Introduction

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"He then that will know much out of this great Book,
the World, must read much in it"
(Lassels, 1670, preface)

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Residence abroad has a long tradition in language education, as a means of honing and developing language skills, and encountering new cultures. The elite Grand Tour began in the 17th century, taking young English gentlemen through France, Germany and Italy, to study languages, art and architecture, and more generally to "enlighten their understanding" and become "acquainted with a world of our kindred we never saw before" (Lassels, 1670, preface). From the early 20th century, varied forms of study/ residence abroad became institutionalised within formal higher education (de Wit & Merkx, 2012). Today, with the mass development of higher education, millions of students spend part or all of their studies as temporary sojourners in a different country, and acquire new language skills to a greater or lesser extent, alongside new academic knowledge, and interpersonal and intercultural skills (Banks & Bhandari, 2012).

Among this international flow, languages students in particular are encouraged or required to undertake some form of study or residence abroad, on the assumption of a distinctive contribution to their target language proficiency, and in particular to oral fluency. Many North American languages students with varying levels of pre-programme proficiency attend short instructional programmes organised by their home institutions abroad. In Europe, many languages students criss-cross the continent to earn credit in a different country for a semester or a complete academic year, and enrol in a partner university abroad, through student exchanges funded by the Erasmus programme of the European Union (now Erasmus Plus: European Commission, 2014). Worldwide, very large numbers of English language graduates proceed to some form of advanced study abroad in English-medium educational institutions. Accordingly, research on the language learning outcomes of study/ residence abroad developed actively in the later 20th century, largely as a sub-strand of the new discipline of second language acquisition research (see reviews e.g. in Collentine, 2009; Freed, 1995). Surveys of study abroad research confirm in general terms the expected broad linguistic benefits,

especially in the areas of oral proficiency, pragmatics and vocabulary development (Llanes, 2011). However, Llanes (2011) also points out a number of limitations to the mainstream SLA research in study abroad contexts. For example, benefits for some areas of language are contradictory or unclear (this is notably the case for grammar learning); the age range typically studied is narrow (adolescents/ young adults); and the most beneficial starting age/ starting language level are not known.

As is well known, second language acquisition research was inspired at its foundation primarily by developments in theoretical linguistics and psycholinguistics (Mitchell, Myles & Marsden, 2013, Chapter 2), and this focus is mirrored in the study abroad research tradition surveyed by Llanes (2011). However, even from the early days of second language acquisition research, there were voices calling for greater sociolinguistic sensitivity concerning constructs such as "input" and "interaction", and in recent decades ethnographic and poststructuralist thinking have become increasingly influential within SLA theorising (see e.g. Atkinson, 2011). Given the social dislocation inevitably attaching to the experience of study/ residence abroad, it is not surprising that qualitative research traditions investigating its impact on sojourners' personality, identity and intercultural awareness has flourished strongly in this particular domain (influential studies include e.g. Jackson, 2010; Kinginger, 2009; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005). This research has highlighted sojourners' growth as practical problem-solvers, and their increasing ease with diversity and self-discovery. At the same time, this research tradition has documented contradictions and troubles concerning the evolution of identity and creation of new relationships (for example with respect to gender). The construction of social groups/ communities of practice turns out to be easier for many sojourners when getting together with other international students than with locals; English turns out to be an easily available lingua franca to the student sojourner for many types of social contact, which makes accessing and using other languages more challenging. Some microethnographic work has demonstrated the complexity of discourse with e.g. homestay families, showing that accessing "rich target language input" involves not only the investment of time, but also more crucially the negotiation of social relationships and discovery of mutually satisfying topics and activities with host interlocutors.

This book arose from a conference held in Southampton in April 2013, titled "Residence Abroad, Social Networks and Second Language Learning". The conference organisers took the view that in order to further progress the tradition of research on language learning during study/ residence abroad, it was necessary to bring together the two research traditions outlined above. The broad aim of the conference was to explore underlying sociocultural reasons for vari-

ability in language learning success during study/ residence abroad. More specifically, the concept of "social networks" was borrowed from sociolinguistic research which also sought to explain variability in language use through the social relationships entered into (by dialect speakers of English in urban Belfast: Milroy, 1987); this concept was addressed directly in some conference papers, but by no means all.

Accordingly, the book is divided into four sections. Section 1 "Setting the Scene" includes two contributions from plenary speakers at the conference. In Chapter 1, Ulrich Teichler provides an authoritative general overview of trends in temporary study abroad, noting its well established social and linguistic advantages, but also its decreasing exceptionalism in a globalising world. In Chapter 2, James Coleman makes the general case for a poststructuralist perspective on study abroad, problematizing notions of discrete languages, cultures, and communities, and stressing the role of virtual communication in disrupting all of these; these two writers agree in stressing the lifelong impact of the sojourn abroad for identity, employment, and social relationships.

In Section 2, "Placement Types and Learning Consequences", different chapters address varied types/ dimensions of the 'study abroad context' and investigate relationships with language learning. Adopting a language socialization perspective, Kinginger (Chapter 3) presents microethnographic work on dinner table conversations between two American adolescents and Chinese host families, documenting the "socialisation of intimacy" and the "socialisation of taste", as her participants learn to joke and argue with their hosts. Di Silvio, Donovan and Malone (Chapter 4) were interested in boosting homestay interaction by providing training for host families, and ran a large scale study comparing formally the language progress (in Chinese, Russian and Spanish) of students living with trained (n=87) vs. untrained families (n=65). The host families receiving training felt enthusiastic about it, and overall the students' oral proficiency benefited significantly, but no significant differences were found between the two student groups; these researchers expect to explain these findings better, once detailed analysis has been conducted of host-student interaction samples.

