SOCIAL INTERACTION, IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING DURING RESIDENCE ABROAD

EDITED BY

ROSAMOND MITCHELL
University of Southampton

NICOLE TRACY-VENTURA
University of South Florida

KEVIN MCMANUS
University of York

Eurosla monographs

Eurosla publishes a monographs series, available open access on the association's website. The series includes both single-author and edited volumes on any aspect of second language acquisition. Manuscripts are evaluated with a double blind peer review system to ensure that they meet the highest qualitative standards.

Series editor

Gabriele Pallotti,
University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

Assistant editors

Amanda Edmonds,
Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour

Kevin McManus,
University of York

Fabiana Rosi,
University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

Table of contents

Section 3:
Social networks and social interaction

Section 4:
Social networks and social identities

Acknowledgements

The editors wish to acknowledge the sustained commitment of all contributors to this collaborative volume, as well as the contributions of numerous anonymous reviewers. In particular we wish to acknowledge the constructive guidance received from the General Editor of the EUROSLA Monographs series Prof Gabriele Pallotti which contributed substantially to shaping the final volume.

The idea for this edited volume arose from a conference titled "Residence Abroad, Social Networks and Second Language Learning", organised in April 2013 at the University of Southampton, UK. The conference was one of the final activities of the LANGSNAP research project funded from 2011-2013 by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (research award number: RES-062-23-2996).

The editors would also like to acknowledge the input and support of the conference organising committee and all participants at the conference, as well as that of the following bodies sponsoring the conference:

- AILA Research Network on "Study Abroad and Language Acquisition";
- Centre for Applied Language Research, University of Southampton;
- Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, University of Southampton;
- Faculty of Humanities Graduate School, University of Southampton;
- University Council of Modern Languages, UK.

Introduction

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

Rosamond Mitchell
Nicole Tracy-Ventura
Kevin McManus

References

Atkinson, D. (Ed.) (2011). *Alternative approaches to second language acquisition*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Banks, M. & R. Bhandari (2012). Global student mobility. In D. K. Deardorff, H. De Wit, J. Heyl & T. Adams (Eds.) *The Sage handbook of international education* (pp. 379-398). Thousand Oaks/ London: Sage.

Collentine, J. (2009). Study abroad research: findings, implications and future directions. In M.J. Long & C.J. Doughty (Eds.) *The handbook of language teaching* (pp. 218-233). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell**.**

Dewey, D. P., Bown, J., Baker, W., Martinsen, R.A., Gold, C. & Eggett, D. (2014). Language use in six study abroad programs: An exploratory analysis of possible predictors. *Language Learning* **64,** 36-71.

de Wit, H. & G. Merkx (2012). The history of internationalisation of higher education. In D. K. Deardorff, H. De Wit, J. Heyl and T. Adams (Eds.) *The Sage handbook of international education* (pp. 43-60). Thousand Oaks/ London: Sage.

European Commission (2014). *Erasmus Plus programme guide*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf

Freed, B. F. (Ed.). (1995). *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Jackson, J. (2010). *Intercultural journeys: From study to residence abroad*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Mcmillan.

Kinginger, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kinginger, C. (Ed.). (2013). *Social and cultural aspects of language learning in study abroad.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Lassels, R. (1670). *The voyage of Italy, or a compleat journey through Italy in two parts*. London: John Starkey.

Llanes, À. (2011). The many faces of study abroad: an update on the research on L2 gains emerged during a study abroad experience. *International Journal of Multilingualism* 8, 189-215.

Milroy, L. (1987). *Language and social networks*. (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Mitchell, R., Myles, F. & Marsden, E. (2013). *Second language learning theories. (3rd Ed.).* Abingdon: Routledge.

Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2002). *Student mobility and narrative in Europe: The new strangers*. London: Routledge.

Pellegrino Aveni, V. A. (2005). *Study abroad and second language use: Constructing the self.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 1
The impact of temporary study abroad

Ulrich Teichler
University of Kassel

In Europe, the Erasmus programme was established in 1987 with the vision that eventually 10% of students would spend a period in another European country during the course of study. The Leuven 2009 Communiqué of the Ministers involved in the Bologna Process set a target of 20% for 2020. This underscores how highly student mobility that is temporary, "horizontal" and outbound is appreciated in Europe. Based on various evaluation studies, the author of this chapter has argued that "learning from contrast" is the key value of horizontal mobility, i.e. study in another country in the framework of study provisions, which are different in substance, but more or less equal in quality to those at home. Various surveys show that formerly mobile students do not achieve a substantially higher professional status than formerly non-mobile and are considered only slightly more professional competent. They seem to be more competent, however, to handle international environments, and they are clearly more likely to be internationally mobile after graduation. However, a survey undertaken some years ago suggests that temporary mobility within Europe might be losing its exceptionality, thus raising the question of how international learning could be more creative in the future.

1. Temporary outwards mobility: the prime emphasis in Europe

Increasing mobility and enhancing the value of student mobility has been one of the major objectives of higher education policy across Europe (cf. Teichler, 2009; Wächter, 2008; van der Hijden, 2012). There has been hardly any other major theme of higher education policy associated with so much appreciation. While almost all issues of higher education tend to be discussed controversially, temporary student mobility seems to be "good" from all points of view – leaving aside occasional remarks that some students consider temporary study abroad as extended holidays, that a minority of mobile students have difficulties coping with the demands at the host institution, and that student mobility for the whole study programme has led to "brain drain" of talents from economically disadvantaged countries (see Wächter, 2006).

Yet, student mobility is such a heterogeneous feature that hardly any generalisation can be made about its modes and its impact. Only two features are kept in common: first, there is a contrast between the living and learning environment of the country that students were accustomed to previously, and the living and learning settings of the country that students experience when they are mobile. Secondly, international offices of universities tend to be in charge of the whole spectrum of mobile persons.

In-depth analyses of student mobility have shown that four distinctions have to be made to understand its character and possible impact (see the overviews in Kelo, Teichler & Wächter, 2006; Teichler, Ferencz & Wächter, 2011):

1. "Foreign students" and "study abroad" versus student mobility;
2. Temporary mobility (occasionally called "credit mobility") versus mobility for the whole degree programme (occasionally called "degree mobility");
3. "Horizontal" versus "vertical" mobility;
4. Inward versus outward mobility.

First, most available studies employ the term "student mobility", but actually provide information about students whose citizenship is different from that of the country where they study. Even many experts in student mobility ignore the difference between *foreign* and *mobile* students when they refer to statistics (see for example Banks & Bhandari, 2012; de Wit, 2012). We know, however, that many foreign students have already lived and learned in the country where they eventually study; moreover, some mobile students have lived and learned abroad, prior to returning to the country of their citizenship for the purpose of study. Therefore, a distinction has to be made between foreign students and study abroad on the one hand and student mobility on the other. Moreover, the frequently employed term *international students* is most confusing in this context because it evades this distinction.

Second, many students go to another country with the intention to be eventually awarded a degree there, and thus spend the whole study period in another country. But temporary student mobility, possibly for a semester or an academic year, is by no means an infrequent phenomenon. *Temporary mobility* is clearly distinct from *degree mobility*, i.e. mobility for the whole study programme, because learning at more than a single university during the course of study is a key component of study for temporarily mobile students – experiencing contrasting learning environments and expecting that phases of study at two or more universities will eventually be recognized as part of a whole study programme.

Third, there is an important distinction that will never show up in official statistics: that between *vertical* and *horizontal* student mobility. In the former case,

students move from an academically and often economically less favourable country or institution, to a more favourable country and institution. This is based on the hope that the quality of one's competences will be substantially enhanced by such a leap upwards, and adaptation to the host country and institution is the imperative. In the latter case, students are mobile between countries and institutions of a similar academic level: learning from valuable contrasts is the aim, rather than a leap upwards. Available information suggests that most upwardly mobile students study abroad for the whole study programme, whereas most horizontally mobile students opt for temporary study in another country.

Fourth, a distinction can be made between the directions of mobility. For example, a temporarily mobile student can be viewed as *outwardly mobile* (or "outgoing") from the perspective of the university where she or he has studied previously, and as *inwardly mobile* (or "incoming") from the perspective of the host university. This distinction certainly plays a role for the universities concerned: they, as a rule, take more active care of the inwardly mobile students from other countries than of those who left the university for a while, but they are eventually more responsible for the assessment of the outgoing students, because, in eventually awarding the degree, the students have studied in another country as part of the overall achievement in the local study programme. And this distinction also plays a role in national policies: as regards inwardly mobile students, the individual country might reflect on how it serves the competence enhancement of students most of whom eventually will live and work afterwards in other countries. As regards outwardly mobile students, one might reflect on how the competences of "our" students (and subsequently "our" graduates, who will eventually live and work in the home country) might change and might hopefully be enhanced, as a consequence of experiencing life and study in another country for a while.

Temporary horizontal mobility has gained enormous popularity in Europe over the years. It was already addressed by the Council of Europe in the 1950s when conventions for the recognition of prior learning were formulated for mobile students and graduates. The Erasmus programme, established by the European Union in 1987, was a breakthrough to move temporary mobility from an exceptional choice to a normal option. The Bologna Declaration of 1999 called for a similar structure of study programmes and degrees across European countries, notably for the purpose of facilitating both horizontal intra-European (mostly temporary) mobility and vertical inward (mostly degree) mobility, whereby the latter was expected to reflect a growing attractiveness of higher education in Europe for students from other regions of the world. Finally, the ministers of countries participating in the Bologna Process agreed with the Leuven Communiqué of 2009 in setting the target for the year 2020 that 20% of all students should have experi-

enced a period of mobility (including internships) during their course of study (see Teichler, 2012).

Thus, temporary study in another country has been emphasized increasingly across European countries. This is bound to raise questions concerning the actual impact of this extensive temporary horizontal mobility.

We have to take into consideration, though, that temporary study in another country does not have the same weight in the higher education policies of all European countries. Notably, the United Kingdom could be seen as a clear exception, where most attention clearly has been paid to incoming degree mobility for a long period. Recent indications of growing attention to temporary study abroad, however, suggest that the possible value of temporary study in another country cannot be ignored in the long run: How do our own graduates get competent to be international players?

This chapter aims at delineating the frequency of temporary student mobility in Europe and assessing the impact of temporary mobility on the career and work of formerly mobile students. In the past, temporary student mobility has been the step-child of official statistical information (see Banks & Bhandari, 2012; Teichler & Ferencz, 2011), and the majority of surveys have focussed on the conditions and the effects of mobility for whole study programmes (see Deardorff & van Gaalen, 2012; de Wit, 2008). This chapter intends to contribute to a better balance of information by drawing from available more complex statistical sources and by reporting the major results of surveys undertaken in the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century that have addressed the Erasmus programme, i.e. the largest scheme in Europe for the promotion of temporary student mobility.

2. Deplorably weak information base on temporary outwards mobility

Europe-wide statistics relevant to understanding the frequency of international student mobility are produced jointly by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) in Montreal, the OECD in Paris and EUROSTAT (the statistical agency of the European Union) based in Luxembourg. These three supranational agencies, here called UOE for short, address the national agencies in charge of national collection of educational data and ask them to deliver national statistics according to a common set of definitions and operational guidelines that is updated annually. As national agencies might have definitions and practices of their own, UOE have to decide whether the information provided more or less fits the guidelines or should be treated as "missing information".

We often read publications reporting high absolute numbers of foreign students worldwide. It looks impressive to note that this figure has been 300,000 or

so in the 1950s and might have surpassed 4 million today. However, the total number of students has increased similarly; thus, the proportion of foreign students among all students worldwide did not increase much beyond 2%.

Although student mobility is so high on the political agenda, the quality of international data collection on the subject is deplorable. Three weaknesses are most salient in this context:

- Dominance of data on foreign students and study abroad;
- No distinction made between temporary mobility and mobility for the whole study programme;
- Exclusion of most temporarily mobile students.

First, international student statistics have solely focussed on foreign students (from the perspective of the host country) and on study abroad (from the perspective of the country of origin). The United Kingdom was the only country for a long time that did not deliver data on citizenship to UOE, but rather data on mobility (measured by the difference between the country of domicile and the country of study). Nowadays, however, a larger number of European countries measure both, i.e. foreign students and mobile students. A recent study employing both measures (Teichler & Ferencz, 2011) came to the conclusion that only about three quarters of foreign students in Europe are mobile for the purpose of study; moreover, the available data suggest that one tenth of mobile students in Europe are not foreign. The respective figures for the United Kingdom in 2007 were the following, as Table 1 shows: 13.6% of all students in the UK were foreign mobile students, 5.9% foreign non-mobile students, and 1.3% incoming students with home nationality (mostly "returners"). Thus, the total number of mobile students (the first and the third figures) was 14.9% and the total number of foreign students (the first and the second figures) was 19.5%.

Table 1. Percentages of foreign/mobile students 2007 according to UOE data

	A	CH	UK	E	DK
a. Foreign mobile students	11.9	14.3	13.6	1.8	2.7
b. Home country mobile students	0.5	2.1	0.7	0.0	2.8
All mobile students (a, b)	12.4	16.4	14.3	1.8	5.5
c. Foreign non-mobile students	4.6	5.0	5.9	1.6	6.3
All foreign students (a,c)	16.7	19.3	19.5	3.4	9.0

Source: Based on Teichler, Ferencz & Wächter, 2011

Second, no distinction is made in the statistics between temporarily mobile students and those mobile for the whole study programme. This holds true for the international statistics as well as for most national statistics. In many publications, statistics of Erasmus students were provided as a proxy for temporary student mobility in Europe. At present, however, this approach is employed less frequently, because experts estimate that Erasmus students comprise less than one third of all temporarily mobile students in Europe.

Third, although the UOE even recommend the national agencies not to include students from foreign countries and mobile students who are temporarily mobile for less than one year in the statistics they contribute to UOE international datasets, at present about half of the temporarily mobile students in Europe seem to be counted as "international students" in these statistics (see Teichler, Ferencz & Wächter, 2011).

3. The frequency of student mobility in the light of available statistics

As pointed out above, the available international statistics do not really provide an appropriate picture of student mobility. However, we will start off with the most widely used data and then move towards more accurate data.

According to the combined UOE data, as shown in Table 1, 19.5% of students studying in the United Kingdom in 2007 were foreign students. (See Teichler, Ferencz & Wächter, 2011 for details of data compilation.) Along with Switzerland (19.3%), this was the highest quota of foreign students, if we disregard very small European countries with "incomplete" higher education systems (e.g. Liechtenstein and Cyprus). The respective rates were about 11% each in France and Germany.

In contrast, the ratio of students with home nationality studying abroad to resident students with home nationality was only 1.2% in the case of the UK in 2007. This was the second lowest among EU countries (following Bulgaria with 1.1%). The respective figures were 3.2% for France and 4.3% for Germany.

If we address intra-European student mobility, we still note non-reciprocity in the case of the UK: while 0.6% of UK students studied in other European countries, 5.3% of the students in the UK were citizens of other European countries. The respective figures for Switzerland were about 6% versus 11%. In contrast, reciprocity held true for Germany (4.3% versus 4.4%) and for all Erasmus-eligible countries on average (3.3% versus 3.3%).

The picture is similar, if we focus merely on Erasmus student mobility. In 2007, only about 0.3% of all students in the UK studied in another country in the framework of Erasmus as compared to 0.7% of all students in all Erasmus-

eligible countries. In reverse, 0.7% of the students in the UK were Erasmus from other European countries; this proportion was close to the European average (cf. Ferencz, 2011). According to the first major evaluation of the Erasmus programme (for the years 1987-1995), UK Erasmus students had lowest expectations, felt least prepared, had least foreign language proficiency, and eventually were least satisfied with the study abroad period (Teichler, 1997).

The figures presented so far showed proportions of foreign or mobility students among all students enrolled in a given year. The ministers in charge of higher education of the countries cooperating in the Bologna Process, however, pointed out in 2009 that the most interesting figure is the proportion of students having studied abroad – for some period or the whole programme – during their course of study (we might call it the "event" or the "occurrence" of student mobility), and they put forward a target for 2020: By that year, 20% of all European students should have been mobile before they eventually graduate.

Graduate surveys so far are the best possible source of information on the occurrence of temporary student mobility. According to a secondary analysis of surveys in ten European countries undertaken at different times in the first decade of the 21st century, the respective rates among bachelor graduates were 24% in the Netherlands, 18% in Austria, 15% in Germany, 6% in the Czech Republic, 5% in Italy, 4% in the UK, and 2% in Poland (Schomburg & Teichler, 2011). Although these figures do not include students spending the whole study programme in another country, we can draw the conclusion that the European target rate of 20% has been reached already more than a decade earlier in some countries (i.e. the Netherlands and Austria), can be reached with ease in some countries (e.g. Germany), and seems to be out of reach in other countries (e.g. the UK).

4. The value of temporary student mobility

4.1. The information base

There is a multitude of studies on the "impact", "outcome", "success" or "value" of student mobility (see for example the overviews in Deardorff & van Galen, 2012, and de Wit, 2009; cf. also the general overviews on research on internationalisation in de Wit & Urias, 2012; Kehm & Teichler, 2007). They cover a wide range of settings of mobility, and they address altogether many dimensions of results, such as cultural learning, personality development, international understanding, foreign language proficiency, general academic enhancement, and subsequent mobility, as well as career enhancement. Most of the available studies, however, address the results of mobility for the whole study programme.

The following overview of the impact of temporary mobility will largely report the findings of an evaluation study of the Erasmus programme published in 2009 which can be considered as the most in-depth study undertaken in recent years on temporary student mobility (Janson, Schomburg & Teichler, 2009; Teichler & Janson, 2007). Certainly, we know that there are more temporarily mobile students in Europe outside Erasmus (funded by national support schemes, covering the costs themselves, etc.) than Erasmus students. Available comparative information suggests that Erasmus students are a slightly less selective group, and eventually also a slightly less successful group, than all temporarily mobile students. Yet, the survey of former Erasmus students is the most thorough base of information available; moreover, it not only shows the views of formerly mobile students, but also those of teachers, administrators and employers. One has to take into consideration that the study shows the views of persons who had spent a semester or a year of study abroad in the academic year 2000; more recent information certainly would be desirable, but the data presented here cannot be viewed as completely outdated (cf. also the findings of a more recent survey in Bürger & Lanzendorf, 2011).

The study named *The Professional Value of Erasmus Mobility* draws not only from the survey of 2000 Erasmus students undertaken five years later (called *Study C* in Tables 3 and 4). It also takes into account the results of a survey of Erasmus 1989 students undertaken about five years later (called *Study A* in Tables 3 and 4: see Maiworm & Teichler, 1996; Teichler & Maiworm, 1997) as well as representative surveys of all graduates of the academic year 1995 surveyed about four years after graduation in four European countries (called *Study B* in Tables 3 and 4: see Jahr & Teichler, 2007).

4.2. The most visible effects

The surveys show that international mobility increases the interest in further study: about twice as many formerly mobile students embark on further study as formerly non-mobile students. There is another striking, but certainly not surprising effect: a substantial proportion of formerly mobile students have a foreign partner or spouse.

In singling out the strongest professional difference between formerly mobile students and formerly non-mobile students, we have to point to professional mobility. A few years after graduation, 15-20% of formerly mobile students are employed in another European country, as compared to only about 3% of formerly non-mobile students in Europe. In addition, a substantially higher proportion of the former are sent abroad temporarily by their employers.

4.3. Competences upon graduation

Surveys of former Erasmus students are by no means a perfect tool for measuring the impact of a study period in another country on the competences acquired overall, when students eventually graduate. The survey of 1995 graduates (*Study B*), however, allows us to compare the retrospective self-rating of competences acquired at the time of graduation between those who had been mobile in the course of study and those who had not been mobile.

As was to be expected, former Erasmus students felt three times as strong in foreign language proficiency as formerly non-mobile students. They were also convinced that temporary study in another country was very helpful in getting to know the culture and society of the host country and in understanding other cultures and getting along with persons from different backgrounds. The formerly mobile ones also viewed themselves as moderately stronger as far as working independently, adaptability, and general communication skills are concerned. Otherwise, the formerly mobile students reported hardly any major difference in both specific knowledge and general competences, compared with formerly non-mobile students.

In the most recent study (*Study C*), the formerly mobile students were asked to compare their competences to those of formerly non-mobile students. In this case, the formerly mobile rated their level of competences somewhat higher according to almost all the dimensions addressed in the survey. One might suspect that the formerly mobile students overrate their competences; however, the employers surveyed in the same study rated graduates with international experiences somewhat higher in many respects as well, for example for their organizing abilities, adaptability, initiative and assertiveness (see Table 2). Surveys of teachers have also shown that they estimate the academic calibre of Erasmus students as slightly higher on average than that of non-mobile students.

In this context, it is also worth mentioning that former Erasmus students look retrospectively with a favourable eye on their experiences during the study period in another country. Problems regarding academic matters were less often named than those concerning accommodation, financial matters and administrative matters. Even though former Erasmus students do not get all their achievements recognized upon return by their home institution, more than half of them are convinced that they made greater academic progress abroad than during a corresponding period at home, while about one quarter considered their academic progress to be equally high and less than a quarter conceived their academic progress abroad as lower than during a corresponding period at home. Altogether, the assessment of the Erasmus period has remained surprisingly constant over the years. This suggests on the one hand that efforts for

Table 2. Competences of young graduates with and without international experience according to employers 2005 (percentages*)

	Young graduates	
	with international experience	*without* international experience
International competences		
Foreign language proficiency	88	48
Knowledge/understanding of international differences in culture and society, modes of behaviour, life styles, etc.	76	28
Ability to work with people from different cultural backgrounds	76	40
Professional knowledge of other countries (e.g. economical, sociological, legal knowledge)	59	16
Knowledge and methods		
Computer skills	69	66
Field-specific knowledge of methods	64	54
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	62	58
General competences		
Adaptability	81	57
Initiative	79	62
Getting personally involved	79	67
Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence	75	57
Analytical competences	70	59
Problem-solving ability	70	58
Written communication skills	70	58
Planning, co-ordinating and organising	67	50
Loyalty, integrity	66	62
Power of concentration	63	59
Accuracy, attention to detail	59	57
Applying rules and regulations	58	52
Count (N)	(187)	(250)

Question C4a: Please rate the competences of the young graduates in your organisation. To what extent do they have competences in the following areas on average? Please answer this question both for the group of young graduates with international experience and for the group of young graduates without international experience.

* Responses 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = "to a very high extent" to 5 = "not at all"

Source: Janson, Schomburg & Teichler, 2009

improvement have not been visibly successful, but on the other hand that the growth of temporary student mobility has not decreased the quality.

4.4. Job search and transition to employment

All three studies addressed the transition from study to employment. The majority of former Erasmus students are convinced that the temporary study experience in another country was helpful to obtain their first job. This was stated by 71% of the Erasmus students of the late 1980s (*Study A*), 66% of those graduating in the mid-1990s (*Study B*), but only 54% of those studying abroad around 2000 (*Study C*; see Table 3). The value of study experience in another country, thus, seems to be on the decline in this respect.

Table 3. Perceived positive influence of the Erasmus study period on employment and work: A comparison between various surveys of former Erasmus students (percentages of employed graduates)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 surveyed 1993 (Study A)	Graduates 1994/95 surveyed 1999 (Study B)	ERASMUS students 2000/01 surveyed 2005 (Study C)
Obtaining first job	71	66	54
Type of work task involved	49	44	39
Income level	25	22	16

Question H1 (2005): What impact do you feel that your study abroad experience has had with regard to your employment?

Source: Janson, Schomburg & Teichler, 2009

The surveys also suggest that temporary study in another country makes the job seeker's CV more distinctive. More than 60% of the respondents of all three surveys believe that their foreign language proficiency played a major role in their employer's decision to recruit them, and more than 50% noted that their international study experiences did so. The employer surveys mention academic knowledge and personality as more important criteria, but also point out that foreign language proficiency and work experience abroad, as well as study abroad experiences, are important criteria for hiring formerly mobile students.

4.5. The employment situation

Only 25% of the former Erasmus of the late 1980s (*Study A*) believed that their study period abroad contributed to a higher income than that of the formerly non-mobile students. This proportion fell to 22% among the respondents of the later

study (*Study B*) and to only 16% of those of the most recent study (*Study C*) – in the third case even slightly lower than the proportion of those assuming that they had a lower income.

Another representative survey undertaken in 2005 of graduates from various European countries who had graduated around 2000, took into consideration not only mobility during the course of study, but also shortly after graduation. Accordingly,

- graduates who had been temporarily mobile (only) during the course of study, earned 11% more;
- those who were internationally mobile (only) after graduation, earned 9% more;
- those who were internationally mobile both during the course of study and after graduation, earned 14% more than graduates who had not been internationally mobile at all (see Allen & van der Velden, 2011). One has to bear in mind, though, that this difference might be partly due to the fact that some of those working only have a higher income as a temporary allowance for work abroad.

These small income advantages might be disappointing for those hoping that temporary study in another country is an entry ticket to top careers. But, after all, Erasmus is a programme providing public support for additional study expenses in another country. It facilitates study abroad in many respects without requiring substantial individual monetary and non-monetary "investment". Such a support programme can be viewed as successful, if it contributes to European and international competences and to related work assignments, rather than promising a higher status and a higher salary.

About five years after the study period in another country, i.e. less than three years on average on the job, the transition to employment is not completed by all former Erasmus participants, and not all have reached a stable employment situation. In comparing the three surveys, we note:

- an unemployment quota at the time of the survey of 4% of those in the first study (*Study A*), 3% in the second study (*Study B*) and 6% in the third study (*Study C*);
- 10%, 7% and 10% were employed part-time;
- 27%, 27% and 35% were employed on a temporary contract.

Available information suggests that temporary employment of graduates during their early career has increased in Europe in general. Therefore, there is no evidence that international study experience is a cause for the increased proportion of temporary employment among former Erasmus students.

4.6. Links between study and subsequent work

Altogether, 61% of the former Erasmus participants surveyed in *Study C* stated that they use the knowledge acquired in the course of study to a high extent. In the previous surveys, no significant differences could be found in this respect between formerly mobile and formerly non-mobile students.

The Erasmus experience was viewed as having had a positive influence on the graduates' work tasks some years later by 49% of the respondents of the first survey (*Study A*), 44% of the respondents of the second survey (*Study B*) and 39% of the respondents of the third survey (*Study C*). Thus, the positive influence of Erasmus on later work tasks decreased over the years, according to the former Erasmus students' perception.

As already mentioned, one of the most visible influences of Erasmus on subsequent employment is the high rate of those working internationally or in an international environment. Actually, 18% of the respondents of the first survey, 20% of those of the second survey and again 18% of those of the most recent survey reported that they were employed in a country different from the country of graduation for at least some time after graduation. This compares with only about 3% of all highly qualified Europeans employed in another European country than that of their nationality.

An international working environment is indicative for the work situation of former Erasmus students. The majority of respondents of the recent survey stated that understanding of foreign cultures was an important element of their work assignment, and about two thirds named working with people of different cultures and communicating in foreign languages as important. However, less than half of the former Erasmus students responding in any of the three surveys stated that their work tasks were to a high extent internationally visible according the five areas addressed in Table 4. Over the years, this proportion declined. For example, using the language of the host country frequently on the job fell from 47% to 42% and eventually to 38%. Similarly, frequent use of knowledge of the culture and society of the host country was reported by 30% and thereafter even by 32%, but declined to 24% in the third survey.

The surveys show that former students from all fields of study underscore the importance of their international competences for their work. The differences by field turned out to be smaller than conventional wisdom suggests. For example, professional knowledge of other countries (e.g. economical, sociological, legal knowledge) was considered most often, as one could expect, as important for their current work by those students having graduated from humanities and business studies (52% each), but this was also stated by a substantial proportion of graduates from natural sciences (31%) and medical fields (32%, according to *Study C*). Also knowledge or understanding of international differences in culture and socie-

Table 4. Erasmus-related work tasks of former Erasmus students: A comparison between various surveys (percentages of employed graduates)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 surveyed 1993 (Study A)	Graduates 1994/95 surveyed 1999 (Study B)	ERASMUS students 2000/01 surveyed 2005 (Study C)
Using the language of the host country orally	47	42	38
Using the language of the host country in reading and writing	47	40	38
Using first-hand professional knowledge of host country	30	25	25
Using first-hand knowledge of host country culture/society	30	32	24
Professional travel to host country	17	18	14

Question F6 (2005): To what extent do the responsibilities of your work involve the following? Responses 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: Janson, Schomburg & Teichler, 2009

ty, modes of behaviour, lifestyles, etc., was viewed as important, as one might expect, by many of those graduating from humanities (68%), but also not infrequently by those from natural sciences (40%). Further, the proportion of those considering the ability to work with people from different cultural programmes as important for their work ranged from 71% in business studies to 60% in natural sciences. Finally, the number who named ability to communicate in foreign languages as important ranged between 74% by former Erasmus students of business studies and 61% of those in medical fields.

Overall therefore, the professional value of the Erasmus period in another European country, and the resulting knowledge and understanding of the host culture and society, seems to be somewhat in decline.

5. Concluding observations

A temporary study period undertaken in another European country certainly turns out to be professionally valuable. As surveys of former Erasmus students undertaken in the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century

show, the majority of them believe that their understanding of foreign cultures and societies in general or specifically of the host country is important. Their international experience seems to have been helpful for most of them in getting employed for the first time. A substantial proportion, even though less than half, consider their work tasks to be linked to their study experiences and are strongly involved in visibly international activities (e.g. utilizing foreign language, communicating with foreigners, utilizing knowledge on other countries, etc.). Moreover, students mobile during the course of study are by far more frequently internationally mobile during the first few years of their career than their colleagues who had not been mobile during the course of study. Thus, temporary student mobility seems to be effective in preparing students for an increasingly internationalizing world.

Not only the majority of formerly mobile students, but also the majority of teachers in higher education and the majority of employers believe that internationally experienced students turn out to be superior in many professionally relevant competences: general academic competences, professional knowledge and various communicative skills and personality features. Also, formerly mobile students reach slightly higher positions and a slightly higher income than formerly non-mobile students.

These findings vary somewhat by field of study as well as by the formerly mobile students' home and host country. As regards field of study, these differences are smaller than conventional wisdom suggests. As regards country, however, one finding stands out which was not discussed in this article: Former Erasmus students from Central and Eastern European countries reported a high professional value for temporary study substantially more often than former Erasmus students from Western European countries. In the Central and Eastern European countries, study experience in another European country clearly was a more exclusive experience ensuring a higher professional reward – at least in the years addressed in the three studies examined. This indicates that study in Western Europe on the part of students from Central and Eastern European countries is often interpreted as upward vertical mobility (i.e. not as horizontal mobility which seems to dominate in student mobility between Western European countries).

The slight superiority of formerly mobile students over non-mobile students as regards general competences, professional knowledge, personality, income, professional position, etc., cannot necessarily be viewed only as an impact of temporary study abroad. Rather, it might be explained to some extent as a "selection effect", because the available studies show as well that a slightly above average number of formerly mobile students have parents with high income and high educational attainment, and also had international experiences more often already, before embarking in higher education study.

Altogether, temporary mobility cannot be viewed as a magic tool for career enhancement. It is nonetheless a successful means to strengthen abilities needed in

the growing number of job roles with visible international work tasks as well as work tasks requiring understanding of other cultures and lifestyles. The moderate effect in those directions might be viewed as disappointing as regards some expectations, but certainly it is a success according to the core objectives of Europeanisation and internationalisation policies in higher education.

There is one finding, however, that suggests some caution in assessing the overall professional value of temporary study abroad. The professional value of the Erasmus experience turns out to be more modest for recent generations of students than for those having studied in another European country some time ago. It seems that temporary study in another country offers an exclusive experience to a lesser extent now than some years ago, and that visibly international work assignments grow to a lesser extent than the proportion of internationally experienced graduates.

This finding of decreasing "value added" of temporary student mobility might be explained as being caused by a declining exceptionality of international experiences (see Janson, Schomburg & Teichler, 2009). Over the years, students have achieved increasing international experiences outside higher education even if they do not spend a period of study in another country. In addition, the students' chances to have international experiences at their home institutions of higher education increase with growing opportunities of contact with academic staff and students from other countries as well as growing efforts to strengthen international dimensions of the home curriculum, for example undertaken under the label "internationalisation at home".

One might draw the conclusion that temporary study experience in another country will not grow consistently alongside the increasing professional relevance of international competences. Rather, targeted curricular efforts will be needed to ensure that temporary study abroad will be a clearly more promising environment for students who later will play an important role in the internationalising world of work.

References

Allen, J. & van der Velden, R. (Eds.) (2011). *The flexible professional in the knowledge society: New challenges for higher education*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Banks, M. & Bhandari, R. (2012). Global student mobility. In D. K. Deardorff, H. de Wit, J. D. Heyl & T. Adams (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of international higher education* (pp. 379-397). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Bürger, S. & Lanzendorf, U. (Eds.) (2011). *Higher education institutions in Europe: Mobilized by mobility.* Werkstattberichte, 73.Kassel: International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel

Deardorff, D. K. & van Gaalen, A. (2012). Outcomes assessment in the internationaliza-tion of higher education. In D. K. Deardorff, H. de Wit, J. D. Heyl & T. Adams (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of international higher education* (pp. 167-189). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

De Wit, H. (2008). Changing dynamics in international student circulation: Meanings, push and pull factors, trends and data. In P. Agarwal, M. E. Said, M. Sehoole, M. Sirozi & H. de Wit (Eds.), *The dynamics of international student circulation in a glob-al context* (pp. 15-48). Rotterdam and Taipei: Sense Publishers.

De Wit, H. (Ed.) (2009). *Measuring success in internationalisation of higher education.* Amsterdam: European Association for International Education.

De Wit, H. (2012). Student mobility between Europe and the rest of the world: Trends, issues and challenges. In A. Curaj, P. Scott, L. Vlasceanu & L Wilson (Eds.), *European higher education at the crossroads: Between the Bologna Process and national reforms* (pp. 431-439). Dordrecht: Springer.

De Wit, H. & Urias, D. (2012). An overview and analysis of international education research, training and resources. In D. K. Deardorff, H. de Wit, J. D. Heyl & T. Adams (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of international higher education* (pp. 101-109). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Ferencz, I. (2011). Credit mobility in EU programmes ERASMUS and LEONARDO da VINCI. In U. Teichler, I. Ferencz. & B. Wächter (Eds.) (2011), *mapping mobility in higher education in Europe. Volume I: Overview and trends* (pp. 89-113). Bonn: Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst.

Jahr, V. & Teichler, U. (2007). Graduates' international experience and mobility. In U. Teichler (Ed.), *Careers of university graduates: Views and experiences in comparative per-spectives* (pp. 211-224). Dordrecht: Springer.

Janson, K., Schomburg, H. & Teichler, U. (2009). *The professional value of Erasmus mobi-lity.* Bonn: Lemmens.

Kehm, B. M. & Teichler, U. (2007). Research on internationalisation in higher education. *Journal of Study in International Education, 11*, 260-273.

Kelo, M., Teichler, U. & Wächter, B. (Eds.) (2006). *EURODATA: Student mobility in European higher education.* Bonn: Lemmens.

Maiworm, F. & Teichler, U. (1996). *Study abroad and early career: Experiences of former ERASMUS students.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Schomburg, H. & Teichler, U. (Eds.) (2011). *Employability and mobility of bachelor graduates in Europe: Key results of the Bologna Process.* Rotterdam and Taipei: Sense Publishers.

Teichler, U. (1997). The British involvement in European higher education programmes: Findings of evaluation studies on Erasmus, Human Capital and Mobility and Tempus. In *The Thirtieth Anniversary Seminars* (pp. 39-64). London: Society for Research into Higher Education.

Teichler, U. (2009). Student mobility and staff mobility in the European Higher Education Area beyond 2010. In B. M. Kehm, J. Huisman, & B. Stensaker (Eds.), *The European Higher Education Area: Perspectives on a moving target* (pp. 183-201). Rotterdam and Taipei: Sense Publishers.

Teichler, U. (2012). Student mobility in Europe: The informational value of official statistics and graduate surveys. In A. Curaj, P. Scott, L. Vlasceanu & L Wilson (Eds.), *European higher education at the crossroads: Between the Bologna Process and national reforms* (pp. 485-509). Dordrecht: Springer.

Teichler, U. & Ferencz, I. (2011). Student mobility data – recent achievements, current issues and future prospects. In U. Teichler, I. Ferencz. & B. Wächter, B. (Eds.), *Mapping mobility in higher education in Europe. Volume I: Overview and trends* (pp. 151-177). Bonn: Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst.

Teichler, U., Ferencz, I. & Wächter, B. (Eds.) (2011). *Mapping mobility in higher education in Europe*. Volumes 1 & 2. Bonn: Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst.

Teichler, U. & Janson, K. (2007). The professional value of temporary study in another European country: Employment and work of former Erasmus students. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 11* (3/4), 486-495.

Teichler, U. & Maiworm, F. (1997). *The Erasmus experience: Major findings of the Erasmus evaluation research project.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Van der Hijden, P. (2012). Mobility key to EHEA and ERA. In A. Curaj, P. Scott, L. Vlasceanu & L Wilson (Eds.), *European higher education at the crossroads: Between the Bologna Process and national reforms* (pp. 377-386). Dordrecht: Springer.

Wächter, B. (2006). Brain drain: What we know and what we do not know. In Teichler, U. (Ed.), *The formative years of scholars* (pp. 51-66). London: Portland Press.

Wächter, B. (2008). Mobility and internationalization in the European Higher Education Area. In Kelo, M. (Ed.), *Beyond 2010: Priorities and challenges for higher education in the next decade* (pp. 13-42). Bonn: Lemmens.

Chapter 2
Social circles during residence abroad:
What students do, and who with

James A. Coleman
The Open University, UK

This chapter brings together some of the theoretical approaches which link residence abroad, social networks, and second language learning, and then confronts them with some of the data available on students' social activities and linguistic encounters during a sojourn abroad. In reviewing past and present trends in residence abroad research, the paper explores the applicability of a concentric circles model of socialisation while abroad (Coleman, 2013a) and of a complex dynamic systems approach in relation to different study abroad contexts.

Following the organisers of the conference at which the plenary on which the current paper is based, I use the term "residence abroad", though alongside the equally current term "study abroad". The British Government, in 1997, funded three major university projects to identify and disseminate best practices in this area. These projects (Coleman 2002) agreed on the generic term *residence abroad* as being more inclusive than, for example, *assistantship* or *year abroad*. *Residence abroad* implies living for an extended period in a foreign country, under many of the same conditions and constraints as local students and residents, and the term has since become standardised across U.K. academic contexts.

1. Folk linguistics, SLA research, and social networks

Student residence abroad for academic and language learning started long, long before the emergence of second language acquisition theory. Erasmus himself, with his peregrinations as student and scholar, exemplified the academic traditions of mediaeval Europe. The notion of learning languages through immersion, of residence abroad to enhance language learning, is equally deeply rooted, based on folk-linguistic notions of immersion, whose practices preceded theorisation by many decades.

In the English language, the folk representation of immersion is expressed through the phrase: "eat, drink and sleep" + noun. Examples from Google range from the predictable "eat, drink and sleep music", or "eat, drink and sleep cricket"

to the less expected "eat, drink and sleep body-building" and the downright exotic "eat, drink and sleep moveable type". As applied linguists, we are interested in those who, through residence abroad, eat, drink and sleep French or Spanish or Japanese or Arabic. Whether we accept a cognitive-interactional or sociocultural theoretical basis for second or foreign language acquisition, we agree on the crucial role played by intensive, frequent, meaningful interactions in the target language. Given this shared understanding, what is surprising is that it has taken so long for applied linguists who are researching study abroad to address the issue of social networks.

If students enhance their proficiency in the target language by eating, drinking and sleeping French (or Spanish, or Japanese, or Arabic), i.e. through the immersion which underpins the whole notion of residence abroad, then no literature review is required in order to identify the obvious research questions:

- Who do they eat *with*?
- Who do they drink *with*?
- Who do they sleep *with*?

Why did our discipline ignore such self-evident questions for so long, preferring instead to devise studies which produced inconsistent or even contradictory findings about the impact of "the study abroad context" on language learning? Perhaps our field of enquiry had the wrong starting point, since it emerged not from education but from SLA, not from real-life experience and practice but from the laboratory. (Deardorff, e.g. 2006, is not the only one to have observed and underlined the mutual ignorance and at times even mistrust which exists between those who administer student mobility programmes and those who research the outcomes.) At the time when study abroad emerged as a research topic for applied linguistic researchers, they were themselves immersed in a context which, if it sought at all to open the "black box" of what happened during a study abroad experience, often did so by looking at discrete parts in isolation, without considering that the whole could be more than the sum of the parts. Perhaps a further factor was the dominance of research into *classroom* practice, which led to a tendency to explore those aspects of language learning which can be most effectively taught in a classroom, and which easily fit a pretest, treatment, posttest research model. Classroom teaching, and hence classroom-based research, favours syntax, morphology, lexis, pronunciation, measurable fluency, reading, writing, speaking, listening, basic transactional functions (requests, apologies, etc.), or "tasks", as opposed to those language skills which are typically acquired outside the classroom and over a long period of time, such as advanced pragmatics, sociolinguistic and sociocultural aspects of language use, prosody or languaging, let alone wider aspects of the real-world language learning process such as autonomy, identity, agency, and affect.

Sociolinguistic studies of residence abroad (e.g. Regan, Howard & Lemée, 2009) are immensely more labour-intensive than before-and-after independent-and-dependent-variables studies, but they unveil the real longer-term development away from classroom learning and towards the norms of native and expert speakers. They identify learning which cannot be achieved in the classroom, the very *raison d'être* of residence abroad. More generally, the research community needs to treat study abroad as a broader ethnographic domain, with language learning just one of many spin-offs, in order to recognise the significance of social networks.

2. The phenomenon under study

University study is growing fast, as is student mobility (though as shown in Chapter 1, the available statistics have to be treated with caution). There were claimed to be 4.3 million mobile students in 2011 (OECD, 2013), a five-fold increase since 1975. The European Union's Erasmus academic exchange programme, launched in 1987, has now helped 3 million participants to study or work abroad as part of their university study. Impressive as these figures are, they still represent a minority of university students. Fewer than one in 40 global students is mobile (OECD, 2013), while in Europe mobile students represent just 0.96% of the student population each year, or 4% during their entire programme of study. The number of U.K.-based students undertaking some form of outward mobility, after a decade of decline, has been increasing year on year since 2007 and is now higher than ever (Carbonell, 2013; http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/countries/uk_en.pdf). Residence abroad is thus a significant phenomenon, with huge potential for further expansion (despite the cautionary note on the diminishing value of residence abroad struck by Teichler in his conclusion to Chapter 1). The importance of international experience for the subsequent employability of graduates (British Academy, 2012), within an increasingly globalised and marketised higher education industry, makes it even more important that we understand how the residence abroad process can work, both from linguistic and other perspectives.

If we take as the object of study the trajectory of the student during residence abroad from departure to return home and beyond, then each student brings an individual profile, comprising biographical variables, including personality, identities, motivations, willingness to communicate (WTC), agency, hopes, fears and goals, as well as direct linguistic variables (conventionally designated as L1, L2) and language learning variables such as styles and strategies. Additionally, the research subject may be conceived narrowly as a language learner or "learner-as-apprentice", or much more broadly as a language user and whole person (Coleman, 2013a; Kinginger, 2008; Kramsch, 2009; Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007). Similarly, the

impact of residence abroad may be researched narrowly, as a short-term "treatment", or more fully across the subsequent life of which a semester or year abroad is so often a crucially formative part.

Labels, however necessary for identifying generalisable patterns, obscure the complex, multiple and dynamic nature of phenomena. The very widely used terms "L1" and "L2" are less precise than we would like to think. A much earlier review of study abroad research in Europe and North America (Coleman, 1998a) was prefaced by contrasting the European and U.S. contexts. I emphasised then – and it remains true today – that concepts of multilingualism and plurilingualism are deeply embedded in European legislation and the debate on language education policy in both the European Union and the Council of Europe. Yet the terms themselves rest on a particular historical conception of the nature of language, which prioritises viewing individual languages as discrete and normative entities (Spanish people live in Spain and speak Spanish, French people live in France and speak French). As linguists in our professional and private lives, each of us knows that each of the languages we use is not a clearly demarcated entity. My L1 English is composed of varieties, dialects, sociolects and idiolects which make it different not only from the L2 (or L3 or Ln) English of my international readers, but also different from the L1 English of my compatriots. My L2 French or German is not the normative French or German described in textbooks, grammars and dictionaries, but also a distinct, impermanent variety comprising imperfectly mastered conventions and paradigms, insights and inputs from the books I happen to have read and the people I happen to have met in successive social networks, but also elements and echoes of the other languages I have acquired and used over several decades of international encounters or heard in the current interaction, during which I am instinctively accommodating to the language of my interlocutor. My L2 is constructed afresh each time I use it. In preference to the terms "multilingual" (as in multilingual turn) or "bilingual", which imply a count of discrete reified codes, I use the more messy "flexilingual" (Byrne, 2012).

The Dylan project (http://www.dylan-project.org/: see Berthoud, Grin & Lüdi, 2013), for example, has published accounts of the dynamics of contemporary multilingual practices in varied settings reflecting this perspective, and also discussed the policy and pedagogical implications, in a European setting.

I have repeatedly lamented the inconsistency of terminology related to study or residence abroad (e.g. Coleman, 2013a, p. 19). The different labels for different types of study/residence abroad embrace a continuum from long-term autonomy for advanced learners (a frequent British or European model) to short constrained group activities for less advanced learners (a frequent North American model). Contexts for study/residence abroad vary geographically and organisationally, in terms of location, accommodation, linguistic and social context, role (work place-

ment, volunteering, formal study, teaching as a language assistant), and host university study (language courses, content courses alongside local students, voluntary registration, no access to local universities). They also vary according to institutional preparation and support, such as those best practices concerning administration, support, assessment, debriefing on return, follow-up, etc. brought together by the Residence Abroad Matters projects (see Coleman & Parker, 2001), and still widely implemented by British institutions.

Residence abroad is also located in time, and during the decades in which it has become a serious research object, societies have evolved hugely, not least as regards domains such as travel and communications technology which impact upon the degree of immersion experienced (Coleman & Chafer, 2010). U.K. teenagers in December 2013 own an average of six digital devices: this "digital first" generation, for whom "always-on connectivity" is the norm (Logicalis, 2013), will shortly be considering study abroad.

It can therefore be argued that social and technological changes have impacted on residence abroad to such an extent that "abroad" today is not the "abroad" of even five or ten years ago, and that it is invalid to cite older studies as if they addressed the same residence abroad phenomenon. Documentation of this transformation can be found in more recent studies, such as those of Elola and Oskoz (2008), Hampton (this volume), Kinginger (2008), and Lee (2011). Future researchers need to analyse multimodal communication in Facebook, Skype or whatever online environments succeed them, both from a social networks and a pedagogical perspective – although no agreed methodology yet exists for recording, transcribing and analysing online multimodal language-learner interactions. A meta-analysis of research studies has recently shown convincingly that language learning supported by new technologies is typically never worse than, and likely to be better than, language learning without support from computer-assisted language learning (Grgurović, Chappelle & Shelley, 2013), while the recent European INTENT project (www.intent-project.eu/) has also illustrated some exciting new approaches to integrating telecollaboration with physical and virtual student mobility. In the social network context, therefore, researchers must embrace the full gamut of physical and virtual networks and their role in language learning.

Since all these divergent external factors interact with the individual's changing identities, goals and motivations, the social encounters, language use, and physical and virtual networks which this book addresses, and the sheer serendipity of what happens during a foreign sojourn, referring to "the" study abroad context or "the" study abroad experience is a patent absurdity. It is a truism in statistics that aggregation conceals heterogeneity, and generalisations in the domain of study abroad are particularly likely to distort the diversity of the actual experience.

Given that the primary shared interest of readers of this volume is language learning, it is unsurprising that we frequently conceive of our student subjects as language learners, forgetting for the moment that language gain is just one objective or outcome. Those of us who have managed residence abroad programmes know that the students we send out are not the same students who return: the latter are taller, more confident, more flexible, more open to new experiences, as well as more linguistically proficient: the language learning is part of a much bigger picture. When they responded to a closed-item institutional questionnaire, it is true that mobile students ten years ago did see themselves principally as language learners (Coleman, 2003: N = 2325). Linguistic and cultural objectives were most important, with personal and professional objectives not far behind, and insights into the aesthetic/artistic culture of the target language community less important. But open questions in the same survey showed different emphases. The principal theme which emerged was a yearning for novelty: new countries, cultures, experiences, people and friends. Alongside this was a desire for personal development in terms of confidence and independence, and frequent reference to home, both as a fear of homesickness and isolation, and in seeking a different perspective on the familiar.

The more spontaneous responses focus often on identity ambitions, on an ideal L2 self which is more than merely linguistic (Coleman, 2003), for example:

- "The experience of living like a Russian, speaking Russian with many Russian friends and acquaintances from all walks of life";
- "To feel like a French person, rather than an English person abroad";
- "Putting myself into a French way of thinking, pretending to be French";
- "Meeting Spanish people and becoming at one with them".

Applied linguists who speak of "performing" identities will recognise what students are seeking to articulate. These findings receive striking support from a recent large scale survey of the priorities of college students of languages in the USA (Magnan, Murphy, & Sahakyan, 2014). This study showed students' leading priority to be the social goal of participating in new "communities", with "communication" second out of the five National Standards for Foreign Language Education.

A wholly different perspective on residence abroad comes from googling "Erasmus Orgasmus" (Ana Beaven introduced me to the term). Erasmus Orgasmus is, like nationality, an imagined community, though an online one, with a particular identity-linked characterisation: "When Erasmus began it was little-known, and promised nothing more than mobility and educational enrichment. Today it has become the infamous international social party network that allows European students to live a lavish lifestyle abroad under the pretext of studying" (cited in Coleman, 2013b, p.23).

It is important to bear in mind these different viewpoints when considering residence abroad, merely as a "sub-field of applied linguistics" (Kinginger, 2009, p. 29) or a "major subfield of SLA research" (Ferguson, 1995, p. xi). Are we perhaps looking down the wrong end of the telescope, starting from our identity rather than that of the participants? For them, language learning is a sub-field of study abroad.

3. Identity, change and dynamic complexity

A U.K. government report (Government Office for Science, 2013) reiterates the now widely accepted notion that people can have many different overlapping and fluid identities which we perform according to contexts and in interaction. The report pinpoints three important ways in which internet technologies are driving changes in who we are: the blurring of private and public identities, increasing social plurality, and above all hyper-connectivity. If, previously, you were what you said, today you are what you tweet (Coleman, 2013b, p.24).

Curiosity has been found to be essential for successful study abroad. Curiosity is mentioned in various models of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997), and linked to openness, flexibility, ambiguity tolerance, lack of ethnocentrism, interest, discovery of the new. It is developed in Houghton's (2012) model of intercultural dialogue. A recent best-selling work of popular fiction brings together the themes of curiosity, of technology impacting the social context, and of performing identities:

> It seemed to me that there was nothing new to be discovered ever again. […] We were the first human beings who would never see anything for the first time. We stare at the wonders of the world, dull-eyed, underwhelmed. Mona Lisa, the Pyramids, the Empire State Building. Jungle animals on attack, ancient icebergs collapsing, volcanoes erupting. I can't recall a single amazing thing I have seen first-hand that I didn't immediately reference to a movie or a TV show. […] I've literally seen it all, and the worst thing […] is: The second-hand experience is always better. The image is crisper, the view is keener, the camera angle and the soundtrack manipulate my emotions in a way reality can't anymore. (Flynn, 2012, pp. 80-81)

Committed travellers will acknowledge this recognition that the exotic is more familiar than in pre-internet days, that packaged online icons take precedence over genuine experience. Physical discovery of the new, at least in terms of monuments and locations, has become subordinate to virtual discovery. In taming the shock of the unfamiliar, the World-Wide Web is seconded by globalisation, and the

homogenisation of consumer products. On my first visit to France, I was confronted by vehicles such as I had never encountered before: Simcas, Peugeot 203s and 204s, Renault 3s. Visits to Eastern Europe even into the early 1990s produced Ladas, Wartburgs, Dacias, Trabants and Zils unknown in the West. When everyday objects such as cars are so different, there is inevitably a *dépaysement* which contributes to the sense of immersion in a new context, and which is far less sharp for today's sojourners, amidst global brands. In an internet-connected world, where you can see in advance from above and from street level the very buildings in which you will be studying, can the same level of curiosity (and the related definition of intercultural competence) be maintained?

Another example of the unstable (dynamic, complex) context of residence abroad can be found in evolving national social habits. The author's year abroad in Besançon coincided – and it was a genuine coincidence – with France's highest ever annual wine consumption, but since then, there has been an 80% fall in consumption, and 38% do not drink wine at all. For the older generation, wine is associated with national identity, *le patrimoine*; the middle-aged generation, aspiring to discrimination and quality, drink less but better, while for the internet generation wine is just another consumer product (Schofield, 2013). France, in reality, has changed.

Thus, our theoretical understandings are shifting, the focus of study abroad research is shifting, contexts are shifting through time and place. Theoretical approaches informing research methods have moved beyond narrow cognitive approaches concerning the individual brain. The interaction of participant and context, each with its own set of variables, has been theorised in nested ecosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1993), the learner-context interface (White, 1999), ecological and environmental approaches (van Lier, 2003), and in complex dynamic systems (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Complex dynamic systems have become widely accepted as a useful theoretical framework to embrace the rejection of essentialist notions of culture, identity, gender, nationality, motivation, attitude, language, and belief; and the recognition that all of these are fluid, dynamic, situated, and constantly reconstructed through interaction.Social network theories have a far longer history, and are addressed in other contributions to the current volume (see especially Chapters 8, 12 and 13). The first use of "network" in a metaphorical sense to refer to social relations dates back to Barnes (1954):

> Each person is, as it were, in touch with a number of other people, some of whom are directly in touch with each other and some of whom are not. Similarly each person has a number of friends, and these friends have their own friends; some of any one person's friends know each other, others do not. I find it convenient to talk of a social field of this kind as a *network*. Earlier I used the term

web […] However, it seems that many people think of a web a something like a spider's web, in two dimensions, whereas I am trying to form an image for a multi-dimensional concept. (Barnes, 1954, pp. 43-44)

The sociogram, invented by Moreno (1933), is a diagram of social networks, with the self (ego) and others shown as points and ties as lines. Tie strength is "a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie" (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361).

Definitions depend on your own social networks and disciplinary allegiances. Within sociology, group organisation and relations provide opportunities and normative limitations on individual psychological development, beliefs and actions. Mitchell (1969) described an ego-centred network characterised by degree of reciprocity, intensity and durability. Closed networks are characterised by strong, dense ties but these require effort to establish and maintain, and while allowing for sharing and co-building of complex knowledge, may not allow sufficient new inputs for learning. First-order ties may lead to second-order (friend-of-a-friend) ties. Ties may be uniplex or multiplex (e.g. a cousin is a workmate and friend).

Within sociolinguistics, social networks were first applied in dialectology to draw isoglosses based on shared lexical and phonological items. Subsequently, sociolinguists acknowledged inter-personal variation (class, gender, age) and intra-personal variation (situation or context, topic), leading to more complex portrayals of linguistic and social identity through group membership.

In applied linguistics, social networks were initially researched with reference to child L1 acquisition, and the development of bilinguals (e.g. Wiklund, 2002). More recently, social networks have been addressed in study abroad research (e.g. de Federico de la Rúa, 2003; Isabelli-García, 2006; Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2008; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Ying, 2002), and this work is closely linked to identity studies (e.g. Dervin, 2008; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Papatsiba, 2003). Within some programmes, pre-departure social networks are deliberately constructed among outgoers in order to build a group dynamic (Haug, 1996). A quantitative measure related to social networks is the widely used Language Contact Profile (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz & Halter, 2004), which relies on self-report to quantify accommodation, the days and hours spent using L1 and L2, interlocutors, and use of the four language skills during foreign sojourns.

The density and multiplexity of sojourners' social networks reflect the extent of their social integration. Of particular interest to study abroad research is Granovetter's (1973, 1974) insight into the "strength of weak ties". These are the links created with new acquaintances, and they contrast with established, durable links with friends and family: "Weak ties […] indispensable to individuals' oppor-

tunities and to their integration into communities. Strong ties, breeding local cohesion, lead to overall fragmentation" (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1378).

The frequently observed difficulty for study abroad students of accessing locals is due not only to the latter's uninterest in making contact with incomers who have come for a short, pre-determined stay and whose linguistic skills may make conversation difficult. In addition, both locals and the students themselves have already built close, stable bonds with family, friends and peers. Historically, before the Industrial Revolution, most human societies encountered few outsiders; it is unsurprising that humans are typically satisfied with existing social networks unless obliged by circumstances, or led by other concerns (e.g. sexual attraction or desire to practise English with a native speaker) to open them up.

Weak ties enable sojourners to develop as individuals. If no new ties are made, there will be less change in the individual. The "marginal, those less subject to social pressures" (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1367) are more open to the reinvention of self and to new ideas. If you go abroad as an autonomous individual, then you are free of the constraints of the social identities which your previous social circle imposes upon you. Meeting new people can nurture new activities and new attitudes. This is the fundamental basis of learning through mobility. The new perspectives of new acquaintances allow and prompt you to re-invent yourself. The problem with research which adopts a pre-and-post design is that the person whom you greet on return from extended study abroad is not the same person to whom you said goodbye several months earlier.

The relevance of social network theories for study abroad objectives is thus self-evident, though only recently have they come to the fore in empirical studies (e.g. Dewey, Ring, Gardner & Belnap, 2013). Study abroad can offer huge opportunities for social interaction, often allied to an active need, born of isolation in an unfamiliar environment, to link up with people. The "Who?" "How many?" and "How deeply?" of new social networks will determine many of the outcomes. The identity of the new contacts has implications for the vehicular language(s) and thus for linguistic development. The extent of new contacts has implications for the extent of target language input, and can be linked to quantitative data elicited by, for example, the Language Contact Profile. How deeply the student gets to know new friends has implications for input, output, feedback and the range of language functions practised, hence pragmatic competence. And of course, greater contact with locals may impact other objectives (academic, cultural, intercultural, personal, professional), not to mention fun and tourism.

Social networks are thus crucial to the learning outcomes of study abroad. They tend to be formed early (from fear of isolation), and may subsequently either fossilise or develop. They represent a major influence on the variability of study abroad experience: Greater contact with the local community leads to greater gains. Interacting with host nationals has been shown to be a key to successful adjustment

(Chirkov, Safdar, de Guzman & Playford, 2008), while interacting with co-nationals reduces contact with locals (Chapdelaine & Alexich, 2004; Teichler, 1991).

Those administering study abroad programmes have long recognised the importance of social networks. Host institutions commonly organise 'language buddies' or paired tasks, parties, excursions, or accommodation which mix local and international students. Preparation, at least in a U.K. context, normally involves providing outgoing students with strategies for getting to know local people. Outgoers are encouraged to use the Resto U or Mensa for lunch, and to join a local church, sports clubs, choir or hobby group, while avoiding Irish bars and other co-nationals. They are urged to make an effort to get to know locals, for example, within the constraints of security, by advertising English lessons. Presojourn activities to alert students to the significance of social networks (such as the sociogram described in Coleman, 1998b) can underpin strategies to achieve social insertion. The Residence Abroad Matters projects, building on existing practices, developed guidelines for ethnographic, out-of-classroom tasks and research projects which obliged students to engage with the local communities, and were highly effective (e.g. Roberts, 2001). The usefulness of Community Service Learning for social integration has been acknowledged in a number of U.S. projects: e.g. Abbot and Lear (2010). Homesickness, visits home and from home, frequent online contact, anxiety, and fatigue may reinforce existing strong (probably L1) networks, and risk limiting new, initially weak ties.

Perhaps the most significant route into new social circles is sex. Published research hardly mentions sexual attraction and relationships, yet there is overwhelming first-hand evidence that taking millions of fun-loving, novelty-seeking, outward-looking, bright, adventurous young people out of the constraints of home, family and old friends and releasing them into exciting and unfamiliar environments with the instruction to get to know the locals frequently leads to intense personal relationships, i.e. strong, multiplex ties. The student-generated website thirdyearabroad.com has a popular thread on making and breaking intimate relationships: http://www.thirdyearabroad.com/when-you-arrive/long-distance-love/item/371-love-in-a-foreign-climate.html. The British Council's (2005) booklet celebrating the centenary of the British teaching assistantship noted the number of marriages which the scheme had inadvertently sponsored. Any reader with study-abroad experience, whether as administrator or sojourner, will no doubt recognise the picture.

One poignant example from a diary entry of an Italian student studying abroad in England is cited by Beaven: "This week has been particular, with a happy side and a sad side. My English friend and I are not friends anymore, but a couple! We found out to be in love with each other and now we are always together. Obviously, when you feel extremely happy something bad has to happen and my beloved dog died three days ago…" (Beaven, 2012, p. 82).

Studies are clearly needed to identify the link between intimate relationship patterns and enhanced linguistic and intercultural competences, though ethical problems need to be acknowledged for both research and good practices.

4. Social circles

One way of representing typical social networks of study abroad is as concentric circles (see Figure 1, reproduced from Coleman, 2013a, p.31). This model, resulting from 25 years of researching and administering study abroad, visiting students abroad in Europe, and the Residence Abroad Matters project, may help us better understand the socialisation patterns of students during study abroad.

Figure 1. Coleman's concentric circles representation of study abroad social networks
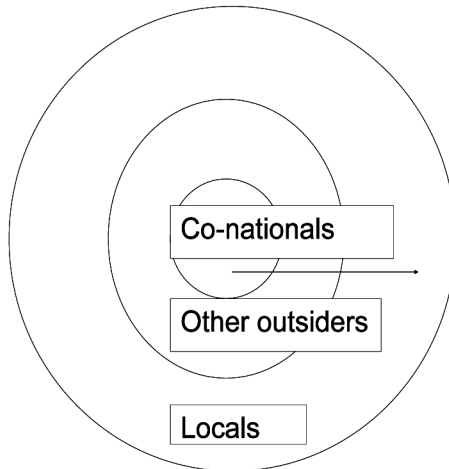
Students begin by socialising with co-nationals. With time and motivation they add other non-locals to their social circles. If circumstances (including sojourn duration) permit and their own motivations, attitudes, actions and initiatives allow, they can additionally include locals. One circle does not replace another; rather, the process is additive, with the circle broadening during the sojourn. The circles represent progression of friendships rather than intensity as in Dunbar's (2010) "circles of acquaintanceship", and are not mutually exclusive. They reflect earlier work by Bochner, McLeod and Lin (1977) and de Federico de la Rúa (2003, 2008). Co-nationals may or may not share a mother tongue (one in six British residents has a first language other than English).

Individual and institutional strategies can support the process. British universities will seek to avoid sending large groups of students to the same destination, and for this reason may prefer language teaching assistantships and other work placements to Erasmus exchanges. Assistantships and work placements each provide the outgoing student with a ready-made group of locals with whom they are obliged to talk (and, additionally, a professional social identity to start from), although of course work contexts introduce issues of hierarchy and may involve the use of a *lingua franca*. Many host universities arrange language partnerships, with set tasks for pairs to complete together, and this may lead to extramural social relationships. A local and already acculturated co-national community can also provide a shortcut to meeting the target-language community.

How do the concentric circles inform linguistic interactions and input? Much study abroad research concerns students who come from or travel to a majority English-speaking country. Other studies acknowledge the international role of English or English as a lingua franca (ELF), especially in higher education contexts (e.g. Coleman, 2006; Jenkins, 2013; Kalocsai, 2011). But for a majority, we might expect interactions within the inner circle to be in a shared L1, although some groups, especially from North America, formally agree to use the target language even amongst themselves while abroad. Interaction in the middle circle might be in the L2 or a lingua franca (often English), while interaction with the outer circle might range between L1, L2 and lingua franca (French in the case of the Senegal study described below, where English-speaking students interact with mainly Wolof-speaking locals). As already mentioned, however, reifying and numbering languages sequentially in this way, as if they were entirely separate entities, is as *passé* as uncritical acceptance of Hofstede's cultures, or pre-Davies definitions of the native speaker (Davies, 2003: Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007). Each of us, in an age of global migrations and internationalised campuses, possesses a linguistic repertoire embracing more or less complete but overlapping systems, and in any given interaction we will draw flexilingually on whichever resources best meet the immediate need.

All interactions, whether with co-nationals, other outsiders or locals, may of course impact the non-linguistic objectives of study abroad, in particular the development of cultural knowledge and intercultural skills, even if there is no linguistic gain and even if the home and host countries speak the same language. (Even within Erasmus, 44% of U.K. outgoers have no language component in their degree, and for every ten Erasmus outgoers there are three more heading for the USA, Canada or Australia: Carbonell, 2013). In social network terms, uniplex ties become multiplex, first order become second-order, dense networks in the inner or middle circles become spare networks (with thinner links) in the middle or outer networks, which themselves become denser.

It remains to be seen how useful the concentric circles model is in practice, either for research or the day-to-day running of student mobility programmes. It can be applied to the Senegal study (Coleman & Chafer, 2011), which comprised 47 completed questionnaires and 5 interviews with graduate participants who had completed a work placement in Dakar over the previous 25 years. Each former student evidenced an individual trajectory, with more or less stable networks. The patterns during the West African sojourn broadly confirm the model in moving from initial reliance on co-nationals to a greater social mix. Close friends and new partners were proportionately more likely to come from the middle than the outer (local) circle, but a majority made both non-local friends (85.7%) and close friends (69.4%), and Senegalese friends (91.7%) and close friends (52.1%). Networks formed during residence abroad often led to enduring relationships: Seventy-four percent had visited subsequently, a majority of participants (89.6%) had kept in touch, and 58.3% were still in touch years or decades later. The same is true of Erasmus students: 91.0% stay in touch with foreign friends met abroad, 57.0% with five or more of them, and 34.5% visit them subsequently (Boomans, Krupnik, Krzaklewska & Lanzilotta, 2008, p. 39). Having foreign friends is a predictor for international career mobility (Parey & Waldinger, 2008). We are reminded that study abroad research which focuses only on the sojourn itself, or at best a short period before departure and after return, may fail to capture its most significant impacts which are often lifelong.

The qualitative Senegal study data (about 30,000 words of open questionnaire responses, and the five interviews) show that networks are linked (albeit unpredictably) to accommodation, with a trend to move from arranged accommodation to individual choices, and to proficiency in French and Wolof: The latter helped to moderate outsider status. But networks are linked more closely with attitude or *savoir être*, such as using the same minibuses as locals for transport within the city, or even adopting local styles of dress. While most participants reported making progress in French, there was no formal measurement of L2 gains, so it was not possible to make any causal link between social networks and L2 acquisition.

The concentric circles might, it is hoped, help to design future research into student residence abroad. It would require a good deal more work to properly explore the fit of the model to other published studies, but a few examples of well-cited reports can be related to aspects of the model. Magnan and Back (2007) analysed a U.S. model of study abroad, considering English L1 and French L2. They found progress in French, but it was determined neither by accommodation arrangements nor by extent of self-reported language contact. However, spending time with co-nationals (even if speaking French) was acknowledged by participants as negative: "I lived and socialized with Americans. I think this hurt my French" (Magnan & Back 2007, p. 52).

Stewart's (2010) study of e-journals provides four case studies of U.S. students in Mexico which can be related more clearly to the model. There are frequent changes in accommodation, but daily skyping in English is found not to be significant in predicting linguistic gains. Individuals plateau at different stages. Molly socialises mostly with her inner circle (no middle-circle contact); Jennifer and Doug with both inner and outer circles; and Elise with inner and middle circles (notably one French student). The findings could be said to fit the model, in that the further they socialise from the centre, the closer these participants move to a target community identity.

Among mixed-method studies, Dewey, Bown and Eggett (2012) researched 204 US students in Japan, using the Study Abroad Social Interaction Questionnaire. The particular study abroad context comprised L1 English and L2 Japanese, with no middle circle. Nonetheless, social network structures emerged as a key variable, with results which "indicate connections between social networks, language use, and language gains", though the authors comment also that "a more comprehensive picture can only be gained through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods" (Dewey, Bown & Eggett 2012, p.130).

Finally, Beaven's (2012) thesis describes a longitudinal multimethod study of 21 Italian outgoers (teaching assistants, Business School, Erasmus students), and analyses the role of their physical and virtual networks in cross-cultural adjustment and the overcoming of obstacles, e.g. replicating Pitts (2009) in identifying how participants use co-nationals as a coping mechanism. It may be that studies of European and/or Erasmus contexts which Beaven memorably labels "international Erasmusland" (Beaven 2012, p. 221) are better matched to the concentric circles model than research in non-Erasmus contexts, but more research is required, especially with the kind of qualitative and longitudinal case studies which Jackson (2008, 2010) and Kinginger (2008, this volume) have recently conducted. The model may help to make explicit contextual factors which remain unexplored or unstated in many studies. We cannot ethically tell our outgoing students who they should eat, drink and sleep with, but we may certainly ask them when they get back.

References

Abbott, A., & Lear, D. (2010). The connections goal area in Spanish community service-learning: Possibilities and limitations. *Foreign Language Annals, 43*, 231-245.

Barnes, J.A. (1954). Class and committees in a Norwegian island parish. *Human Relations, 7,* 39-58.

Beaven, A. (2012). *An exploration of cross-cultural adaptation in the context of European student mobility*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick.

Berthoud, A.C., Grin, F. & Lüdi, G. (Eds.) (2013). *Exploring the dynamics of multilingualism: The DYLAN project.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Bochner, S., McLeod, B. M., & Lin, A. (1977). Friendship patterns of overseas students: A functional model. *International Journal of Psychology, 12,* 277-294.

Boomans, V., Krupnik, S., Krzaklewska, E. & Lanzilotta, S. (2008). *Generation mobility.* European Students Network. Retrieved from http://www.esn.org/content/esn-survey-2007-generation-mobility

British Academy (2012). *Valuing the year abroad: A British Academy–UCML position statement.* Retrieved from http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Valuing_The_Year_Abroad.cfm

British Council (2005). *Breaking the barriers: 100 years of the language assistants programme 1905-2005.* London: British Council.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1993). The ecology of cognitive development: research models and fugitive findings. In R. H. Wozniak and K. W. Fischer (Eds.), *Development in context: Acting and thinking in specific environments* (pp. 3-44). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byrne, N. (2012) *Today's launch: The U.K.* Language Rich Europe. Retrieved from http://languagerichblog.eu/2012/06/28/todays-launch-england/

Carbonell, J.-A. (2013). *Still growing after all these years: Outward student mobility in the United Kingdom between 2007-08 and 2011-12.* London: Kingston University.

Chapdelaine, R.F. & Alexich, L. R. (2004). Social skills difficulty: Model of culture shock for international graduate students, *Journal of College Student Development, 45,* 167–184.

Chirkov, V.I., Safdar, S., de Guzman, J. & Playford, K. (2008). Further examining the role motivation to study abroad plays in the adaptation of international students in Canada. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 32,* 427-440.

Coleman, J.A. (1998a). Language learning and study abroad: the European perspective, *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 4,* 167-203. Retrieved from http://www.frontiersjournal.com/issues/vol4/vol4-07_Coleman.pdf

Coleman, J.A. (1998b). Student preparation for residence abroad: two stages in acquiring cross-cultural capability. In D. Killick & M. Parry (Eds.), *Cross-cultural capability, the why, the ways, the means: New theories and methodologies in language education* (pp 32-44). Leeds: Leeds Metropolitan University.

Coleman, J.A (2002). Translating research into disseminated good practice: the case of student residence abroad. In R. Macdonald & J. Wisdom (Eds.), *Academic and educational development: Research, evaluation and changing practice in higher education* (pp.88-98). London: Kogan Page.

Coleman, J.A. (2003). Student voices on residence abroad. Paper presented at *Setting the agenda: Languages, linguistics and area studies in higher education,* UMIST, June 2002. Retrieved from http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/paper/1259

Coleman, J.A. (2006). English-medium teaching in European higher education. *Language Teaching, 39,* 1-14.

Coleman, J.A. (2013a). Researching whole people and whole lives. In C. Kinginger (Ed.) *Social and cultural dimensions of language learning in study abroad* (pp. 17-44). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Coleman, J.A. (2013b). Dymplexity: new theories, new contexts and new labels for mobile students. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 8,* 20-28.

Coleman, J.A. & Chafer, T. (2010). Study abroad and the internet: Physical and virtual context in an era of expanding telecommunications. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad*, *29,* 151-167.

Coleman, J.A. & Chafer, T. (2011). The experience and long-term impact of study abroad by Europeans in an African context. In F. Dervin (Ed.), *Analysing the consequences of academic mobility and migration* (pp. 67-96). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Coleman, J.A. & Parker, L. (2001). Preparing for residence abroad: staff development implications. In J. Klapper (Ed.) *Teaching languages in higher education: Issues in training and continuing professional development* (pp. 134-162). London: CILT.

