There and Back Again: A Study of the Effects of Study Abroad on the Language Learning of Returned University Students

Thomas Bjoern Mendelovits

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Honours of Linguistics in the Faculty of Arts, the University of Melbourne

November 2007
Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Neomy Storch for her constant and consistent scrutiny of my progressing research and perfect blend of tough love and encouragement.

Thanks also to Tim McNamara for some helpful suggestions regarding possible avenues in the field of language and identity and to Carsten Röver for his feedback on the quantitative side of things and a semester of bureaucratic kindness.

This study would not have been possible without the kind support of staff of the School of Language, who provided me access to their students. My thanks to Diane de Saint-Leger, Gabrielle and Laura of French Studies, Leo Kretzenbacher and Gert Reifarth of German, Stephen Kolsky, Andrea and Gregoria of Italian, Mara Rogers of Spanish, Robert Lagerberg of Russian, Catrin Norrby of Swedish, Diane Manwaring of Chinese and Koji Payne of the Japanese Club.

Away from this thesis, all the people at the Department provided a wonderful environment for an Honours year; Nick Evans, Janet Fletcher, Rachel Nordlinger for teaching what was often a delicious distraction from thesis concerns. The Honours student cohort also made the experience that much more enjoyable. (Thanks for the title, Amos). Thanks to my pilots, Rachel and Miranda Stanyon, and for Miranda’s amazing proofing. Also, thanks to Dad for his invaluable intelligence and good-judgment in times of logical crisis and to Mum for all-round support.

Finally, a warm thank you to each of the 28 participants of this study. It was a pleasure to meet you and to hear your stories. I wish you all the best in your future as language learners and users.
# Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables..............................................................................................................5

1. Introduction.................................................................................................................................6

2. Theoretical Background.............................................................................................................7
   2.1. Research on Study Abroad.................................................................................................7
      2.1.1. History of SA research..............................................................................................7
      2.1.2. Investigating the post-SA experience.........................................................................8
   2.2. Motivation and the Social Nature of SLL..........................................................................10
      2.2.1. Process and qualitative approaches to motivation......................................................12
   2.3. Learner-Perspective Approaches to SA...........................................................................15
   2.4. Identity in SLL.....................................................................................................................17
   2.5. Research Questions.............................................................................................................18

3. Methodology.............................................................................................................................20
   3.1. Instruments..........................................................................................................................20
      3.1.1. Questionnaire.............................................................................................................20
      3.1.2. Questionnaire pilot.....................................................................................................22
      3.1.3. Focus-group interview...............................................................................................22
   3.2. Study Implementation..........................................................................................................22
   3.3. Participants..........................................................................................................................23
   3.4. Coding and Interpretation of Qualitative Data....................................................................23
      3.4.1. Proposal of ‘Returnee Profiles’..................................................................................26
   3.5. Statistical Analysis of Section III of the Questionnaire...................................................26

4. Findings.....................................................................................................................................27
   4.1. RQ1 - Motivational, Attitudinal and Behavioural Changes...............................................27
      4.1.1. ‘Increased Commitment’............................................................................................28
      4.1.2. Behavioural Changes.................................................................................................29
      4.1.3. Quantitative findings regarding the Socio-Educational model and Self-Determination Theory of motivation .................................................................30
4.2. RQ2 - Temporal effect on motivation, attitudes and behaviour since return… 32

4.3. RQ3 - Post-SA Learner-Perspectives……………………………………………………33

4.3.1. Composite of needing ongoing opportunities………………………………………33
4.3.2. Composite of class-related attitudes ……………………………………………35
4.3.3. Composite of future needs for improvement …………………………………..36
4.3.4. Composite of hindrances to improvement………………………………………37

4.4. Returnee Profiles……………………………………………………………………38

5. Discussion………………………………………………………………………………45

6. Conclusion……………………………………………………………………………51

References……………………………………………………………………………….52

Appendices…………………………………………………………………………………57

Appendix I – Instruments ………………………………………………………………57

I-A. Questionnaire………………………………………………………………………57
I-B. Focus-group interview plan…………………………………………………………65

Appendix II – Documents of administration………………………………………..68

II-A. Letter of invitation to teachers……………………………………………………68
II-B. Plain Language Statement………………………………………………………..69
II-C. Consent form for questionnaire…………………………………………………70
II-D. Consent form for focus-group interview……………………………………….71

Appendix III – Table of participants…………………………………………………72

Appendix IV – T-tests for questionnaire Section III items……………………….74
List of Figures and Tables

Figure 2.1. Dörnyei and Otto’s (1998) Action Stage process model of L2 motivation…………13

Figure 4.1. Composite of ‘Increased Commitment’ .................................................................28

Figure 4.2. Composite of Behavioural Changes.................................................................29

Figure 4.3. Temporal Effects.............................................................................................32

Figure 4.4. Composite of needing ongoing opportunities...............................................34

Figure 4.5. Composite of class-related attitudes..............................................................35

Figure 4.6. Composite of future needs for improvement.................................................36

Figure 4.7. Attitudes to progress as a result of SA.........................................................36

Figure 4.8. Composite of hindrances to improvement......................................................37

Figure 4.9. Native speaker opportunities while abroad.....................................................39

Figure 4.10. Composite of salient non-language experiences of the SA..........................40

Table 3.1. Breakdown of questionnaire Section III items for statistical analysis ...............26

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics of T-test for ‘Integrative Orientation’ .................................31

Table 4.2. T-test for ‘Integrative Orientation’ showing Significance .....................................31
1. Introduction

For many learners of a second language (L2), studying the language abroad may be the single most salient experience in their history of language learning. The experience of living abroad, possibly for the first time in one’s life- with all the inherent challenges, fun and potential for using the L2- is sure to rate highly in the minds of many language students. When investigating the importance of study abroad (SA), however, it must be asked how the experience affects the student in the long-term. This study will attempt to move towards qualifying the post-SA experience in an exploration of students’ ongoing L2 learning, including motivations and general attitudes, on return. In this way, the true value of SA, and any changes that the experience affords those who undertake it, will emerge.

Study abroad is the term used across the majority of the second language acquisition (SLA) literature to describe the programmatic study of university students abroad. In Europe, where this type of sojourn is a core aspect of any university degree course, study abroad is most often called “residence abroad”, while in the US, study abroad is most often used (Coleman 1998: 174). At the University of Melbourne, students may undertake two types of ‘study abroad’ (Melbourne Abroad website, www.mobility.unimelb.edu.au/ma_program/Ex&StudyAbr.html). On the one hand, Exchange takes the form of a structured semester- or two-semester long course at an affiliated overseas university. For language students this will invariably include classes in the L2, while for non-language students, as well as some L2 learners, classes in English in relevant disciplines are usually the main offering (cf. Melbourne Abroad website, http://www.mobility.unimelb.edu.au/whats_new.html). The second type is referred to as Study Abroad and is an overall less-structured period, ranging from a few weeks to a number of months, for which the student must arrange most details of the study themselves. Each year, and for each language department, a number of scholarships are awarded for students who wish to study their L2 at an overseas institution, either on Exchange or as Study Abroad. Study abroad is thus an encouraged, if not mandatory, aspect of foreign language education at the University of Melbourne.

