But overall, the words used to describe the experiences were "amazing," "brilliant," "awesome," and "you cannot compare it to anything else."

Of great interest to us was what they said after we asked the question "What was it like in your language classes at Michigan State University post-study abroad?" During Phase 1 of the focus group sessions, students generally opined that they "had a ton more confidence" in their classes at Michigan State and that they were "more willing to speak in class." But one student did note that she had a hard time with the reduction in class intensity, coupled with reverse culture shock:

Reentering, well [first] we had 6 weeks off, was like getting hit with a brick. It's been a lot harder. My listening has really improved. But I have a culture shock of coming back to America. I didn't think it was a big adjustment to learning in

China, because I was learning full on, all the time. But adjusting back to class only two times a week was hard.

During Phase 2 of the focus group sessions, we focused on questions about reentry into classes on campus post-study abroad. We discussed this issue with three students who had returned from the Russian summer program and were in Russian 440 on campus, and two who had returned from China, but only one of them was taking Chinese that fall; Emma wanted to take Chinese in the fall, but there were no courses offered that she had not taken before or that she had not become exempt from taking (her abroad course work counted as some of the fall course offerings and she could not “retake” them); she planned to take Chinese in the next spring semester.

The three students from the Russian study abroad program who enrolled in Russian 440 post-study abroad each commented on how easy it was to know which class to take post-study abroad. They noted that they wanted to continue Russian for various reasons. One was a Russian major who saw continuing Russian as a bonus. The other two were dual majors, one a Russian (primary) and Linguistics (secondary) major, and the other the other way around, Linguistics (primary) and Russian (secondary). Both Lilly and Simon noted that they knew well ahead of time that they would take Russian 440 post-study abroad, and they noted that the transition was smooth and easy. Eva noted that she could “see a little bit of a difference” in the 440 class between those who studied abroad and those who had not because “for some of the assignments there would be a vocab list and I already know three quarters of the words just because I learned them when I was abroad.” Lilly concurred and noted that “it was [in 202 before study abroad] difficult for me to speak in class, but if I hadn’t done the study abroad program, I’d be worse [off now] because now I can understand [the professor] and the course is entirely in Russian.”

The reentry for the two Chinese students might be able to be qualified as more difficult. Emma was a dual education (primary) and Chinese (secondary) major but was unable to enroll in Chinese her fall semester post-study abroad in part because what she took abroad in the summer counted, for her, as the courses that were offered in the fall. She said, “I’m done with the language,” but that she will take one more elective, but that it is only offered in the spring. When we asked how Daniel knew what classes to take post-study abroad, he said the following:

DANIEL: “So, my advisor told me beforehand what I’d be earning credit for. She just gave me like a 10 credit block that says Advanced Spoken Chinese. It doesn’t have a number.”

INTERVIEWER: “It doesn’t have a number? How come?”

DANIEL: “Because I already took 401 and 402.”

INTERVIEWER: “Oh, so there’s nothing else for you to do. So, 401 and 402 are five credits?”

DANIEL: “The program was 10 credits. I don’t know the details. I know I have more than enough credits [to major in the language] right now. I’m graduating [with my BA] in 3 years.”

INTERVIEWER: “Do you feel like you have the equivalent to what you could have had you taken 401 and 402?”

DANIEL: “I’m leaning more towards no than yes, just because I feel like that study in China wasn’t as intense as I thought it was gonna be.”

We continued on this topic and had the following discussion, in which the two students from the Chinese study abroad program noted that the professors in China taught courses that were not exactly equivalent to the courses offered at the home institution, although the classes while abroad counted exactly as the home institution classes. For example, their culture classes were on tai-chi and calligraphy, and were hands on. Daniel noted that the professors in China gave a lot of personalized attention and were concerned about the students' personal goals for learning or improving their Chinese. But, Daniel noted, with the personalized instruction, there were pitfalls while abroad, especially if students did not want to be challenged:

EMMA: "The class wasn't like a challenge for me, there was stuff that I hadn't learned.

It wasn't hard, I didn't struggle at all."

INTERVIEWER: "Did you have a lot of homework at night?"

EMMA: "No."

DANIEL: "We hardly had homework."

EMMA: "It also came down to what students wanted to do."

Implications: Recommendations for Practice

Reentry into the home academic program is important for students and for foreign language programs because the option to study abroad is normally a secondary (optional) route through any college-level foreign language curricular program. Study abroad can be a major (and beneficial) side pipeline that hopefully returns students to the regular, at-home curriculum. In this chapter, we demonstrated the clear advantages that studying abroad has on learners' speaking skills, and we showed the clear advantages that study abroad programs have on the programs' obtainment of their proficiency objectives. Thus, language programs *need* robust and accessible study abroad programs. And research has shown that study abroad programs are carrots that bring a large portion of students to the advanced language-learning table (Dwyer, 2004, p. 156).