Davies, A. (2003). *The native speaker: Myth or reality*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

de Federico de la Rúa, A. (2003). *Réseaux d'identification à l'Europe: Amitiés et identités d'étudiants*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille / Universidad Pública de Navarra.

de Federico de la Rúa, A. (2008). How do Erasmus students make friends? In S. Ehrenreich, G. Woodman & M. Perrefort (Eds.), *Auslandaufenthalte in Schule und Studium: Bestandaufnahmen aus Forschung und Praxis* (pp. 89-103). Münster: Waxmann.

Deardorff, D.K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalisation. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 10*, 241-266.

Dervin, F. (2008). *Métamorphoses identitaires en situation de mobilité*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Turku: Turku Yliopisto.

Dewey, D.P., Bown, J. & Eggett, D. (2012). Japanese language proficiency, social networking, and language use during study abroad: Learners' perspectives. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *68,* 111-137.

Dewey, D., Ring, S., Gardner, D. & Belnap, K. (2013). Social network formation and development during study abroad in the Middle East. *System, 41*, 269-282.

Dunbar, R. (2010). *How many friends does one person need? Dunbar's number and other evolutionary quirks*. London: Faber & Faber.

Elola, I., & Oskoz, A. (2008). Blogging: Fostering intercultural competence development in foreign language and study abroad contexts. *FLANNALS, 41,* 454-477.

Ferguson, C. (1995). Foreword. In B. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (xi-xv). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Flynn, G. (2012). *Gone Girl*. London: Phoenix.

Freed, B., Dewey, D. P., Segalowitz, N. & Halter, R. (2004). The Language Contact Profile. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 26,* 349-356.

Government Office for Science. 2013. *Future identities: Changing identities in the U.K., the next 10 years*. Retrieved from http://www.bis.gov.uk/foresight/our-work/policy-futures/identity.

Granovetter, M. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology, 78,* 1360–1380.

Granovetter, M. (1974). *Getting a job*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Grgurović, M., Chapelle, C. A. & Shelley, M. C. (2013). A meta-analysis of effectiveness studies on computer technology-supported language learning. *ReCALL, 25,* 165-198.

Haug, G. (1996). Student mobility between Europe and the US. *European Journal of Education, 31,* 181-192.

Houghton, S. (2012). *Intercultural dialogue in practice: Managing value judgment through foreign language education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Isabelli-García, C. (2006). Study abroad social networks, motivation and attitudes: implications for second language acquisition. In E. Churchill & M. A. DuFon (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 231-258). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Jackson, J. (2008). *Language, identity, and study abroad: Sociocultural perspectives*. London: Equinox.

Jackson, J. (2010). *Intercultural journeys: From study to residence abroad.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jenkins, J. (2013). *English as a lingua franca in the international university: The politics of academic English language policy*. London: Routledge.

Kalocsai, K. (2011). The show of interpersonal involvement and the building of rapport in an ELF community of practice. In A. Archibald, A. Cogo & J. Jenkins (Eds.), *Latest trends in english as a lingua franca research* (pp. 113-138). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Kinginger, C. (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case histories of Americans in France. *Modern Language Journal, 92,* 1-124.

Kinginger, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kinginger, C. (Ed.) (2013). *Social and cultural dimensions of language learning in study abroad*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Kramsch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject: What foreign language learners say about their experiences and why it matters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kramsch, C., & Whiteside, A. (2007). Three fundamental concepts in second language acquisition and their relevance in multilingual contexts. *Modern Language Journal, 91* (s1), 905-920.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2011). Complex, dynamic systems: A new transdisciplinary theme for applied linguistics? *Language Teaching, 45*, 202-214.

Larsen-Freeman, D., & Cameron, L. (2008). *Complex systems and applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lee, L. (2011). Blogging: Promoting learner autonomy and intercultural competence through study abroad. *Language Learning & Technology, 15*, 87-109.

Logicalis (2013). *Realtime generation 2103 survey: Rise of the digital first era*. Retrieved from http://staging.uk.logicalis.com/pdf/Final1_RTG_brochure_lowres.pdf

Magnan, S., & Back, M. (2007). Social interaction and linguistic gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 40,* 43–61.

Magnan, S., Murphy, D., & Sahakyan, N. (2014). Goals of collegiate learners and the standards for foreign language learning. *Modern Language Journal, 98* (s1), 632 pp.

Mitchell, J.C. (1969). The concept and use of social networks. In J. C. Mitchell (Ed.), *Social networks in urban situations*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Moreno, J.L. (1933). Emotions mapped by new geography. *New York Times*, 3 April 1933.

Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2002). *Student mobility and narrative in Europe: The new strangers*. London: Routledge.

O.E.C.D. (2013). *Education at a glance*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2013_eag-2013-en

Papatsiba, V. (2003). *Des etudiants européens: Erasmus et l'aventure de l'altérité*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Parey, M., & Waldinger, F. 2007. *Studying abroad and the effect on international labor market mobility: Evidence from the introduction of ERASMUS*. London: Centre for the Economics of Education, LSE.

Pellegrino Aveni, V. (2005). *Study abroad and second language use: Constructing the self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pitts, M.J. (2009). Identity and the role of expectations, stress, and talk in short-term student sojourner adjustment: An application of the integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 33,* 450–462.

Regan, V., Howard, M. & Lemée, I. (2009). *The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Roberts, C. (2001). *Language learners as ethnographers*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Schofield, H. (2013). *Why are the French drinking less wine?* BBC News Online. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21929287.

Stewart, J. A. (2010). Using e-journals to assess students' language awareness and social identity during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 43,* 138-159.

Teichler, U. (1991). *Experiences of Erasmus students: Select findings of the 1988/89 survey*. Kassel: Gesamthochschule Kassel.

van Lier, L. (2003). A tale of two computer classrooms: The ecology of project-based language learning. In J. Leather & J. van Dam (Eds.), *Ecology of language acquisition* (pp. 49-63). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.

White, C. J. (1999). Expectations and emergent beliefs of self-instructed language learners. *System, 27,* 443-457.

Wiklund, I. (2002). Social networks from a sociolinguistic perspective: the relationship between characteristics of the social networks of bilingual adolescents and their language proficiency. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 153,* 53-92.

Ying, Y. (2002). Formation of cross-cultural relationships of Taiwanese international students in the United States. *Journal of Community Psychology, 30,* 45–55.

Chapter 3
Language socialization in the homestay:
American high school students in China

Celeste Kinginger

Pennsylvania State University

The homestay component of study abroad is often credited with particular value for language learning. However, in quantitative studies of university students abroad, the putative "homestay advantage" has been difficult to prove. Some research with high school students suggests that younger students tend to develop more intimate relationships with their hosts than do their older counterparts. Based on audio interviews and recordings of conversational interactions, this paper draws on the language socialization framework to explore how two teenaged learners of Chinese were received by their hosts. The first was a student of limited Chinese proficiency who was socialized toward the expression of relational identity and familial intimacy through teasing. The second was a student of more advanced proficiency who participated in many interactions involving the socialization of taste, including Chinese food ways for the student, and American culinary practices for the family.

1. Introduction

What does it mean to be "at home" while also "abroad"? "Home" is often framed as the polar opposite of "abroad," and evokes banal platitudes such as "home is where the heart is," "home is where you mom is," or "home is where, if you go there, they have to let you in." In the scholarly literature, studies of dinnertime discourse clearly demonstrate that the familiarity children enjoy at home is the backdrop for a broad range of cognitive achievements. As they interact with trusted family members, children are socialized in myriad ways, learning everything from taste and table manners (Ochs, Pontecorvo & Fasulo, 1996) to political views (Gordon, 2004), locally accepted standards for narration (Blum-Kulka, 1997), or scientific thinking and theorizing about the world (Ochs & Taylor, 1992). At dinner, family members display and develop their relationships, thus carrying out the very activity that defines what it means to be a family. Through "repeated rites of passage to adult discourse" (Blum-Kulka, 1994, p. 45) beginning in infancy, and

in parallel with language development, children are socialized into practices, values, and moral stances of their communities.

In the context of student mobility, what kinds of learning take place when young people temporarily elect to join new families in a foreign country? Unlike immediate family members, student guests and host families do not usually share a common cultural background and social history. Neither are they familiar nor on intimate terms with each other. Meanwhile, in lay perceptions and publicity about study abroad, the homestay is credited with many virtues: students are offered first hand experiences of local cultural practices, pathways toward social networks expanded beyond the home, and of course, numerous opportunities to interact with hosts in ways that further language learning. To what extent do the rich and varied socialization processes of childhood also apply in the case of the many youthful strangers who live with families abroad?

1.1. A homestay advantage?

No doubt, many people who have enjoyed a successful homestay trace the acceleration of their language learning to that experience. In my own case, I was welcomed as a 19-year-old into the home of a farm family in the south of France. Their town, Prouilhe-par-Corniou, had a wintertime population of about 12, but the summer brought vacationers and returning extended family members along with all the routine work of animal husbandry, hay mowing, gardening and preserving. My host mother quickly realized that I had few practical skills, and set me the task of ironing socks and napkins. Over time, however, the family members patiently instructed me in farm and household chores. This instruction took place in the presence of many physical artifacts serving to clarify intended meaning: vegetables and fruits to be harvested, goats to be milked, cheese moulds to be filled, piglets to be evaluated for purchase, slugs to be washed off salad leaves, hay to be stacked. I was a college student, and legally at least, an adult and entitled to some degree of self-determination. Sometimes I experienced mild claustrophobia. But in Prouilhe-par-Corniou there was no escape and in any case there were no other Anglophones with whom to run away. I stayed, and learned to talk, to cook, to eat, to care for livestock, and to appreciate both waste-free, sustainable agriculture and the moral and religious values that sustained it in that place.

Therefore, among the many surprises in store when I began to investigate research on language learning abroad, the most astonishing was the discovery that the homestay is not a reliable environment for language learning abroad. At the macro-level of larger scale quantitative studies, no absolute correlation has been found between living arrangements and the development of proficiency. For example, Rivers (1998) examined the ACTFL OPI (American Council on the Teaching

of Foreign Languages Oral Proficiency Interview) scores of over 2500 dorm-stay versus homestay learners in the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) Student Records Base for the years 1976 through 1996. The students who had lived with families were *less* likely to develop speaking proficiency than those who did not. Similarly, in a project involving 830 learners of various languages, Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige (2009) found no relationship between housing type and OPI measures. Only when these researchers factored in the estimated amount of time that students spent with their families were they able to establish such a correlation. This finding prompted the authors to remark that "the variable that matters here is whether students take advantage of homestays by engaging with family members" (p. 16).

Turning to the qualitative literature, one of the only broad generalizations that can be advanced is that there is considerable variation in the extent to which student do, in fact, engage with host family members. Wilkinson (1998) contrasted the cases of "Molise," who was warmly welcomed and gently assisted in her French language learning, and "Ashley," whose host family did not bother to pick her up when she arrived, and subsequently demonstrated little interest in anything to do with her. The accounts of the Russian homestay in Pellegrino Aveni (2005) portray both "positive, supportive behavior" (p. 61) and terrifying, destructive behavior, including a host brother who, with support from his father, routinely played a game of "shoot the American" with a real, though unloaded handgun. In Kinginger (2008) there is the case of "Bill," whose low proficiency in French and general humanistic goals were matched with a host family's willingness to shepherd him through lengthy dinner table conversations focused mainly on his language learning. There is also, however, the case of "Ailis", whose single host mother preferred to dine in the company of the television, and who returned from France having apparently forgotten some of the French she knew before the sojourn.

The success of the homestay as a learning environment seems to depend, on the one hand, on whether or not students are received as persons of consequence, deserving of the family's attention and socializing efforts. To some extent, as Klapper and Rees have recently pointed out (2012), the nature of study abroad, including the homestay, can be viewed as arbitrary and idiosyncratic; much depends upon students' emotional reaction to the hand they are dealt. On the other hand, however, this success also depends on how students position themselves in their adopted households, the efforts they make to understand the practices and motives of their hosts, and whether or not they can graciously accept the role of a temporary "child."

A recent survey of 116 college-aged American language students (Juveland, 2011) revealed that, while these students do value the unique learning opportunities afforded in homestays, the most salient negative perception was of "decreased freedom as an adult" (p. 67). These students were concerned about lack of privacy,

the imposition of rules or curfews, and the indignity of being interpreted as incompetent and childlike. And in fact, when Iino (2006) investigated the approaches of Japanese host families, he found a continuum ranging from "two-way enrichment," favoring intercultural dialogue and learning for all parties, to "cultural dependency" in which students were considered fundamentally helpless and occasionally positioned as exotic family "pets" (p. 162).

The literature on the homestay experiences of high school students suggests (if it does not prove) that younger learners may be more likely than their college-aged peers to be received *in loco parentis* as temporary children, and to tolerate and benefit from this arrangement more easily. This may be due in part to the host families' acceptance of legal responsibility for the safety and well being of their charges. US-based students in particular have yet to experience the taste of freedom from familial oversight that university study typically offers. In any case, the scant research on this phenomenon shows that high school students frequently make dramatic gains in proficiency and report numerous opportunities to interact in various settings involving all generations of their host families and the families' social networks. This was the case for Hashimoto's (1993) 16-year-old Australian who arrived in Japan with no functional language ability and, a year later, had developed a broad communicative repertoire along with considerable awareness of pragmatic norms. Three of the four American high school students followed by Spenader (2011) through their year-long sojourn in Sweden arrived knowing no Swedish but returned home with "Superior" (professional level) proficiency. When Perrefort (2008) compared the portrayal of Erasmus versus a European secondary school programme in interviews with veterans, she found that only the high school students highlighted language-learning experiences, including the importance of intense local engagement for overcoming linguistic insecurity. The Erasmus students tended to categorize themselves as "spectators" (p. 77) and expressed frustration at their inability to access local social networks. Similarly, when interviewed (Kinginger & Tan, 2013), participants in the same Chinese language programme under consideration here claimed that the homestay experience had offered significant engagement in everyday communicative settings, and has improved their proficiency "exponentially" in comparison with classroom learning.

1.2. Language socialization in the homestay

If high school homestay sojourners sometimes display remarkable gains in proficiency, and tend to offer praise for the intensity and variety of their participation in communicative events, what, in particular, takes place in their exchanges with hosts? To answer such a question, the natural choice of framework is language socialization, that is, research examining how "acquiring a language is part of a

much larger process of becoming a person in society" (Ochs, 2002, p. 106). Through language socialization, children and other novices develop the "communicative competence, membership, and legitimacy" (Duff, 2007, p. 310) required for participation in the social life of communities, including both routine language and literacy practices and the accompanying preferences for action, emotion, and thought. Language socialization theory is both holistic and particularistic; it emphasizes how novices are socialized to use language and at the same time are socialized through language toward community activities and worldviews. Language socialization research therefore attempts to elucidate the dialectic relationship that obtains between particular socializing events and their broader sociocultural environments, linking microethnographic study with a maximally holistic interpretive frame.

Originally articulated by Ochs and Schieffelin (1984), language socialization locates its primary disciplinary source in linguistic anthropology, but borrows liberally from other fields, such as sociology, linguistics, and education, depending upon the goals of each project. A key influence on the early development of the approach was the work on interactional and communicative competence by Gumperz (1982) and Hymes (1972). To recall, Hymes argued against a sole focus on linguistic competence and for a broader construct, communicative competence, which "involves knowing not only the linguistic code, but also what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in any given situation" (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 18). Another significant contribution to the early framing of the approach (Duff, 2007; Ochs, 1986, p. 2) were the views on the integrity of language, mind and society outlined by Vygotsky (1962, 1978) which have evolved into contemporary sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). As a theory of the mediated mind, sociocultural theory portrays the development of higher order cognition from the outside in, that is, through interaction with artifacts or more expert people in the Zone of Proximal Development. Novices are seen to internalize language and other semiotic resources through active participation at various levels of engagement (from observation to full participation) and in so doing, transform their own cognition and, potentially, the nature of the activity itself. Development is viewed as an historical, or *genetic* process at various interrelated levels, including phylogenesis, sociocultural history, the ontogenesis of the individual, and microgenesis, or the history of particular psychological functions over short periods of time as development takes place "right before one's eyes" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 61).

Early language socialization research focused exclusively on illustrating the cultural specificity of language and literacy socialization in childhood (Heath, 1983; Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Today, the scope of this work has expanded to include the study of second or multiple language socialization of novices of diverse age and in a variety of settings (Duff, 2012). At the same time,

the field has been influenced by "the poststructuralist realization that learning is a non-linear, relational human activity, co-constructed between humans and their environment, contingent upon their position in space and history, and a site of struggle for the control of power and memory" (Kramsch, 2002, p. 5). In particular, such poststructuralist views encourage scrutiny of the subtle processes through which power is circulated and reproduced in language learning and use (McNamara, 2012), and researchers are increasingly aware that this process can be dynamic, negotiated, and contested. In the case of language learners abroad, if they do gain access to socializing encounters, this process may be accepted, resisted, or rejected, and may lead to innovative or hybrid identities.

Very few studies involve direct observation of language socialization processes in homestays abroad. Wilkinson (2002) scrutinized the conversations taking place between students of modest proficiency in French and their host families in France. Her findings demonstrate the significance of prior socialization into the use of classroom discourse, as the students displayed a marked preference for pedagogical talk (including the infamous Initiation- Response- Evaluation structure) in their attempts to converse. Cook (2008) examined how Japanese host families socialized student guests to use the addressee honorific *masu* form. In this study, the families provided both modeling and explicit instruction which progressively guided the students toward the ability to shift from plain to honorific style in ways that are appropriate for "in group" communication.

Another study by Cook (2006) examined the collaborative telling of "folk beliefs" in dinnertime conversations between Japanese hosts and student guests. By "folk belief" Cook means the assertion of generalizations about some aspect of Japanese or the host student's culture, including stereotypes. The Japanese host families' beliefs were frequently interpretable in relation to *nihonjinron*, an ideology framing the Japanese culture and food ways as exceptionally unique and therefore inaccessible to foreigners. Food and eating habits were frequently discussed, including the belief that Americans cannot live without beef, or the belief that foreigners cannot bear to eat fermented soybeans (*nattoo*). While many of the assertions discussed went uncontested, the student guests challenged them in 40.4% of cases, typically, out of concern for politeness, by providing counter examples. Cook concludes that in the case of these interactions, a "two-way enrichment" (Iino, 2006) process took place. By submitting them to scrutiny and challenge from a different cultural perspective, both student guests and hosts became aware that their own implicit assumptions might not be reliable or based in truth.

DuFon (2006) examined the socialization of taste for American students in Indonesia. From data collected over a period of five years (field notes, language learning journals, and recordings of dinner table interactions), DuFon extracted various themes, including orientation to the food, food as pleasure, rituals involv-

ing food, and food and health. Because the students were often unfamiliar with the dishes on offer, their hosts instructed them on the names of foods and ingredients in ways that greatly resemble the classroom pattern drills of the audio-lingual era:

Bruce:	*Saya senang. Apa namanya?*
	I like this. What is it called?
Ibu Djumandi:	*Jagung.*
	Corn.
Bruce:	*Jagung saya?*
	Just corn?
Ibu Djumandi:	*Dadar jagung.*
	Corn pancake.
Bruce:	*Dadar.*
	Pancake.
Ibu Djumandi:	*Dadar jagung.*
	Corn pancake.
Bruce:	*(Dadar jagung.)*
	(Corn pancake.)

(Dufon, 2006, p. 98)

Indonesian hosts also emphasized the pleasure to be taken in eating, and educated their guests about the aesthetics of their cuisine, including the practice of direct, unmitigated criticism of dishes improperly prepared. They also attempted, often without success, to convey their views about the influence of food on health, e.g. the belief that iced beverages can aggravate a cough.

In concluding her report, DuFon hypothesized that orientation to food is likely to occur in many homestay settings, although the precise nature of this practice may vary. She also noted that the dinner table was a key context for language learning in her study and that this setting "offers many opportunities for learning through the use of language about a culture's values, beliefs, attitudes and view of food, and for learning to use the language in certain ways in order to talk about food" (pp. 117-118).

2. The current project

The current project is an exploration of the particular socialization practices taking place in the short-term homestay programmes that are now the norm for American students abroad. It was inspired in part by comments of earlier programme participants to the effect that the homestay is a rich environment for language and culture learning (Kinginger & Tan, 2013), and in part by previous quantitative research measuring dramatic gains in language ability for high school students abroad. Our data come from an intensive Chinese language

programme (Landon-in-China) enrolling American high school students for two- to four-week homestays in Beijing and Chengdu. While the brevity of the programme precluded longer-term documentation of socialization outcomes, we can examine the families' and students' attempts to socialize each other and, on occasion, we can also observe the microgenesis of particular language features. This paper offers brief considerations of two participants' experiences: 1) a student of modest proficiency (David) who became actively involved in his host family's routine practice of teasing; and 2) a student of more advanced proficiency (Sam) who participated in many interactions involving the socialization of taste.

2.1. Setting

Data were collected from 12 students and 22 host families involved in the Landon-in-China programme in the summers of 2011 and 2012. The regular programme included a two-week tour followed by a four-week language immersion period during which students were placed individually with Chinese host families for two weeks in Beijing and then in Chengdu. The host families typically included one host sibling whose interests were matched with those of the guest. An optional three-week internship was also available in combination with the programme or as a separate offering; in this case students were placed in homes where the parents' professional interests aligned with theirs.

The Landon-in-China programme was unlike offerings for college-aged students in that the programme operated *in loco parentis* for the students. The programme director, chaperones and faculty from the United States, the Chinese host parents and siblings, as well as instructors hired locally, jointly assumed responsibility for the students' well-being and the quality of their experience. Although the programme expressly discouraged American participants from gathering together after school, they were very rarely alone. With the exception of the morning intensive language classes, the programme invited all Chinese host brothers and sisters to join in its afternoon activities as well as weekend trips to surrounding sites of interest. The programme also attempted to match the ages, interests, and hobbies of the participants with those of the host siblings.

2.2. Participants

When David joined the Landon-in-China programme, he was a rising junior, 16 years of age. David's family had immigrated to the US from Ecuador to pursue professional opportunities. He grew up in a Spanish-speaking household and was bilingual in English and Spanish. He had studied Chinese for two years, and was

described by the programme director as possessing a caring and open personality, displaying strong desire to learn about other cultures, and proud of his own cultural heritage.

At 17, Sam was entering his final year in high school. His parents had emigrated from Ethiopia as teenagers, raising their children to be bilingual in Amharic and English. Sam had studied Chinese for 11 years, beginning with a maths, science and social studies Chinese immersion programme in elementary school. He had taken an Advanced Placement course as a high school junior, awarding him college-level credit for language study.

David's Beijing hosts included a mother (HM), a father (HF) and a sister (HS) of approximately David's age. Sam's Beijing hosts included a mother (HM), a father (HF) and a brother (HB) of approximately Sam's age. All of the participants, students and hosts, are of relatively privileged socioeconomic backgrounds, with the parents employed in professional or managerial roles.

2.3. Data

Data for this study include field notes from observation performed by the programme director, transcriptions of semi-structured interviews at the programme's end with students and host families, and audio recorded interactions. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Pennsylvania State University, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. David provided us with six separate and sequential recordings of interactions in various settings totaling 170 minutes. Sam recorded nine sequential mealtime interactions totaling 262 minutes, with an average length of 29 minutes.

2.4. Analysis

The aim of the project was to understand the specific communicative practices that students like David and Sam are referencing when they describe the Chinese homestay as a rich environment for language and culture learning (Kinginger & Tan, 2013). In David's case, our first overview of the data revealed that the family, and eventually David, were involved in frequent episodes of teasing, so we elected to focus on the evolution of David's participation in this particular, routine speech event. In Sam's case, a considerable amount of the talk was devoted to the topic of food and taste. We first isolated the many taste-related episodes, and determined that these accounted for nearly a quarter (24.9%) of the talk. We then classified these episodes by thematic category, and analyzed episodes typifying each theme as opportunities for learning for Sam and his hosts.

From language socialization theory we borrow the idea that language learning is more than the mere accumulation of usable forms, but is linked in a

dialectical relationship with the learning of culture in a holistic process of "becoming a person in society" (Ochs, 2002, p. 106). Also relevant to our analysis are several key notions from sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). A fundamental notion is that human action, including thinking and speaking, is mediated by cultural-psychological tools (Kozulin, 1998), especially semiotic tools such as language. While built on a biological substrate, the higher mental functions are cultural and historical in origin. Second is the conceptualization of learning as process of internalization. Through engagement with other human beings and with culturally-evolved artifacts, learners gradually develop internalized repertoires for thinking and speaking that are provided by the sociocultural environments they frequent. Third is Vygotsky's (1978) *genetic* method based on his understanding of development as a dynamic, historical process, and calling for observation of this process as it takes place "right before one's eyes" (p. 61). Particularly relevant for our study is the microgenetic study of interactive settings and affordances where researchers may trace the history of particular functions over short periods of time, in this case the participants' ability to participate in the expression of intimacy through teasing, for David, and talking and think about Chinese and American taste, for Sam.

3. Findings

3.1. Teasing and familial intimacy

The recordings provided by David included numerous instances during which his host family engaged in teasing, an interactional practice that normally indexes a degree of familiarity and intimacy. Specifically, teasing is a form of situational humor in which participants create a "play frame" on a backdrop of shared knowledge and assumptions, using both utterances and suprasegmental features and/ or nonverbal communication (Boxer & Cortés-Conde, 1997, p. 277). Teasing is pleasurable because, like irony and other forms of humor, it involves the interpretation of hidden meaning (Tannen, 1986). More importantly, and although it can be a high-risk game, teasing can support the display and development of relationships. Specifically, among intimates or friends, the successful negotiation of identity through humour results in bonding and the enhancement of relationships. Teasing can also play an important pedagogical role because it often invokes societal norms and their violation (e.g., Schieffelin, 1986).

We therefore hypothesized that involving David in this practice, and eventually inviting his participation, was an index of the degree to which he developed an intimate relationship with his hosts. From the beginning of his stay, he was party

to teasing on the part of his host family members. Before the entire assembled extended family, his host sister was teased about her relatively poor academic performance in comparison to a classmate. His host sister retaliated later on in teasing her mother about the effects of age on her appearance. Toward the end of his stay, our data show that David became the target of his family's situational humour. Specifically, David had revealed his distaste for seafood, which the family had to date avoided serving in an effort to please him. However, when enjoying a packet of snack crackers, David's HM and HS noticed that the crackers had a theme, namely SpongeBob SquarePants, the undersea cartoon hero and his equally aquatic friends Patrick Star, Mr. Krabs, Squidward Tentacles, and Plankton:

Excerpt 1[1]

1. HM: **chī   ba** ((passing the food to David))
              eat   PRT
              (Please) eat
              tiāo   yí   ge
              pick:up one   CLF
              Pick up one
              (LAUGHTER) <@ tā   bù   chī yú @>
                               he   NEG   eat fish
                               He doesn't eat fish
2. HM&HS: **(LAUGHTER)**
3. David: **yú (LAUGHTER)**
              fish
              Fish
4. HM: **<@ zhè dōu @> (LAUGHTER)**
                   this   all
                   This is all
5. HS: **<@ ((indecipherable)) @>**
6. David: **<@ Yeah yeah @>**
7. HM: **(H)**
8. David: **and that**
9. HM: **zhè   dōu   shì   hǎixiān**
              this   all   COP   seafood
              This is all seafood
10. All   **(LAUGHTER)**

In this case, the teasing invokes David's violation of the Chinese moral precept that one should not disclose personal food preferences, especially as a guest. Such disclosure may of course cause inconvenience for the host, but the precept is itself

---

1 Conversational data were transcribed according to an adapted version of the Dubois et al. (1993) discourse transcription system (Appendix A and B).

embedded in a larger concept of etiquette involving the avoidance of waste, learning to appreciate food in all its forms (Cooper, 1986; Hsu & Hsu, 1997), and valuing the "five tastes in harmony." According to an expert on Chinese food ways, "…when eating, one should not be inclined to eat excessively only the foods with one particular taste and ignore the others. 'Harmony' is the essence of Chinese philosophy" (Liu, 2011, p. 73). Seen in this light, the activity taking place in Excerpt 1 is not just teasing, but also reinforcing a morality (the avoidance of disclosing food preferences) that is tied to ideology and identity.

At the very end of his stay, David became an active participant in his host family's intimate practice of teasing. In Excerpt 2, we find David and his host family discussing the photos in a family album, including many pictures of HS as an infant. HS had repeatedly expressed her annoyance both at having her baby pictures revealed and at the participants' comments about those pictures. In this case, the presence of a physical artifact clearly assisted David in following the topical content of the talk, which occurred in cycles, with comments following the presentation of each photo's theme. Earlier in the interaction, David had succeeded in amusing the entire family by suggesting that HS looked "fierce" in one of the photos. Here, once again, his contribution was deemed humorous:

Excerpt 2

1. HM: **zhège   shì   HS**
             this:CLF   COP   (name)
             This is HS
2. David: **(LAUGHTER)**
3. HM: **hěn   xiǎo   hěn   xiǎo**
             very   little   very   little
             Very little, very little.
             zhè   yàng   hǎoxiàng dōu   bú   dào   yí-   yí-   yí   suì
             this   look   seem   even   NEG   arrive one   one   one   year:old
             (She) looks to be not even one, one, one year old
             yí   suì?
             one   year:old
             one year old?
             ha?
             PRT
             right?
             zhè   shì
             this   COP
             This is
             (LAUGHTER) <@ zhège   gèng   xiǎo @>
                            this:CLF   more   young
                            This one, even younger
4. David: **(LAUGHTER)**

5.	HM:	**tā**	**xiǎo**	**shíhòu**	**jiù**	**zhè**	**yàng**
		she	little	when	already	this	look

When little, she already looked like this

		suǒyǐ	**tā**	**xiǎo**	**chéng**	**zhè**	**yàng**
		so	she	small	become	this	look

so she was this small

6.	David:	**(LAUGHTER)**
7.	HF:	**(LAUGHTER)**
8.	David:	**That's you?** ((referring to HS))
9.	HM:	**(LAUGHTER)**
10.	HF:	**mh**

INT

Yeah

11.	HS:	**ou= (LAUGHTER)**

PRT

Oh

12.	David:	**méi**	**yóu**	**toufa**
		NEG	exist	hair

No hair

13.	All:	**(LAUGHTER)**

Laughter at the expense of the grown-up "baby" in the photo may well be common in middle-class households around the world. In this particular case, situational humour was clearly intended to reinforce the affective bonds that the family had been building with David throughout his stay. In tracing the development of David's ability to participate in the (potentially risky) teasing, we suggest that his sojourn led to the onset of socialization toward familial intimacy despite his modest initial proficiency. Perhaps, it is these kinds of personally meaningful interactions that students are referencing when they describe the homestay as a rich environment for language and culture learning.

3.2. Talking about food

Unlike David, Sam arrived in Beijing having invested considerable time and effort in learning Chinese, and was able to begin active participation in home-based conversations, occasionally supported by his family's proficiency in English, from the beginning. Sam had attended an elementary school offering Chinese immersion in maths and science, and had then continued to study Chinese throughout his school years, culminating in an Advanced Placement (college-level) course. He had taken several short trips to China and had spent the previous summer in an intensive residential Chinese course in the US. Sam participated only in the optional internship aspect of the programme, and lived with a family whose father worked at the same petrochemical company where Sam was temporarily employed. All of the recordings that Sam provided for the study were of mealtime interactions

whose topical content was dominated by questions of food and taste. The themes of these conversations paralleled those of DuFon's (2006) research: orientation to food, food as pleasure, and food and health.

Sam's HM routinely oriented him to the foods she served in much the same manner that was observed for Indonesian hosts by DuFon (2006). That is, she labeled dishes and ingredients and had Sam repeat the labels. In Excerpt 3, from Sam's first recording, the family was eating rice porridge (congee) with mung beans. HM first ensured that Sam could name the dish itself, then, shortly afterwards, its ingredients.

Excerpt 3

1. HM:	*Sam*	**zhīdào**	**zhèige**	**jiào**	**shénme me**		
		know	this:CLF	call	what	PRT	
	Sam (do you) know what this is called?						
	nǐ	**chī**	**de**	**nèige**	**wǎn**	**lǐmiàn de**	
	2sg	eat	NOM	that:CLF	bowl	inside	NOM
	what you're eating in the bowl						
2. S:	**bù-**	**bù**	**zhīdào**				
	NEG	NEG	know				
	(I) don-don't know						
3. HM:	**zhèige**	**shì**					
	this:CLF	COP					
	this is						
	zhè	**jiào**	**xīfàn**				
	this	call	thin:rice				
	this is called congee						
4. S:	**xīfàn**						
	thin:rice						
	congee						
5. HM:	**[xī]fàn**						
	thin:rice						
	congee						
[13 turns]							
19. HM:	**Sam** *what do you call*						
	this						
20. S:	*unh bean?*						
	uh s- I donno what [that is]						
21. HM:	*[bean] bean*						
	uh bean maybe is						
	a little bigger than this						
22. S:	*mhm*						
23. HM:	*than this bean*						
24. S:	*um*						
	wǒ	**bù**	**zhīdào**				
	1sg	NEG	know				
	I don't know						

25. HM: ***Chinese***
   in Chinese is
   lǜdòu
   green:bean
   mung beans
26. S: **lǜdòu**
   green:bean
   mung beans
27. HM: ***yah so***
   xīfàn
   thin:rice
   congee
   zhèige lǐmiàn jiùshi
   this:CLF inside ADV:COP
   Inside it is what we call
   rice and
28. HF: **lǜdòu**
   green:bean
   mung beans
29. HM: **lǜdòu**
   green:bean
   mung beans
30. S: ***mhm***
31. HM: **dàmǐ hé lǜdòu**
   rice and green:bean
   rice and mung beans
32. S: **dàmǐ hé lǜdòu**
   rice and green:bean
   rice and mung beans
33. HM: ***yah***

Like the data examined by DuFon (2006), this interaction exhibits a strong pedagogical cast: it greatly resembles a classroom vocabulary lesson in the IRE (Initiation- Response- Evaluation) structure. In three separate cycles, separated by an interval in which HM inquired about a word in English, HM as "teacher" introduced a lexical item, had Sam repeat it, and confirmed that his repetition was correct, either through further repetition of her own (Turns 3 – 5) or with an explicit evaluation (Turns 25 – 27 and 31 – 33). Here, however, the talk differs significantly from classroom discourse in that it is *relevant* to the immediate demands of the situation. Thus, in Vygotskian terms, we claim that HM was working in Sam's Zone of Proximal Development. First, she located this Zone by determining that Sam did not know how to name the dish, then, rather than simply telling him what it was called, she and HF assisted his performance in naming the foods himself. What we are observing here, then, is one episode in the microgenetic development of Sam's ability to talk about Chinese food.

Another common practice at the dinner table was the negotiation of "folk beliefs" (Cook, 2006) about food as pleasure and the relationship of food and health. For example, Sam contested HF's claim that Americans invest little effort in cookery, and attended to HM's complaints about the fast food she had been obliged to eat during a business trip to the US. He was also party to HB's ongoing socialization, as HM chided him for failing to eat enough or to choose enough vegetables. In Excerpt 4, from the sixth recording, Sam attempts to defend the hamburger as a nutritious food, offering his HM an alternative view but failing to convince her:

Excerpt 4

1. S: ***unh*** **wǒ –** **wǒ**   **yào**   **gěi**   **ni shuō**
        unh 1sg   1sg   want   give 2sg   say
        unh I-I want to say to you
        nǐ   ***uh uh***
        2sg   *uh uh*
        you *uh uh*
        mēi- zài **mēiguō** **suóyǒu** **de**   **hànbǎo**   **bú** **shì**
        Amer-in America   all   ASSOC   hamburgers NEG   COP
        In America, all hamburgers aren't
        bú   **shì**   **duì**   **shēntǐ** **bù**   **hǎo**
        NEG   COP   for   body   NEG   good
        aren't bad for the health

2. HM: **[èn]**
        INT
        mhm

3. S: **[yīnwei]** **zài** **méiguó** **zhí**   **zhí**   **yǒu**   ***uh***
        because   in   America   only   only   have   *uh*
        because in America there's only only *uh*
        màidānglǎo **de**   **hànbǎo**
        McDonald's   ASSOC   hamburger
        hamburgers from the McDonald's
        tā   **jiù**   **shì**   **bù**
        3sg   ADV   COP   NEG
        it's just not
        duì   **shēntǐ** **bù**   **hǎo**   **kěshì**
        for   body   NEG   good   but
        not good for the body but
        unh most **zhōngwén** **zěnme** **shuō**
        unh most Chinese   how   say
        unh most how to say (this) in Chinese?

4. HB: **dàbùfen**
        most
        most

5. S: **dàbùfēn** **dē**   **hànbǎo**   **shì**   **wǒ-**
        most   ASSOC   hamburger   COP   1sg
        most hamburger are I -

        bú   duì   shēntǐ   bù   hǎo
        NEG   for   body   NEG   good
        not not good for the health

6. HM: **dànshì   chī   hànbǎo**
        but   eat   hamburger
        but hamburgers
        cài   tài   shǎo   le
        vegetable   too   few   CRS
        have too few vegetables

7. S: *uhuh*

8. HM: **ròu**
        meat
        meat
        tā   lǐmiàn   jiùshì
        3sg   inside   ADV:COP
        it only has
        liǎng   piàn   miànbāo
        two   piece   bread
        two pieces of bread
        zhōngjiān   jiā   le   yīdiǎnr   cài
        middle   add   PFV   few   vegetable
        add few vegetables in the middle
        jiā   le   liǎng   céng   ròu
        add   PFV   two   layer   meat
        and two layers of meat

9. S: *uhuh*

10. HM: **cài   tài   shǎo   le**
        vegetable   too   few   CRS
        too few vegetables
        wǒmen   jiù   xíguàn   chī
        1pl   ADV   used:to   eat
        we are just used to eating
        en   bǐjiào   duō   de   cài
        INT   relatively   many   NOM   vegetable
        unh relatively more vegetables
        měi   yī   dùn   fàn   ròu   chī   de   shǎo
        every   one   CLF   meal   meat   eat   CSC   little
        every meal we eat little meat
        dànshì   cài   dǎo   chī   de   duō
        but   vegetable   instead   eat   CSC   many
        but a lot of vegetables

In this case, Sam nominated the topic of the healthful hamburger, attempting to convince HM that her perspective represented an overgeneralization and that variations on the hamburger exist. HM's response is to reject Sam's assertion, explaining that hamburgers contain too much meat and too few vegetables. In Chinese culture, like in many others, a significant theme is the belief that food and medi-

cine share the same roots, and one aspect of this relationship is the proper balance of meat and vegetables (e.g., Liu, 2011). Thus, in this case, although Sam was unable to defend the hamburger, we see HM offering him a concrete example which she relates to a principle of Chinese food culture.

4. Conclusion

In this study, both host families adopted a "two-way enrichment" approach (Iino, 2006), interpreting the homestay as offering opportunities for learning by everyone involved. In both cases, the focal students became very much engaged in the routine communicative practices of their hosts, participating in socializing encounters to the extent that their language proficiency permitted. Although his speaking ability was limited, David nevertheless developed the ability to participate in situational humour indexing intimacy. His experience speaks to the emotional dimension of study abroad. Forming close relationships with local people is, after all, an important first step toward understanding these people and mastering their communicative resources. Although these kinds of relationships are certainly documented for older participants (e.g. in the case studies of Kinginger, 2008, or Jackson, 2008), there are also many stories of misunderstandings and failure to reach common ground. We wonder if David's experience illustrates how younger students' willingness to be integrated into host families, along with the families' own protective stance, may increase the likelihood that homestays will succeed as contexts for language learning. For Sam, because of his more advanced proficiency and his hosts' attentiveness, the homestay also offered many opportunities for language socialization, that is, integrated learning of language and culture. His hosts took the time to provide developmentally sensitive assistance as he learned to talk about food, and also explained to him how they viewed the relationship between food and much broader cultural, aesthetic, moral, and health-related concepts.

The limitations of this study are multiple and diverse. Many themes beyond intimacy and taste may be explored in the data we have transcribed so far, and more will no doubt emerge as we examine the data from the other ten participants and their hosts. To minimize the intrusion and disruption involved in the data collection, we elected to record on the audio channel only, and this both limits the interpretability of the data and excludes analysis of gesture, gaze, eye-contact and other crucial, non-verbal features of communication. Perhaps most importantly, the length of the programme under study limits our ability to trace the longitudinal effects of students' participation to the microgenetic level. Our focus on the particular compromises both trustworthiness and generalizability. We do not (yet) know how representative the data presented here will be in comparison to those of the other participants. However, this limitation is also a strength. In response to criti-

cism of qualitative approaches and their failure to generalize, van Lier (2005) once argued that *particularization* can also be a virtue of research. If qualitative accounts are read with interpretive acumen and sensitivity to the transferability of their findings from one context to another, they can yield useful and durable insights. In fact, for study abroad, the results of more macrolevel research, including the near-universal findings about significant individual differences, could be profitably supplemented, and perhaps interpreted, by examining what happens, in particular, when language learners go abroad.

References

Blum-Kulka, S. (1994). The dynamics of family dinner talk: Cultural contexts for children's passages to adult discourse. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 1*, 1-50.

Blum-Kulka, S. (1997). *Dinner talk: Cultural patterns of sociability and socialization in family discourse*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Boxer, D. & Cortés-Conde, F. (1997). From bonding to biting: Conversational joking and identity display. *Journal of Pragmatics, 27*, 275-294.

Cook, H.M. (2006). Joint construction of folk beliefs by JFL learners and Japanese host families. In M.A. DuFon & E. Churchill, (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 120-150). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Cook, H.M. (2008). *Socializing identities through speech style: Learners of Japanese as a foreign language*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Cooper, E. (1986). Chinese table manners: You are how you eat. *Human Organization, 45*, 179-184.

Du Bois, J. W., S. Schuetze-Coburn, S. Cumming, & D. Paolino, D. (1993). Outline of discourse transcription. In J. A. Edwards & M. D. Lampert (Eds.), *Talking data: Transcription and coding in discourse research* (pp. 45-87). Hillsdale, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Duff, P.A. (2007). Second language socialization as sociocultural theory: Insights and issues. *Language Teaching, 40*, 309-319.

Duff, P.A. (2012). Second language socialization. In A. Duranti, E. Ochs, & B. B. Schieffelin (Eds.), *The handbook of language socialization* (pp. 564-586). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

DuFon, M.A. (2006). The socialization of taste during study abroad in Indonesia. In M.A. DuFon & E. Churchill, (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 91-119). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Gordon, C. (2004). "Al Gore's our guy": Linguistically constructing a family political identity. *Discourse and Society, 15*, 607-631.

Gumperz, J. (1992). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hashimoto, H. (1993). Language acquisition of an exchange student within the homestay environment. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 4*, 209-224.

Heath, S. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hsu, V. & Hsu, F. (1977). Modern China: North. In K. Chang (Ed*.), Food in Chinese culture* (pp. 295-316). New York: Yale University Press.

Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected readings* (pp. 269-293). Harmondsworth,UK: Penguin.

Iino, M. (2006). Norms of interaction in a Japanese homestay setting – Toward two way flow of linguistic and cultural resources. In M.A. DuFon & E. Churchill, (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 151-173). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Jackson, J. (2008). *Language, identity, and study abroad: Sociocultural perspectives*. London: Equinox.

Juveland, S. (2011). *Foreign language students' beliefs about homestays*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Portland State University, Portland, OR.

Kinginger, C. (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case studies of Americans in France. *Modern Language Journal, 92*, 1-124.

Kinginger, C. & Tan, D. (2013). Exploring the potential of high school homestays as a context for local engagement and negotiation of difference: Americans in China. In C. Kinginger (Ed.), *Social and cultural aspects of language learning in study abroad* (pp. 155-178). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Klapper, J. & Rees, J. (2012). University residence abroad for foreign language students: Analysing the linguistic benefits. *The Language Learning Journal, 40*, 335-358.

Kozulin, A. (1998). *Psychological tools: A sociocultural approach to education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kramsch, C. (Ed.) (2002). *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives*. New York: Continuum.

Lantolf, J. & Thorne, S. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Liu, J. (2011). *Chinese food*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McNamara, T. (2012). Poststructuralism and its challenges for applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics, 33*, 473-482.

Ochs, E. (1986). Introduction. In B. Schieffelin & E. Ochs (Eds.), *Language socialization across cultures* (pp. 1-13). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, E. (1988). *Culture and language development: Language acquisition and language socialization in a Samoan village*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, E. (2002). Becoming a speaker of culture. In Kramsch, C. (Ed.) *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 99-120). New York: Continuum.

Ochs, E., Pontecorvo, C. & Fasulo, A. (1996). Socializing taste. *Ethnos,* 61, 7-46.

Ochs, E. & Schieffelin, B. (1984). Language acquisition and socialization: Three developmental stories and their implications. In R. Shweder & R. LeVine (Eds.), *Culture theory: Essays in mind, self, and emotions* (pp. 276-320). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, E. & Taylor, C. (1992). Science at dinner. In C. Kramsch & S. McConnell-Ginet (Eds), *Text and context: Multidisciplinary perspectives on language study* (pp. 29-45). Lexington, MA: DC Heath.

Pellegrino Aveni, V.A. (2005). *Study abroad and second language use: Constructing the self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Perrefort, M. (2008). Changer en échangeant? Mobilités et experiences langagières [Change through exchange? Mobility and language-related experiences]. In F. Dervin & M. Byram (Eds.), *Echanges et mobilités académiques: Quel bilan*? [Exchanges and academic mobility: What results?] (pp. 65-91). Paris: L'Harmattan.

Rivers, W. (1998). Is being there enough? The effects of homestay placements on language gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 31*, 492-500.

Saville-Troike, M. (2003). *The ethnography of communication: An introduction*, 3rd Edition. Oxford: Blackwell.

Schieffelin, B. (1986). Teasing and shaming in Kaluli children's interactions. In B. Schieffelin & E. Ochs (Eds.), *Language socialization across cultures* (pp. 165-181). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schieffelin, B. & Ochs, E. (1986). *Language socialization across cultures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spenader, A. (2011). Language learning and acculturation: Lessons from high school and gap year students. *Foreign Language Annals, 44*, 381-398.

Tannen, D. (1986). *That's not what I meant! How conversational style makes or breaks relationships*. New York: Ballantine.

Vande Berg, M., J. Connor-Linton & M. Paige (2009). The Georgetown Consortium Project: Interventions for student learning abroad. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 18*, 1-75.

van Lier, L. (2005). Case study. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 195-208). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Vygotsky, L. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wilkinson, S. (1998). On the nature of immersion during study abroad: Some participants' perspectives. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 4,* 121-138.

Wilkinson, S. (2002). The omnipresent classroom during summer study abroad: American students in conversation with their French hosts. *Modern Language Journal, 86,* 157-173.

Appendix A

The following conventions are adopted in transcribing the interactional data. For detailed descriptions of transcription system, please refer to Du Bois, Schuetze-Coburn, Cumming, & Paolino (1993).

-	truncated word
:	speaker identity/turn start
?	appeal
( )	vocal noises
(H)	inhalation
<@ @>	laugh quality
(( ))	researcher's comment

Appendix B

Grammatical Glosses

ADV	adverb
ASP	aspect
CLF	classifier
COP	copula
CRS	current relevant state
INT	interjection
NEG	negative
NOM	nominalizer
POSS	possessive
PRT	particle

Chapter 4
Promoting oral proficiency gains in study abroad homestay placements

Francesca Di Silvio, Anne Donovan and Meg Malone
Center for Applied Linguistics

Although the study abroad homestay context is commonly considered the ideal environment for language learners to develop oral proficiency, host-student interactions may be limited. The goal of the present study was to assess the impact of an intervention with host families designed to increase meaningful conversational exchange with hosted learners of Spanish, Mandarin, and Russian participating in semester-long study abroad programmes. The study used a pretest and posttest Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI) to investigate the oral proficiency gains of students whose families received the training intervention ($n = 87$) and students whose families did not ($n = 65$). Surveys of student and family participants examined target language use and attitudes about the homestay experience and the training. Students as a whole significantly improved their oral proficiency over the semester abroad, and though there was no statistically significant difference between groups, qualitative findings suggest that the intervention was well received and confirm the importance of encouraging study abroad learners to increase their engagement with hosts.

1. Introduction

Study abroad is often viewed as the ideal environment for aspiring language learners to develop their capabilities, particularly in the domain of speaking. A study abroad experience is assumed to provide a depth of immersion in the target language; further, placement with a host family is considered to be the optimal living arrangement to foster language gains because it provides continuous opportunities for target language input. The conventional wisdom about the guaranteed benefits of the homestay frequently touted by study abroad programmes and satisfied sojourners has been challenged, however, by a growing body of research on language learning in study abroad contexts. A number of investigations have found that living with a host family does not always produce extensive or linguistically rich interactions (Diao, Freed, & Smith, 2011; Iino, 2006; Kinginger, this volume;

O'Donnell, 2004; Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004; Wilkinson, 1998) or expected language gains in contrast with learners in other living arrangements (Magnan & Back, 2007; Rivers, 1998; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). Recent studies examining study abroad outcomes have identified the need for in-programme interventions to support language development by encouraging students to increase the quantity and quality of their engagement with native speakers (Cadd, 2012; Du, 2013; Kinginger, 2011) including homestay hosts (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2010; Martinsen, 2010; Shively, 2010; Vande Berg et al., 2009).

The present study sought to investigate the impact of structured training of host families designed to increase meaningful interaction with students. Using a pretest and posttest design with an experimental and control group of university students in one-semester study abroad programmes, the study examined the relationships between oral proficiency gains, target language use, and student and host beliefs about the study abroad experience. This research was motivated by the relative lack of empirical studies focusing on homestay interactions and behaviours of host families. Its results are intended to contribute to the development of in-programme interventions to promote student engagement with hosts.

The following literature review discusses findings on the development of oral proficiency during study abroad and outlines studies examining the relationship between language contact and speaking gains, as well as investigations of the homestay experience. Studies cited involve U.S. university students unless otherwise noted.

2. Background

2.1. Oral proficiency gains from study abroad

Researchers investigating oral proficiency development as a result of study abroad have frequently used such measures as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and the Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI), which are rated according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, a scale commonly used in U.S. contexts. Numerous studies using the OPI and the SOPI have documented gains in ACTFL ratings by groups of students in varied study abroad programmes, for example, learners of French (Magnan & Back, 2007) and German (Lindseth, 2010) after one semester abroad, learners of Portuguese after a six-week summer programme (Milleret, 1991), and learners of Spanish after summer and semester programmes (Mendelson, 2004a). Across studies, proficien-

cy gains were more common for students who entered the programme with lower proficiency levels. One shortcoming of the OPI and similar instruments for investigation of study abroad outcomes is that the rating scale may not be sensitive enough to measure the incremental progress made by learners during their time abroad, especially for those with higher proficiency levels and in shorter-term programmes (Freed, 1998; Llanes, 2011; Magnan & Back, 2007; Milleret, 1991).

In his examination of OPI outcomes of more than 5,000 U.S. undergraduate and graduate students of Russian who participated in study abroad programmes of varying durations between 1994 and 2009, Davidson (2010) found that gains were strongly correlated with longer lengths of stay and displayed a wide range of individual variation. Numerous studies have compared oral proficiency outcomes of students studying abroad with control groups at their home universities and found that abroad groups are more likely to make gains and make greater gains than those studying at home (Freed, 1995; Hernández, 2010a; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Vande Berg et al., 2009).

2.2. Language contact and development of speaking skills

To illuminate the results of early outcomes studies showing great differences in individual achievement, subsequent study abroad research attempted to relate student language gains to target language use. This trend has been accompanied by a movement to incorporate qualitative research on the nature of student interactions and social networks while abroad through the use of ethnographies, case studies, and mixed methods (Kinginger, 2011).

Many studies have used versions of the Language Contact Profile (LCP), a questionnaire asking students to report the average number of hours spent on various language activities, to quantify contact with the target language. Findings from studies using the LCP have not been consistent, however, in supporting the common assumption that increased contact leads to greater improvement in speaking performance. Yager (1998) found a significant positive correlation between amount of interactive contact and gains in speaking sample scores by learners of Spanish after two consecutive five-week summer sessions, and Hernández (2010b) found that total contact with the target language was a significant factor in SOPI gains by learners of Spanish after a semester abroad. By contrast, Mendelson (2004b) did not find any relationship between total, interactive, or non-interactive contact hours and OPI gains of learners of Spanish in summer and semester programmes. Segalowitz and Freed (2004) also concluded that total contact was not correlated with gains in oral performance after one semester for either at-home or study abroad learners of Spanish. Finally, Martinsen (2010) found that interaction in the target language

did not predict changes in oral skills by learners of Spanish after a six-week summer programme. Regarding time spent on specific language activities, Magnan and Back (2007) found that of the types of contact reported on the LCP, only speaking the target language with American classmates was significantly and negatively correlated with OPI gains for learners of French in a semester programme.

Mixed methods studies have sought to scrutinize the student experience abroad in combination with assessment of language learning outcomes. Isabelli-García's (2006) study showed gains in SOPI ratings by three of four Spanish learners after one semester abroad and suggested a positive relationship between development of oral proficiency and engagement in the local community. Spenader (2011) documented gains in OPI ratings over a year abroad by three of four high school and gap-year learners of Swedish and observed how divergent reactions to the host environment influenced language learning. In case studies of six students of French in a semester programme, Kinginger (2008) also interpreted individual differences in language growth to be linked to contact with and attitudes towards the host community. Du (2013) found that learners of Chinese in a semester programme who observed a language pledge performed significantly better on measures of fluency than peers who mainly spoke English outside of class. Dewey, Belnap and Hilstrom (2013) investigated the relationship between social network development and perceived gains in oral proficiency by learners of Arabic in a semester programme. Predictors of gains included greater intensity of friendships, more time spent speaking with people outside of established social circles, and, most strongly, higher levels of English language proficiency of Arab friends.

2.3. The homestay experience

Research examining the relationship between study abroad housing type and language learning outcomes has shown mixed results. One of the first studies to challenge common assumptions about the benefits of the homestay setting was Rivers' (1998) analysis of proficiency scores from more than 1,000 undergraduate and graduate learners of Russian over 20 years, which found that homestay participants were less likely than those who lived in dormitories to gain in speaking proficiency. In the French context, Magnan and Back (2007) did not find a difference in OPI gains between learners living with native speakers and those living with non-natives in a semester programme. By contrast, in their large-scale study of learners of seven target languages, Vande Berg et al. (2009) found an association approaching significance between homestay living and greater oral proficiency gains for students of less commonly taught languages, and Hernández (2010b) noted that 15 of 16 Spanish learners who

made gains on the SOPI after one semester abroad lived with a host family, while three of four who did not improve lived in apartments with non-native speakers.

Findings from studies investigating contact in the home and language growth also dispute the assumption that a homestay provides a linguistic advantage. Martinsen (2010) found no relationship between Spanish learners' evaluations of relationships with their host families and gains on an oral skills test after a six-week summer programme. In Segalowitz and Freed's (2004) study of learners of Spanish in a semester programme, there was a negative correlation between time speaking with the host family and gains in length of longest turn, suggesting that homestay interactions may have been mostly short and formulaic. Dewey (2008) found that vocabulary development by learners of Japanese in a semester study abroad programme was more highly correlated with time spent speaking with friends than speaking with host families. However, Vande Berg et al. (2009) reported a significant relationship between the amount of time spent with hosts and oral proficiency gains for students of French, German, and Spanish. Evidence that the homestay is not always a source of rich and pragmatically appropriate target language input can be seen in Iino's (2006) recordings of interactions at home, which demonstrated that family members used simplified language and provided limited corrective feedback to learners of Japanese in an eight-week summer programme.

Other research has reported largely positive participant perspectives on the homestay experience and its contributions to language learning. Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) interviewed host families in Spain and Mexico and found that while all considered the family to be a valuable linguistic resource for learners, many mentioned individual student differences as factors limiting interaction and thought that it was the student's responsibility to join in family activities. Allen and Herron (2003) reported that in evaluations of a six-week summer programme, 18 of 20 learners of French thought that living with a family provided a linguistic or cultural advantage and nine thought that speaking with family members helped improve their speaking skills. Schmidt-Rinehart and Knight (2004) found that among 90 learners of Spanish in summer and semester programmes, 85% felt comfortable with their host families by the end of the programme, although some students expressed disappointment at their level of interaction with and integration into the family. Questionnaires indicated that over 90% of students would recommend a homestay to others, and time spent with the family was significantly correlated with learning as much language as anticipated. Allen (2010) reported that 12 of 18 learners of French in a six-week summer programme expressed satisfaction with their homestay interaction in the target language in post-programme surveys. Using weekly questionnaires of 70 learners of French in a semester programme, Diao et al. (2011) found that stu-

dents spent significantly more time interacting with host families than with any other local group. At the end of the programme, nearly two-thirds of participants gave unequivocally positive responses about the contribution of the homestay setting to their language learning; in the 26% mixed and 10% negative responses, students discussed limited interaction, a sense of exclusion from conversations, and host use of English.

Studies looking in depth at the quality of individual students' connections with their host families support the conclusion that homestay, like study abroad more broadly, is a complex context in which great differences in outcomes can emerge. Wilkinson (1998) collected ethnographic data from seven learners of French in a summer programme and reported varying attitudes toward the homestay placement including feelings of discomfort and tension. O'Donnell (2004) found in a diary study of 22 learners of Spanish in a semester programme that students reported misunderstandings in conversations with their hosts and described interactions as focused on a narrow range of everyday topics. In a diary study of six learners of Russian over an academic year, Pellegrino Aveni (2005) detailed widely divergent perceptions of homestay experiences ranging from a context of comfort and support for linguistic development to situations of intimidation and isolation. Castañeda and Zirger's (2011) ethnographic study of eight learners of Spanish in a three-week programme in a small town found that participants viewed the host family as a key point of access to language practice and social networks.

3. Method

Within the wealth of literature on language development during study abroad, gaps have been identified that limit the potential generalization of findings. Researchers have noted that many of the studies involve a small number of participants (Diao et al., 2011; Llanes, 2011) and report student viewpoints to the exclusion of perspectives from members of the host community including families (Kinginger, 2013; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002). As Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2010) found in attempting to implement task-based assignments to increase student-family interactions in programmes for Spanish, there is a discrepancy between what students say they want to accomplish in a study abroad homestay experience and the behaviours they actually engage in, in the absence of additional programme and family support. The current study was designed to address these gaps by establishing programmatic and family responsibility for a language learning intervention and collecting data from a large population of study abroad learners of Spanish, Mandarin, and Russian and their host families.

This chapter addresses the following research questions:

1. What oral proficiency gains do study abroad participants in homestays attain after one semester, and is there a difference between gains made by participants whose families receive training on ways to extend conversation with students and those whose families do not?
2. Do student characteristics and target language use affect language gains?
3. What do students and their host families believe was effective about the homestay experience and the training intervention?

3.1. Participants

Between the (U.S.) spring 2011 and fall 2012 semesters, data were collected from 161 students enrolled in semester study abroad programmes and living in homestays in Lima, Peru and Valparaíso, Chile; Nanjing, Beijing, and Shanghai, China; and Saint Petersburg, Russia, as well as hosts of 89 participating students. The programmes were operated by the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), a U.S.-based organization that accepts students from a variety of American colleges and universities. Coursework varied by programme and initial proficiency level, though all required classes in the target language.

Although programme staff assisted in recruiting for this study, there was no requirement for either students or host families to participate. Student assignment to the experimental or control group was conditioned by their hosts' willingness to attend one training session and complete pre- and post-surveys, and invitations to participate in the family training were staggered over the multiple semesters of data collection. Upon completion of all study requirements, students in both groups and hosts of experimental group students received compensation for their time.

For this analysis, nine students were excluded from the data set: seven who were not eligible due to previous participation by their host families, one who left the study abroad programme, and one who failed to complete all measures of the study. Table 1 shows the composition of the student sample by language and group.

Table 1. Student participants

Language	Experimental Group	Control Group	*N*
Spanish	31	22	53
Mandarin	26	23	49
Russian	30	20	50
Total	87	65	152

The final population included 92 females and 60 males between the ages of 18 and 45 who were currently or recently enrolled in university study, with an average age of 20.9 years (*SD* = 2.30). The population included a majority of students in their junior year as well as six sophomores, 33 seniors, two recent graduates, and one gap-year student. Participants reported a wide variety of majors, with 64% majoring in the target language or related area studies. The average length of prior formal study of the target language for all participants was 4.3 years (*SD* = 2.89), with a range from 0 to 15 years, and the experimental and control groups were evenly matched (4.2 and 4.4 years, respectively). English was the sole language used at home for 116 students; 33 students indicated that English and one or more additional languages were used at home. Other home languages listed by students included Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole, German, Hebrew, Jamaican Patois, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Swahili, Vietnamese, and Yu'pik. The three students who did not report English as their home language were all born and educated in the United States. While some learners were studying their home language (four Russian, three Mandarin, and two Spanish), their number was insufficient to constitute a separate group for statistical analysis, and their pretest oral proficiency ratings fell within the range of the overall participant population.

3.2. Treatment

The intervention entailed attendance by one adult member of each family hosting an experimental group student at one approximately hour-long training session intended to increase student-host conversational exchange. Families of control group students did not participate in this training.

Training sessions were conducted in the local language by the study abroad programme director or host family coordinator in accordance with training protocols developed by project staff. Programmes were encouraged to consider the needs of local families in arranging the training by, for example, holding multiple sessions and incorporating refreshments. Training sessions were scheduled to occur after completion of pretest data collection in the fourth week of each semester.

Topics covered during training included the critical role of the host family in helping students improve their speaking skills, contexts in which conversations typically occur at home, and strategies to prompt students to talk more such as asking about an event in the recent past, avoiding structures that allow 'yes/no' replies, and using follow-up questions. The session provided time for participants to reflect on past hosting experiences, brainstorm possible questions and other means to draw out students, practise strategies, and ask questions. Participants were requested to share what they learned at the training with other family members but not to discuss its content with their students.

3.3. Instruments

Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview. The SOPI, a 45-minute tape-mediated test developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics (Stansfield, 1996), was administered as a pretest and posttest to measure student oral proficiency gains. Test takers follow instructions in a printed booklet while listening to an audio file that delivers 15 speaking tasks (13 for Russian). The test is designed to elicit speech samples rated according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 1999), with an algorithm used to calculate a global rating from individual task ratings. Possible SOPI ratings range from Below Novice High to Superior (though a slightly modified scale was applied here, see Table 2 below).

 Student surveys. Surveys were completed in English by students at the beginning and end of their semester abroad. The pre-survey asked about language and travel background, prior use of the target language, and anticipated use of the target language during the semester. The post-survey asked about actual target language use, including language activities with the host family, and evaluation of the homestay experience. Questions about target language use were adapted from the LCP (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004). In contrast to the LCP, students were asked to report target language activities in hours per week rather than days per week and hours per day, and to consider typical hours spent in the previous month instead of the whole semester. These modifications were intended to streamline the surveys and encourage greater accuracy of reporting.

 Host family surveys. Surveys translated into the local language were completed by a representative from each family hosting an experimental group student at the beginning and end of the student semester. The pre-survey asked about previous experiences hosting foreign students and motivations for hosting. The post-survey asked about language activities with the hosted student and evaluation of the training.

3.4. Data collection procedures

SOPI and survey data were collected at the beginning of the study abroad programme once students had begun their homestays (approximately weeks 2-3) and again near the end of the semester (around week 15). Members of the U.S.-based project team visited each site at the start of the first semester of data collection to review instruments and procedures with programme staff to ensure fidelity of implementation.

 SOPIs were administered in a language lab or in classrooms using digital recorders at sites without access to lab facilities. Surveys were completed online by the majority of participants, and printed versions were made available to those for

whom Internet access was problematic. Eight Russian hosts reported post-survey responses by phone to the local family coordinator to ensure that responses were collected on schedule.

3.5. Data analysis procedures

SOPI ratings were assigned by trained raters familiar with the test format and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. All Mandarin and Russian SOPIs and over one third of Spanish SOPIs were double-rated to establish inter-rater reliability. Moderate agreement between raters was found, with a linear weighted kappa of .55. Ratings that did not agree were adjudicated by two members of the project team using close examination of individual task ratings and rater comments to determine a single final rating. To analyse SOPI gains, ACTFL level ratings were converted to the values shown in Table 2, in line with conventions used in previous research (Dandonoli & Henning, 1990; Kenyon & Tschirner, 2000; Vande Berg et al., 2009). Ratings of Below Novice High were considered equivalent to Novice Mid for the purposes of this analysis, and there were no Superior ratings in the data set.

Table 2. Numerical conversions of ratings

ACTFL Rating	Conversion
Novice Mid	0.3
Novice High	0.8
Intermediate Low	1.1
Intermediate Mid	1.3
Intermediate High	1.8
Advanced Low	2.1
Advanced Mid	2.3
Advanced High	2.8

Analysis of survey data combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. Statistical analyses for factors affecting SOPI gains are presented in detail in the next section. Responses to open-ended questions were qualitatively coded using a system of open coding evolving from the data gathered (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Responses were first translated into English as necessary. Two members of the project team subsequently reviewed and coded survey responses independently, then compared codes to create a unified list and re-coded the responses using this final coding scheme.

4. Results

4.1. Oral proficiency gains

Gains in oral proficiency were analyzed for a total of 149 participants for whom pretest and posttest SOPI ratings were available; pretest SOPI files were missing for two students and not ratable for one student. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for student SOPI ratings by group. An independent samples *t* test indicated that there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups at the time of pretest, both in the aggregate and when categorized by language of study, suggesting that the groups were evenly matched.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for pre and post SOPI ratings by group

Group	Administration	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	*SD*
Experimental	Pre	0.3	2.8	1.31	.47
(*n*=86)	Post	0.8	2.8	1.60	.43
Control	Pre	0.3	2.8	1.52	.51
(*n*=63)	Post	1.1	2.8	1.78	.46

Table 4. Pre and post SOPI ratings by language

Rating	Mandarin		Russian		Spanish	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Novice Mid	8	-	-	-	-	-
	(16.3%)					
Novice High	1	1	5	1	-	-
	(2.0%)	(2.0%)	(10.0%)	(2.0%)		
Intermediate Low	16	8	16	5	11	4
	(32.7%)	(16.3%)	(32.0%)	(10.0%)	(22.0%)	(8.0%)
Intermediate Mid	14	13	23	30	4	5
	(28.6%)	26.5%)	(46.0%)	(60.0%)	(8.0%)	(10.0%)
Intermediate High	6	11	6	10	17	12
	(12.2%)	(22.4%)	(12.0%)	(20.0%)	(34.0%)	(24.0%)
Advanced Low	4	9	-	4	14	18
	(8.2%)	(18.4%)		(8.0%)	(28.0%)	(36.0%)
Advanced Mid	-	7	-	-	1	8
		(14.3%)			(2.0%)	(16.0%)
Advanced High	-	-	-	-	3	3
					(6.0%)	(6.0%)
Total	49		50		50	

Table 4 shows the distribution of SOPI ratings by language. Learners of Mandarin were most likely to begin their programmes at low levels of proficiency, with the majority of student ratings at the levels of Intermediate Low and Intermediate Mid and a number of students starting at Novice Mid. The majority of Russian learners also began their programmes with ratings in the range of Intermediate Low to Intermediate Mid. The Spanish learners as a group began their programmes at a higher level, with most ratings at the Intermediate High and Advanced Low levels.

Table 5 shows student SOPI gains by group. All participants maintained or improved their oral proficiency ratings over the course of their programmes.

Table 5. SOPI gains by group

Group	No Change	Gain of 1 Sublevel	Gain of 2 Sublevels	Gain of 3 Sublevels	Total
Experimental	23 (27%)	49 (57%)	13 (15%)	1 (1%)	86
Control	20 (32%)	35 (56%)	7 (11%)	1 (2%)	63
Total	43	84	20	2	149

A paired samples t test showed that participants experienced significant gains in their oral proficiency ratings, $t(148)=-13.23$, $p<.001$, $r=.74$; however, there was no significant difference in gains between groups. An ANCOVA comparing the two groups using the post-SOPI as dependent variable and pre-SOPI as covariate was not significant, $F(1)=0.202$, $p=.654$. Similarly, analyses of the gains by language did not show any significant differences between the experimental and control groups. Therefore, in response to the first research question, participants did make gains in oral proficiency after one semester abroad, but there was no significant difference in gains made by participants whose families received the training intervention and those whose families did not.

4.2. Factors affecting language gains

The second research question addressed how student characteristics and interaction with the target language affected oral proficiency gains. Given the structure of the ACTFL levels, there is not a wide range of potential growth outcomes for students over one semester; indeed, the majority of study participants gained just one sublevel in SOPI ratings or made no gains. For this analysis, students were divided into groups of "gainers" and "non-gainers" and growth was analysed using binary logistic regression with separate models testing variables related to student characteristics, target language contact, and host family language activities. For each model, independent variables were first tested for multicollinearity and determined to be appropriate for inclusion.

The student background variables analysed were home language (monolingual English or multilingual), amount of prior target language study (0 to 15 years), pretest SOPI rating, and gender. Table 6 shows the significant results of the logistic regression, Nagelkerke R^2=.109.

Table 6. Logistic regression of student characteristics predicting gains

Factor	B	S.E.	Odds Ratio
Pre SOPI	-1.316*	.405	.27

Notes. B: unstandardized estimates; S.E.: standard error; *p<.05

Table 6 indicates that the only student background variable that predicts language gains is starting proficiency level, with students more likely to gain if they began at a lower level.

Total weekly hours spent on target language reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities as reported in student post-surveys were entered into a logistic regression; however, none emerged as a significant predictor of language gains. Students also reported weekly hours spent using the target language while participating in language partner exchanges, volunteer activities, work, classes outside the academic programme, and extracurricular organizations including sports teams. Total weekly hours spent on each type of activity were considered in a logistic regression with significant results shown in Table 7, Nagelkerke R^2=.059. The only student activity variable that contributed significantly to language gains was time engaged in a language exchange, with more time spent on language exchanges resulting in greater gains in proficiency.

Table 7. Logistic regression of student activities predicting gains

Factor	B	S.E.	Odds Ratio
Language Exchange	.338*	.155	1.402

Notes. B: unstandardized estimates; S.E.: standard error; *p<.05

The final logistic regression examined the frequency with which families undertook various language activities with their hosted students. The post-survey asked families about the frequency with which they corrected student speech, discussed grammar rules, talked about idioms, asked the student questions, read the student's writings, watched television and films together, and discussed current events. Table 8 shows the significant results of the logistic regression, Nagelkerke R^2=.069.

Table 8. Logistic regression of family behaviours predicting gains

Factor	B	S.E.	Odds Ratio
Discussion of idioms	-.43*	.22	0.65

Notes: B: unstandardized estimates; S.E.: standard error; *p<.05

As Table 8 demonstrates, the only variable that contributed significantly to the model was the frequency of discussing idioms. However, this relationship was negative, indicating that the more often a family reported they discussed idioms, the less likely the student was to gain on the SOPI.

4.3. Participant perspectives

Open-ended questions at the conclusion of the post-surveys were designed to elicit attitudinal feedback from participants. Table 9 lists coded responses to the student survey question "What could your host family have done to help you learn more [target language]?" by group.

Table 9. What host family could have done (5 or more responses)

Response	Experimental Group (*n*=64)	Control Group (*n*=45)	Total (*n*=109)
They were great	14 (21.9%)	13 (28.9%)	27 (24.8%)
Correct me more	9 (14.1%)	8 (17.8%)	17 (15.6%)
Interact with me more	10 (15.6%)	4 (8.9%)	14 (12.8%)
Spend more time with me	6 (9.4%)	1 (2.2%)	7 (6.4%)
Be more patient with my speech	5 (7.8%)	2 (4.4%)	7 (6.4%)
Ask me more questions	3 (4.7%)	4 (8.9%)	7 (6.4%)
Don't speak English/Use the target language	3 (4.7%)	4 (8.9%)	7 (6.4%)
Initiate more conversations	3 (4.7%)	4 (8.9%)	7 (6.4%)
Involve me in activities outside the home	5 (7.8%)	1 (2.2%)	6 (5.5%)
Use less colloquial speech	4 (6.3%)	2 (4.4%)	6 (5.5%)
I should have done more	4 (6.3%)	1 (2.2%)	5 (4.6%)
Watch TV/movies together	3 (4.7%)	2 (4.4%)	5 (4.6%)

Note: Responses could be coded in multiple categories.

The most popular responses did not vary between groups, with positive comments about host family contributions most common for both groups, followed by requests for more correction of student speech. Proportionally more experimental than control group students requested that their families interact with them more and spend more time with them, while a greater proportion of the control group students, whose families did not receive training on extending conversations through the use of questions, wanted their families to ask more questions and initiate more conversations, as well as use the target language rather than English. Five students assumed responsibility for limitations to their language learning, explaining that they should have engaged more with the family. Other responses provided by multiple students included reviewing assignments, speaking more slowly, doing activities together, and forcing the student to speak (4 responses each), as well as not treating the student as a financial exchange (3 responses). Four students reported a desire for a different composition of host family (more than one member or a sibling of similar age).