This study concerns the experiences of language learners at the University of Melbourne who have returned from studying their university-chosen language abroad, either on an Exchange or Study Abroad program. It focuses on perceived changes to motivations, behaviours and attitudes as a result of study abroad, and their temporal effects, and is thus an attempt to move towards an understanding of the post-SA experience. In keeping with the literature, the term study abroad (SA) is used throughout.
2. Theoretical Background

This chapter will discuss the research traditions pertaining to this study. Firstly, a broad outline of the history of research on SA is offered. A gap concerning the post-SA experience is highlighted as providing a basis for this study. Thereafter, an investigation into relevant frameworks of learner motivation is entered into, including the need for a more qualitative approach that will account for flux and change as a result of SA. Followed is a discussion of learner-perspective research, deemed especially advantageous both to understanding the post-SA experience and a qualitative investigation of motivation. This flows into an examination of the growing importance of language identity in SLA, or SLL, research. Finally, the three research questions of this study are proposed.

2.1. Research on Study Abroad

As the number of study abroad programs on offer around the world grow on a yearly basis, so too does the related SLA literature expand (Block 2007: 146). The types of study abroad programs previously under investigation have assumed that study abroad, with its combination of formal instruction in the L2 and the potential for intercultural interaction offered by a context new to most participants, is a prime environment for linguistic gains to proficiency (Freed 1998, Churchill and DuFon 2006, Warren 2004). While there have been studies to test the absolute truth of the benefits of SA and to ask to whom and in what context benefits occur most readily (Dewey 2004, Simoes 1996), the product-oriented measuring of linguistic gains continues to be the major focus of research on SA (cf. DuFon and Churchill 2006, Byram and Feng 2006, cf. list of publications at Frontiers website, http://www.frontiersjournal.com).

2.1.1. History of SA research

The publication of the first volume of Frontiers, an interdisciplinary journal devoted to study abroad (Whalen 1995), highlights the burgeoning interest in researching study abroad. In the same year, a ‘groundbreaking’ (Block 2007) volume Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context (Freed 1995) collected a number of papers interrogating different aspects of SLA in SA. These were organised into sections on predicting, measuring and comparing gains; sociolinguistics; and diary-studies qualifying specific SA experiences. In questioning the assumption that SA leads to more ‘native-like fluency’ generally, the main findings across studies (cf. Siegal 1995, Regan 1995) indeed showed greater communicative competence of

---

1 In acknowledgment of the fact that this study is concerned not so much with ‘acquisition’ but learning and use, SLL is used instead of the traditional SLA (cf. Block 2007). At risk of confusion, where the research tradition is concerned, SLA is used.
those who went abroad - both sociolinguistically and pragmatically. Apart from linguistic proficiency, the diary-studies explored learner beliefs (cf. Brecht and Robinson 1995, Polanyi 1995). A particularly interesting finding was that SA leads to changes in ‘folklinguistic theories’ that potentially debase the potential for increased competence as a result of negative views of instructed learning leading to avoidance of class, at the same time that a distrust of colloquial language shaped interactions with native speakers (NSs) (Miller and Ginsberg 1995). The focus here on how learner attitudes shape behaviour reflects an early attempt at qualifying the SA experience from the students’ perspective.

Over a decade later, the continuing tradition toward measuring intercultural aspects of SA and sociolinguistic gains is reflected in two volumes (cf. Byram and Feng 2006, DuFon and Churchill 2006, also see Warren (2004) on Melbourne University students in New Caledonia). Studies included in Byram and Feng (2006) again treat SA as an experience offering significant potential for changes to aspects of learner’s cultural knowledge, and cover a range of contexts such as Japanese learners of English in England (Ayano 2006), Chinese mainland students in Hong Kong (Lam 2006), and settings including post-graduate teacher education programs (Alred and Byram 2006). Studies in DuFon and Churchill (2006) trace the learning of sociolinguistic norms of Indonesian students (DuFon 2006) and include a number of papers on pragmatic aspects of learning in Japan (Iino 2006, McMeekin 2006).

2.1.2. Investigating the post-SA experience

The experience of returned students, and the lasting effect of SA, has received a relative paucity of focus in the literature. Exceptions are found in a number of papers by James Coleman and associates (Coleman et al 1994, Coleman 1996), which sought to document the readjustment process on return from SA. Major findings were that that language learning significantly slowed down on return from SA (Coleman et al 1994), and that competence is highest on return, but then falls away quickly (Coleman 1996, Raffaldini 1987). The non-linguistic effects of SA may be just as salient on return, as was found in Bicknese’s (1974) study on U.S. college students 10 months after return from study abroad in Germany. Students noted changes to their perceptions of self, culture and value systems. Similarly, Laubscher (1994) found that students felt more independent, self-reliant and confident in their abilities as a result of SA.

More recently, two longitudinal studies in intercultural education (Ehrenreich 2006, and Alred and Byram 2006) tackle the lasting importance of SA head-on. Ehrenreich (2006) interrogated the assumed ‘quasi-automatic’ nature of the benefits of SA with an aim to explore
the students’ (German assistant teachers who spend a year in Anglophone countries as part of their educational training) perceptions on the impact of the time abroad in four domains: personal, professional, linguistic and cultural. Retrospective interviews were used successfully and the data were coded into the pre-given categories, with labels attached in keeping with the subject-centred approach. Thus, personal learning, professional learning, linguistic development, (inter)cultural experiences and a further category of changes to ‘relevance system’ were given. Pre-SA, the teachers-in-training classified language and culture as the most important motivations for going to anglophone countries, while on return the most commonly noted impact was in the personal category. Ehrenreich notes that it was difficult to assess the general impact of SA, again because of too many internal and external variables. Thus, some participants noted that the experience had had a major impact in personal and professional lives, but at other times eschewed a long-term relevance to the SA; perceiving it to have faded into a past episode with no trace in current life. This finding supports the retrospective methodology and has the important implication that perceptions of the experience are never divorced from the current context (Ehrenreich 2006: 208). The robustness of the study rested on the ability of participants to recall even up to a few years back, which shows the intersection of time elapsed and the perceived long-term impact of the experience (Ehrenreich 2006: 202). Ultimately, the lack of consistent variables did not matter as the data was subject-centred and contextualised.

Another retrospective study (Alred and Byram 2006) looks at the more long-term effects of SA on British students in France. The participants were again assistant teachers, interviewed directly after SA and again ten years later to assess the ongoing importance placed on their SA experience. Like in Ehrenreich (2006), the individual differences were almost too great to draw any general findings, except that the ‘year abroad’ became a lens by which participants viewed future developments in their lives (Alred and Byram 2006: 230). Some considered the experience crucial in defining who they became as people (e.g. in fostering a love of travel) and professionally (e.g. in reinforcing a love of their work as teachers), while others remember the SA negatively (e.g. realising they don’t like teaching). The authors note, however, that this could have been because they were forced to reflect on a period a decade ago. Again and crucially though, the importance of the study is that even while the participants were all at different stages in their post-SA life, the retrospective aspect of the methodology highlights the importance of studying the effects of a period as potentially salient as SA, and how this can become a ‘lens’ for viewing future life developments. A similar approach to viewing changes to attitudes as a result of SA will serve in the exploration of the post-SA experience in this study.
2.2. Motivation and the Social Nature of SLL

For many, SA is an inherently exciting, and potentially destabilising, experience and thus it would be expected that changes to affective aspects of the L2 learner (such as motivation) would figure prominently in defining the importance of the experience. Motivation, a stalwart of the SLA tradition, has surprisingly escaped much focus in the SA literature. In the post-SA context the gap is markedly stark.

Motivation to learn an L2 has been isolated as one of the ‘big two’ individual factors in determining long-term success, the other being aptitude (Ellis 2004: 536, Skehan 1989). The inherently social aspect to learning a second language is theorised by the Socio-Educational (S-E), or social-psychological, model of motivation coming out of Canada (Lambert and Gardner 1972, Clement 1980, Gardner 1985), which has been vital in showing that, amongst other variables, success is related to the learner’s attitude toward the target-language (TL) community (Dörnyei 1994: 519). While this line of research is tied to the multicultural context of Canada (Williams and Burden 1997: 117), it perfectly suits charting changes to motivation afforded by the new cultural context of SA.