To maximize the benefits of study abroad, the language programs also need to fully articulate and understand exactly how the study abroad programs fit within and enhance the language program at the home institution. Language programs should also understand how big their reentry issues are. For example, we were surprised to find that many of participants did not continue studying the language post-study abroad. The reasons for this were complex, having to do *inter alia* with lacking credits in other required courses, but one issue within one program appeared to be that by studying abroad, students had no courses in the target language left to take at the home institution. Counting short-duration but intensive study abroad coursework as longer-term, less-intensive, home coursework may be problematic: We know from DeKeyser (2010) and Davidson (2007, 2010) that short study abroad programs (six weeks or less) tend to *not* show noticeable increases in proficiency because the programs are too short. Thus, a suggestion to smaller language programs is to create a separate set of courses (that are actually not offered at the home institution) into which study abroad credits can be placed so that the option to continue learning post-study abroad remains a full possibility.

A second issue relating to why students did not continue studying the language post-study abroad was that after study abroad, the students had completed enough credits for a minor and viewed themselves as "done with the language," as one of our focus group

participants quipped. University language programs may need to investigate the effects of study abroad on the program and minor students' discontinuation of language learning post-study abroad. Post-study abroad, students are *primed* to continue learning to the advanced levels (DeKeyser, 2010), and language programs should try to maximize the benefits of study abroad by also promoting the continuation of language learning post-study abroad. A suggestion could be to adjust the program requirements such that post-study abroad, students must take at least one language class at the home institution, although we recognize that this could have the negative effect of reducing study abroad participation. Such a requirement is in place at Albion College in Michigan (personal communication with Sherri Lang on November 30, 2016). And in addition to that requirement, at Albion, returning study abroad students are also required to live in a campus language house for at least one semester, which may help them with reverse culture shock (as we reviewed in the literature; Gray & Savicki, 2015), and may also foster an out-of-class, target-language communicative environment, which were two things our focus group participants noted they struggled with after they returned: that is, they noted a lack of intensity in learning the language at the home instruction post-study abroad, and they suffered from reverse culture shock.

Limitations and Future Directions

Within each program, an issue that needs more investigation relates to who oversees a language program's study abroad options and the students who participate. There are various models, and there are multiple options. Is it a faculty member involved in the study abroad and overall curricular programming, or is it an instructor or academic advisor who most likely does not set the overall academic pathways or curricular programming? This information is important to understand because if the study abroad *traffic director*, so to speak, is separate from the overall road (curriculum) planner, one needs to understand the nature of the relationship between the traffic director and the road planner to fully envision the health and well-being of the study abroad programming and how it fits within the overall foreign language program.

Another area of future research we uncovered from our current work is that language programs might need to establish separate curricular objectives and proficiency expectations for those who study abroad vs. those who do not. We think it may be important to understand whether curricular objectives need to be qualified by the various paths of language experiences the students in the program may have, including study-abroad-experience paths. In our previous work (Winke & Gass, 2018), we have found that study abroad is one way, but not the only way, of achieving advanced status in the language. The probability of achieving a program's proficiency benchmarks needs to be qualified in terms of the options in the program. We echo the suggestions outlined by Lord and Isabelli-Garcia (2014) that those involved in language program articulation must identify and then close any gaps that exist between a foreign language program's study abroad offerings and the home (stateside) curriculum. Language program directors need to have a better understanding of precisely the benefits gained from study abroad experiences. Similarly, educators need to have a better understanding of how individual characteristics align with types and lengths of study abroad experiences, as educators and program directors continue to gain insight into how much studying abroad increases a student's chances of obtaining the language program's proficiency benchmarks.

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Key Terms

Cultural adjustment	Proficiency assessment
Culture shock	Proficiency benchmarks
Focus groups	Proficiency goals
Language curricula	Reentry
Language development	Reverse culture shock
Proficiency	Study abroad

Further Readings

- Brewer, E., Cunningham, K., & Green, M. F. (Eds.). (2009). *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines*. Sterling, VA: Stylus. (This edited volume is not on integrating study abroad into language-learning curricula per se, but it has extremely noteworthy chapters on embedding preparation for study abroad in language courses [Chapter 5 by Redmann], helping students bolster their study abroad experience through their senior thesis research [Chapter 10 by Fass and Fraser], and using study abroad as an advantage when on the job market [Chapter 11 by Brewer and Cunningham].)
- Paige, M. R., Cohen, A. D., Kappler Mikk, B., Chi, J. C. & Lassegard, J. P. (2006). *Maximizing study abroad: A students' guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use* (2nd Ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition. Retrieved from <http://carla.umn.edu/maxsa/guides.html>. (This set of guidebooks is aimed at students and study abroad program directors. Directors can assign parts of the guidelines to help students with upcoming, during, and post-study abroad issues. Of particular interest to us is the unit on *Post-Study Abroad*. In that unit, papers include "Appreciating different styles of successful reentry," "Study abroad leads to life-long learning," and "Strategies for long-term maintenance of language and culture learning.")
- Savicki, V., & Brewer, E. (Eds.). (2015). *Assessing study abroad: Theory, tools, and practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus. (This book with 16 chapters by numerous authors goes in depth in presenting empirical and theoretical articles on assessing the benefits of study abroad. While the chapters do not exclusively focus on language learning while abroad, the papers are informative and thought-provoking on methods and procedures in assessing various study abroad outcomes.)