Table 10 shows coded responses to the family survey question "How could the training be more effective and useful to you as a host?"

Table 10. How could training be more effective? (2 or more responses)

Response	Total (*n*=53)
Training is beneficial	30
It is good to exchange ideas in a group	6
Have more sessions	5
Success depends on student characteristics	5
Advise taking students on outings	3
Have longer training	2
Differentiate training based on student proficiency	2

Note: Responses could be coded in multiple categories.

As shown in Table 10, host families had a positive response to the training session and particularly praised the group structure as helpful for exchanging ideas. All suggestions for changes reflected a desire for expanded training, including having additional, longer, or differentiated sessions. Five host family participants noted that the success of the strategies discussed during training would depend on student characteristics such as openness.

5. Discussion

The finding that study participants as a group demonstrated significant oral proficiency gains as measured by the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines after a semester abroad is consistent with previous research (see, e.g., Hernández, 2010b; Lindseth, 2010; Magnan & Back, 2007; Mendelson, 2004a). This study further aimed to investigate whether a host family intervention would result in increased oral proficiency gains; however, results demonstrated that students whose families received training on extending conversation in the home did not outperform students whose families were not trained.

Additional study findings point to important considerations for study abroad programmes to promote oral proficiency gains. First, students should be encouraged to participate in language partner exchanges because this type of target language contact was found to be a significant predictor of gains. Second, the relationship between initial proficiency levels and language gains supports the idea that students of lower levels can benefit from a study abroad experience. This finding is not surprising given previous study abroad research that has found students at lower levels make greater gains as discriminated by the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (Freed, 1998; Llanes, 2011; Lindseth, 2010; Magnan & Back, 2007; Milleret, 1991). It also supports the call in the literature for other measures that might better capture progress made by study abroad learners, particularly those who begin at higher levels (Freed, 1998; Llanes, 2011). It is unclear from the limited survey data why host family discussion of idioms would also be a negative predictor of gains; perhaps this type of explicit language instruction is not the most beneficial target language input for learners in the homestay. Instead of replicating classroom roles and discourse patterns, which Wilkinson (2002) found to be typical of student conversations with their hosts, families could better stimulate student language development by providing greater exposure to their natural native speaker conversational norms.

Finally, the open-ended comments provided by both students and host families in post-surveys affirm both the objective and the design of the training intervention. Families clearly welcomed this additional content provided by the programme, as more than half of respondents took time to describe how they found the session to be beneficial and 17% requested expansions to the training. Student suggestions that their family could have helped them learn more language by increasing interaction and time spent with them as well as asking more questions and initiating more conversations also validated the content of the training.

6. Limitations

Within the research design, the study has some necessary limitations. First, findings related to target language use are based on self-reported survey data which gauges only the quantity of target language contact and may not accurately or fully reflect what occurred while abroad. It is hoped that recordings of homestay conversations made by a subset of students will provide evidence of the quality of typical student-host interactions. Second, as noted in other research, the SOPI rating scale may not be fine-grained enough to discern progression made during a semester abroad, especially for students who begin with higher proficiency levels. To address this limitation, SOPI responses will be transcribed so that pretest and posttest performances can be compared using other metrics. Finally, the precise content of the training intervention could not be controlled across sites and times of implementation. This degree of flexibility was appropriate, however, to provide for a design that could be replicated by other study abroad programmes.

7. Conclusion

This study aimed to add to the research on oral proficiency development in study abroad homestays by investigating an intervention designed to increase student interaction with hosts implemented through training of families. Perhaps because the training consisted of a single brief session, the intervention was too limited to result in statistically significant differences between groups. Further research could examine the effects of expanded training based on student and host suggestions given in surveys and findings from language socialization research (C. Kinginger, personal communication, April 12, 2013). It could also be beneficial to provide training to students to encourage them to participate in conversations at home and consider their responsibility to engage in family activities, which might address the discrepancy in student and host perspectives on who should initiate those efforts (Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004). Future studies should also consider additional means of assessing oral proficiency gains as well as gains in other language skills. Subsequent phases of this project plan to pursue in-depth analysis of the survey data to consider other factors that promote or discourage oral proficiency gains, examine what recorded conversation data reveals about target language use in the homestay, and review transcriptions of SOPIs for language growth not discerned in holistic ratings. It is hoped that these areas of research will inform stakeholders about how to optimize the language learning benefits of study abroad homestays.

References

ACTFL. (1999). *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines–Speaking. Revised 1999.* Hastings-on-Hudson, NY: ACTFL Materials Center.

Allen, H. W. (2010). Interactive contact as linguistic affordance during short-term study abroad: Myth or reality? *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 19*, 1-26.

Allen, H. W., & Herron, C. (2003). A mixed-methodology investigation of the linguistic and affective outcomes of summer study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 36*, 370-385.

Cadd, M. (2012). Encouraging students to engage with native speakers during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 45*, 229-245.

Castañeda, M. E., & Zirger, M. L. (2011). Making the most of the "new" study abroad: Social capital and the short-term sojourn. *Foreign Language Annals, 44*, 544-564.

Dandonoli, P., & Henning, G. (1990). An investigation of the construct validity of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and Oral Interview Procedure. *Foreign Language Annals*, *23*, 11-22.

Davidson, D. E. (2010). Study abroad: When, how long and with what results? New data from the Russian front. *Foreign Language Annals, 43*, 6-26.

Dewey, D. P. (2008). Japanese vocabulary acquisition by learners in three contexts. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 15*, 127-148.

Dewey, D. P., Belnap, R. K., & Hilstrom, R. (2013). Social network development, language use, and language acquisition during study abroad: Arabic language learners' perspectives. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 22,* 1-23.

Diao, W., Freed, B., & Smith, L. (2011). Confirmed beliefs or false assumptions? A study of home stay experiences in the French study abroad context. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, *21*, 109-142.

Du, H. (2013). The development of Chinese fluency during study abroad in China. *The Modern Language Journal, 97*, 131-143.

Freed, B.F. (1995). What makes us think that students who study abroad become fluent? In B. F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 123-148). Amsterdam: J Benjamins.

Freed, B. F. (1998). An overview of issues and research in language learning in a study abroad setting. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 4,* 31-60.

Freed, B. F., Dewey, D. P., Segalowitz, N., & Halter, R. (2004). The language contact profile. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 26,* 349-356.

Hernández, T. (2010a). Promoting speaking proficiency through motivation and interaction: The study abroad and classroom learning contexts. *Foreign Language Annals, 43,* 650-670.

Hernández, T. (2010b). The relationship among motivation, interaction, and the development of second language oral proficiency in a study-abroad context. *The Modern Language Journal, 94,* 600-617.

Iino, M. (2006). Norms of interaction in a Japanese home stay setting: Toward a two-way flow of linguistic and cultural resources. In M. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 151-173). Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

Isabelli-García, C. (2006). Study abroad social networks, motivations and attitudes: Implications for second language acquisition. In M. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language Learners in Study Abroad Contexts* (pp. 231–258). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Kenyon, D.M., & Tschirner, E. (2000). The rating of direct and semi-direct oral proficiency interviews: Comparing performance at lower proficiency levels. *Modern Language Journal, 84,* 85-101.

Kinginger, C. (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case studies of Americans in France. *The Modern Language Journal, 92,* 1-124.

Kinginger, C. (2011). Enhancing language learning in study abroad. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 31,* 58-73.

Kinginger, C. (2013). Language socialization in study abroad. In C.A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Knight, S. M., & Schmidt-Rinehart, B. C. (2002). Enhancing the home stay: Study abroad from the host family's perspective. *Foreign Language Annals, 35,* 190-201.

Knight, S. M., & Schmidt-Rinehart, B. C. (2010). Exploring conditions to enhance student/host family interaction abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 43,* 64-79.

Lindseth, M. U. (2010). The development of oral proficiency during a semester in Germany. *Foreign Language Annals, 43,* 246-268.

Llanes, À. (2011). The many faces of study abroad: An update on the research on L2 gains emerged during a study abroad experience. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 8,* 189-215.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Magnan, S. S., & Back, M. (2007). Social interaction and linguistic gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 40,* 43-61.

Martinsen, R. (2010). Short-term study abroad: Predicting changes in oral skills. *Foreign Language Annals, 43,* 504-530.

Mendelson, V. G. (2004a). *Spain or bust? Assessment and student perceptions of out-of-class contact and oral proficiency in a study abroad context* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Mendelson, V. G. (2004b). Hindsight is 20/20: Student perceptions of language learning and the study abroad experience. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 10,* 43-63.

Milleret, M. (1991). Assessing the gain in oral proficiency from summer foreign study. *ADFL Bulletin, 22*, 39-43.

O'Donnell, K. (2004). *Student perceptions of language learning in two contexts: At home and study abroad* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Pittsburgh.

Pellegrino Aveni, V. (2005). *Study abroad and second language use: Constructing the self.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Rivers, W. P. (1998). Is being there enough? The effects of home stay placements on language gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, *31*, 492-500.

Schmidt-Rinehart, B. C., & Knight, S. M. (2004). The home stay component of study abroad: Three perspectives. *Foreign Language Annals, 37*, 254-262.

Segalowitz, N., & Freed, B. (2004). Context, contact, and cognition in oral fluency acquisition: Learning Spanish in at home and study abroad contexts. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 26*, 173-199.

Shively, R. L. (2010). From the virtual world to the real world: A model of pragmatics instruction for study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, *43*, 105-137.

Spenader, A. J. (2011). Language learning and acculturation: Lessons from high school and gap-year exchange students. *Foreign Language Annals, 44,* 381-398.

Stansfield, C. (1996). *Test development handbook: Simulated oral proficiency interview (SOPI).* Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Vande Berg, M., Connor-Linton, J., & Paige, R. M. (2009). The Georgetown Consortium Project: Interventions for student learning abroad. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 18,* 1-75.

Wilkinson, S. (1998). Study abroad from the participants' perspective: A challenge to common beliefs. *Foreign Language Annals, 31*, 23-39.

Wilkinson, S. (2002). The omnipresent classroom during summer study abroad: American students in conversation with their French hosts. *The Modern Language Journal, 86*, 157-173.

Yager, K. (1998). Learning Spanish in Mexico: The effect of informal contact and student attitudes on language gain. *Hispania, 81*, 898-913.

Chapter 5
The affective benefits of a pre-sessional course at the start of study abroad

Jean-Marc Dewaele*, Ruxandra-S. Comanaru*
and Martine Faraco**

*Birkbeck College, University of London, **Aix-Marseille University

The study reported in this chapter focuses on the effect that a 2 to 4 week pre-sessional course at Aix-Marseille University had on Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in the French as a foreign language of 93 learners of European and Asian origin, who ranged from beginners to intermediate learners. They were tested at the start and at the end of the course. Results showed a significant decrease in levels of FLA and a significant increase in WTC. Length of stay had no effect on FLA, but was positively linked to difference in WTC. Level of proficiency had no effect on difference in FLA but had a positive effect on difference in WTC, with lower-intermediate learners showing the biggest increase in WTC. Students' cultural background had a significant effect on FLA and WTC at Time 1, with the Asian group reporting more FLA and less WTC.

1. Introduction

Study abroad programmes provide an opportunity for foreign language (FL) learners to live in the community of the language they are learning for a fixed period of time. Learning a language through study abroad (SA) programmes is thus different from FL classroom learning, as well as from learning the language in the community where one resides, as in the case of immigrants or refugees. The decision to go abroad to learn a FL is the learner's personal choice, possibly influenced by parents or teachers, although many language degree programmes have a mandatory SA component (Coleman, 1996, 1998). Allen (2010) found that among her six American students of French, the choice to study abroad was seen as "a critical step to achieving fluency or a means of travel and cultural learning" (p. 27). Thus, SA students are often motivated not only to learn the language and the culture of the FL community, but also to discover a new country and to engage with members of that community on a personal level, presumably in the FL. Other reasons for the

pursuit of FL can include instrumental ones, such as acquiring skills to enhance the job prospects or to become more competitive on the labour market. However, many factors can influence the success of a SA experience (Kinginger, 2008; Regan, Howard, & Lemée, 2009).

Many universities nowadays offer pre-sessional language courses which aim to prepare students' language skills for the SA programme, either at an undergraduate or postgraduate level. Turner (2004) defines a pre-sessional course as "one occurring before the student begins academic study" (p. 98). Apart from language skills, students are also socialised into that particular university environment, i.e. the structure of the courses, tutors' expectations and style of teaching, among other factors. The goal of pre-sessional courses abroad is to prepare international students undertaking a SA programme for the requirements of the university they enrol in. Thus, the pre-sessional course abroad is the students' first contact with the university system in the host country, and potentially with the host culture (Copland & Garton, 2011).

There are different types of SA and pre-sessional courses. The minimal duration of SA is typically 3 months, which is the minimum period in the European Erasmus exchange programme, but it can also be much shorter (a few weeks) and extend up to a year. Pre-sessional courses vary usually from 2 to 8 weeks prior to the beginning of the academic year, but can in some instances last as long as one year.

Relatively few studies have considered the changes induced by a short SA in two key affective variables: Foreign language anxiety (FLA) and willingness to communicate (WTC), and most of the research on the effects of pre-sessional courses abroad has been carried out with regard to English programmes. The present study thus aims at filling this gap by investigating the effects of pre-sessional courses on these variables, as well as looking at a different context, i.e., French-speaking universities.

2. Literature review

2.1. Foreign language anxiety (FLA)

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has been long recognized as a determining factor in the successful acquisition, perceived communicative competence and use of a FL. There is a variety of reasons that can influence successful FL acquisition. Some are contextual reasons (the status of that particular language within the community where it is being learned, the availability of resources for FL learning, formal or informal language learning mode and many more), some are situational (the level of formality required in an interaction, the degree of acquaintance with the inter-

locutor and so on), and some are individual (personality, motivation for learning a FL, age of onset of acquisition, knowledge of other FLs, anxiety and willingness to communicate in a FL, among others). These factors have been found to have a profound effect on FL learning outcomes and have been discussed extensively in applied linguistic research (Dörnyei, 2009).

FLA is, nonetheless, one of the most intricate and influential variables in FL learning (Oxford, 1999). It is a significant predictor of successful oral FL communication (Woodrow, 2006). Many individuals have a positive self-image, which encompasses moderate self-esteem, and good ability to manoeuvre social situations and to present themselves to others in a positive light. But when these learners attempt to communicate in a language which they do not master to a high degree, this self-image might be threatened by the reduced ability to express themselves easily (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Thus, "second language communication entails risk taking and is necessarily problematic" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128), and therefore a communicative act in FL will probably be somewhat intimidating to many language learners. As Horwitz and her colleagues (1986) rightfully point out, FL learning is the field of study that involves the learner's self more than any other field, as s/he is required to use the limited resources available in the FL to express him/herself in a way consistent with the first language (L1) self.

MacIntyre (2007, p. 565) defines FLA as "the worry and usually negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using an L2" in an L2 situation, be it a FL classroom or an L2 context. Researchers have pointed out that anxiety is a complex concept, with many facets. It can be operationalized at three levels: trait, situation-specific and state anxiety, each one of these levels tapping into a slightly different concept of FLA (Dewaele, 2002, 2007; Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008; MacIntyre, 2007). Trait anxiety refers to a type of behavior characteristic to an individual over long periods of time; situation anxiety emerges as a response in a recurrent situation; and state anxiety occurs in specific situations and ignores whether that response has emerged previously or whether it is a recurrent reaction.

Some studies have indicated the importance of the context where the communicative act takes place for the perceived levels of anxiety. Learners who enjoy their learning experience in a classroom context report lower levels of FLA (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Dewaele et al. (2008), in their study on *communicative anxiety* (CA) in the L1 and FLA in adult multilinguals, found that levels of CA/FLA were higher in languages acquired later in life. CA/FLA levels were also linked to the interlocutor and the type of interaction (speaking on the phone or in public is more anxiety-provoking than talking to a friend or a colleague). They report that participants who had learnt their FL only through formal instruction suffered more from FLA than participants who, in addition to formal instruction, had also made

extracurricular use of the FL. Other factors found to decrease the levels of CA/FLA were knowledge of multiple languages, self-perceived competence in the FL, increased use of the FL, a wider network of interlocutors, increased socialization in that language group, lower age of onset of acquisition, and most notably, higher levels of the trait Emotional Intelligence. Other psychological factors have been linked to FLA such as second language tolerance of ambiguity (Dewaele & Shan Ip, 2012), psychoticism, extraversion and neuroticism (Dewaele, 2013a). Foreign language anxiety together with other individual difference variables has also been found to be predictive of FL study abandonment (Dewaele & Thirtle, 2009).

Research on the effect of short and intensive language courses is well established. An early study carried out by Gardner, Smythe and Brunet (1977) investigated the effect of a five-week intensive French programme on attitudes, motivation and achievement in French among Anglo-Canadians. This research was not conducted in a SA environment but the programme aimed at immersing the students in the language by offering residence throughout the course and encouraging French as the only medium of communication. One of the findings of this study was that the level of FLA was related to the level of proficiency of the students. Gardner and his colleagues report that "the beginners were considerably more anxious than the intermediate students who in turn were more anxious than the advanced students, indicating that anxiety about speaking French decreases as proficiency and training increase" (Gardner, Smythe & Brunet, 1977, p. 251). The authors concluded that the five-week intensive programme was beneficial in decreasing the students' anxiety levels in learning and using French, while at the same time providing support for an increased motivation for achieving higher levels of proficiency.

Another influential study in this area is that by Allen and Herron (2003) who found that 25 American students who participated in 15-week summer SA programmes in France reported lower levels of FLA both in classroom and outside of the classroom situations at the end of the programmes. Based on interviews with their participants, they also noted that their FLA prior to studying abroad was twofold, involving both lack of confidence in linguistic abilities and apprehension regarding cultural differences. They conclude by suggesting that contact with native speakers in ordinary FL classrooms would probably be beneficial not only for linguistic purposes, but also for supporting positive attitudes towards the target language group. Similar results were also reported by Matsuda and Gobel (2004), who studied *foreign language classroom anxiety* (FLCA) in Japanese students learning English. They report that an overseas experience influenced self-confidence in speaking English, which in turn, together with gender and proficiency, became predictors of performance for first-year students.

The studies presented here suggest that one way of expanding the foreign language learning (FLL) context to include the use of the FL outside of the classroom

is studying abroad or having some sort of overseas experience, which can reduce the levels of FLA and encourage FL learners to become more confident, authentic FL users.

2.2. Willingness to communicate (WTC)

Willingness to communicate (WTC) originated in the field of L1 linguistics. It was first introduced by McCroskey and his colleagues in the 1980s (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). It referred specifically to a personality trait that would explain the variation among people's desire to engage in communication in various contexts and with various interlocutors. The authors did not deny the influence of the particular situation and interlocutor, but nonetheless, McCroskey and his colleagues placed WTC in L1 at the centre of a person's communicative strategies.

Later, MacIntyre (1994) re-examined the WTC theory and proposed a path model in which WTC was directly related to communication apprehension and perceived communicative competence. He suggested that the WTC model could be employed when examining the variability of communication across situations and that a number of other variables could influence a person's WTC. Among these variables were: The familiarity between the interlocutors, the size of the group where the communicative act is taking place, the degree of formality of the situation, the topic discussed, and not least, the language of the discourse.

MacIntyre went on to test this model in the context of L2 communication and found that anxiety to communicate in L2 and perceived L2 communicative competence also predicted WTC in L2. He later combined this model with Gardner's socio-educational model in order to examine the vital variables for WTC in L2 (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre & Clément, 1996) and found that WTC greatly influenced the frequency of communication in L2, and was in turn influenced by perceived competence in L2, motivation to engage in an exchange in L2, and to a lesser extent, anxiety to communicate in L2.

In another study, MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) proposed a more complex theoretical model for L2 WTC. This pyramidal model puts forward six different layers influencing WTC (see Figure 1). The main factor to influence the first layer (use of L2) was WTC. Here, WTC is defined as the propensity to engage in a communicative act with a particular interlocutor at a specific time. The first three layers are described as being "situation-specific influences on WTC at a given moment in time" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547), while the next three layers "represent stable, enduring influences on the process" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). Although a very complex model, the authors present it as a way of explaining the situational and personality influences that might determine the frequency with which a person uses their L2.

Figure 1. The pyramid model of WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998)
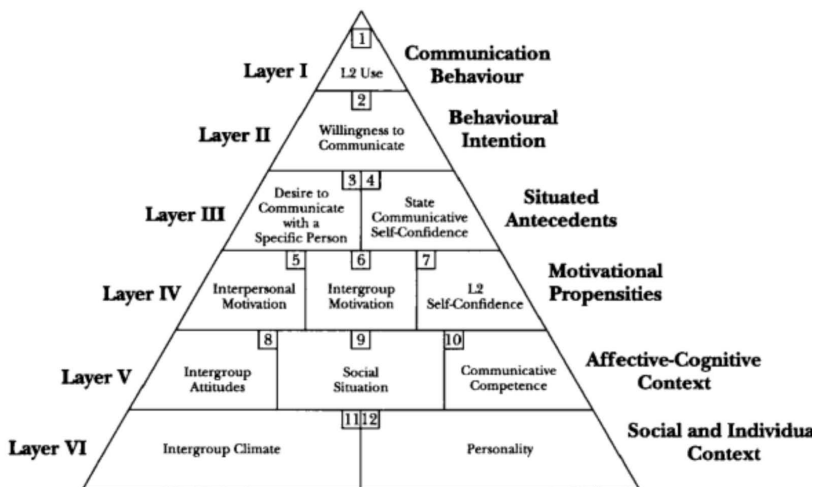
In other L2 studies, further influences on WTC were identified. MacIntyre and Blackie (2012) found that WTC, as well as FLA, were related to hesitation, but were not related to test anxiety. Clément, Baker and MacIntyre (2003) found that confidence in L2 was related not only to WTC, but also to identity, and both these variables had a predictive role in the frequency of use of L2. Studies conducted mainly in the Japanese context suggest that WTC had other antecedents as well: Yashima (2002) proposed *international posture*, a variable defined as the attitudes some learners have towards English as an international language independent of any national group. A study looking at Japanese high-school students who studied English for 3 weeks before enrolling in an American high school for a one-year exchange programme showed that higher levels of WTC before departure were related to longer and more frequent communication with Americans (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishida, & Shimizu, 2004). It also posits that "L2 anxiety is somewhat related to the sense of adjustment to the new environment" (Yashima et al., 2004, p. 140). This study, however, did not assess the change in the levels of WTC or FLA before and after the language courses. MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) argue that WTC can be hypothesised to be a stable characteristic to reflect an individual's level of propensity towards engaging in communication in L2, but also a concept that might vary depending on the situation or even the moment.

The aim of studies on WTC in L2 is to identify the variables linked to the decision to engage in L2 interactions. As evidenced by the complexity of the mod-

els presented here, there are many person- or situation-related variables that can influence one's WTC.

2.3. Study abroad (SA) and pre-sessional courses

The premise of SA programmes is that learning the FL in a naturalistic setting will have a positive influence on the learners' proficiency. The informality of learning in the context of SA can provide options for contact with the L2 outside of the classroom setting (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003), which can be beneficial for the language learners. Pre-sessional courses abroad can be considered short SA programmes, with the only difference that at the end students do not usually return home, but continue their studies at that university, which can potentially have an effect on their motivation and attitudes towards the learning process. On completion of a pre-sessional course, students are often required to take a language test to certify a sufficient level of FL proficiency that allows them to attend university level courses.

Results from previous studies typically show that SA of one semester is linked to a foreign language gain (Magnan & Back, 2007), but that there is a large amount of inter-individual variation (Coleman, 1997; Kinginger, 2008). Some students maximize the possibilities to engage in interactions with native speakers of the target language, while others remain huddled inside their own linguistic community (Regan, Howard, & Lemée, 2009). SA has been found to have immediate and short-term outcomes, such as gains in target language proficiency (Kinginger, 2011), although these are not necessarily permanent (Regan, 2005). Generally, it appears that SA has a significant effect on communicative outcomes, while grammar and writing are less easily influenced (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). SA has also long-term impact on global engagement and on subsequent educational and career choices (Paige, Fry, Stallman, Jon, & Josic, 2009).

While less research has been carried out on short SA (typically around one month), the results have pointed in the same direction (Anderson, Lawton & Hubbard 2006). Even a short period abroad can have profound positive effects on language learners' skills and attitudes (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Evans & Fisher, 2005). Nonetheless, SA students might differ from pre-sessional students. Recent studies (Copland & Garton, 2011; Jarvis & Stakounis, 2010) point to this difference and open the field to new research questions. Pre-sessional courses usually take place in the summer; thus the students enrolled tend to have less contact with local students. The programmes are seldom designed to provide opportunities for contact with the host culture; rather, they focus more on acquiring the required language level for the students to be able to enroll in university courses in autumn. However, these circumstances allow the

pre-sessional students to learn some cultural norms, as well as complete the negotiation of services, prior to the beginning of the academic year.

Studies to date have focused on the opportunities that pre-sessional students have to engage in interactions in the language of study in the host community (Copland & Garton, 2011; Jarvis & Stakounis, 2010) but few investigated the effect of short-term pre-sessional courses on affective dimensions. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effect of a pre-sessional programme on levels of FLA and WTC within the French context, recognising the fact that successful communication between the students and members of the local community can be dramatically influenced by these variables.

3. Research Questions

1) Do FLA levels decrease between the start and end of the course?
2) Do WTC levels increase between the start and end of the course?
3) Are students at lower proficiency levels suffering more from FLA?
4) Do students at lower proficiency levels have lower levels of WTC?
5) Is length of the course linked to variation in FLA and WTC between Times 1 and 2?
6) Is students' cultural background linked to variation in FLA and WTC at Times 1 and 2?

4. Method

4.1. Pre-sessional courses at Aix-Marseille University

The pre-sessional courses at Aix-Marseille University are specifically addressed to the foreign students entering the university, who participate on a voluntary basis, as in the case of the studies described above. Many students are part of the Erasmus exchange programme. Participants represent a rather homogeneous group, at least in terms of objectives. They are generally highly motivated, as linguistic competence in French is the key to their academic success.

The content of these intensive pre-sessional courses touches upon four skills (oral and written comprehension and production), as well as the exploration of various types of academic work (summaries, reading reports, note taking, commentaries, essays, dissertations). Materials for the courses are press articles, extracts of literary works, and grammar exercises from various textbooks. For oral comprehension, materials revolve around recorded interviews from radio programmes, current events and songs. Oral interaction classes are based on the communicative

approach: these include sessions with French native speakers that allow the foreign students to use their new linguistic skills. Students have 20 course hours a week (5 days). In the past, the pre-sessional course lasted up to four weeks, with some students opting for three weeks, but it has recently been limited to two weeks. Data for the present study were collected in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Students are assigned to the pre-sessional classes based on a short written performance (20 lines on the topic "Tell your personal experience of learning French"). Language levels are determined following the guidelines of *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), a framework to describe achievements of learners of FLs across Europe (Council of Europe, 2001). At Aix-Marseille university students should have at least a B-level in French to enter a bachelor's programme, in other words, they have to be "independent users" ranging from CEFR B1 "threshold or intermediate", to B2 "vantage or upper intermediate". B1 typically corresponds to a minimum of 300 hours of classroom exposure. Students live in student halls of residence where they will remain for one or two semesters. They are encouraged, during this period, to seek contacts with the local community. Interactions with native speakers of French are facilitated through the school during the pre-sessional period as well.

4.2. Instruments

Participants filled out a short biographical section, followed by Likert scales for 6 items reflecting FLA and the 8 item WTC test from Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009). The latter part was filled out twice, at the start of the course and at the end. Participants received a small box of *calissons* (a local speciality) to thank them for participating. Scale analysis revealed that the FLA scale had a high level of internal consistency at Time 1 (Cronbach's *alpha* = 0.83), and at Time 2 (Cronbach's *alpha* = 0.82). Scale analysis showed that the WTC scale at Time 1 had sufficient internal consistency (Cronbach's *alpha* = 0.77). However this dropped slightly at Time 2 (Cronbach's *alpha* = 0.68).

The totals were calculated for FLA and WTC at Times 1 and 2. A one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the total scores were normally distributed at Times 1 and 2. A Pearson correlation analysis showed that the values on the two scales were negatively related (r (92) = -.39, $p < 0.001$ at Time 1, and r (92) = -.25, $p < 0.014$ at Time 2). In other words, participants with higher levels of FLA typically displayed lower levels of WTC.
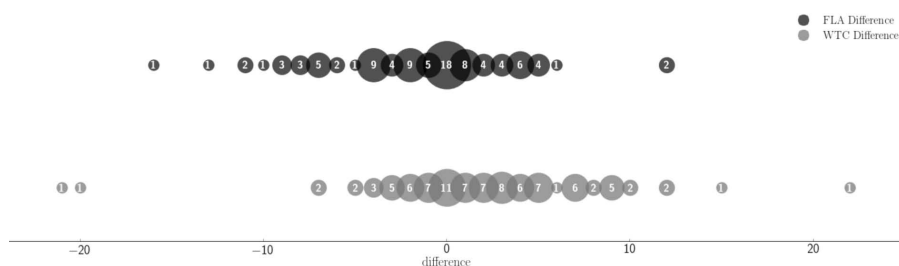
4.3. Participants

Of the 93 students (84 females, 9 males), a quarter had Russian as an L1 (n = 24), 17 were native speakers of English, followed by German (n = 12), Chinese,

Italian, Japanese and Korean (all n = 7), Spanish (n = 3); other L1s included Catalan, Greek, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Czech and Turkish. A quarter of students (n = 25) followed the 2-week course, over half did the 3-week course (n = 52), and less than a fifth (n = 16) did the 4-week course. There was a wide range of proficiency levels in French among the students at the beginning of the course; about a fifth (n = 18) were at an A1/A2 level (beginners), a similar proportion were placed at an A2 level (n = 21) (elementary users), a B1 level (n = 20) and a B2 level (n = 23). A smaller proportion had the level C1 (n = 10) (proficient users).

4. Results

The first research question focused on differences in FLA between Time 1 and Time 2. An analysis of the raw difference values shows that half of the participants reported lower levels of FLA at Time 2, with 20% reporting no change in FLA and 30% reporting (slightly) higher levels of FLA at Time 2 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Differences in FLA and WTC from Time 1 to Time 2

The frequency of each difference is expressed by the area of the bubbles. The numeric values represent number of participants and are displayed inside the bubbles[1].

   A paired t test showed that FLA dropped significantly between Time 1 and Time 2 (t (92) = 2.85, p < 0.005) (see Figure 3).

––––––

1   We are aware that only interview data would have allowed us to find out why some students went against the general trend.

Figure 3. FLA at Times 1 and 2
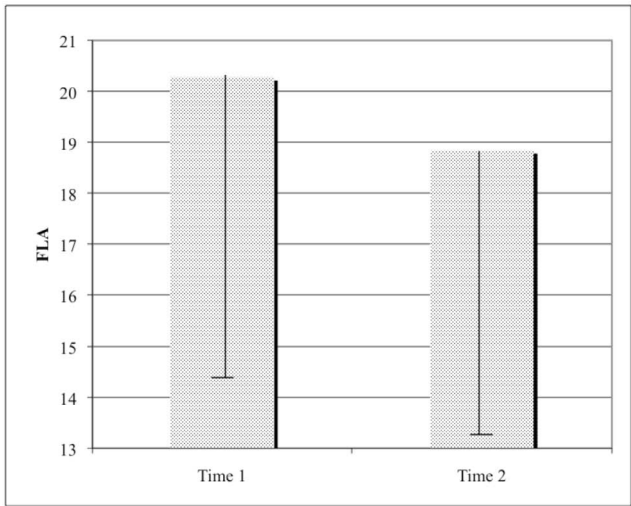
The second research question focused on differences in WTC between Time 1 and Time 2. A closer analysis shows that the WTC values increased by Time 2 for half of the participants (52%) while one third of participants went against the general trend and reported lower levels of WTC at Time 2, with 10% reporting no change in WTC (see Figure 2). A paired *t* test showed that overall WTC increased significantly between Time 1 and Time 2 (t (91) = 3.22, p < 0.002) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. WTC at Times 1 and 2
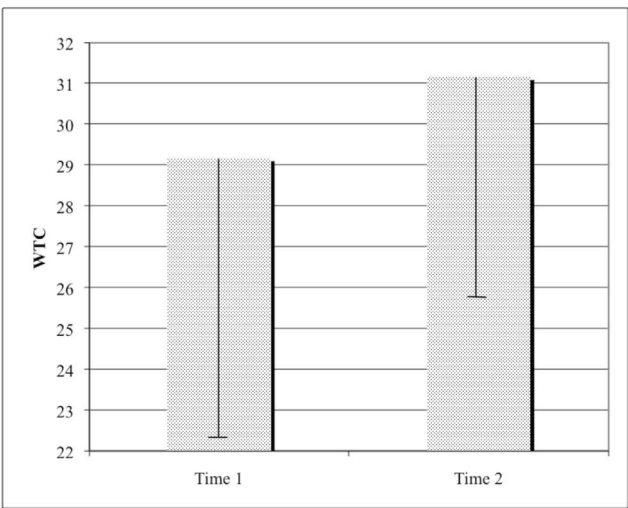
The third and fourth research questions dealt with the effect of proficiency level on FLA and WTC. A one-way ANOVA showed no effect of proficiency on FLA at T1 and T2 ($F (4, 87) = 1.55$, $p = ns$; and $F (4, 87) = 1.55$, $p = ns$ respectively). A similar lack of effect emerged for WTC at T1 and T2 ($F (4, 87) = 0.91$, $p = ns$; and $F (4, 87) = 1.37$, $p = ns$ respectively).

It thus seems that the beginners were not more anxious than the more advanced learners, and that their WTC in French was not significantly different from the other groups.

The fifth research question we address is that of the variation in the amount of difference in FLA and WTC scores between Times 1 and 2. The average drop in FLA between Times 1 and 2 was -1.43 ($SD = 4.8$); the average increase in WTC was 1.98 ($SD = 5.9$).

A one-way ANOVA showed a non-significant effect of length of study on difference in FLA at Times 1 and 2 ($F (2, 90) = 1.34$, $p = ns$). A look at the means does suggest a slight trend of lower FLA values for those who stayed longer (see Table 1).

Table 1. Difference in FLA according to length of stay (mean and standard deviation)

Duration	Mean	SD	N
2 weeks	-0.28	4.71	25
3 weeks	-1.58	4.70	52
4 weeks	-2.75	5.36	16

However, a one-way ANOVA suggested that length of study had a significant impact on difference in WTC ($F (2, 90) = 6.71$, $p < 0.002$, $eta^2 = 0.13$). In other words, students who had stayed longer had become significantly more willing to communicate in French. A look at the means (Table 2) shows that the WTC value for those who stayed for two weeks actually dropped, while those who stayed for three weeks had the strongest increase, followed by those who stayed for four weeks. Another interesting observation is the fact that the dispersion around the mean is largest for those who had stayed for two weeks, and becomes gradually smaller for those who stayed longer. This suggests that as the course wore on, fewer students reported silence as their preferred option in various situations.

Table 2. Difference in WTC according to length of stay (mean and standard deviation)

Duration	Mean	SD	N
2 weeks	-1.28	7.39	25
3 weeks	3.65	4.99	52
4 weeks	1.56	3.63	16

A one-way ANOVA showed a non-significant effect of level of proficiency on difference in FLA at Times 1 and 2 (F (4, 87) = 0.38, p = ns). A look at the means shows a non-linear relation, with the low intermediate learners (B1) showing the biggest drop in FLA and the advanced learners (C1) presenting the smallest decrease (see Table 3).

Table 3. Difference in FLA according to level of proficiency (mean and standard deviation)

Proficiency	Mean	SD	N
A1/A2	-1.39	3.55	18
A2	-1.29	5.29	21
B1	-1.70	5.00	20
B2	-1.43	5.34	23
C1	-1.00	5.46	10

A one-way ANOVA indicated that level of proficiency had a significant impact on difference in WTC (F (4, 87) = 2.81, $p < 0.03$, eta^2 = 0.11). Surprisingly, the group of beginners shows an actual drop in WTC between Times 1 and 2. There is also a large dispersion around the mean (SD = 8.57). The other groups show an increase in WTC and the low intermediate learners (B1) are the ones with the largest increase, followed by the intermediate learners (B2). The progress of the 10 advanced learners (C1) is the smallest (see Table 4).

Table 4. Difference in WTC according to level of proficiency (mean and standard deviation)

Proficiency	Mean	SD	N
A1/A2	-1.72	8.57	18
A2	2.00	3.91	21
B1	3.90	5.96	20
B2	3.35	4.82	23
C1	1.70	3.02	10

To answer the question whether students' background might be linked to FLA, WTC and differences between Time 1 and Time 2, we distinguished between two groups of students: Asian (n = 21), and European (n = 72). An independent t test showed a significant difference in FLA between both groups at Time 1 (df = 47.7, t = 2.5, $p < 0.017$) and Time 2 (df = 91, t = 2.4, $p < 0.021$). The Asian group had the highest FLA scores both at Time 1 and Time 2 (see Table 5).

The Asian group was found to score significantly lower on WTC than the Europeans at Time 1 (df = 90, t = 2.1, p < 0.043); however, this difference was no longer significant at Time 2 (df = 90, t = -1.2, p = ns) (see Table 5).

Table 5. FLA, WTC and difference scores of Asian and European participants at Times 1 and 2 (mean and standard deviation)

Variable	Background	*Mean*	*SD*
FLA Time 1	Asian	22.6	4.3
	European	19.6	6.3
FLA Time 2	Asian	21.3	4.3
	European	18.1	5.8
WTC Time 1	Asian	26.5	5.5
	European	29.9	7.1
WTC Time 2	Asian	30.0	5.1
	European	31.5	5.4

6. Discussion

The finding of a drop in FLA among our participants reflects earlier findings for students in longer SA programs (Allen & Herron, 2003), and confirms early findings for short immersion programs (Gardner et al., 1977). Cubillos, Chieffo and Fan (2008) found that a five-week SA Spanish course led to significantly higher levels of confidence (typically a mirror image of FLA) and self-perceived ability after the SA. Our finding of a drop in FLA and a boost in WTC echoes results in Dewaele et al. (2008) and Dewaele (2010) about the effect of context of acquisition of the FL. A mixed context, like pre-sessional courses, seems ideal affectively, combining classroom instruction and simultaneous extracurricular use of the FL.

Our study suggests that even a short period abroad has psychological consequences. We can therefore only speculate that the gradual lowering of FLA and increase in WTC among our participants during their first few weeks in Aix-en-Provence would continue until the end of their studies. It is also possible that those who moved in the opposite direction between Times 1 and 2, or displayed no change, might eventually move in the expected direction after a longer time in France. Engle and Engle (2004) found that short-term SA did not have a significant effect on measures of intercultural sensitivity and that students needed to spend at least one year abroad for the gains to become significant.

One important characteristic of our sample is that the students were tested at the end of what constitutes the prelude to their studies at the university. In other words, they were motivated to learn as much as possible in order to be able to follow classes in various departments with native speakers of French after the end of this pre-sessional course. This required a true 'investment', in other words, a strong desire and commitment to learn French within the classroom and the wider social context (Norton, 2001). One could imagine that short SA followed by a return to the home institution might not produce the same urgent need to progress in the target language. Few studies to date have focused on pre-sessional language courses, and the main goal of these existing studies was to investigate the effect of these pre-sessional courses on test scores (Green, 2007) or the students' interactions with native speakers outside of the classroom (Copland & Garton, 2011; Jarvis & Stakounis, 2010). The present study offers a different perspective on this matter, suggesting that the pre-sessional courses have a beneficial effect on the affective aspect of language learning, by decreasing FLA levels and increasing WTC.

Our finding that proficiency levels are unrelated to levels of FLA is not surprising, but can be explained by the fact that although the students' levels were somewhat different they all had at least some knowledge of French. Some studies have reported a decrease of FLA at higher levels of proficiency (Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012; Liu, 2006; Gardner et al., 1977), while others have reported an increase of FLCA at higher levels of proficiency (Marcos-Llinás & Juan-Garau, 2009), for no obvious reason. It seems that once FL learners become authentic FL users a negative correlation appears between self-reported levels of proficiency and FLA (Dewaele, 2010, 2013b).

The finding that the size of difference in FLA between Times 1 and 2 was unrelated to both length of stay and proficiency level was surprising, as one could have expected that a slightly longer stay (an extra week or two) might have led to a slightly bigger reduction in FLA, since this is the general pattern between Times 1 and 2. The lack of a significant effect of proficiency level on FLA is linked to the non-linear amount of difference between groups, with the biggest decrease in the intermediate group and a smaller decrease among the other groups.

The same pattern emerged for WTC, but students who had stayed longer and were more proficient made bigger gains in WTC. One possible explanation is that the effect of the interaction between these two independent variables is different for FLA and WTC. While the low intermediate learners managed to reduce their FLA by the end of the course, they seem not yet to have picked up the confidence to engage easily in French interactions. In contrast, the intermediate learners had increased their WTC sharply, and the more advanced learners, especially after a longer course, felt both more able, and more willing, to communicate in French.

The significant effect of background on FLA at Times 1 and 2 and the significant effect on WTC at Time 1 (but not Time 2) shows that Asian learners were more anxious when using French and were less likely to use it at Time 1, though the difference in WTC had disappeared by Time 2. No information was available concerning the time the Asian students had already spent in Western academic environments but we can speculate that differences in classroom culture may have pushed anxiety levels up and may have limited the desire to use French in various interactions. Xiao (2006) looked at the perceptions and expectations of Chinese students in Irish English institutions and found that the Chinese students were not accustomed to the communicative approach, "which was deemed incompatible with their own conceptualization of what constitutes good learning and good teaching" (p. 5). They thought carefully before speaking English in class, and "were more concerned about their own linguistic accuracy or fearful of losing face" (p. 7). It is likely that our Asian students had similar perceptions at the start of the course, but these seem to have weakened by the end of the course, possibly because of the cultural heterogeneity of the student population. This suggests that the course was successful in preparing the students to participate in French academic and social life. Although the Asian students might still have been more anxious about the use of French, at least they were more willing to jump in.

7. Conclusion

Short and even very short (two weeks) pre-sessional courses at the beginning of a SA programme bring about significant changes in two crucial affective variables in target-language use: A drop in FLA and an increase in WTC. The pre-sessional course seems to boost learners' self-confidence in using French as a tool for communication in a variety of modes and situations.

Individual differences in the absolute values of FLA were not linked to proficiency levels. The size of the drop in FLA between Times 1 and 2 was not linked to length of stay nor to proficiency level. However, both length of stay and proficiency level were found to have a significant positive effect on the amount of difference in WTC. Students' background had a significant effect on FLA at Times 1 and 2 and on WTC at Time 1, with Asian students reporting higher levels of FLA and being less willing to use French at Time 1.

We thus conclude that the pre-sessional course at the start of the SA had a clear affective benefit for our participants: it had prepared them to participate in French social and academic life with more confidence.

References

Allen, H. W. (2010). Language-learning motivation during short-term study abroad: An activity theory perspective. *Foreign Language Annals, 43,* 27–49.

Allen, H. W., & Herron, C. (2003). A mixed methodology investigation of the linguistic and affective outcomes of summer study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 36,* 370–385.

Anderson, P. H., Lawton, L., & Hubbard, A. C. (2006). Short-term study abroad and intercultural sensitivity: A pilot study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 30,* 457–469.

Arnaiz, P. & Guillén, F. (2012). Foreign language anxiety in a Spanish university setting: Interpersonal differences. *Revista de Psicodidáctica, 17,* 5-26.

Chieffo, L., & Griffiths, L. (2004). Large-scale assessment of student attitudes after a short-term study abroad program. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 10,* 165-177.

Clément, R., Baker, S.C., & MacIntyre, P.D. (2003). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The effects of context, norms and vitality. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 22,* 190-209.

Coleman, J.A. (1996). *Studying languages: A survey of British and European students.* London: CILT.

Coleman, J.A. (1997). Residence abroad within language study. *Language Teaching, 30,* 1-20.

Coleman, J.A. (1998). Language learning and study abroad: The European perspective. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 4,* 167-203.

Copland, F., & Garton, C. (2011). I felt that I do live in the UK now: International students' self-reports of their English language speaking experiences on a pre-sessional programme. *Language and Education, 25,* 241-255.

Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp

Cubillos, J. H., Chieffo, L., & Fan, C. (2008). The impact of short-term study abroad programs on L2 listening comprehension skills. *Foreign Language Annals, 41,* 157–186.

Dewaele, J.-M. (2002). Psychological and sociodemographic correlates of communicative anxiety in L2 and L3 production. *The International Journal of Bilingualism, 6,* 23-39.

Dewaele, J.-M. (2007). The effect of multilingualism, sociobiographical, and situational factors on communicative anxiety and foreign language anxiety of mature language learners. *The International Journal of Bilingualism, 11,* 391-409.

Dewaele, J.-M. (2010). Multilingualism and affordances: Variation in self-perceived communicative competence and communicative anxiety in French L1, L2, L3 and L4. *International Review of Applied Linguistics, 48,* 105–129.

Dewaele, J.-M. (2013a). The link between foreign language classroom anxiety and psychoticism, extraversion, and neuroticism among adult bi- and multilinguals. *The Modern Language Journal, 97,* 670-684.

Dewaele, J.-M. (2013b). *Emotions in multiple languages.* 2nd Edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 4,* 237-274.

Dewaele, J.-M., Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2008). The effects of trait emotional intelligence and sociobiographical variables on communicative anxiety and foreign language anxiety among adult multilinguals: A review and empirical investigation. *Language Learning, 58,* 911-960.

Dewaele, J.-M., & Shan Ip, T. (2013). The link between foreign language classroom anxiety, second language tolerance of ambiguity and self-rated English proficiency among Chinese learners. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 3,* 47-66.

Dewaele, J.-M. &., & Thirtle, H. (2009) Why do some young learners drop foreign languages? A focus on learner-internal variables. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 12,* 635-649.

Dörnyei, Z. (2009). *Personality in second language acquisition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Engle, L., & Engle, J. (2004). Assessing language acquisition and intercultural sensitivity development in relation to study abroad study design. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 10,* 219-236.

Evans, M., & Fisher, L. (2005). Measuring gains in pupils' foreign language competence as a result of participation in a school exchange visit: The case of Y9 pupils at three comprehensive schools in the UK. *Language Teaching Research, 9,* 173–192.

Gardner, R. C., Smythe, P. C., & Brunet, G.R. (1977). Intensive second language study: Effects on attitudes motivation and French achievement. *Language Learning, 27,* 243-261.

Green, A. (2007). Washback to learning outcomes: a comparative study of IELTS preparation and university pre-sessional language courses. *Assessment in Education: Principles, policy and practice, 14,* 75-97.

Horwitz, E.K., Horwitz, M.B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal, 70,* 125-132.

Jarvis, H. & Stakounis, H. (2010). Speaking in social contexts: Issues for pre-sessional EAP students. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language, 14.*

Kinginger, C. (2008). *Language learning in study abroad: Case studies of Americans in France.* Oxford: Blackwell.

MacIntyre, P. D. (1994). Variables underlying willingness to communicate: A causal analysis. *Communication Research Reports, 11,* 135-142.

MacIntyre, P. D. (2007). Willingness to communicate in the second language: Understanding the decision to speak as a volitional process. *The Modern Language Journal*, *91,* 564-576.

MacIntyre, P. D., & Blackie, R.A. (2012). Action control, motivated strategies, and integrative motivation as predictors of language learning affect and the intention to continue learning French. *System*, *40,* 533-543.

MacIntyre, P. D., & Charos, C. (1996). Personality, attitudes, and affect as predictors of second language communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 15,* 3–26.

MacIntyre, P. D., & Clément, R. (1996). A model of willingness to communicate in a second language: The concept, its antecedents, and implications. Paper presented at the 11th World Congress of Applied Linguistics, Jyväskylä, Finland.

MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K.A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *Modern Language Journal, 82,* 545–562.

MacIntyre, P.D., & Doucette, J. (2010). Willingness to communicate and action control. *System, 38,* 161-171.

Magnan S. S., & Back, M. (2007). Social interaction and linguistic gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 40,* 43-61.

Marcos-Llinás, M., & Juan-Garau, M. (2009). Effects of language anxiety on three proficiency-level courses of Spanish as a foreign language. *Foreign Language Annals, 42,* 94-111.

Matsuda, S., & Gobel, P. (2004). Anxiety and predictors of performance in the foreign language classroom. *System, 32,* 21-36.

McCroskey, J.C., & Richmond, V.P. (1987). Willingness to communicate. In J. C. McCroskey & J. A. Daly (Eds.), *Personality and interpersonal communication* (pp. 129-156). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Norton, B. (2001). Non-participation, imagined communities and the language classroom. In M. Breen (Ed.), *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research*. Harlow: Longman, 159–171.

Oxford, R. L. (1999). Anxiety and the language learner: new insights. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp. 58-67). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Paige, R. M., Fry, G. W., Stallman, E., Jon, J., & Josic, J. (2009). Study abroad for global engagement: The long-term impact of mobility experiences. *Intercultural Education, 20 (S1-2),* 29-44.

Regan, V. (2005). From community back to classroom: what variation analysis can tell us about context of acquisition. In J.-M. Dewaele (Ed.), *Focus on French as a foreign language: Multidisciplinary approaches*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 191-209.

Regan, V., Howard, M., & Lemée, I. (2009). *Acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad contex: Irish learners of French*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Taguchi, T., Magid, M., & Papi, M. (2009). The L2 Motivational Self System among Japanese, Chinese and Iranian learners of English: A comparative study. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 66-97). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Tanaka, K., & Ellis, R. (2003). Study abroad, language proficiency, and learner beliefs about language learning. *Japan Association for Language Teaching, 25,* 63-87.

Turner, J. (2004). Language as academic purpose. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 3,* 95-109.

Woodrow, L. (2006). Anxiety and speaking English as a second language. *RELC Journal, 37,* 308-328.

Xiao, L. X. (2006). Bridging the gap between teaching styles and learning styles: A cross-cultural perspective. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (TESL-EJ), 10,* 1-15.

Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL context. *The Modern Language Journal, 86,* 54-66.

Yashima, T., Zenuk-Nishida, L., & Shimizu, K. (2004). The influence of attitudes and affect on willingness to communicate and second language communication. *Language Learning, 54,* 119-152.

Chapter 6
Placement type and language learning during residence abroad

Rosamond Mitchell*, Kevin McManus**
and Nicole Tracy-Ventura***

*University of Southampton, UK, **University of York, UK,
***University of South Florida

The "year abroad" is a longstanding component of British university degree programmes in languages. As noted by other commentators (Coleman, 1997 and this volume; Collentine, 2009), the British "year abroad" is typically undertaken by language majors with several years' prior language study and a relatively advanced proficiency level in their target language(s). It is a common requirement for programme completion, to spend two academic semesters abroad. However students can have considerable latitude in how the time abroad is spent, and assessment by the home institution is relatively "light touch", typically involving e.g. a substantial project or long essay. Today, languages students typically undertake one of three placement types: as English language teaching assistants, on other forms of work placement, or as Erasmus exchange students following relevant academic programmes at a partner university. Numbers of U.K. languages students undertaking the classic university student exchange version of the year abroad are relatively stable at around 7,500 per year, a much smaller number than incoming international students at U.K. universities, though numbers undertaking teaching assistantships and other work placements have risen (British Academy & University Council for Modern Languages, 2012; King, Findlay, & Ahrens, 2010).

The linguistic benefits of the year abroad have been tracked in various research studies (Coleman, 1996, 1997; Ife, 2000; Klapper & Rees, 2012; Meara, 1994; Willis, Doble, Sankarayya, & Smithers, 1977). In general, this research indicates that while learners make considerable progress in their target L2, the variability which is characteristic of residence abroad programmes more widely (Kinginger, 2008) affects this group as well (on this see especially Klapper & Rees, 2012).

The research project "Social Networks, Target Language Interaction and Second Language Acquisition During the Year Abroad: A longitudinal study" (the LANGSNAP project: http://langsnap.soton.ac.uk) was planned to provide fuller evidence on L2 acquisition during the year abroad, including documenting devel-

opment on a range of language domains, and connecting progress in L2 to a range of individual, social and contextual variables. (See Mitchell, 2014 for an overview.) The project tracked a cohort of 56 students majoring in French or Spanish, before, during and after spending their year abroad in France, Spain or Mexico during the academic year 2011-12. This chapter reports one aspect of the findings of this project: the experience of the French L2 participants (*n*=29) of different placement types in France, and how placement type related to aspects of their target language development.

1. Literature review: Placement types and language learning

Four explanations are typically offered to explain the variable L2 learning outcomes of residence abroad (RA): a) predeparture proficiency; b) length of stay; c) individual differences; and d) contextual factors. Concerning predeparture proficiency, there is mixed evidence. Several researchers from North American contexts, where students often study abroad as novices, have argued that a minimum proficiency level is needed for learners to benefit quickly from RA (e.g., Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1995; DeKeyser, 2010; Lafford, 2006; Lafford & Collentine, 2006). However others (e.g. Llanes & Muñoz, 2009) have shown significant benefits even for early learners on short stays abroad. The LANGSNAP participants were all advanced learners with 8-10 years' prior language learning experience; a set of L2 pre-tests provided baseline information on their oral and written capabilities.

A limited number of studies have examined the impact of length of stay on language development, and these are reviewed by Llanes (2011). These studies show that participants can benefit even from very short stays abroad, but that on aspects of language from vocabulary and grammar to pragmatic and sociolinguistic features, the longer the stay abroad, the greater the impact. The LANGSNAP participants were all committed to a two-semester stay abroad, so length-of-stay comparisons were not possible between groups.

Concerning the possible role of individual differences, research has started to uncover how social-psychological and sociolinguistic factors concerning attitudes, willingness to communicate, and intercultural awareness (Kinginger, 2008), can impact on language learning success while abroad, as well as cognitive styles (Hokanson, 2000) and psycholinguistic factors such as working memory (Lord, 2006; O'Brien, Segalowitz, Freed, & Collentine, 2007) and cognitive processing abilities (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). Affective variables (motivation, anxiety, personality) have been widely studied and several qualitative studies (e.g. Jackson, 2008, 2010; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005) have documented how personal dispositions can influence learners' amount of interaction with native

speakers, and thus indirectly the availability of interactive learning opportunities. The LANGSNAP project adopted both a quantitative and a qualitative approach to individual learner differences. Firstly, the study documented learners' personality factors through use of a Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009), and traced language use patterns and social networking patterns of participants through specially developed questionnaires. Additionally, regular semistructured interviews explored individuals' language use, social networking, motivation, and intercultural understanding.

Concerning contextual factors, a considerable number of studies have compared learning during study abroad with learning by comparable groups at home, not always to the advantage of the former, though in general it has been shown that oral fluency develops more strongly while abroad. (See for example Isabelli-García, 2010; Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz and Halter, 2004, who found that home immersion students outperformed SA students, and reviews and discussion e.g. in Lafford, 2006; Collentine, 2009; Llanes, 2011.) However, given the compulsory nature of residence abroad on British degree programmes, meaningful at-home comparison groups are not available, and the most interesting questions concern contextual factors within the RA experience which may affect development.

Sojourners' place of residence has been an important focus in past research, partly because of the use of homestays on many American study abroad programmes. In a large scale quantitative RA study, Rivers (1998) compared the proficiency gains of L2 Russian learners living with a host family or in a dormitory, and claimed that contrary to expectations, homestay had a positive impact on reading only. Later quantitative studies (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz & Halter, 2004) also failed to show clear influences for place of residence on learning gains. Qualitative accounts of life with host families have suggested possible explanations, demonstrating greatly varying interpersonal relationships and roles established with host family members (e.g. (Cook, 2008; Kinginger, this volume; Jackson, 2010; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Wilkinson, 2002). The LANGSNAP methodology did include systematic collection of information from participants about place of residence/co-habitants. In France, shared accommodation with other international students or assistants was considerably more common than homestays or flats shared with French-speaking flatmates, regardless of placement type, and this fact seems to have depressed somewhat the opportunities of the French L2 participants for interaction with fluent French speakers, compared with the Spanish L2 participants. This place of residence effect is seen in other studies, e.g. Papatsiba (2006), Klapper and Rees (2012). However no dominant impact of place of residence on language development has been detected, across the LANGSNAP dataset. Overall, the mixed results of place of residence studies suggest that intervening variables have greater importance.

The three types of placement undertaken by the LANGSNAP participants (teaching assistantship, work placement, university exchange) have been available to British students of languages over many years. Teaching assistant exchange programmes with France date from 1904 (British Council, 2005), and this was the most popular placement type until the 1980s, when the Erasmus programme began providing funding for student exchanges (Teichler, 2004). By the time of Coleman's major survey (Coleman, 1996), over half the 12,000 or so British students then estimated to be spending a year abroad were undertaking student exchanges. Teaching assistantships were the next most popular option, and other types of work placement were relatively rare. The overall figure of British students of languages undertaking study abroad through the Erasmus scheme declined to 7,000 or so in the early 2000s, and has not risen much since (King, Findlay & Ahrens, 2010). Numbers of British students going abroad have increased overall since 2007, but it seems likely that many of these are non-language majors and therefore beyond the concerns of this chapter.

All three placement types undertaken by language students have been investigated in previous studies. The Erasmus-funded student exchange has been evaluated regularly by Teichler and associates, e.g. Teichler (2004; this volume), and the Erasmus experience of language majors from a variety of countries has been examined in more language-focused studies (e.g. Barron, 2006; Coleman, 1996; Ife, 2000; Klapper & Rees, 2012; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Papatsiba, 2006; Regan, Lemée, & Howard, 2009; Tragant, 2012). These studies report generally high levels of participant satisfaction, including a positive sense of personal growth, and intercultural development. Concerning language learning, studies report generally positive outcomes especially regarding oral fluency and receptive skills (though less so for grammar, even when receiving in-country instruction: Ife, 2000). However, these accounts also report some difficulties of local social integration, with Tragant's Spanish participants (for example) reporting "little contact outside the university environment" during their sojourn in England (2012, p. 176). Similarly, over half of Papatsiba's French L1 sojourners abroad reported "weak interaction with natives" (2006, p. 118). These students reported the early formation of an international "Erasmus community", and continuing solidarity between co-nationals; only one-third of participants in this study fully embraced and explored cultural difference (p. 128). The use of English as a lingua franca among international students is also seen as a factor limiting target language use by U.K. students (Ife, 2000). The language teaching assistantship has also been quite extensively researched (e.g. Alred, 1990; Alred & Byram, 2002, 2006; Ehrenreich, 2006; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002), though these studies focused primarily on the professional and/or intercultural development of participants. The early interview survey of Alred and Byram (Alred, 1990) reported an increased sense of maturity for all participants, together with an increased "rel-

ativisation" of native identity for some. The extent to which they were treated as professionals within host schools was crucial for their overall sense of integration/marginality. Interestingly, Alred and Byram (2002) re-interviewed a number of their original participants 10 years on, and were able to trace lasting effects in terms of intercultural competence (as described also in Coleman, this volume).

Work placements have traditionally attracted fewest U.K. languages students, though they have increased in popularity since receiving Erasmus funding (King, Findlay & Ahrens, 2010). The early study of Willis, Doble, Sankarayya and Smithers (1977) involved 80 students on work placements abroad, comparing their development with a smaller group of university exchange students. In this study the work placement group significantly outperformed the university group, on linguistic, intercultural and personal development measures. These researchers attributed these results to opportunities to use the target language "in a wider variety of social contexts" (p. 44), and also their "relative isolation" from co-nationals. (Of course, due to internet access and electronic communication, such "relative isolation" from English-speaking family and friends is impossible today.) The 1990s study by Meara (1994) drew on a questionnaire survey with 586 year abroad participants (301 on student exchange, 129 teaching assistants, and 81 workplace interns). The whole cohort viewed the experience favourably and reported growth on the usual dimensions (L2 speaking and listening, intercultural skills and personal development). However, Meara notes that the student exchange group had lower self-rated mean scores for language improvement, than either of the other two groups.

This brief survey of research on placement types draws attention to some possible sources of variability in the development of year abroad students' linguistic proficiency. Exchange students are likely to be engaged socially in international Erasmus communities, with English the most easily available lingua franca; they are generally reported as having varying success in forming close relations with local peers. Teaching assistants may be better integrated in their local school, but where their professional role is not taken seriously they risk marginalisation and social isolation. Past research on work placements suggests that they may be the most favourable environment in principle, in terms of target language use and a clear social role. However, studies on language development within work placements are few, and pre-date e.g. widespread internet use. Overall the literature is fragmented, with small and dissimilar groups under study in different empirical projects, and frequent reliance on retrospective self-report for information on language development.

The LANGSNAP dataset allows for an in-depth review of placement types and their different characteristics/ contributions to language development. Placements were undertaken simultaneously, under similar conditions of contact with the home institution. Measurement of language proficiency took place for all

participants before, during and after residence abroad, and all participants were visited and interviewed on three occasions during their sojourn. Language use patterns and social networking were captured systematically through questionnaires, again administered during in-sojourn visits. Thus the LANGSNAP project allows the following questions to be addressed:

What are learners' perceptions of the impact of placement type (student exchange, teaching assistantship, work internship) on language use and development?

Do differences in placement type impact on language development?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

Participants were 29 advanced level university learners of French, spending Year 3 (two semesters) of a four-year degree programme (BA) in France. All were majoring in French, either as sole subject, or in combination with one or more other subjects (mostly other languages). All attended the same institution, which insisted on the year abroad being spent in a single placement. For this placement, they had chosen between teaching assistantship (*n*=15), university exchange (*n*=8) and work placement (*n*=6). The mean time spent abroad in France was 9.5 months (range: 7-12 months). Participants' mean age was 20.5 (range: 19-25 years) and the mean length of time previously spent studying French was 10.5 years (range: 6-20 years).

2.2. Instruments

Oral interviews conducted in French were used to collect qualitative information on learners' rationale for choosing a particular placement scheme and its perceived impact on language development. Quantitative data on the French language development of students taking part in the different placement schemes were derived through analysis of an elicited imitation task, a picture-based oral narrative and the same set of French-medium oral interviews.

Elicited imitation (EI) is a technique requiring the learner to listen to an L2 oral stimulus and then repeat it as accurately as possible. EI has been proposed for a considerable time as a valid and reliable general measure of L2 oral proficiency, which taps implicit knowledge; the underlying rationale is that learners can only accurately imitate sentences that they have both parsed and comprehended (Bley-Vroman & Chaudron, 1994). Using as a model the English sentences from Ortega, Iwashita, Rabie and Norris (1999), a French EI test was specially created for the

LANGSNAP project (Tracy-Ventura, McManus, Norris & Ortega, 2014), and used alongside a similar test in Spanish designed by Ortega (2000), not reported here. The EI Test was administered on computer and took just over nine minutes to complete. It included 30 test sentences in French, spoken by a native speaker and ranging from 7 to 19 syllables in length. These sentence stimuli were presented in order from lowest to highest number of syllables, and the participants' attempted imitations were recorded for later analysis. (For full details and discussion see Tracy-Ventura et al., 2014.)

The picture-based oral narrative ("Cat Story") was originally created in Spanish by Domínguez, Tracy-Ventura, Arche, Mitchell and Myles (2013); a parallel French version was created for the LANGSNAP project. The story contains 36 images organized over 13 pages. Participants had a few minutes to look at the story and then retold it, while reviewing the pictures. Each retelling lasted approximately 7 minutes, and was audiorecorded.

L2 oral interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis between each participant and a native/near-native speaker, at all data collection points. The interview questions centred on living abroad, use of the L2, language development, social networks and daily routines. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes, and was audiorecorded. The end-of-sojourn reflective interview, conducted in English at Visit 3, collected participants' retrospective reflections on their stay abroad. All interviewers were provided with specialized training and were given feedback on technique prior to beginning the fieldwork.

Use of the same French-medium interviews both as a source of French language data, and as a source of information about perceptions of the stay abroad, may be queried. In the case of the LANGSNAP interviews, participants were aware both that their French would be analysed, and that their interlocutors were representatives of the home institution; it was acknowledged that their self-presentation would be influenced accordingly. However, rich anecdotal accounts of daily life, and of personal relationships, were provided in these interviews, cross checked through an English medium interview administered at the end of the sojourn, as well as with project questionnaire findings (not analysed here). Overall the team were satisfied concerning the dependability of the accounts provided and the patterns which emerged from these.

2.3. Procedure

Data were collected over a period of 23 months, with six data collection points scheduled before, during and after RA. The Pretest took place in the UK (May 2011). Once abroad, participants were visited three times (November 2011, February 2012, and May 2012). Two posttests took place in the UK following participants' return (September 2012, January 2013). The EI task was conducted at

Pretest, Visit 2 and Posttest 1. The *Cat Story* narrative task was conducted at Pretest and again at Visit 3. The reflective interview in English was conducted at Visit 3. The L2 interviews were conducted every time. However, for the purposes of this chapter, analysis has concentrated on the L2 interviews conducted at Pretest, at Visit 2, and at Posttest.

2.4. Analysis

All audio data were orthographically transcribed using the CHAT transcription system (CHILDES: MacWhinney, 2000). For the qualitative analyses reported here, relevant interview transcripts were analysed thematically with partial support from QSR NVivo 10.

To provide a rounded picture of developing French proficiency, three quantitative analyses of the French production data were conducted: general oral proficiency (EI Test), lexical diversity in L2 oral interviews and oral fluency (in picture-based narratives). Firstly, learners' individual utterance repetitions on the EI Test were scored based on a five-point scoring rubric (0-4). The maximum score possible for the test is 120 (30 x 4). Two raters coded half the EI data together and agreed on scores through discussion; the other half of the data was coded independently. Secondly, lexical diversity was analysed for the L2 interviews at Pretest, Visit 2 and Posttest 1 using D (an index developed by McKee, Malvern and Richards, 2000, that estimates lexical diversity for an individual, while taking text length into account), as calculated via the CLAN program (MacWhinney, 2000). Thirdly, the *Cat Story* at Pretest and at Visit 3 was used to estimate learners' rate of speech, operationalized as the number of pruned syllables produced per minute (see Lennon, 1990). This measure involves removal of any repetitions, false starts, or L1 use prior to syllable counting and analysis, so that only L2 speech in addition to the length of pauses are taken into account (in contrast to unpruned speech rate, for example, which measures everything uttered). For a full discussion of task types and different operationalizations of fluency, see Segalowitz (2010) and de Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen, and Hulstijn (2012).

We assessed the distribution of scores on all dependent variables. Shapiro Wilks tests showed normal distribution ($p>.05$) in all cases. For this reason, parametric tests have been conducted throughout. To compare changes in scores over time, plus differences between the three placement groups, while taking account of differences between the groups at pre-test, mixed ANCOVA was selected as the most appropriate test for change in overall proficiency (as measured through EI) and for change in lexical knowledge (as measured through D). Regular ANCOVA was appropriate to measure change in fluency. Checks showed that the data did not violate any assumptions of ANCOVA (linearity, homogeneity of regression slope, homogeneity of variance etc.).

3. Results a): Perceptions of language use and development

The first analysis examined participants' perceptions of the impact of placement type on social networking, language use and language development.

3.1. Placements and language use abroad: Participants' expectations

The Pretest interview provided insights into participants' reasons for choosing different placement types. Among those planning to be teaching assistants, a majority (8/15) were considering teaching as a possible future career. Those undertaking work placements were also keen to experience professional life, and/or felt that this role would enhance their future employment prospects. Several in both these groups said they wanted a change from university study, and some also valued the prospect of earning some money while abroad. Half of the participants undertaking a student exchange mentioned the availability of formal instruction in French plus other languages as a positive inducement (though university was to some extent the "default" option, and several mentioned dislike of teaching and/ or the difficulty of getting work placements as supplementary reasons for their choice). All of the participants had high general expectations for opportunities to hear and speak French during their year abroad. However the group most likely to mention immersion in a French environment as a specific reason for placement choice, were those undertaking work placements (3/6). Those taking up assistantships were most aware that they were being recruited for their English language skills, and that there could be some tensions between their English teaching role and their own desire to improve their French.

3.1. Social networks and language use abroad: The actuality

Before departure, the student exchange group had reported high expectations of making French student friends on campus. The actuality was rather different, and by the time of Visit 2, most members of this group were reporting other Erasmus students (some British, some of other nationalities) as their most regular social contacts, i.e. the people they spent time with in the evenings, or travelled round with at weekends. Within these friendship groups, English predominated, though some examples of French-speaking international networks and/ or individual contacts were reported. (For example, participant 108 spoke French all year with a Japanese exchange student.) One participant (128) reported positive efforts to befriend French students in her hall of residence at the start of the year (she organised a picnic, she left her room door open …), but these had fizzled out by the time of Visit 2. While a few found a romantic partner (a French boyfriend was reported by participant 107), it was not easy to

find close same-sex friends. Some students reported positive daytime contact with classmates; for example, participant 126 reported regularly lunching with French friends from her Italian class. Participant 104 reported making friends with fellow music students, and 121 reported getting help with academic work from classmates. Organised tandem exchanges were reported by several students as a way of accessing French conversation opportunities, though of course reciprocal English conversation was entailed. Three students reported real success in penetrating French-speaking networks off campus, one of them (unusually for a student) through his host family (104), another through serious participation in an athletics club (108), and the third through her interest in local folk music which took her to folk nights and festivals as well as to student associations and music lessons (129). As for their university teachers, students mostly reported more distant relations than applied in the home university. Some language teachers were reported to be helpful with study advice, but two students perceived their lecturers in content classes (French literature, history) to have a negative attitude to Erasmus students. Students attending music classes (104, 129) were the most positive about French-medium content instruction.

The teaching assistant group (*n*=15) were aware before departure that the schools they would be working in might be problematic as a source of friends, compared with a university placement, because of age and status issues. In practice a majority of this group reported other assistants, with whom they often shared accommodation, as their main local social contacts (10/15). These mixed-nationality peer networks were most likely to be predominantly English-using during leisure time, though some French-using examples were reported (e.g. participant 106 spoke French routinely with a German language assistant). The social relations established with teachers in the assigned schools varied considerably. Several reported teachers as important social contacts (e.g. helping with banking problems: 101), a majority reported feeling welcome in staffrooms and at lunchtimes, with six assistants mentioning these as important locations for French conversation, and three also reported well-developed friendships with individual teachers. Teachers were also described as offering professional support (e.g. with lesson planning or with discipline problems). On the other hand, a minority reported loneliness and problems with integration in the school.

As noted earlier, the teaching assistant group had of course been recruited because of their English language skills, and were mostly expected to interact in English during class time. Interaction with teachers out of class was reported to be predominantly French-medium (and there were primary schools where no-one spoke much English), but a minority based in secondary schools reported teachers' preference to practise their own English. Participant 117 described differing practice in two schools:

> In one of the schools the teachers were quite keen on speaking English, because sort of having an English person there helped them, and then in the other school my teachers were like "well we're going to speak to you in French, because we know you are here to learn French, so we will speak French unless you mind in which case we can speak English to you", and I said "no, speak French to me and if I don't understand we can work around it", and that really helped, having people that sort of only spoke to me in French. (117)

Outside the professional relationships of the school, some assistants reported organised activities likely to lead to interaction in French (a choir, exercise classes and a languages cafe, or a tandem exchange). A distinctive activity open to this group was provision of private English tutoring, to school students, and two participants reported developing friendly relations with the families of tutored children, which were carried on through French.

Like the teaching assistant group, the interns on work placement had mainly been recruited by their host organisations because of their English language skills. Two of them worked as administrators in an international business school, and the others worked in internationally oriented commercial companies. Typical work tasks included dealing with email correspondence in English and/or French, answering the phone (mostly in French), and undertaking translation and interpreting. For example, 124 reported a varied if low level administrative routine using a range of language skills:

> I answer the phone, I do translations, and I take the minutes in the meetings. I organise deliveries for parcels and for equipment, I make hotel reservations and train reservations for staff travel, and lots of other tasks, the tasks that other people don't want to do. (124, Visit 1)

Individuals also undertook general personal assistant duties, or staffed a library desk. One intern was hired specifically as an in-house English teacher, and found that this role led to a largely English-speaking relationship with colleagues. However the rest reported using mostly French in face to face office talk, and almost all (5/6) reported very good social relations with colleagues at work, taking part in group lunches and coffee breaks every day. Outside work, the living arrangements and main social networks of this group were diverse (one lived with French relatives, four others with international interns or students, while just one claimed that her "main friends" were French). Two female interns had found French boyfriends.