The assumption behind the S-E model of motivation is the distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations, which together with motivational intensity, make up a learner’s motivational profile. The variable ‘Integrativeness’ can be seen as ‘a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community’ (Gardner 2001: 5), subject to the fact that learning a foreign language requires acquisition of cultural and behavioural aspects of that community (Gardner 1985). Thus, ‘attitudes’ to the TL culture are key to this form of motivation. On the other hand, an instrumental orientation relates to learning the L2 in order to gain external rewards, such as in furthering career prospects or to gain study credit, etc. ‘Motivational Intensity’, sometimes simply termed ‘Motivation’ (Gardner 2001) consists of effort, desire and positive affect and distinguishes differing levels of motivation, the most motivation occurring when all three are present in high levels. While an integrative orientation has in most cases been linked to long-term success, the intersection of different aspects of the motivational profile in predicting success has been an object of much study (Ellis 2004: 537).

The typical instrument used to gauge a learner’s motivational profile is the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (cf. Gardner, Tremblay and Masgoret 1997), a questionnaire made up of scales testing the constructs ‘Integrativeness’ (containing scales on
Integrative Orientation, Interest in Foreign Languages, Attitudes toward French Canadians, etc), ‘Instrumental Orientation’ (gauging the importance of career, education, etc. to L2 learning) as well as other variables such as Motivation, Language Anxiety and in some studies (cf. MacIntyre et al 2001), Willingness to Communicate; this is isolated as correlating with an integrative orientation in predicting achievement and is relevant to the SA context. The popularity of the AMTB is reflected by a number of studies that have sought to extend its applicability to other motivational frameworks, such as Self-Determination Theory (Noels 2001, Noels et al 2003) and Action Control Theory (MacIntyre, MacMaster and Baker 2001), which have typically been in a relationship of mutual exclusivity (Gardner and Tremblay 1994). Self-Determination Theory (cf. Deci and Ryan 1985) provides an alternate categorisation of motivational orientation as situated along a continuum of autonomy from more self-determined (intrinsic) to less self-determined (extrinsic) types. Those who are more intrinsically motivated engage in an activity due to the inherent pleasure involved, while extrinsic motivation relates to processes external to the learner’s self-concept (cf. Noels 2001). In examining the relationship between Self-Determination Theory and the Socio-Educational model, studies (Noels 2001, Noels et al 2003) have shown that there may be a relationship between the intrinsic and integrative and extrinsic and instrumental orientations and thus that feelings of autonomy in learning may be related to positive feelings towards the TL culture (i.e. Integrativeness). A further formulation, Action Control Theory (cf. Heckhausen and Kuhl 1985, Kuhl 1994), examines the link between behaviour and attitudes, with an action control mechanism posited as a process mediating intentions and ultimately determining action. A study (MacIntyre, MacMaster and Baker 2001) investigating the relationship between the Socio-Educational model and Action Control theory found a distinct difference between ‘Actional’ and ‘Attitudinal Motivation’, that is that positive attitudes toward the TL culture do not necessarily implicate more action, as the socio-education model would have it. These attempts at integrating various models of motivation reflect a perceived need in the SLA field for a more inclusive formulation of motivation and may be of use in analysing findings generated by a broad-based qualitative approach to motivation as employed in this study. The background to this approach is outlined following a summary of the engagement of SA research with motivation.

The socio-educational formulation of motivation suits research on SA well, in that attitudes toward the TL culture would be expected to change as a result of being, perhaps for the first time, firmly ensconced within that context. Some early studies (Clement 1978, Gardner et al 1978, Hanna et al 1980) found that studying abroad did play a positive role not just on proficiency but also on motivation. Some more recent studies have further attested to the motivational benefits of SA (Yashima 1999, Yashima et al 2004, Allen 2002, Hoffman-Hicks
2000). However, it was also shown (Allen 2002) that for students with integrative motivation at the outset of the SA program, negative experiences abroad could frustrate their desires and make them lose motivational disposition to the TL-culture towards the end of SA. Furthermore, it was also found (Hoffman-Hicks 2000) that perceived levels of competence and success, more than anything else, could affect motivation and that as long as this was fostered they would continue to feel positive about their SA experience. These studies ultimately seek to predict linguistic gains in linking orientations with learning outcomes. The applicability and importance of these findings to this study are thus rather limited in light of the need to explore changes to motivation on return and how this will impact on future learning, and not just on immediate learning outcomes.

2.2.1. Process and qualitative approaches to motivation

To attempt to reduce [students’] orientation, attitude and motivation to a single scale is clearly distortion… simpler models of motivational and attitudinal effects on language learning… remain the bare skeleton, unlikely to account for the complexity of language practices and ideology. (Spolsky 2000: 165)

A number of aspects of the Socio-Educational model have been critiqued; the main criticism of relevance here is the static nature of the dichotomous opposition of the integrative and instrumental motivation subtypes, presented as they are as stable traits of learners (Ellis 2004, Dörnyei 2001). In reality, language learning is a dynamic and changing process (Ushioda 1996), and especially in regards to the SA context, an research approach accounting for motivational flux seems all the more appropriate. A key challenge for motivation theories is therefore to account for changes in time, but hardly any research has been done on ‘typical trends of change or developmental aspects’ (Dörnyei 2001: 82). The major such attempt is Dörnyei and Otto’s (1998) model based on a ‘sequence of discrete actional events within the chain of initiating and enacting motivated behaviour’, which builds on Action Control Theory as outlined above. Three stages are outlined: the preactional stage (including ‘choice motivation’ preceding action); the actional stage (‘executive motivation’ energising action) and the postactional stage (involving critical retrospection after action is completed/terminated). This model is at the same time too detailed and too rigid and over-simplifies the learning experience in positing either achievement or failure. However, the model may have some interesting reflections in relation to the post-SA experience, with its cyclical conception that for new intentions and goals to be formed the original intention and goal has to be either amended, or dismissed. In this study, it may prove interesting how the students view the goal of language learning on return from SA (which of itself provides a goal to studying a language at university) and plan for the future.
Figure 2.1. Dörnyei and Otto’s (1998: 48) Action Stage process model of L2 motivation.
While pre-/post-testing using the AMTB may uncover some interesting findings regarding change (which then could fit into a model such as the Action Stage schema presented above), a methodology incorporating both quantitative as well as a qualitative approach based on learner-perspectives (cf. Dornyei and Schmidt 2001, Gardner and MacIntyre 1992) is much better suited to exploring the experience of returned students’ motivation. Noting the ‘trap in much social-psychological research which smugly reports correlations and patterns in the answers to questionnaires’, Spolsky (2000: 160) relates a conversation that took place with the renowned motivation researcher Wallace Lambert in 1968 during which Lambert told him that “the best way to learn about someone’s integrative motivation [is] probably to sit quietly and chat with him over a bottle of wine for an evening”. It thus almost seems that the entire psychometric history of motivational testing was but a methodological convenience. The work of Ema Ushioda (1996, 2001) represents the most concerted attempt at charting qualitative motivational developments across time and in regards to how students perceive them.