Notes

- 1 We refer to language programs as representing all areas of undergraduate language instruction (first through fourth year).
- 2 It is important to note that this research focused on general academic performance, which may or may not include academic performance in language classes.
- 3 The research in this chapter was funded by a Flagship grant from the National Security Education Program (see Acknowledgments). The grant initiative goal was to investigate the attainment of foreign language proficiency by undergraduates at various levels of instruction (first through fourth year) in diverse foreign language programs at US universities.

- 4 With ACTFL OPIc administration, students self-select their oral test level. A below rate is given when a student selects an oral test level that was too high for him or her resulting in an insufficient amount of oral data for the purposes of evaluation.
- 5 We could not conduct the same analysis for Russian given insufficient numbers.
- 6 The Russian program does not have many primary majors. However, many students have history or international relations as primary majors and select Russian as a second or additional major.

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The Future of Study Abroad

History and Current Trends in US Study Abroad

Amelia J. Dietrich

Introduction

Over the past 100 years, study abroad in the US and around the world has grown immensely. This concept of an educational experience that was once comprised mostly of individually organized trips across the seas has grown to become a multibillion-dollar industry backed by college and university administrations, supported by federal funding, and subjected to regulation at the institutional and governmental levels. While overseeing plans for education abroad was previously just one aspect of the job of a faculty member or administrator, today, there are whole offices and even colleges devoted to international/world/global studies or study/education abroad. The administration of these educational activities abroad is a full-time job, and education abroad is a professionalized field complete with its own set of skills and knowledge required of those working in it. The development of this field has led to the evolution of a vocabulary of terms and concepts that are often unfamiliar, even to those faculty members who advise and teach students before, during, and after study abroad programs. With this in mind, the present chapter aims to serve as an introduction to study abroad from the perspectives of professionals working in the field. The chapter begins by tracing the major points in the history of study abroad, focusing primarily on the unique situation of study abroad in US higher education. Later, the chapter moves on to a more in-depth review of recent developments in the field, including its standardization and professionalization. It concludes with a discussion of current major trends in study abroad, including efforts to increase access to study abroad for a more diverse student population; the rise of independent program provider organizations, short-term programs, and not-for-credit experiences; and the focus on health, safety, security, and risk management. The chapter, and its final section in particular, is presented in this volume with the hope that this introduction to the field of study abroad may prove useful and informative to new professionals to the field or to language researchers, faculty, and others whose day-to-day work is more focused on certain academic features or outcomes of study abroad than the design and administration of study abroad programming. Awareness of these trends may help to

inform the design of future research studies and facilitate the ongoing relationship between faculty and administrators engaging in study abroad program development.

The History of Study Abroad in the US

As an American concept, studying abroad can trace its origins to the so-called “Grand Tour” of the 19th century, during which the cultural elite would travel abroad and visit the capitals of Europe as a sort of coming-of-age experience (Hoffa, 2007). During this time, of course, the ability to go abroad was only available to the wealthy and highly educated, and was often conducted independently. Hoffa points out that the American Grand Tour “often had social and diplomatic dimensions,” with wealthy American students traveling throughout Europe to connect with the children of families of similar socioeconomic stature in these countries in order to learn European manners and “refinement,” and maybe even find a husband (Hoffa, 2007, pp. 3–6). This at least partially explains why study abroad was seen historically as an activity for young female students, a trend that persists to present day. As study abroad developed in these early years, study abroad pioneers such as Indiana University led their first “Summer Tramps” to Western Europe (especially England, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy) as early as 1884 (Indiana University, 1884). The University of Delaware began its Junior Year Abroad program in France in 1923 (University of Delaware Institute of Global Studies, 2013).