3.3. Participants' perceptions of language development abroad

The university based participants typically attended formal language classes where they studied topics such as translation, grammar and writing, gave formal presentations, learned French essay-writing style and were exposed to more academic/formal registers in French. They wrote some coursework (not always successfully) and took language examinations. A minority mentioned informal correction by peers as contributing to their learning. Clearly therefore this group were investing regular effort in learning standard French. However, almost all of them identified oral fluency, vocabulary, and listening comprehension as the areas in which they noticed most personal improvement; only one student believed her writing had improved most. Almost all (7/8) commented in some way on register issues. Most claimed that their informal everyday French had improved more than more formal speech styles. For example, both 107 and 129 said they had ongoing problems with selection of *tu/vous* address forms. Ongoing problems were also reported in managing service encounters with strangers (using medical services, for 108; reporting a fraud to police, for 107). Few students mentioned academic registers specifically; of those who did, 104 and 108 felt they now could discuss e.g. topics in history or politics with confidence, partly as a result of extensive reading (104). However 121's lack of self-confidence with academic French led her to drop out of a history module.

The teaching assistants expressed even more strongly that "the main focus was really oral and just going for it" (115). In this group, 11/15 talked about speaking and listening comprehension as the main areas in which they had developed. Two assistants mentioned mastering the *tu/vous* distinction (e.g. when speaking to the head teacher), and three others referred to the need to develop professional skills in spoken French (e.g. giving explanations to school students; giving pastoral advice). A few also reported progress in understanding children's vernacular speech. This group very generally reported experiencing informal correction, by teacher mentors, fellow assistants and even their pupils. The only writing task mentioned by any participants in this group was their project for the home university (a 5,000 word research report).

All workplace interns mentioned one or more aspect of spoken language as having improved during work experience: Pronunciation, listening comprehension, and overall fluency. After early challenges, most reported achieving effective performance at work; just one intern reported ongoing language difficulties, which affected her professional performance. Improved telephone skills were mentioned by three interns. In addition, most interns mentioned vocabulary development explicitly, including listening for and assimilating appropriate business expressions. The most distinctive aspect of language improvement for this particular group, however, concerned writing. Four interns mentioned

improved ability to carry out email correspondence in French, and form-filling, minute-taking and translation were also spoken about as tasks contributing to writing development. For example, 128 undertook book reviews and some high-profile translations for her team:

> The director of the whole [organisation] asked me to translate her biography for the magazines, for [Newspaper] and all that, and that made me feel - I was really pleased, but I was really stressed as it was up to me to do it, afterwards my boss just asked, "you're sure?" and off it went. (128, Visit 3)

Like the students at university, the interns reported monitoring and correction of their French by work colleagues, especially when writing (something they generally appreciated, though they valued becoming increasingly independent writers as the year progressed).

3.4. Section conclusion: Interactions between placement type, social networking and target language use

As shown above, participants on all types of placement formed multilingual networks when abroad, and continued to use English alongside French as part of their everyday experience. On all placement types, living arrangements varied, but only a minority shared accommodation with French speakers only. On all placement types, a rich environment of French input was available. However for all participants, the more accessible social networks typically involved bilingual or multilingual speakers, with whom they had to negotiate language choices as a dimension of building social relationships.

As teaching assistants and on work placement, English was seen as key to their role, whether undertaking English instruction, or carrying out office duties such as translations and email correspondence. This positive view of English was reinforced, for example, by families' willingness to hire language assistants as private English tutors for their children. In these settings, participants' English abilities were also attractive to professional colleagues during leisure time, e.g. when schoolteachers and professional colleagues seized the chance to practise their English. On the other hand these professional settings frequently offered access to French-using social environments (the school staffroom, or workplace restaurant, alongside classrooms and offices), and chances to interact with at least some French monolinguals (e.g. primary school teachers without much English, secondary school students). Away from the work setting, a small minority of teaching assistants reported socialising primarily with French speakers, whereas 4/6 interns said they did so (two with French boyfriends). It seemed that teaching assistants' primary social network was among other assistants who were of course international, and where English often

served as lingua franca. In this they resembled the student participants, who as we have seen found it relatively hard to make/sustain French-using networks when away from the daytime campus, and spent their leisure time predominantly with other Erasmus students. Again, the exceptions were those with a French boyfriend, those living with French speakers, and those who embedded themselves in some sort of organised leisure activity (music, sport). When on campus, student participants found it easier to develop some level of social relations with French classmates. Again however, several traded on their English abilities in order to 'earn' French conversation opportunities with peers, by taking part in tandem language exchanges.

Opportunities for language development did vary in detail by setting. Obviously the university based group had extensive access to formal instruction in French. The interns on work placement were expected to write emails and other texts in appropriate registers, and gained practical experience of translation and sometimes interpreting, as well as engaging in various kinds of professional spoken discourse. The teaching assistants reported very little focus on writing, but had to deal with different registers in spoken French. Yet as we have seen, students from all groups mainly stressed common themes of accent, vocabulary and overall oral proficiency as the domains where learning had been most noticeable to them.

4. Results b): The actuality of language development

The second analysis examined participants' performance on three different measures of language development at Pretest, during Visit 2 or 3 abroad, and at Posttest 1. Group size is clearly a limitation to these analyses, with 15, 8 and 6 participants in the university, assistantship and internship groups respectively. Another limitation is that all of the measures presented relate to aspects of oral proficiency (the EI Test, lexical diversity and fluency). Clearly it would be useful in future to examine proficiency in writing, given the participants' rather different accounts of writing opportunities when abroad. It is worth noting as well that the analyses aimed at getting an overview of linguistic development rather than a precise account of change between the discrete points in time "beginning" and "end" of the RA period. We acknowledge that all potential change (both attrition and development) may not be fully captured by these three data collection points.

4.1. L2 oral proficiency

Figure 1 shows participants' EI Test performance. The descriptive evidence shows a trend toward improvement over time for all three groups, alongside some differences between groups. To test whether the differences in time and group were sig-

nificant a mixed analysis of covariance (mixed ANCOVA) was conducted, with EI scores at Pretest as the covariate to control for individual differences prior to RA; its high reliability met a key ANCOVA assumption (Cronbach alpha = 0.92). The between-groups independent variable was placement type (teaching, university, work) and the within-groups independent variable was time. The dependent variable was the EI score. The interaction between placement and time was not significant, $F(2, 25) = 1.29$, p=.29. There was a statistically significant main effect for time, $F(2, 25) = 8.92$, p=.006, and the effect size was very large (partial eta squared = .26). Pairwise comparisons showed that the mean scores at V2 (M=80.46, SD=1.74) and at Post-1 (M=86.72, SD=1.85) were significantly different (p<.001). The main effect for placement did not reach statistical significance however: F(2, 25) = 1.26, p=.30. In summary, therefore, these results indicate that, in contrast with time, differences in placement type did not significantly impact on the development of oral proficiency.

Figure 1. Development of oral proficiency over time (EI mean scores by placement group)

Error Bars: 95% CI
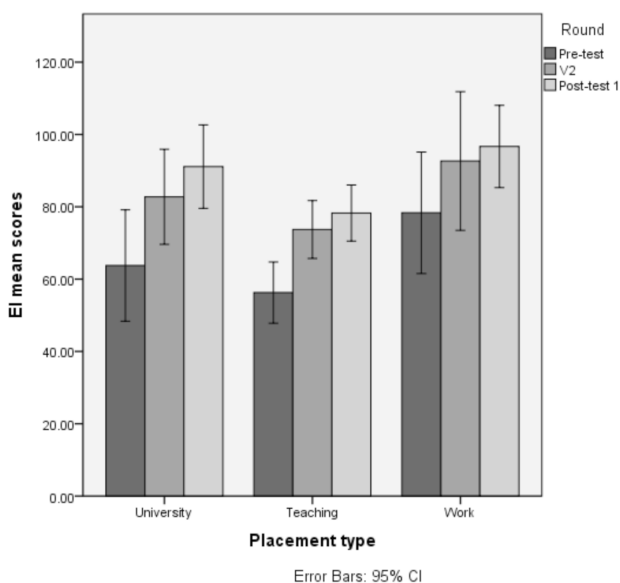
4.2. Lexical diversity

Figure 2 shows participants' lexical diversity scores (group means) as measured by D in the oral interview at the same assessment points (Pretest, Visit 2, Posttest 1); the trend is one of improvement over time in lexical diversity for all three groups. Similar to the results presented on oral proficiency, a mixed analysis of covariance

(ANCOVA) was conducted to assess the influence of placement type on changes in lexical diversity (as measured by D), using the Pretest D scores as the covariate to control for individual differences prior to RA. The between-group independent variable was placement type (teaching, university, work) and the within-group variable was time. The dependent variable was the D score. The interaction between placement and time was not significant, $F(2, 25) = .68$, p=.51. Although the main effect for time did not quite reach statistical significance, $F(2, 25) = 3.29$, p=.08, it did show a medium effect size (partial eta squared = .11). The lack of statistical significance could be due to the small sample size. There was no main effect for placement type: $F(2, 25) = .06$, p=.94. In summary, therefore, these results indicate that differences in placement type did not significantly impact on lexical diversity.

Figure 2. Development of lexical diversity over time (D mean scores by placement group)

Error Bars: 95% CI
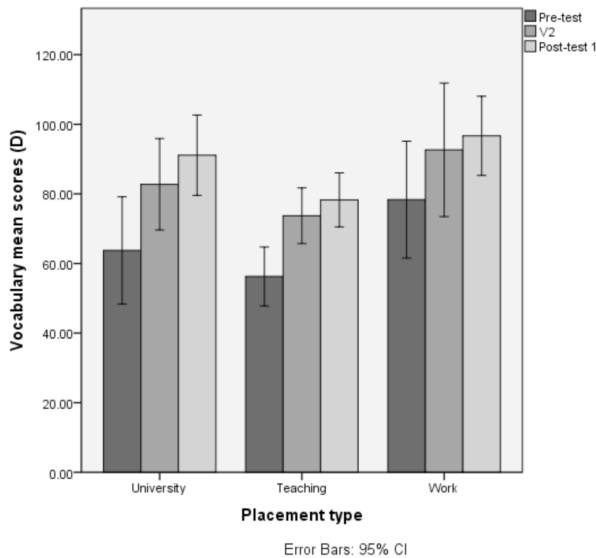
4.3. Fluency

Figure 3 shows participants' fluency scores (speaking rate) in the spoken narrative used at the Pretest and at Visit 3 (*Cat Story*). Once again, the comparison of the three placement types shows improvement over time in speaking rate for all three groups. An ANCOVA was conducted to assess the influence of placement type on changes in fluency over time, using fluency scores at Pretest as the covariate to control for individual differences prior to RA. The independent variable was placement type (teaching, university, work). The dependent vari-

able was fluency score at V3. After adjusting for the pretest fluency scores, the difference between Visit 3 scores was not significant, $F(2, 24) = .26$, p=.78. In summary, therefore, these results indicate that differences in placement type did not significantly impact on speaking rate.

Figure 3. Development of fluency over time (mean speaking rates by placement group, *Cat Story*)
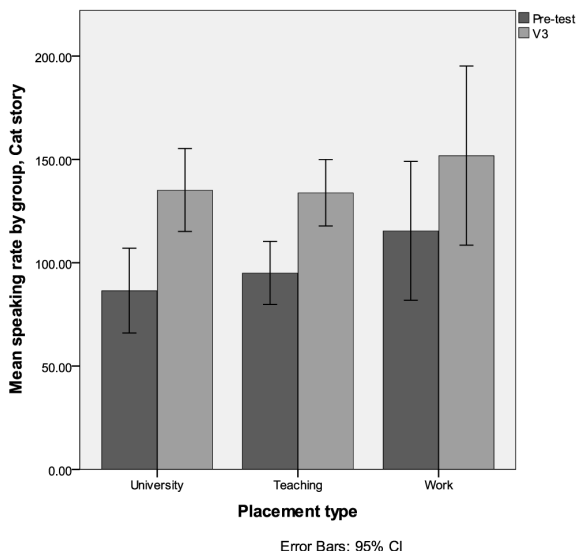
5. Discussion

This chapter set out to explore the possible contribution of placement type to language use and development, in the context of an academic year spent in France by British university students. Three different placement types were involved: studying French and/or other subjects at a partner university, working as a (paid) teaching assistant in one or more French primary or secondary schools, or undertaking a working internship in a French institution. Students made their placement choices for a variety of reasons, academic, professional or instrumental, and were aware before departure of the language learning opportunities available in principle in each setting, but also had some awareness of the placement-specific social challenges they might face.

To answer Research Question 1, we analysed the extensive interviews conducted with participants before and during their stay abroad. These interviews paint a rich picture of language use across all three types of placement. All had access in principle to a rich French medium experience, with extensive input avail-

able in university classrooms, schools and office environments. All environments offered mentors or instructors in some form, who were aware of the participants' need to use and learn French, and usually provided support for this. University-based participants attended formal language classes; workplace interns had their work monitored and corrected by colleagues, and teaching assistants were involved in staffroom discussions in French. However, in all three environments, participants' English language abilities were also seen as a valued asset. Teaching assistants and interns had been specifically recruited because of these abilities, and were expected to teach/use English as part of their professional role; these groups are described by Coleman as "intercultural mediators" (1997, p. 4). Participants attending university also found that English was a type of social capital which could earn them French conversational partners through tandem arrangements. In all settings, participants also encountered bilingual/multilingual speakers who were keen to practise their English informally with them, and had to develop strategies to manage these relationships. There was little between-group difference in living arrangements, and in leisure time activities. Thus, most members of all three groups lived with British or international peers, and only a minority lived with French-dominant speakers. Similar patterns obtained for leisure time activities; just a minority within each placement type formed close friendships and/or romantic partnerships with French speakers. Service encounters with strangers might involve French or English, to an unpredictable extent.

All participants were thus negotiating a bilingual/multilingual existence while in France. The degree to which French vs English was predominant varied partly because of very local circumstances (e.g. whether or not teachers in a host school spoke English), partly because of participants' individual characteristics and agency (e.g. how far they persisted with French usage, and/or sought French-using interlocutors, in mixed-language situations). This variability did not seem closely tied to placement type.

Concerning perceptions of language development, the participants in all placement types agreed in stressing oral proficiency, typically mentioning improvements in listening comprehension, in accent, in vocabulary, in fluency, and/or in spoken politeness. The only noticeable inter-group difference concerned reports on writing. University students and interns had regular opportunities to write in French, and the interns in particular mentioned writing as an important aspect of their development; on the other hand, writing did not feature at all in the accounts of the teaching assistants.

Regarding our second research question, relating to the impact of placement type on language development, the findings can be briefly summarised. Three domains were analysed: Overall French proficiency (as indicated through EI), oral fluency (as measured by speaking rate in the *Cat Story* narrative), and lexical diversity (as measured by D in oral interviews). The interns group was at some initial

advantage over the other two groups, but all three groups progressed similarly while abroad, making significant gains on all dimensions investigated. Given the rather different experiences of the three groups with respect to writing, it is a limitation that data on students' writing performance has not yet been analysed. Overall however, it seems that placement type by itself does not significantly affect key aspects of students' linguistic progress. That is to say, every placement type offers in principle a rich exposure to French and interactional opportunities; the extent to which participants made use of these did vary, but this variation seems to relate mainly to factors other than placement structures.

6. Conclusion

The quantitative findings from the research reported in this chapter confirm the overall positive linguistic benefits of residence abroad for advanced language learners noted in many other studies, at least in the oral domain. Regarding possible placement effects, the workplace interns started at some linguistic advantage over their peers. However, all groups made similar progress, indicating that placement type was not a major influence on development in spoken French.

The qualitative findings provide insights into aspects of the RA experience shared by all participants, which seem to outweigh the structural differences of placement type. All placements offered access, in principle, to a rich French-using environment. But as English speakers, our LANGSNAP participants possessed linguistic capital which many of their interlocutors in France were keen to access, so as to develop their own English resources. English is well established as a common Erasmus lingua franca among students from different linguistic backgrounds, even in environments where English L1 students are rare (Kalocsai, 2011). Internet communication also offers unlimited opportunity to sustain home social networks and relationships, which are mostly established English monolingual zones. Thus it is unsurprising that our participants found themselves negotiating bilingual and multilingual language practices, nor that the new social networks established abroad were rarely French-medium-dominant. Some individuals exploited personal talents such as music or sport, to establish strong French network ties; other individuals achieved this through local mentors (e.g. teachers, relatives, French housemates, or boyfriends), and some through personal decision making (e.g. to actively avoid other British students, to persist in speaking French in all service encounters). But regardless of placement type, most developed "mixed" networks and practices, where French and English alternated (with occasional use of other languages) with little variation through the year.

This chapter thus reaches similar conclusions to those of previous work on contextual factors, e.g. work on the homestay and its mixed impact on language learning. It seems that more refined analysis of students' personal motivations and characteristics, multilingual language practices, and emerging social relations is needed, if we are to begin to explain variation in the L2 development of RA participants. Other chapters in the volume make progress on various aspects of this project, and we expect that further LANGSNAP analyses will also contribute in due course to this "social turn" in study/ residence abroad research.

References

Alred, G. (1990). *Residence abroad and the cultural perceptions of students of foreign languages in higher education: ESRC end of award report, R000231196.* Swindon: Economic and Social Research Council.

Alred, G., & Byram, M. (2002). Becoming an intercultural mediator: A longitudinal study of residence abroad. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 23*, 339-352.

Alred, G., & Byram, M. (2006). British students in France: 10 years on. In M. Byram & A. Weng (Eds.), *Living and studying abroad: Research and practice* (pp. 210-230). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Barron, A. (2006). Learning to say 'you' in German: the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context. In M. A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 59-88). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Bley-Vroman, R. and Chaudron, C. (1994). Elicited imitation as a measure of second-language competence. In E.E. Tarone, S.M. Gass & A.D. Cohen (Eds.) *Research methodology in second language acquisition* (pp. 245-261). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bowden, H.W. (2007) *Proficiency and second-language neurocognition: A study of Spanish as a first and second language.* Unpublished PhD thesis. Washington, DC : Georgetown University.

Brecht, R.D., Davidson, D.E., & Ginsberg, R.B. (1995). Predictors of foreign language gain during study abroad. In B. F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 37-66). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

British Academy (2012). *Valuing the year abroad: A British Academy–UCML position statement.* Retrieved from http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Valuing_The_Year_Abroad.cfm

British Council (2005). *Breaking the barriers: 100 years of the language assistants programme 1905-2005.* London: British Council.

Coleman, J.A. (1996). *Studying languages: A survey of British and European students*. London: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.

Coleman, J.A. (1997). Residence abroad within language study. *Language Teaching, 30*, 1-20.

Collentine, J. (2009). Study abroad research: findings, implications and future directions. In M. H. Long & C. J. Doughty (Eds.), *The handbook of language teaching* (pp. 218-233). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Cook, H.M. (2008). *Socialising identities through speech style*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

De Jong, N.H., Steinel, M.P., Florijn, A., Schoonen, R. & Hulstijn, J H. (2012). Facets of speaking proficiency. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 34*, 5-34.

DeKeyser, R. (2010). Monitoring processes in Spanish as a second language during a study abroad program. *Foreign Language Annals, 43*, 80-92.

Dewaele, J.-M., & van Oudenhoven, J. P. (2009). The effect of multilingualism/ multiculturalism on personality: No gain without pain for Third Culture Kids? *International Journal of Multiculturalism, 6*, 443-459.

Dominguez, L., Tracy-Ventura, N., Arche, M.J., Mitchell, R. & Myles, F. (2013). The role of dynamic contrasts in the L2 acquisition of Spanish past tense morphology. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 16,* 558-577.

Ehrenreich, S. (2006). The assistant experience in retrospect and its educational and professional significance in teachers' biographies. In M. Byram & A. Weng (Eds.), *Living and studying abroad: Research and practice* (pp. 186-209). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Freed, B.F., Dewey, D.P., Segalowitz, N. & Halter, R. (2004). The Language Contact Profile. *Studies In Second Language Acquisition, 26,* 349-356.

Hokanson, S. (2000). Foreign language immersion homestays: Maximising the accommodation of cognitive styles. *Applied Language Learning, 11*, 239-264.

Ife, A. (2000). Language learning and residence abroad: how self-directed are students? *Language Learning Journal, 22*, 30-37.

Jackson, J. (2008). *Language, identity and study abroad: Sociocultural perspectives*. London: Equinox.

Jackson, J. (2010). *Intercultural journeys: From study to residence abroad*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kalocsai, K. (2011). The show of interpersonal involvement and the building of rapport in an ELF community of practice. In A. Archibald, A. Cogo & J. Jenkins (Eds.), *Latest trends in English as a lingua franca research* (pp. 113-138). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

King, R., Findlay, A., & Ahrens, J. (2010). *International student mobility literature review: Report to HEFCE, and co-funded by the British Council, U.K. National Agency for Erasmus*. Higher Education Funding Council. Retrieved from http://www.british-council.org/hefce_bc_report2010.pdf

Kinginger, C. (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case histories of Americans in France. *Modern Language Journal, 92*, 1-124.

Klapper, J., & Rees, J. (2012). University residence abroad for foreign language students: Analysing the linguistic benefits. *The Language Learning Journal, 40*, 335-358.

Lafford, B.A. (2006). The effects of study abroad vs classroom contexts on Spanish SLA: Old assumptions, new insights and future research directions. In C. A. Klee & T. L. Face (Eds.), *Selected proceedings of the 7th conference on the acquisition of Spanish and Portuguese as first and second languages*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

Lafford, B.A., & Collentine, J. (2006). The effects of study abroad and classroom contexts on the acquisition of Spanish as a second language: From research to application. In B. A. Lafford & R. Salaberry (Eds.), *Spanish second language acquisition: From research findings to teaching applications* (pp. 103-126). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Lennon, P. (1990). Investigating fluency in EFL: A quantitative approach. *Language Learning, 40,* 387-417.

Llanes, À. (2011). The many faces of study abroad: An update on the research on L2 gains emerged during a study abroad experience. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 8*, 189-215.

Llanes, À. & Muñoz, C. (2009). A short stay abroad: does it make a difference? *System*, 37, 353-365.

Lord, G. (2006). Defining the indefinable: Study abroad and phonological memory abilities. In C.A. Klee & T.L. Face (Eds.), *Selected proceedings of the 7th conference on the acquisition of Spanish and Portuguese as first and second languages* (pp. 40-46). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

MacWhinney, B. (2000). *The CHILDES project: Tools for analyzing talk. Third Edition.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

McKee, G., Malvern D.D. and Richards, B.J. (2000). Measuring vocabulary diversity using dedicated software. *Literary and Linguistic Computing, 15*, 323–37.

Meara, P. (1994). The year abroad and its effects. *Language Learning Journal, 10*, 32-38.

Mitchell, R. (2014). *Social networks, target language interaction and second language acquisition during the year abroad: a longitudinal study. ESRC End of Award Report RES-062-23-2996*. Swindon : Economic and Social Research Council.

Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2002). *Student mobility and narrative in Europe: The new strangers*. New York: Routledge.

O'Brien, I., Segalowitz, N., Freed, B., & Collentine, J. (2007). Phonological memory predicts second language oral fluency gains in adults. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 29*, 557-581.

Ortega, L., Iwashita, N., Rabie, S. and Norris, J.M. (1999) *A multilanguage comparison of measures of syntactic complexity*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, National Foreign Language Resource Center.

Papatsiba, V. (2006). Study abroad and experiences of cultural distance and proximity: French Erasmus students. In M. Byram & A. Weng (Eds.), *Living and studying abroad: Research and practice* (pp. 108-133). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Pellegrino Aveni, V. (2005). *Study abroad and second language use: Constructing the self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Regan, V., Lemee, I., & Howard, M. (2009). *The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Rivers, W.P. (1998). Is being there enough? The effects of homestay placements on language gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 31*, 492-500.

Segalowitz, N. (2010). *The cognitive bases of second language fluency.* New York: Routledge.

Segalowitz, N., & Freed, B. F. (2004). Context, contact, and cognition in oral fluency acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 26*, 173-199.

Segalowitz, N., Freed, B.F., Collentine, J., Lafford, B.A., Lazar, N., & Diaz-Campos, M. (2004). Comparison of Spanish second language acquisition in two different learning contexts: Study abroad and the domestic classroom. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 10*, 1-18.

Teichler, U. (2004). Temporary study abroad: The life of ERASMUS students. *European Journal of Education, 39*, 395-408.

Tracy-Ventura, N., McManus, K., Norris, J. & Ortega, L. (2014). 'Repeat as much as you can': Elicited imitation as a measure of oral proficiency in French. In P. Leclercq, A. Edmonds & H Hilton (eds.), *Measuring L2 proficiency: Perspectives from SLA* (pp. 143-163). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Tragant, E. (2012). Change or stability in learners' perceptions as a result of study abroad. In C. Munoz (Ed.), *Intensive exposure experiences in second language learning* (pp. 161-190). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Wilkinson, S. (2002). The omnipresent classroom during summer study abroad: American students in conversation with their French hosts. *Modern Language Journal, 86*, 157-173.

Willis, F.M., Doble, G., Sankarayya, U., & Smithers, A. (1977). *Residence abroad and the student of modern languages: A preliminary survey.* Bradford: University of Bradford Modern Languages Centre.

Chapter 7
Erasmus students: Joining communities of practice to learn French?

Agnès Bracke and Sandrine Aguerre
University of Bordeaux Montaigne

This chapter investigates the language learning of incoming Erasmus students in Bordeaux, and focuses on pragmatic aspects of this language learning. It postulates that the diversity of the communities of practice these students will join has an influence on their language learning. First, it investigates the communities of practice which the investigated population (Erasmus students from different countries and studying various subjects) actually join (in the personal, educational and public domains). This leads to observation of differences in community of practice membership between Erasmus students who share living accommodation and Erasmus students who do not. Secondly, we investigate the differences between these two groups as far as the pragmatic aspects of language learning are concerned.

1. Introduction

The research study reported in this chapter takes an action-oriented approach and has an interest in pragmatic aspects of language, in order to understand and support the language learning of Erasmus students undertaking study abroad. It investigates incoming Erasmus students who spend a semester or an academic year in higher education institutions in Bordeaux (France), whether majoring in languages or not. We aim at using the concept of *community of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to analyse how Erasmus students involved in social activities related to study abroad in Bordeaux learn (or rather, continue to learn) French language.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Action oriented approach

In agreement with the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR: Council of Europe, 2001), we consider language learners as "social agents" who have to accomplish tasks. These tasks may or may not require language to be

used, and they occur during the social activity of the language learner/user. Thus, the CEFR assumes that language use is always part of a social activity and that language always acquires its meaning in context. Therefore, the language used or learned depends greatly on the contexts students are exposed to. Language learning always occurs in context and requires the learners to be active and performing tasks using this language. The CEFR defines four domains in which social activity is likely to occur: educational, public, personal and professional.

2.2. Communities of practice

Theories about communities of practice refer to a situated perspective on cognition and learning that considers that "any knowledge, however theoretical it seems, is the product of a social space and a social practice and doesn't exist in itself" (Berry, 2008: 16 – our translation). They regard learning as a process of participation in social practices. For Wenger (2005), in a given social context, individuals take part in a social activity that is organised to succeed as a *joint enterprise*. As individuals interact with other individuals, they perform activities and produce artefacts that display this shared experience. This in turn produces contextualised knowledge, and this collective learning both produces and structures practices among the group, i.e. it shapes the group of individuals into a community of practice. Inside this community, learning therefore is both a means and a condition for the integration of new members. In a community of practice, the activity to achieve the joint enterprise leads the individuals to build a shared repertoire. The level of integration of individuals is correlated to their engagement.

Communities of practice are a specific level of analysis, different from the analysis of specific interactions (individual level), or of the behaviour of social groups (social group level). One person can belong to several communities of practice, and a given social group would constitute a constellation of practices, i.e. several communities of practice related to each other, for different possible reasons (historical, organisational, institutional, geographical, competitive or collaborative: Wenger, 2005). The concept seems to us a good tool to investigate Erasmus students at a collective level, but also as individuals who may interact with different people.

The Erasmus programme is an institutional project in which different people from different institutions share enterprises and interact on an individual level; therefore, it can be seen as a constellation of practices. As shown by Dervin (2008) with his notion of *groupalité*, we are aware that we cannot limit the sociality of Erasmus students to being a group. We will consider that, by taking part in this programme, students get an "Erasmus" status, through which they can join or form different communities, made up of Erasmus students only, or not. These different possible communities of practice are represented schematically in Figure 1. We

have organised them according to two dimensions that reflect the objectives of the Erasmus programme: i.e. to foster students' mobility during their studies, but also to foster general intercultural understanding among Europeans (Erasmus Mundus, 2009).

**Figure 1.** Erasmus students and potential communities of practice
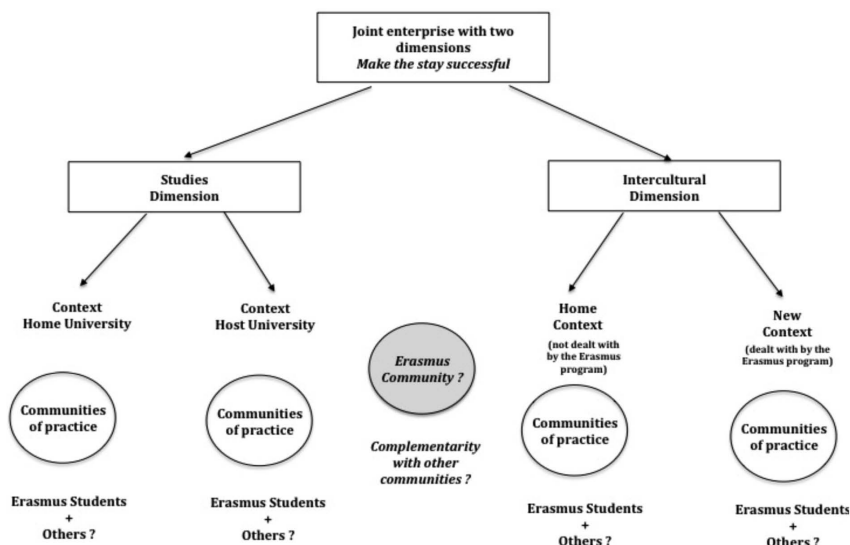
Our study focuses on the communities Erasmus students may form or join during their stay abroad. We consider these communities within three broad domains: educational, personal and public (the professional domain is not considered in this study). These domains are parallel to the three major settings in which students undertaking residence abroad are believed to have access to communicative inter-action, according to Kinginger (2009): educational institutions and classrooms, places of residence, and service encounters and other informal contact with expert speakers.

2.3. Language learning and communities of practice for Erasmus students

We adopt a contextualised approach to language learning and are interested in the learning of pragmatic aspects of language. Building on the findings of Barron (2003) about important development in pragmatic competence of study abroad informants, our study investigates the relationship between the pragmatic language learning of Erasmus students and the communities of practice they join when in Bordeaux.

Figure 2 represents the way we think about this pragmatic language learning. We assume that Erasmus students, when in Bordeaux, join different communities of practice, possibly with various levels of engagement in these communities. Therefore, they learn how to act according to the practices in force in these communities (cf. Element 1 in Figure 2) - including how to use French language related to these new practices. Thus, they learn lexicon and grammar, but also develop a pragmatic and discursive competence (cf. Element 2 in Figure 2). Interacting with experts inside these communities, they have informal access to some metadiscursive and metalinguistic thinking (Gombert, 1993) about discursive aspects of the effective practices of the community; this thinking is elicited when focusing on being successful in the joint enterprise of the community (cf. Element 3 in Figure 2). Pragmatic elements of language learning become *transferable* via the decontextualisation process (by decontextualisation, we mean making explicit the characteristics of the context in which structures are encountered) and the recontextualisation process (the process of setting the structures in new contexts). This transfer process assumes that students are also able to establish connections between different discursive elements learnt in different communities (cf. Element 4 in Figure 2).

Figure 2. Erasmus students, communities of practice and language learning
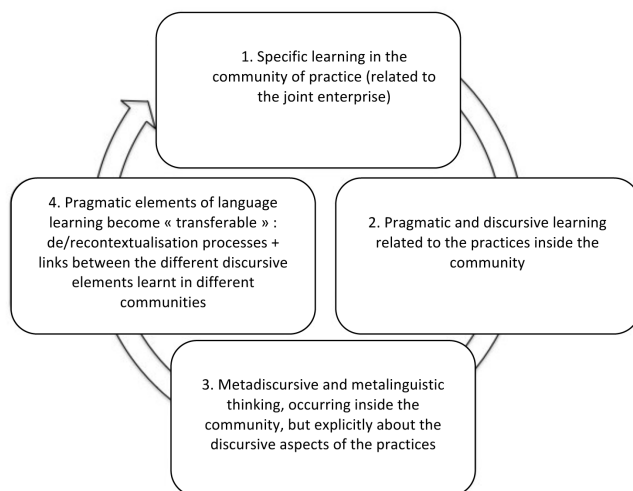
After analysing the communities of practice joined by the Erasmus students, this chapter investigates what students report about their language learning during their stay, focusing on pragmatic aspects. This focus is obtained by working on what they report about the discursive strategies they used during their interaction in French.

A strategy, as defined in the CEFR, is "any organised, purposeful and regulated line of action chosen by an individual to carry out a task" (Council of Europe, 2001, p.9). We will use the term *discursive strategy* to refer generally to strategies that are used in discourse. This is a broad notion that, according to Gumperz (1982) refers both to linguistic and sociocultural knowledge that needs to be shared in order to maintain (conversational) involvement. It is difficult to define and delimit discursive strategies precisely, as they can be related to different levels of discourse management (planning, actual speech or writing, revision) and to different linguistic levels (micro or macro level: from choosing a word or a structure to designing general discourse organisation). Besides, discursive strategies vary according to the context and the aim of the discourse studied. For our purposes, we drew up a list of discursive strategies students may use when interacting with native speakers (see Appendix, Question 17). The sample of strategies we selected are strategies mainly for interaction (although some could be used in all language activities), and which aim either at maintaining and managing the interaction, or at managing the relationship between the context of the interaction and the linguistic structures used in this context. When designing this sample, we included strategies related to each of the four categories of the CEFR: planning, execution, evaluation and repair.

In French SLA literature, it is more common to talk about *communication strategies* (see for example Behrent, 2007, or Suso Lopez, 2001), and to distinguish between these and *learning strategies*. This is another reason for us to favour the term *discursive strategies*. Like Gaonac'h (1990), we consider that the distinction between communication and learning strategies is not completely satisfactory. First because, when learning a foreign language, communicating is a means for learning: When we try to keep the conversation going (using communication strategies) we are also maintaining the means of learning. Secondly, the limit between communication strategies and learning strategy is unclear: For example, making explicit the meaning of a word is related both to communicating and learning. On many occasions, only the intention of the participant could justify qualifying the strategy used as a communication one or as a learning one. We consider that discursive strategies can serve purposes both of communication and of learning, and therefore prefer this term.

We consider an action to be a strategy as long as it can be identified as a choice meant to achieve a specific aim, either by the subject who is using it or by an external observer. Thus, a research participant does not always explicitly design strategies as such, but he/she can identify a strategy in hindsight. We will use the expression that Suso Lopez (2001) borrowed from Faerch and Kasper (1983) about communication strategies and say that discursive strategies are "potentially conscious": although the subjects are not necessarily aware of these strategies at the time of the interaction, they can in retrospect think about their aim and their cognitive process.

The aim of our study is to ascertain what types of pragmatic and discursive learning take place inside the communities of practice, and whether metalinguistic and metacognitive thinking about this learning is possible (cf. Element 3 in Figure 2). We will also investigate the connection between metalinguistic and metacognitive thinking and participation in communities of practice. This is a necessary step in order to investigate in future research the possibilities for the transfer of pragmatic learning (cf. Element 4 in Figure 2).

3. Protocol and population

As it is important for us not to limit our study to language or linguistics students, our long-term aim is to take into account all institutions involved in the Erasmus programme in Bordeaux. For the preliminary study reported in this chapter, we decided to work with six institutions, representative of different types of study mobility. On the methodological level, this preliminary study allowed us to make the people in the *Relations Internationales* (RI) departments within each institution aware of our research, and to test our methodological tools. On the epistemological level, it allowed us to test the relevance of our presuppositions and our hypotheses.

Figure 3. Participants' countries of origin
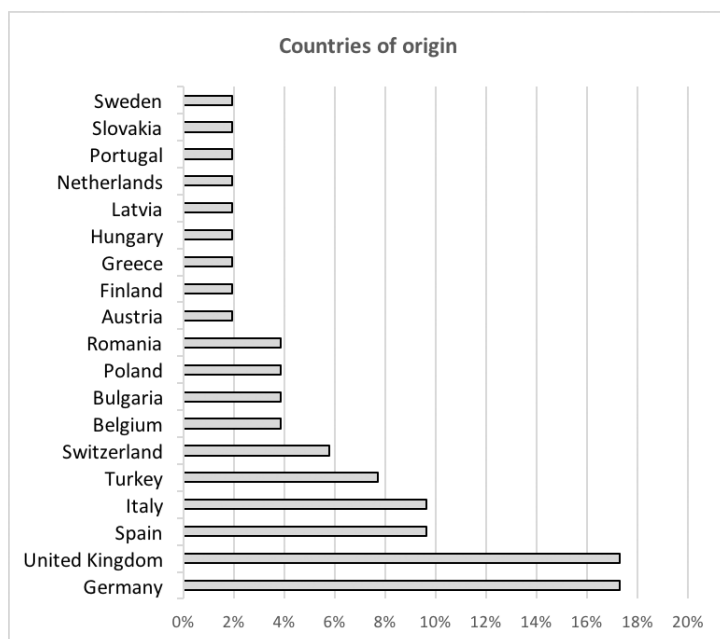
Figure 4. Subjects studied by participants
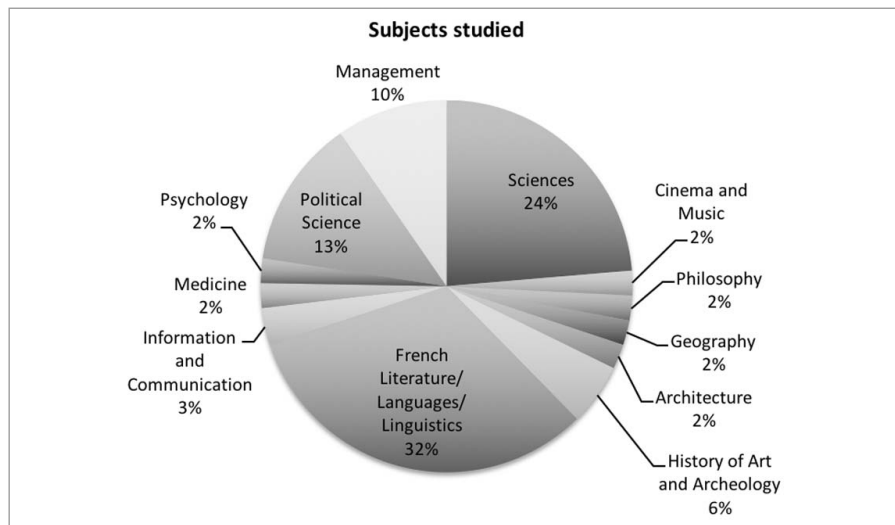
The chapter presents results obtained via an online questionnaire (cf Appendix). This questionnaire was designed with two kinds of questions. The first category focused on social activities in the personal, educational and public domains, and the second on participants' attitude towards language use and learning.

The questionnaire was sent via email to our partners in the RI departments in the six target institutions, who forwarded it to their incoming Erasmus students, in two phases: the first part of the questionnaire on arrival in Bordeaux, and the second part towards the end of their stay. We obtained 52 answers for each part of the questionnaire. Students came from 19 different countries (see Figure 3), while 73% were Bachelor's students, 23% were Master's students and 4% were PhD students. As stated previously, our population was studying varied subjects, although language, literature and linguistics students formed the biggest category of students (see Figure 4). We had no objective access to their level of proficiency in French, but 60% of them declared an intermediate level, and 40% an advanced level.

Due to the number of students we aimed to get data from, and the need to prioritise questions most directly relevant to our investigation, we did not determine in detail the mobility capital (including personal history and previous experience of mobility: Murphy-Lejeune, 2002) of the participants. However, as part of our research investigates the relationship between membership of the communities of practice and the learning of pragmatic aspects of language, we included questions to identify the participants' attitude toward French language learning.

Considering the usual requirements of higher education institutions in Europe, we expected incoming Erasmus students in Bordeaux to aim at improving their French language level, and indeed, French language learning was the main objective for the Erasmus students we surveyed. When answering an open question about their objectives for their stay in France, more than 90% mentioned progress in French language, compared with lesser frequencies for other hoped-for outcomes, such as: knowledge about French culture (53.3%); personal development/becoming a more independent person (43.3%); meeting people from different countries (26.6%); progress in the subject they are studying (23.3%); and benefiting from the quality of French higher education (13.3%).

Regarding the means to improve their French language level, when asked whether they favoured "situations where they would have an opportunity to speak French", a large majority of respondents (77%) said they did; fewer than 6% said they did not, and 17.2% "did not think about it". In addition, 57% of students reported attending French lessons, although these classes were not compulsory for their studies. Not surprisingly, self-declared intermediate students were more likely to attend French lessons (62%, against 50% of the advanced students).

We can say that our participants cared about improving their language skills, and for this purpose relied mainly on "real life situations", although more than half of the respondents also attended classes. Only a small minority (11.4%) neither attended French classes nor favoured situations where they could practice French.

4. Hypotheses and results

4.1. Social activities and communities of practice for incoming Erasmus students in Bordeaux

So far, the study has confirmed that Erasmus students take advantage of *situations of communication* in Bordeaux to improve their level of French. Next we focus on the social activities they were likely to take part in. Along with identifying their interlocutors (students or not, native speakers or not) in these activities, we clarify what communities of practice they joined. This part of the investigation is organised according to the CEFR domains.

4.1.1. Hypotheses regarding place of residence

The place of residence has an a priori impact on the communities which students join in the personal domain (i.e. simply by living with other people, they

will necessarily share tasks related to organising and managing their life together). However we assume that the place of residence (whether living with other people or not) has an impact on the variety of interlocutors students have access to, not only in the personal domain but also more generally.

Our specific hypotheses concern the different influence of the place of residence on the communities of practice Erasmus students join in the public and educational domains:

1. As they all have the same Erasmus student status, the place of residence will make no difference to the communities they join, and the variety of interlocutors they encounter, in the educational domain.
2. The place of residence has an impact on the communities they join in the public domain.

4.1.2. Process: questions relating to communities of practice

In order to identify the communities of practice Erasmus students would join, and whether these consisted of students or nonstudents, and of French native speakers or foreign native speakers, our approach was the following:

- Ask about the kinds of people they interacted with in general over their stay, in order to identify the interlocutors they had access to overall.
- For the personal domain, ask about accommodation type, and who they were living with.
- For the public and educational domains, draw up a list of activities they were likely to perform, ask them to confirm whether they did them, and who with.

We also asked questions about the organisation of activities, to assess participants' engagement in the communities identified.

4.1.3. Results

4.1.3.1. Personal domain

Concerning living accommodation, participants reported the following: 51.4% lived in a shared house or flat, 37.1% lived in a *chambre universitaire*, and 11.4% lived in a flat on their own. In Bordeaux, a *chambre universitaire* is an individual 9 m^2 bedroom, in a building with shared kitchen and bathrooms. The kitchen facilities are, in reality, rarely used and there are few contacts directly related to everyday life between students in these buildings. This is why we contrast students who live in a shared house or flat (or *shared accommodation students*, from now on SAS) with students living on their own or in a *chambre universitaire*, who do not have to

take part in collective everyday activities with flatmates (*non shared accommodation students*, NSAS).

The characteristics of the housemates of the SAS group are shown in Figure 5. (Participants could report as many categories of housemate as they wished, so that responses total more than 100%.) Among this group, four situations emerge with almost equal frequency:

- living with other Erasmus students from their own country;
- living with Erasmus students from other countries;
- living with French students;
- living with French non-students.

Participants did not live with people from their own country, unless they were also Erasmus students. Overall it seems that the *Erasmus student* status was more prominent than the *home* characteristic of the non-French housemates they chose to live with. However, they were willing to live with French non-students, suggesting that *French native speaker* status was more important than student status.

Figure 5. Flatmate types reported by SAS group
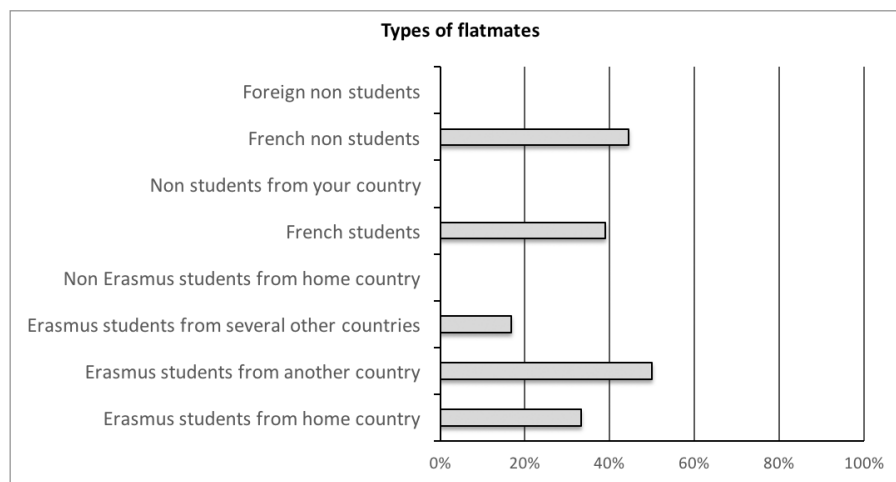
The SAS group clearly have potential for contact, in the personal domain, with a broader variety of people than the members of the NSAS group. How far these two groups interacted differently in practice, is explored below.

Figure 6 shows the type of interlocutors students in each group (SAS and NSAS) perceived they had access to, in general, during their stay.

Figure 6. Percentages of participants declaring an interaction with suggested interlocutors (RI= Relations Internationales)
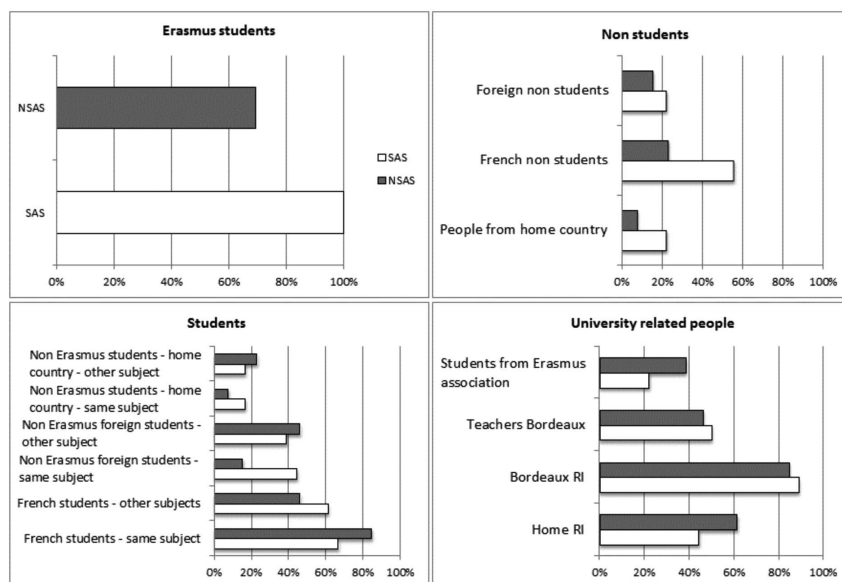

Figure 6 confirms our first hypothesis: overall, SAS do communicate with more diverse people in general (they score higher in the *non students* category), and NSAS tend to communicate more with students (either French or foreign) and with Erasmus associations. Thus it seems that students who have less variety in the personal domain have more intensive interaction among students in general, and have access to French native speakers mainly through students met during their studies. This means that SAS have at least peripheral participation in more diverse communities of practice than NSAS.

4.1.3.2. Educational domain

We investigated the communities formed/joined by participants in the educational domain via 1) questions about informal social activities (as opposed to activities organised by the institution) such as collaborative work outside the classroom, and 2) questions about social activities related to more institutional or administrative aspects of their stay.

We assumed that all participants had to deal with the institutional and administrative aspects of their stay, so we did not ask for confirmation. For informal educational activities, we were surprised to observe that, overall, less than half of the participants (48.6%) reported such activities. However, we can

note it seems easier, or at least more frequent, for students living in shared accommodation to take part in informal activities related to their studies: The SAS group do these informal activities more than the others (56% against 41%).

Figure 7. Interlocutors within educational activities, for SAS and NSAS groups
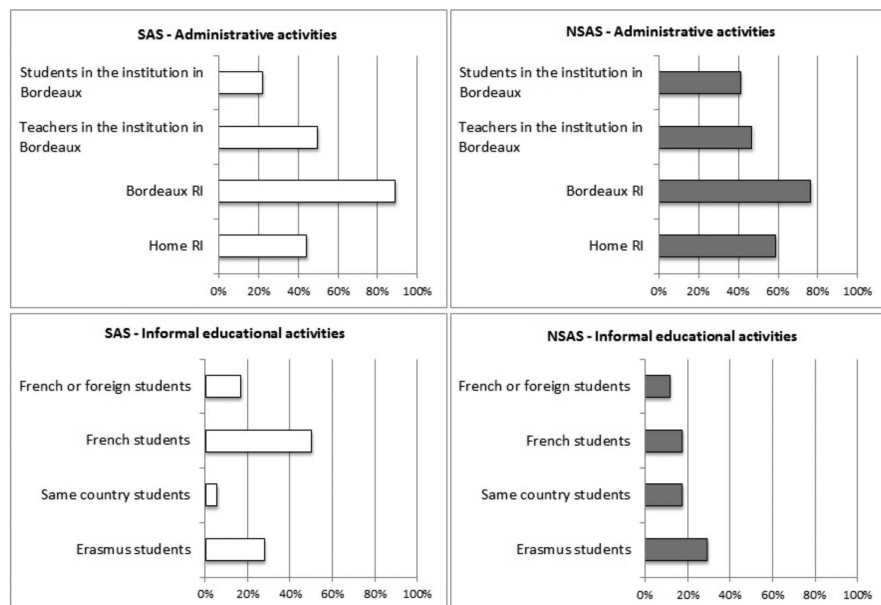
The graphs in Figure 7 present the interlocutors of SAS and NSAS groups, for these educational activities (both institutional and informal). The following points can be made about the informal interactions of SAS and NSAS with fellow students:

- there is no substantial difference in the numbers of Erasmus or foreign students they interact with;
- SAS have more interaction with French students;
- NSAS have more interaction with students from their home country.

As for institutional interlocutors, we can note that:

- SAS seem to interact somewhat more frequently with the host RI;
- NSAS resort a bit more frequently to their home RI;
- Overall, NSAS seem to resort more to institutional support than SAS.

Contrary to what we expected, therefore, there is an overall difference between SAS and NSAS in the educational domain as well: SAS seem to join more informal and diverse communities of practice than NSAS.

4.1.3.3. Public domain

We also investigated the groups that are formed or joined by students in the public domain via questions about activities to discover Bordeaux and the area, and activities related to their home culture. Most students reported activities to discover Bordeaux and the area: 82.9% in total. SAS were more involved (88.9%) in these activities than NSAS (76.5%). The situation is different for the activities related to their home culture, where 66.7% of SAS were involved, against only 17.6% of NSAS.

There is also a difference about the companions of SAS and NSAS for the activities to discover Bordeaux, as seen in Figure 8. In this analysis we have differentiated between activities offered by organisations and by individuals.

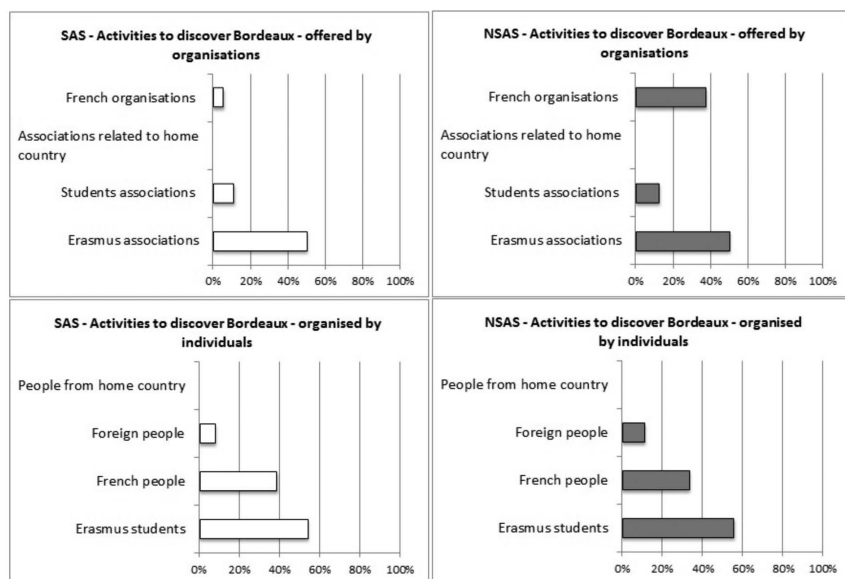**Figure 8.** Activities in public domain: discovering Bordeaux and the area, for SAS and NSAS groups

Figure 8 shows that both groups of students seemed to benefit similarly from the University offer, but that NSAS resorted more to other institutional interlocutors, such as the *Office du tourisme*. As in the educational domain, NSAS, who have fewer resources from their personal domain than SAS, resort more to institutional means in the public domain. When the activities were organised by individuals,

however, patterns were similar, and both categories of students did these activities with the same kinds of people: Erasmus students above all, then French people and finally, and significantly less, non-student foreign people.

We already noted that SAS did more activities related to their home culture. Organisation of these activities was different as well, as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Activities in public domain related to home culture, for SAS and NSAS groups
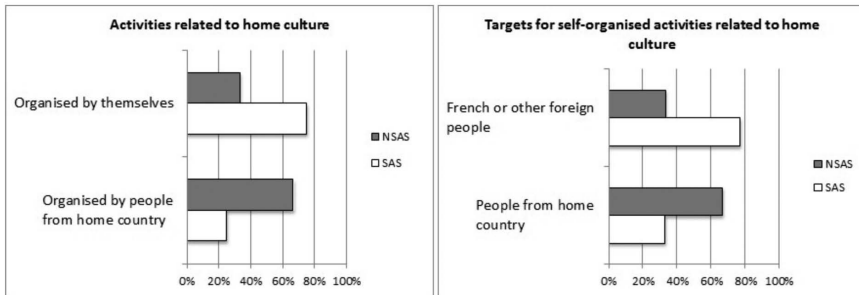
NSAS tended to rely more on people from their home country than SAS. For 66.7% of NSAS, home culture activities were organised by people from their country, when this was the case for only 25% of SAS. On the other hand, SAS tended to be a lot more active in organising such activities (75% organised some themselves, when only 33% of NSAS did). SAS also tended to share their expertise in their own culture with different people (see above) which suggests not only a larger diversity of interlocutors in the public domain, but also a stronger mutual engagement in these communities of practice.

Overall therefore, the place of residence has a clear influence on the communities of practice students join in the public domain. SAS have more diverse practices, these practices are more informal, and they involve more diverse people, at a higher level of engagement.

4.1.4. Intermediate conclusions

SAS seem to have a larger variety of interlocutors, both in general and within each domain we investigated. This does not mean they interact less with other Erasmus (or foreign) students, but that they also interact with other interlocutors. It seems more difficult for NSAS to interact with noninstitutional interlocutors: The less variety there is in the personal domain, the more students centre their interaction on the student population and institutional interlocutors for the educational domain, and on home country related people and organisations in the public domain.

As the "informal and improvised" characteristics of communities of practices are important (Brown & Duguid, 1991), we can say that NSAS have more trouble joining existing informal communities of practice in Bordeaux, or forming communities with host country residents. SAS seem to join more diverse communities of practice than NSAS.

4.2. Variety of communities of practice and learning of pragmatic aspects of language

As mentioned earlier, Erasmus students aim at improving their French language level, through engagement in real life interactions. In 3.2, we observed that SAS seem to relate to a wider variety of interlocutors than NSAS, in more diverse communities of practice, where they seem to have a stronger engagement. Next, we investigated whether SAS and NSAS have a different attitude towards pragmatic aspects of language learning. Before doing so, we needed to establish that learning of these pragmatic aspects does occur for our participants. This area of the research was reflected in the second part of the survey instrument (Question 14 onward: See Appendix).

4.2.1. Learning of pragmatic aspects for general population

4.2.1.1. Hypothesis

Our main hypothesis was that, being in France, students would be confronted with real life contexts, and would notice and care about the pragmatic dimension of language.

4.2.1.2. Process

First, we asked participants whether they discussed language issues (with anyone) and, if so, to tick what these issues were related to: "meaning of words or structures", "grammatical construction of some structures, how to use the language in context (how to choose words and structures)", and "how to interpret the aim of the situation or the intention of the interlocutor". We also asked them who they discussed these issues with.

Another set of questions investigated participants' awareness of discursive strategies. Question 16 asked whether, during their stay, they used "means to adapt what you were saying to the situation". This was a yes/no question, with the option to add examples if they wanted to. Question 17 consisted of a list of 12 discursive and learning strategies to tick if they used them, plus a "none of these" option. Finally, to assess metacognitive activity around these strategies, Question 18 asked whether they discussed strategies with anyone, and if so, who with.

4.2.1.3. Results

Participants' answers to the question about the language issues they discussed during their stay are summarised in Figure 10. These tend to confirm that use of structures in context attracts as much reflection as the meaning of words and grammar structures themselves. The last item (interpreting a situation) received fewer responses than the others, either because participants may not have faced this kind of issue, or because they did not address them explicitly in discussion.

Figure 10. Percentage of participants declaring having discussed language issues
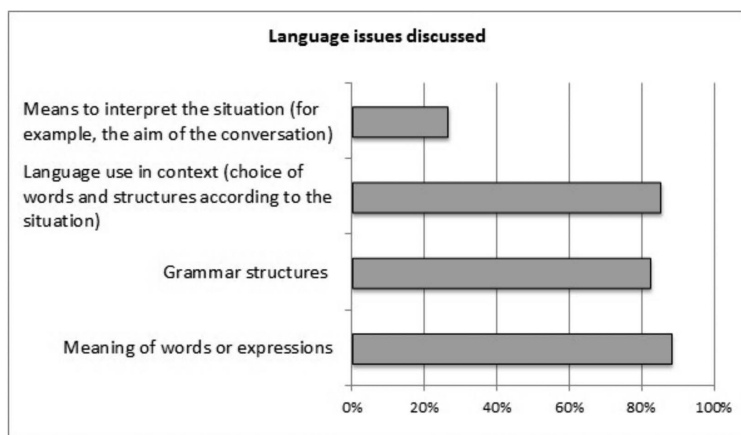
As far as the use of discursive strategies is concerned, just over half of the students agreed they used "means to adapt what they were saying to the situation" (54%). Among those, some were able to give examples, such as paying attention to register, using intonation and situation to understand key ideas, asking for explanations, etc. Overall, this score shows a rather low awareness of using discursive strategies, and we noticed there was no significant variation depending on participants' level of French, nor on attendance at French lessons.

In response to Question 17, which offered a list of strategies, participants were able to identify those strategies they used: None of the students selected "none of these strategies". However only 35% of the students said they discussed these strategies with someone, while 65% did not. This suggests a low awareness of strategies, and shows a lack of metalinguistic and metacognitive thinking about them.

To sum up, on the one hand 85% reported having discussed issues of language use in context, and all reported using at least some discursive strategies, while on the other hand their ability to refer spontaneously and explicitly to means of adapting their language was limited. From this we conclude that although the pragmat-

ic dimension of language use is something learners actually deal with, it is not the focus of their language learning, and they do not explicitly reflect upon it on a metalinguistic or metacognitive level, or discuss it as such with other people – not even French teachers. Interestingly, neither French lesson attendance nor French level led to any significant variation in responses.

Our hypothesis concerning pragmatics is thus partly confirmed: student participants do care about pragmatic aspects of language, as they discuss related issues with their interlocutors, and they perceive themselves to use discursive strategies. However, this attention to pragmatic aspects remains at the level of language use, and students seem not to develop this situated problem-solving on a metalinguistic or metacognitive level. Next, we compare this learning of pragmatic aspects for SAS and NSAS groups.

4.2.2. Comparison of learning of pragmatic aspects for SAS and NSAS population.

4.2.2.1. Hypotheses

We can sum up our hypotheses on this issue by saying that we expect variation in communities of practice to imply different levels of awareness of pragmatic aspects of language, for both use and learning. This expectation is captured in four hypotheses:

1. SAS look more for opportunities to practice French and will take advantage of the variety of interlocutors to talk about language issues with more people;
2. SAS are more aware of the importance of pragmatic aspects in language use;
3. SAS use a wider range of discursive strategies;
4. SAS reflect more on pragmatic aspects at a metalinguistic and metacognitive level.

4.2.2.2. Process: Questions relating to attitude towards language learning

We will investigate these hypotheses by comparing the answers of the SAS and NAS groups to the questions already described in 4.2.1.2.

4.2.2.3. Results

Hypothesis 1: Figure 11 shows some link between the place of residence and the tendency to favour situations where participants practise French: over 80% of SAS said they favoured these, and none said they did not. Among NSAS, 70.6% favoured these situations, but 11.8% did not. There was little difference in response to the third option, "I did not think about it" (16.7% of SAS answers, 17.6% of NSAS).

Figure 11. Attitude towards language practice: Comparison between SAS and NSAS groups
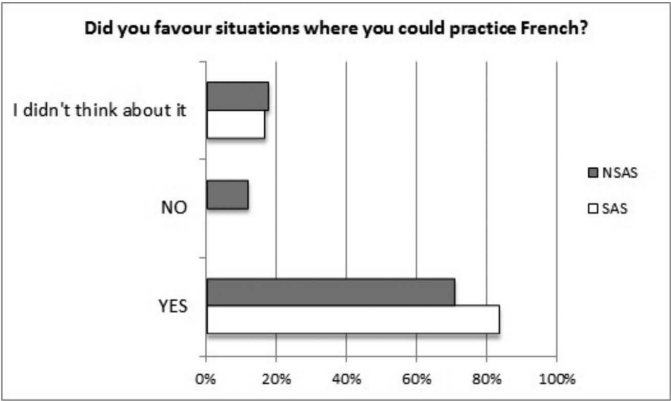

In Figure 12, we can observe that SAS talk about language issues more frequently with most types of interlocutor, thus confirming our first hypothesis. The only kind of interlocutors NSAS interact with more is Erasmus students from their home country.

Figure 12. Interlocutors when discussing French language issues: Comparison between SAS and NSAS groups
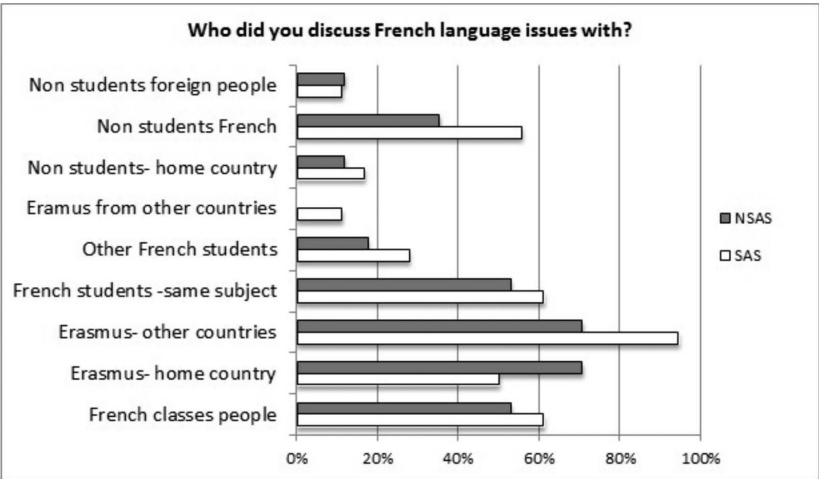
Hypothesis 2: As shown in Figure 13, more SAS declared having used means to adapt their speech to the situations than NSAS, which tends to confirm our hypothesis that SAS are more aware of pragmatic aspects in language use.

Figure 13. Speech adaptations to situations of communication: Comparison between SAS and NSAS groups
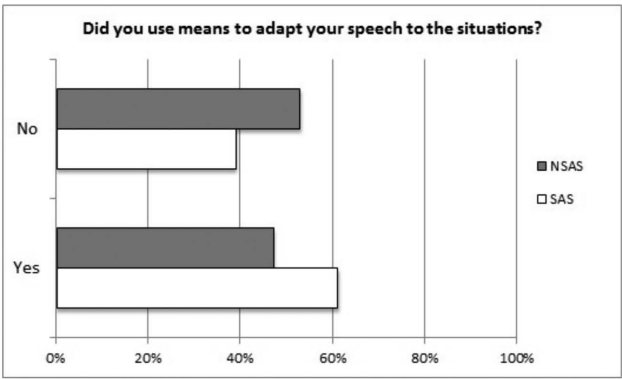
Hypothesis 3: Question 17 invited participants to tick the discursive/ learning strategies they used, and here we were unable to find a trend: Six strategies were ticked by more NSAS than SAS, four by more SAS than NSAS and two strategies were selected by almost the same numbers of SAS and NSAS. There was no regularity in regard to the individual strategies ticked either. Our third hypothesis is not confirmed by these results, as we cannot say SAS use a wider range of strategies. Thus, the variety of interlocutors does not seem to have an impact on the range of strategies used, or at least, our questionnaire method failed to show any such impact.

Hypothesis 4: As can be seen in Figure 14, more SAS students declared having discussed these strategies with other people (41.2%), against 29.4% of NSAS. Consistent with results presented in 3.2., SAS discussed these strategies equally with Erasmus students and with French people (whether students or not), while NSAS discussed them more with Erasmus students than with French people.

Figure 14. Discussions about strategies: Comparison between SAS and NSAS groups
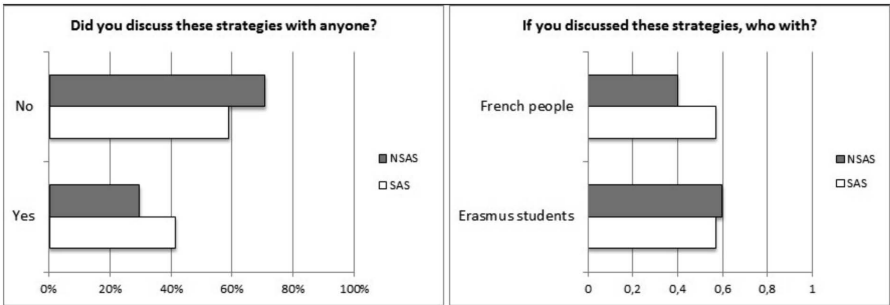
The fact that SAS explicitly discussed strategies as such more than NSAS tends to confirm our hypothesis 4, indicating that SAS reflect more on these pragmatic aspects at a metalinguistic level. The answers to Question 19 followed the same trend. This question asked whether they would have been interested in working on these strategies in the context of language support for Erasmus students. 72.2% of SAS said they would, when only 27.8% of NSAS did; it seems that students who have been involved in more varied communities express a clearer interest in working on discursive strategies in a more explicit way.

5. Conclusion

This preliminary study has confirmed that learning French is part of the Erasmus students' main aims during their stay, and has shown that joining diverse communities of practice is favourable to the learning of pragmatic aspects of language. But this does not necessarily mean students are able to autonomously reflect on this learning on a metalinguistic and metacognitive level. Although all Erasmus students in Bordeaux have the same status, they do not all find themselves in the same communities: we have observed a positive relationship between *sharing accommodation* and *joining diverse communities* in every investigated domain. This may be as much a consequence of their place of residence, as it is a cause for them to choose to live in shared accommodation.

   We can draw two sets of recommendations from this study: The first set is about the way local institutions (in our case, Bordeaux) organise the Erasmus programme, and the second about future lines of research.

   As far as local institutions are concerned, we think they can influence the communities of practice students join, and related language learning, in three ways. Two of these entail providing shared enterprises to students. Examples for Bordeaux could be:

- providing shared enterprises in the personal domain by encouraging students to share nonstudent accommodation, or offering/building more communal student accommodation (unlike the present *chambres universitaires*);
- providing shared enterprises in the educational domain including collaborative tasks out of class (and encouraging teachers to mix groups of French and foreign students);
- providing study abroad students with specific training addressing metalinguistic and metacognitive thinking, as an extension of existing language support.

On a scientific level, in order to fully understand the relationship between *joining communities of practice* and *learning language*, we need to investigate further the way students engage in detail with the social activities they take part in, as well as the language learning they gain from their involvement in the activities. Further work will need to investigate two sets of issues:

1) The relationship between attitudes towards French learning and the level of engagement in the different communities of practice.
2) The relationship between explicit (metalinguistic and metacognitive) work on discursive strategies, level of engagement in the communities, and improvement in language learning.

References

Barron, A. (2003). *Acquisition in interlanguage pragmatics: Learning how to do things with words in a study abroad context*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Behrent, S. (2007). *La communication interalloglotte: Communiquer dans la langue cible commune*, Paris: L'Harmattan

Berry, V. (Ed.). (2008). Les communautés de pratiques. *Pratiques de Formation: Analyses*, 54.

Brown, J.S., & Duguid, P. (1991). Organizational learning and communities of practice: toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. *Organization Science,* 2, 40-57.

Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp

Dervin, F. (2008). *Métamorphoses identitaires en situation de mobilité*. Turku: Presses Universitaires.

Erasmus Mundus Programme (2009) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/about_erasmus_mundus_en.php

Faerch, C. & Kasper, G. (1983). *Strategies in interlanguage communication.* London: Longman.

Gaonac'h, D. (1990) Les stratégies attentionnelles dans l'utilisation d'une LE. In Gaonac'h, D. (Ed.) *Acquisition et utilisation d'une langue etrangère: Approche cognitive. Le Français Dans le Monde, Recherches et applications*, Special Issue, 41-49.

Gombert, J.E. (1993). Metacognition, metalanguage and metapragmatics. *International Journal of Psychology*, 28, 571-580.

Gumperz, J.J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kinginger, C., (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research*. Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E., (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2002). *Student mobility and narrative in Europe: The new strangers*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Suso Lopez, J. (2001). Les stratégies de communication. Chapter 6 in *Discours, énonciation et enseignement-apprentissage du FLE* (pp.165-203), Granada: Metodo Ediciones.

Wenger, E. (2005). *La théorie des communautés de pratique: Apprentissage, sens et identité*. Québec: Les presses de l'Université de Laval.

Appendix: Questionnaire

Participants had to answer this questionnaire in two phases (the first one being at their arrival). It was submitted on line, and in French (although some of the questions, judged a bit more difficult to understand, were translated into English as well).

Information about participants: Please fill in the following fields:

First name:
Last name:
Home university:
Major subject(s) in your home university:
Level of study (Bachelor, Master, PhD)
Training attended in Bordeaux:
Date of arrival in Bordeaux (September / January)
Length of stay in Bordeaux (a year, a semester)
Self assessed level of French: (beginner, intermediate, advanced)

PHASE 1

Question 1 (open question):
Why did you decide to come and study in a French school / university ?

Question 2 (open question):
How do you think you are going to benefit from this stay in Bordeaux?

Question 3:
To prepare your stay and studies in your university/your school in Bordeaux, you may have looked for information about different topics: studies, life in Bordeaux, French language.
For each topic, please tick the boxes of the information you looked up before coming to Bordeaux (you can tick several boxes).

3.1. Studies:
- Looking up information about the similarity / correspondance between the curriculum in your home institution and the curriculum in Bordeaux.
- Looking up information about how your institution in Bordeaux is organised (for example: UFR in university, departments, etc.)
- Looking up information about the schedule for the semester, the year, the training you will be doing.
- Looking up information about how the training you will attend in Bordeaux is organised
- Looking up information about the contents of the training you will attend in Bordeaux.

- o Looking up information about the kind of classes you will have to attend in Bordeaux (for example: classes in amphitheatre, classes in lab, groupwork, etc.)
- o Looking up information about how the training you attend will be evaluated (for example: oral exams, written exams, continuous or final assessment, etc.)
- o Looking up information about the ECTS you will get from the classes you will attend in Bordeaux
- o Looking up administrative information about you will have to do do in the institution in Bordeaux (forms you will have to fill in, registration, etc.)
- o Looking up information about people to meet and places to go to take care of the administrative aspects of your studies when you will first arrive
- o Other searches about your studies

3.2. Every day life in Bordeaux:
- o Looking up information about housing:
  - o University accomodation
  - o Renting a flat
  - o Sharing a flat
- o Looking up information about transport:
  - o To go to Bordeaux
  - o To go around Bordeaux
- o Looking up information about health system
- o Looking up information about leisure and culture activities in Bordeaux
- o Looking up information about the budget / finances (how much does it cost to live in Bordeaux: accommodation, food, going out, etc.)
- o Other information about everyday life in Bordeaux

3.3. French Language:
- o Looking up information about possible French classes in the institution you will attend in Bordeaux
- o Looking up information to get ready to use French language specifically for the training you will attend in Bordeaux
- o Looking up information about French language schools or language centres, and their fees, in Bordeaux.
- o Looking up places where you could practice French in Bordeaux
- o Looking up information about French Language in general
  - o if so, what kind of linguistic information (for example, vocab, grammar, pronunciation, etc.)
- o Looking up information about how past Erasmus students improved their French during their stay abroad

Question 4

For the researched topics, tick who you were in touch with, in which way, and in which language.