In a survey of 20 Irish University-level French learners, Ushioda (1996) opted for introspective and open-ended interviews to uncover patterns of motivational change. The main findings contrast with the questionnaire-based studies into growth or loss of motivation; instead patterns of qualitative change to motivation were proposed. These were related to changing contexts of learning such as having studied in France, a lack of motivation around exam times, and long-term L2 goal changes as well as motivational stability (e.g. an unchanging ‘intrinsic’ love of French). Ushioda thus concludes that motivational change can occur as a result of L2-external factors in individual’s biographies, and as such provides stark evidence that SLL should not be treated in isolation, but rather together with considerations of the learner’s general personal experience.

A further study (Ushioda 2001) continued this line of investigation with regards to four distinct categories drawn from the earlier study (Ushioda 1996): ‘motivational evolution over time’, ‘motivational perspectives on L2 development over time’, ‘factors negatively affecting L2 motivation’, and ‘motivational strategies’. Data from interviews were coded into eight most-occurring motivational features (including ‘academic interest’, ‘desired levels of L2 competence’, ‘personal goals’, ‘feelings about French-speaking countries or people’ etc) and a ‘motivational profile’ of most to least salient features was constructed for each participant. Again, it was found that motivation is by its nature a dynamic process and not simply the ‘cause or product of certain learning experiences’ or success in learning. Ongoing flux should be taken as an analytic category and it is equally important to note that how students perceive and react to the idea of motivation itself will shape future behaviours. This echoes the notion that the
retrospective nature of surveys on return from SA can function as a benchmark to perception, crystallising expectations and readjustments at a certain moment in time (cf. Ehrenreich 2006). A joint qualitative and quantitative approach to motivation is employed in this study, which seeks to address the gap in the SA research concerning changes to motivation. Let us now see how the SA literature has engaged the benefits of learner-perspective research.

2.3. Learner-Perspective Approaches to SA

An integral aspect of the SA literature is the recognition of the complexity of defining both the SA and individual variables, and the risk of generalising these (Huebner 1998, Byram and Feng 2006). As such little meta-analysis has been done on the global benefits of SA or variables predictive to success, and the qualification of specific contexts remains of key interest (Churchill and DuFon 2006). This reflects a trend in the SLA literature (cf. Collentine and Freed 2004) toward qualifying the context of learning as a key area of investigation - whether it is the classroom, SA, or, in this case, the post-SA context.

Studies exploring student’s views of the SA experience can be seen as running alongside the product-oriented approaches; as an attempt to understand the inherently complex context of SA and the idea that such an understanding will inform ultimate learning as well as personal outcomes. As noted above, the last section of Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context (cf. Freed 1995) was dedicated to ‘diary-studies’ and in the first volume of interdisciplinary SA journal Frontiers (cf. Freed 1998) to be expressly dedicated to SLL, two papers (Wilkinson 1998, Pellegrino 1998) mark a shift toward this contextualised research in seeking to describe salient aspects of the time abroad in the students’ own terms and how these beliefs may affect their learning experience while abroad. Pellegrino (1998) proposes her qualitative, explorative study as an antidote to the predominating product-oriented research, noting that, while quantitative studies may attest to gains in certain aspects of proficiency while on SA, they cannot attest to personal growth, students perceptions of the benefits of SA, or its impact on the learner. Her findings, which report the importance placed on interaction with NSs, the derogation of formal instruction and the contrasts between different host-countries, reflect an important approach to researching SA, namely that, as an inherently new and social experience, uncovering students’ perspectives is vital in understanding patterns of L2 learning and use and in seeking definition of the overall SA experience. Furthermore, as Pellegrino (1998: 110) notes, this approach allows for an understanding of changing behaviours and attitudes, vital to the post-SA experience relevant to this study.
Other early perception-based studies found, among other concerns, links between gendered experiences and language gains (Polanyi 1995), the differing importance placed on the role of formal instruction while abroad (Brecht and Robinson 1995) and perceptions of motivational change (Ushioda 1996). More recently, the continuing tradition is exemplified by studies on processes of self-construction while abroad (Pellegrino 2005), and on intercultural learning (Jackson 2005). A case-study (Isabelli-Garcia 2006) of four American learners of Spanish studying abroad in Buenos Aires provides a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between lived experiences abroad, motivations and attitudes. While the study ultimately sought to classify these variables in their impact on oral proficiency gains, the employment of qualitative techniques such as interviews and journals attests to the usefulness of a contextually situated analysis in the SA’s potentially tumultuous environment and how a number of variables relating to personality and expectations can interact. Although all students’ oral proficiency improved, again, individual variation proved dramatic and the SA experience itself had very different effects. Those with higher levels of overall motivation had better attitudes towards Argentine culture and developed better social networks. The two participants whose attitudes changed from positive/neutral to negative did not acculturate or form good social networks, which lead to decreases in motivation. Thus, ‘personality’ (a term given to describe cultural attitudes as well as relative ability to cope and acculturate) and perceptions of the SA experience can prove crucial in defining changes over time, even if language gains are a given. Isabelli-Garcia (2006: 255) concludes that the ‘holy grail’ of interaction with NSs (cf. Pellegrino 1998, Kinginger 2004), and the creation of social networks while abroad, works as a ‘conduit between motivation and language acquisition in the SA context’. This study is unique in its application of the kind of learner-perspective approach useful in the SA context to an investigation of motivation, albeit in examining motivational loss and gain (Ushioda 2001).

The exploratory approach to data collection thus outlined—by its nature qualitative and often employing interviews—overcomes the obstacles caused by the inherently variant properties of both individual SA experiences and the individual L2 learner themselves and thus provides a context for the interpretation of findings. Furthermore, the nuanced perspectives gained are best suited to uncovering potentially fluctuating attitudes as a result of the potentially tumultuous period abroad. Ultimately, the validity of such an approach lies not in the objective reality of the perceptions, but rather because these perceptions will ultimately influence the students’ actions (Pellegrino 1998, Miller and Ginsberg 1995). Such an exploratory approach will be employed in uncovering post-SA perspectives, and motivations, of students in this study. The next section
briefly discusses the growing importance of considerations of language identity, which itself is built on the same kind of learner-perspective methodologies (cf. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004).

2.4. Identity in SLL

To learn a second language is to take on a new identity

(Guiora et al 1972: 422)

The social nature of L2 learning has an associated facet- that of identity- that has only recently begun to receive scrutiny in SLL research (Block 2007, Kinginger 2004: 220). If, as the Socio-Educational model has it, learning a second language ‘involves the acquisition of skills and behaviour patterns which are characteristic of another community’ (Gardner 1985: 146), then obviously this will have implications for the identity of the SA learner as they renegotiate their ‘subject position’ (cf. Bhabha 1994, Block 2007) in the new context abroad, as well as on return, where the learner has undergone a potentially salient experience in their life histories. More than any other angle on SLL, the focus on identity requires a complete adherence to the ‘subject’, supported by a learner-perspective approach. Such perspectives, often based on first-person narratives, are gaining increasing attention in the literature despite a backlash against a perceived lack of empiricism (cf. Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000).