The US began sponsoring international education opportunities of its own after World War I with the establishment of the Belgian American Education Foundation in 1920. This foundation, led by President Herbert Hoover, organizer of the Committee for Relief in Belgium, was created to sustain the political friendship built between the US and Belgium during the war (DuBois, 1995, p. 55; The Belgian American Education Foundation, 2016). Around this same time (in 1919), Nobel Peace Prize winners Nicholas Murray Butler, Elihu Root, and Stephen Duggan, Sr., founded the Institute of International Education (IIE) on the belief that international educational exchange was the basis for “greater understanding between nations,” without which “lasting peace” could not be achieved (Institute of International Education, 2017). Over the years, IIE has shaped US study abroad in meaningful ways, including establishing international exchanges around the world; working with the US government to administer Fulbright programs; developing public-private partnerships to support international education; helping to found National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA) and Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) (discussed later); and creating the Open Doors Survey, the definitive reference for international education statistics in the US today.

The US government continued its investments in educational exchange in 1946 when Congress passed the Fulbright Act. Senator Fulbright used the assets from credits and liquidated US properties left in Europe after World War II to fund educational activities in those countries. Within this postwar context, the Council on Student Travel (now known as the Council on International Educational Exchange or CIEE) was founded with the mission “to help people gain understanding, acquire knowledge, and develop skills for living in a globally interdependent and culturally diverse world” (CIEE, 2017). For the past 70 years, CIEE has organized educational exchanges for students, teachers, and administrators. Today, they are one of the largest providers of study abroad programming in the US. The influx of 25,000

incoming international students arriving in the US on Fulbright exchanges led to the development of the NAFSA in 1948. At the time of its establishment, NAFSA was a professional organization for the university administrators who would support arriving international students (it would later include professionals working in outward-bound study abroad as well).

In 1960, seeing the need for a national conversation regarding the difference between independent student travel and formalized study abroad, 500 international educators and higher education administrators convened in Chicago at the National Conference on Undergraduate Study Abroad. This initiated a national conversation regarding the need for national standards to ensure program quality in this growing field (Hoffa, 2007, p. 249). The original Fulbright legislation was replaced by the Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act in 1961 (now known as the Fulbright-Hays Act), which further cemented the government's commitment to international educational exchange by growing the size of the board overseeing the scholarship program, creating an assistant secretary of state position to oversee educational exchanges, identifying additional sources of funding for the program, and inviting additional countries to join the program (DuBois, 1995, p. 57). In 2015, the Fulbright Program sent 1,921 American students or recent graduates abroad and reported having alumni who have come from or gone to over 180 countries in the world as a part of Fulbright programs (J. William Fulbright Scholarship Board, 2016).

More recent government efforts to support cultural and educational exchange with other countries include the Boren Act of 1991, which established the National Security Education Program (NSEP) to provide financial support of unidirectional educational efforts related to "critical" areas of US foreign policy, i.e., sending American students overseas to learn languages and cultures of other countries deemed critical to US national security (Mason, Powers, & Donelly, 2015; Riddle, 1992). A study of the first 15 years of Boren Awards recipients indicated success of the program overall and found that the longer students were abroad, the greater were the gains they achieved in oral proficiency in the critical target language (Mason et al., 2015, pp. 12–13). In 2000, the International Academic Opportunity Act launched the Gilman International Scholarship program, a competitive award that funds study abroad participation and is available to undergraduate students who qualify for Pell grants through demonstrated financial need. The year 2006 was declared the Year of Study Abroad by a simple resolution of the US Senate so that US educational institutions would be encouraged to promote and expand study abroad initiatives for students (S. Res. 308, 2005). Still more recently, the presidency of Barack Obama saw the establishment of the 100,000 Strong in China (2009) and 100,000 Strong in the Americas (2011) initiatives, which were aimed at increasing international study to those regions (US Department of State, 2016). Through the funding of scholarships and grants, these initiatives provide institutions with impetus for developing programs in these regions and sending more American students on educational programs there.

Likely due in large part to greater government support and increased globalization, the 1990s and early 2000s witnessed a rise in the number of US students studying abroad, from about 70,000 students in academic year 1991/1992 to over 260,000 students in academic year 2009/2010 (Institute of International Education, 2001, 2010). With this came a growing workload and the need for more staff at universities to support study abroad students as well as a rise in the professionalization of

the field. A 2008 survey of 309 individuals working in study abroad found that the majority of them had advanced degrees and previous international experience. Still, international education and study abroad offices at colleges and universities around the US found themselves understaffed or reaching their limit in terms of their ability to support the student population they served (Spencer, Kreutzer, & Shallenberger, 2008; see also The Forum on Education Abroad, 2016b, for information on positions in the field of education abroad).

Responding to this growing field in flux, professional organizations developed and offered more resources, training, and support for people working in the field of study/education abroad. NAFSA began admitting members and providing resources and programming for professionals involved in sending US students abroad and eventually renamed the organization to NAFSA: Association of International Educators to reflect this broader scope in 1990 (NAFSA, 2016a). During this same period, noting the value of study abroad as a field of scholarly inquiry unto its own, faculty and administrators in the field worked to found academic journals that focused exclusively on publishing research on international education and study abroad: *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 1995– and *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 1997–.