4.1. For studies related research:

4.1.2. you were in touch with:
- o International Relations in your home institution:
  - o By reading information on their website
  - o By talking face to face with someone
  - o By email:
    - • In French
    - • In your mother tongue
    - • In English

- Students who attend the same training as you in your home institution and who were Erasmus students, in <u>Bordeaux, before you</u>:
  - In a face to face interaction
  - Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - Via email
- Students who attend the same training as you in your home institution, and who were Erasmus students before you, but not in Bordeaux:
  - In a face to face interaction
  - Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - Via email
- Students who attend the same training as you in your home institution, and who were getting ready, like you were, to leave as Erasmus students, to Bordeaux:
  - In a face to face interaction
  - Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - Via email
- Students who attend the same training as you, and who were getting ready, like you were, to leave as Erasmus students, but not to Bordeaux:
  - In a face to face interaction
  - Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - Via email
- Other students from your home institution, who were Erasmus students before you but not in Bordeaux:
  - In a face to face interaction
  - Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - Via email
- Other students from your home institution, who were getting ready to leave as Erasmus students like you were, but not to Bordeaux:
  - In a face to face interaction
  - Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - Via email
- Other students from your country, who were Erasmus students in Bordeaux before you:
  - In a face to face interaction
  - Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - Via email
- Other students from your country, who were Erasmus students before you, but not in Bordeaux:
  - In a face to face interaction
  - Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - Via email
- Other students from your country, who were preparing to be Erasmus students like you, in Bordeaux:
  - In a face to face interaction
  - Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - Via email
- Other students from your country, who were preparing to be Erasmus students like you, but not in Bordeaux:
  - In a face to face interaction
  - Via social networks (ex. Facebook)

- ○ Via email
- ○ Foreign students, who were Erasmus students before you, in Bordeaux:
  - ○ In a face to face interaction
  - ○ Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - ○ Via email
    - • In French
    - • In your mother tongue
    - • In English
- ○ Foreign students, who were Erasmus students before you, but not in Bordeaux:
  - ○ In a face to face interaction
  - ○ Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - ○ Via email
    - • In French
    - • In your mother tongue
    - • In English
- ○ Foreign students, who were preparing to be Erasmus students like you, in Bordeaux:
  - ○ In a face to face interaction
  - ○ Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - ○ Via email
    - • In French
    - • In your mother tongue
    - • In English
- ○ Foreign students, who were preparing to be Erasmus students like you, but not in Bordeaux:
  - ○ In a face to face interaction
  - ○ Via social networks (ex. Facebook)
  - ○ Via email
    - • In French
    - • In your mother tongue
    - • In English

4.1.3. During these interactions, did you only gather information, or did you also provide information to other people?

4.2. For "everyday life in Bordeaux" research,

4.2.1. you were in touch with: (same options as 4.1.1)

4.2.3. During these interactions, did you only gather information, or did you also provide information to other people?

4.3. For "French language research ",

4.3.1. you were in touch with: (same options as 4.1.1)

4.3.3. During these interactions, did you only gather information, or did you also provide information to other people?

PHASE 2

Question 5
Since your arrival in Bordeaux, who did you / have you interact(ed) with? (you can tick several answers)
- ○ People from the "Relations Internationales" (RI) from your home university
- ○ People from Bordeaux "Relations Internationales" (RI)

- Specific teachers from Bordeaux in charge of tutoring Erasmus students
- Specific students from Bordeaux in charge of tutoring Erasmus students
- Erasmus students from your own country, who you had been in touch with before coming to Bordeaux
- Erasmus students from another country, who you had been in touch with before coming to Bordeaux
- Erasmus students you met in Bordeaux, who are from your own country
- Erasmus students you met in Bordeaux, who are from another country
- French students who study same subjects as you do
- French students who study different subjects from yours
- Foreign (non Erasmus) students who study same subjects as you do
- Foreign (non Erasmus) students who study subjects different from yours
- Students from your own country (non Erasmus) who study same subjects as you do
- Students from your own country (non Erasmus) who study subjects different from yours
- Non student people from your country, who live in France
- Non student French people
- Non student foreign people

Question 6

Tick the kind of activities you have taken part in since your arrival in Bordeaux:
- Collective activities, outside of classroom, related to your studies (for example, revision groups, working on a joint presentation, etc.)
- Activities to discover France, Bordeaux or the area (for example, excursion, visits, concerts, etc.)
- Activities to discover other cultures (European or nonEuropean)
- Activities related to your home culture (for example, national celebrations, typical meals, etc.)

Question 7

In your studies, when there were group activities and you had an opportunity to choose the members of the group, did you choose to work with:
- Erasmus students from different countries exclusively
- Students from your own country (Erasmus or not) exclusively
- French students exclusively
- Indifferently with French or foreign students

Question 8

8.1. In order to discover France, Bordeaux and its area, did you take part in (several answers possible):
- Activities organised by Erasmus associations
- Activities organised by student associations (not necessarily Erasmus ones)
- Activities organised by associations related to your country (for example: Turkish Association of Bordeaux)
- Activities organised by French associations or organisations (for example: Office du Tourisme, Association des amis de Mauriac, etc.)
- Activities organised by individuals who were:
    - Erasmus students
    - French people
    - People from your country
    - Other foreign people

8.2. For these activities, did you:
- only take part in them
- also took part in their organisation (partly or completely)

Question 9

When you had activities related to your own culture, were these activities (several answers possible):
- ○ organised by associations related to your country
  - ○ attended by people from your country exclusively
  - ○ attended also by French or other foreign people
- ○ organised by individuals from your country
  - ○ attended by people from your country exclusively
  - ○ attended also by French or other foreign people
- ○ organised by yourself (on your own or with some help)
  - ○ for people from your country exclusively
  - ○ for French or other foreign people

Question 10

10.1. During your stay, what kind of accomodation do you live in:
- ○ a "chambre universitaire"
- ○ shared accommodation
- ○ a flat/house where you live on your own

10.2. If you live in shared accommodation, <u>apart from yourself</u>, how many people live in this accommodation:
- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4 or more

10.3. your housemates are (several answers possible)
- ○ Erasmus students from your country
- ○ Erasmus students from another country
- ○ Erasmus students from several other countries
- ○ French students
- ○ Students (non Erasmus) from your country
- ○ Non students from your country
- ○ Non students French people
- ○ Non students foreign people

If they are students: do they study the same subject as you (YES/NO)

10.4. (If you live in a "Chambre Universitaire" or shared accommodation) what language do you speak in your place of residence (one answer only)
- ○ French only
- ○ Your mother tongue and French
- ○ Your mother tongue, French and another foreign language
- ○ A foreign language and French
- ○ Foreign language(s) only

10.5. Is your place of residence what you were looking for when you first arrived?
- ○ yes
- ○ no (if no, please say what you were looking for)

Question 11

Since your arrival, did you attend French classes
- ○ No
- ○ Yes – if yes, where did you attend French classes:

- Compulsory classes in your curriculum
- Optional classes in your curriculum
- Classes in a language school / center
- Classes in an association

Question 12

12.1. Please tick the languages you use to communicate in the following every day life situations (several answers possible):

- To communicate when you attend classes,
  - You use French
  - You use your mother tongue
  - You use another foreign language
- When you communicate with other students in between classes:
  - You use French
  - You use your mother tongue
  - You use another foreign language
- When you go out with French people only
  - You don't do this activity
  - You use French
  - You use your mother tongue
  - You use another foreign language
- When you go out with French and foreign people
  - You don't do this activity
  - You use French
  - You use your mother tongue
  - You use another foreign language
- When you go out with foreign people only
  - You don't do this activity
  - You use French
  - You use your mother tongue
  - You use another foreign language
- When you are in French shops or services
  - You don't do this activity
  - You use French
  - You use your mother tongue
  - You use another foreign language
- When you do sports
  - You don't do this activity
  - You use French
  - You use your mother tongue
  - You use another foreign language

12.2. In your everyday life, can you think of other situations in which you always speak French? please give a list.

Question 13

In your daily activities, did you favour situations where you had an opportunity to speak French?

- Yes
- No

Question 14

During your stay, did you discuss French language issues?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes – if yes, who with?
    - ○ People (teacher / learners) from the French classes you attended
    - ○ Erasmus students from your country
    - ○ Erasmus students from other countries
    - ○ French students who study same subjects as you
    - ○ French students who study subjects different from yours
    - ○ Non Erasmus students from your country
    - ○ Non students people from your country
    - ○ Non students French people
    - ○ Non students foreign people

Question 15

These language issues were related to:

- ○ The meaning of some words or expressions
- ○ Some grammar structures
- ○ Language use in context: which words or structures to use according to the situation (who you're talking with, what you're talking about, etc.)
- ○ Means to interpret what the aim of the conversation is / what the person you're talking to is after

Question 16

During your stay, did you use means to adapt what you were saying to the situation?

- ○ Yes – if yes, what means did you use (please give examples)
- ○ No

Question 17

During your stay, when communicating in French, did you happen to use the following strategies:

1. Ask yourselves questions about the status of the person you were talking to, in order to adapt your language.
2. Wonder how to organise what you wanted to say (what are you going to say or not, and in which order?)
3. Use your mother tongue or another foreign language to get around a problem in French language.
4. Ask the person you're talking to to rephrase something you didn't understand.
5. Rephrase something the person you're talking with said, in order to make sure you understood.
6. Rephrase something you said, in order to make sure the person you're talking with understands you.
7. Use gestures and facial expressions to understand what the other person is saying.
8. Use the context (where you are, who you are with, what you are talking about, what you already know about it) to guess the meaning of some words or sentences.
9. Use gesture, facial expressions or objects around you in order to get people to understand you better.
10. During a conversation, check with someone if a word or an expression you already know is appropriate in this situation.
12. During a conversation, when you come across a new word or expression, ask if it can be used in any context or situation.

12. Avoid using a certain word or structure because you are not sure it is appropriate in the situation.
13. None of these strategies.

Question 18
Did you discuss these strategies with anyone?
Yes – if yes, who with (open question)
No

Question 19
If you had been offered to work on these strategies as part of a support programme for learning French for Erasmus students, would you have taken part?

Chapter 8
Social networks and acquisition of sociolinguistic variation in a study abroad context: A preliminary study

Rozenn Gautier and Jean-Pierre Chevrot
Université de Grenoble

Over the past decade, there has been a clear increase in awareness of social and contextual perspectives in the field of second language acquisition (Atkinson, 2002; Ortega, 2011). A growing strand of literature has focused on how linguistic use and acquisition is affected by learning contexts (Muñoz, 2012). Looking in particular at linguistic outcomes, this literature tries to track the impact of different contexts such as the classroom environment, the naturalistic environment, immersion settings, and study abroad contexts. Learning in contexts where the target language is used is considered particularly beneficial because such an environment should provide access to language that is ample in quantity and diverse in quality. Growing interest has been shown in study abroad (SA) contexts in a diverse array of studies focusing on gains in oral fluency, syntax, vocabulary, phonology, and sociolinguistic and pragmatic usage (Freed, 1995; Kinginger, 2009). SA research has demonstrated that most of the time this context is beneficial for L2 learning. As the field matures, however, many authors are beginning to question one of the most long-standing beliefs, which is that the amount and frequency of contact that students have during their SA experience will increase their language gains (Diao, Freed & Smith, 2011; Freed, Segalowitz & Dewey, 2004). To our knowledge, despite the persistency of this belief, it has not yet been possible to establish a clear correlation between the amount of contact students have and improved language use during a SA experience.

Our goal is to complement this strand of studies by collecting more systematic data and exploring in greater depth the social relationships that shape the SA experience, with a view to linking these results to sociolinguistic acquisition. In this chapter, we present the results of a preliminary study on the application of social network analysis to a study abroad context. The findings provide an initial picture of L2 learners' daily language use, of the types of social networks that emerge in a study abroad context, and of how these social networks can be linked to L2 learners' usage of sociolinguistic variants.

1. The variationist approach and second language acquisition

The belief that changes in language use can be connected with the social activity of individuals was first introduced by Labov (1976). In his famous analysis of the use of the postvocalic /r/ in New York, he showed that linguistic behaviour depends on the socioeconomic class of a speaker. L1 sociolinguistic research has demonstrated that native speakers' alternation between two or more linguistic variants expressing the same meaning is an integral part of spoken language competence (Labov, 1976) and is acquired at a very early age in children (Chevrot & Foulkes, 2013).

A number of studies on the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in L2 have been situated within this paradigm. By sociolinguistic competence, we understand learners' ability to vary in their use of two or more L2 sociolinguistic variants according to the social context. In SLA, the variationist approach aims at understanding and determining what can make variability in L2 speech systematic. Variability in L2 acquisition and the mechanisms of language change over time are controversial issues. Dewaele (2004a) underlines that a large number of independent variables can affect variation in the L2. Indeed, apart from the social characteristics of the speaker, there are many other factors that can have an impact on L2 acquisition such as the learner's first language, the degree of curricular and extracurricular exposure to the L2, and also the type of input received from teachers and pedagogical materials. How the individual may variably use two or more forms and what influences these changes are key questions in L2 sociolinguistic research. Understanding how L2 learners come to appropriate sociolinguistic patterns of variation and what factors impact most on their acquisition remains the main goal of the variationist approach in the SLA agenda.

An increasing number of empirical studies have focused on the acquisition of variation by learners of French. As it provides more access and exposure to sociolinguistic markers in the target language community, the study abroad context has been given a more substantial place in the field of SLA. Different studies investigate the impact of study abroad on the acquisition of variation by conducting cross-sectional studies comparing groups at home and groups in the target language community; and/or through longitudinal studies following the evolution of sociolinguistic competence before, during and after the stay abroad (Lemée, 2002; Sax, 2003; Regan, Howard & Lemée, 2009; Dewaele, 2004b). These studies show that L2 learners who spend time abroad increase their knowledge of informal variants and use them at a higher rate than students who have never spent time abroad. It has also been found that L2 learners under-use informal variants even with naturalistic exposure to L2, compared to native speakers. Howard (2012) underlines a need for a more ethnolinguistic approach to studies of sociolinguis-

tic variation. Taking a closer look at what happens socially during learners' time abroad could illuminate "the experiential process that the L2 learner undergoes, as opposed to focussing solely on the acquisitional outcomes of such subjective and highly personal language contact experience in a study abroad context" (Howard, 2012, p. 31). Shifting the focus from a global view of the study abroad context to a deep analysis of the structure of learners' social networks in the host country could provide a better understanding of the development of sociolinguistic competences in SLA.

2. Social networks and their impact on language use

To understand the relationship between language and society, Milroy and Gordon (2003) examine the concept of community, not as an abstract and general unit (e.g. a spatial unit corresponding to a city, a social unit corresponding to a social class, etc.) but in terms of local linguistic and social features. Milroy (1987) provides a more concrete definition of specific communities by describing in detail their local conditions and their actual social interactions. Milroy indicates that differences in the structure and nature of social networks directly influence individuals and therefore have an impact on their language practices. The strength of a social network is defined in terms of density and multiplexity. On the one hand, social network analysis focuses on the content of the network ties. Each individual may be linked to others in more than one capacity, for example as a colleague, a relative and a friend. If an individual can be related to other individuals in various areas of sociability, his/her relationships are defined as 'multiplex'. On the other hand, social network analysis is also based on the larger structure of individual network ties. A network is said to be relatively 'dense' if a large number of the persons to whom the individual is linked are also linked to each other.

A dense and multiplex network is a strong indicator of social integration. According to Milroy (1987), belonging to such a network leads to maintenance of similar language use between speakers. Conversely, a loose and uniplex network implies that an individual is linked to others in different, discrete areas, and that the individuals in his/her network do not know each other. This type of network would not be very conducive to the transmission and conservation of local language use. Milroy set out to test the hypothesis of a relationship between the structure and content of social networks and the use of typical phonological variants within a local community. Focusing on three communities in the city of Belfast, Milroy (1987) shows a significant correlation between the social integration of an individual in the community and the use of specific phonological characteristics.

As far as we know, few studies have investigated the acquisition of L2 variation in relation to social network analysis. However, this kind of investigation could bring new insights into the mechanisms of appropriation and acquisition of sociolinguistic competence. Indeed, a deep understanding of the social surroundings of learners through social network analysis could help explain how input provided by naturalistic exposure affects the learning process.

3. Presentation of the study

Our study aims to complement variationist research on the acquisition of sociolingusitic variables by examining how social networking impacts on the sociolinguistic skills of French learners during SA. This preliminary study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What types of social networks do American learners develop during a stay abroad in France of a year?
- Can the different types of social networks developed be linked to the evolution of the use of sociolinguistic variables?

3.1. Data collection

The study is based on a longitudinal analysis of the L2 speech of seven American learners of French over a period of three months at a French university, with data collected in December and March. The students came for a study abroad programme of nine months and their ages ranged from 18 to 22 years. They were all living in a host family at the beginning of the study and had daily French classes. Their level of proficiency in French was B1 or B2 (according to the CEFR: Council of Europe, 2001). Their level of proficiency was evaluated according to the CEFR guidelines by professional teachers in the language centre where the learners were taking French classes during their stay abroad. The group of students was composed of five females and two males. The learners were not specializing in French but were spending a year abroad as part of their wider university studies. The students had between 16 and 20 hours of French classes every week, including French language, French literature and civilization studies.

Two types of data were collected, both social and linguistic. To collect linguistic data, we recorded students on two occasions through semi-directed interviews. The first set of interviews took place in December and the second in March. A native speaker of French interviewed each individual learner for one hour on each occasion. Despite some limitations, the semi-structured interview

is a fruitful method of collecting data, allowing production of free speech and therefore providing a situation of communication close to an authentic conversation experience. Following their elicitation, the data were transcribed using standard orthography. We then performed a quantitative linguistic analysis to obtain clues about the evolution of the learners' usage of selected sociolinguistic variables during their stay.

We observed the social network of learners in March, at the end of their stay. To determine each learner's social network – that is to say all the ties that connect each learner with other people – we developed two complementary procedures: a name generator (a contact diary), and a name interpreter (a questionnaire). First, we gave a contact diary to the students, which they were required to fill in every day for one week, recording every conversation they had. We chose the contact diary among other possible tools for enumerating networks because we were interested in the daily contacts and frequent interactions of the learners. The contact diary is a valuable tool because it allows the students to report events spontaneously, when they appear in context (for the limitations of the diary method, see Bolger, Davis & Rafaeli, 2002; Fu, 2007). To relieve the burden on the informants and simplify completion of the diary for them, we made it as systematic as possible with very few entries to be filled in. Each time they spoke to someone outside the French classroom, they had to write down the name of the person, how long the conversation lasted and the language they used. Thanks to those contact diaries, we had access to quantitative data regarding the length of exposure to particular languages (French and English) but also the names of all the members of the learners' social network.

We then supplemented the contact diary data with a questionnaire that we filled in with the students. The questionnaire was based on the names that the students had written in their contact diary and served as a name interpreter. We asked the student about the characteristics of each network member present in the contact diary – age, sex, nationality, language most frequently spoken – and the characteristics of the relationship – type of relationship (member of the host family, friend, colleague, etc.), overall frequency of interaction with each person, types of activities they shared. Finally, for each person cited in the contact diary, we asked participants to make a list of contacts they had in common. Thus, the questionnaire afforded us a deeper representation of the different links within the friendship networks of each learner.

With this methodology, it is possible to obtain both compositional and structural information about each learner's network. Compositional information refers to the attributes of network members, while structural information refers to measures regarding the links between network members. To describe the network in this preliminary study, we focused mainly on two types of criteria:

- A structural criterion: Density;
- Compositional/interactional criteria: Number of contacts who are native speakers of the L1; number of contacts who are native speakers of the L2; amount of time spent speaking the L2 (reported in the contact diary).

The social structure of a network is generally represented by a graph with individuals (as points) and relationships (as ties). Density is a measure of cohesion frequently used in network analysis (Borgatti, Everett & Johnson, 2013; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). This measure is the proportion of pairs of network members whom the respondents indicated were likely to have contact with each other. The density of a network is expressed by the ratio of total possible ties to the total actual ties in the network. In an ordinary undirected graph the number of possible ties is n(n-1)/2 (with *n* points that is to say *n* network members). For example, in a network of ten individuals, the number of possible ties is 45; so, if the number of effective ties is 25, the network density would be 0.55 or 55%. The greater the density, the more likely it is that a network will be considered a cohesive community.

We selected density from among different structural measures used in social network analysis (for details on the structural properties of a network see Borgatti, Everett & Johnston, 2013 or Wasserman & Faust, 1994). In this preliminary analysis with a limited number of learners, we were mostly interested in obtaining an initial overall view of the structure and composition of the networks created with a specific focus on language use. Consequently, we adopted a limited set of criteria: one structural criterion – density – which provided the overall shape of the set of relationships by describing the cohesion between network members, and several interactional criteria regarding language use. Density was calculated using Ucinet software, and the social network graphs were created using Netdraw software (Borgatti, Everett & Freeman, 1999), accessible at http://www.analytictech.com/ucinet/.

3.2 Data analysis for two sociolinguistic variables in French: The retention or omission of ne and the variable realization of liaisons

We studied two frequent French sociolinguistic variables, namely the variable realization of phonological liaisons and the variable omission of the pre-verbal negative particle *ne*, as exemplified in the following sentences:

Variable liaison realization
(1) c'est un chat vs. *c'est /t/ un chat*
[It is a cat]

ne retention or deletion
(2) je ne comprends pas vs. *je comprends pas*
[I don't understand]

Both variable liaison and the retention/deletion of *ne* are long standing and wide-spread variables in French and they have both been extensively studied among adult native speakers.

3.2.1. Variable liaison

The first systematic work on French liaison was written by Schane (1965), and since then a great number of studies have investigated this phenomenon. Many studies based on oral corpora (Booij & De Jong, 1987; Durand, Laks, Calderone, & Tchobanov, 2011) agree on the existence of two categories of liaison: obligatory and variable. Obligatory liaisons are those systematically produced by native speakers. The four syntactic contexts in which they appear are: After a determiner (eg. *les /z/ oiseaux*, the birds); after a personal pronoun (eg. *Ils /z/ arrivent*, they are coming); when a pronoun is placed after a verb (eg. *allons /z/ y*, let's go); and in lexicalized phrases (eg. *de temps /z/ en temps*, from time to time). We are only concerned with variable liaisons here. The syntactic contexts of variable liaison are more difficult to study since their realization is highly variable. Regarding linguistic factors, Mallet (2008), working on a large corpus from native French speakers, showed that some syntactic contexts are more productive than others in terms of the realization of variable liaisons. For example, variable liaisons after monosyllabic prepositions (such as: *chez, dans, dès, en*) are almost categorically realized with a mean rate of 91.91%. However, in other syntactic contexts such as after some forms of the auxiliary *avoir*, realization is far less frequent (3.45%). Another study based on a corpus of informal conversations of native speakers (Ahmad, 1993) shows that the mean realization of liaison is only 10%. Apart from syntactic factors, the realization of variable liaisons is also dependent on extralinguistic factors, such as the social class, gender or age of the speaker. The phenomenon of liaison in French is complex for L2 learners to deal with, in terms of its frequency and status in the sociolinguistic profile of native speakers. Few studies have focused on the acquisition of variable liaisons. Howard (2012) found that the formal variants (i.e. realization of liaisons) are more present in L2 speech than in native speaker discourse. Despite interindividual differences, learners tend to decrease their usage of variable liaisons after a stay abroad in France (Howard, 2012; Thomas, 2002).

3.2.2. Omission and retention of *ne*

Studies on the retention and omission of *ne* in French native speech have also shown both linguistic and extralinguistic constraints. Regarding linguistic factors, Armstrong and Smith (2002) explain that the choice of verb, of nominal or pronominal subject or of lexicalized expressions is among the factors that can affect the retention or omission of *ne*. As in the case of variable liaison, there are also a number of social factors that impact on the deletion or retention of *ne*. In a recent corpus-based study, Berit Hansen and Malderez (2004) note that the retention of *ne* is a sociolinguistic variable in constant evolution in the speech of native speakers. Through a comparison between their corpus and older corpora, they show that the retention of *ne* is declining. That is to say, from the 1970s to the 1990s, the mean rate of *ne* retention went from 15.8% to 7 %. The impact of the age of the speaker is also noted; speakers aged 50 to 36 maintain the *ne* 14.4% of the time whereas speakers aged 23 to 15 maintain the *ne* 2.5% of the time. Studies (Amstrong & Smith, 2002; Berit Hansen & Malderez, 2004) have also reported that both social class and geographical origin have an impact on the retention or omission of *ne*. Studies of L2 learners' acquisition of this sociolinguistic variable (Dewaele, 2004b; Regan et al., 2009; Sax, 2003) have shown that students who had never been abroad did not adapt their omission rate according to the situation of communication. However, prolonged authentic use of French with native speakers seems to foster the development of this stylistic variation. They also found that even if the students decrease their usage of formal variants after study abroad, they maintain a higher retention rate than native speakers.

These studies of L2 acquisition of variable liaison and the omission of *ne* seem to be consistent in their findings in two respects. Firstly, the study abroad context has a positive impact on L2 learners' use of sociolinguistic variables, as they evolve from formal use of the variants to more informal use. Secondly, studies also indicate that learners do not reach the vernacular norms of native speech. Tracking the social environment during a study abroad period should provide new insights into L2 sociolinguistic competence. The links created by L2 learners with different speakers during their stay in France may have an impact on their usage of French variants. Focusing on the extent to which L2 learners develop such links could give further insights into how the learners adapt their use of sociolinguistic variants. Our study is oriented towards a deep analysis of the social environment using tools and methodological frameworks dedicated to network analysis in order to explore the relationship between social network and sociolinguistic L2 acquisition.

4. Findings

4.1. What type of social networks do American learners develop during a stay abroad of a year?
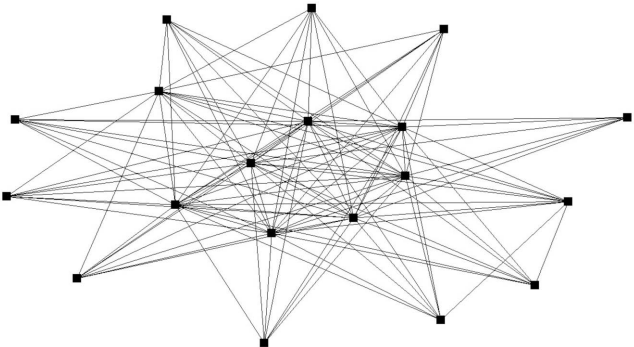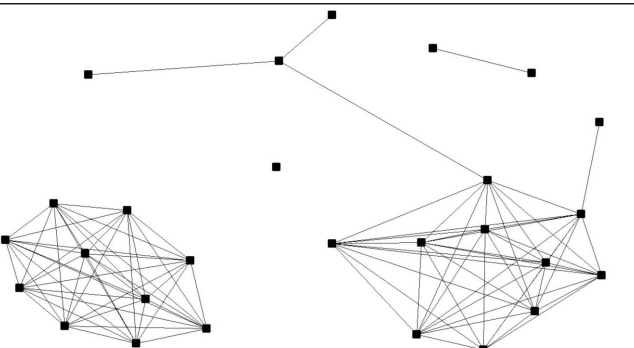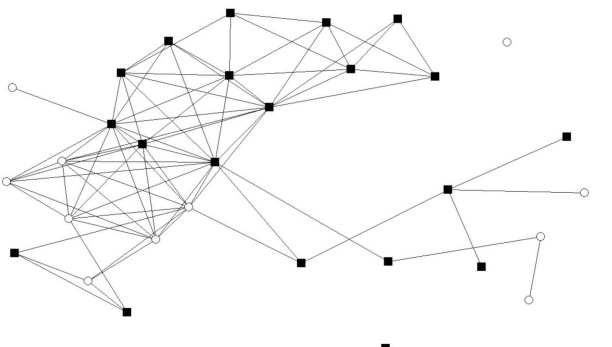
Using the two different criteria defined earlier (structural and interactional), we observed three types of social networks. First, based on the structural criteria we distinguished *dense* and *composite* social networks. We referred to a study conducted by sociologists on the dynamics of social networks of young adults (Bidart, Degenne & Grosetti, 2011) in order to name and describe the network structure found in our own study. *Dense* networks are tightly connected; They contain a high concentration of network members and are generally composed of one single large group. Consequently, the average density is relatively high (above 30%), showing strong cohesion among network members. *Composite* networks are more loosely connected and more diverse, consisting of different groups of network members. As a result, the density is lower (under 30%) and the overall structure of the network is less concentrated.

We then differentiated these networks according to the native-speaker contacts present and the mean amount of time spent speaking the L2 during the week that the contact diary was kept. Five learners had created *Anglophone* networks consisting of only English-speaking contacts. Two learners had *Anglophone and Francophone* social networks mixing French- and English-speaking contacts, with a substantial amount of time spent speaking the L2 outside the classroom (a mean of 27 hours per week was reported in the contact diary). Among the five learners with only English-speaking contacts, two had a *dense* network, with a smaller amount of time spent speaking the L2 outside the classroom (a mean of 6 hours per week) and the three others had a *composite* network, with a fairly small amount of time spent speaking the L2 outside the classroom (a mean of 7 hours per week).

The following graphs (Figure 1) represent these three main types of social networks. We selected one graph as an example for each type of social network, so as to demonstrate its main characteristics. In the social network graphs, links represent all the connections between every friend of the learner. The dark dots represent English-speaking contacts and the white circles, French-speaking contacts. To make the graphs easier to read and understand, the learner him/herself is not represented.

Neil and Cristina's social networks are very dense networks of native English-speaking contacts, in which there are many connections between individuals, i.e. it seems that everybody knows everybody. The density is above 30 % for these two learners and they speak around 6 hours of French per week. Three learners (Shirley, Andrea and April) have composite networks also only composed of English-speak-

Figure 1. Characteristics of learners' social networks

Characteristics of networks	Types of social networks
	Dense Anglophone social networks **[Neil and Cristina]**
2 learners: - **Density > 30 %** - **Mean amount of time spent speaking French: 347 min per week (6h)**	
	Composite Anglophone social networks **[Shirley, April and Andrea]**
3 learners: - **Density < 30 %** - **Mean amount of time spent speaking French: 433 min per week (7h)**	
	Composite Anglophone and Francophone social networks **[Jenna and Gary]**
2 learners: - **Density < 30 %** - **Mean amount of time spent speaking French: 1613 min per week (27h)**	

ing contacts. This kind of social network is far less concentrated than the dense Anglophone type. The density is less than 30%, and these learners speak a mean of 7 hours of French per week. In this type of network, there are different cliques of contacts that are not connected to each other. Finally, two learners (Gary and Jenna) have composite Anglophone and Francophone social networks. This type of social network is composed of a high number of individuals but with few links between them. Contacts are relatively dispersed and many of them do not know each other. The two learners can also be distinguished by the number of hours they speak French per week, a mean of 27 hours, and by the number of French contacts represented by white circles.

We can see that American learners have difficulties in creating connections with the native community, as only two learners have connections with French contacts. From our social network analysis, we can also see that there are differences in the shape and characteristics of the social life of the learners. Next, we shall explore whether these differences can be linked to different kinds of sociolinguistic acquisition during their stay in France.

4.2. Can the different types of social networks developed be linked to the evolution of the use of sociolinguistic variables?

Table 1 presents the results for the learners' realization of variable liaison and retention of *ne*. Each learner is presented and categorized by the type of social network they create during their stay abroad. This table also provides numbers and percentages for variable realization of liaisons and of retention of *ne* at two periods of their stay.

Table 1. Seven learners' rate of realization of variable liaisons and of retention of *ne* at Time 1 and Time 2

Learners	Neil	Cristina	April	Andrea	Shirley	Jenna	Gary
Type of network	Dense Anglophone		Composite Anglophone			Composite Anglophone and Francophone	
Variable liaison							
T1	26.3% (24/91)	27.1% (35/129)	51.2% (41/80)	23.8% (13/57)	21.4% (15/70)	23.9% (40/167)	8.5% (8/94)
T2	35.8% (28/78)	27.4% (25/91)	23.6% (9/38)	27.2% (6/22)	12.5% (7/56)	16.2% (18/111)	5.8% (5/85)
Ne retention							
T1	48.3% (15/31)	81.3% (48/59)	45% (23/51)	73.3% (22/30)	44.4% (12/27)	38% (38/100)	1.8% (1/53)
T2	64.1% (25/39)	80% (40/50)	29% (9/31)	41.1% (7/17)	47.8% (22/46)	35.6% (31/87)	1.6% (1/60)

Neil and Cristina, who have a dense Anglophone network, tend either to increase or to maintain a high rate of realization of formal variants of the two sociolinguistic variables at the two different periods. For the five learners who have a composite network, there is a general trend towards a decrease in the rate of realization of the formal variant of the liaison and of the *ne* particle. Two learners, Jenna and Gary, who have composite anglophone and francophone networks, both decrease their use of formal variants between the two periods. More generally, at T1 for both phenomena we observe that the learners' rates of realization of the two variants are heterogeneous. Gary stands out as an outlier, pointing in the direction of native speaker usage. (In informal native speech, variable liaisons are realized 10% of the time: Ahmad, 1993, and *ne* is maintained 2.5% of the time: Berit Hansen & Malderez, 2004).

So far, these data suggest that learners with dense connections with L1 speakers tend to increase or maintain a high usage rate of formal variants of sociolinguistic variables, while those with a loosely connected social network that contains L2 speakers tend to decrease their usage of formal variants. However, the results for the three learners with composite Anglophone social networks ran counter to this tendency. Two of these learners, April and Shirley, decrease their rate of realization of optional liaisons (going from 51.2 % to 23.6 % for April, and 21.4 % to 12.5 % for Shirley). But the number of optional liaisons realized by Andrea increases from 23.8 % to 27.2 %. Concerning the rate of retention of *ne,* only Shirley's retention increases (going from 44.4 % to 47.8 %), whereas the rates of April and Andrea decrease respectively from 45% to 29 % and from 73.3 % to 41.1 %. Learners who have composite Anglophone social networks thus form a more heterogeneous group in which the usage of formal variants seems to decrease but the pattern of evolution is not clear and regular.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The three different types of social network we found revealed an important aspect of learners' social life during study abroad. The differentiation between dense Anglophone, composite Anglophone and composite Anglophone and Francophone networks, brings to light the different ways in which the learners may be connected to other individuals in the host country. What we learnt from this analysis is that even if sociability is mostly oriented towards English-speaking peers, there are differences in the shape of learners' networks. For some learners with dense Anglophone social networks, the ties with their interactants are highly concentrated and the amount of time spent speaking the L2 is low. The learners' relationships are all connected to each other. Composite Anglophone social networks, on the other hand, are composed of different cliques of contacts

and their members' sociability is thus less concentrated, with a greater amount of time spent speaking the L2. This could be understood as a more outward-looking type of network in which members are more dispersed and the cohesion of ties is weaker. Dense Anglophone networks might indicate greater difficulty in integrating into the host community and could be interpreted as a need to create a community in which learners can feel as if they were at home.

In the preliminary study presented here, we included the description of social networks at one moment of the learners' stay in France. In order to have a more complete view of the composition of learners' social networks, it would be necessary to grasp the dynamics of social interaction over time. Indeed, Bidart et al. (2011) explain that social network formation is in constant evolution, constrained by different transformations and important steps in life. These changes directly impact on relationships between individuals, leading to movement in social networks that can evolve from dense to composite or the reverse. As Bidart et al. (2011, p. 311) state: *"Envisager une relation à un moment donné, c'est arrêter un film sur une image fixe. Or, l'histoire d'une rencontre et la relation qui s'est façonnée depuis constitue généralement la matière la plus importante d'aujourd'hui"* [Considering a relationship at a given time, is like stopping a movie on a still image. And yet the story of an encounter and the relationship that has since developed, generally constitutes the most important of all subject matters today] (our translation). A longitudinal study tracking the creation of learners' social networks would therefore usefully supplement this preliminary study.

Moreover, it would be interesting to investigate a larger group of learners to establish whether it is possible to find recurrent patterns of sociability. A deeper analysis of the formation of social networks combined with qualitative analysis of the different interactants could explain the differences in the types of social networks. In particular, learners with composite Anglophone and Francophone networks – in which there are many different English- and French-speaking contacts who are less connected to each other than in other networks – might have gone through different steps of network formation. Understanding how learners evolve in the creation of their social bonds should provide new insights into what is happening socially in a study abroad context, and how far interactions create specific social forms that can be connected to specific language use.

Regarding the linguistic aspect of our study, an interesting hypothesis emerges from the link between social networks and use of the two sociolinguistic variables. The learners with dense English-speaking networks seem to maintain or increase their rates of formal variants whereas the learners with composite French- and English-speaking networks tend to decrease their rates of formal variants between the two periods of observation. The learners with French native speaker contacts spent more time daily in conversation with native speakers than the learners with only English-speaking contacts. This would seem to indicate that the use of soci-

olinguistic variables by L2 learners can be related to the social network created during study abroad, rather in the same way as it is for L1 speakers (Milroy, 1987). However, this conclusion must remain hypothetical since the number of L2 participants is small. Furthermore, the link between sociability and acquisition of sociolinguistic variables remains unclear for three of the seven learners of our study. Indeed, the results for learners with composite English-speaking networks show individual variation without any well-defined directional change in the use of variants between the two periods. These results can therefore not be explained by analysis of the learners' contacts network alone; in order to fully understand their use of sociolinguistic variations, it may be necessary to also observe the input received in the classroom or in other parts of their social life (such as interaction with their host family).

To observe the impact of the naturalistic environment on learners' sociolinguistic skills, we also need more experimental studies involving recognition of sociolinguistic norms in specific syntactic contexts through both judgement and production tasks, such as those that have already been used to understand the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation by children (Barbu, Nardy, Chevrot & Juhel, 2013). An important aspect of the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation by L2 learners that needs to be explored is learners' awareness of the stylistic value that the variants convey. Different authors have stated that L2 learners tend to decrease their use of formal variants after a stay abroad, in order to "sound native-like". What, then, is the reason for the increase in use of formal variants by some of our learners? Are they fully aware of the style they are adopting? And if this is the case, do they use formal variants in order to move away from native speaker discourse? Dewaele supposes that "learners may also consciously decide not to adopt certain variation patterns from the NS community if they judge them to be in conflict with their own ideological and cultural beliefs or sense of self" (2004a, p. 314). These questions could be answered by using judgement and production tasks or even through introspective questionnaires about learners' awareness of the use of sociolinguistic variables. Last but not least, this study also raises an important issue regarding the correlation between social network and language use and acquisition. Indeed, in our data some learners converge more than others towards local sociolinguistic patterns, but is such behaviour due to the type of network they create, or do they belong to a certain type of network because of their level of proficiency in French? In order to gain a better understanding of the correlation between the shape of learners' relationships and their usage of the L2, it is necessary to conduct further analysis of both their levels of L2 proficiency and their attitudes towards the native community.

References

Ahmad, M. (1993). *Vingt heures de français parlé: Aspects phonétiques de la liaison* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Université Stendhal, Grenoble.

Armstrong, N. and Smith, A. (2002). The influence of linguistic and social factors on the recent decline of French *ne*. *Journal of French Language Studies, 12,* 23-41.

Atkinson, D. (2002). Toward a sociocognitive approach to second language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal*, *86*, 525–545.

Barbu, S., Nardy, A., Chevrot, J-P. & Juhel, J. (2013). Language evaluation and use during early childhood: Adhesion to social norms or integration of environmental regularities? *Linguistics, 51,* 381-411.

Berit Hansen, A., & Malderez, I. (2004). Le ne de négation en région parisienne: Une étude en temps réel. *Langage et société,* 107, 5-30.

Bidart, C., Degenne, A., & Grossetti, M. (2011). *La vie en réseau: Dynamique des relations sociales*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Bolger, N., Davis, A., Rafaeli, E. (2003). Diary methods, capturing life as it is lived. *Annual Review of Psychology, 54,* 579-616.

Booij, G. & De Jong, D. (1987). The domain of liaison: theories and data. *Linguistics, 25,* 1005-1025.

Borgatti, S.P., Everett, M.G. & Freeman, L.C. (1999). *UCINET 6.0: Version 1.00*. Natick: Analytic Technologies.

Borgatti, S. P., Everett, M. G., & Johnson, J. C. (2013). *Analyzing social networks*. Los Angeles and London: Sage Publications.

Chevrot, J.-P. & Foulkes, P. (Eds.) (2013). Language acquisition and sociolinguistic variation. Special issue of *Linguistics 51(2)*.

Council of Europe. (2001). *A common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dewaele, J.M. (2004a). The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in French as a foreign language: an overview. *Journal of French Language Studies, 14,* 301-319.

Dewaele, J.M. (2004b). Retention or omission of the *ne* in advanced French interlanguage: The variable effect of extralinguistic factors. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 8,* 433-450.

Durand, J., Laks, B., Calderone, B. and Tchobanov, A. (2011). Que savons-nous de la liaison aujourd'hui ? *Langue Française, 169,* 103-135.

Diao, W., Freed, B., & Smith, L. (2011). Confirmed beliefs or false assumptions? A study of home stay experiences in the French study abroad context. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad*, *21*, 109-142.

Freed, B.F. (1995). *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Freed, B.F., Segalowitz, N., & Dewey, D. P. (2004). Context of learning and second language fluency in French: Comparing regular classroom, study abroad, and intensive domestic immersion programs. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 26, 275-301.

Fu, Y. (2007). Contact diaries: Building archives of actual and comprehensive personal networks. *Field Methods,* 19 (2), 194-217.

Howard, M. (2012). The advanced learner's sociolinguistic profile: On issues of individual differences, second language exposure conditions, and type of sociolinguistic variable. *The Modern Language Journal*, 96 (1), 20-33

Kinginger, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research.* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Labov, W. (1976). *Sociolinguistic patterns.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Lemée, I. (2002). Acquisition de la variation socio-linguistique dans l'interlangue d'apprenants hibernophones de français L2: Le cas de *on* et *nou*s. *Marges Linguistiques, 4,* 56-67.

Mallet, G.M. (2008). *La liaison en français: Descriptions et analyses dans le corpus PFC* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense.

Milroy, L. (1987). *Language and social networks*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Milroy, L. & Gordon, M. (2003). *Sociolinguistics: Method and interpretation*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Muñoz, C. (Ed.) (2012). *Intensive exposure experiences in second language learning*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Ortega, L. (2011). SLA after the social turn: Where cognitivism and its alternatives stand. In *Alternative approaches to second language acquisition,* D. Atkinson (Ed.), 167-180, New York: Routledge.

Regan, V., Howard, M. and Lemée, I. (2009). *The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context.* Cleveland: Multilingual Matters.

Sax, K. (2003). *Acquisition of stylistic variation in American learners of French* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Indiana University.

Schane, S.A. (1965). *The phonological and morphological structure of French* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Thomas, A. (2002). La variation phonétique en français langue seconde au niveau universitaire avancé. *Acquisition et Interaction en Langues Etrangères, 17,* 101-121.

Wasserman, S. and Faust, K. (1994). *Social network analysis: Methods and applications.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 9
Teacher language learning and residence abroad:
What makes a difference?
Perspectives from two case studies

Annelies Roskvist, Sharon Harvey, Deborah Corder
and Karen Stacey
Auckland University of Technology

This chapter reports on the experiences and views of two New Zealand language teachers who participated in one-year overseas immersion programmes and the ways in which these experiences were seen to impact on their target language (TL) proficiency. Following Wang's (2010) recommendation, the chapter seeks to contribute to study and residence abroad research by focusing on the process of language learning alongside the gains achieved. We take a case study approach using data from questionnaires and interviews to provide an in-depth understanding of the teachers' contexts, their views of changes in their TL proficiency and factors they saw as facilitating and hindering learning while on their immersion programme. Milroy's (1987) social network framework provides a way to analyse the meaning and utility of interactional opportunities experienced by the two teachers while overseas. Findings indicate overall positive outcomes for the two teachers, but the study also uncovered a sense of missed opportunities for learning. This chapter provides insights for future immersion programmes and makes suggestions that seek to optimise teachers' learning and thus enhance positive outcomes for their students. We expect this chapter to be of interest to the academic community concerned with language teacher professional development, as well as to language teachers wishing to undertake an immersion programme.

1. Introduction

To increase the capability of language teachers in the country, the New Zealand (NZ) government has, since 2005, provided them with the opportunity to spend time in countries where the target language (TL) is spoken as the primary language. In NZ these awards are called *immersion awards*, reflecting the expectation that teachers will be "immersed in" the TL and culture. Teachers are funded to live over-

seas for periods of a few weeks to up to a year. The aim is for them to develop their language proficiency and intercultural competence in authentic settings, so they can apply the knowledge and skills they have gained to improve student language learning experiences and outcomes (NZ Ministry of Education, 2010). The research literature focuses mainly on university students and often uses the term *study abroad* (SA) which is defined by Kinginger (2009) as "a temporary sojourn of pre-defined duration, undertaken for educational purposes" (p. 11). Another term used, and sometimes interchangeably with study abroad, is *residence abroad* (RA), referring to students either studying for part of their degree in the country where the TL is spoken, or undertaking a work placement in an overseas country. RA is usually over an extended period of time and may or may not include TL instruction (Coleman, 1997). Both terms can be applied to the experiences of NZ teachers, since they both study and work as part of their immersion programme. In this study the term *immersion programme* (IP) is used, as this is the term used by the NZ Ministry of Education.

The work reported here comes from a larger research project (Harvey, Roskvist, Corder, & Stacey, 2011) commissioned by the NZ Ministry of Education, which gathered both quantitative and qualitative data to determine the effectiveness of teachers' language and culture immersion experiences. Here, we present qualitative case studies of two teachers on long-term (one-year) IPs, so as to gain a more in-depth understanding of their immersion contexts and their experiences as participants in the IP. The teachers' perceptions of changes to their TL proficiency and their views on the factors that contributed to, or hindered, their TL development are explored in detail, in order to identify what made a difference to their learning. A social network framework (Milroy, 1987) has been used, albeit in an exploratory way, to analyse and contrast the interactional opportunities in which the two teachers engaged.

2. Literature review

2.1 Study/residence abroad

Much of the research literature on SA/RA to date has focused on programmes for students and their effects on students' TL proficiency, cultural knowledge and more recently their pragmatic development and intercultural competence. Research in the field is characterised by a "high level of variation within and across studies" (Coleman & Chafer, 2011, p. 68); however, there does appear to be general support for the value of SA/RA in increasing TL proficiency, in particular oral skills (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009). Social perspectives on TL acquisition see engaging with communities of language users and their social and

cultural practices as critical to language acquisition (Lantolf & Johnson, 2007), and while this is less straightforward to demonstrate than might be supposed, interaction with host community members is widely assumed to assist TL development in the SA/ RA context (Isabelli-García, 2006).

We view interaction from both a cognitivist perspective and as a social process and believe both have a role to play in TL acquisition. The uptake of opportunities for interaction is considered to be one of the essential requirements for successful language learning (Ellis, 2005; Gass, 1997). Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis views acquisition as being most effective when learners are involved in the negotiation of meaning, since it is through this negotiation that learners gain further information about the TL. Research suggests that this interactional feedback can act as a prompt to learners to *notice* TL forms, and this can lead to *modified output* and TL development (Gass & Mackey, 2006, p. 3). Conversation in particular is central to the acquisition of language, being "not only a medium of practice; … [but] also the means by which learning occurs" (Gass, 1997, p. 104).

In SA/ RA contexts, there is some empirical support for the assumption that use of the TL outside the classroom must assist the development of the immersion language (Dewey, Bown, & Eggett, 2012; Isabelli-García, 2006). Dewey et al. (2012, p. 126) use the term *dispersion* to refer to the number of social groups with which a learner engages during SA/RA, and they claim this to be a significant predictor of perceived gains in TL speaking proficiency. In particular, homestay, as one example of a specific social group context, has been credited with facilitating language and cultural gains (H.W. Allen, 2010; Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004). However, some reservations have also been expressed with regard to homestay experiences (Diao, Freed, & Smith, 2011; Freed, 2008). Regarding linguistic gains, Trentman (2013) argues that there is a need to look at the quality (p. 460) of a particular living arrangement rather than whether people stay in homestay or dormitory/hostel accommodation. In this chapter, interaction is viewed through a social network lens in order to explore the concept of dispersion more fully in respect of our case study teachers.

Milroy defines social networks as "informal social relationships contracted by an individual" (1987, p. 178) and social network analysis as looking at the "differing structures and perspectives of these relationships" (2002, p. 549). Milroy's social network research in Belfast looking at first language communities is pertinent to our study as it explains how language use and interaction in one's community are symbiotically related. With clear implications for language learning, Milroy notes that: "The closer an individual's network ties are with his local community, the closer his language approximates to localised vernacular norms" (1980, p. 175). Milroy (1987) evaluates ties in terms of *density* and *plexity*. A dense network is one where a number of people with whom an individual is

linked, are also linked to each other. Plexity measures the various ways people might be involved with each other. While a *uniplex* relationship is characterised by a person having links to another in just one area, for example, as a colleague, a *multiplex* or "many-stranded" (Milroy, 1987, p. 21) network has a person interacting with others in multiple ways: for example, as a colleague, friend, and sports team member. Effective use of Milroy's work was made by Isabelli-García (2006) in her analysis of the informal relationships formed by four students from the United States learning Spanish in Argentina. Her study showed that social networks with TL speakers (developed through such activities as voluntary work) provided varying interactional and learning opportunities for the SA participants, thus helping to explain both linguistic development and variation among learners (2006, p. 231). (See also Chapter 8 in this volume.)

The influence of individuals' TL proficiency level at the time of SA/RA on the extent of linguistic gains has also been investigated. However, again, findings are mixed. While some studies show greater linguistic gains by advanced learners (for example, Magnan and Back's 2007 study), others indicate that learners with lower levels of TL proficiency may make greater gains (see overview by Regan, Howard and Lemée, 2009). However, it does seem that a "functional level" (DeKeyser, 2007, p. 217) of competence is necessary in order to take advantage of interaction opportunities with expert users. DeKeyser's (2010) study of US students of Spanish living in Argentina, for example, found that students whose knowledge of Spanish grammar was weak, tended to avoid interaction opportunities and made less progress. DeKeyser (2010) concluded: "The more they know, the more they can get better at using what they know through practice and add new knowledge through input and interaction" (p. 90). Trentman (2013) also notes in her study of American students learning Arabic in Egypt that "inadequate linguistic preparation" was a key reason for failure to access opportunities to use the TL (p. 468).

2.2 SA/RA research involving language teachers

The vast majority of SA/RA studies involve undergraduate students, with a paucity of studies focusing on teachers (but see Gleeson & Tait, 2012; Harbon, 2007; Wernicke, 2010). The value of SA/RA programmes as professional development for language teachers, however, has long been advocated. Müller-Hartmann (2000) for example described them as "central phases in the process of language and culture learning" (pp. 211–212) and as "profitable" not only for students but also for teachers both pre- and in-service. Benefits reported in teacher studies to date include TL improvement and enhanced awareness of pedagogy (Bridges, 2007), as well as increased confidence in TL speaking, growth in cultural knowledge and the establishment of valuable networks (L.Q. Allen,

2010). Our own study extends the limited research base on immersion pro-
grammes for language teachers by documenting participating teachers' perspec-
tives on their TL gains, and on factors facilitating or hindering these gains.

3. Research questions and research approach

The two research questions addressed in this chapter are: (1) What linguistic gains
did the two teachers believe they had made? and (2) What factors did they see as
facilitating or hindering these gains? A qualitative case study approach has been
chosen because of the "richness of description and detailed contextualization" that
it can produce (Duff, 2008, p. 59), including information "to which we would not
otherwise have access" (Merriam, 2009, p. 46).

4. Methodology

4.1 Instruments

The perceptions of the two case study teachers were collected by means of a
questionnaire and three 40–50 minute semi-structured individual interviews,
all administered following the IP. Interview data were recorded in note form,
with teachers' responses written verbatim. The contemporaneous handwritten
record was then typed and transferred into electronic scripts by the researchers
themselves.

The interview questions elicited participants' perceptions of changes in their
TL proficiency and factors they saw as facilitating or hindering their TL develop-
ment. We used a thematic analysis approach to analyse the interview and qualita-
tive questionnaire data. Such an approach, according to Braun and Clarke (2006)
can "potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data" (p. 5).
Coding was undertaken manually using themes derived from the two research
questions; these themes were further refined during analysis. Quotations from the
data have been extracted to highlight findings.

4.2 Participants

Stake (1995) observes that in selecting cases, "the first criterion should be to
maximise what we can learn" (p. 4). The two case study participants were select-
ed to represent the two groups of teachers from the original larger study: that is,
secondary school teachers (teaching students in Years 9–13, i.e. students aged
about 13–17 years), and the generalist teachers who teach at primary and inter-

mediate schools. (In NZ, many students in Years 7–8 attend an intermediate school between primary and secondary.) One case study teacher is thus a secondary school teacher, while the other is an intermediate and therefore generalist teacher.

Teachers of languages at secondary school in NZ are very likely to be specialists in their subject area, i.e. they will probably have majored in their teaching language at university and will likely have specialist language teaching qualifications. In contrast, NZ intermediate school teachers teach most subjects across the curriculum, with the TL being just one of these, and are therefore likely to have lower levels of TL proficiency. The NZ government's 2007 initiative to increase the teaching of foreign languages in schools has been concentrated to a large degree in Years 7–8 which have traditionally not offered languages other than English (the de facto national language) and Māori (NZ's indigenous language and one of the two official languages). Hence it was of particular importance to include an IP participant from this background.

5. Case studies

5.1 Case study teacher one

Patricia (pseudonym) was a secondary school teacher with 15 years' language teaching experience at the time of the IP. She taught a European language[1] as her main teaching subject at a large NZ urban secondary school, and had a postgraduate qualification in the teaching language. Prior to beginning the IP, she perceived herself as having an "intermediate" level of proficiency in listening, speaking and writing, and "advanced" in reading. "Intermediate" was a level on a five-point scale of proficiency provided to respondents, which included beginner, elementary, intermediate, advanced and expert user. We interpret it to be close to B2 (*Independent User*) on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR: Council of Europe, 2001). (We acknowledge that direct use of the CEFR in our research to determine levels would have been more informative.)

Patricia's linguistic goal was first and foremost to improve her speaking, followed by developing her cultural knowledge and her understanding of grammar. Her IP was spent for the most part in a small city in the main TL-using country.

---

1 The number of New Zealand language teachers who have participated in one year immersion programmes is small. To ensure the confidentiality of participants is maintained, the target language and host country are not identified.

She lived in an apartment initially with another English-speaking teacher and then on her own. She taught English regularly at a local secondary school for most of her stay. For the first ten weeks she taught just five hours a week while she followed an intensive TL course, and then taught 20 hours weekly for most of the remainder of the year. In addition to the TL course she also attended a course focused on language pedagogy. She reported in the questionnaire that being able to study and experience the role of a student not only improved her TL skills but also enhanced her teaching skills. On her return from the IP, Patricia saw herself as having made "significant" gains in language proficiency and assessed herself as being at CEFR Level C1 (*Proficient User with Effective Operational Proficiency*). (During the IP, Patricia developed familiarity with the CEFR which in turn provided her with an improved means of self-assessing her language proficiency.)

When asked in the questionnaire what she believed helped her most to improve her language proficiency, Patricia professed a strong belief in the importance of interaction: "To improve proficiency, you have to mix with [TL] speakers and that is one of the reasons why I loved working practically full time at the school." It seems her professional involvement in teaching and association with a host school provided direct access to native speaker communities, carrying linguistic, cultural and social benefits. She said:

> I loved it. Being part of the school community … meeting lots of people, being invited into peoples' homes, on holiday, even going with teachers on a marking panel to another city for three days, going on school trips. It gave me real purpose. I was useful and could contribute.

Patricia's social network can be described informally as multiplex. As can be seen in the statement above, she interacted with TL speakers frequently and in a variety of contexts, both professional and personal. She assisted in professional activities with local teachers and this involved time away with them; she was invited to teachers' homes and met their family and friends. Thus, she interacted with people in more than one capacity – as colleague, and as friend. Isabelli-García (2006) notes that "social networks with native speakers allow the SA learner expanded opportunities for interaction" (p. 257), and this certainly was the case for Patricia. In addition to TL input and interaction provided through professional contact with colleagues and students at school, Patricia gained opportunities for further TL interaction outside the school setting through her friendships with local teachers. On the other hand, given that she lived for the most part by herself, her accommodation did not provide much in the way of opportunities for interaction. When asked what factors hindered her linguistic gains, none were identified.

5.2 Case study teacher two

Bob (pseudonym) was a teacher of students in Years 7–8 (aged about 11–13 years). He was an experienced generalist teacher, responsible for all subjects including the TL, which he taught for two hours a week throughout the year in his NZ school.

Although Bob had five years' experience teaching the TL at the time of the IP, his initial level of TL proficiency was rather basic. He had taken an internationally recognised language proficiency test prior to the IP, achieving a level equating to Level A1 (*Basic User)* on the CEFR. On the five-point scale provided to questionnaire respondents, he recorded himself as having an elementary level of proficiency. His main linguistic goal for the IP was to improve his TL speaking, in particular pronunciation. Like Patricia, Bob spent his IP in a small European city, completing two intensive TL courses, each of four weeks' duration. He was also associated with a school where he reportedly spent a high number of hours each week teaching English. Toward the end of his IP, Bob passed a language proficiency test equating to Level B1 (*Independent User)* on the CEFR. He spoke positively of his linguistic gains and noted in particular, improvements in TL fluency and in confidence. In his questionnaire response, Bob largely credited the two intensive TL courses for these gains: "Most of my improvement in language proficiency was made during these courses." Interacting with TL speakers was also identified as a factor underpinning gains. He saw himself as highly motivated to improve his proficiency but also thwarted to some extent.

While Patricia reported no negative factors impacting on her language gains, Bob acknowledged several, with "not enough immersion" as the key negative factor. This was explained with regard to his teaching role, insufficient access to TL classes, and his accommodation. Bob reported teaching English for 25+ hours per week which he saw as "too much". In addition, although he was able to attend two months of classes, he believed longer intensive courses would have been useful, and the lack of pre-IP assistance from the IP organisers in locating suitable courses was also considered a negative factor. Additionally, he identified several aspects related to his accommodation as hindering linguistic gains, and regretted not living with a host family. Bob had lived in an apartment with a fellow English speaker for the first two months. As he said: "X was fluent but I struggled so we ended up speaking English … hardly immersion." On the other hand, however, they provided emotional support for each other in the first two months, including encouraging each other to take advantage of interaction opportunities with TL speakers. However, after two months Bob's family arrived and they moved into an apartment together for eight months; despite intentions to speak the TL, Bob emphatically noted "we spoke English." Also noted by Bob in the first interview

was that invitations to participate in out–of-school social activities "dried up" once his family arrived.

A qualitative analysis of Bob's self-reported social networks suggests that his main network was largely composed of other members of his first language community (although not entirely as he did claim some friendships with TL speakers). This English-speaking network was made up mainly of those he lived with: a fellow native speaker of English initially, and later his family. It seems that this fairly closed personal network structure, while providing emotional support for Bob, reduced the opportunities for developing networks with TL communities and ongoing interaction with TL speakers. In particular, Bob's professional life did not lead to networking with local colleagues beyond the professional world of the school, to the same extent as Patricia's did. Rather than a single, multiplex network involving TL in different domains, his were more uniplex (an English speaking network at home, a a largely professional-only network at school). Bob also reported that he lacked confidence in using the TL in the beginning of his IP experience; coupled with his lower level of TL proficiency, it seems likely that this impacted on interactional opportunities, in line with the suggestions of DeKeyser (2007) and Trentman (2013).

6. Discussion

The two teachers had disparate teaching backgrounds, and had different immersion experiences; however both noted considerable gains in their TL proficiency. The case studies shed light on factors they perceived as influencing their TL progress, and on the role of social networking in particular. Patricia arrived in the target language setting with a self-reported intermediate level of proficiency. While she had a professional teaching role, her workload was not excessive (a maximum of 20 hours per week). She was highly motivated to make the most of every social and professional opportunity and made further linguistic gains, partly through instruction but attributed largely by Patricia herself to a multiplex social network developed through her association with teachers in a local school. Pertinent here is the view by Dewey et al. (2012) of a "symbiotic relationship" (p. 126) between networks and linguistic gains. That is to say: "those who make friendships with natives tend to use the language and therefore make gains, and those who make greater gains are more capable of making friendships with locals" (p. 126).

Bob, too, was highly motivated and also saw himself as having considerably improved his TL proficiency (a view supported by test evidence). He was pleased with his progress, and acknowledged a crucial role for TL instruction in this, but at the same time acknowledged his frequent use of English with an English speak-

ing colleague initially, and later with family. He also made friends with local teachers, some of whom he maintained contact with after the IP, but it seems that unlike Patricia, for whom the school and teaching English provided considerable TL interactional opportunities beyond the school setting, such interactional opportunities were fewer for Bob after his family arrived. Bob's workload was greater than Patricia's (25+ hours per week), and he was clear too that such a heavy workload was not conducive to improving his TL proficiency, perhaps because these professional duties took time away from other activities that could have led to TL interaction. In terms of social networks, therefore, at least initially, it appears that Bob had neither the time, the confidence nor the opportunities to form the kinds of multiplex relationships that Patricia enjoyed. It appears that Patricia, with her combination of a higher initial level of TL proficiency and her social availability, was more accessible to the TL community. Churchill and DuFon (2006) make the point that:

> Building a social network is more easily achieved by some learners than others. Success in this endeavor is related to learner characteristics such as openness, ability to make oneself socially salient, persistence in working to gain access, and tolerance for and attention to unmodified input … the last trait appears to be related not only to personality, but also to the learner's level of proficiency. (p. 20)

Certainly, both Patricia and Bob were well motivated and open to new experiences, and benefited linguistically from the IP. But it is unsurprising that Bob's lesser availability and lower level of TL proficiency impacted on his ability to make connections outside the classroom, and that a metaphor of lost opportunities to some extent underpins his experience, highlighting the need for better calibration of immersion programmes to the needs of individual learners, and in general for more structure around immersion experiences (Plews, Breckenridge, Cambre & de Freitas Fernandes, 2014).

Milroy's (1987) work with social networks has provided useful insights into what was occurring for the two teachers in this study in terms of their linguistic development, their integration into the TL community, and their subsequent opportunities for TL use and proficiency development. It is helpful in partially explaining the difference between the two teachers' experiences and perspectives. As shown in Dewey et al.'s (2012) study, social networks play a clear role in shaping TL use, and can promote language gains (p. 118). For Patricia: "People and relationships are the key to the success of the whole experience." From Patricia's success, but more particularly from Bob's more limited experience, it seems that the design of the IP would benefit from incorporating more structured opportunities for engagement in host community activities. This engagement, as

Trentman (2013) points out, "is often dependent on the value (often non-linguistic) that the learners provide" (p. 470). For teachers, such opportunities could centre round a school, but expectations should ideally go beyond playing the role of an English language instructor (conscientiously fulfilled by Bob as well as by Patricia). An expectation of involvement in the wider life of the school, including extracurricular activities, could well lead more routinely to expanded social networks, as we saw in the particular case of Patricia. Interactional opportunities with expert users could also be enhanced through an expectation that IP participants undertake ethnographic projects involving interaction with TL speakers in the local community (Jackson, 2006; Trentman, 2013). Certainly opportunities for immersion exist in the host country but what is apparently needed are "opportunities for engagement" (Trentman, 2013, p. 470), and structured support for less-proficient and less confident participants to take these up.

7. Conclusion and directions for further research

The overall aim of the study was to explore in greater depth the perspectives of the two teachers in terms of their linguistic gains, and their perceptions of the factors facilitating and hindering these gains. One of the advantages of case study research is being able to address "how" and "why" questions (Yin, 2009, p. 13). Applying a social network lens to the case studies, albeit in an exploratory way, has been illuminating in gaining further understanding of how different types of networks are formed, and interactional opportunities gained. Thus Patricia (already an intermediate TL speaker and also a lone sojourner), could develop a multiplex social network with TL speakers, largely through her association with the host school, which had a positive impact on her TL development. On the other hand, Bob's lower level of initial TL proficiency and confidence, his family responsibilities and very high teaching workload, deterred the development of multiplex networks despite being in an apparently similar professional workplace, and left him more dependent on instruction for linguistic progress.

These highly-contextualised case studies contribute to the rather sparse knowledge base on IPs as professional development for language teachers. This study is based on just two teachers, so caution needs to be exercised regarding conclusions. However, it has resulted in new insights, in particular the varying value of activities that require professional engagement with the TL community, such as working in local schools. The study points to areas for further research. More information is needed as to the quality of the interactions teachers had with TL speakers, in the host school setting. Also worthy of further investigation is the value that the teachers provide as perceived by the host community schools (Trentman, 2013), and the impact this might have on the formation of social networks with

TL speakers and on IP teachers' TL gains. These would contribute further insights into the complex nature of learning for teachers on IPs. A final word from one of the two teachers provides a fitting end:

> I feel so very fortunate to have been able to be part of this … . I am grateful for the opportunity and think that the programme has enormous potential; it will make a real positive change to language teaching and learning in NZ.

References

Allen, H.W. (2010). Interactive contact as linguistic affordance during short-term study abroad: Myth or reality? *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, XIX* (Fall-Winter), 1-26.

Allen, L.Q. (2010). The impact of study abroad on the professional lives of world language teachers. *Foreign Language Annals, 43*, 93-104.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*, 77-101.

Bridges, D. 2007. Learner perceptions of a professional development immersion course. *Prospect, 22*, 39-58.

Churchill, E*.,* & DuFon, M. (2006). Evolving threads in study abroad research. In M. A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 1-27). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters*.*

Coleman, J.A. (1997). Residence abroad within language study. *Language Teaching, 30*, 1-20.

Coleman, J.A., & Chafer, T. (2011). The experience and long-term impact of study abroad by Europeans in an African context. In F. Dervin (Ed.), *Analysing the consequences of academic mobility and migration* (pp. 67-96). Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp

DeKeyser, R. (2007). Study abroad as foreign language practice. In R. DeKeyser (Ed.), *Practice in a second language: Perspectives from applied linguistics and cognitive psychology* (pp. 208-226). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

DeKeyser, R. (2010). Monitoring processes in Spanish as a second language during a study abroad program. *Foreign Language Annals, 43*, 80-92.

Dewey, D., Bown, J., & Eggett, D. (2012). Japanese language proficiency, social networking, and language use during study abroad: Learners' perspectives. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 68*, 111-137.

Diao, W., Freed, B., & Smith, L. (2011). Confirmed beliefs or false assumptions? A study of home stay experiences in the French study abroad context. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 21*, 109-142.

Duff, P. (2008). *Case study research in applied linguistics.* Oxford, UK: Routledge.

Ellis, R. (2005). *Instructed second language acquisition: A literature review.* Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education. Retrieved January 5, 2013, from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/5163

Freed, B.F. (2008). Second language learning in a study abroad context. In N. Van Deusen–Scholl & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education: Vol. 4. Second and foreign language education* (2nd ed.; pp. 1215-1227). New York: Springer.

Gass, S. (1997). *Input, interaction, and the second language learner.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Gass, S.M., & Mackey, A. (2006). Input, interaction and output: An overview. *AILA Review 19*, 3-17.

Gleeson, M., & Tait, C. (2012). Teachers as sojourners: Transitory communities in study abroad programmes. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*, 1144-1151.

Harbon, L. (2007). Short-term international experiences and teacher language awareness. *International Education Journal, 8*, 229-243.

Harvey, S., A. Roskvist, D., Corder, D., & K. Stacey. (2011). *An evaluation of the language and culture immersion experiences (LCIE) for teachers programmes: Their impact on teachers and their contribution to effective second language learning.* Report to the Ministry of Education. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Education. Retrieved January 15, 2012, from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/an-evaluation-of-the-language-and-culture-immersion-experiences-for-teachers-programme

Isabelli-García, C. (2006). Study abroad social networks, motivation and attitudes: Implications for second language acquisition. In M. A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 231-258). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Jackson, J. (2006). Ethnographic preparation for short-term study and residence in the target culture. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 30*, 77-98.

Kinginger, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research.* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lantolf, J.P., & Johnson, K. E. (2007). Extending Firth & Wagner's ontological perspective to L2 classroom praxis and teacher education. *Modern Language Journal, 91*(Suppl.), 875-890.

Llanes, A., & Muńoz, C. (2009). A short stay abroad: Does it make a difference? *System, 37*, 353-365.

Long, M.H. 1996. The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W.C. Ritchie & T.K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of language acquisition*: Volume 2 (pp. 413-468). New York: Academic Press.

Magnan, S. S., & Back, M. (2007). Social interaction and linguistic gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 40*, 43-61.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons.

Milroy, L. (1980). *Language and social networks.* Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Milroy, L. (1987). *Language and social networks* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Milroy, L. (2002). Social Networks. In J.K. Chambers, P. Trudgill & N. Schilling-Estes (Eds.), *The handbook of language variation and change* (pp. 549-572). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Ministry of Education. (2010). *LIAs 2010 selection and interview information.* Retrieved November 25, 2012, from
http://language-immersion.tki.org.nz/about_the_awards/awards_information

Müller-Hartmann, A. (2000). Exchanges. In M. Byram (Ed.), *Routledge encyclopedia of language teaching and learning* (pp. 211-214). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Plews, J.L., Breckenridge, Y., Cambre, M.-C., & de Freitas Fernandes, G. M. (2014). Mexican English teachers' experiences of international professional development in Canada: A narrative sequel. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 11*, 52-75.

Regan, V., Howard, M., & Lemée, I. (2009). *The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Schmidt-Rinehart, B.C., & Knight, S.M. (2004). The homestay component of study abroad: Three perspectives. *Foreign Language Annals, 37*, 254-262.

Segalowitz, N., & Freed, B. F. (2004). Context, contact and cognition in oral fluency acquisition: Learning Spanish in at home and study abroad contexts. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *26*, 173-199.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Trentman, E. (2013). Arabic and English during study abroad in Cairo, Egypt: Issues of access and use. *The Modern Language Journal, 97*, 457-473.

Wang, C. (2010). Toward a second language socialization perspective: Issues in study abroad research. *Foreign Language Annals, 43*, 50-63.

Wernicke, M. (2010). Study abroad as professional development for FSL teachers. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics/Revue Canadienne de Linguistique Appliquée*, *13*, 4-18.

Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Chapter 10
Student interactions during study abroad in Jordan

Jennifer Bown, Dan P. Dewey and R. Kirk Belnap

Brigham Young University

For many years, researchers have assumed that studying abroad produces "fluent" speakers of a given language. However, in the past several decades, researchers have recognized that learners do not always avail themselves of opportunities to interact in the target language, and even when they do, success is not guaranteed. Scholars have begun to recognize that the quality of learners' interactions during study abroad may be more important for ultimate language gains than the quantity of language use. This qualitative study documents the interactions of 82 students of Arabic studying in Amman, Jordan, as well as the factors that influenced the quality of their interactions, and the strategies they used to improve them. Data include surveys, weekly speaking journals, and interviews. Findings suggest that learners' self-regulatory strategies as well as programme interventions can improve the SA experience.

1. Introduction

Study abroad (SA) is often touted as the best path to fluency in a foreign language. The assumption is that SA will provide learners with rich, naturalistic input, as well as ample opportunities for interaction in the target language (L2). However, recent research on SA has challenged these assumptions, demonstrating that SA does not always guarantee a true immersion environment (Churchill & DuFon, 2006; Collentine & Freed, 2004; Freed, 2008).

Isabelli-García (2006) suggests that "contact with the host culture outside of the classroom and attitudes towards the host culture can be related to the development of oral communication skills and accuracy" (p. 232). However, numerous studies have demonstrated that contact with locals in the target language is not as extensive as previously thought. For example, Kuntz and Belnap (2001) found that students studying abroad in Morocco and Yemen rarely spoke Arabic outside of class, perhaps because learners have difficulty gaining access to target language speakers (Magnan & Back, 2007; Wilkinson, 1998).

Even when learners have extensive contact with native speakers (NS) of the target language, out-of-class contact with the L2 may not lead to language gains. Mendelson (2004) found no direct relationship between the students' reported L2 contact hours and their gains in oral proficiency. Similarly, Miller and Ginsberg (1995) found no correlation between amount of interaction with NSs and measured L2 proficiency gains.