In a recent volume charting the history of SLL’s engagement with identity, Block (2007) covers the potential for ‘TL-mediated subject positions’ that come as a result of a series of specific SLL contexts, such as SA. Synthesising elements of the SA research tradition which relate to his focus on identity, he notes that SA students learn not only about the content of their course but also about education and socialising processes in the new context (Block 2007: 7). In the American context, Block (2007) cites a number of studies (Polanyi 1995, Talburt and Stewart 1999, Kinginger and Farrell Whitworth 2005, Pellegrino 2005) that reflect frustrations felt by SA students at not being able to develop new positions or ‘fit into’ the local culture. A notional ‘discomfort zone’ is proposed as defining many students’ time abroad, with critical experiences pushing them away and not toward the TL culture, resulting in increased national identity and the predominance of the subject position of ‘the American abroad’. In contrast, on the other side of the Atlantic, Block observes an ‘embryonic European identity’ and the potential for more TL-mediated subject positions (Block 2007: 177), which may result due to more previous travel and a desire to travel, an enjoyment of using the TL and meeting people from other countries. These differing national perspectives may figure when discussing the Melbourne University context of this study and any effects of SA on identity.
The notion of ‘investment’ in an L2 has been proposed by Norton (Norton Peirce 1995, 2000) as an alternative to the static and reductive Socio-Educational motivation framework, and of fully incorporating the importance of changing learner identities into the L2 learning context. Like many studies based on social-constructivism, investment sees identity as not an inherent aspect of a person’s self, but constituted by that person in interaction (cf. Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000: 171). Noting the economic sound of the term, Norton (2000) makes sure to distinguish it from the instrumental, and integrative, orientations:

The notion [of investment] presupposes that when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are constantly organising and reorganising a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Thus an investment in the target language is also an investment in learner’s own identity [italics added], an identity which is constantly changing across time and space. (Norton 2000: 10-11)

Like in Norton (1995, 2000), many studies of identity have taken inequitable power relations and social justice as their framework (cf. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). A particularly pertinent example is the longitudinal study of Alice (Kinginger 2004), a French learner who overcame significant personal and external obstacles, both at home and during a two-year SA, before she was at a stage where she was satisfied with her learner identity. While the power relations associated with language may not be implicated in the experience of returned SA students, the very different supposition offered by ‘investment’ may help to qualify the post-SA experiences of participants in this study. Such a formulation seeks to go beyond a formulation of motivation as internal to language learners and sees the social arena as a prime factor in determining potential for ongoing use and learning

2.5. Research Questions

The three research questions of this study seek to address the gap in the study abroad literature concerning a qualification of the post-SA experience. They reflect a need for an exploratory approach to L2 motivation based on learner-perspectives, which thus allow for an understanding of potential changes as a result of both the SA and of the experience of being back. The terms ‘motivation’, ‘attitude’, and ‘behaviour’ are all used freely, as ways of eliciting learners’ perspectives on the phenomena under investigation (cf. Norton 2000: 21, Ushioda 1996). The third research question is an attempt at a broad description of how learners perceive the post-SA experience.
RQ1: Are there any changes to students’ language learning motivation (including attitudes and behaviours) on return from study abroad?

RQ2: Is there a temporal effect on motivation (including attitudes and behaviours) after return?

RQ3: Does the study abroad experience define in a similar way learners’ perspectives on language learning on return?
3. Methodology

This chapter will first describe the dual instruments used in this study including their different aims and structures. The administration of the instruments and the participants recruited for the study will then be discussed and finally a description of the methods of coding and analysing both the qualitative and the quantitative data will be offered.

3.1. Instruments

A multi-method approach (cf. Huberman and Miles 2002) employing two tools was employed in keeping with the oft-noted lack of depth inherent in purely questionnaire-based research (Brown 2001, Gillham 2000), and reflected in the field of motivational research (cf. Dornyei and Schmidt 2001, Ushioda 1996, Ushioda 2001, Spolsky 2000). Such an approach is also favoured in the SA literature (cf. Freed 1998). The first instrument was a questionnaire taking around 15 minutes, the second an additional focus-group interview lasting approximately 45 minutes.

Because of the perceived gap in the literature concerning the experiences of students returning from study abroad, a generally exploratory approach was taken to both stages of data collection. As such, a number of variables were initially collected in the questionnaire (cf. Huebner 1998), which were ultimately eschewed in favour of further lines of inquiry to be covered in the interviews.

3.1.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was composed of three sections. The full document can be found in Appendix I-A.

Section I – Biographical and Background Information

This section contained 11 items covering the biographical profile of the respondent as well as general information on the SA, type of SA program, and items asking how many language subjects the respondent has taken since return and the current status of their enrolment. The breadth of fields was chosen to aid in the uncovering of potential variables for analysis.

Section II - Exploring the SA and post-SA experience
This section was designed to provide the basis for qualitative analysis of trends and to lead toward the formulation of questions for the focus-group interviews. Items a) to e) provide information qualifying the SA experience and included: reasons for deciding to study abroad, opportunities for and perceptions of native speaker interaction, prominent non-language aspects of the SA. These may be identified as variables in post-SA perspectives on motivations and attitudes, in keeping with the aims of RQ3 to see whether the ‘SA experience defines in a similar way learners’ perspectives on language learning on return’. Item f) (changes to motivation and interest due to SA and changes to motivation and interest over time since return) relates to the aims of RQ1 and RQ2- to uncover trends of how students perceive changes, and the temporal nature of these changes after return. The final item, g) (perceived help and hindrances to progress since return) especially served to elicit learner perspectives on the post-SA experience in answer to RQ3, and echoes the qualitative exploration of ongoing motivation sought in this study.

**Section III - Likert Scales gauging ‘Before’ and ‘After’ Motivation and Orientations**

As noted in the review of literature in the previous chapter, the aims of this study relate to the Socio-Educational motivation framework in its concern with the social aspect of L2 learning, sympathetic to researching SA. The results from this section thus answer RQ1 as a way of gauging changes to aspects highlighted in the Socio-Educational (S-E) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) traditions and, in answering RQ3, to see if these changes were evidenced across the participants. Items were included from both traditions to investigate changes to attitudes toward the TL-culture, dependent variables (such as Anxiety and Willingness To Communicate), motivational intensity, and whether SA affects intrinsic/extrinsic motivation types. Instrumental Orientation and Extrinsic motivation were treated as a single entity in item formulation as they both relate to external reward-based reasons for learning a L2, and have been found to be similar constructs in the literature (see discussion of Noels et al 2000 in 1.2 above).

15 of the 17 items were presented with a ‘Before’ and ‘After’ scale, encouraging respondents to ponder how their SA experience has affected the construct in question (see Table 3.1 in section 3.5 for a breakdown of the coding). This method echoes the retrospective gauging of aspects of experiences with long-term salience as described above (see Ehrenreich 2006 and Alred and Byram 2006 in section 2.1.2). The items used were drawn directly from the commonly used AMTB of Tremblay, Masgoret and Gardner (1997), and for the Willingness to Communicate items, MacIntyre et al (2001).
3.1.2. Questionnaire Pilot

Before administration, the questionnaire was piloted on two students who had been on high-school exchanges, and were therefore ineligible for this study. Thereafter, a number of questions were cut to shorten the duration of the questionnaire, and wording revised in order to clarify certain items.

3.1.3. Focus-Group Interview

The main aim of the focus-group interviews (see Appendix I-B for the full question plan) was to narrow the focus on post-SA experiences. Interviews were semi-structured and a question plan was designed to allow students to describe their learning since return and any changes to behaviours as a result of SA, and over time since returning to the Melbourne University context. In finding a fairly bare characterisation of motivation in the questionnaires, the interview sought to tease out learners’ views of motivation as well as changes over time. In exploring perceptions on the post-SA experience (RQ3), questions were asked concerning potential for progress on return and views on classes and the learning context.

Furthermore, the interviews allowed participants to elaborate on ideas noted by them in the questionnaire responses (brought up by the interviewer) as well as collecting more in-depth information concerning trends noted by the researcher in analysing the questionnaires. Huberman and Miles (2002: 15-16) propose that this ‘overlap of data collection with data analysis’ allows not just a head start in finding what is needed, but also suits the exploratory (if not ‘theory-building’) goals of the research, where individual cases are just as important as broad trends across the data. Thus, the fact that the interview was an optional addition to the questionnaire (and that therefore data on some individuals would be fuller for some) was overcome by the quality of this data in highlighting individual cases of change as per RQ1 and RQ2. The nature of the interviews also best suited the aims of RQ2 in uncovering the complex and nuanced nature of changes over time since return. In addition, the interviews allowed a perception of trends across participants (for RQ3), which were often palpably clear in comparison to the static nature of much questionnaire data.