Recognizing a need for an organization that focused specifically on supporting professionals working with outbound US students, whose needs, motivations, and experiences are often quite different from those of students coming to study in the US from other countries, The Forum on Education Abroad was founded in 2001 as a professional association for institutions and organizations sending US students on study abroad (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2014a). The mission of The Forum was focused on developing and “promoting standards and] best practices... in education abroad” (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2014b). The first edition of *The Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* was published in 2004; it is presently in its fifth edition (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2015b). Following the publication of the *Standards*, The Forum on Education Abroad was recognized by the US Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for the field in 2005 (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2014a), a designation it holds to present day. In support of these standards and to help professionals in the field to apply them consistently, The Forum offers a variety of training events and resources; a Professional Certification Program for individuals working in the field; and a Quality Improvement Program (QUIP), in which an institution or organization voluntarily undergoes an external review by experienced professionals who determine through interviews, self-study, and site visits whether the institution/organization’s program(s) meet the standards for the field.

Current Trends

It is important to have awareness of the professional associations described earlier and the work they do because it is through their data collection and advocacy efforts that the field has gleaned most of the existing knowledge about the current intertwined trends in study abroad and is able to make advancements in key areas. The trends highlighted in this section were chosen based on the author’s professional involvement in the field of education abroad, which includes awareness of these trends as rising themes for a variety of professional meetings, conferences, and emerging

associations in recent years, and is also based on trends identified in publications in the field. Hoffa and DePaul's (2010) edited volume included three chapters, each of which focused on a different aspect of the diversification of study abroad (DeWinter and Rumbley on curricular diversity; Stallman, Woodruff, Kasravi, and Comp on diverse student profiles; Ogden, Soneson, and Weting on diverse destinations). All of the trends that follow were also identified as top concerns or top strategies employed by education abroad professionals in The Forum on Education Abroad's 2015 State of the Field Survey (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2016a, pp. 5, 8). These trends were also selected insofar as they represent aspects of study abroad that often fall outside of the scope of the work of faculty and researchers in this area (the assumed audience of this volume), and thus may be less familiar to them. Awareness and understanding of these priorities and concerns could help to strengthen partnerships between the academic and administrative sides of study abroad program development implementation.

Where available, further reading and practical resources are highlighted. The section begins with the discussion of increasing participation, access, and diversity, not only for its importance to the field at the present time but also because the constant efforts to find more students to study abroad and to include a more diverse study abroad student profile are closely related to the other trends that follow.

Access, Diversity, and Increasing Participation

In the 2003/2004 academic year, 191,231 American college and university students studied abroad for academic credit (Institute of International Education, 2015b), accounting for approximately 1.1% of the total of 16.9 million American college and university students that year (US Department of Education, 2016). Among these students, 65.6% were women; 83.7% were white; 5% were Hispanic or Latinx; 6.1% were Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander; and 3.4% were black or African-American (Institute of International Education, 2015b). The “traditional” study abroad student is generally characterized as a white, undergraduate female, likely a student of the liberal arts. The traditional destination for these students is Europe. While the number of students studying abroad has increased in approximately the past 10 years (up to 264,889 or 1.6% of the US college student population in 2013/2014), the profile of the typical student has remained largely the same: 65.3% women; 74.3% white; 8.3% Hispanic/Latinx; 7.7% Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; 5.6% black/African-American (compare with US higher education enrollment generally for that same year: 56.6% women; 59.3% white; 15.8% Hispanic/Latinx; 6.4% Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander; 14.7% black/African-American) (Institute of International Education, 2015b; National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). The most popular destinations for US students studying abroad in 2013/2014 were UK (12.5% of students abroad), Italy (10.3%), Spain (9.1%), France (5.9%), and China (5.0%) (Institute of International Education, 2015b). In this regard, little has changed within the dominant patterns of US study abroad since the days of the Grand Tour of Europe. One aspect of US students abroad that has changed in ways that mirror overall trends of academic majors in US higher education is field of study. While the traditional motivation for study abroad was with the intention to learn languages and cultures (humanities), in 2013/2014, STEM (22.6% of students abroad), Business (19.6%), and Social Sciences (18.7%) majors all outnumbered Foreign Languages and

International Studies (7.8%) and Fine or Applied Arts (7.0%) majors (Institute of International Education, 2015b).