On the other hand, studies of learners' social networks, while not focusing directly on learners' language use, offer insights into the effects of interactions on language gain. For instance, Isabelli-García (2006) found that "learners with high motivation…developed more extensive social networks" (p. 255) and that those with more extensive networks had more opportunities to engage in advanced-level tasks. Dewey, Belnap and Hillstrom (2013) found that intensity, a measure of the closeness of an individual's relationship, was positively correlated with oral proficiency gain during SA. Hillstrom (2011) posits that closer relationships allowed learners to have more meaningful social and linguistic interactions with these individuals.

Taken together, the studies cited above imply that type of interaction may be more important than amount of L2 use during SA. As Freed and her colleagues note, it may be that "the nature of the interactions, the quality of the experiences, and the efforts made to use the L2" are more important for linguistic gains than the quantity of language use (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004, p. 24).

Scholars have employed a number of qualitative methods to better understand learners' interactions. Brecht and Robinson (1993) made use of calendar diaries and interviews to examine how and under what circumstances learners use the L2 during SA. Later, Pellegrino (1998; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005) examined learners' choices about when to use the L2 during SA, finding that learners were primarily influenced by their linguistic goals and by perceived threats to their identities.

More recently researchers have made use of audio- and videorecorded conversations to document learners' L2 interactions. Wilkinson's (2002) study analyzed learners' recorded conversations with NSs, finding that learners and their interlocutors tended to replicate classroom discourse patterns even in out-of-class situations. DuFon (2006), Cook (2006) and Iino (2006) used video- and audiorecorded interactions to examine the ways in which learners are socialized into the host culture. From a language socialization perspective, these studies have yielded many intriguing insights. However, recording of naturally-occurring conversations may prove impractical in many situations, particularly in countries where individuals may be mistrustful of recording devices. Moreover, these studies reflect only a portion of the total interactions in which learners engage, choosing specific conversations to analyze, rather than focusing on the totality of the learners' interactions.

In this chapter, we explore the various interactions and tasks in which SA learners engage using three data sources: student speaking journals, interviews with students, and a post-SA Language Task Frequency Survey. These instruments allow a broader perspective on learners' interactions during SA, and particularly on those interactions that they found most helpful for promoting their language skills.

We address the following research questions:

1. What types of interactions did students most frequently engage in during SA in Jordan?
2. What factors affected student interactions on SA?
3. What strategies did learners use in order to improve the quality of their speaking experiences?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants and programme

Participants for this study were 82 learners of Arabic who participated in an intensive semester-long programme in Amman, Jordan in fall of 2011 (*n*=52, 32 males and 20 females) or fall of 2012 (*n*=30, 18 males and 12 females), organized by a large private university in the US. Each participant was a native speaker of English, including one bilingual speaker of English and Spanish. Participants received four semesters of Arabic instruction (50 minutes per day, 5 days per week) prior to leaving on SA, and scores for participants in this programme are typically Intermediate-Mid on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview at the beginning of the SA (see http://www.languagetesting.com for details on the interview and scores). Intermediate on the ACTFL scale is roughly equivalent to A2/B1 according to the descriptors in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001). Both years the programme was led by the same SA director, a faculty member from the home institution. Both groups participated in a predeparture orientation course at their home institution, which consisted of seven 90-minute sessions covering programme rules, history, culture, and ways to make the most of their experience abroad. Emphasis was placed on setting realistic expectations, as well as techniques for engaging NSs in conversations. While in country, students also received regular coaching on maximizing their SA experience, including instruction on cultural differences and strategies for improving the quality of their speaking experiences.

During their sojourn abroad students attended class approximately three hours a day, five days a week. These courses included a conversational Jordanian

Arabic course as well as a current events class (a content course conducted in Arabic). The third hour of class was conducted largely in English and consisted of discussions of language details and quizzes on the readings, coaching for making the most of their time, and brief culture discussions typically in reaction to student experiences that week. Each week a guest lecturer met with the students for an hour to discuss in Arabic a topic of relevance to their stay. In addition, the 2012 group met one-on-one with trained tutors to practise speaking for 30 minutes three times a week and to review their writing twice a week for 15 minutes. Outside of class, participants were required to speak in Arabic two hours a day for five days a week as well as to read articles selected from the newspaper for approximately the same amount of time. Participants resided in apartments with four to six fellow programme participants in an affluent neighborhood near the University of Jordan.

In the last half of the 2011 programme, in response to requests by some of the students, all students were offered the opportunity of additional speaking time with tutors and approximately one third availed themselves of this opportunity. Programme directors discovered that learners found these interviews of a much higher quality than what they typically experienced with friends or acquaintances. As a result, the 2012 programme provided learners with an additional three hours a week of individual speaking practice with hired conversation partners, which counted toward the requirement to speak with locals 20 hours or more per week.

Once a week, the entire group met with the programme director(s) and teaching assistants (TAs) to debrief; In these sessions they were encouraged to talk about their frustrations and challenges as well as their triumphs. Students also met individually on a regular basis to discuss their speaking experiences with a programme director or one of the TAs. Teaching assistants had previously participated in the programme as students and served as role models and coaches for the learners. In these sessions, learners received feedback, encouragement, and coaching in terms of their language learning efforts. Learners spent a total of thirteen weeks in-country, approximately two weeks of which were spent touring with relatively limited study and use of the L2.

2.2. Data sources

A variety of data sources, primarily qualitative, were utilized in this study. In this chapter we draw primarily on learners' weekly speaking journals and the Post-SA Language Task Frequency Survey. Some quotations are also drawn from interviews conducted with select participants in the fall of 2011, as well as from daily speaking reports from the 2012 participants. Our findings are further informed by interviews with the SA programme directors.

Weekly speaking journals (WSJs): Each week learners were required to submit to their programme director and TAs a narrative in which they reflected on the week's speaking experiences and wrote about detailed plans for improving their interactions the following week. Besides the narrative component, learners also rated their efforts to find new people to speak with, their listening comprehension, success in communicating their ideas, fluency, and accuracy on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest. The complete survey is available in Appendix A. In this chapter we will focus on the narrative data.

Post study abroad language function frequency survey: Several months after the conclusion of the 2012 programme, researchers administered an online survey in which 2011 and 2012 participants were asked to indicate how frequently they engaged in selected language functions drawn from ACTFL's descriptors of Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior levels of oral proficiency. Here we use 'function' in the sense in which it is used by ACTFL: to describe the global tasks which learners can perform in the language, as defined by ACTFL for each proficiency level. Advanced-level speakers are defined as capable of narrating and describing in all tenses in the language and of handling situations with a complication. Superior-level speakers are capable of arguing viewpoints and offering hypotheses. We occasionally use "task" to describe these global capabilities, though the usage differs from the pedagogical usage, in which it usually refers to a communicative exchange in which the learner has a particular goal to meet, such as making an appointment or communicating a message (Ellis, 2003).

For the list of functions covered in the survey, see Table 1 below. Learners ranked the frequency with which they engaged in each function on a six-point Likert scale (1 = *Never*, 2 = *Less than once a week*, 3 = *Once a week*, 4 = *2-3 times a week*, 5 = *Several times a week*, and 6 = *Daily*). The response rate for the survey was 43.9%.

Though it is true that the self-report data is unlikely to be an accurate record of practice, especially so long after the study abroad experience, the survey allowed the researchers a glimpse into the learners' perceptions of their SA interactions.

The ACTFL guidelines represent global characterizations of integrated performance in speaking, reading, writing, and listening. The guidelines describe what learners should be able to do at each of four major levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior. A more detailed description of the guidelines for each level, and the corresponding sublevels, can be found on ACTFL's website (the 2012 version was used in this research). The ACTFL guidelines have become the national standard in the U.S. for testing and rating and have had a significant washback effect (Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996) on curriculum and instruction. The functions were particularly useful for labelling the types of interactions the participants experienced while abroad and informed the design of the survey. However, the survey cannot capture the full range of the ACTFL guidelines, as we

employed only one axis: language functions. The ACTFL guidelines are based on alignment of global functions with three other dimensions, including text types (the type of language that the learner produces to perform the functions of the level), contexts (situations in which the learner can function), and content (the topics the learner is able to discuss).

Personal interviews (PIs): Learners met individually with programme directors or TA mentors to discuss their learning and speaking experiences on a weekly basis. In addition, during fall semester 2011, twelve of the students were selected for in-depth individual interviews with external researchers. Students were selected in consultation with programme directors based on the learners' proficiency level and their apparent satisfaction with the SA experience. Thus researchers selected learners who represented a range of pre-programme proficiency skills, as well as students whose satisfaction and engagement levels ranged from very low to very high. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Other students were interviewed after their return, but these interviews were not recorded. Instead, researchers relied on their interview notes.

Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPIs): Each student in the study participated in at least one OPI. Participants from the 2011 group were tested twice, once prior to the start of the programme and once at the end of the programme. The 2012 participants were tested only at the end of the programme. The ACTFL OPI is a standard assessment based on the ACTFL guidelines that is often used to gauge speaking gains during SA. OPI scoring is based on a holistic rating encompassing accuracy, content, text type, and functions that learners are capable of. Each OPI is double-rated; if the raters disagree on the rating it is sent to a third rater.

2.3. Data analysis

The Post Study Abroad Language Function Frequency Survey provided quantitative data on the perceived frequency with which learners performed selected functions. For each individual survey item, we calculated the mean response and the standard deviation. Reliability for the survey items involving frequency of occurrence of language functions was moderately high (α=.85).

In addition to quantifying mentions of language functions, journals and interviews were also coded with particular reference to research questions 2 (What factors affect learners' ability to interact with NS?) and 3 (What strategies do learners use to engage in "quality" speaking opportunities?) Researchers identified patterns and themes found in the interviews and speaking logs using inductive techniques (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and coded them using the online qualitative analysis program, Saturate (www.saturateapp.com). After initial codes were established, they were clustered into categories.

3. Findings and discussion

3.1. Research Question 1: Types of interactions

To answer this question, we employed the Post Study Abroad Language Function Frequency Survey, in which learners reflected on how frequently they engaged in a variety of functions. Table 1 presents the average frequencies for each of the items in the survey. Results indicate that learners engaged most frequently in functions associated with Intermediate-level language, such as *asking and answering questions* and *talking about self and family*. Functions such as *describing, dealing with situations with a complication*, and *discussing less-familiar topics* were less frequent. Least frequently reported were functions associated with the Superior level, including *stating and supporting opinions, discussing abstract topics of global or local significance*, and *speculating*.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for post study abroad language function frequency

Function	Mean	SD
Asking and answering questions	5.90	0.44
Talking about daily routine	4.98	1.05
Talking about self and family	5.40	1.03
Describing in detail	4.65	1.29
Telling stories or personal experiences	5.05	0.96
Negotiating situations with complications	4.00	1.07
Participating in conversations on unfamiliar topics	4.35	1.19
Stating and supporting opinions	4.10	1.34
Discussing abstract topics of global significance	4.00	1.50
Discussing abstract topics of personal significance	4.18	1.36
Speculating and hypothesizing	3.43	1.26

These findings are not unexpected in that many native-language interactions do not exceed Intermediate level, that is, they are limited to sentence-level transactional exchanges. Moreover, the mean proficiency level of the students at the beginning of this programme was Intermediate, and the Intermediate speaker is sometimes referred to as the "Linguistic Survivor" (Allen, no date). That is, Intermediate speakers are capable of asking and answering questions and meeting most needs related to daily survival. Their lack of accuracy and limited vocabulary make it difficult for them to function at the Advanced level, let alone at the Superior level,

especially early in the programme. Nevertheless, what is surprising is the relative frequency with which learners reported even Superior-level functions, such as *stating and supporting opinions* (mean=4.10) and *discussing abstract topics of personal significance* (mean=4.00). The scores suggest that learners engaged in such functions multiple times per week. It is important to point out, however, that the survey was completed several months after programme completion and may not represent an accurate picture of learners' interactions, especially those in the early part of the programme. Moreover, in the absence of recorded conversations, it is difficult to ascertain the nature of these exchanges. Opinions are classified as a Superior-level function, yet these can be expressed at an Intermediate level. For example, a comment such as "Obama is a good president" is an opinion although it does not comprise Superior-level speech. Nevertheless, data suggest that learners felt they had opportunities to engage in both Advanced- and Superior-level functions and the fact that almost all of them were rated as either Intermediate High or Advanced Low or Mid by the end of the programme suggests that they could indeed perform a number of functions classified by ACTFL at higher levels. Of the survey respondents at the end of the programme, seven were rated Advanced Mid, fourteen Advanced Low, ten Intermediate High, and five Intermediate Mid. Note that Intermediate High speakers are more like Advanced-level speakers than Intermediate Low or Mid as they can handle many of the same functions associated with the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance on these functions. (http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/speaking).

3.2. Research Question 2: Factors affecting interaction

Because of the programme's emphasis on the development of OPI skills, learners were encouraged not only to speak the language for two hours a week, but to engage in conversations that would facilitate language growth. Thus, participants on the programme were overwhelmingly concerned with the quality of their interactions (mentioned 259 times in weekly speaking journals, by 63 learners). In their journals, learners often described what they meant by "quality". Quality interactions were those in which the learner was an active participant, in which the learner was able to engage in higher-order functions, such as narrating and describing, or expressing opinions. Interactions in which the learners were not able to take an active role or were otherwise frustrated in their attempts to perform Advanced-level functions were not considered quality exchanges.

A close analysis of narrative data sources, primarily the weekly speaking journals, allowed us to better understand students' perspectives on their interactions. A number of factors were shown to affect the quality of learners' interactions including gender, ability to engage the interlocutor, and the interlocutors themselves.

Gender: At first glance, it appeared that there were differences in patterns on the Post Study Abroad Language Function Frequency Survey between the male and female participants. To assess these differences, several statistical procedures were employed. To determine whether there were overall differences between males and females in terms of the frequency with which they reported engaging in particular tasks, we conducted a t-test. Table 2 depicts the descriptive statistics for this analysis; functions for which the difference between men and women was statistically significant ($p<.05$) are indicated with an asterisk. Results indicate that females reported significantly less frequent interactions in which they discussed abstract topics of global significance, stated and supported hypotheses, or speculated about possible alternative outcomes – all functions associated with the Superior level. These results may be a function of different proficiency levels. While preprogramme OPI scores were not available for all of the respondents, the average pre-OPI score for the female respondents was Intermediate Mid, while the average score for the male respondents was Intermediate High. That is, the males were able to function at the Advanced level at least 50% of the time, while the female students demonstrated random abilities at the Advanced level. Thus, the male students were overall better equipped to handle more linguistically complicated functions. Additionally, the small N in this study may have affected the results.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for males and females on post study abroad language function frequency survey

Function	F	M	*p*	*t*
Asking and answering questions	5.81	5.92	0.55	0.60
Talking about daily routine	4.45	5.24	0.04*	2.13
Talking about self and family	5.45	5.30	0.73	0.34
Describing in detail	4.18	4.88	0.12	1.59
Telling stories or personal experiences	4.63	5.2	0.12	1.59
Negotiating situations with complications	4.00	4.48	0.29	1.07
Participating in conversations on unfamiliar topics	4.27	4.92	0.16	1.45
Stating and supporting opinions	3.09	4.56	0.002*	3.31
Discussing abstract topics of global significance	2.90	4.56	0.002*	3.30
Discussing abstract topics of personal significance	3.45	4.60	0.022*	2.41
Speculating and hypothesizing	2.82	3.80	0.031*	2.25

Data from weekly journals and interviews indicate that women had qualitatively different speaking experiences than men. One issue may have been the availability – or lack thereof – of interlocutors. The female students in the programme were largely advised to avoid conversations with unfamiliar men in order to avoid harassment or any semblance of impropriety. Thus, many of the women in the programme primarily confined themselves to conversations with Arab women, which presented unique challenges. Among them was the added effort required to find female interlocutors, which often necessitated traveling to places such as the university of Jordan or female-only fitness clubs. Six of the female participants indicated that finding women to talk with was challenging, reporting that the male participants had an advantage in this regard. Becca, for instance, reported in an interview with a teaching assistant: "just for the main issue, that there are fewer women on the streets". Lily reported in week 1: "I've noticed that while there are young men everywhere just relaxing, girls are often out for a purpose and don't have time to chat". None of the men on the programme made similar comments about the lack of availability of men to talk with, though they did complain about the quality of the conversations. Because the female participants were advised not to talk with unfamiliar men, their options for speaking were thus somewhat limited. Though it is true that the male participants were also instructed not to strike up conversations with Arab women, the men seemed to have less difficulty in finding potential speaking partners due to the fact that Arab men tend to spend their leisure time outside of the home.

Another challenge posed by limiting interactions to women is that choice of topics was occasionally limited. Ten of the women reported that their conversation partners were not interested in discussing politics or current events, preferring, as Amy stated (Week 9 WSJ), to talk about "girly, fluffy stuff". Sophie (PI) reported, that she had a hard time discussing more abstract topics "'cause a lot of women, again, are apathetic. They don't care. They're like "whatever."… The men are the ones that are involved". Similar frustrations were reported by Abbie, who recounted that: "I sometimes get frustrated with the girls when all we talk about is weddings and makeup" (Week 7 WSJ). In fact, weddings and makeup were reported as regular topics of discussion for women (weddings by eleven women and makeup by five women). In contrast, only one man mentioned weddings and no men mentioned grooming items (razors, nail clippers, etc.). Moreover, several of the men noted that their conversations on politics and more abstract topics took place with cab drivers (eighteen men in weekly speaking reports and six in in-depth interviews). The women in the programme were advised, however, not to talk with cab drivers beyond the necessities of the service transaction, and thus had more limited access to this source of interaction (though seven women, including Jenni [Week 2 WSJ], ignored the admonition: "I had a really good conversation with a taxi driver about beggars in Jordan").

Though all of the female students engaged at some point in discussions of politics, particularly with their trained speaking partners, in thirty instances (by ten of the female participants), the women lamented the unwillingness of their interlocutors to discuss such topics. This concern was not expressed by male participants in their narratives, with one exception; Jerome reported frustration with younger males' choice of topics, including a tendency to talk about "girls and sex" (Week 2 WSJ). Moreover, three women reported in their WSJs fears that they had offended or put off their interlocutors by discussing politics, whereas no men reported such problems. However, it should be noted that the absence of evidence in the men's narrative reports does not mean that they were entirely free from such experiences. Programme directors anecdotally reported that several men were frustrated by the tendency of young Arab males to discuss "shallow" topics.

Research on females studying in the Arab world indicate that American women often feel uncomfortable conversing with Arab men and have fewer opportunities for risk-free social encounters in public spaces than their male counterparts (Kuntz & Belnap, 2001; Hillman, 2008; Trentman, 2012). Moreover, women are often subjected to various forms of sexual harassment, which tend to "silence" women (Polanyi, 1995; Twombly, 1995) or, at the very least, negatively affect their motivation to interact with members of the target culture. Although they are not traumatized, men are nevertheless negatively affected by the current situation in the Arab world. Without intervention, most male students are not likely to have the opportunity to converse freely with women and benefit from their views.

Though the particular social norms of the Middle East may have limited some of the women's access to interlocutors and topics, studies in conversation and discourse analysis have long noted gender differences in topic choice among native speakers of English (Bischoping, 1993; Haas & Sherman, 1982; Moore, 1922; Newman, Groom, Handelman, & Pennebaker, 2008). As part of pre-programme training for SA, the findings from this study suggest that learners should be informed of the discourse norms of the speech community they will be visiting, with a special focus on gender differences.

The importance of programme interventions in helping female and male students is also worthy of note. For example, Brecht, Davidson, and Ginsberg (1995), in a study of students studying abroad in Russia, noted that women made fewer gains than men. By 2010, however, Davidson reported that gender had receded as a predictor of proficiency. Davidson attributes this change not only to changing gender norms in Russia, but also to dedicated training in self-management, with a particular focus on the female learners. The Jordan programme hired speaking partners for the students, allowing both male and female students opportunities to interact with native speakers of the opposite sex (for a full description of interventions, see Belnap & Abuamsha, 2015). In addition, the programme has given particular attention to its female learners by hiring a female TA to serve as a peer role

model and by publishing profiles of women who have successfully navigated study abroad (see, for example http://nmelrc.org/pp/arabic-success-stories/kylie and http://nmelrc.org/pp/arabic-success-stories/heidi).

Ability to engage the interlocutor: Analysis of weekly speaking reports brought to light learners' struggles to engage interlocutors and highlighted the effects of those difficulties on the kinds of conversations in which learners participated. A number of factors influenced learners' ability to hold their interlocutors' attention, including proficiency in Arabic and the learners' own personality.

Early in the programme, learners reported that their linguistic deficits were the biggest impediment to meaningful interactions with NSs of Arabic. In particular, the learners believed that their linguistic deficits made it difficult to engage their interlocutors and keep their attention. *Deficits in speaking* was coded 152 times and was mentioned at least once by all 82 participants. As Anne reported in week two (WSJ) of the programme: "The people I talk to are polite enough to engage in conversation, yet show no desire to ever speak again. In my opinion this is because I do not speak well enough to make the conversation interesting". However, as learners' skills improved and confidence increased, they reported that they were increasingly able to engage their interlocutors and participate in deeper conversations. After ten weeks in country, Ellen reported in her WSJ: "Now, I feel comfortable in conversations. I'm not nearly (or even half) as fluent/speedy as native speakers, but at least I don't kill the conversation with my pauses". Janelle also wrote during the tenth week of the programme in her daily speaking report: "I have loved my growth in (…) speaking. Things have really progressed from talking about studying Arabic to discussing women's role in Islam".

Personality emerged as another factor influencing the ability to engage interlocutors; it was coded 22 times by 16 individual learners as an obstacle to engagement, while only three learners (in eight instances) reported personality as facilitating interaction. Caroline, for instance, stated (Week 2 WSJ): "My biggest problem is that I'm simply not a 'talker.' I'm being asked to do something in Arabic that I would never do in English", and David echoed this (Week 1 WSJ): "I'm not a fan of talking to people, which makes this difficult". On the other hand, Sally reported in week 5 that her open personality facilitated interaction: "My personality actually seems to work here…I am…a rather open, friendly, and loyal person who wants to care about people and invite confidences" (WSJ).

These findings confirm those of previous research studies which have found that preprogramme language proficiency and personality affect language use. As regards preprogramme proficiency, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) conclude that learners' initial proficiency influenced both the amount and type of L2 extracurricular activities in which they participated. Similarly, Brecht et al. (1995) found that learners with higher initial proficiency were more likely to speak the L2. In a study of personality variables, Ożańska-Ponikwia and Dewaele (2012) found that open-

ness, as well as self-esteem, were the best predictors of language use for Polish immigrants in Ireland. This study confirms previous research and offers insights into the ways in which learners used strategies to mitigate the effects of both linguistic deficits and personality issues, as detailed below.

Interlocutors: Learners' communication difficulties require sympathetic interlocutors, and the role of the interlocutor emerged as one of the primary factors affecting both the quality and quantity of students' interactions. In 242 instances, the interlocutor emerged as the primary obstacle to communication, while in 243 reports the interlocutor was seen to facilitate engagement. Savannah, for instance, tellingly reported in her very first WSJ: "Before this week, I didn't realize how dependent speaking experiences are on the person I'm talking to".

Unsympathetic interlocutors who spoke English complicated the situation even further. When the learners struggled to speak or understand in Arabic, their interlocutors often switched to English, as reported in 48 of the WSJ entries. In the first week of the programme, Colton described attempts to get beyond pleasantries that ended badly: "The only times that I was able to move beyond pleasantries, the intensity of the conversation died way down as I took time to process what I wanted to say and how I would go about saying it, or broke down into the Jordanian speaking in English as I struggled on in Arabic" (WSJ). He noted that he hoped eventually to find his ideal interlocutor, a NS of Arabic who "doesn't speak good English, is patient, and has time to talk to me".

Like Colton, Bert reported initial difficulties getting "past the general pleasantries" (Week 1 WSJ). He noted the inherent contradiction in his attempts to learn the language, namely: "I really want to improve my speaking abilities to the point that an Arab would willingly want to speak with me, but I can't get to that point until I practice more with a native who would be willing to speak to me".

Interlocutors' impatience often led not only to curtailed conversations, but also increased anxiety about speaking, which, in turn, further complicated interactions. On the other hand, learners reported higher quality interactions when their interlocutors were patient, accepting, and willing to speak Arabic (even if they spoke English well). In week 3 Devon reported:

> So in terms of speaking I feel like I'm moving on to a better place!...[I've] been talking with the same guy. He knows the programme we're doing, he's very familiar with Americans and is quite fluent in English, but he is very enthusiastic about helping us learn Arabic. So it was nice to sit and talk with him. I'd often venture outside of what I knew how to say in Arabic.

These patterns match those found by Dewey et al. (2013), who also found that interlocutor personalities, attributes, and English language proficiency affected formation of social networks with NSs of Arabic. Interestingly, they found that the

greater the English proficiency of the learners' Arab friends, the more gains students were likely to make in their Arabic speaking proficiency. They posit that Arab interlocutors who are highly proficient in English are more likely to be sympathetic to language learners and perhaps better able to tailor their speech to the needs of the students, like the trained tutors.

In her discussion of self-presentation in the L2, Pellegrino Aveni (2005) posits that learners want "to feel validated as an intelligent, mature, individual, worthy of friendship" (p 37). Interlocutors whose behaviors did not validate the learners' sense of self made learners uncomfortable and anxious, and, in some cases, simply shut down the conversations. On the other hand, sympathetic interlocutors, who were patient and interested in the learners, facilitated not only L2 use, but also deeper conversations.

For the most part (79 mentions by 46 students), learners reported that their best speaking partners were instructors and speaking partners assigned by the institute for one-on-one practice. Paul recounted: "At this point I still feel like the most positive speaking experiences I have, by a wide margin, are my [one-on-one] speaking appointments…. My teachers do a fantastic job of probing for opinion, feelings, supporting arguments, and analysis" (Week 3 WSJ). These findings are encouraging, given that language teachers are accustomed to interacting with non-native speakers, and, more importantly, are trained to "push" learners and to scaffold their utterances. Moreover, these findings are heartening in that they suggest that study abroad programmes can actively promote learners' language acquisition by arranging for one-on-one conversations with competent instructors. This is particularly important in light of current research indicating that, left to their own devices, many learners may not find the kinds of quality interactions with native speakers that lead to development of proficiency (Isabelli-García, 2006; Polanyi, 1995; Rivers, 1998; Wilkinson, 1998).

Although trained speaking partners are likely to provide the kinds of speaking practice most likely to lead to proficiency development, these conversations are not likely to lead to development of real friendships, of the type to promote cultural understanding. Though the learners were uniformly positive in their assessment of their speaking appointments, one participant noted that "At this point I still feel like the best most positive speaking experiences I have by a wide margin are my speaking appointments. This concerns me because speaking appointments are so sanitary" (Paul, Week 3 WSJ). Though learners primarily reported developing a good rapport with their professional speaking partners, these conversations did not generally lead to friendships or to any kind of entrée into the culture.

Another factor related to the interlocutor was the closeness of the interlocutor's relationship with the learner. According to the WSJs of 47 students (reported 189 times), learners who made one or two close Arab friends were

generally able to have higher quality speaking experiences. Samuel (Week 3 WSJ) indicated that familiarity with interlocutors led to improved speaking experiences: "I don't consciously try to find [new] speaking partners anymore. Which is good because now it is impossible to stay on pleasantries because my speaking partners know me so well, and they want to talk about more complex things".

After Kimberly found a regular speaking partner in week 3, she noted her relief, stating "I am not feeling like I have the same conversation over and over every day with somebody new, but not making any progress". Thus as learners became more familiar with their interlocutors and established friendships, they were able to move beyond mere pleasantries and push themselves to speak on a wider variety of less familiar, and possibly more complex, topics.

These findings accord well with research on social networks. Dewey et al. (2013) found that intensity, a measure of the closeness of learners' relationships, was a positive predictor of L2 gain during SA in Jordan and Morocco. Hillstrom (2011) posits that closer relationships facilitate deeper, more meaningful conversations. The data here offer support for this assertion: Learners perceive that the quality of their conversations improve as they develop closer relationships among the members of their social networks. The data in this study are of limited reliability, given that they rely on self-report. This is particularly true of the journals, where some students provide a good deal of information and others very little. Future research could utilize other methods of data collection, including participant observation and recordings of conversations to test the validity of learners' perceptions. Interviews with learners' friends and acquaintances would also yield additional insights.

3.3. Research Question 3: What strategies did learners use to improve the quality of their interactions?

The strategies that learners reported depended upon their communication goals. Pellegrino Aveni (2005), in her study on L2 use during SA, posits three distinct communication goals that influence learners' language choices, two of which emerged as relevant for the current study: social networking and L2 practice. Social networking is defined as "communication performed for the establishment and development of relationships between the learner and interlocutors and for the maintenance of etiquette and social propriety during interaction with others" (p. 28). L2 practice, on the other hand, refers to communication initiated or sustained for the purpose of developing L2 skills. Trentman (2012) notes that these goals can be mutually exclusive. In her study, learners often found English preferable for social networking. In the present study, the goals were not necessarily mutually exclusive. In most cases, learners tried to

establish friendships not only for their own sakes, but also in order to further their language skills. However, some of the strategies that learners used reflected one goal more than the other.

Because many learners in this study were serious about developing their proficiency, most were deliberate in their speaking experiences, typically pushing to go beyond pleasantries and to find opportunities to practise skills such as narration and description. Their journals describe their attempts to "deepen" conversations and to provide themselves with the practice they deemed so necessary. Many of these strategies were suggested to the learners in consultation with the programme director and TAs. Learners frequently posed questions in their weekly journals, and then reported trying techniques that their "coaches" had suggested to them.

Among the strategies learners used were those to keep their interlocutors engaged and to build rapport. Strategies for demonstrating interest in the interlocutor and for engaging their attention were reported 48 times by 15 learners. For instance, Lily reported: "I've found…the best way to get the time to go faster is to ask questions until you find a subject that they love talking about" (Lily, Week 2 WSJ). Similarly, Atticus reported: "I've gotten past the basics by being interested in the person you [*sic*] are talking to. Asking them about their family or education and trying to dive into that subject by asking more questions about that. It is so much better to stay on one subject and dive deeper in a specific area rather than jumping around or skimming the surface for information" (Week 2 WSJ). Heidi, too, found that quality questions were the key to better conversations:

> I was conversing with a 37 year old first year college student and I kept asking the normal questions about major and family, and then I stopped myself and asked better questions. Questions like, why starting an education so late? What are you doing to do with that? What's your dream regarding the impact you want to make in the world? etc… Bottom line, the better the questions, the better the conversation. (Week 3 WSJ)

In addition to asking questions, learners reportedly tried to increase the engagement of their interlocutors by finding topics that were of interest to them. Marshal, for example, reported: "I'm learning what's interesting to Arabs, and I try to focus on these things" (Week 1 WSJ). Gus, who over the course of the semester reported making several close friendships with Arabs, commented: "I've found that taking an interest in their lives and opinions has made quite the difference in making meaningful relationships" (Week 3 WSJ). Strategies meant to engage the interlocutor and build rapport tended to improve the quality of interactions, as well as strengthening relationships. As Atticus noted in week 9, "I find

as I show genuine interest in what others have to say and what they are doing, they are more prone to talk to you [*sic*]."

At times, however, some learners privileged language practice over authentic interactions. Wilbur, in his second weekly journal noted the conflict between real communication and the need for conversation practice in the following terms: "I am torn between wanting to develop true friendships for the right reasons and buttering up someone that I can continue speaking Arabic with." Some learners felt that they were "using" their interlocutors for strategic purposes. Such strategic use of interlocutors was coded 98 times in the weekly journals of 45 students. Among other strategies, four participants reported "monologuing," that is, delivering long monologues as a means of practicing particular functions. Learners were aware that this strategy often lost the interest of their interlocutors. For example, Emma

> tried to move all of my speaking opportunities in a direction that would help me prepare [for the OPI]. Any time I got the chance to describe a place or person, explain a process, or give an opinion, I went all out! I don't think my excessive rambling particularly endeared me to anyone, but with so little time left, I am willing to appear social [sic] incompetent for a little extra practice! (Week 13 WSJ)

Seven other learners forged ahead with Arabic, even when their interlocutors had switched to English, as Pam did: "When the girl I was talking to just refused to speak Arabic, I decided to work on speaking and not worry about not getting listening in and started narrating some of the presentation topics we've already practiced" (Week 5 daily speaking journal). Another tactic reported by nine students to keep Arabic going was to feign comprehension so as not to prematurely end the conversation. In the absence of appropriate pragmatic skills for continuing conversations, learners reported using body language as a means of showing their interlocutors they were interested. Patricia, for instance, reported: "If I don't understand words I usually smile and nod because I've noticed people tend to elaborate then, and I can usually pick up on the subject after a few seconds of confusion. I don't like to stop people every time I get confused because it gets frustrating and tends to hamstring the conversation" (PI).

Students occasionally told falsehoods to get in practice; four students reported using this tactic. Alan, for instance, reported in his daily speaking report from week 5: "I made up many lies to tell people in cabs. I practised narrating about my fake life." As it turns out, Alan created a false identity for himself after anti-American riots broke out near the U.S. embassies in Egypt and Yemen. He decided to tell people that he was Canadian, and "spent a significant amount of time creating a back story. I have told this tale to many cab drivers, and gotten fairly good at narrating the new life which I have created for myself." Two other students also

claimed to be from countries other than the US, but they did so in order to prevent natives from speaking English with them. One participant, Samuel told an Arab that he'd only been studying Arabic six months. This prompted not only a series of compliments, but also a number of questions about the learner's course of study. Samuel noted, "a lie to say I've only been studying six months, but it was worth the practice of describing the programme" (Week 8 WSJ).

In addition to strategies for prolonging the conversation or for ensuring an opportunity to speak, learners reported engaging in pre-speaking planning, particularly of vocabulary. Pre-speaking, of some form or another, was coded 144 times in the journals of 54 participants. Lance, in consultation with the programme director, decided to "come up with lists of generic adjectives, descriptions and expressions that can be widely applicable, in the hopes that this will help me manoeuvre with more ease in my speaking. Like if I find myself accidentally mentioning that I prefer the public transportation system in Boston as opposed to [my hometown], I have a set of 'facilities' adjectives that could generically describe any facilities of any kind" (Week 10 WSJ).

Others would choose topics about which they wanted to speak, read up on the topics, and then try to direct the conversation towards those topics. This tactic was coded 38 times, in the journals of 24 students. In particular, students used their current events class at the institute as fodder for conversations, as demonstrated in Jonah's journal: "What has really helped has been to use the topics we discuss in class… to help guide the conversation" (Week 6 WSJ).

In short, learners' interest in L2 practice was sometimes in conflict with their goals of social networking. Learners who privileged L2 practice over relationship building often sacrificed authenticity in their interactions in order to achieve their goals, particularly when authentic interactions failed to provide the conditions learners deemed necessary for learning. It is unclear what effect these tactics have on the development of relationships, and on learners' ability to become legitimate participants within a community of practice. To better understand the effects of such interactions on the interlocutors and how learners are received by these interlocutors and their communities, future research should take into account the perspectives of the individuals with whom students regularly interact.

What is apparent, however, is that an Arabic immersion experience is, as Trentman (2012) concludes, not a given. SA may not necessarily be the acquisition-rich environment that many posit it to be. Though programme interventions may go a long way toward improving the overall experience (see Trentman, 2012; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009), the learners themselves must regulate their own learning and the learning environment, inasmuch as the sociohistorical context allows them to. As Bown (2009) notes, effective self-regulators actively shape the learning environment, creating experiences that produce the conditions deemed necessary for meeting their goals.

4. Conclusion

This study represents an attempt to document learner interactions during SA. The self-reported nature of the data limits the findings, as without direct observation it is impossible to access in detail the content of conversations. What one student perceives as a given language function, e.g. a description, may not match what other students, let alone OPI raters, consider to be description. Moreover, the findings document the experiences of learners in one particular programme in a specific geographic locale, and these experiences may not be generalizable to other programs. Nevertheless, the findings of this study offer preliminary insights into the nature of learner interactions, and provide a broader view of the totality of such interactions.

Data from this study further remind researchers that the "gender gap" in SA is alive and well, affecting access to native speakers and to certain kinds of discourse. While learners may attempt to transform the SA setting through use of strategies, certain aspects of the setting may prove impervious. In these cases, programme interventions and learner strategies are particularly necessary.

This study raises serious questions about a *laissez-faire* approach to students finding the practice they need, especially when it comes to more advanced level functions. Effective opportunities for practice and feedback require more of both the programme and the student. Many students do not have the benefit of enrolling in a programme that provides well-designed interventions and coaching. As a result, we underscore Dörnyei's call to "shift our focus…to the learner's self-regulating capacity, that is, the extent of the learner's proactiveness" (2009, p. 183).

References

Allen, R. (no date). *The language proficiency rating system*. Retrieved from http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/other/courses/isp/Languages/rating.

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2012). Performance descriptors for language learners. 2012 edition. Alexandria, VA: ACTFL.

Belnap, R. K., & Abuamsha, K. (2015). Taking on the 'Ceiling Effect' in Arabic. In T. Brown & J. Bown (Eds). *To Advanced proficiency and beyond: Theory and methods for developing Superior second-language ability.* (pp. 105-116). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Bischoping, K. (1993). Gender differences in conversation topics, 1922-1990. *Sex Roles*, *28*, 1-18.

Bown, J. (2009). Self-regulatory strategies and agency in self-instructed language learning: A situated view. *Modern Language Journal*, *93*, 570-583.

Brecht, R.D., Davidson, D.E., & Ginsberg, R.B. (1995). Predictors of foreign language gain during study abroad. In B.F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 37-66). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Brecht, R.D., & Robinson, J.L. (1993). *Qualitative analysis of second language acquisition in study abroad: The ACTR/NFLC project*. Washington, DC: National Foreign Language Center.

Churchill, E., & DuFon, M.A. (2006). Evolving threads in study abroad research. In M.A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 1-27). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Collentine, J., & Freed, B.F. (2004). Learning context and its effects on second language acquisition: Introduction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *26*, 153-171.

Cook, H.M. (2006). Joint construction of folk beliefs by JFL learners and Japanese host families. In M.A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 120-150). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp

Davidson, D. E. (2010). Study abroad: When, how long, and with what results? New data from the Russian front. *Foreign Language Annals*, *43*, 6-26.

Dewey, D.P**.**, Belnap, R.K., & Hillstrom, R. (2013). Social network development, language use, and language acquisition during study abroad: Arabic language learners' perspectives. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 22,* 84-110.

Dörnyei, Z. (2009). *The psychology of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

DuFon, M.A. (2006). The socialization of taste during study abroad in Indonesia. In M.A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 91-119). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Ellis, R. (2003). Task-based language learning and teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Freed, B.F. (2008*).* Second language learning in a study abroad context. In N. Van Deusen–Scholl & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education: Vol. 4. Second and foreign language education (*2nd ed.*,* pp. 1215-1227*).* New York*:* Springer.

Freed, B.F., Dewey, D.P., Segalowitz, N., & Halter, R. (2004). The Language Contact Profile. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *26*, 349-356.

Haas, A., & Sherman, M.A. (1982). Conversational topic as a function of role and gender. *Pscyhological Reports, 51,* 453-454.

Hillman, S.K. (2008*). Reconceptualizing good language learners: Insights from highly proficient learners of Arabic* (Unpublished qualifying paper, Second Language Studies Program). Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

Hillstrom, R. (2011). *Social networks, language acquisition, and time on task while studying abroad in Jordan* (Unpublished Master's thesis). Brigham Young University,

Provo, UT.

Iino, M. (2006). Norms of interaction in a Japanese homestay setting: Toward a two-way flow of linguistic and cultural resources. In M. A. Dufon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 151-176). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Isabelli-García, C. (2006). Study abroad social networks, motivation, and attitudes: Implications for second language acquisition. In M. A. Dufon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 231-258). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Kuntz, P., & Belnap, R.K. (2001). Beliefs about language learning held by teachers and their students at two Arabic programs abroad. *Al–cArabiyya [Arabic], 34,* 91-113.

Magnan, S., & Back, M. (2007). Social interaction and linguistic gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 40,* 43-61.

Mendelson, V.G. (2004). 'Hindsight is 20/20': Student perceptions of language learning and the study abroad experience. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad*, *10*, 43-63.

Miller, L., & Ginsberg, R.B. (1995). Folklinguistic theories of language learning. In B.F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 293-315). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Moore, H.T. (1922). Further data concerning sex differences. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology 17*, 210-214.

Newman, M.L., Groom, C.J., Handelman, L.D., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2008). Gender differences in language use: An analysis of 14,000 text samples. *Discourse Processes*, *45*, 211-236.

Ożańska-Ponikwia, K., & Dewaele, J.M. (2012) Personality and L2 use: The advantage of being openminded and self-confident in an immigration context. *EUROSLA Yearbook 12*, 112-134.

Pellegrino, V. A. (1998). Student perspectives on language learning in a study abroad context. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad*, *4*(2), 91-120.

Pellegrino Aveni, V. A. (2005). *Study abroad and second language use: Constructing the self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Polanyi, L. (1995). Language learning and living abroad: Stories from the field. In B.F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 271-291). Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Rivers, W.P. (1998). Is being there enough? The effects of homestay placements on language gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 31*, 492-500.

Segalowitz, N., & Freed, B.F. (2004). Context, contact, and cognition in oral fluency acquisition: Learning Spanish at home and study abroad contexts. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *26*, 173-199.

Shohamy, E., Donitsa-Schmidt, S., & Ferman, I. (1996). Test impact revisited: Washback effect over time. *Language Testing*, *13*, 298-317.

Trentman, E. (2012). *Study abroad in Egypt: Identity, access, and Arabic language learning* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI Number: 3517251)

Twombly, S. B. (1995*). 'Piropos*' and friendships: Gender and culture clash in study abroad. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 1,* 1-27.

Vande Berg, M., Connor-Linton, J., & Paige, R. M. (2009). The Georgetown Consortium Project: Interventions for student learning abroad. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 18,* 1-75.

Wilkinson, S. (1998). Study abroad from the participants' perspective: A challenge to common beliefs. *Foreign Language Annals*, *31*, 23-39.

Wilkinson, S. (2002). The omnipresent classroom during summer study abroad: American students in conversation with their French hosts. *Modern Language Journal, 86*, 157-173.

Appendix A
Weekly Speaking Journals

Edit form - [Weekly Speaking Report] - Google Docs   https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/gform?key=0At4CiQ2Z0e...

Weekly Speaking Report

Write a couple of paragraphs about this last week's speaking experiences, and plans for the next week. We are asking you to be honest, reflective and insightful. We want to know how you felt about this last week, but less in the emotional sense (I felt happy, I felt satisfied) and more in the analytical sense: how do you feel you performed, what did you do that went well, what could you have done better, in the areas of finding and getting through speaking situations.

Possible things to cover:
   (for finding speaking partners) What worked and what didn't work? What things did I do to encourage speaking, and what things did I do to shut off opportunities that may have presented themselves? How patient/antsy was I in these encounters? Did I make it easy or difficult to speak to these same partners again?
   (for the speaking encounter itself) What did I do to encourage getting beyond pleasantries? Did I find ways to separate from my American colleagues and have one-on-one conversations with Jordanians? Did I find ways to elicit and deliver narration, description, opinion, hypotheticals, etc., in the past, present and future time? Was I able to express and ask for opinion without getting emotionally involved, and making my partner feel I was sincerely interested in what he had to say? Was I aware of tense? verb agreement? noun/adjective agreement? pronunciation? Did I notice words that 'go together'? Did I pay attention to how my partners said things with the goal of eventually incorporating some of it into my own performance? Did I find a way to be interested in my partners and their lives? Did I find a way to start liking them?

We are interested in your honest reflections on your successes and failures this week, some self-reflection on

Name *
Choose your name from the list. Double check before submitting this form that you are doing it under your name.
Al-Jamal Sami

Week *
This is the week you are reporting on, NOT the week during which you are writing the report. Week #1 begins on Sunday, Sept. 4th. Count from there. Check before submitting this form that you are submitting it under the correct week number.
Week #1 (Sep 4-8)

Evaluation *
Type your paragraphs here.

Overall Experience *
Rate the overall success of this week's speaking experiences.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
pretty much a waste	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	very successful

Finding *
Rate your efforts to find partners and encourage high quality, one-on-one conversation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
didn't work very well	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	really paid off

Comprehension *
Rate your understanding of what your partners said.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
didn't get much	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	understood everything

Communicating *
Rate your being able to say what you wanted to say, and it being understood by your partners.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
constantly frustrated	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	no trouble getting message across

Accuracy *
Rate your adherence this week to Arabic grammatical, word choice, and pronunciation norms.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
major tense, agreement, vocabulary, pronunciation (etc.) problems	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	I didn't make any errors at all

Fluency *
Rate your performance in terms of fluency

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
very halting, long pauses	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	words just came pouring out of my mouth

Chapter 11
Meeting in the virtual middle: blending online and human resources to generate a year abroad community

Cathy Hampton

University of Warwick

This paper is interested in exploring two concepts that currently have a significant bearing on the epistemological experiences of modern foreign language (MFL) students: study abroad, and the digital learning environment. It seeks to study the extent to which their confluence can provide those students with the kind of pedagogical encounters that higher education institutions should be offering in the 21st century. These two concepts are both credited with offering radical potential for change and agency, not least because in different ways they offer the possibility of acting in a global environment. When British MFL students return from their required year abroad, "something has happened to them" (Kristensen, 2004, p. 97, quoted in Meier & Daniels, 2013, p. 2); Killick (2011) documents in similar terms the horizon shifting that takes place in the mind of the alert traveller in global spaces, digital and otherwise; Garrison speaks of e-learning as a "disruptive technology" that is currently destabilizing traditional modes of teaching and learning and sowing the seeds for different modes of interaction (2011, p. 125). Year abroad students, meanwhile, are also disrupted learners, since they are engaged in a liminal activity operating at the edge of the formal, institutionalised university system, in terms of pedagogy but also in terms of space. The multi-directional interventions made possible in a virtual learning environment offered the French Department at Warwick University the opportunity to explore formal and informal learning events for these students in intimate detail. Our project sought, then, to examine the new pedagogical possibilities that might emerge from tying a physical experience of movement abroad, prompting acute self- and intercultural awareness, to a learning medium that in its plural, transactional and interactive nature privileges "cognitive and experiential disturbance" (Barnett, 2000, p. 155). Could the appropriate synthesis of these two spaces generate a new kind of learning currently unaccounted for, and thus unarticulated, in the pedagogical vision we had for our students?

1. Language and abroad: spaces of disturbance

If we read the work of those academics currently reflecting on the state of schol-arship and the experience of learning in higher education, the semantic field is one of flux: students must learn to cope with a veritable Babel tower of compet-ing discourses; there are no longer any absolutes, and the university must learn how to prepare them for this. "The challenge facing students and teachers is that 'the world of knowledge is overwhelming, a vast ocean, horizonless, plung-ing to impossible depths' (Achenbach, 1999, p. 23)", says Garrison (2011, p. 30). Barnett uses the term "supercomplexity" to define the epistemological state of the present; pedagogy in this context must reflect the "uncertainty, unpre-dictability, contestability and changeability" of the world of knowledge (2000, p. 159). Sarnivaara, Ellis and Kinnunen speak of ours as "an age of uncertainty and strangeness [that] should not be understood in terms of knowledge and skills, but rather as a matter of human qualities and dispositions" (2012, p. 308). Such thinkers underscore the necessity for universities to embrace the challenge of teaching differently in this environment, and stress above all the notion of partnership of students and teachers in the process. This emphasis on the transactional is seen in the vocabularies used to characterise the desired forms of knowledge exchange: community of inquiry (Garrison); collaborative learning; socio-cultural knowledge (Tynjälä & Gijbels, 2012). These new learn-ing models aim to inculcate high-level meta-cognition and reflections amongst student learners (so that they are aware of learning *processes*, the limitations of their own position and the relationship between the self and the world that might give rise to such a position). They also take as a given the notion that learning spaces stretch well beyond the four walls of any academic institution.

These are exciting propositions, and, if we can borrow the language of Sarnivaara et al. concerning "human qualities and dispositions", we might want to suggest that students studying languages are extremely well disposed to fulfil these new criteria, and *a fortiori* when they are abroad. Like other students of the Humanities, they may well have covered a corpus of postmodern materials raising questions of this kind in their "content" modules, but above all students of languages are practically aware of the slippage inherent in any definition and transmission of meaning because they practise the act of translation, where an awareness of the cultural and epistemological standpoint of translator and audi-ence is vital (Bellos, 2011). This relationship of the self to language, culture and environment is particularly brought home to students during their year abroad, where their very identity is challenged by the requirement to represent them-selves in a language that is not their mother tongue. In *Study Abroad and Second Language Use: Constructing the self*, Valerie Pellegrino Aveni notes:

The balance learners gain between the culture from which they come and the culture into which they enter gives them greater insight into their own self-construction between the two worlds. […] the frustrations of limited communicative abilities force learners to develop alternative means of interaction, not only with others, but with their own self-identity. The result is a new sense of personality and purpose. (2005, pp. 147, 150)

This is precisely the kind of affective response Barnett asks of the ideal learner in the supercomplex world:

A dual task incumbent on the lifewide learner is that of maintaining their learning in […] various learning sites and of sustaining a more or less coherent self across those learning sites. (2012, p. 17)

Furthermore, students of languages abroad must be natural networkers if they are to learn. Meier and Daniels speak of the importance of social capital for language learners abroad: "participation in the social environment in the host country is a key objective of the year abroad" (2013, p. 233). The linguistic benefits that come from the ability to collaborate are obvious, but the attendant willingness to risk the self by existing in a third space in between two cultures (i.e. the year abroad space) could permit the dispositions expected of the productive 21st century learner to flourish. It was the intention of our year abroad project that these experiences be quantified and reflected upon in a parallel online area that would give a clear but open-ended pedagogical framework for the metacognitive processes we wished to encourage.

Going on a year abroad involves taking a step into the unknown. In designing the year abroad virtual learning environment (VLE) we sought theoretical models that also favoured productive risk taking. Over the past few years, Warwick University has innovated in the area of collaborative learning in its development of the "open space learning" model. Open space learning (OSL) dethrones the lecturer as expert and takes a social constructivist approach to learning that asks students to draw on personal experience in tackling areas of the curriculum, typically in improvisatory spaces involving peer and group work that leads the student from individual to collaborative reflection. The vocabulary of open space learning celebrates imaginative play and creativity, i.e. a kind of journeying narrative:

The notion that "failure" should be honoured is […] transgressive, as is the idea of adults "playing" in open spaces. Related to this is the idea that proposes the transitional nature of OSL: the work exists between clearly defined spaces and, as such, is always in the process of dialectically forming and re-forming so is always provisional and never closed. […] OSL becomes, thereby, transactional, in the sense of an open and free exchange of ideas. (Monk, Chillington-Rutter, Neelands & Heron, 2011, pp. 127-128)

This description seemed particularly apposite for the betwixt and between status of the year abroad, which might be considered the ultimate in open space learning requiring improvisation. Crucially, the virtual elements of the year abroad experience for our students could allow for the "transactional" dimension to this learning to be put in place despite the geographical distance between individual learners.

Allied to this experiential model, Barnett's metaphor of the modern learner as "liquid" helpfully quantifies the flexible dispositions that allow modern learners to learn best. Such learners show "a preparedness to encounter the unexpected, a willingness to go on even though one does not know what might be round the next bend, […] a desire to voyage further and develop in the process a will to listen to the world" (Barnett, 2012, p. 10). In our project it was important to use the VLE to probe how such dispositions might allow linguistic competencies to grow whilst offering a learning experience altogether more rounded than the acquisition of language alone. Finally, we sought to acknowledge the disruptive qualities of the year abroad and sought to help students explore the beneficial aspects of this disruption collaboratively. As Cathy Davidson argues in *Now You See It*, disturbance is vital to intellectual growth:

> We learn our patterns of attention so efficiently that we don't even know they are patterns. We believe they are the world, not a limited pattern representing the part of the world that has been made meaningful to us at a given time. Only when we are disrupted by something different from our expectations do we become aware of the blind spots we cannot see on our own. (Davidson, 2011, p. 56)

Barnett speaks in similar terms: "part of the responsibility of higher education in a supercomplex age […] is that of creating disturbance in the minds *and being* of the students" (2008, p. 155). Since, as Garrison has argued, learning is maximised when students are obliged to acquire a "metacognitive awareness" of such processes and to generate "critical discourses" in response to them (pp. 28, 31, 61), one of the key goals of the VLE was to provide a space to critique intercultural and linguistic encounters in two stages, firstly by requiring that students recount individual experiences of the self in its new world, and secondly by soliciting shared responses potentially unearthing other "blind spots" or presenting new ways of viewing. Garrison notes that: "The demands of an evolving knowledge society create expectations for individuals to be independent thinkers and, at the same time, interdependent, collaborative learners" (p. 53), and reminds us that digital learning, dependent on written (and, in the case of our VLE, asynchronous) exchanges of information, offers the possibility for reflection "at a higher cognitive level than in a face-to-face verbal context" as

"students have more time to reflect, to be more explicit and to order content and issues" (p. 33). This is particularly pertinent in the year abroad context, where for many students the emphasis is placed squarely on oral communication, involving intimate negotiations between interlocutors and contexts that remain ephemeral and often go entirely undiscussed.

2. Designing the site

The above discussion articulates our belief that the disjunctive nature of the year abroad within an otherwise formal degree programme offers students the possibility to hone dispositions invaluable to their development as successful lifelong learners, according to the notion that "the student's being in the world is more important for her learning than her interests in developing knowledge and understanding in a particular field" (Saarnivaara et al., 2012, p. 308). That said, as language teachers we also had particular objectives in place for advancing the students' language expertise in preparation for a taxing final-year language programme. It is an entry requirement for students studying French at Warwick to have passed the A Level (school leaving) examination in the language; the annual cohort numbers approximately 100 students, who normally complete their year abroad in the third year of their degree (the cohort numbers approximately 100 students). The year abroad is mandatory, but, as in most university language departments, the range of activities undertaken by students is diverse. Students studying French jointly with another language (Italian or German) generally elect to spend the academic year in one country and the summer vacation in another, so exposure to French in the cohort varies when measured temporally. Of those students in France or a francophone country, approximately 70% are employed as language assistants, 25% are Erasmus students and the remainder undertake a range of paid or unpaid work placements. Of those joint language students residing in Italy and German-speaking countries, almost all take up Erasmus placements. Here again, then, we see huge variety in the students' exposure to written and spoken French. All these students, whether based in a French-speaking country or elsewhere, must participate in the virtual learning activities set up by the French department.

The challenge, therefore, was to design a site that set out specific tasks with mapped linguistic objectives guiding the students towards particular cognitive, curriculum-focussed goals that nevertheless included open-endedness and explicitly drew on students' individual experiences. Ideally, we sought to engender interplay between formal and informal activities, so that dispositions honed in one might have a discernible impact on the other. The site we developed in

conjunction with Warwick Language Centre was a hybrid of Moodle and Mahara (what the Language Centre terms "a talking Mahoodle").

Our site had three clear areas:

- A formatively-assessed work area for the preparation, submission and return of 2-3 formative essays. Targets set and feedback given were largely teacher-led. All factual information (aims, objectives, submission requirements) was given in English to ensure absolute clarity of expectations; all written work was produced, marked and discussed in French.
- A collaboration area (used by staff and students) with a number of forums. The language of staff threads varied between French and English according to the nature of the activity being promoted. Students were free to use either language in their response, with French encouraged for certain activities.
- A personal reflection and dossier building area, largely, but not exclusively student led, constructed in Mahara. This area was almost exclusively in French.

3. The formative essay task

The essay task (numbering two to three assignments depending on the student's degree programme) came with quite specific cognitive and linguistic criteria, but was constructivist in that students were required to devise their own topic area and title, based on experiences and encounters. Students were also required to create an electronic dossier of resources on the chosen topic, intended both to inform the essay and to be used subsequently during final-year essay and oral classes. The essay was marked by native speaker *lecteurs* in the French department, following a period of training in assessment, levelling, and marking electronically. Students received detailed individual feedback in French, including colour coding of both mistakes and felicitous expressions / constructions, a detailed response to content, and feed-forward guidance for improving written language. An essay-writing forum was created for students to raise questions in advance of the task submission deadline, and to respond to marked work.

This pattern of learning corresponds to Laudrillard's Conversational Framework (see Laudrillard, 2009, in Kear, 2011, pp. 46-7.) Specific task requirements generated questions on referencing correctly, finding and using sources and presenting work appropriately, to which both staff and fellow students responded in the forum space. However, the most productive community of inquiry sprang up when several students independently voiced concerns about how to construct

an essay title in correct French. For staff, this raised questions about pedagogy (none of the prepared online resources had addressed this question),[1] but in advance of our posting a response, another student (Andrew) had embraced the teacher role:

> Jazz: DONC, quelqu'un pourrait m'aider à penser à un titre pour ma dissertation? Je voudrais parler de l'homosexualité en France (l'égalité maritale en particulière) et expliquer la situation en France par rapport à celle en Angleterre. Je ne suis pas certaine concernant ce que je dois mettre comme titre.

> Andrew: En plus, on peut utiliser des citations. Alors, si tu veux encore traiter l'homosexualité et faire une comparaison entre l'Angleterre et la France n'est-ce pas possible d'aborder le thème avec une citation? Peut-être tu peux choisir deux: une d'un ressource anglais traduit en français, l'autre en français, et la suivre avec une question générique du genre: "Qu'est-ce que ces deux citations veulent-elles dire au sujet de la perception de l'homosexualité en France et en Angleterre?"

We had sought to build faith in the site as a space of *mutual* inquiry from the beginning of the academic year by employing a native French speaker postgraduate student, Laure, to staff the collaborative forum and seed it with informal activities (discussed in more detail below). Laure was herself a student overseas and her capacity for empathy established trust. On the basis of this mutuality, imparting advice and building helpful feed-forward material from the first assignment became a shared endeavour. Selected students assented to their essays being used as examples of good practice; the *lectrice* (teaching assistant) team created a document on title building; targeted advice sheets on discrete language difficulties (use of tenses, articles, pronouns and so forth) were constructed and disseminated on the

----

1   The online resources setting out the relationship between dossier-building and essay stipulated: "Each of your three dossiers should relate to a particular aspect of French (francophone) culture and society in the broadest sense of the word: your dossiers may relate to literature, history, art, current affairs (politics, economics, education, media, science and technology…) Mix and match according to your own interests. […] The key thing is that the topics you choose really interest you and can be examined in-depth and rigorously. […] Based on the material of each of your three dossiers, you are required to submit TWO / THREE essays of 1000—1200 words. […] There are no set topics for the essays. Instead, you are asked to formulate your own titles. When formulating the title, however, bear in mind that the essay should produce an argument and not present a topic that is merely descriptive."

site, with the instruction that errors covered here would be penalized more strong-ly in subsequent assignments.

This multi-layered feedback system seemed to generate a much more focussed interest in the benefits of these formative assignments than had hitherto been the case when students submitted and had marks returned by post. Students were proactive in maximising the effectiveness of the feedback mechanism, by, for instance, requesting (via the forum) a change of date for the final assignment in order to have more time to digest and act on feedback from the second.

The percentage of students who failed to complete these assignments was very low, despite their solely formative nature (the first assignment achieved an 88% submission rate, for instance). Of course they did not suit a minority of students. For some, any link to the centre was anathema for an independent year abroader; for others, more formal assessment was desirable: "I feel that when the year abroad does not count towards your degree whatsoever it's difficult to motivate yourselves at times." More students, however, exhibited quite advanced metacognitive aware-ness of the creative pedagogical potential on offer in the balance of space and struc-ture offered by the year abroad programme:

> Rose: I totally champion the French department's decision NOT to make the year abroad count towards our degrees. […] As Cathy's questionnaire sug-gests, the year abroad gives us the time and the space to get to know ourselves – our strengths, weaknesses, motivations and ambitions – and to make our own decisions based on our own, individual interests.

> Kathryn: I would like to say that the year abroad should most definitely not just be about improving academically, it should be about developing yourself in a variety of ways; predominately [sic], of course, in terms of language abil-ity but I feel that this covers many skills, not just writing essays. I enjoy the fact that I now have enough time to read books in German at my own leisure, something I never have time for at Warwick as there are so many other com-pulsory books to read. Additionally, for Erasmus students, having the year abroad not count towards our degree gives us the freedom to take advantage of the many different courses on offer at European universities.

Clare and Matthew went further in linking the freedom to explore their status as global citizens in an assessment-neutral environment with the intellectual "play" and risk taking that can inspire academic advancement:

> Matthew: I chose [my] title because after having read several bouquins about mountaineering and the guides of Chamonix, I just really wanted to write about it! Roger Frison-Roche was my inspiration, and then I researched using accident results from the Club Alpin Suisse, Mountain Rescue, and some

> mountaineering discussion forums. […] I should probably have chosen a subject a little more France specific, but seeing as these essays don't count towards my degree mark I thought the risk was worth it and I allowed my heart to rule my head.

> Clare: Chosing [sic] the titles was hard but at the same time the complete liberty was wonderful and I actually ended up writing and researching topics which originally I would never had contemplated if the titles had been given to me, and therefore I discovered more about France.

4. The dossier building task

The essay assignments' combination of, on the one hand, highly specific objectives and feedback mechanisms and, on the other, research-driven, open content, proved highly effective. The accompanying dossiers were much harder to embed in the learning process. Although students gathered material, many did not use the suggested Mahara format to do so, and many of those who did use Mahara found it hard to organise their content effectively. Mahara is an extremely flexible online space, giving students the opportunity to source and arrange text, video, web material and photos using a drag and drop system. Students were provided with instructions for use in the form of screen captures, videos and word documents, as well as examples from a previous pilot study for the VLE. They also received some training in usage of the site prior to their year abroad. Nevertheless, once abroad many students felt that Mahara was not intuitive enough to be readily usable (see also O'Toole, 2013)[2]; there was also a tendency for users to see the pages as something of a "scrap book" for resources (O'Toole, p. 14). Mahara offers the facility for students to share their pages with others, and we encouraged critical appraisal of pages through a comments facility. However, only 16 students in a cohort of about 120 shared their pages, allowing staff to offer advice on copyright issues and the web, on layout and on reflective appraisal of content, distributed to individual students and, more gen-

---

2 Facebook postings revealed problems with logging in and confusion about the different discrete areas of the combined Moodle / Mahara platform that dovetail with Robert O'Toole's analysis of the challenge of a Mahara-style e-portfolio: "to achieve a single reflective task in the e-portfolio, the student needs to successfully understand and use, in combination, different functions in different parts of the interface. They might even have to choose, find, initiate, complete and find their way out off [sic] several distinct workflows (with series of web pages), not immediately connected to the task in hand" (O'Toole, p. 11).

erally, through the Moodle forums. The best of the pages, responding to advice given, showed an excellent level of reflection, incorporating critical discourse on the choice of content, a sifting and sorting of materials through target language summaries and key vocabulary lists, and a sensitivity to presentation.

In summary, though the dossier task itself had been broken down into a number of objectives, many of these were more directly focussed on the process of choosing topics; it was clear that in order to engender high level critical engagement with the material chosen we needed to do more to help students organise and analyse their work. Basing our revisions upon best student practice, we have worked with Warwick e-learning adviser Rob O'Toole to devise a new dossier area on the Warwick Sitebuilder interface that ties the uploading of content directly to critical appraisal of it through a mandatory web form setting explicit tasks (including: "draw up a list of new vocabulary"; "explain why you have chosen this article"). This "what you see is what you get approach" relieves students of the "high extraneous cognitive load" associated with using the more open-ended Mahara platform (O'Toole, 2013, p. 11), which our students, already carrying a heavy load of new cognitive responsibilities in their individual year abroad contexts, were not ready to assume. Further research will be needed to assess how the dossiers, in the older and newer formats, are re-used by students in final-year language classes.

5. Informal collaborative learning: the forums

The Moodle forums saw the most productive combination of teacher-led scaffolding and student driven activity in which students clearly "internaliz[ed] the teaching role" (Kear, 2011, p. 43). In order to galvanize the disparate community at the beginning of the academic year, the decision was taken to have a programme of seeded activities which students could opt into, combined with a termly compulsory posting. The seedings ranged from the very informal (virtual cinema and reading clubs, recipe sharing, description of regions) to those requiring reflection on language and interculture, and others focussing clearly on professional and academic skills building. English was the language of interaction in the academic and reflective postings, whilst other, more informal threads were set in French, with the option of answering in either French or English. The compulsory forum tasks elicited a participation rate of around 66%, and showed many students eager to engage in reflection on their working roles and to adopt a transactional approach to problems and questions. A body of about 20 students participated readily in other, voluntary, forum discussions and, indeed, initiated discussions of their own; it was this group that made the transition from the role of active respondent to that

of facilitator. In what follows, I analyse the responsibilities and dispositions that these different levels of participation elicited.

5.1 Student as task manager

Pellegrino Aveni (2005) and Killick (2011) have noted the anxiety that can beset new year abroaders seeking to establish an identity in a foreign-language setting. The earliest student-generated interventions on the forum reflect this anxiety:

> Stephanie: I don't know about you [speaking to the general audience] but this first two months has been a steep learning curve. This should be reassuring and even satisfying but, apart from still being alive and relatively healthy, I don't really feel that the results are showing. […] What I feel I am picking up is short cuts. My greatest fear is that, if I don't hurry up and make myself understood sharpish, my locutor will quickly get bored and either interrupt me, ask me to speak in English or walk away. As a result, my speech has accelerated but articulation still lags woefully behind, making it harder for people to understand me.

Andrew's response clearly holds the forum space to be pastoral. This allows him to probe the problem of identity and language in a sophisticated way:

> Thank you so much for posting this - I was beginning to wonder if I was the only person to have this same awkward feeling that my French is resting at more or less at the same level and not progressing.
> The slow progression of my ability to communicate orally is now becoming quite alarming (particularly as I have been out here for just over a month). I think, in part, it's actually because we're thinking too much about what to say (afraid of making mistakes, trying to think ahead, trying to crystallise ideas about what to say in our heads). […]
> We're […] used – in the UK – to speaking a language fluently. I know that if I talk to another native English speaker, even if I don't quite express myself well, I will nevertheless have been successful in communicating the concept or idea that I wanted to say. We don't have that luxury in a different country (and culture) such as France.

Naturally staff offered encouragement and reassurance in response to this, but another student chose a rather different tack, offering a friendly telling off to the students for having persisted in communicating in English:

> Chers Stefanie et Andrew, Tout dabord, je ne crois pas qu'écrire en anglais vous aidera à ameliorer votre français ; […] A mon avis, il faut pratiquer, pra-

tiquer, PRATIQUER, même si vous faîtes pas mal d'erreurs au début. […] J'espère que vous ayez trouvé mon conseil à peu près utile et que ce n'était pas trop (pour utiliser un peu d'anglais) "Thank you, Captain Obvious"

The response was well received and these students began to express themselves in French on the site as a result. Communication in French on the site was optional, and not necessarily the desired outcome even in this situation, where students might feel they need to voice anxieties in their own tongue. Nevertheless, this discussion did a lot to foster confidence in using French.

5.2. Student as producer

At regular intervals the forums were seeded with questions in English that asked students to consider changes in intercultural understanding. While staff had a tendency to solicit introspection in their question types, a group of students offered, unsolicited, a more practical contribution. Tom, recalling that the meeting for new outgoing students was about to take place at Warwick, set the following challenge for his co-year abroaders:

> I thought maybe it would be a good idea to have a forum where we could post things that could be of particular interest to next year's YAers [sic]. Think about things that we wanted to know last year: Phones, Housing, Second jobs etc etc and it could help David in term 3 when he has a billion 2nd years asking him what the best available phone tariffs are?

The response was seven very detailed posts on the topics Tom had raised. This posting anticipated a need also articulated in questionnaires and demonstrated students' willingness to assume the status of expert, even to the extent of intervening in the organisational processes of the year (Kear, 2011). This had been encouraged elsewhere on the site in the establishment of three "professional" forums (the Assistantship forum, the Erasmus forum and the Paid Work forum). Contributions to these forums were compulsory, and students asked to reflect on their work role, by offering sample material (lesson plans, assessment of pupil need; how to integrate at university, which courses to recommend; reflection on expectations in the workplace). Some posts produced in-depth analyses of intercultural exchange, learning dispositions and classroom, university and workplace behaviours, which showed students "negotiat[ing] peer social discourses, overcome[ing] their own resistances […] and acquiring more responsibility (agency)" (Meier & Daniels, p. 234). I list some examples below:

> Despite being paid for only 12 hours of work per week, I was asked to do all sorts of extra stuff for free. And when I say asked, I mean I didn't really have

a choice. I found myself caught between whether to just say yes to everything (this has been my motto since working here, especially in social situations) or to stick up for myself.[3]

The social aspect of uni here (or lack of) is what we were warned about/expected, but seeing it in action is different from hearsay. It's a shame they don't have as much of a student community here as campus unis tend to, […], but I think this is due to the entirely different systems, for example the fact that students here tend to have at least 20 hour weeks regardless of subject, that mean that such involved extra curricular activity isn't really possible.

When I began my year abroad I felt like I had all the time in the world to get settled and start making the most of the opportunity. However, the sooner you realise that isn't the case the better off you'll be. That is the best advice I could give anyone about to undertake their year abroad, and also what I would tell the former version of myself if I could time travel.

I have now managed to instill [sic] confidence in them [my pupils] merely by telling them how impressed I am with them when they speak. If they say something correctly, I believe it is important to give them positive feedback, not only to reward them but to make them feel happy about themselves having got something correct.

6. Conclusions: no more them and us?

This online community was advantaged by having interacted in the real world in years 1 and 2 prior to the year abroad. Nevertheless, the team saw it as essential to establish a *group online* identity that was transactional, playful, exploratory and cohesive, but rigorous in its academic standards (Garrison, 2011, pp. 46-50). Affective posts revealing staff dispositions sat alongside academic posts, and the students responded by cementing social cohesion through humour. Whilst we had been busy seeding the site with pedagogical prompts and nudges, the students had agreed on Facebook to seed it with secret code words around the topic of cheese (chosen because "it is typical of a French equivalent which is SO different"). It was only when I reviewed all forum entries that I spied a trend of which this is one example: "It turned out that I had acute appendicitis so what

---

 3 This student's end-of-year review suggests the benefits of this difficult learning curve: "Teaching in Germany has made me far more confident. Before, I found it nerve-racking to speak to a group of 20 people I already knew, now a group of 30 is fine."

followed was a laparoscopic appendectomy […] I spent 5 days [in hospital] recuperating. Luckily I'm feeling much cheddar now - cheese things happen!" The eventual sharing of the joke between staff and students elicited real conviviality ("Haha well caught on!!!!!"; "You gouda love a good pun") both on this site and the cohort's Facebook page,[4] growing to have "group or dyad-level affect" and "to build stronger relationships within the social context" (Robert & Wilbanks, 2012, p. 1075). Of course, this joke would not have worked if there had been no "them" and "us", and the departmental site was clearly credited with a distinctive pastoral and pedagogical role, as these questionnaire responses indicate:

> The department's VLE focuses on the cultural and educational side of living in France and encourages us to share and compare our experiences with other students all over France.

> It is a place to ask academic questions and to gain reputable advice (either from other students experiences, or in terms of recommendations).

> I have so many Facebook groups for various year abroad criterion [sic] it's comforting to know that there is a direct link to all other Warwick students and teachers.

This position of trust is, I believe, a product of the decision to give "strong leadership" and a high level of task scaffolding to the site (Garrison, 2011, p. 62).

Garrison's generalist approach to the online pedagogical space and Meier and Daniel's linguist-focussed approach to the year abroad space offer complementary models of how students' deep learning might be sustained in the long term. Garrison's practical inquiry model envisages a 4 stage process for online tasks: "trigger, exploration, integration, and resolution" (p. 60). Meier and Daniels describe three metaphors that characterise the year abroad learning process: the acquisition, participation and contribution metaphors, where contribution involves the deepest, most beneficial level of immersion in a foreign social context (pp. 233-234). This chapter has emphasized particularly the lifelong learning dispositions that can be developed during the year abroad. In this context, we wish to acknowledge that any resolution will be partial, and will perhaps uncover triggers for a new learning endeavour. We sought to encourage awareness of this process through the creation of a Mahara page that formally

---

4 I was granted permission to participate in this page once I discovered its existence through questionnaires on the students' use of virtual spaces.

introduces students to some of the meta-cognitive perspectives explored above and asks them to respond with personalised reflections. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Using Mahara for post-YA reflections

We intend to support this with an improvisatory workshop addressing the issue of returning to the institution using the metaphor of the fairy tale,[5] which incorporates the stages of departure, exploration and reintegration:

"Il y avait une fois…"

- The fairy tale. Brainstorm: what is characteristic of this genre? How does it work? Why might it be a good analogy for the year abroad?
- TASK: Imagine your year abroad experience as a fairy tale. Examine each stage of the process in detail. Think about:
  - Feelings
  - characters
  - space / geographies

---

5 This approach echoes Killick's assessment of placement abroad as initiating a process of becoming that has mythic properties (p. 267).