3.2. Study Implementation

In order to gain access to potential participants, staff representing individual language departments were contacted, asking for permission for the researcher to come in at the end of
class to administer a questionnaire and ask for further participation in a focus-group interview (the letter of invitation, Plain Language Statement and Consent Forms are given in Appendix II). Alternate methods of recruitment were also used, such as group emails, advertisements and through personal contacts. Once language teaching-staff permission was granted, and ethics approval gained from the University’s Human Resource Ethics Committee, data collection commenced and over a period of three weeks 28 questionnaires were received. Those who were willing and able to participate in the additional focus-group interview were invited to provide contact details. 18 of the 28 students consented to interviews, with 14 eventually making it to a session. Six interviews took place at the University (composed of three groups of three, two groups of two and one individual interview). All interviews were audio-recorded.

3.3. Participants

Of the 28 participants (16 female, 12 male), five languages were represented including 10 German learners, 6 French learners, 6 Spanish learners, 3 Italian learners, and 3 Japanese learners. The vast majority’s first language background was English. Of those interviewed the majority were learners of German (n=6) and French (n=5), plus 2 of Spanish and 1 of Italian. The recruitment method meant that the vast majority (n=19) of students were still enrolled in language subjects, including 2 students currently enrolled in an Honours program in their language department. A number (5) had finished their language studies during SA, and thus took no courses on return, and a lesser amount (3) had since finished. One student noted he had quit his course after returning from SA. Of the 22 who were enrolled in language subjects on return, the majority have taken one or two subjects (13), with lesser amounts taking more subjects. Three groups were composed by time since return; 1-3 months (n=6), 4-11 months (n=13), and 12+ months (n=9). Of the last group, 5 students had been back for 18 or more months at the time of data collection. Unfortunately for uncovering temporal changes, only two of these students were interviewed.

A full breakdown of participants by id code, pseudonym, L2, length in months since return, language subjects taken since return and language enrolment status is offered in Table 1 in Appendix III.

3.4. Coding and Interpretation of Qualitative Data

The nature of qualitative data is inherently ‘unstructured and unwieldy’ and thus requires careful deliberation when generalisations are to be made about underlying content and the value thereof.
(Huberman and Miles 2002, cf. also Gillham 2000). In the interpretation and coding of both questionnaire and interview responses, both the research questions and the most salient features being ‘generated’ (Huberman and Miles 2002: 310) by the participants guided the analysis. This follows the approaches to the post-SA context of Ehrenreich (2006) and Alred and Byram (2006) as well as the motivation research of Ushioda (1996, 2001). Huberman and Miles (2002) five-step ‘Framework’ methodology was useful in deciding the best procedure to follow in deriving categories and trends from the data. The five-steps, with the research process illustrated, were employed as follows:

1) **Familiarization** – firstly, the data was compiled; from questionnaires and from transcribed interviews. Throughout, notes were made on recurrent themes and salient ideas. Certain individually interesting statements were noted.

2) **Identifying a thematic framework** - the data was read through and notes generated from step 1), and any new ideas, were transformed into a list of broad headings for data organisation. These included ‘Changes to Attitudes, Behaviours, Motivation’, etc. The potential for individual responses to be related to two such headings was noted, and returned to before step 4) **Charting** (see below). At this stage, data from questionnaires and interviews were kept separate.

3) A) **Indexing** – at this stage, sentence by sentence each response in each questionnaire and interview for each participant was listed under the list of headings created in step 2). Next to the response, the participant id was entered. At the end of this stage, all the data was entered according to the most broadly possible expressed criterion and only where extremely similar wording was used were two respondents placed next to one response. However, certain trends were beginning to be perceived across the respondents. Data from the questionnaires and interviews remained separate and the respondent’s own words were kept. At this stage, around 70 categories were listed for questionnaire data, and 50 for interview data. **Illustration:** The example of Rose (id15) will show how responses were placed under relevant headings. In response to Section II e) **(Thinking now about returning to Australia, how would you describe the overall language progress you made during study abroad?)** Rose wrote: “it was only a month, but I became more confident in my spoken French and got to experience the culture attached to the language”. For this item, responses were divided into Positive, Negative and Ambivalent Progress. Rose’s response was placed in the Positive category due to the impression it leaves regarding oral proficiency improvements. The mention of ‘[experiencing] the culture’, not related to linguistic progress per se, was placed under the heading ‘Non-
Language Experiences of SA’ and the response regarding ‘confidence’ was placed under the broad ‘Changes to Motivation’ heading.

3) B) Developing a thematic framework – an extra stage to the ‘Framework’ model was inserted at this point. The list of responses was compared and contrasted and similarly worded responses were collapsed into single ‘Categories’, reflecting similar ideas. At risk of over-reduction, a range of different wordings was kept in formulating these Categories of trends. When this was done, a range of the respondents’ own wording was kept, reflected by the use of ‘/’ between similar wording and ‘…’ between similar ideas (e.g. ‘increased learning of/engaging with culture/politics’, ‘lack of exposure/materials… have to look elsewhere’). On deciding on whether to create one Category for two or more potentially different ideas, the degree of overlap between respondents’ was noted. Thus, where five participants noted both ‘cultural’ and ‘extracurricular’ activities as necessary for progress, these Categories were kept separate. Alternatively, regarding questions on ‘changes to motivation’ only three participants responded with seeking out both ‘more cultural’ and ‘more extracurricular’ activities and thus these Categories were collapsed. At this stage, the lists of categories from questionnaires and interviews were compared and, where appropriate, collapsed. To make sure frequencies were never misrepresented, individuals’ responses were again checked across both data sources and where two comments were made by one individual relating to one Category this was entered only once. Thus, for each Category the participant id was entered and the number of participants who responded accordingly could be counted; this giving an overall view of the salience of each Category. At this stage, the number of Categories had been collapsed to 40 for both data sources.

4) Charting – the list of Categories were re-arranged according to the headings, this time with the research questions firmly in mind. These collections of Categories represent ‘Composites’ of trends across the data (e.g. Attitude Changes, Behavioural Changes, Temporal Changes, Post-SA Perspectives). In the case of Post-SA Perspectives, further Composites were constructed as made up of related Categories of responses (e.g. ‘Composite of class-related issues’ included the Categories ‘don’t have to try in class’ and ‘need more/better classes’). Where one Category fit two Composites it was applied to both and noted. Categories not fitting any of the nine Composites were excluded from analysis. At this stage a number of tables were created according to Composite trend heading (e.g. ‘Composite of hindrances to improvement’), participant, Category responses, and relevant biographical information.
5) Mapping (and interpretation) – once all the Categories and individual responses had been fitted into trend headings for Composites supporting the aims of the research, bar charts were created to show the frequencies of participants responding to each Category.

3.4.1. Proposal of ‘Returnee Profiles’

At this stage, in-depth knowledge of the data had been achieved and in conjunction with the trends presented by these bar charts, three learner ‘profiles’ are proposed. These profiles serve a complementary purpose to the frequency charts, namely in providing depth to the understanding of the experiences of returned students. As such, they synthesise a number of trends and are, in some ways archetypal and non-mutually exclusive. Even so, where appropriate, an attempt is made to align each participant to one, or more, Profile. To aid in constructing these Profiles, the particularly interesting or emblematic individual responses noted before were returned to in order to provide explication of certain relevant findings.