As in higher education more broadly (Haring-Smith, 2013), within study abroad diversity and inclusive excellence have become a priority. Recent efforts by the government (e.g., the 100,000 Strong initiatives and the recently re-introduced Simon Act [NAFSA, 2016b]) and universities around the US have focused on augmenting overall numbers of participation in study abroad by simultaneously expanding access to study abroad for a more diverse population of students (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2016a, p. 9). Targeted populations include first-generation college students, community college students, ethnic and racial minorities, men, veterans, students with disabilities, and student athletes. The Generation Study Abroad initiative, an effort of the Institute of International Education started in 2014, aims to mobilize resources in order to double study abroad participation among US students to 600,000 by 2019 (Institute of International Education, 2014). As of May 2016, 400 US colleges and universities had signed on as commitment partners in this initiative and pledged to work to achieve this goal.

In addition to these broad efforts, and likely in response to the perceived challenges that professionals in the field face to achieve these aims and a gap in the resources available to address them, certain movements and organizations have been established to address specific access issues. The Diversity Abroad Network, founded in 2010, is “dedicated to increasing participation and better serving the needs of diverse and underrepresented students in international education” (Diversity Abroad, 2016). Mobility International was founded in 1981 with the aim of empowering students with disabilities to study abroad. Abroad with Disabilities, founded in 2015, helps study abroad professionals learn how to serve as support and advocate for students with disabilities and to create and implement programs with students with disabilities in mind.

Another strategy employed by education abroad professionals to increase student participation has been to diversify the destinations of programs offered (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2016a, p. 9). Expanding study abroad programming beyond the traditional destinations in Europe can appeal to a broader array of students for a variety of reasons, including their chosen fields of study (e.g., tech- and business-oriented students may feel Asia has more to offer for their current interests and future career goals; van der Meid, 2003) or family heritage. The latter, known as heritage seeking (Szekely, 1998), is also viewed as a method for encouraging greater diversity of the study abroad student profile. It has been suggested that one reason that racial and ethnic minorities on US campuses are underrepresented among study abroad students is because they feel that on predominantly white campuses they are already developing their ability to relate and interact across cultures—an oft-cited benefit of study abroad—every day (Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2010). A recent exploration of study abroad destination decision-making by students within the University System of Georgia found that minority students were significantly more likely to choose study abroad destinations that corresponded to their ethnicities (Whatley, 2017). This is supported by previous smaller-scale studies and anecdotal reports that found, e.g., many African-American students choosing to study in Ghana as “a quest for personal history or roots” (Landau & Chioni Moore, 2001), and that students choosing to study abroad in Israel are typically Jewish (Donitsa-Schmidt & Vadish, 2005). Thus, not just the barriers but also the motivations to study abroad for students

of color may be different. By adding destinations in Latin America to an institution's study abroad portfolio, for example, institutions offer the opportunity to connect with one's ancestral heritage to a segment of the student population that does not share that connection to Europe. This opportunity, then, may offer additional motivation and, in turn, attract more Hispanic/Latinx students to study abroad.

The Rise of Program Providers

In the field of study abroad, independent program provider organizations, often called simply "program providers," are defined as "[a]n institution or organization that offers education abroad program services to students from a variety of institutions. A program provider may be a college or university, a nonprofit organization, a for-profit business, or a consortium" (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2015a). Collaborations between colleges and universities, and independent program provider organizations may be based on formal agreements, and they may include agreements regarding exclusivity of the university to collaborate with a particular provider for programs in a particular city or region. Program provider organizations generally welcome students from a variety of college or university partners to participate in their programs abroad. In some cases, program provider organizations can also work with institutions to create customized programs suited to the needs of their particular student body or academic context and available only to students of that university.

In the early years of study abroad, colleges and universities sending students abroad organized and sponsored many of their own programs by way of exchange agreements with partner institutions abroad and the employment of their own faculty to lead semesters abroad and shorter-term study tours. Cost, curricular integration, quality assurance, and the potential competition that third-party provider organizations would pose to university-run study abroad programs were causes for concern among study abroad administrators (Heyl, 2011). As recently as 2007, colleges and universities reported using third-party organizations, such as independent program providers and consortia, to run less than 15% of exchange programs. No more than 50% of other types of programs offered by colleges and universities were run through third parties (namely nonexchange integrated study courses at foreign universities and programs run using a "study abroad center" format, which offer courses in the host country designed specifically for study abroad students) (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2007, p. 4). A more recent survey of US colleges and universities showed a marked increase in the use of independent program provider organizations and other third-party services to offer study abroad programming to their students, now reporting at least 25% of exchange and faculty-led programs run through third parties and approximately 72% of "study abroad center" formats run by third parties (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2016a, p. 21).