The next three papers in Section 2 involve learners of French undertaking some form of study/ residence abroad in France, in varying contexts. Dewaele, Comanaru and Faraco (Chapter 5) look at the affective benefits of a short pre-sessional language course for 93 students from varied language backgrounds planning to study for credit in France, many of them within the framework of the Erasmus scheme. Dewaele et al. investigated the constructs of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) with pre- and post-tests, finding that for the group overall, FLA was reduced and WTC was increased as a result of participation in the course. Chapters 6 and 7 exam-

ine the experience of Erasmus students in France, during their main period of study. In Chapter 6, Mitchell, McManus and Tracy-Ventura report on the language learning, social expectations and experiences of 29 British undergraduates spending a 'year abroad' in France, in three different types of placement: as language teaching assistants, as exchange students, or as workplace interns. It turned out that despite the folk beliefs of participants, language development was very similar for all three groups, with strong progress being made in general proficiency, oral fluency, and vocabulary. Most participants reported bilingual or multilingual everyday practices, and friendship groups typically involving conationals or international students; those individuals who formed mostly local French-speaking ties, seemed to achieve this primarily through personal characteristics and leisure interests, rather than through placement type. Bracke and Aguerre (Chapter 7) also compare two groups of Erasmus students resident in Bordeaux (though of varied national background); their interest in this paper concerns place of residence, and specifically compares students cohabiting with French speakers and those living alone or with international students. In this case, group differences were found, with French flatmates influencing participation in a range of local communities of practice, and also promoting greater language awareness among their cohabitants.

Section 3 "Social Networks and Social Interaction" groups papers drawing explicitly on notions of social networks to explain patterns of language behaviour and/ or language learning among sojourning students. Gautier and Chevrot (Chapter 8) explored in depth the friendship networks of seven American students studying in France, and related these to the students' acquisition of selected sociolinguistic variables in spoken French (deletion of the negative particle *ne*, and liaison). They identified three types of social network among their participants: dense Anglophone, composite Anglophone, and composite mixed Francophone/ Anglophone. The members of the dense Anglophone and composite mixed groups behaved as expected (i.e. the former stuck with the more formal sociolinguistic variants, the latter adopted more informal variants). However the composite (loose) Anglophone network members also decreased the rate of formal usage; it seemed that members of this group remained somehow more open/ sensitive to sociolinguistic input. Roskvist, Harvey, Corder and Stacey also report a small scale qualitative network study in Europe, in this case of two New Zealand language teachers undertaking year-long working placements (Chapter 9). Superficially the two teachers' experience was similar (both teaching English); however their starting proficiency was very different (the female teacher at C1 on the CEFR, the male at A1), and the male teacher was joined by his family for part of the time. The female teacher lived alone but viewed her school role as a highly positive entry point to a French-using social network. The male teacher however viewed

his teaching role as restricting him to English, and regretted not taking part in a target language homestay; these two cases shed some light on underlying reasons for the creation of different network types while abroad. Bown, Dewey and Belnap (Chapter 10) tracked 82 students of Arabic on an intensive study abroad programme in Jordan. The participants took pre- and post-tests for oral proficiency, and documented their interactions/ language tasks through journals and a survey; the study showed that pre-departure proficiency, personality and – above all – participant gender affected participants' ability to engage in frequent/ higher quality interactions. However as time progressed and social networks became denser, participants reported "deeper, more meaningful" conversations. In Chapter 11, Hampton explores and evaluates the role of a virtual network/ community of practice created from the home institution, in supporting student sojourners while abroad, in documenting their experience and completing academic tasks. An interesting feature is the student-led insistence on making the target language (French, again), a main medium of communication on the network. Finally in Chapter 12, Campbell explores the maintenance and development of social networks with Japanese interlocutors, by four Australian students following a period of study abroad in Japan. The Chapter demonstrates the significance of virtual means (Facebook, instant messaging) alongside face-to-face encounters in sustaining these networks, and factors governing language choice within them. A mix of virtual and face-to-face experience is seen as optimal in sustaining such longer distance networks.

The final section (Section 4, "Social Networks and Social Identities") deals with evolving social identities among study abroad participants. In Chapter 13, Trentman adopts a poststructuralist perspective on the construction of gendered identities among 54 American SA participants in Egypt. The main emphasis is on the female participants' experimentation with identities such as "traditional good girl" or "loose foreign woman", and mechanisms by which they made female friends, found romantic partners, and/ or gained entry to Egyptian family networks. Trentman shows how programme decision-making can facilitate interaction between sojourners and local Egyptian female students, creating shared communities of practice and extending the intercultural experiences of both groups. In Chapter 14, Plews similarly adopts a poststructuralist perspective to explore development and change in the national identity construction of Canadian students, drawing on a dataset of journals and interviews conducted with 33 students studying in German. Unlike in some past studies, where students appeared to choose between a heightened national identity or a more relativized intercultural identity, the findings presented here lead to a complex and nuanced picture, where heightened intercultural awareness may accompany a heightened sense of being Canadian.

Overall this book presents a snapshot of language learning in study abroad as a dynamic research field drawing on diverse psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, ethnographic and poststructuralist traditions. The provision of adequate accounts of success and failure in language learning, in terms of social contexts, social networks and learners' identity construction, is a main challenge facing SA/RA research (see also Kinginger, 2013, and Dewey, Bown, Baker, Martinsen, Gold & Eggett, 2014 for other recent significant contributions). The editors believe that the collection of work presented here highlights a range of promising research directions for this future research programme.

July 2015

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