3.5. Statistical Analysis of Section III of the Questionnaire

The 17 Likert scales comprising Section III were coded into groups for analysis as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item count</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Item Code</th>
<th>Research tradition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Integrativeness</td>
<td>i), iv)</td>
<td>S-E Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Instrumental Orientation/Extrinsic</td>
<td>ii), v)</td>
<td>S-E Orientation/SDT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>iii), vii), xiv)</td>
<td>SDT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>vi), xii)</td>
<td>S-E Dependent Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Motivational Intensity</td>
<td>viii), x), xiii)</td>
<td>S-E Dependent Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Willingness to Communicate</td>
<td>ix), xi)</td>
<td>S-E Dependent Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Perceived Success</td>
<td>xv), xvii)</td>
<td>S-E Dependent Variable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1. Breakdown of Section III items for statistical analysis

In order to chart changes to each of these variable as a result of SA, t-tests for paired/dependent samples were run to test the statistical significance of differences in means between the ‘Before’ and ‘After’ scale responses.
4. Findings

This chapter will first outline general findings generated from the data, in the form of frequency charts (Figures 4.1 to 4.3) reflecting the exploratory aims of uncovering changes to motivations (including attitudes and behaviours) as reflected by RQ1, and the temporality of such changes (RQ2). The results of the t-tests are presented in answer to RQ1. Thereafter, findings regarding post-SA learner-perspectives on L2 learning are presented in accordance with RQ3. Figures 4.4 to 4.8 show the frequencies of the relevant Categories relating to this question. Quotes are offered throughout to illustrate the kinds of responses given.

Following the presentation of charts and statistics, three ‘Returned Learner Profiles’ are proposed. These provide a more detailed view of the post-SA experience in keeping with the generally qualitative approach of the research, and are explicated with the help of selected emblematic quotes. The three Profiles simultaneously touch on the three aims of the study in general: detailing changes to qualities of motivation, the temporal changes since return, and describing the post-SA experience.

4.1. RQ1 - Motivational, Attitudinal and Behavioural Changes

A few notes are in order to clarify the reading of the frequency charts presented as Figures 4.1 to 4.10 below. Firstly, the separation of findings reflects distinctions according to the student-generated, exploratory approach, which sought to determine trends across the data. Therefore, the findings are not presented according to changes to Motivation, Attitudes and Behaviours as mutually exclusive or analytic entities in their own right but rather as Composites of trends collecting related Categories of responses. Where appropriate (as for Behavioural Changes and the quantitative findings) the tripartite distinction of motivation, attitudes, and behaviours of the research questions is utilised. As such, some Categories are found in more than one Composite bar chart where they relate to more than one trend. These bar charts show the frequency of responses across both questionnaire and interview data according to the number of participants who made a relevant responses (this is termed ‘Number of Responding Participants’). The total number of responses is also given, showing the overall salience of the Composite (cf. Stephenson 1999). Because some participants made more than one comment regarding the Composite, the number is often greater than 28.
4.1.1. ‘Increased Commitment’

Perhaps the most striking feature across responses was perceived changes post-SA to broad attitudes to the language and its study. A Composite termed ‘Increased Commitment’ is proposed to describe a number of perceived changes which incorporate learners’ motivations, attitudes and behaviours, which all have the trait in common of a more fully-formed commitment to the language as a result of SA. The Categories making up this Composite of traits of Increased Commitment are presented in Figure 4.1.

![Figure 4.1. Composite of ‘Increased Commitment’ (Total Responses = 91)](image)

A total of 91 responses were made across all data (over half from interviews) toward the formulation of this Composite, which reflects what could be described as a new quality of motivation on return in an avowal of ongoing commitment to language learning as a direct result of SA. The highest number of responses (n=14) stated simply ‘more motivation’, often in response to questionnaire item f) (describe the key changes to your motivation and interest). As Davis (id1, German) noted: “I was highly interested and motivated before the exchange- if any change, perhaps even more interested and motivated afterwards”. More interestingly, a large number (n=13) noted changes to their engagement with the culture including out of class engagement with L2 materials. Gabi (id7, Spanish) described this feeling well in an interview:
“My philosophy toward language learning has changed, to sustainable learning which can only be achieved through cultural aspects”. A similarly large number noted changed attitudes to the language relating to a newfound ‘passion, love...’ (n=12) for the language and ‘more perspective’ (n=9) on learning the L2 as resulting from SA, detailing a new sense of context and a reinforced a love of the L2, with the result that their internal commitment to the language likewise grew stronger. Katja (id20, Spanish) exemplifies this in her questionnaire: “I found a passion for continuing the language learning. I am also considering Honours in Spanish”.

It is interesting to note that in only five cases (id17, id21, id22, id23, id27) was there no response made which related to this Composite.

4.1.2. Behavioural Changes

The common trends concerning behaviour changes are presented in Figure 4.2. Certain Categories (such as ‘increased learning of/engaging with culture/politics…’) are also found in the ‘Increased Commitment’ Composite, but it is useful to repeat to see the full Composite of perceived effects of SA on behaviours.

![Figure 4.2. Composite of Behavioural Changes (Total Responses = 44)](image)

The largest number of participants (n=13) noted a ‘more independent/less formal learning style’ as well as more learning activities external to the classroom (n=13). These two findings are related in that they reflect autonomy of learning, extending beyond the instructed context. Of
the 13 respondents who noted a more independent learning style, in two extreme cases (id23 and id25) SA led to the decision to stop formal study. Bernard (id25), a learner of Japanese, felt frustrated with instruction on return to Melbourne University and decided to discontinue his Diploma of Modern Languages, while Frank (id23), a learner of Spanish, noted: “I don’t think I’ll do much, if any, formal study though. Practice will be the key for me”.

Another interesting finding was that 5 of the 6 respondents who noted ‘no change to learning style’, at other places made note of certain changes to their approach to language learning. For example, after a long, focus group discussion regarding what language learning they had been doing since return, Julia (id4, German) concluded by noting that there was “not much change though since coming back to my language learning”. Just a few minutes prior she had commented: “now I seek out more extracurricular activities, like Stammtisch, where people go to the pub and try to speak only German. It’s a good atmosphere compared to language classes”. Julia noted that she never would have done this before and expressed frustration at ‘timid’ students in class, stating: “before I was shy, but now I’m frustrated by others who seem they don’t even want to learn German”. Thus we see how hard it is to tie down students’ perceptions of themselves and how qualitative data provides a means of gauging, in a very real way, changes to students attitudes to language learning and its interplay with both in-class and out-of-class behaviours.

4.1.3. Quantitative findings regarding the Socio-Educational model and Self-Determination Theory of motivation

Statistical analyses were run on the questionnaire scale items as a way of relating the post-SA experience to the traditional psychometric frameworks offered by the S-E and SDT formulations of motivation. This allows us to see whether students perceived any changes to the constructs offered regarding types of motivational orientation, intensity and dependent variables affecting these. The t-tests show a number of statistically significant differences in means of responses to the ‘Before’ (B) and ‘After’ (A) SA scales. This was especially the case as regards changes to a more Integrative Orientation. Table 4.1 shows that the means for both items gauging Integrative Orientation (Section III items i) *I learn the language because I like the associated culture* and iv) *I enjoy meeting people from the country of the language I study* increased from an average of 3.9 and 4.0 on the Before scale to 4.4 and 4.8 on the After Scale.
Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics of T-test for ‘Integrative Orientation’

Table 4.2 shows that these mean increases (0.5 and 0.8 out of 5) were significant (p<.05) for both items, indicating that, on the whole, returned SA students feel closer to the TL culture and NSs.