Particularly as pressure from university leadership and government entities to send more US students abroad increases, the option to use independent program provider organizations and consortia can be seen as a means of doing more with less. Through the wide array of options that these organizations can offer to students, colleges and universities can increase the diversity of length, type, and location of study abroad programs available to their students without having to hire additional faculty or staff or invest in additional property. Program provider organizations with

long histories and experienced local and/or on-site staff in the host community can also add an additional level of benefit to colleges and universities by guaranteeing high levels of knowledge of the host community and appropriate safety and security measures on the ground, which potentially reduces some of the risk liability for the institutions sending students and enriches the intercultural aspects of the study abroad program. Downsides of program provider partnerships for colleges and universities include the difficulty in assessing, assuring, and comparing quality in an expanding marketplace, a perceived loosening of control over academic content and curriculum integration of programs, and the loss of study abroad revenue that would otherwise go to campus budgets if programs were run directly by the institution (see also Heyl, 2011).

Short-Term Programs

Short-term programs in the field of study abroad are generally defined as those lasting eight weeks or less (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2015a). Such programs often take place during breaks from the regular university semester: summer, Spring Break, January term, etc. Participation in these programs makes up a large proportion of all participation in study abroad—62.1% of US study abroad students in 2013/2014 studied abroad on a program of eight weeks or less—and has increased steadily in recent years, up from 51.6% in 2003/2004 (Institute of International Education, 2015a). Students select shorter programs because they view these as allowing them to have the study abroad experience without having to take time out from “real life,” i.e., activities that are important to them on campus, their course requirements for graduation, families, friends, relationships, and work (Hulstrand, 2006). Shorter options may be particularly important for nontraditional or low-income students who may not be able to afford longer terms abroad or who cannot take the time to go abroad long term due to work or family commitments.

While shorter programs do increase the opportunity for participation by more students who are more diverse in many ways, educators and professionals in the field have raised concerns. Many in the field operate on the belief that any time spent abroad is better than none at all (Lemmons, 2013) and that more is even better (Engle & Engle, 2004). Still, doubts remain as to whether shorter-term programs are well suited to achieve some of the goals that higher education has set for study abroad, particularly goals for intercultural and language learning (see, e.g., Anderson, Lorenz, & White, 2016; [DAI]; Hulstrand, 2006; The Forum on Education Abroad, 2016a). In response to these concerns, research on short-term programs would indicate that, especially with proper intervention, students can make meaningful linguistic (Duperron & Overstreet, 2009; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Zamastil-Vondrova, 2005) and intercultural (Czerwionka, Artamonova, & Barbosa, 2014; Kehl & Morris, 2008; Zamastil-Vondrova, 2005) gains, and have a transformative learning experience (Walters, Charles, & Bingham, 2016). In fact, some studies would suggest that shorter, more structured programs can actually be equally or more effective at helping students make gains in these areas (e.g., Strange & Gibson, 2017). This may be attributable to the fact that in short-term programs, faculty and on-site staff can better encourage (or even force, though it sounds unpleasant) students to have regular contact with locals from the host community (Anderson et al., 2016). During long-term programs, US students generally have far more free and unstructured time

that they may end up spending largely alone or in the company of fellow foreign students (Arenson, 2003). Furthermore, there are indications that students who participate in short-term programs perceive the impacts of these experiences on their personal and intellectual lives to be significant (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). Students participating in short-term programs are more likely to study foreign languages and stay enrolled in college or university and complete their studies than their peers who do not study abroad; they are also more likely to study or travel abroad again, often for longer periods of time (Cushner, 2004). Hulstrand (2006) and The Forum on Education Abroad's *Standards of Good Practice in Education Abroad* can offer practical guidance on how to structure programs and guide students' learning in all formats, including short-term ones. Strategies include setting clear expectations with students well in advance of departure, designing contact with the local community and the local language into the program activities, assigning students guided reflections through class discussions and/or journaling, and providing ample time and guidance for them to continue to reflect and debrief after they have returned home.

Noncredit Experiences

Many of these short-term and other experiences abroad include little or no time in a formal classroom setting. A study released in early 2016 reports that US students "are pursuing a broader range of international educational activities despite not receiving academic credit for them" (Mahmoud & Farrugia, 2016), which they call Non-Credit Education Abroad (NCEA). These experiences include service learning and volunteering, conducting research or fieldwork overseas, attending academic conferences and athletic events, participating in the performing arts, or completing internships. Twenty-two thousand US students participated in noncredit activities in the 2013/2014 academic year (Institute of International Education, 2015a). Mahmoud and Farrugia (2016) cite the relatively reduced cost of participation in such activities vs. traditional study abroad programs and greater flexibility of incorporating these experiences into their college experience without interrupting their on-campus studies as major reasons for the rise in participation in these kinds of international experiences. These advantages also make such programs an appealing option for institutions and organizations committed to increasing US college and university student participation in educational experiences abroad. The study considers that students may be pursuing these types of not-for-credit experiences abroad (at least sometimes) through student organizations or other campus groups who do not work with the professional staff in international/study abroad offices to prepare for the experience. Other times, they may pursue these opportunities independently. This leads Mahmoud and Farrugia to further point out that the data collected on this area of education abroad may not be fully representative of the reality: If students are going abroad on programs and activities for which they are not receiving credit, their home institution may not be involved in or be aware of their participation. Therefore, the institution may not have the information available to report in the annual Open Doors Survey, and the total numbers provided in this source may be an underestimation. This disconnect between the institutional involvement and the study abroad experience makes this area of education abroad a bit of a no-man's-land at times, where study abroad professionals and other educators and administrators cannot or do not have the ability to oversee and support the quality and safety of these study