It is hoped that this improvisation will complement and extend written online reflections, as well as encouraging students intuitively to feel the imaginative leap that may be necessary to take their serendipitous year abroad experiences forward to the world beyond the placement.

In addition, we intend to add to Meier and Daniel's target-language contribution metaphor the additional requirement that students contribute something of their acquired linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge to their home community on their return; Killick has noted the "broader socio-cultural skills and perspectives gained on mobility" that can usefully be fed back (p. 261). Currently, the Mahoodle has been remodelled for the summer transitional period to include fact files of information summarising key forum discussions of interest to newly outgoing students, and allowing volunteer students to act as online consultants for this next cohort. From the following academic year, one assessment task will require students to write online resources in French for the students that will follow them. Additionally, a pilot widening participation project will see 15 volunteer students gather and peer review artefacts that might profitably be used to stimulate learning in the year 9 French classroom (using Moodle forums and other online spaces to compare materials), to be developed for use in local schools on their return.

Just as language-learning is grounded in the contextual, the shifting and collaborative, so too are the worlds, virtual and actual, of the 21st-century learner, and the synergies are worth pursuing, in order to stress that students of languages are particularly astute, prescient learners for this current time. Such initiatives as those set out above offer our students frames for thinking about how the year abroad has the potential to transform, and seek to bring to the fore the value of being mindful of such transformation. Global citizenship, facilitated by the infinite possibility of new online encounters, demands such mindfulness. The encounter with the other has produced such reflections before, but now, unlike in previous ages, we can all be travellers. As Montaigne would have it: "Le monde n'est qu'un branloire pérenne. Toutes les choses y branlent sans cesse. […] Je ne puis assurer mon objet. Il va trouble et chancelant, d'une ivresse naturelle. Je le prends en ce point, comme il est, en l'instant que je m'amuse à lui. Je ne peins pas l'être. Je peins le passage". (1998 [1595], p. 267)[6].

---

6 "The world is but a perennial see-saw. Everything in it […] waver[s] with a common motion […] I am unable to stabilize my subject: it staggers confusedly along with a natural drunkenness. I grasp it as it is now, this moment when I am lingering over it. I am not portraying being but becoming" (Screech, 1991, p. 207).

References

Barnett, R. (2000). *Realizing the university in an age of supercomplexity.* Buckingham and Philadelphia: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Barnett, R. (2012). The coming of the ecological learner. In Tynjälä, P., Stenström, M.-L. & Saarnivaara, M. (Eds.), T*ransitions and transformations in learning and education* (pp. 9-20). Dordrecht: Springer.

Bellos, D. (2011). *Is that a fish in your ear? The amazing adventure of translation.* London: Penguin.

Davidson, C. (2011). *Now you see it: How the brain science of attention will transform the way we live, work, and learn.* New York: Viking.

Garrison, D. (2011). *E-learning in the 21ˢᵗ century.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Kear, K. (2011). *Online and social networking communities.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Killick, D. (2011). *Students as global citizens: being and becoming through the lived-experience of international mobility* (Doctoral thesis). Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds, UK. Retrieved from
http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/world-widehorizons/David_Killick_PhD_Thesis.pdf.

Meier, G. & Daniels, H. (2013). 'Just not being able to make friends': Social interaction during the year abroad in modern foreign language degrees. *Research Papers in Education*, 28, 212-238.

Monk, N., Chillington-Rutter, C., Neelands, J. & Heron, J. (2011). *Open space learning: A study in transdisciplinary pedagogy.* London: Bloomsbury.

Montaigne, M. de (1595; republished 1998). *Essais.* Paris: Pocket.

O'Toole, R. (2013). *A report on e-portfolios: Design features, uses, benefits, examples & emerging trends.* (Working Paper). Retrieved from University of Warwick, Coventry, UK: http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/54586/.

Pellegrino Aveni, V. (2005). *Study abroad and second language use: Constructing the self.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Robert, C. & Wilbanks, J.E. (2012) The wheel model of humor: Humor events and affect in organizations. *Human Relations,* 65, 1071-1099.

Saarnivaara, M., Ellis, C. & Kinnunen, H.-M. (2012). Transgressive learning: A possible vista in higher education? In P. Tynjälä, M.-L. Stenström, & M. Saarnivaara (Eds.), *Transitions and transformations in learning and education* (pp. 307-326). Dordrecht: Springer.

Screech, M. (1991). (Translator). *Michel de Montaigne: The complete essays.* London, Penguin.

Tynjälä, P. & Gijbels, D. (2012). Changing world: Changing pedagogy. In P. Tynjälä, M.-L. Stenström, & M. Saarnivaara (Eds.), *Transitions and transformations in learning and education* (pp. 205-222). Dordrecht: Springer.

Chapter 12
Life post-study abroad for
the Japanese language learner:
Social networks, interaction and language usage

Rikki Campbell
Monash University

Over the past two decades, there has been a steady increase in studies concerning language learners' out-of-class interaction and social network development in study abroad contexts (e.g. Kato & Tanibe, 1997; Tanaka, 2007; Ayano, 2006; Isabelli-Garcia, 2006; Pearson-Evans, 2006; Zappa, 2007; Meier & Daniels, 2011; Dewey, Bown & Eggett, 2012; Trentman, 2013; research in this volume). However, to date, there has been very little research into the ongoing impact of study abroad on learners' target language (TL) speaking networks once they return to their home countries. Do they maintain these newly developed networks and/or demonstrate an enhanced ability to expand TL networks once removed from the study abroad environment? Moreover, do these networks continue to provide opportunities for TL usage, or do frequent contact with TL speakers, and opportunities for language use and learning, become but a lingering memory of the study abroad experience? These questions have become the focus of the present research, which, based within a larger doctoral project, investigates the impact of various university-level study abroad programmes on Japanese language learners' social networks with Japanese speakers after they returned to Australia. In this chapter, I provide a brief review of the literature concerning the benefits of study abroad, and then narrow the focus to studies regarding social interaction, network maintenance and/or development, and language use in post-study abroad contexts. I then introduce the methodology employed in this study, followed by a discussion of findings and directions for future research.

1. Literature review

The experience of studying abroad for language learners has a multitude of potential benefits. Numerous studies have found that it has a positive influence on areas including personal, intellectual, intercultural, and professional devel-

opment (Coleman & Chafer, 2011; Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Kauffman, Martin & Weaver, 1992; McMillan & Opem, 2004; Nunan, 2006). Moreover, a significant number of studies have found evidence of a relationship between learner interaction with native speakers whilst abroad and language acquisition (Allen & Herron, 2003; Hernandez, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2000, 2006; Regan, 1995; Smith, 2002; Yager, 1998); motivation (Bachner & Zeustschel, 1994; Isabelli-García, 2006; Simoes, 1996); learners' confidence in themselves and their language skills (Allen & Herron, 2003; Magnan & Back, 2007; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Xu, 2010; Zappa, 2007); and levels of both classroom and non-classroom anxiety (Allen & Herron, 2003; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Xu, 2010; Zappa, 2007).

Longitudinal surveys conducted by the Institute for the International Education of Students (Dwyer, 2004; Dwyer & Peters, 2004; McMillan & Opem, 2004), Nunan (2006), and Coleman and Chafer (2011) have also highlighted the ongoing impact of study abroad even decades after the experience. Of particular importance to the current research, each of these studies found that a substantial number of participants (>50%) still maintain relationships they developed while abroad. Importantly, Coleman and Chafer (2011) found that all of their informants who had graduated between 2006 and 2009 were still in contact with each other; possibly due to enhanced communication technologies. Based on questionnaire data, however, these studies primarily report on overall trends, and thus do not account for the idiosyncrasies of individual learners. Moreover, they do not address reasons behind patterns of network maintenance, or patterns of language use post-study abroad.

A longitudinal study conducted by Jiménez Jiménez (2003), however, has taken a qualitative approach to examine American learners of Spanish and their second language (L2) interaction both during and post-study abroad. Although he found a significant decline in the degree of interactive Spanish use once students returned to America, some of his participants continued to use the L2 daily through telephone calls to friends, partners, and host families remaining in Spain, as well as through sporadic face-to-face interaction with native speakers or study abroad peers in America. It was also found that differences in learners' future plans noticeably impacted on their degree of post-study abroad L2 usage, where students planning on utilising Spanish in future activities such as travel or work exhibited a greater degree of usage than those who did not. Furthermore, several students who did not increase their Spanish proficiency as much as they had hoped to while in Spain mentioned having self-conscious feelings of failure, which further prevented them from using the L2 post-study abroad.

Further qualitative research conducted by Campbell (2011) and Kurata (2004) has found that sojourns in Japan provided crucial opportunities for Japanese learners to meet and subsequently maintain contact with Japanese speakers after returning to their normal country of residence (Australia). Networks in

Japan for participants in each of these studies were found to provide valuable sources for friendship and ongoing Japanese interaction through a wide range of channels including letters, email, chat, Skype and Facebook, which most of the informants were not exposed to pre-study abroad. These findings were also reflected in Pasfield-Neofitou's (2012) study, where participation in international exchanges provided a gateway into online interaction with Japanese speakers. Moreover, participants in both Campbell's (2011) and Kurata's (2004) studies reported perceived increases in linguistic, sociolinguistic, and cultural competence as a result of their sojourns in Japan, and an overall increase in frequency and duration of Japanese use post-study abroad.

In a subsequent study, Kurata (2007) further examined the language use patterns of Japanese learners in an Australian setting, the majority of whom had spent at least some time in Japan. By employing Grosjean's (1982) framework of factors influencing language choice in bilingual settings and Norton's (2000) notion of investment, she identified the following influential factors:

Participant-related factors

- Perceived L2 proficiency of learners and their social network members;
- Investment in L2 by learners and their social network participants;
- Awareness/sensitivity to interlocutors' language needs and their identities in relation to their L2 proficiency;
- History of linguistic interaction.

Situation-related factors

- Location/setting;
- Presence of monolinguals;
- Fatigue and lack of time;
- Channel/use of new technology.

Discourse content-related factors

- Topics;
- Type of vocabulary.

Interactional function-related factors

- Exclusion;
- Assistance to an L2 learner.

Kurata (2007) found that although the participant-related factors appeared to play the most significant role, patterns of language selection were influenced by a combination of the above social and contextual factors in complex ways. For example,

she found that although many of the informants continued to use Japanese with Japanese contacts they had established during sojourns in Japan, almost half of the reported interactions were conducted predominantly in English. She related this to the fact that most of these interactions were in the form of email, where her participants preferred to use English. Campbell (2011) also found that while her informants claimed to primarily use Japanese with their Japanese network members in Japan, one claimed to email one of her network members in English, reciprocating their language preference. Furthermore, Campbell found that although perceived increases in Japanese proficiency and confidence as a result of study abroad led to greater Japanese use post- compared to pre-study abroad with Japanese network members in Australia, her participants would often leave the language choice up to their network members. This was because they claimed to have greater empathy with Japanese students studying in Australia (having themselves been Japanese learners studying in Japan), and respected the fact that they had come there to learn English. Thus, learners' interactional experiences whilst on study abroad are evidently a sub-category of Kurata's (2007) "history of linguistic interaction" listed above.

This section has introduced a limited number of studies concerning language learners' network maintenance/development, social interaction, and language use after returning to the home country. Due to the dearth of research in this field, some researchers (Burns, 1996; Kurata, 2011; Zappa, 2007) have called for more longitudinal and/or follow-up studies examining how the study abroad experience impacts learners in various social, personal, and academic contexts once they return to their home countries. Furthermore, Segalowitz, Freed, Collentine, Lafford, Lazar, and Dìaz-Campos (2004, p.15) have argued for more qualitative research concerning study abroad experiences, and in particular for greater focus on learners' opportunities for interaction and the nature of communication that occurs both inside and outside the classroom. The present study therefore aims to address some of these missing gaps in the literature, more specifically by examining the following research questions:

1) What is the nature of Japanese language learners' networks with Japanese speakers post-study abroad?
2) What factors influence the nature of learners' networks with Japanese speakers post-study abroad?
3) What are the patterns of language usage within these networks and what factors influence them?

Given the limited sample size, this study should be considered a preliminary investigation on topics and areas worthy of further, more systematic, study.

2. Methodology

2.1. Informants

This chapter focuses on four Japanese language learner informants, who are each completing an undergraduate course at the same university in Australia. A basic outline of their relevant backgrounds is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Informants' background

	Sophie	Phoebe	Oscar	Jane
Ethnicity	Caucasian Australian	Caucasian Australian	Colombian	Caucasian Australian
Native language	English	English	Spanish	English
Approximate length of formal Japanese study prior to university study abroad	Elementary school: 7 years High school: 6 years University: 2.5 years	High school: 6 years University: 2 years	High school: 5 years University: 2 years	University: 2.5 years
Approximate level of formal Japanese study prior to study abroad*	Japanese 9 (CEFR B2; JLPT N2)	Japanese 8 (CEFR B1; JLPT N2)	Japanese 6 (CEFR; B1 JLPT N3)	Japanese 5 (CEFR B1; JLPT N4)
Length and purpose of trips to Japan prior to study abroad	2006 Two week high school tour (homestay)	2007 Five week high school exchange (homestay)2011 One week holiday	Nil	2011 Two weeks, programme was ended early in wake of Tohoku Disaster
Details of study abroad programme in Japan	Six weeks June-July 2012 at Language Institute	One semester 2012 at public University	One year 2011-2012 at public University	One year 2011-2012 at private university
Time since SA programme completion (at end of data collection)	15 months	15 months	14 months	6 months
Subsequent Japanese studies	Semester 2, 2012: Japanese 10	Semester 1, 2013: Japanese 11	Nil	Semester 2, 2012: Japanese 8

Note: the informants provided the level to which they had studied at their Australian university, where numbers correspond to number of semesters studied (e.g. Japanese 9 represents the level equivalent to nine semesters of study [from entry level] at this particular university). For ease of comparability, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) levels that the university deems equivalent to successful completion of each level have also been provided (cf Council of Europe, 2001; The Japan Foundation, 2012)

Reflecting the reality of study abroad, and language learners in general, these informants show differences in terms of duration and level of Japanese language study, and trips to Japan, prior to their university-level study abroad programmes. Whilst all of the other informants are native speakers of English, Oscar's first language is Spanish, though he has resided in Australia for the past 12 years, and has native-like English proficiency. Moreover, each of the informants participated in different study abroad programmes during 2011-2012, Sophie's lasting for six weeks, Phoebe's for one semester, and Oscar's and Jane's for one year. Sophie's programme was at a language institute, while the other three informants all attended Japanese universities. Each of the informants completed their study abroad programmes in July 2012; the interview data reported in this paper were collected between 5 and 8 months following study abroad. When interviewed, all were still full-time students, but Phoebe was the only informant still currently studying Japanese. Due to these various differences, difficulties obviously exist in directly comparing their experiences. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is not to attempt to draw generalisations, but rather to exploit the richness of the data, and present some of the commonalities and idiosyncrasies which have been identified.

2.2. Data collection and analysis

The first stage of the data collection was to have the four informants complete a background questionnaire, which gathered details concerning their demographic and linguistic background, sojourns in Japan, and social contact with Japanese speakers, during and after residence abroad. This was immediately followed by the initial semi-structured interview, which gathered in-depth data concerning their study abroad experience, social interaction, and networks with Japanese speakers in both Australia and Japan. In subsequent months, informants were requested to complete one-week interaction journals at three to four month intervals, which detailed any interaction that occurred with Japanese speakers during that time. They were then interviewed again by the author as soon as possible after completion of each journal.

The data utilised in this study is summarized in Table 2. Note that because Sophie and Phoebe commenced their participation in this research while they were on study abroad, their background questionnaire, initial interview, first interaction journal, and Sophie's first subsequent interview were completed during this period. The remaining data were all collected post-study abroad.

The combined use of journals and interviews offers a good balance between validity and practicality. On one hand, Marsden (1990) and Badstübner and Ecke (2009) have cautioned that retrospective accounts of interaction may have limitations such as overestimation of L2 usage, and therefore suggest that the

Table 2. Summary of collected data

Informant	Background questionnaire	Initial Interview	Interaction Journal	Subsequent Interviews
Sophie	Jul 2012	Jul 2012	Jul 2012	Jul 2012
			Dec 2012	Dec 2012
			Jun 2013	Jun 2013
Phoebe	Jul 2012	Jul 2012	Aug 2012	Sept 2012
			Feb 2013	Feb 2013
			Aug 2013	Aug 2013
Jane	Sept 2012	Sept 2012	Dec 2012	Dec 2012
Oscar	Mar 2013	Mar 2013	Mar 2013	Mar 2013
			Jul 2013	Jul 2013
			Sept 2013	Sept 2013

use of a daily journal is a more efficient means of eliciting detailed data concerning L2 usage and interactions. A number of studies have also shown that the use of one-week logs is an effective means of eliciting language learners' social networks (Isabelli-García, 2000, 2006; Pearson-Evans, 2006; Whitworth, 2006; Kurata, 2004, 2011). On the other hand, although it is acknowledged that it would have been desirable for the informants to keep interaction journals over the entire period of data collection, it was envisaged that this would place too great a demand on the informants, especially considering the voluntary nature of their participation in the research. Therefore, any interaction that occurred outside of the period covered by the journals was discussed at the end of each subsequent interview. These interviews were conducted to discuss any occurring interaction in further detail, particularly concerning patterns of language choice, as well as any changes in the informants' networks since we had last met. Utilisation of the journals as stimuli was found to considerably enhance the recollection of recently occurring interaction, so that detailed data was obtained for the one-week periods.

The data collected by each of the above methods was then imported into NVivo data analysis software for thematic analysis, a method that Braun and Clarke (2006) claim "should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis" (p. 78). In the initial stage of analysis, the interview transcripts were coded using the *a priori* themes of post-study abroad networks, interaction, and language usage. From these coded interview segments, the factors influencing the nature of networks and patterns of language use emerged, and further analy-

sis was guided by themes, categories and constructs drawn from the literature. For example, from excerpts of interviews coded as "language use with NSs", various factors influencing language use were then identified and coded according to Grosjean's (1982) framework of factors introduced in Section 1 above. Once the data collection was complete, the transcripts were reviewed in greater depth and comparative analysis at both the within-case and cross-case levels was carried out. Within-case analysis, that is, looking at the data collected from a single informant, affords a more profound understanding of that informant (Bazeley 2007). This was achieved through comparison of their interview data collected at the different stages, as well as their interactional patterns with different network participants. On the other hand, cross-case analysis has two goals: to enhance generalisability, by testing whether the findings can be applied to other settings/informants or if they are more idiosyncratic in nature; and to strengthen understanding and explanation.

In addition to qualitative analysis conducted in NVivo, basic quantitative analysis was also carried out in Microsoft Excel. In particular, lists of pre-, during-, and post-study abroad network members generated in each of the informants' interviews were uploaded into an Excel spreadsheet, along with various network characteristics such as frequency, channel, and language of interaction. This then enabled calculations of network size, composition, and degree of maintenance, as well as degree of language use occurring within the networks.

3. Findings and discussion

3.1. Informants' post-study abroad networks and interaction with native Japanese speakers

In this section, I provide a discussion of the informants' post-study abroad networks[1] and interaction with native Japanese speakers post-study abroad. The size of the informants' networks at the end of data collection is presented in Figure 1, with a focus on composition in terms of when the relationships were established.

---

1   This research draws upon Milroy's (1987, 178) definition of social network as "the informal social relationships contracted by an individual". For a person to be included as a network member, the informants had to know them by name, be able to contact them by phone, mail, or internet, and have contacted them in the past two years.

Figure 1. Informants' post-study abroad network with native Japanese speakers
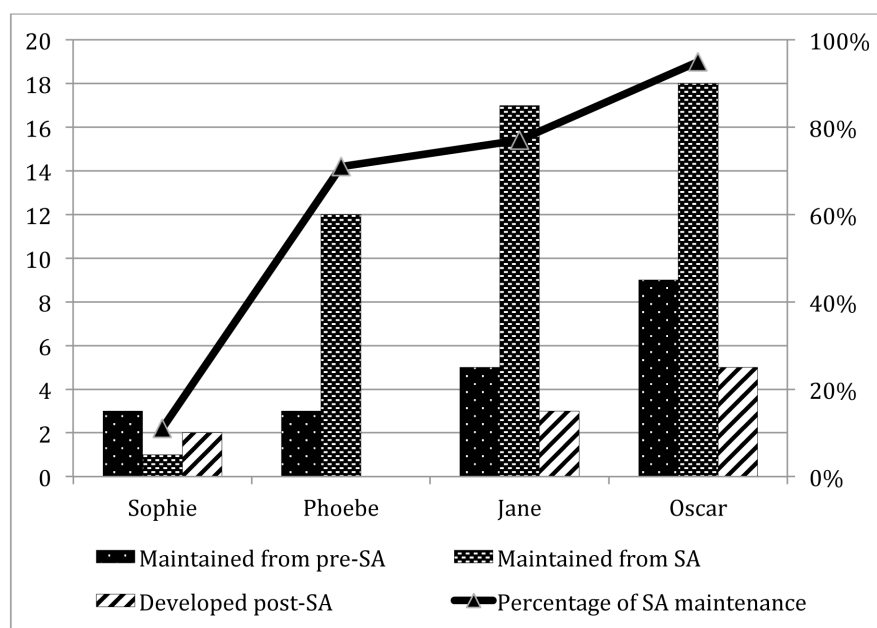
All of the informants currently maintain contact with between three and nine Japanese they had met prior to their study abroad experiences. The vast majority of these pre-study abroad contacts were established in the educational context: through clubs, social activities, or classes. Due to space constraints I will not discuss these network members in detail; however, providing these figures as a comparison, it can be observed that each of the informants' networks at least doubled after their study abroad experience.

As indicated in Figure 1, Sophie's network is considerably smaller than the other informants', with a total of six network members. She has only maintained contact with one of the network members encountered while on study abroad in Japan, the significantly lower maintenance likely due to the fact that she participated in a six-week programme at a language institute as opposed to a one or two semester programme at a university. Sophie explained that while in Japan she only met her Japanese network members once or twice in person, and thus only maintained contact with the person with whom she developed a closer relationship, established through regular Facebook messaging. Although she is connected with a few others on Facebook, she mentioned that she does not have any active contact with them, and thus would not include them in her current social network.

In contrast to Sophie, the largest portion of the other three informants' networks is composed of contacts they have maintained from their study abroad period, and their degree of maintenance was also significantly higher. Contacts maintained from this period primarily fit into clusters formed around activity fields whilst abroad, such as shared residence (Jane), university clubs (Oscar, Jane), buddy/tutor programmes (Phoebe, Jane), home visit programmes (Jane, Phoebe), and English conversation classes (Jane). Although frequency of contact with network members established whilst on study abroad has drastically reduced since the informants returned to Australia, this maintained contact was found to provide increased opportunities for interaction with Japanese speakers compared to pre-study abroad (cf. Campbell, 2011; Kurata, 2004).

For each of the four informants, contact was maintained exclusively through interactive communication technologies, including email, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) programs such as Skype, and smartphone messaging applications such as Line.

The impact of interactive communication technologies on network maintenance was a predominant theme in the data, and the primary reason for discontinued contact was that the informants' network members did not have a Facebook account. Phoebe, for example, stated that maintained contact was "mostly Facebook, they don't do emails or anything, it's just so much easier. They either use it a *lot* or they don't use it at all". Interestingly, however, Oscar observed that within his Japanese network, contacts who had both Facebook and Twitter accounts utilised Twitter far more frequently. Regardless of the platform, interactive communication technologies have greatly aided the ease at which networks can be maintained, and may even postpone the "natural decline" that is witnessed in many relationships (Cummings, Lee & Kraut, 2006).

In line with the findings of Ellison, Steinfield and Ecke (2007) and Lewis and West (2009), each of the informants in this study noted that Facebook was the most convenient and easiest way to maintain contact. They simultaneously utilised multiple functions of Facebook to varying degrees, including private messages, wall posts, and commenting on and/or liking their network members' posts. They also highlighted how features of Facebook facilitate interaction, where a notification about a birthday, or an update appearing in the News Feed, might initiate a topic of conversation that may not have otherwise occurred. As observed in Lewis and West's (2009) study, the News Feed may also provide a form of passive engagement, enabling users to stay informed about their network members' lives without necessarily making any direct contact. Although beyond the scope of this paper, examination of self-initiated versus reactive interaction (i.e. commenting on or "liking" of posts), and whether or not this correlates to strong or weak tie strength, is thus a point of interest (cf. Haythornthwaite, 2005).

In addition to Facebook, Jane also heavily utilised Line, a smartphone messaging app, that allowed her to send either individual or group messages directly to her friends' phones for free. When talking about people she has lost contact with, Jane explained that: "It's not that I wouldn't talk to them, it's just that they don't really use Facebook and I don't have them on Line". Line was her everyday and preferred means of contact; because messages came directly to her phone like text messages, Jane explained that she did not have to go out of her way to keep in contact like she did with friends who were not on Line. Sophie is also an avid user of WhatsApp, an app similar to Line; however, she only uses this for contact with her non-native Japanese speaker friends. Oscar was the only informant who claimed to use Skype with his Japanese network, though he had only used it once since the completion of his study abroad programme.

Although the impact of interactive communication technologies was the factor impacting network maintenance most frequently discussed by the informants, a few other factors also arose from the data. Each of the informants mentioned that the closeness of relationships established whilst abroad influenced frequency of contact. As stated by Phoebe: "The more time goes on, it does tend to be that if we weren't as close, the frequency does tend to drop off a little bit". Moreover, frequency of contact was also influenced by the informants' workloads at university. Oscar mentioned that contact with his networks in Japan was much less frequent during semester because he simply did not have time to initiate conversations. Likewise, at the time of her last interview, Jane was completing an internship, and mentioned being too busy to go out of her way specifically to contact people.

Whilst these findings reflect Kurata's (2007) in that commitment to study and lack of time negatively impacted contact frequency, Phoebe presented a different case. She stated: "Around exams it's not very much, but when there's a pile of work that you need to chip away at, it's those times that we're mostly in contact". Thus, her contact patterns were the reverse of the other informants', in that she claimed to have more interaction during semester than holidays. For Phoebe, holidays were an opportunity to "get out of the house more" and "do stuff". A similar case was also observed in Pasfield-Neofitou's (2012) study, where one informant mentioned that most of her online communication occurred during exam or assignment periods, as opposed to holidays. Therefore, it is possible that these patterns of contact frequency are reflections of individuals' overall communication habits.

Another factor found to influence network maintenance was the tangible opportunity to meet again in person. Jane explained that: "Akemi is going to come to Australia so I've been sending a lot of private messages [on Facebook] to her, 'cause she's going to stay at my place. So I'm organising everything with her there". Similarly, Oscar had also recently initiated contact with one of his friends in Japan "because he's about to come to Australia". For these two informants, it appears

that the anticipation of meeting someone again in person enhanced interaction, prompting an exchange of frequent private messages on Facebook. As Pasfield-Neofitou (2012) found, interactive communication technologies may play an important role in organising offline contact between Japanese learners and their social network members. Moreover, data from my larger doctoral project also shows that as further time elapses, opportunities to meet up with contacts again in Japan or elsewhere are of particular importance for further maintaining, strengthening, or rekindling ties even a decade after study abroad programme completion.

In terms of post-study abroad network development, two trends emerged. Firstly, although Phoebe and Sophie expressed the desire to further expand their Japanese networks in order to practise their L2, they exhibited little agency in doing so. One month post-study abroad, Phoebe mentioned the desire to "search for some sort of Japanese speaking club", because she considered spoken interaction "ideal" for maintaining her Japanese proficiency. By the time of her final interview six months later, however, Phoebe remained the only informant who had not established any new native Japanese network members. She admitted that she had "not particularly" gone out of her way to do so, and explained: "the uni[versity] study schedule tends to make it just a little bit difficult to… go out of your way to meet up with people who speak Japanese". In other words, Phoebe did not have the availability of time and resources that is required to establish new networks. Thus, Phoebe commented that the extent of her Japanese interaction was largely limited to "at university" with her non-native speaker classmates. She did, however, also meet up with her pre-study abroad native Japanese friend Kae every few weeks, though she claimed that they would primarily interact in English.

Similar to Phoebe, Sophie's realisation that she was not "using the [Japanese] language" five months post-study abroad prompted her to "immerse [her]self in the cultural things available to [her] in Melbourne". Specifically, she mentioned in her final interview that she had recently attended a Japanese conference for undergraduate students because she "wanted to meet Japanese people [with whom] to practise [her] Japanese". While she succeeded in establishing two new contacts at this event, she was somewhat disappointed because they wanted her to "speak in English for practice". Nevertheless, she claimed to interact with them several times a week via Facebook messages, and also met up once a fortnight in person. Although these relationships were just at their early stages at the end of Sophie's participation in the research, it would have been interesting to see how long they were maintained. As Pasfield-Neofitou (2010, p.146) has suggested, primarily instrumental relationships such as these are likely to be seen as a burden when other priorities intervene, which may lead to their disintegration unless some common interest is found.

Compared to Phoebe and Sophie, Jane and Oscar appeared to invest more time in Japan-related activities, which presented greater opportunities for meeting native Japanese speakers. Although their post-study abroad network development was still relatively minor, it is important to note that because they were both members of members of a Japan-related club at their university prior to their study abroad experiences, they were able to return to the same community upon their return, which acted as a springboard for further network development. Oscar also commented that because the club has scheduled events on a weekly basis, it is one of the best ways for learners to make native Japanese speaker friends in the Australian context. This reflects the findings of several previous studies that have found clubs to promote frequent contact and increased opportunities for interaction and friendship development between Japanese learners and native speakers (Burns, 1996; Kato & Tanibe, 1997; Morofushi, 2008; Campbell, 2011). Indeed, Oscar established a further three Japanese contacts when he joined the committee of his Japan-related club, and Jane another one through her involvement in the weekly events.

Although the Japan-related club was the primary source of face-to-face interaction with native Japanese speakers for both Oscar and Jane, they also claimed to develop additional friendships through classes. Jane established two contacts through a visitor session in her Japanese language class, though she explained that unfortunately the visitor session was held just before the participating students went back to Japan, and thus although she spent a day with them before they left, they had only had minimal contact on Facebook since. Similarly, although Oscar claimed to establish two native Japanese speaker contacts through his Chinese class, they were no longer taking the subject, and, although they were connected on Facebook, they had not had any recent virtual contact at the time of the interview. He had, however, had several impromptu meetings with them on university campus.

Given the fact that each of the informants had been back in Australia for six to thirteen months, and exhibited an ongoing interest in Japan, it was somewhat surprising to find that their networks had not expanded to a greater degree. However, networking requires effort and the investment of time and resources, and if these are committed to existing friends, it is less likely that individuals will seek out further friendships (Fehr 1996). Indeed, it was found that each of the informants still had considerable interaction with network members established either prior to or during study abroad, who continued to offer them opportunities for engagement with Japanese language and culture. Thus, it was possible that they had more of a focus on network maintenance as opposed to development, as I also found in a previous study (Campbell, 2011). More longitudinal data collected from other informants in my larger doctoral project, however, does suggest that given time, and learners' continued desire for interaction with Japanese, networks

developed post-study abroad are likely to eventually outweigh networks main-
tained from the study abroad period.

    Although the findings discussed above indicate that networks established
while abroad continue to offer important opportunities for interaction with native
Japanese speakers, as other studies have found, access to native speakers does not
necessarily guarantee opportunities for L2 practice (Campbell, 2011; Kurata,
2007, 2010, 2011; Pearson-Evans, 2006). The following section thus examines the
patterns of language use that occur within the informants' social networks, and
then discusses some of the factors influencing such patterns.

3.2. Patterns of language use with native Japanese speakers

In order to identify the informants' language use patterns, Nishimura's (1992)
categories of bilingual speech were employed. She uses three categories, namely
"the basically Japanese variety", "the basically English variety", and "the mixed
variety", which refers to simultaneous use of both languages. In the present study,
these first two categories were were renamed as *Predominantly Japanese* and
Predominantly English. Because some of the informants are speakers of other lan-
guages, an additional category of *Other language* was also employed. Figure 2
depicts the percentage of the informants' networks (and number of contacts) that
they claimed to use each language variety with.

Figure 2. Patterns of language use with native Japanese
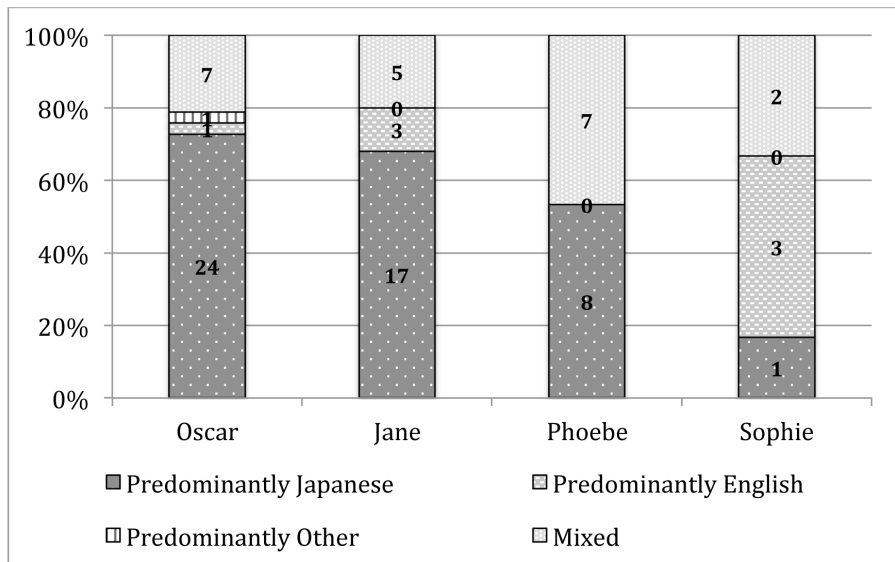
As can be seen, either predominantly Japanese or mixed varieties were the most common selections, whilst the choice of predominantly English or other language varieties was relatively minor. Thematic analysis revealed a number of different influential factors, which I have categorised according to Grosjean's (1982) factors influencing language choice in bilingual settings: participant, situation, content of discourse, and function of interaction. Although each individual learner-native speaker case warrants an in-depth analysis, due to space constraints, the major factors influencing language selection are summarised below.

In terms of participant-related factors, the most frequently discussed factor influencing all four of the informants' language use with their network members post-study abroad was the perceived proficiency of their shared language(s). Obviously, if Japanese was the only shared language then this became the language of interaction by default. If, however, the informants' network members were also bilingual, this resulted in interesting patterns of language negotiation. In the majority of cases, network members established whilst on study abroad in Japan tended to have less knowledge of English than network members established in Australia, and thus there was a stronger tendency to use Japanese with those contacts. The language that the relationship was established in was also found to be influential, and in most cases continued through time. This can be categorized under Grosjean's (2010, p.45) factor of "language history", where he explains that individuals tend to develop an "agreed upon" language that becomes the language of communication from then on (even if never discussed). These two factors are effectively reflected in Phoebe's comment, where she stated that: "If Japanese was the language that we established our relationship in then generally I'll always use Japanese. But that is mainly for people I met in Japan".

Patterns of language choice could also be influenced, however, by the informants' or their network members' insistence on using their second language in order to gain practice. The informants' and their network members' investment in their respective L2s resulted in interesting patterns of language negotiation, and sometimes non-reciprocal language use. Both Phoebe and Jane, for example, observed that a number of their network members started to use more English with them when they went on study abroad to America. Interestingly, Phoebe mentioned that she tended to reply to English posts in Japanese "to keep in line" with her pre-established language choice while in Japan, thus engaging in non-reciprocal language use. Grosjean (1982, p.142) has suggested that non-reciprocal language use indexes a lack of group solidarity, which may lead to embarrassment or even anger between bilinguals. Thus, Li Wei (2013, p. 369) has indicated that this pattern of language use in spontaneous spoken discourse is not usually sustainable. However, it appears that this may not be the case when it comes to written discourse, as

Phoebe claimed to engage in non-reciprocal language use with several of her network members because they share an "understanding that we both want to practice the language that we're learning". Kurata (2007) also identified a case of non-reciprocal language use between a Japanese learner and two of her Japanese friends in Japan and, together, these examples provide evidence that when it comes to written forms of interaction, non-reciprocal language use may be considered comfortable and even natural in bilingual networks.

In contrast to Phoebe, Jane claimed that with her networks maintained from study abroad she would reply to their posts in whichever language she was addressed in. Jane's contacts, however, were her English students when she was in Japan, so she was already accustomed to using English with them when they were "feeling eager" to practice. It is therefore possible that their previous role-relation of teacher-student influenced ongoing patterns of language selection, where Jane's use of English was associated with an identity as English teacher. Similarly, Oscar did not mind writing in English to his friends in order to help them improve their English. Interestingly, he further commented: "While I was in Japan I would try to use Japanese because I was trying to practise. But now it's at the level where I don't take notice if I use Japanese or English. I don't care so much anymore now that I'm comfortable with it".

Likewise, Jane also felt more "comfortable" with using Japanese, and Sophie mentioned that study abroad had greatly enhanced her confidence in using the language (cf. Magnan & Back, 2007; Xu, 2010; Zappa, 2007), which contributed to increased Japanese use post-study abroad.

In terms of situation-related factors, it is plausible that for Phoebe and Jane's contacts currently in America, their location or setting, where English is the dominant language, also impacted on their language choice. This also holds true for each of the informants' network members currently in Australia, where Jane, Oscar and Sophie all claimed to use either the mixed or predominantly English variety of language. This relates to another situation-related factor: the presence of monolinguals. Sophie, for example, claimed that although she always used Japanese when alone with her Japanese family friends, if her own family (who do not speak Japanese) were also present, they would switch to English. Similarly, Oscar stated that although he predominantly used Japanese with the native Japanese speakers in his Japan-related club committee, all proceedings are conducted in English, because "otherwise it's unfair" to those who are less proficient in Japanese language. Jane, on the other hand, primarily interacted with club members at club events, and claimed that these were conducted predominantly in English.

While the above finding is in accordance with that of Kurata's (2007) study, Phoebe also made interesting observations about language use on Facebook, in particular, concerning the presence of monolinguals. She mentioned that she rarely

posts things exclusively in Japanese on Facebook because she "didn't want to be too alienating" to non-Japanese speaking Facebook friends. In addition to her own language use on Facebook, Phoebe also observed that her study abroad peers tended to post in both English and Japanese "because obviously half the people we met were Japanese, and if it's mostly directed towards Japanese people then you might comment in Japanese".

Oscar was the only informant to mention a discourse-related factor influencing language choice with native speakers: topic of conversation. He explained that with his current girlfriend, who is a Japanese international student in Melbourne, their language use constantly varies depending upon topics, but that "when she's speaking about her study and things like that, she'll use English – definitely". He explained that: "Because she studies in Australia there are some things that she can't say in Japanese because, what do you say, *senmon kotoba* (sic) [technical language], the words on a specific topic or whatever, she probably doesn't know the words in Japanese either. She didn't study that in Japan."

As the above discussion demonstrates, patterns of language selection depend upon a multitude of different factors. Overall, each of the informants claimed to have increased opportunities for Japanese use currently compared to pre-study abroad, either in person or by other forms of communication. Importantly, interactive communication technologies were found to provide each of the informants with enhanced opportunities for Japanese reading input and writing output. Phoebe mentioned that she enjoys being able to observe native speakers' online language conventions, which differ significantly from spoken discourse. This type of behavior, known as online "lurking", or reading without posting, provides important opportunities for language acquisition and cultural learning (Pasfield-Neofitou, 2012). Phoebe and Oscar also mentioned that they participated in mediated language assistance within their social networks, providing and receiving feedback on emails written in their respective L2s. Moreover, Sophie mentioned that spending time with her Japanese contacts in Melbourne has been beneficial not only for her language development, but also for cultural knowledge that she believes can often be missed when learning languages in institutional settings.

4. Conclusion and future directions

Through qualitative examination of four informants' post-study abroad interaction with native Japanese speakers, this study has provided evidence of the ongoing impact that study abroad can have on language learners' TL networks. Although previous research (e.g. Coleman & Chafer, 2011; Kurata, 2004; McMillan & Opem, 2004; Nunan, 2006) has found that study abroad positively contributes to

ongoing opportunities for interaction with native speakers, this is the first known study that has conducted a preliminary investigation of post-study abroad patterns of network maintenance, development, and language selection.

This study found that although each of the four informants still maintain contact with a number of network members established pre-study abroad, for all but one of them, the largest portion of their TL-speaking networks is composed of contacts established whilst on study abroad. Participation in a one or two semester study abroad programme therefore appears to impact significantly on such networks. On the other hand, as Sophie's case demonstrated, the limited contact available with native speakers within a six-week programme at a language institute may not be sufficient to promote ongoing contact.

Importantly, there appeared to be a stronger focus on network maintenance as opposed to development of new networks post-study abroad, where each of the informants continued to draw upon the valuable linguistic affordances provided by their networks developed during study abroad. Post-study abroad networks were influenced by a number of factors, including the closeness of relationship established while abroad, utilisation of interactive communication technology, university workload/availability of time, opportunities to meet again, and degree of investment in Japan-related activities. Moreover, as this group of informants represents relatively recent study abroad returnees, it is likely that time post-study abroad is also a relevant factor influencing network development. Even within this small sample, the informants' networks showed a considerable degree of individual variation, which suggests the need for further larger-scale studies to investigate more systematically the impact of learner characteristics such as TL proficiency, motivation, attitudes, and willingness to communicate.

In line with previous studies (Kurata 2004; Pasfield-Neofitou 2012), the informants reported interacting with their network members over a variety of interactive communication technologies, which were not necessarily utilised in the TL prior to their study abroad experiences. They also highlighted ways in which these technologies are being utilised to enhance network maintenance. Importantly, it was found that although Facebook positively impacted the potential for initial network maintenance, with time, some of the Facebook friendships became passive in nature, and decreasing interaction suggests that others might be moving in the same direction. The findings therefore suggest that future research into language learners' post-study abroad networks takes the novel nature of constantly evolving interactive communication technologies into further consideration. In particular, there is a need to gauge the degree of reactive interaction, such as commenting on or "liking" of posts that appear on social networking sites, and further categorise network members as either active or passive ties (cf. Daming, Xiaomei & Li Wei, 2008; Li Wei, Milroy & Ching, 1992).

References

Allen, H.W. & Herron, C. (2003). A mixed-methodology investigation of the linguistic and affective outcomes of summer study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 36*, 370-385.

Ayano, M. (2006). Japanese students in Britain. In M. Byram & A. Feng (Eds.), *Living and studying abroad: Research and practice* (pp. 11-37). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Bachner, D.J., & Zeutschel, U. (1994). *Utilizing the effects of youth exchange: A Study of the subsequent lives of German and American high school exchange participants*. New York: Council on International Educational Exchange. Retrieved from http://www.ciee.org/images/uploaded/pdf/occasional31.pdf

Badstübner, T., & Ecke, P. (2009). Student expectations, motivations, target language use, and perceived learning progress in a summer study abroad programme in Germany. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German, 42*, 41-49.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology 3*, 77–101.

Burns, P.D. (1996). *Foreign students in Japan: A qualitative study of interpersonal relations between North American university exchange students and their Japanese hosts* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Massachusetts: Amherst, MA.

Campbell, R. (2011). The impact of study abroad on Japanese language learners' social networks. *New Voices, 5*, 25-63.

Coleman, J.A., & Chafer, T. (2011). The experience and long-term impact of study abroad by Europeans in an African context. In F. Dervin (Ed.), *Analysing the consequences of academic mobility and migration* (pp. 67-96). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cummings, J.N., Lee, J., & Kraut, R. (2006). Communication technology and friendship during the transition from high school to college. In R. E. Kraut, M. Brynin & S. Kiesler (Eds.), *Computers, phones, and the internet: Domesticating information technology* (pp. 265–278). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Daming, X., Xiaomei, W., & Li Wei (2008). Social network analysis. In Li Wei & M. G. Moyer (Eds.), *The Blackwell guide to research methods in bilingualism and multilingualism* (pp. 263-275). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Dewey, D.P., Bown, J., & Eggett, D. (2012). Japanese language proficiency, social networking, and language use during study abroad: Learners' perspectives. *Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes, 68*, 111-137.

Dowsett, G. (1986). Interaction in the semi-structured interview. In M. Emery & P. Long (Eds.), *Qualitative research: Papers from a symposium, May 22 and 23, 1986* (pp. 50-56). Canberra: Australian Association of Adult Education.

Dwyer, M. (2004). More is better: The impact of study abroad program duration. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 10*, 151-164.

Ellison, N.B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook 'Friends': Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 12*, 1143-1168.

Fehr, B. (1996). *Friendship processes*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Grosjean, F. (1982). *Life with two languages: An introduction to bilingualism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Grosjean, F. (2010). *Bilingual: Life and reality*: Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Haythornthwaite, C. (2005). Social networks and internet connectivity effects. *Information, Communication and Society, 8*, 125-147.

Hernandez, T. (2010). The relationship among motivation, interaction, and the development of second language oral proficiency in a study-abroad context. *Modern Language Journal, 94*, 600-617.

Isabelli, C.L. (2000). *Motivation and extended interaction in the study abroad context: Factors in the development of Spanish language accuracy and communication skills* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). The University of Texas: Austin, Texas.

Isabelli-García, C. (2006). Study abroad social networks, motivation and attitudes: Implications for second language acquisition. In M. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 231-258). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

The Japan Foundation. (2012). *N1-N5: Summary of linguistic competence required for each level.* Retrieved from http://www.jlpt.jp/e/about/levelsummary.html

Jiménez Jiménez, A.F. (2003). *Linguistic and psychological dimensions of second language attrition during and after a study abroad experience* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Pennsylvania State University: University Park, PA.

Kato, K., & Tanibe, H. (1997). Tanki ryuugakusei no gakushuu nettowaaku [Studying networks of overseas students who stay in Japan for a short period]. In Nihongo kyooiku gakkai nettowaaku choosa kenkyuu iinkai [The Network Research Committee of the Society of Japanese Language Teaching] (Ed.), *Kyooiku no Nihongo Kyooiku Nettowaaku Zukuri ni kansuru Choosa Kenkyuu kenkyuu [Research on the creation of domestic networks in Japanese language education]* (pp. 113-121). Nihongo Kyooiku Gakkai [Society of Japanese Language Teaching].

Kurata, N. (2004). Communication networks of Japanese language learners in their home country. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 14*, 153-179.

Kurata, N. (2007). Social and contextual factors influencing L1/L2 use in learners' social network contexts: A case study of learners of Japanese in Australia. In H. Marriott, T. Moore & R. Spence-Brown (Eds.), *Learning discourses and the discourses of learning* (ebook ed., pp. 271-290). Melbourne: Monash University ePress.

Kurata, N. (2011). *Foreign language learning and use: Interaction in informal social networks.* London: Continuum.

Lewis, J., & West, A. (2009). 'Friending': London-based undergraduates' experience of Facebook. *New Media & Society, 11*, 1209-1229.

Li Wei, Milroy, L., & Ching, P. S. (1992). A two-step sociolinguistic analysis of code-switching and language choice: The example of a bilingual Chinese community in Britain. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 2*, 63-86.

Li Wei (2013). Code-switching. In R. Bayley, R. Cameron & C. Lucas (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of sociolinguistics* (pp. 360-378): Oxford University Press.

Liebscher, G., & Dailey-O'Cain, J. (2005). Learner code-switching in the content-based

foreign language classroom. *Modern Language Journal, 89*, 234-247.

Magnan, S.S., & Back, M. (2007). Social interaction and linguistic gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 40*, 43-61.

Marsden, P.V. (1990). Network data and measurement. *Annual Review of Sociology, 16*, 435-463.

McMillan, A., & Opem, G. (2004). Study abroad: A lifetime of benefits. *Abroad View Magazine, 6*, 58-60.

Morofushi, M. (2008). *Communities of practice and opportunities of developing language socialization* (Unpublished paper). Monash University.

Nishimura, M. (1992). Language choice and in-group identity among Canadian Niseis. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 3*, 97-113.

Nunan, P. (2006). *An exploration of the long term effects of student exchange experiences.* Paper presented at the IDP Australian International Education Conference, Perth.

Opper, S., Teichler, U., & Carlson, J. (1990). *Impacts of Study Abroad Programmes on Students and Graduates.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Pasfield-Neofitou, S. E. (2012). *Online communication in a second language: Social interaction, language use, and learning Japanese.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Pearson-Evans, A. (2006). Recording the journey: Diaries of Irish students in Japan. In M. Byram & A. Feng (Eds.), *Living and studying abroad: Research and practice* (pp. 38-63). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Pellegrino, V.A. (1998). Student perspectives on language learning in a study abroad context. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 4*, 91-120.

Regan, V. (1995). The acquisition of sociolinguistic native speech norms: Effects of a year abroad on second language learners of French. In B.F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 245–268). Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Segalowitz, N., Freed, B.F., Collentine, J., Lafford, B.A., Lazar, N., & Dìaz-Campos, M. (2004). A comparison of Spanish second language acquisition in two different learning contexts: Study abroad and the domestic classroom. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 10*, 1-18.

Simoes, A.R. (1996). Phonetics in second language acquisition: An acoustic study of fluency in adult learners of Spanish. *Hispania, 79*, 87-95.

Smith, L.R. (2002). The social architecture of communicative competence: A methodology for social-network research in sociolinguistics. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 153*, 133-160.

Tanaka, K. (2007). Japanese students' contact with English outside the classroom during study abroad. *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics, 13*, 36-54.

Tanaka, K., & Ellis, R. (2003). Study-abroad, language proficiency, and learner beliefs about language learning. *Japan Association for Language Teaching, 25*, 63.

Trentman, E. (2013). Arabic and English during study abroad in Cairo, Egypt: Issues of access and use. *Modern Language Journal, 97*, 457-473.

Whitworth, K.F. (2006). *Access to Language learning during study abroad: The roles of identity and subject positioning* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). The Pennsylvania State University: University Park, PA.

Xu, G. (2010). Understanding the role of interaction from linguistic, affective, and social perspectives. *TESL Canada Journal, 27*, 68-88.

Yager, K. (1998). Learning Spanish in Mexico: The effect of informal contact and student attitudes on language gain. *Hispania, 81*, 898-913.

Zappa, S. (2007). *The academic literacy socialization of Mexican exchange students at a Canadian university* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of British Columbia: Vancouver. Retrieved from https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/31768 (ubc_2007-319710.pdf)

Chapter 13
Negotiating gendered identities and access to social networks during study abroad in Egypt

Emma Trentman

University of New Mexico

Research on gendered experiences during study abroad typically reveals the disadvantages reported by primarily American female students in gaining access to local social networks compared to their male counterparts (Anderson, 2003; Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger & Farrell Whitworth, 2005; Kinginger, 2008; Kuntz & Belnap, 2001; Polyani, 1995; Twombly, 1995). Although this research has been crucial to raising awareness of gendered experiences abroad, there is a need for research that takes a more nuanced approach to the ways students, especially women, negotiate gendered experiences abroad. This paper draws upon poststructuralist theories of identity (i.e. Norton & McKinney, 2011) to analyze the experiences of American female study abroad students in Egypt. This analysis reveals that female students negotiated gendered identities that both facilitated and hindered their access to local social networks. Thus, while study abroad can reproduce negative gendered experiences, there are also transformative possibilities for resisting this narrative.

1. Introduction: Poststructuralist theories of identity

Poststructuralist theories of identity reject the notion of fixed identity categories that are biologically or socially determined from birth or early childhood, asserting instead that these identities are multiple and performed in particular contexts (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Block, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; Butler, 1999; Cameron, 1996; Davies & Harré, 1990; Morgan, 2007; Norton, 2000; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Omoniyi & White, 2006). For example, Butler (1999) argues that gender is not the source of particular acts, but rather created by the acts themselves:

> Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and,

hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. This formulation moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of gender as a constituted social temporality. (Butler, 1999, p. 214)

By focusing on the performative, socially and temporally constructed nature of identity, researchers in applied linguistics have explored the possibility for individuals to actively (re)negotiate their identities in ways that are advantageous for their language learning goals (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Norton, 2000; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Norton & Toohey, 2001). As Norton and McKinney (2011) state:

> The construct of identity as multiple is particularly powerful because learners who struggle to speak from one identity position can reframe their relationship with their interlocutors and reclaim alternative, more powerful identities from which to speak. This has profound implications for SLA. (p. 73)

At the same time, these researchers recognize that individuals are not free to negotiate any identity they desire. Indeed, there are often tensions between individual agency and the socio-historical context stemming from inequitable power structures (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Butler, 1999; Cameron, 1996; Davies & Harré, 1990; Norton, 2000; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Omoniyi, 2006; Pennycook, 2001). Thus, the performative nature of identity does not mean there are no real life constraints. Concerning gender, Cameron (1996) explains:

> It is important to stress here that deconstructing gender into its constitutive acts is not a denial of its existence or of its social salience. Most people do experience gender as an inalienable part of who they are. It is because gender is so salient that so much work goes into its production and reproduction. (p. 47)

In research on language learning in other contexts, poststructuralist theories of identity have proven useful as they allow for both the recognition of identity-related constraints learners face due to their particular socio-historical circumstances as well as learners' abilities to negotiate their identities to some degree (Kamada, 2010; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Takahashi, 2013). As discussed below, study abroad is a particularly salient context for identity negotiation (Block, 2007b), so these theories may be able to provide insight in these contexts as well.

2. Gender and study abroad

Previous research on study abroad in various locations throughout the world reports strikingly similar findings concerning American female research participants' accounts of how their gender limited their access to local social networks (in this chapter the term *American* means a United States citizen). Many of these gendered experiences are related to catcalls, sexual harassment, and being generally uncertain of the attention of local men. As a result of both real and perceived threats to their security from local men, American female students have reported feeling alienated from their environment and experiencing difficulties gaining access to local social networks in Russia (Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Polyani, 1995), Costa Rica (Anderson, 2003; Twombly, 1995)**,** Argentina (Isabelli-García, 2006), the Arab world (Bown, Dewey, Belnap, & Shelley, 2012; Ishmael, 2010; Kuntz & Belnap, 2001), France (Kinginger & Farrell Whitworth, 2005; Kinginger, 2008), and Spain (Talburt & Stewart, 1999). At the same time, some participants in these studies sometimes refuse to behave in ways that might lessen their exposure to catcalls and sexual harassment, such as not wearing shorts or going out late alone, because they feel these practices conflict with their individual rights (Anderson, 2003; Kinginger, 2009).

In addition to feeling threatened by local men, American female study abroad participants also report difficulties making friends with local women in Costa Rica (Anderson, 2003; Twombly, 1995), France (Kinginger & Farrell Whitworth, 2005; Kinginger, 2008), Spain (Bataller, 2008), and the Arab world (Ishmael, 2010; Kuntz & Belnap, 2001). Reasons the students give for these difficulties include competition for local men, stark differences between the lives of local and American women, and negative or uninterested attitudes towards study abroad students.

As a result of fears and uncertainties concerning interactions with local males, and difficulties forming friendships with local females, female study abroad students often turn to their compatriots, other international students, or home-based virtual social networks for comfort, effectively further isolating themselves from local social networks (Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2009; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Twombly, 1995).

However, this common narrative of the gendered experiences and sexual harassment of female students studying abroad, their difficulties making female friends, their subsequent refuge in their compatriots, and the problems this poses for gaining access to local social networks and language use has been critiqued for focusing on the experiences of primarily American learners and prioritizing their perspectives over local ones, particularly since definitions of sexual harassment can vary cross-culturally (Block, 2007a; Kinginger, 2008; Kinginger, 2009).

Nevertheless, previous research on the experiences of American women has made important contributions to the study abroad literature by demonstrating the salience of gendered identities abroad and their impact on the study abroad experience. Using post-structuralist theories of identity to reveal the nuances of gendered performances abroad is one way of expanding upon this previous research. For example, Kinginger & Farrell Whitworth (2005) found that in contrast to a student who blamed French gender norms for her isolation, another developed coping strategies and began to question her own gendered assumptions. Siegal (1995, 1996) describes the tension felt by western female learners of Japanese between performing Japanese gender norms to resist a positioning as the foreign female other, and rejecting the performance of these norms because they found them "too humble" or "too silly".

The study reported in this chapter uses poststructuralist theories of identity to examine multiple female gendered identities negotiated by American study abroad students in Egypt, and ways in which these negotiations impacted access to Egyptian social networks. The findings show that negotiating female gendered identities can both confirm the dominant narrative of negative experiences abroad as well as provide avenues of resistance.

3. The current study

The current study focuses on the experiences of 54 primarily American learners of Arabic (32 female, 22 male) studying abroad in Egypt. Egypt is an Arabic speaking country, and the diglossic nature of the Arabic language means that the language used by Egyptians ranges from Egyptian Arabic (EA) to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) or Classical Arabic depending on the particular context. However, most university programmes outside of the Arab world teach only MSA, and this is what the participants had predominantly studied prior to arriving in Egypt. The use of English and English-Arabic code-switching is common among the younger generations of the middle and upper classes in Egypt, particularly in urban areas, where they often attend English medium language schools.

The students were enrolled at two universities in Egypt, the American University in Cairo (AUC) and Alexandria University. AUC is a prestigious, private, English-medium university. Students were enrolled in either the study abroad programme or the intensive Arabic programme, and had the option of studying both EA and MSA. In the former, students directly enrolled in English medium classes and also took 1-2 Arabic classes. In the latter, students enrolled in approximately 20 hours of Arabic classes a week. Alexandria University is Egypt's second largest public university. Although it is Arabic medium, there are a number of specialized programmes with English medium tracks. Students

took approximately 20 hours of Arabic (EA and MSA) a week through a private programme housed within the Center for Teaching Arabic to Foreigners and administered by a small liberal arts college in the United States. This programme plays an extensive role in students' lives outside of the classroom, arranging extracurricular activities as well as Egyptian roommates, host families and language partners. Students sign a language pledge to use only Arabic during the programme.

Between September 2009 and April 2011, the student participants were interviewed by either myself or a research assistant in Arabic at the beginning and end of their experience, and in either Arabic or English midway through. The Arabic interviews, which were also designed to look at fluency measures, covered themes in participants' daily life in Egypt and backgrounds. The other interview focused on students' lives abroad and their perceptions of their experiences. The role of gender was a specific interview topic, but I rarely had to ask about it, as students typically brought up this topic themselves. They also filled out a questionnaire including a modified version of the Language Contact Profile (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004). A subset of 25 students (those who agreed to participate) participated in social media observations, allowing me to follow them on Facebook and/or read their blogs (if they had one). I made general observations of the university settings and, in fall 2010, engaged in participant observation with six female students. I also interviewed 10 Arabic teachers and 13 Egyptian associates of the students. More information about the participants' backgrounds and the data collection can be found in Trentman (2012). To analyze this data, I used MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software, to code passages related to gender-related incidents in a recursive process and develop the themes discussed below.

4. Results

Gender-related incidents were a constant theme throughout the data, in response both to questions specifically asking about gender as well as to those that did not (e.g. What is the most challenging part of your experience? Who do you hang out with?). While the general consensus supported the narrative of sexual harassment and fear of interactions with local males, difficulty making female friends, and subsequent refuge in the study abroad peer group, there were also gendered experiences that resisted this pattern. I discuss six gendered identities negotiated by female participants that emerged from the data: *traditional good girls, loose foreign women, targets of sexual harassment, female interlocutors, guests of the family,* and *romantic partners*.

4.1. Traditional good girls

Female students in this study described their frequently unsuccessful attempts to resolve a tension between their desire to respect Egyptian culture by negotiating a role as a *traditional good girl* who did not stay out late or interact with random men, and the unwelcome restrictions on their movement and language practice they faced as a result of this negotiation. The students at Alexandria University complained about their dormitory curfew (although their curfew was several hours later than that of the Egyptian women), particularly as there was no curfew in the male dormitory. Although the AUC students did not have a curfew, they commented that the curfews of Egyptian women limited their ability to hang out with them. Furthermore, female students felt that performing this identity limited their opportunities to engage in many of the informal interactions their male colleagues relied on for practice, such as encounters in the streets, shops, and traditional coffee shops of Egypt. Tasha explained:

> I feel like I can't have a conversation, like I can't just like shoot the breeze with an Egyptian man that I meet or talk to because it might come across as something, even if it doesn't, it's just like everything, I've been warned so many times, like oh, you can't just like strike up conversations with men, because they're going to take it the wrong way, um, whereas, the guys I know, the American guys I know, especially, there are a few of them that do have very good language skills, like Arabic language skills, they can, and they've had just like, random conversations with people on the street corners and stuff, so they've had more of an opportunity, or it's more acceptable for them to like go up to a random Egyptian man and like talk to them.

The women also felt that performing the identity of a *traditional good girl* limited the types of conversations they could have. While many of them were interested in politics, they felt that this was not a topic women were expected to discuss, a view confirmed by several of the Egyptian roommates. Kala explained that if she were male:

> I think just the length and like the subjects maybe of the conversation would be different, because I found that they, like cab drivers ask a lot of my male friends about like the economics in America, and politics, and um, were they to know that I also know about it, I'm a poli sci major, like you know what I mean, so it's just kind of a different subject, they kind of filter based on me being a girl.

Thus, while negotiating an identity as a *traditional good girl* could give students a greater sense of security, it limited their access to informal encounters and political conversations.

4.2. *Loose foreign women*

Frustrated by these restrictions, the female students sometimes chose to ignore them, generally by drawing upon their positioning as *foreign women* to engage in activities that *traditional good girls* would not do, including returning home late at night, traveling overnight unchaperoned and away from their families, and having male friends.

   While drawing upon the intersection of their gendered and foreign identities offered more opportunities to engage in informal encounters, it could also index them as overly sexually liberal, or primarily interested in sex, a common stereotype of western women in Egypt. Ayman, an Egyptian associate, blamed this assumption on the movies:

الناس هنا بيتفرجوا على الأفلام الأجنبي واللي أنا اكتشفت بعد كده إن دي أزبل أفلام بالنسبة للسينما الأمريكي اللي هي تتعمل عندنا يعني الأفلام مش كويسة فمعظم الأفلام دي بتدي صورة نمطية عن البنت الأمريكية أو البنت الغربية إنها بتفكر في حاجة واحدة الجنس

[People here watch foreign films and what I learned later is that this is worst of the American cinema, what plays here you know, is like films that aren't good, so most of these films provide stereotypes about the American girl or the Western girl, that she thinks about one thing, sex]

Since the female students did not necessarily want to be positioned as engaging in all of the behaviours indexed by the identity of *loose foreign woman*, this sometimes caused them to avoid interactions with strangers, especially men. Other students chose to risk negotiating an identity as a *loose foreign woman* if they felt it provided them with opportunities to use Arabic they could not gain otherwise. Anna explained how she was able to successfully gain opportunities for interaction and still resist an overly sexual positioning:

زمان لما كنت في التاكسي والسواق كان بيقول شيء وحش أو شيء مش مناسب خلاص أنا ماتكلمش معه بس دالوقتي افتكر حتى لو هو شخص وحش هأتكلم معه عشان يعني إذا بأحس إنه فعلا خطير أو فعلا فعلا غير مؤدب ممكن أخرج التاكسي أو أسكت بس حتى لو عنده أفكار غريب أتكلم معه مثلا كان عندي مناقشة مع واحد سواق تاكسي وهو قالي من الأول كنت أعمل في السياحة ويعني البنات والشربة كانت كويس قوي ويعني اه هو سألني انت لديك صاحب مصري بمعنى صاحب عاطفي وماكنتش فاكرة ما كنتش فاهمة إن السؤال كان يعني صاحب صاحب فكتت فاكر اه وهو كان طبعا انت (عندك) وازي المصريين يعني ازي العلاقات مع المصريين ويعني هو فعلا سألني يعني basically هل هو جيد بالسرير في إنجليزي فكنت يا راجل يا سلام وقلت يعني دا سؤال مش مناسب بعدين كلمنا عن التعليم ورأيه عن أشياء مختلفة وكان ظريف بس كان لازم يعني بأقول يعني خلاص

[In the past when I was in a taxi and the driver was saying something bad or something inappropriate, enough, I didn't talk with him, but now I think even if he's a bad person I'll speak with him because like if I feel that it's really dangerous or really, really not appropriate I can get out of the taxi or be quiet, but even if he has strange ideas I'll speak with him, for example, I had

a discussion with a taxi driver and he said to me from the beginning I used to work in tourism and the girls and the drinking were very good, ah, he asked me if I had an Egyptian friend, meaning romantic friend, and I didn't think, I didn't understand that the questions was like a boyfriend friend so I thought yes, and he was, of course [you have] one, and how are the Egyptians, like how are the relations with Egyptians, and like he really asked me like basically, is he good in bed in English, so I was like, hey man, wow, and I said like that's an inappropriate question and afterwards we talked about education and his opinion on different things, and it was fun, but I had to say like enough]

In general, the students reported a great deal of difficulty negotiating the tensions between the *traditional good girl* and *loose foreign women* identities. They were often uncertain which identity they were expected to perform, or even which one they wanted to perform, if they felt that there was a conflict between this performance and their own sense of identity or their interactional goals.

4.3. Targets of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment was a dominant issue in the data, as evidenced by the feelings of discomfort and danger the female students experienced as a result of sexual harassment, the male students' happiness that they did not have to deal with sexual harassment, and the participants' general impression that the female study abroad students received more sexual harassment as a result of their foreign appearance, less conservative dress, and perceptions of foreign women as sexually liberal.

A study prepared by the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (ECWR; Hassan, Shoukry, & Abul Komsan, 2009) reported that sexual harassment is a major problem in Egypt, with 83% of Egyptian women and 98% of foreign women reporting exposure to sexual harassment, and 46.1% of Egyptian women and 52.3% of foreign women reporting harassment on a daily basis. Of the Egyptian men surveyed, 62.4% admitted harassing women, and 88% said they had seen women harassed. The types of harassment reported included: "touching, noises (including whistling, hissing noises, kissing sounds etc.), ogling of women's bodies, verbal harassment of a sexually explicit nature, stalking or following, phone harassment, and indecent exposure" (p. 15). The female participants in this study reported exposure to all of these types of harassment, sometimes on a daily basis, and felt that this was a major challenge for them. Jane explained:

The thing that annoys me the most honestly is just the street harassment, like, I've, it was one thing, like when I first got here, it was just like this is so, this is such a novel, like this is a novelty, this is so new, I've never encountered this

before, and now it's getting to the point where it's just, it just kind of annoys me, because especially, it's like when I'm like walking around Tahrir, I'm like okay, I'm just trying to go to this class … so it's like, I just want to go to class, I want to like go back, I don't want to have to like deal with, getting like hissed at and stuff like that.

These frustrations were compounded by cross-cultural variation in what counted as sexual harassment. While the ECWR report and many of the American women felt that harassment included verbal remarks, many Egyptians do not, distinguishing between *al-muʕa:kasa:t* (catcalls) and *at-taħarruʃ al-ginsi* (sexual harassment), where the former could sometimes be considered closer to flirtation. For example, Leila, an Arabic teacher, explained:

لو مثلا قلنا إن طالبة مصرية سافرت امريكا وفيه شخص في الشارع قالها كلمتين شكلك حلو أو شكلك وحش هي مش هتعتبر إن دا تحرش هي هتعتبر إن دا معاكسة وهي عندها فرق في ثقافتها بين التحرش والمعاكسة

[If for example we said an Egyptian student travelled to America and there was someone in the street who said two words, you look good or you look bad, she wouldn't consider it *at-taħarruʃ* [harassment], she would consider it *muʕa:kasa* [a catcall], and she has a difference in her culture between *at-taħarruʃ* and *al-muʕa:kasa*]

While some study abroad participants were not bothered by catcalls, particularly if they were from a place in the U.S. where this was common, they still emphasized their difficulties with harassment such as being grabbed or followed. Adding to the students' frustration was their inability to do anything about the harassment they received. Although in contrast to the women in Anderson's (2003) study, the female students in this study did modify their dress, this had little effect on the harassment they received. Indeed, the ECWR survey notes that although it was a common belief among Egyptians that women who dressed less modestly received more sexual harassment, 72.5% of the women who reported being harassed were veiled.

The standard advice offered by Egyptians for dealing with unwanted catcalls was to pretend not to hear, or to go places with a male companion, something that the study abroad students found difficult to accept. Anne explained: "It's been a new experience, a hard experience for me to have to rely on other people, specifically other males, to feel safe, so that's something that was very hard for me to get used to". As a result of their inability or unwillingness to ignore catcalls, the female study abroad students also developed their own coping techniques, some of which they recognized were culturally inappropriate or limited their ability to engage in other interactions, such as raising their middle finger to their catcallers, wearing

headphones, or putting on an angry "street face". A few of the female students also tried to appreciate the verbal comments as compliments.

In general, the participants in this study felt that the fear and frustration with the catcalls and sexual harassment the female students experienced limited their opportunities for informal interactions and Arabic language use. While the reservations of some of the Egyptian participants concerning the study abroad students' reactions to catcalls demonstrate the necessity of taking cross-cultural variation in perceptions of sexual harassment into consideration, it is crucial to note that the discomfort these American women experienced abroad did cause many of them to avoid interactions with locals, limiting their access to local social networks.

When female study abroad students felt that their study abroad context limited them to performing the identities of *traditional good girls, loose foreign women*, or *targets of sexual harassment*, they often felt that their gender negatively impacted their abilities to gain access to Egyptians compared to their male colleagues. However, there were some female participants were able to perform other gendered identities available within this context that indeed promoted their access to local social networks, including those of *female interlocutor*, *guest of the family*, and *romantic partner*.

4.4. Female interlocutors

While the Egyptians that the students encountered in the street, shops, and coffee shops were most likely to be male, there were opportunities for the female students to engage in informal encounters with women in the female-only cars on the tram and metro. Interacting with females in these gender-segregated locations could also help them maintain the *traditional good girl* identity described above while still interacting with women. More sustained interactions occurred in the dormitories at the Alexandria University, where female study abroad students were matched with Egyptian roommates and language partners who also participated in pro-gramme activities. Participants felt that this was crucial to their abilities to practise the language, particularly given their limited opportunities in the street. Rose explained:

> أستطيع أن أتكلم مع البنات في المدينة وفعلا دا بس ويعني البنات في الترام أحيانا بس يعني ما عندي
> كل الفرصة زي الولاد لأروح لقهوة كل ليل وأتكلم مع أي شخص في مجموعة صغيرة التي يمكنني أن
> أتكلم معه بس أظن هذا مش مشكلة بالنسبة للغة عشان يمكنني ما زال نتكلم نفس الساعة مع العرب مع
> المصريين بس مش مع أشخاص مختلف تماما

> [I can speak with the girls in the dorms and really, that's it, and like the girls in the tram sometimes, but like I don't have all the opportunities like the boys to go to a coffee shop every night and speak with anyone in a small group that

I can speak with, but I think this isn't a problem in terms of the language because we can still speak the same hours with Arabs, with Egyptians, but not with completely different people]

Furthermore, while the female students could risk feeling uncomfortable to engage in interactions with men, the male students complained that it was almost impossible for them to talk to women, a difficulty that hindered their attempts to understand Egyptian culture. In contrast, Isabelle felt that the cultural insights she gained from women were an advantage to being female:

أعتقد فيه حاجة كويسة إن أنا بأستطيع أن أبدأ كلام مع ستات وأعتقد فيه ناس كثير التي مش بيفهموا الستات المصريين ام فذلك دائما كويس عشان أنا بأستطيع أن أشوف حاجات من وجهة نظرهم التي أعتقد الرجالة مش بيستطيعوا أن يروا

[I think there is a good thing, that I can start talking with women and I think there are a lot of people that don't understand Egyptian women, um, so that's always good because I can see things from their point of view that I think the men can't see]

4.5. Guests of the family

In addition to being able to talk to women, it was also easier for the female students to enter Egyptian family life. For example, only female students were able to participate in a homestay at Alexandria University, female students reported more visits to their roommates' families, and some male students complained that this was an opportunity they were missing. Wendy, an Arabic teacher, also felt that this was an advantage of being female:

You can meet, go to families, especially for women, you can get almost adopted into families left right and centre and I know so many women who have done this and who have acquired another family or almost, and it's impossible to say what kind of things you discover when you eat with a family and I don't know, sit around and talk, and there's so much that you can't do unless, that you cannot do unless you're in a setting that allows for it, and yeah, Cairenes are, as I said before, really sociable, and really welcoming, and often you have access, if you really pursue it you have access to family life that is not going to happen elsewhere.

Female students often visited their roommates' and friends' families on weekends or attended engagement parties and other family events that the male students were not invited to. Inas, an Egyptian roommate, described her family's delight with the Arabic-speaking study abroad students and how communication between her roommates and her family continued between visits:

لما بيشوفوا وشهم إنهم (الطلاب) مبسوطين وبيتكلموا عربي دا أحسن حاجة بالنسبة لهم (الأسرة) هم
مبسوطين قوي قوي قوي وأسرتي كل الوقت تتصل لازم تجيبي البنات مرة ثانية لازم تجيبي البنات هم
وحشونا وبتتكلم معهم ازيك يا حبيبتي وحشتيني هم أصدقاء دالوقتي مش نفس الحاجة من خمس سنين
لما كنا بنشوف الإعلانات في التلفزيون وبنشوف الأخبار مش نفس الحاجة خالص دالوقتي هم عندهم
أصدقاء امريكيين بيحبوهم جدا جدا

[When they see in their faces that they [the students] are happy and speak Arabic, that is the best thing for them [the family], they are very, very, very happy, and my family always calls and says you need to bring the girls again, you need to bring the girls, we miss them, and they talk with them, how are you sweetie, I miss you, they're friends now, it wasn't the same five years ago when we saw the announcements on TV, and we saw the news, it's not the same thing at all, now they have American friends they like very very much]

4.6. Romantic partners

It was also possible for female study abroad students to date Egyptian males, especially at AUC, while the reverse was highly unlikely, thus allowing them to negotiate identities as potential romantic partners. Nathalie emphasized the cultural insights she gained through her Egyptian boyfriend:

It gave me really good insight into the culture because he would invite me to do things that you wouldn't just like invite your normal friends to do like I would go to his house quite often and like meet his parents and talk to his parents and like I got to go to weddings with him and stuff, and like engagement parties and all that type of thing, so it was a very nice experience, and we're still really good friends because we didn't really break up.

While Egyptian boyfriends often provided access to Egyptian social networks, these relationships tended to be in English, as the study abroad students felt that their Arabic did not match their boyfriends' English for the purposes of establishing a relationship.

Thus, within the context of their study abroad experiences, female students performed a variety of identities, including those of a *traditional good girl, loose foreign woman, target of sexual harassment, female interlocutor, guest of the family*, and *romantic partner*. As in previous research on study abroad, American females reported serious limitations on their ability to engage with some local social networks as a result of gendered experiences. Yet the multiple ways in which female gender could be performed in this context meant that some female students were also able to actively negotiate gendered identities that helped rather than hindered their access to Egyptian social networks.

5. Discussion

The results of this study are necessarily context specific, and may not be generalizable to other study abroad locations. Furthermore, I have focused exclusively on gender in this chapter, and this is certainly not the only identity these participants negotiated abroad. However, focusing on the multiple nature of identity in other locations abroad may also reveal a variety of gendered identities that students can negotiate, some of which may be more advantageous than others to their ability to gain access to social networks.

If gendered experiences can be negotiated in ways that both hinder and help access to local social networks, the logical question for those interested in improving the study abroad experience is: What can be done to promote the latter over the former? In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss programme-level recommendations for improving the study abroad experience, as change at this level may be easier than changing individuals or the socio-historical context. The detailed implementation of these recommendations will have to be worked out within the specific study abroad context, as it is not possible to use exactly the same solution in contexts that vary geographically, temporally, demographically, and in other ways.

A notable factor that made female students cognizant of their ability to peform the identities of *female interlocutors* and *guests of the family* was programme facilitation of access to Egyptian females via communities of practice, which facilitate learning through mutual engagement, a shared repertoire, and a joint enterprise (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). A prominent example was the Alexandria University dorms, where the Egyptian students were considered part of the programme, received free room and board for assisting the study abroad students with their linguistic and cultural development, and were expected to participate in programme trips and cultural events. In contrast to some of the AUC students, who barely interacted with their roommates despite their close physical proximity, the community of practice developed in the Alexandria University dorms often facilitated the negotiation of positive gendered identities and entrance into Egyptian families and social networks. Students who were able to negotiate positive gendered identities outside of the dormitories often relied on their participation in other communities of practice, such as sports teams or clubs, and they were most successful when they had skills to contribute to these communities, rather than simply a desire to participate. Since finding and joining these communities could take a considerable amount of time and the majority of students were only abroad for a semester, pairing students with organizations ahead of time, to allow them to start participating immediately upon arrival, is a way in which programmes could facilitate this method of gaining entrance into local social networks. While explicit programme facilitation of the *romantic partner* identity is

likely inappropriate, the female students who developed romantic relationships abroad often met their partners through the social networks they developed via participation in communities of practice.

Programme facilitation of interactions for female participants was crucial not only for the study abroad students, but also for the Egyptian females with whom they interacted. All of the Egyptian women interviewed in this study explained that they valued the opportunities for cultural and linguistic exchange they gained through their interactions with study abroad students. However, many of the students in the Alexandria dormitory explained that this would be difficult without participation in the programme. In contrast to the study abroad students, many of the Egyptian women did not have the financial resources to travel abroad, and Egyptian families often do not allow unmarried women to travel alone. Even if they were able to travel abroad, Egyptians face visa restrictions for entering a number of countries where Americans do not. Meeting foreigners in Egypt is a solution to these problems, and indeed one Egyptian roommate described the opportunity as "حلم أنا مش باحلمه [a dream I'm not dreaming]."

Furthermore, having this access facilitated by an educational programme could assuage their families and friends' fears that they would be influenced by *loose foreign women*. Halima explained that this was a common concern among her friends:

حتى أي بنات ثانيين مصريات ممكن تقولك ازي أقعد مع بنات أمريكية ازي؟ انت هتكوني بعد كده مش كويسة وهتكوني مع أولاد دائما وهتكوني وهتكوني وهتكوني وحاجات كثير يعني ازي انت تقعدي مع بنت امريكية ازي وهم بيعتقدوا إن البنت الامريكية دي يعني هتخليكي يعني بجد هتخليكي يعني مش كويسة أو حاجة زي كده

[Even any other Egyptian girls they might tell you how can I stay with American girls how? You won't be good after this, you'll be with boys all the time, and you will be, you will be, you will be, and many things, like how are you living with an American girl, how, and they think that this American girl, like she will make you, like really, she will make you like not good, or something like that]

Thus, programme facilitation provided a safe and secure environment for both Egyptian and foreign women to meet each other. Failing this, both Egyptian and study abroad students could miss out, as Nora, an Egyptian student and Arabic teacher explained:

بأقولك فيه ناس كثير عايزة تصحب الناس اللي بيتكلموا عربي بس هو التوجيه يعني أنا كنت ماباكسفش لكن فيه جاية بيتكسف

[I'm telling you, there's lots of people who want to be friends with those that speak Arabic, but it's the guidance, I wasn't shy, but there's ones who are shy]

Thus, while it was certainly possible for female study abroad students to negotiate the identities of *female interlocutor* and *guest of the family* without programme facilitation, this facilitation greatly expanded the opportunities not only for study abroad students but also for the Egyptian females with whom they interacted. The existence of these opportunities helped make students aware of the variety of ways in which they could perform gendered identities, and thus feel less frustrated when they were forced to perform ones they found disadvantageous. While the nature of programme-facilitated interaction will necessarily vary by context, ensuring that it takes into account the multiple gendered identities learners can negotiate in that context, whatever they might be, may help with gaining entrance to social networks and language acquisition.

Yet even when their programmes facilitated access to local women, the students were not always successful at negotiating the positive gendered identities needed to enter their social networks. Often, this was a result of the students' inability to negotiate cultural differences with their interlocutors, which typically led to complaints echoing those in Twombly's (1995) study that the perspectives and lives of Egyptian women were simply too different for them to relate to each other or develop friendships. A promising method for helping students develop less ethnocentric perspectives in this case is the completion of a small ethnographic project (i.e. Jackson, 2006; Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001). In this model, students receive training in ethnographic research methods before going abroad, complete data collection for a small project while abroad, and write a reflective research paper when they return. This process can help students engage with their environment, develop a more nuanced awareness of cultural differences, and provide opportunities for critical reflection. Encouraging students to pursue joint research projects with Egyptian students could not only facilitate access (through the shared project) but could also help all participants develop greater skills for cross-cultural negotiation.

Finally, explicit training in viewing identities as performances negotiated within particular contexts, rather than static attributes, could be useful in making students aware of the options open to them in a given context. This might take the form of providing case study examples of students who were successful in negotiating advantageous gendered identities, and coaching students in developing their own techniques for successful identity negotiation before and throughout the study abroad experience. While the exact nature of this coaching will depend heavily on the specific study abroad context, I hope that making students aware of the choices they may have while negotiating these identities will help lessen the frustration of circumstances in which they feel that it is impossible to negotiate identities that assist with their language learning goals.

Further research is needed to show the extent to which study abroad programs can influence students' ability to negotiate identities advantageous to gaining entrance to social networks and language learning. Future research should also investigate other types of gendered and non-gendered identities absent from this paper, and particularly the intersections between them. By focusing on the nuances of identity negotiation in particular contexts, I hope that research can help positively transform these experiences for both study abroad students and locals, rather than reinforcing the negative and distressing experiences reported in much of the current study abroad literature.

References

Anderson, A. (2003). Women and cultural learning in Costa Rica: Reading the contexts. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad, 9*, 21-52.

Bataller, R. (2008). *Pragmatic development in the study abroad situation: Requesting a service in Spanish* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI Number: 3323398).

Blackledge, A., & Pavlenko, A. (2001). Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts. *International Journal of Bilingualism, 5*, 243.

Block, D. (2006). Identity in applied linguistics. In T. Omoniyi & G. White (Eds.), *The sociolinguistics of identity* (pp. 34-49). London: Continuum.

Block, D. (2007a). *Second language identities.* London: Continuum.

Block, D. (2007b). The rise of identity in SLA research, post Firth and Wagner (1997). *The Modern Language Journal, 91*, 863-876.

Bown, J., Dewey, D., Belnap, K.R., & Shelley, H. (2012, March). *Study abroad as a gendered experience: American women in Egypt.* Paper presented at the American Association of Applied Linguistics, Boston, MA.

Butler, J. (1999). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Cameron, D. (1996). The language-gender interface: challenging co-optation. In V.L. Bergvall, J.M. Bing, & A.F. Freed (Eds.), *Rethinking language and gender research* (pp. 31-53). Harlow: Longman.

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 20*, 43-63.

Freed, B.F., Dewey, D.P., Segalowitz, N., & Halter, R. (2004). The language contact profile. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 26*, 349-356.

Hassan, R.M., Shoukry, A., & Abul Komsan, N. (2009). *Clouds in Egypt's sky: Sexual harassment: From verbal harassment to rape: A sociological study.* Cairo: The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights.

Isabelli-García, C. (2006). Study abroad social networks, motivation, and attitudes: implications for second language acquisition. In M. A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.),

Language learners in study abroad contexts (pp. 231-258). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Ishmael, A. (2010, March). *Studying abroad in the Arabic-speaking world: Gender perspectives.* Paper presented at the Georgetown University Roundtable on Linguistics, Washington, DC.

Kamada, L.D. (2010). *Hybrid identities and adolescent girls: Being "half" in Japan.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Jackson, J. (2006). Ethnographic preparation for short-term study and residence in the target culture. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 30,* 77-98.

Kinginger, C. (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case studies of Americans in France. *Modern Language Journal, 92,* 1-124.

Kinginger, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kinginger, C., & Farrell Whitworth, K. (2005). Gender and emotional investment in language learning during study abroad. *CALPER Working Paper Series, 2.* 15 pp.

Kuntz, P., & Belnap, R.K. (2001). Beliefs about language learning held by teachers and their students at two Arabic programmes abroad. *Al-cArabiyya, 34,* 91-113.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Morgan, B. (2007). Poststructuralism and applied linguistics. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 1033-1052). Dordrecht: Springer.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change.* Harlow: Pearson Education.

Norton, B., & McKinney, C. (2011). An identity approach to second language acquisition. In D. Atkinson (Ed.), *Alternative approaches to second language acquisition* (pp. 73-94). Abingdon: Routledge.

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2001). Changing perspectives on good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly, 35,* 307-322.

Omoniyi, T. (2006). Hierarchy of identities. In T. Omoniyi & G. White (Eds.), *The sociolinguistics of identity* (pp. 11-33). London: Continuum.

Omoniyi, T., & White, G. (2006). Introduction. In T. Omoniyi & G. White (Eds.), *The sociolinguistics of identity* (pp. 1-8). London: Continuum.

Pellegrino Aveni, V.A. (2005). *Study Abroad and Second Language Use: Constructing the self.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical applied linguistics: A critical introduction.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Polyani, L. (1995). Language learning and living abroad: Stories from the field. In B. F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 271-292). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Roberts, C., Byram, M., Barro, A., Jordan, S., & Street, B. (2001). *Language learners as ethnographers: Introducing cultural processes into advanced language learning.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Siegal, M. (1995). Individual differences and study abroad: Women learning Japanese in Japan. In B. F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 225-244). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Siegal, M. (1996). The role of learner subjectivity in second language sociolinguistic competency: Western women learning Japanese. *Applied Linguistics*, *17*, 356-382.

Takahashi, K. (2013). *Language learning, gender and desire: Japanese women on the move*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Talburt, S., & Stewart, M.A. (1999). What's the subject of study abroad?: Race, gender, and "living culture". *Modern Language Journal*, *83*, 163-175.

Trentman, E. (2012). *Study abroad in Egypt: Identity, access, and Arabic language learning* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI Number: 3517251)

Twombly, S.B. (1995). "*Piropos*" and friendships: Gender and culture clash in study abroad. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad*, *1*, 1-27.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 14
Intercultural identity-alignment in second language study abroad, or the more-or-less Canadians

John L. Plews

Saint Mary's University - Halifax, Nova Scotia

This chapter examines identity construction in relation to intercultural encounters when studying a second language (SL) abroad. Specifically, it explores how Canadian undergraduate students realign their identities through their experiences and interactions in the target language and culture while on a short-term intensive German immersion study abroad (SA) programme.

1. Identity in study abroad research

Study abroad (SA) inherently estranges the personal daily routines, behaviours, preferences, and interests of participants and situates them in new contexts (places, experiences, activities, roles, relationships, etc.) that are governed by linguistic and cultural difference from their prior experiential, social, and historical frames of reference. If participants are not to remain tourists, whose perception of the target culture tends not to go beyond generalization to include difference, other values, and self-evaluation (Bertocchini & Costanzo, 1996; Byram, 1997; Plews, Breckenridge, & Cambre, 2010; Sercu, 1998), they must acquire - and be encouraged to reflect on - new language and knowledge, actively negotiate with others, and possibly reposition their sense of self in order to convey and fully grasp messages or accomplish tasks satisfactorily and with understanding. SA participants inhabit a type of "heterotopia" (Foucault, 1986) where they may both see themselves reflected and refracted through new experiences and recreate themselves by appropriating these experiences. SA is therefore well suited for the experience and investigation of identity negotiation (Block, 2007).

Popular opinions of identity often view the way we see ourselves as fixed and attached to stable biological and social labels, supported by unchanging practices, symbols, and institutions. One such apparently stable label is national identity, which is indexed to an ethnic bloodline, place of birth and socialization, geopolit-

ical borders, a standard language, a flag and figurehead, a single historical trajectory, and so on. However, poststructuralist and postmodern social sciences and humanities theorists of the past two decades, such as Butler (1990, 1993), Davies and Harré (1990, 1999), Hall (1998, 2000), Harré and Van Langenhove (1991), Van Langenhove and Harré (1993, 1999), Weedon (1997), and Wenger (1998), among others, have argued that identity - one's subjective sense of self and relation to the world - is an unstable, self-conscious, and dynamic phenomenon that is constituted for us discursively in language, that is, through evolving sociocultural, historical, political, and economic bodies of knowledge, and that we also continuously construct socially through our present agency in our daily conversation and physical interactions with others by acting on, or positioning and performing ourselves biographically within and through, our understandings of those discourses. Weedon (1997) argued that the individual constitutes and reconstitutes her "subjectivity" by identifying with positions already offered in discourse and recognizing that her interests are in conflict with those discursive positions.

No doubt influenced by poststructuralism and postmodernism, second language (SL) education has shifted over the past two decades from teaching another nation's language and culture to the development of learners as 'intercultural speakers'. Byram (1995, p. 25) defined such ideal learners as individuals who "operate their linguistic competence and their sociolinguistic awareness […] in order to manage interaction across cultural boundaries, to anticipate misunderstandings caused by difference in values, meanings and beliefs, and […] to cope with the affective as well as cognitive demands of engagement with others." Students develop intercultural (or transcultural and multilinguistic) communicative competence, that is, the ability to communicate with and understand others in the others' language(s) and to "operate between languages" (MLA, 2007) and cultures by using another language and culture as a lens through which to reflect on themselves and the world, the foreignness of others, the foreignness of themselves to others, and the (linguistic and cultural) diversity of their own society (Byram & Fleming, 1998). According to Kramsch (2009), interculturality stresses the relationship of complementarity and difference among cultures, emphasizes the limitations and flexibility of language, explores the difficulty of translation, and encourages taking up multilingual subject positions. Indeed, Kramsch has redefined the human subject of SL education as a self-actualizing "multilingual subject," who is a student of language use and interpretation, whose existence is mediated by language but also who uses language to create her existence; SL learners progress along a linear path of language learning from a physical/embodied stage involving duress, return to childhood, and limitation, to a psychological/imaginative stage marked by escape, future-orientation, or frustration, to a cerebral/enacted stage, indexed as self-enhancing, seeing-without-being-seen, reflective, and performative (pp. 59-65). Focused on *operating between languages*, the intercultural or multilingual subject

position dislocates any simple alignment with the label of nation in personal identity negotiation. Thus, returning to the focus of this article, the question arises: How do SL SA participants' expressions of their intercultural experiences present the positioning of the subject and the (re)alignment of identity in those in-between spaces?

Study and residence abroad research that discusses identity refers to a number of groups of interest. The first, most researched group includes university SL students participating in specialized immersion programmes or regular university courses for various lengths of time in a foreign country,[1] or working as foreign language assistants teaching their mother tongue in a country where their respective target language is spoken.[2] The second group includes students taking programmes abroad for cultural immersion without a SL component.[3] A third group is comprised of pre-service or in-service SL teachers participating in international professional development programmes.[4]

Regarding the first group, Block's (2007) review draws clear distinctions between studies on American, European, and Japanese (female) students: American studies are concerned with critical experiences and how they can lead to "a recoiling into a discourse of American superiority" (p. 185) rather than engagement with otherness; in contrast, European studies focus on developing intercultural awareness and target-language mediated intercultural and pan-European identities, and a certain number of studies on Japanese women (see Piller & Takahashi, 2006; Skarin, 2001) show how they develop liberated personal and gender identities through English.[5]

———

1 See Allen (2010), Archangeli (1999), Cheiffo & Griffiths (2004), Donitsa-Schmidt & Vadish (2005), Franklin (2010), Isabelli-García (2006), Jackson (2006, 2009, 2010), Kauffmann, Martin, & Weaver (1992), Kinginger (2004, 2008, 2010), McGregor (2012), Murphy-Lejeune (2002), Pellegrino Aveni (2005), Pitts (2009), Polanyi (1995), Shively (2011), Talburt & Stewart (1999), Twombly (1995), Wilkinson (1998), and Wolcott (2013).
2 See Bacon (2002), Craig (2010), Murphy-Lejeune (2002), and Tusting, Crawshaw, & Callen (2002).
3 See Cheiffo & Griffiths (2004), Dolby (2004), Kinginger (2010), Lenz & Wister (2008), Pedersen (2009), and Shames & Alden (2005).
4 See Marx & Moss (2011), Plews et al. (2010), Plews, Breckenridge, Cambre, & Martins, (2014), Trent (2011), and Willard-Holt (2001).
5 Kinginger (2009) similarly subdivides this first group into three research strands concerning Americans, Europeans, and Japanese, characterized by their different programme foci: early stage language acquisition, the intercultural awareness of advanced learners, and learning English, respectively.

Scholars investigating American SL SA students have found either the strengthening of American identity or a decrease in national identity and concomitant increased intercultural perspective. The consolidation of national identity during SA can result from the negative experiences of being forced together because of "otherness" (Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Wilkinson, 1998) and of misunderstood interactions (Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2010). Kinginger (2010) found most American students did not give much thought to the American image in their host country before arrival and that therefore hosts' questions ranging from general curiosity to those about foreign policy often caused students to "react defensively and recoil into national superiority" (p. 224; see also Block, 2007). Isabelli-García (2006), Kinginger (2008), and McGregor (2012) similarly found that negative experiences caused increased feelings of national superiority and ethnocentric attitudes. Several scholars (Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2008; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Polanyi, 1995; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Twombly, 1995) have revealed how these negative experiences were related to culturally different understandings and expectations of gendered behaviour. Donitsa-Schmidt and Vadish (2005) found that American and Canadian Jewish students studying Hebrew in Israel who self-identified as North American (as opposed to Jewish or Israeli) were more likely to hold negative attitudes toward Hebrew and Jewishness.

However, other studies of Americans on SL SA (Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Franklin, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2004; Pitts, 2009) have noted that, while cultural differences might cause ethnocentric attitudes in certain circumstances, students' positive acknowledgement of these differences allowed them to develop a multiple or global perspective or more intercultural identity. Spenader's (2008) study of two American high school graduates in Sweden describes how one chose to assimilate while the other was more self-marginalizing. The assimilating participant developed a sense of being "a Swede by association" (p. 254) when doing everyday things with Swedes and speaking Swedish; her "willingness to shift identity and include 'Swedishness' in her own self-concept was strongly related to her ability to learn language" (p. 255).

Corresponding to U.S. findings, Jackson's (2006, 2008, 2009, 2010) studies of Chinese on SL SA in England found that negative experiences in the host culture increased ethnocentric attitudes, whereas an open-minded orientation and positive experiences increased intercultural perspectives. Craig (2009) also recognized this pattern in language assistants from the Caribbean in Colombia and France. Findings concerning European SA participants have also resembled the above pattern, even if not seamlessly. While Tusting, Crawshaw and Callen (2002) revealed nationalistic positioning and Bacon (2002) only some intercultural adjustment in British language assistants, Murphy-Lejeune's (2002) study of Erasmus programme students from across Europe showed how the constant awareness of

national identity early in the sojourn was replaced by target-language-mediated subject positions, the development of pan-European identity, and increased intercultural awareness. She also pointed out how among European students "even the negative or difficult aspects of the stay are eventually perceived as enriching" (p. 231). However, the participants in this study were unusually highly interculturally-oriented even before their SA experience given their prior travel and advanced multilingual competences.

The findings of research on the second and third groups of interest (students in cultural immersion programs without a SL component and SL teachers) do not differ greatly from those on the first. The dichotomy between strengthening national identity and developing an intercultural perspective, however, is less stark for sojourners on non-SL SA programs (Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Dolby, 2004). Dolby found that the national identity of American students in Australia was "riddled with contradictions" (p. 151). While they became more defensive about the USA, they were also increasingly aware of global issues and the appearance and opinions of their own and other nations. Meanwhile, studies of SL teachers on international professional development have revealed that positive experiences might lead participants to align themselves with a more international concept of their profession and so question national practices (Trent, 2011) but also that negative or positive circumstances were perhaps less of a factor in teachers' development of intercultural self-positioning than programme structure, personal agency, and chance (Plews et al., 2010; Plews, Breckenridge, Cambre & Martins, 2014).

Research across all three groups has rarely discussed national and intercultural identity in isolation from other social or psychological aspects of individual identity. Almost all the aforementioned studies addressed positive changes in participants' emotional sense of self, including a greater willingness to speak the target language (Allen, 2010; Archangeli, 1999; Franklin, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2006; Jackson, 2006, 2008, 2010; Kauffmann, Martins & Weaver,1992; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Shively, 2011; Spenader, 2008); although Kinginger (2004) and Jackson (2008) also showed how their participants were depressed by the reality of France and England not matching their expectations. Cheiffo and Griffiths (2004) noted that increased self- and linguistic confidence could shape national and intercultural identity and Pellegrino Aveni (2005) showed how improved language skills and acculturation led to a "more clearly defined […] image of self" (p. 144). Jackson (2009) argued, however, that foreign language learning, even at an advanced level, does not eliminate ethnocentricism.

The assumption emerging from SA research is that negative orientations and interactional experiences in SL SA may cause participants to reject others' viewpoints and values and to assert a more steadfastly national self. Correspondingly, positive orientations and interactions may lead participants to take on others' viewpoints and values and position themselves as more intercultural and less definitive-

ly associated with a given monocultural identity. This might lead to a simplistic equation in which less intercultural is equated with more national and more intercultural equals less national. Perhaps this body of research is too focused on Americans (Block, 2007; Kinginger, 2009) and nationals from other countries with strong myths of monocultural nationhood and national belonging or with an overriding ideological project (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002), although several scholars working in these contexts claim to view identity as a multi-faceted phenomenon (see also Wolcott, 2013, p. 129), which grows more complex through SA. Certainly, research about educational programming that can lead to new cultural perspectives could itself benefit from another cultural perspective. Thus, this chapter asks: How do data from especially Canadian SL SA participants correspond with existing understandings of identity alignment in SA research?

2. The study

This chapter uses data from a qualitative study of Canadian SL students' experiences on a short-term SA programme in Germany. That study was guided by three general research questions: 1) What is it like to speak German (or English) while on SA in Germany? 2) What is the SA curriculum like? and 3) What is it like to be a Canadian studying in Germany? We chose an interpretive method to research these interests since, as Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) have maintained, such an approach is especially insightful regarding the social or participatory and personal or psychological dimensions of SL learning. Data were collected in Germany in the form of digital recordings of one-to-one semi-structured interviews (on average lasting 45 minutes) and photocopies of language-learning journals from 68 study participants of a total of 170 programme enrollments in June 2010, 2011, and 2012.[6,7] All study participants were Canadian citizens between 19 and 25 years who had previously completed at least one year of undergraduate study at a Canadian university. In this chapter I have focused on the third interview question, looking especially at what the participants said about their intercultural experiences, whether they expressed new intercultural subject positions, and how they related their intercultural experiences and/or positions to their personal sense of self. For this purpose I drew on the interview data collected in 2011 from 33 participants (24 females and 9 males). After transcription, I read the transcripts several times, highlighting sec-

---

6   Data were collected by the author and colleagues Kim Misfeldt and Feisal Kirumira.
7   Three individuals are included twice in the participant and enrollment numbers since they took part in the SA program in two separate years and on both occasions volunteered to participate in the study.

tions and making notes concerning emerging trends and narratives related to national and intercultural identity. I then selected some excerpts from ten participants for further analysis, as presented below. I make use of participants' "biographic talk" or "rhetorical redescription" (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1993) to analyze their discursive self-positioning; that is, I explore participant storying or self-indexing as persons in a social plot, their role assignment, self-characterization, selection of relevant action, turns-of-phrase, metaphors, code-switches, etc.

3. The programme

All the participants were enrolled in a longstanding six-week intensive German immersion programme in central Germany, which currently accepts around sixty students from universities across Canada each year. The students receive a two-day residential orientation on programme rules and basic cultural differences between Canadians and Germans, before being billeted with host families for the rest of their stay. They take German language courses at one of three levels: Intermediate (≈ CEFR A2+/B1), advanced (≈ CEFR B1+/B2), or upper advanced (≈ CEFR B2+/C1), and recently a German immersion community service learning course was added. Classes are held Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 12:00, with instructors available for consultation in the afternoons. The instructors are multicultural: during this three-year study they came from Canada, Germany, Great Britain, and Uganda. They use a mix of communicative, task-based, content-integrated, and drama-pedagogy approaches as well as varied literary texts and local textbooks, supplemented by workbooks and grammar reference books. Compulsory assignments include personal or language-learning journals, vocabulary quizzes, oral presentations on cultural topics, guided tours of local sites, film previews and reviews, short essays, ethnographic studies, and examinations; students may choose to do grammar exercises for extra practice. Formal classes are augmented by presentations, excursions, and social, cultural, and sports events. There is a German-only language policy for all classes and programme activities, and students also participate in a tandem partner project with local university students.

4. Findings and analysis

4.1. More intercultural, less Canadian

In his interview, Kieran briefly described two occasions when he experienced a shift in his language-mediated identity:

KIERAN: In my high school I think I was like the only one in Alberta when after I moved there [from New Brunswick], I think I was the only one in the school that actually like was, like lots of people had French last names but they didn't speak a word of French, and I was like the only like true like French-Canadian, I think. […] So my nickname was kind of Frenchy, so.

JOHN: Of course! [Laughs] Not very inventive. But so you grew up with the bilingual identity and sort of here you're adding another language to that. So, you think that by being here that maybe that identity in any way is changing at all?

KIERAN: Kind of making me less of a French-Canadian now.

JOHN: Yeah?

KIERAN: Like learning German.

Kieran recounted first his move from a bilingual part of Canada to an English-speaking one. This move gave rise to the enhancement of the language-mediated aspect of his personal identity, reflected in his new English nickname of "Frenchy." In his recount, Kieran accords himself exclusive status also by focusing on the language-mediated aspect of his biography as the only person at school who could "speak" French. He computes this special status into a unique and increasingly positive bilingual national identity, first by hyperbole ("the only one in Alberta"), then by statistical accuracy ("the only one in the school"), and finally by a statement of exceptional authenticity ("the only like true like French-Canadian"). Then, prompted to reflect on how learning a third language is affecting his bilingual identity, Kieran responds that adding another language decreases his national sense of self ("less of a French-Canadian now"). Elsewhere across Kieran's interview he indicates that his overall experience in Germany was positive, thus supporting prior research claiming that positive experience leads to a more intercultural self-identity and a less nationalistic one.

4.2. Less intercultural, more national Canadian

Participants often mentioned their experiences of German food (e.g., the amount of bread and cheese eaten), and German directness, as indicating distinct cultural differences from Canada. One participant, James, talked about them explicitly:

FEISAL: Were there any instances where you really felt, Oh I'm a Canadian studying in Germany, were there any such instances?

JAMES: Oh definitely with the food, with the direct state of mind um, I'd say those were basically the main two. [And] getting up early.

FEISAL: And when you talk of direct state of mind, do any examples come to mind?

JAMES: Um well, for example if I was thirsty and didn't really want to bring that complaint to my host family then they would be more upset that I did-

n't tell them about my needs rather than trying to look out for their needs.

FEISAL: How did that make you feel?

JAMES: A little awkward I guess and not in a normal state of this-is-how-things-are-done, it's this-is-how-things-are-done-NOW and this-is-how-we-HAVE-to-do-it.

When staying as a guest in a German home, James chose not to bring to his German hosts' attention his need to drink something. Operating from the perspective of the Canadian values of passivity and being an easy-going and uncomplaining guest, he was surprised and unsettled by their response. Instead of seeing how his being undemanding is a challenge to the German value of hospitality, and instead of recognizing in his hosts' direct tone the expression of the German value of clear communication and instruction, his recount of the encounter further normalizes his Canadian perspective over the German one ("not in a normal state") and so necessarily paints his hosts with lack of understanding ("more upset"), inflexibility ("how-things-are-done-NOW"), and authoritarianism ("how-we-HAVE-to-do-it"). Not prepared to realize and negotiate the intercultural dynamics of his situation abroad, James remained in a Canadian sense of self in opposition to Germans.

Mimi also talked about encounters that were difficult and negative experiences for her because of the cultural differences between Canadians and Germans, in ways that showed no consideration for other perspectives. For example, Mimi discussed how she was perceived by some elderly inhabitants of a small town when she wore a short skirt:

> MIMI: I was wearing a dress that I wear at home and people in [German town] could not handle it. Old people were getting so mad at how short my dress was. Like just like people were like walking by and just going, oh well I never! Or like some people would walk by and make [tut-tutting] sounds, and what I was wearing is so like so normal in Canada, like you'd see people wearing it every day, and I just thought that was so funny. Like you [Germans] go naked with strangers in a sauna, but you don't like that my dress is short, but you can't see anything, it's just my legs. […] and like a couple of the other [Canadian] girls too when we wear out like dresses or shorts or skirts or something, old people are upset and like the other people were just like creepin' and it's just like really strange.
>
> JOHN: So have you done anything about that? Like, have you changed in any way the way you dress or the way you behave?
>
> MIMI: Not really, 'cause I mean for me it's kinda like if you're going to go naked in the sauna then you should just get over it because I'm not gonna change all my wardrobe.

Mimi is upset that her usual way of dressing in public was being scrutinized and judged negatively by Germans. She quickly turns combative by making her own judgment on the German custom of not wearing clothes when taking a sauna and at the same time reveals the underlying issue of sexual morality ("go naked with strangers"). Thus, this intercultural encounter presents Mimi with the unexpected difficulties of dressing how she wants and of negotiating an apparent conflict in perceptions of her sexual morality. In this negotiation, Mimi positions herself as ordinary ("so normal," "every day," "you can't see anything," "just my legs"), while she pathologizes the Germans ("funny," "creepin'," "really strange"). While with this episode Mimi invokes subject positions related to sexuality, gender, and age, it is also clear by her use of the words "at home" and "in Canada" as well as by the identification of two contrasting cultural groups ("people in [German town]," "old people," "you," and "other people" versus "I," "a couple of the other [Canadian] girls," and "we") that the discourse of national identity is dominant throughout. Faced with a difficult intercultural encounter, Mimi does not investigate the other cultural perspective. Instead, she casts it as hypocritical and pathological and ultimately dismisses it ("you should just get over it"). In so doing, she consolidates her sense of self ("I'm not gonna change") in a hyperbolic fashion ("all my wardrobe") as constituted by and constituting a national alignment ("at home," "in Canada") that operates as a superior reference point ("so normal").

During her interview, Mimi described a number of other intercultural differences, difficulties, and confrontations, only to judge them from the standpoint of her national identity as inappropriate or interpret them in a way that enhanced it. She would blame the Germans for not understanding her rather than try to understand them or question her perspective:

> MIMI: I'm kind of tired of something and I have to deal with something and somebody doesn't understand something for example that I'm doing 'cause I'm Canadian.

Mimi's lack of impartial engagement with others or inability to see difficult moments as opportunities for intercultural learning replicated the consolidated national self-positioning reported in the aforementioned research on Americans (Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2008, 2010; McGregor, 2012; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Polanyi, 1995; Spenader, 2008; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Twombly, 1995) when facing unfamiliar, negative, awkward, or disorienting situations.

4.3. Not American, positively Canadian

Many participants in this study experienced being mistaken by Germans for Americans. Having to correct mistaken national identity is a common experience

for Canadians when abroad but it is not unique to them; Jackson (2008) and Craig (2010) found the same for Hong Kongers in England and Caribbean students in France. It does not depend on SA participation, nor does it require a second language environment. But the fact that these encounters took place in this instance while the principal actors are on SL immersion adds a critical element that might otherwise be absent. For example, Madeleine's recount makes crucial use of target culture circumstances to mediate a positive national identity, one that is both emotionally and critically advantageous for her sense of Canadian self:

> MADELEINE: When Germans hear you speaking English they're a little … But once they know you're Canadian, like, they seem to be very friendly. But if they think you're American they're not as friendly. But once I've had like three different people be like, "Oh where are you from?" and as soon as you say Canada they're like, "Oh Canada!" And they get all happy and you're like okay, so I don't know about Americans but yeah so.
> FEISAL: So what does that make you feel like?
> MADELEINE: Makes me feel good but also I don't want people to be assuming that I'm American EITHER, so.
> FEISAL: Why not?
> MADELEINE: Well there's a stigma I think in Europe that Americans are more rude and brash and loud and I don't know if it's true but that's just what people think, I think.

By correcting others' misperception of her Canadian nationality as American, Madeleine is able to reframe a negative and possibly threatening experience ("if they think you're American they're not as friendly") as one that reinforces her positive sense of self ("once they know you're Canadian," "very friendly," "Makes me feel good"). But not only does Madeleine use repeated target-culture circumstances ("three different people") to acquire a positive endorsement of her personal national subject position from Germans ("all happy"), she also co-opts it ("there's a stigma I think in Europe") to clear herself and her nationality of any negative attitudes ("Americans are more rude and brash and loud") and so make her personal Canadian national subject position seem superior to both Americans, who are stigmatized, and to Germans, who stigmatize. In so doing, Madeleine is able to obfuscate ("I don't know if it's true") the likelihood that she as a Canadian shares the stigmatizing attitude of Europeans/Germans ("I don't want people to be assuming that I'm American EITHER"). As in previous research on Americans (Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Wilkinson, 1998) the national label becomes salient in SL immersion for many Canadian SA participants. However, they differ from those Americans in that the motivation is not the threat of their foreign hosts' otherness but, rather, their own national phobia of becoming subsumed by American culture.

4.4. More intercultural, no less Canadian

Some participants described conscious attempts to be inconspicuous during the immersion experience, taking on new subject positions where they simulated being Germans as best they could. Leslie, for example, withdrew her Canadian identity strategically for the sake of language learning:

> LESLIE: I kind of try as much as possible to hide the fact that I'm a Canadian, not because I'll be met with any sort of aggression or anything, because like ... I WANT to ... I don't know, why do I do that? Um ... and you know, after a couple of sentences or something, someone will realize that I'm NOT German and I'm not from here, but uh all the same, uh I feel like I speak better with Germans, when it's just me and a German. I feel like my accent is not as good when I speak with other students ... er, I don't know, but because I don't feel like I have to ... er, watch out for that as much? Uh hmm, subconsciously I think that happens, where I don't have to use more Denglisch than the other students, whereas um, if I feel like I really try and blend in, if I'm by myself, then my German kind of tries to blend in as well, and it kind of gets better in that way?

Leslie realizes that she can most improve her spoken German in sustained interactions with more proficient speakers. She has also realized that concealing her Canadian identity can give her a better chance of accessing those quality interactions, for some native speakers lose interest when they know the conversation partner is a less proficient speaker. Leslie is no less Canadian in reality, but she has learned to perform a sound-appearance ("if […] I really try and blend in, […] then my German kind of tries to blend in as well") that positions her temporarily as German, even if remaining undetected for only a few sentences.

In another example, Sheldon, who took part in the immersion programme twice, conjures an especially vivid image of fitting in with the locals:

> SHELDON: Last year, I felt like I was a Canadian, but this year I learned from last year, observing so many people and like what the German people do ... I felt like the Talented Mr. Ripley trying to fit in. And when I went to clubs or anything, everyone just thought I was German, I did things, I told people [other Canadian students] not to do things, but they still did them.

Sheldon's self-comparison with a film character who conceals murder and his sexuality by impersonating his victim, suggests that learning how to put on a convincing act culturally as a German can help language learners pass in certain life situations ("I did things," "I told people [other Canadian students] not to do things") in which they would otherwise be caught out as foreigners ("they still did them")

and from which they might then become excluded. Sheldon is no less Canadian, but he has learned to use intercultural knowledge to forge a new subject position for himself in another culture.

The above two examples draw attention to the embodied and performative nature of re-positioning the self from one national or cultural identity to another. Leslie tries to embody a desired sound in order to access more advantageous speaking opportunities and Sheldon assumes a foreign guise perfected by gathering intercultural knowledge in order to extend and deepen his cross-cultural experiences. Neither loses the listening and observing Canadian underneath. In the next example, Frida puts the embodied and performative aspects of language-mediated subject positions to a different effect:

> FRIDA: It's kind of funny because when you look at yourself and think, wow, it's like I have split personalities. Not only, it's, it's not only, um, because I feel, like, being culturally aware and you know, and just taking on, so, the way people act here when … and then using that and acting as a German, like, when in Germany do as the Germans do, when in France do as the French, and so forth, um, yeah, it definitely affects your personality.

It is clear to Frida that performing ("just taking on") another language- or culture-mediated identity ("when in Germany do as the Germans do, when in France do as the French") for the purpose of learning that language can re-position and change the self ("it definitely affects your personality"). For Frida the new subject position does not conceal any prior identity. Rather, it makes room for more ("I have split personalities"):

> FRIDA: Um, but not too much. I don't think there's a complete change. […] Some mannerisms, I think, some people notice, um, the voice, for instance, sometimes I think my voice in Spanish, my voice in English is higher than my voice in Spanish, or it's the other way around … Um, and then my voice in French is also different and, um, what I have heard from friends is that my, my facial expressions sort of change. When I speak in French I guess I make more French expressions and, like facial expressions.

Frida's sense of language-mediated self is one that has developed and functions incrementally ("I don't think there's a complete change"). Again, it is by making changes to her voice ("is higher than," "is also different") and body ("my facial expressions sort of change") that she activates and signals more than one new self (Spanish, English, French). Frida is no less Canadian, but unlike the previous two participants she takes on a number of positions in ways that accumulate to something more than a surface manoeuvre or sleight of hand that facilitates the satisfac-

tion of a particular learning need or desired cultural experience. Frida's performance of various positions is the self-actualization of her sense of self as intercultural ("split personalities," "culturally aware").

Similar to Frida, Mira's recount of her experience abroad also constructs a new identity by referring to a number of positions, though with Mira these are places rather than languages:

> MIRA: In Kreuzberg it was so ... party and hip and interesting, and all the buildings are interesting and coffee's half the price it is in Potsdamer Platz, and the graffiti is not only beautiful, it's like political in nature. […] And like, you see that in Kreuzberg and you're like, "I belong in Kreuzberg". Like, walking around I was like this is where Lottie and I were like, "my people", [laughs] like ALL the hipsters on a Friday evening are sitting out now, and they're just like ... passing around beers and like […]. I honestly ... there are three things, in Canada and, in Edmonton, because that's where I was born, like I feel like that is the home I have ... but like Ireland is also a home ... it's frustrating in German that you can't pluralize home, like the home ... *Heimat*, you need to pluralize it ... and Germany for sure, I don't specifically know A city. […] and when I'm IN Germany […] I feel very much ... it's ... like part of me now.

During her stay, Mira visits the Berlin district of Kreuzberg and quickly appreciates its alternative social scene and youth culture whose appearance and behaviour she already legitimately (Wenger, 1998) shares thanks to its global nature. Her affinity for Kreuzberg, and, accordingly, for Germany, is so strong that she can talk about it only in possessive and ultimately physical-psychological terms: "I belong," "my people," "home," "*Heimat*", and "it's […] part of me." Because of Kreuzberg, Germany is added to Mira's list of countries that she calls home, which already includes Canada, her place of birth, and Ireland, the place from where her family originates. Mira recalls the word *Heimat* [German for 'home', meaning country or area, 'home town,' or 'homeland'] because she senses it might challenge her new multiple place-based identity. She believes this word cannot be pluralized and so excludes the possibility of having more than one home. This does not suit Mira since taking on Germany as a new home does not mean to her that she must relinquish Canada or Ireland. Showing that she is not prepared to let go of understanding herself through her German soul mates and the German language, her solution is to amend the German word: "you need to pluralize it." Mira would surely have been happy to learn that *die Heimat* can be pluralized as *die Heimaten*, and might have found a better linguistic fit here if she had chosen *das Zuhause* (no plural). But her word choice is deliberate and significantly marks her as an active intercultural speaker. Only *Heimat* invokes the popular, political, and literary German discourses of a specifically German homeland often to the exclusion of other cultures. Remaking herself by adding her voice to another country's debate, Mira is nonethe-

less no less Canadian as she positions herself through her SA experience as inter-culturally at home across three cultures.

4.5. More intercultural, more Canadian

The example of Frida, already introduced, goes even further. She indicates that being more intercultural in fact enhances her Canadian sense of self:

> FRIDA: Well, I still feel very Canadian. Um but I wasn't born in Canada. […] And it's always a puzzle. And they're like, "Oh, so you're not actually Canadian," and I'm like, "Actually, I am REALLY Canadian" because that's what Canada is, it's a mix of so many people from so many places. Um, so I think, um, yeah I think I'll feel more Canadian and more okay to be from so many different places in a way.
> JOHN: So learning German as a foreign language is kind of also contributing to your personal Canadian identity?
> FRIDA: I would say so.
> JOHN: It fits with who you are as a Canadian?
> FRIDA: Mhmm. So yeah, I, you know, I am very Canadian, but it doesn't mean that […] you know, this is who I am because I can adapt to other cultures and […] What I like to do is to go unnoticed in other places, not to be pinpointed as the foreigner.

Even despite the SA program ("still"), Frida positions herself as Canadian to an exceedingly high degree or quality ("very," "REALLY") even though she "wasn't born in Canada." She explains that this has been worked out ("puzzle") in Canada where she has frequently had to negotiate her identity most likely precisely because she was born elsewhere and other Canadians use her visible ethnicity to mark her as non-Canadian ("pinpointed as the foreigner"). She continues by invoking the policy of official multiculturalism ("Canada is […] a mix of so many people from so many places") not only to confirm her rightful status as a Canadian - she can be a Canadian despite being born elsewhere - but also to indicate why learning German on a SA program can further guarantee and enhance her Canadian identity ("I'll feel *more* Canadian and *more* okay to be from so many different places"). Indeed, Frida's specific South American ethnicity and heritage, childhood immigration to Canada, continued upbringing in Quebec and then British Columbia, and ability to speak Spanish, French, English, as well as other languages, position her as an ideal Canadian from the perspective of multicultur-alism. Adding German to the mix of languages and cultures in which she can operate only makes Frida regard herself as "more Canadian."

As much as Frida assumes her ideal Canadian status, she also suggests that she is tired of how her heritage and ethnicity function to uphold the story of Canadian

multiculturalism ("I like to […] go unnoticed in other places, not to be pinpointed as the foreigner"). Ironically, in Germany, where she is seen factually as a foreigner from Canada, she can use her experience of learning German to confirm herself as more intercultural and so more Canadian.

Like Frida, Marcus also regards himself as more interculturally Canadian as a result of SA and he too refers directly to official multiculturalism. However, his background motivation is quite different:

> MARCUS: Well like my whole dad's side of the family is all German. My mom's side is from England. Um so but personally I feel that I'm more German related than my than English. Um just the way that you know my thoughts, my personality, all that. So when I came here the first time three years ago I felt you know just awesome. Even here every day you know I've not had an awkward moment. […]
> JOHN: So did your dad emigrate directly from Germany?
> MARCUS: My dad didn't, his parents did. […] When they were 18 and 19.
> JOHN: Oh so he was probably born in Canada. But still that's, you still, you have a great sort of sense of your German heritage at home.
> MARCUS: Hmm-hmm oh yeah. You know with my grandparents whenever we ask, "what's cooking?" "What's for supper?" My grandma always said "Kinderfragen".
> JOHN: What region are they from in Germany?
> MARCUS: Couldn't tell you.
> JOHN: Yeah, okay. But is this trip and your previous trip as well sort of part of a kind of an identity journey for you?
> MARCUS: I think so for sure yeah.
> JOHN: Can you tell me a bit more about that?
> MARCUS: Uh, well, personally, like me personally, I enjoy my past, you know, what I've done, um, where I come from and everything so being able to learn from that and go in a little bit farther definitely helps out in finding out who you are, what you want to do in the future and such.
> JOHN: Yeah but how does it relate to being Canadian?
> MARCUS: Um, well, Canada it's like very multicultural. Um so if you go down the street and you talk to anybody, they're from all different corners of the globe. Um so for me to be able to find out who I am from my past … definitely helps out finding out who I am as Canadian or in the future or anything like that.
> JOHN: So are you saying that to be kind of more Canadian you also have to really understand more about your past, your heritage from another culture?
> MARCUS: Oh, yeah, yeah. I definitely think so. 'Cause you know if you look at the TV shows here and in the US and the perfect Canadian, it's all lumberjacks or whatever. So um I think you have to find out who you are as yourself before you can become a Canadian.

Marcus positions his Canadian sense of self in relation to his family heritage, choosing specifically to promote his father's more distinctive German background over his mother's English one. Marcus's construction of his national identity as a heritage German-Canadian relies considerably on his imagination: he is not a first-, but a second-generation Canadian; he does not know where exactly his grandparents came from; yet he, a young man from Saskatchewan, adopts their immigration story directly as his own ("where *I* come from," "who I am from *my* past"). For Marcus ("me personally"), learning German in Germany has everything to do with understanding and exploring his German heritage.

However, Marcus is not interested in his German heritage for its sake alone. He is aware that in "very multicultural" Canada the old ideal images of the Caucasian frontiersmen ("lumberjacks") have no genuine currency anymore and it is important for Canadians to demonstrate their personal diversity ("from all different corners of the globe"). The problem Marcus faces in constructing his national identity is that the symbols he has inherited from his grandparents' generation have become hackneyed and dismissed. His being second generation means if someone were to meet him on "the street" he would not be able to show that he is from another "corner of the globe"; Marcus cannot insinuate himself sufficiently into the all-important identity-forming discourse of Canadian diversity that relies specifically on Other races, Other cultures, and Other languages. Yet by experiencing Germany first-hand, Marcus is able to secure a greater sense of a/his diverse national self-identity as a German-Canadian, that is, he co-opts SA to position himself as more clearly a heritage Other and so a more authentic member of the diverse Canadian mosaic. Hence, Marcus and Frida's examples show that after SA one can feel both more intercultural and more national, albeit for different reasons.

4.6. More intercultural, another self

For Lottie, the SA experience has enabled her to discover and actualize a symbolically and emotionally/psychologically different sense of self:

> LOTTIE: I think I'm more … I think the word is *Persönlich? Ich weiss nicht* … um … I'm more personable in Germany than I am in Canada because … I don't know why, but I'll talk to people or go shopping … I'll chat with people in the *Straßenbahn*, uh … I dunno! I just LOVE being here! […] I just … feel more like me HERE than I … ever have, I think […] um … I think it is … the [German] language. I think that … in Canada, I think that when it's English, there's so many more ways just to slump around and just get through day-to-day and make it seem like I can … I can function. But here … when it's not

working, it's really not working and ... you can see it and I'm not so good at hiding when I'm really upset about something. And ... I don't know why, but the language actually helps with that […] I think that IS IT, because in Canada I do feel very much like there's something saying, "Okay, there's Lottie", aaand ... I'm almost trapped within that image [...] I'm still the same person ... always smiling, has to be ... brilliant who has to be doing ... the best and being the best ... and really I'm just trying to ... hold it together. So I'm smiling so it doesn't fall apart, whereas here ... whereas here there's no definition. No one knows that Lottie necessarily. So I can be someone ... I can be maybe who I am now, or who ... just somebody that I want to be. And that's not ... there's not that set definition of, "Oh, there's Lottie". […] I feel more like I'm being me because I get more of a chance to grow a little bit as opposed to being this tiny thing and just being trapped there.

Lottie also contrasts her sense of self "in Germany" with how she retrospectively sees herself "in Canada." While neither of these subject positions are strictly representations of national identity, they are personal self-representations aligned to particular nations and cultures, one "here," the other "there." Lottie's recount of her new German-mediated self begins with a description of herself in German: "*Persönlich? Ich weiss nicht.*" The code-switch signals and emphasizes the role of specifically the German language in the development of her new identity. She then switches back into English to state that she is "more personable in Germany." Lottie did not get a perfect match between the German word and the following English word and explanation. *Persönlich* means 'personal,' not 'personable'; but 'personable' is a rather Anglo-Saxon concept focused on the person that is difficult to translate directly into German.[8] The critical point here, however, is that, whether formally right or wrong, *persönlich* is the word Lottie has chosen and she has infused it with the signified of 'personable' in order to create a new meaningful self in and through language (two languages), much like Kramsch's (2009) symbolically competent multilingual subject.

Studying German in Germany has had a profound psychological effect on Lottie's sense of self, one that she sees as positive and is happy to embrace ("I just LOVE being here," "I [...] feel more like me"). From the perspective of the German-mediated Lottie, the Canadian Lottie ("when it's English") is more depressed ("slump," "this tiny thing") and focused on surviving ("just get through," "function," "hold it together") or pretending to ("seem like," "hiding") by putting on a brave face. This sense of self has become so familiar

---

8   The closest equivalents convey more the action: the English 'personable' lies in German somewhere between *zugänglich* [approachable] or *ansprechbar* [can be spoken to] and *kontaktfreudig* [outgoing/happy to interact].

("there's Lottie") that she cannot break free from it. By contrast, when using German in Germany and facing the challenges that poses, Lottie cannot draw on her prior identity work ("it's really not working," "I'm not so good at hiding"). This removal of her prior sense of self teaches ("actually helps") Lottie that she can be free of former limitations and invites her to construct and realize ("I can") herself anew as she pleases ("somebody that I want to be"). Not only is Lottie constituted anew by her SA experiences of learning German, but through her use of the target language she actively constitutes her new self. To an extent, Lottie's self-emancipating experience of using German in Germany resembles that of the Japanese women using English described by Piller and Takahashi (2006) and Skarin (2001). Lottie's sense of Canadian national identity might not have changed, but certainly her prior sense of self in Canada has been challenged and re-evaluated by an emergent target-language mediated intercultural self.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This chapter has investigated the identity construction of Canadian participants on a SL SA programme in Germany. It asked how SA participants present the positioning of the subject and the (re)alignment of identity in their expressions of their intercultural experiences, and how data from especially Canadian participants correspond with existing understandings of identity alignment in SA research.

   Clearly, this study supports an understanding of participant identity construction in SL SA that allows for variability and complexity in relation to nationality and interculturality. The data on Canadian SA participants analyzed here only partially reflect existing research on SL SA participants from other countries, especially the U.S.A., but they also follow a different dynamic: Canadian SA participants resignify themselves between more or less intercultural or multilingual subjectivities and prior national subject positions; their enhanced national identity might have to do with negative experiences but is more likely a response to identity misrecognition (as American) and does not necessarily imply they cannot also become more interculturally minded; if anything, several Canadians in this study exhibit a sense that being more intercultural means being more Canadian.

   These findings differ from those of previous studies possibly because of the qualitative approach and the dialogic nature of research interviews, or possibly because of the specific focus on Canadians whose national identity discourse is already dominated by interculturality or multiculturalism. Concepts of multiculturalism (where all cultures are recognized equally alongside each other within one country), official bilingualism, racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diver-

sity, hybridity, heritage, immigration, and so on, are written into the governmental, political, educational, social, economic, and cultural discourses that shape the contemporary understanding and physical environment of the nation of Canada (see Carter, Vachon, Biles, Tolley, & Zamprelli, 2006). Sociologists (Bannerji, 2000; MacKey, 2002; Sharma, 2011; Thobani, 2007) have argued that white Canadians co-opted diversity in order to manage differences within the nation, to overcome the socio- and politico-historical 'crisis in whiteness' following colonialism, and to differentiate Canadians from Americans. Yet Sumara, Davis, and Laidlaw (2001) also maintain that the vocabulary and history of "deliberate diversity" and the "essential quality of […] a lack of essential qualities" (p. 144), along with differentiation from the U.S.A., has led Canadians to understand their identity as "contextually dependent," "negotiated," and "compromised" (p. 150), that is, "not unified or seamless, but shift[ing] according to the particularity of language, geographical affiliations, and historical circumstances" (pp. 154-155), or in other words already postmodern. Recent generations of Canadians have certainly been raised consuming such official policies and discourses and so it is to be expected that they explicitly or implicitly call upon them during identity work in SA.

Indeed, my analyses show that some Canadian students might co-opt the intercultural experiences of SL SA to afford themselves greater diversity capital and so negotiate their interculturally national identity. Thus the immediate question rising from this study is whether this is unique to Canadians on SA or whether participants from other countries, especially those with formal or informal multicultural or diversity-based discourses of national identity - for example, Australia, Bulgaria, India, Latvia, contemporary South Africa, etc. - also feel more national when gaining a sense of an intercultural self on SA. Still, the Canadian participants in this study come with different lifespan histories and projections from each other, so perhaps we need closer readings of all SA participants to discover whether the variation not only in the degree but also in the kind of intercultural identity alignment in the Canadian results also applies to other groups. Certainly, this study points to the need for SA research to expand the nature of participants by origin and to adopt more qualitative and critical-analytical research frameworks (see also Block, 2007; Kinginger, 2009; Wilkinson, 1998; Willard-Holt, 2001). It encourages us to reconsider what we think we know about intercultural subject positions in relation to language acquisition, national identity, study abroad, time, and place, opening up a space for more human complexity.

References

Allen, H.W. (2010). Interactive contact as linguistic affordance during short-term study abroad: myth or reality? *Frontiers, 19*, 1-26.

Archangeli, M. (1999). Study abroad and experiential learning in Salzburg, Austria. *Foreign Language Annals, 32*, 115-124.

Bacon, S. (2002). Learning the rules: Language development and cultural adjustment during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 35,* 637-646.

Bannerji, H. (2000). *The dark side of the nation: Essays on multiculturalism, nationalism, and gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Bertocchini, P., & Costanzo, E. (1996, July). L'Europe et l'autoformation des enseignants de langues. *Français dans le monde, 282*, 62-66.

Block, D. (2007). *Second language identities*. London: Continuum.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. London: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of "sex"*. London: Routledge.

Byram, M. (1995). Intercultural competence and mobility in multinational contexts: A European view. In M. L. Tickoo (Ed.), *Language and culture in multilingual societies* (pp. 21-36). Singapore: SEAMEO.

Byram, M., Ed. (1997). *Face to face: Learning language and culture through visits and exchanges*. London: CILT.

Byram, M., & Fleming, M. (1998). Introduction. In M. Byram & M. Fleming (Eds.), *Language learning in intercultural perspective. Approaches through drama and ethnography* (pp. 1-10). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carter, T., Vachon, M., Biles, J., Tolley, E., & Zamprelli, J. (2006). Immigration and diversity in Canadian cities: Something to talk about. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 15*, i-viii.

Chieffo, L., & Griffiths, L. (2004). Large-scale assessment of student attitudes after a short-term study abroad program. *Frontiers, 10*, 165-177.

Craig, I. (2010). Anonymous sojourners: Mapping the territory of Caribbean experiences of immersion for language learning. *Frontiers, 19*, 125-149.

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 20*, 43-63.

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1999). Positioning and personhood. In R. Harré & L. Van Langenhove (Eds.), *Positioning theory* (pp. 32-52). London: Sage.

Dolby, N (2004). Encountering an American self: Study abroad and national identity. *Comparative Education Review, 48*, 150-173.

Donitsa-Schmidt, S., & Vadish, M. (2005). North American students in Israel: An evaluation of a study abroad experience. *Frontiers, 11*, 33-56.

Foucault, M. (1986). Of other spaces. *Diacritics, 16*, 22-27.

Franklin, K. (2010). Long-term career impact and professional applicability of the study abroad experience. *Frontiers, 19*, 169-190.

Hall, S. (1998). Subjects in history: Making diasporic identities. In W. Lubiano (Ed.), *The house that race built* (pp. 289-299). New York: Vintage.

Hall, S. (2000). Cultural identity and diaspora. In N. Mirzoeff (Ed.), *Diaspora and visual culture: Representing Africans and Jews* (pp. 21-33). London: Routledge.

Harré, R., & Van Langenhove, L. (1991). Varieties of positioning. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 21*, 393-407.

Isabelli-Garcia, C. (2006). Study abroad social networks, motivation and attitudes: Implications for second language acquisition. In M. A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 231-258). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Jackson, J. (2006). Ethnographic pedagogy and evaluation in short-term study abroad. In M. Byram & A. Feng (Eds.), *Living and studying abroad: Research and practice* (pp. 134-156). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Jackson, J. (2008). *Language, identity and study abroad: Sociocultural perspectives*. London: Equinox.

Jackson, J. (2009). Intercultural learning on short-term sojourns. *Intercultural Education, 20*, 59-71.

Jackson, J. (2010). *Intercultural journeys: From study to residence abroad*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Mcmillan.

Kauffmann, N.L., Martin, J.N., & Weaver, H.D. (1992). *Students abroad: Strangers at home. Education for a global society*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Kinginger, C. (2004). Alice don't live here anymore: Foreign language learning as identity (re)construction. In A. Pavlenko & A. Blackledge (Eds.), *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts* (pp. 219-242). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Kinginger, C. (2008). *Language Learning in Study Abroad: Case studies of Americans in France. Modern Language Journal* [Monograph, Volume 1. Oxford: Blackwell.]

Kinginger, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad. A critical reading of research*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kinginger, C. (2010). American students abroad: Negotiation of difference? *Language Teaching, 43*, 216-227.

Kramsch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject: What foreign language learners say about their experiences and why it matters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lenz, W., & Wister, J. (2008, May/June). Short-term abroad with long-term benefits. *International Educator* [Magazine], 84-88.

MacKey, E. (2002). *The house of difference: Cultural politics and national identity in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Marx, H., & Moss, D.M. (2011). Please mind the culture gap: Intercultural development during a teacher education study abroad program. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*, 35-47.

McGregor, J. (2012). *On community participation and identity negotiation in a study abroad context: A multiple case study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.

MLA [Modern Language Association of America Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign

Languages; Geisler, M., Kramsch, C., McGinnis, S., Patrikis, P., Pratt, M. L., Ryding, K., & Saussy, H.]. (2007). *Foreign languages and higher education: New structures for a changed world*. Retrieved from http://www.mla.org/pdf/forlang_news_pdf.pdf

Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2002). *Student mobility and narrative in Europe: The new strangers*. London: Routledge.

Pavlenko, A., & Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 155-177). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pedersen, P. J. (2009). Teaching toward an ethnorelative worldview through psychology study abroad. *Intercultural Education, 20*, 73-86.

Pellegrino Aveni, V. A. (2005). *Study abroad and second language use: Constructing the self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Piller, I., & Takahashi, K. (2006). A passion for English: Desire and the language market. In A. Pavlenko (Ed.), *Bilingual minds: Emotional experience, expression and representation* (pp. 59-83). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Pitts, M.J. (2009). Identity and the role of expectations, stress, and talk in short-term student sojourner adjustment: An application of the integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 33*, 450-462.

Plews, J.L., Breckenridge, Y., & Cambre, M.-C. (2010). Mexican English teachers' experiences of international professional development in Canada: A narrative analysis. *e-FLT, 7*, 5-20. Available at http://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/v7n12010/plews.pdf

Plews, J.L., Breckenridge, Y., Cambre, M.-C., & Martins, G. (2014). Mexican English teachers' experiences of international professional development in Canada: A narrative sequel. *e-FLT, 11*(1), 52-75. Available at http://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/v11n12014/plews.pdf

Polanyi, L. (1995). Language learning and living abroad: Stories from the field. In B.F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in study abroad contexts* (pp. 271-291). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Sercu, L. (1998). In-service teacher training and the acquisition of intercultural competence. In M. Byram & M. Fleming (Eds.), *Language learning in intercultural perspective: Approaches through drama and ethnography* (pp. 255-289). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shames, W., & Alden, P. (2005). The impact of short-term study abroad on the identity development of college students with learning disabilities and/or AD/HD. *Frontiers, 11*, 1-31.

Sharma, N. (2011). Canadian multiculturalism and its nationalisms. In M. Chazan, L. Helps, A. Stanley, & S. Thakkar (Eds.), *Home and native land: Unsettling multiculturalism: Lands, labours, bodies* (pp. 85-101). Toronto: Between the Lines Publishers.

Shively, R.L. (2011). L2 pragmatic development in study abroad: A longitudinal study of Spanish service encounters. *Journal of Pragmatics, 43*, 1818-1835.

Skarin, R. (2001). Gender, ethnicity, class, and social identity: A case study of two Japanese women in US universities. In E. Churchill & J. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: Japanese learners and contexts* (pp. 26-55). Tokyo: Temple University.

Spenader, A. J. (2008). Acquiring oral language skills over the course of a high school year abroad: What's in it for absolute beginners? In L. Ortega & H. Byrnes (Eds.), *The longitudinal study of advanced L2 capacities* (pp. 247-263). New York: Routledge

Sumara, D., Davis, B., & Laidlaw, L. (2001). Canadian identity and curriculum theory: An ecological, postmodern perspective. *Canadian Journal of Education, 26*, 144-163.

Talburt, S., & Stewart, M.A. (1999). What's the subject of study abroad? Race, gender, and "living culture." *Modern Language Journal, 83*, 163-175.

Thobani, S. (2007). *Exalted subjects: Studies in the making of race and nation in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Trent, J. (2011). Learning, teaching, and constructing identities: ESL pre-service teacher experiences during a short-term international experience programme. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 31*, 177-194.

Tusting, K., Crawshaw, R., & Callen, B. (2002). "I know, cos I was there": How residence abroad students use personal experience to legitimate cultural generalizations. *Discourse and Society, 13*, 651-672.

Twombly, S. (1995). 'Piropos' and friendships: Gender and culture clash in study abroad. *Frontiers, 1*, 1-25.

Van Langenhove, L., & Harré, R. (1993). Positioning and autobiography: Telling your life. In N. Coupland & J. F. Nussbaum (Eds.), *Discourse and lifespan identity* (pp. 81-99). London: Sage Publications.

Van Langenhove, L., & Harré, R. (1999). Introducing positioning theory. In R. Harré & L. Van Langenhove (Eds.), *Positioning theory* (pp. 14-31). London: Sage.

Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkinson, S. (1998). Study abroad from the participants' perspective: A challenge to common beliefs. *Foreign Language Annals, 31*, 23-39.

Willard-Holt, C. (2001). The impact of a short-term international experience for pre-service teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*, 505-517.

Wolcott, T. (2013). An American in Paris: Myth, desire, and subjectivity in one students' account of study abroad in France. In C. Kinginger (Ed.), *Social and cultural aspects of language learning in study abroad* (pp. 127-153). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

About the authors

Sandrine Aguerre is a Lecturer and Researcher in second language acquisition (SLA) (French as a Foreign Language) at the University of Bordeaux Montaigne, France. Her research focuses on metalinguistic processes and discourses in SLA. Her main interest is in reflective and metacognitive processes of language learners, and their impact on learning, and in how the learning environment can favour these processes.

R. Kirk Belnap is a Professor of Arabic in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages at Brigham Young University, where he has been since 1988. Since 2002, he has served as director of the National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC). His research interests include language policy and planning, second language acquisition, and the history of Arabic.

Jennifer Bown is an Associate Professor of Russian in the Department of German and Russian at Brigham Young University. She has published several articles on language learning in non-traditional environments, including individualized instruction, foreign language housing and study abroad. She is the author of two advanced-level language textbooks.

Agnès Bracke is a Lecturer and Researcher at the University of Bordeaux Montaigne, France. She is head of the section of Didactics of French as a Foreign Language in the Language Sciences Department. She holds a PhD in psycholinguistics about the acquisition of scientific concepts in a Vygotskian approach. Her current interest is in the social dimension of the task-based approach for language learning.

Rikki Campbell is currently in the final stages of her doctoral studies in the School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics at Monash University, Australia. Her doctoral thesis examines the impact of study abroad on Japanese language learners' out-of-class interaction and social networks. Her research interests include study abroad, social networks, informal interaction, Japanese language education, and computer mediated communication.

Jean-Pierre Chevrot is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Grenoble and holds a senior chair at the Institut Universitaire de France. He is interested in the relationships between linguistic knowledge and social knowledge, particularly in the L1 or L2 acquisition phase where the instability of both systems highlights the extent to which they are interdependent.

Jim Coleman is Emeritus Professor of Language Learning and Teaching at The Open University, UK. He has (co-)authored or edited fourteen books and published over a hundred articles and book chapters, principally on aspects of Applied Linguistics but also on French literature. An active campaigner for language learning, teaching and research, he was Editor-in-Chief of *System: An international journal of educational technology and applied linguistics.*

Ruxandra Comanaru has recently completed her PhD in the Department of Applied Linguistics and Communication at Birkbeck, University of London. Her doctoral project investigated the role of language attitudes and practices in the emergence of European identity in different contexts, using a mixed-method approach. She is interested in the relationship between language and identity, particularly the case of multilingual and multicultural individuals. Her research interests also include second language acquisition, bilingualism and multilingualism, bicultural identity construction and change, and cross-cultural perspectives on language learning.

Deborah (Debbie) Corder is Associate Head of the School of Language and Culture at the Auckland University of Technology. She has taught Japanese at secondary and tertiary levels but now teaches mainly intercultural competence. Her research interests include learner autonomy, ICT, intercultural competence and study abroad.

Jean-Marc Dewaele is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Multilingualism at Birkbeck, University of London. He does research on individual differences in psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, psychological and emotional aspects of second language acquisition and multilingualism. He has published over 160 papers and chapters, and a monograph *Emotions in Multiple Languages* in 2010 (2nd ed in 2013). He is Vice-President of the *International Association of Multilingualism* and former president of the *European Second Language Association.* He became General Editor of the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* in 2013.

Dan Dewey, Associate Professor of Linguistics at Brigham Young University, received a PhD in Second Language Acquisition from Carnegie Mellon University. Dr. Dewey teaches courses in linguistics, second language acquisition, language pedagogy, and language testing. He has published in numerous venues, including *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, Foreign Language Annals, Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching,* and *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad.*

Francesca Di Silvio (M.A., Georgetown University) is a Research Associate at the Center for Applied Linguistics. She works on foreign language research, pro-

gramme evaluation, and development and delivery of teacher training, and has contributed to the development of oral proficiency assessments and rater training materials in Mandarin and Modern Standard Arabic.

Anne Donovan (M.S., Georgetown University) is a Research Assistant at the Center for Applied Linguistics. In addition to researching language learning during study abroad, she provides professional development to language instructors on the topic of assessment, and works on projects related to development of and research on language tests.

Martine Faraco is Maître de conférence in linguistics and general phonetics at the Aix-Marseille University in France. She is director of the Centre d'études françaises that provides intensive French classes for foreign students. She edited the book *Regards croisés sur la classe de langue: Pratiques, méthodes et théories.* Aix: Publications de l'Université de Provence, in 2006.

Rozenn Gautier is a PhD student at the University of Grenoble. The main focus of her research is the role of social networks in the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in SLA. She focuses on American and Chinese learners of French as a second language with a special interest in the social and cultural dimensions of the study abroad context in France.

Cathy Hampton is a teaching fellow based in the French Studies section of the School of Modern Languages at Warwick University. Her research and teaching interests centre on early modern French literature and culture; language teaching and the school to university transition; the year abroad as a site of transformational and complex learning; and pedagogy in the virtual learning environment.

Sharon Harvey is an Associate Professor in the School of Language and Culture at Auckland University of Technology. Her research interests include language planning and policy, languages education and the development of intercultural competence.

Celeste Kinginger is Professor of Applied Linguistics in the College of Liberal Arts, Pennsylvania State University (USA), where she is affiliated with the Center for Language Acquisition. Her recent books include *Language Learning and Study Abroad: A Critical Reading of Research* (Palgrave /Macmillan, 2009) and an edited volume entitled *Social and Cultural Learning in Study Abroad* (John Benjamins, 2013).

Margaret E. Malone (PhD, Georgetown University) is Associate Vice President of World Languages and International Programs at the Center for Applied Linguistics and Co-Director of the Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center.

Her research foci include oral proficiency assessment, language assessment literacy, and language programme evaluation. Before joining the Center for Applied Linguistics, she was language testing specialist at Peace Corps-Worldwide.

Kevin McManus received his PhD in French linguistics and second language acquisition from Newcastle University (UK) and is currently a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Education, University of York. His research focuses on second language learning and teaching, particularly French, especially form-meaning mapping, crosslinguistic influence, and the role of context in learning.

Rosamond Mitchell is Emeritus Professor of Language in Education at the University of Southampton, Faculty of Humanities/Modern Languages. She has longstanding research interests in corpus based approaches to second language acquisition and in language education policy. She has recently directed a major study of social networking and language learning during residence abroad.

John L. Plews is Associate Professor of Modern Languages (German) at Saint Mary's University, Canada. He is co-editor of *Traditions and Transitions: Curricula for German Studies* (2013), *Interkulturelle Kompetenzen im Fremdsprachenunterricht* (2007), *German Matters in Popular Culture* (2000), and *Queering the Canon* (1998) and has published on teachers' and students' lived experiences of study abroad, second language curriculum, language teaching and learning, and German culture.

Annelies Roskvist is a senior lecturer in the School of Language and Culture at Auckland University of Technology. In the past she taught English to migrants and refugees but now teaches mainly in the school's language teacher education programmes. Her research interests include professional learning for language teachers, study abroad, and the development of intercultural competence.

Karen Stacey is a senior lecturer in the School of Language and Culture at Auckland University of Technology. Her research interests include study abroad as professional development for language teachers and the teaching of English to migrants and refugees.

Ulrich Teichler is Professor at the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel), University of Kassel, Germany, 1978-2013, and was director of the Centre for 16 years. He has more than 1,000 academic publications in areas including higher education and the world of work, international comparison of higher education systems, international cooperation and mobility, education and social selection, the academic profession, access and admission, continuing professional education, and evaluation in higher education.

Nicole Tracy-Ventura is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics in the Department of World Languages at the University of South Florida. Her research focuses on second language acquisition, study abroad, task-based language teaching, and corpus linguistics. Her work in these areas has appeared in various journals and edited collections. She received her PhD in Applied Linguistics from Northern Arizona University.

Emma Trentman is Assistant Professor of Arabic at the University of New Mexico. She holds a PhD in second language studies from Michigan State University. Her research focuses on Arabic language learning, and she has published articles on Arabic learning during study abroad as well as the acquisition of Arabic dialects.