abroad programs. The disconnect breeds concerns regarding student safety, ethical issues, and the quality of the educational experience on such programs. It is for this reason that Bhandari, deputy vice president of research and evaluation at IIE, urges a concerted effort by colleges and universities to better track these experiences by their students (Mahmoud & Farrugia, 2016). Also acknowledging this potential gap in quality assurance, The Forum on Education Abroad has developed guidelines for applying the *Standards* for undergraduate health-related programs, undergraduate research abroad, and volunteer and internship experiences abroad (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2013).

It would also seem that more knowledge of and access to such programs by faculty and researchers and a more complete integration of such experiences into the panorama of the US college and university experience on campuses could expand the possibilities for investigating the full spectrum of outcomes of educational experiences abroad. Do students make greater language or intercultural gains through participation in for-credit vs. not-for-credit experiences abroad? Are the interventions that support success in these areas the same or different when a student is studying abroad in a classroom as compared to when a student is conducting field research or volunteering in a rural medical clinic? These and many questions could be more readily and deeply studied through the awareness and monitoring of noncredit experiences abroad among US students.

Health, Safety, Security, and Risk Management

Standard 8 of the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* states that an organization should “[prioritize] the health, safety, and security of its students through policies, procedures, advising, orientation, and training” (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2015b). Student health, safety, security, and risk management is a perennial concern of the field (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2016a, p. 5). While study abroad professionals consider these factors and respond to student incidents in their daily work, tragedies involving US students abroad and heightened concerns regarding terroristic acts and natural disasters around the world draw public attention to the field’s practices in this area. Legislative efforts in Minnesota (successful; 2014 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 312–H.F. No. 3172) and New York (attempted; Senate Bill 1566, 2013–2014 Legislative Session), and at the federal level are aimed at requiring colleges and universities who send students abroad to track and report deaths, accidents, and illnesses experienced by students during their time abroad. The national legislation known as the Clery Act of 1990 (as amended by the Violence Against Women Act in 2014) and Title IX (1972) require that colleges and universities report and take action in response to reports of certain crimes, including crimes and unequal treatment on the basis of sex. This can also apply to overseas study abroad locations (University Risk Management and Insurance Association, 2016). Study abroad professionals can find training and resources to help them navigate the complexities of these regulations through their professional associations, such as The Forum on Education Abroad and NAFSA, as well as from risk management professionals on their campuses. Despite increased concerns and legislation, study abroad overall is not a particularly dangerous endeavor. A 2016 study of insurance claims data from approximately 50% of all US students that studied abroad in 2014 reports the rates of illnesses, injuries, and deaths experienced by those students. Importantly,

the study estimates that US students are more likely to die on their home campuses than while studying abroad (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2016c). This would suggest that what professionals in the field have been doing to date to ensure student safety has been relatively effective. Still, knowing the nature of incidents occurring abroad after the fact can help professionals in the field better prepare themselves and their students to avoid future incidents.

The study abroad context is a rich one for helping students to develop language and intercultural communication skills for investigating how such development proceeds, but language and intercultural gains are far from the only factors that go into the development and execution of study abroad programs. Professionals working in the field, including faculty, administrators, and employees of private and nonprofit organizations, work tirelessly to ensure that students have safe and academically rigorous experiences abroad, and that a wide array of opportunities are accessible to students of all types and interests. The preceding review of the main events in US study abroad history and recent developments in the field is offered as an introduction, a jumping-off point, and certainly does not exhaustively cover the publications, organizations, and resources that are available in the field. It is presented in the hopes that it can lead faculty and researchers to the broader resources available to them, and to facilitate conversations “across the aisle” between faculty and study abroad professionals who approach study abroad with different perspectives, expertise, and experiences. Future research in the areas of language and intercultural development in study abroad would serve those academic fields as well as the professional field of study abroad well to more methodically investigate and compare learning outcomes in different program designs and formats, e.g., shorter- vs. longer-term, classroom study vs. service-learning, outcomes for heritage-seeking (and -speaking) students, and to identify practical applications of those findings for use by practitioners in the field.

Key Terms

Study abroad	Health and safety
Education abroad	Risk management
International education	Noncredit education abroad
Short-term study abroad	Not-for-credit education abroad
Diversity	Program providers
Inclusion	Education abroad professional

Further Reading

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