Table 4.2. T-test for ‘Integrative Orientation’ showing Significance

For the alternate motivational orientations, that is, the Instrumental/Extrinsic construct, only one item (ii) *I learn the language because it may be helpful in later career choices* showed significant changes (0.7, p<.05). This reflects the Increased Commitment Composite above in a more long-term motivation to the L2, and mirrors the trend towards a new context being offered by the SA. For the three items testing Intrinsic motivation, there were no significant mean changes. Both items testing changes to Anxiety showed relatively large mean changes (1.6 and 1.1, p<.05), indicating that SA fosters a more positive feeling toward speaking the L2. For Motivational Intensity, one item (viii. *I seek and employ language learning opportunities outside of the classroom*) showed change (0.9, p<.05). This echoes the Behaviour Changes noted above and the trend toward more out-of-class learning. Both items for Willingness to Communicate showed large mean changes (1.3 and 1.1, p<.05), again reflecting SA’s positive effect on learners’ attitudes toward speaking the L2. Changes to the perceived success were not significant, perhaps reflecting the confusing nature of these items and the option of marking a lack of success if it was deemed relevant. Tables of all t-tests are presented in Appendix IV.
4.2. RQ2 - Temporal effect on motivation, attitudes and behaviour since return

This research question was the most slippery to gauge, and as such Figure 4.3 appears correspondingly sparse with only 27 responses generated from both questionnaires and interviews. In order to better gauge the temporal effect of changing motivation, attitudes and behaviours, three learner groups were compared according to time since return. One group was made up of those who had been back between 1 and 3 months (1-3), another between 4 and 11 months (4-11), and the last group having been back 12 or more months (12+). Percentages are given in Figure 4.3 according to the number of participants from each group who answered according to each Category. Many participants noted more than one aspect of change in interviews, and as such percentages do not equal 100%. The most salient Category of respondents were those who noted simply that little change has occurred to motivation since return (n=14). Over half the respondents in both the 4-12 and the 12+ groups noted ‘unchanging motivation’. At the same time, however, almost half (44%) of the 12+ group noted ‘decreased motivation’. This emphasises the fluctuation of learner-perspectives on motivation. Interestingly, none of the other groups noted ‘decreased’ motivation and only small numbers ‘slowly decreasing’ motivation.

![Figure 4.3. Temporal Effects (Total Responses = 27)](image-url)
Data for changing behaviours and attitudes to language learning was especially hard to elicit and as such, only ‘after lull, decided to improve/increase efforts’ relates to this aim. Responses to questionnaire items concerning this aim often touched on disparate aspects. For example, two participants (id16, id28) noted a realisation of the magnitude of language learning. In comparison, interviews proved a better means of uncovering the ever-fluctuating nature of changes over time, but again most students noted a somewhat stable state of action or the decision to become more serious about their study of the L2. On the whole, while they were open for discussion of every topic, when asked to describe changes over time they often seemed at a loss for words or went on with changes as a result of SA. This may have something to do with the question format, but I would argue it relates to the general experience of the language learner who returns from SA and as such this is taken up in the Returnee Profiles below. The full implications of this finding will be returned to in the Discussion chapter.

4.3. RQ3 - Post-SA Learner-Perspectives

A number of charts are presented here in answer to RQ3; showing that SA has a consistent effect on defining perspectives to the L2 learning situation on return. A large number of the categories making up these composites relate directly to perceived needs for further improvement in different contexts, namely out-of-class, the classroom and for progress in the future.

4.3.1. Composite of needing ongoing opportunities

Categories for this Composite were drawn in large part from questionnaire item g) in Section II, regarding students’ perceptions of what could help their continuing language learning in the Melbourne University context. The majority of Categories relate to feelings regarding a need for meaningful and authentic interaction with the language on return.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>No. Responding Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need NS contacts and interaction/more chances to speak</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities/engaging films, books, theatre, etc</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of exposure/materials… have to look elsewhere (i.e. not to class)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for cultural involvement</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping in touch with friends</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking in language</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.4. Composite of needing ongoing opportunities (Total Responses = 61)

Most vitally, the majority of participants (n=19) noted a need on return for having NS contacts. Interestingly, of the nine who did not answer to this effect was a background speaker (Felicia, id6, German), a French student soon to return to begin a PhD in France (Steven, id5) and one who counts himself ‘lucky’ to have French native-speaker colleagues in his workplace (Luke, id13). A crucial related finding which is not reflected in the chart is that, of the nine who noted a ‘need for cultural involvement’, only three (id7, id13, id21) commented on actually having such an ‘involvement’; for example, Luke (id13) as a member of a French theatre company, Gabi (id7) through involvement with a Spanish-medium NGO. It would thus appear that this Composite taps into a general feeling of malaise at the opportunities afforded language learners in Melbourne, all the more acute at having returned from an overabundance of opportunities for authentic interaction while on study abroad. These feelings of frustration are examined returned to below.
4.3.2. Composite of class-related attitudes

The majority of responses generating this Composite were taken from focus-group interview discussions, which reflect a dualistic positive and negative attitude to classes. Out of the eight respondents who were clearly negative (‘unhelpful/bad’) and the seven who were positive (‘helpful/good’) about classes, the number who noted both was almost half (id1, id2, id4, id5). This was usually due to the students enjoying the class as a place to use their language, despite the frustrations of ‘underchallenging’ classes (Felicia, id6, German) or ‘shy’ (Julia, 4id, German) students. Peter (id1, German) noted he feels ‘excitement’ at going to class each week, but at the same time expressed that he is: “often disappointed by the learning experience here”, stating in reference to two recently completed essays towards credit for subjects he undertook in Germany: “what’s the point of a 200 word homework when I just wrote two 5000 word essays”. The need for different types of classes (n=8) was also distinctly felt by some. A good example being Megan (id10), who expressed a severe dislike of the historical nature of French classes after spending time in Montreal and gaining an appreciation for contemporary social issues. The case of Dom (id21), who quit his Diploma in Japanese as a result of the perceived quality of Japanese education at the University, is a marked example of a negative attitude to instruction.

Figure 4.5. Composite of class-related attitudes (Total responses = 47).

Note: 7 students did not answer as course of study was completed while abroad.
4.3.3. Composite of future needs for improvement

This Composite, taken largely from Section II g) ‘Anything that could help?’, works together with other Composites in this section in illustrating perspectives on needs for improvement, in this case in a planned future of ongoing language use and learning.

![Composite of future needs for improvement](image)

Figure 4.6. Composite of future needs for improvement (Total Responses = 20)

As Figure 4.6 shows, ‘to return’ was overwhelmingly the most common choice (n=12). This says something about the way students perceive potential for improvement now that they are back in their home environments; namely the slightly depressing belief that the only way to improve is to return. It also reflects on the positive attitude toward the progress they made as a result of SA, as shown in Figure 4.7.

![Attitude to progress as a result of SA](image)

Figure 4.7. Attitudes to progress as a result of SA (Total Respondents = 28)

**Note:** This question was closed-response.
The fact that 20 out of 28 participants were happy about their progress mirrors the desire to return as a way of improving their L2.

### 4.3.4. Composite of hindrances to improvement

This Composite functions as a convex to certain Categories in the ‘Composite for needing ongoing opportunities’ and ‘Composite of future needs for improvement’, being taken from the second part of the same question item g) ‘Anything that is hindering progress?’ As such, the ‘need a goal’ Category appears in both.

![Composite of hindrances to improvement](image)

The most common response (n=11) was ‘time constraints/different priorities’. This is as expected where the student’s life while abroad is primarily focused on the learning and use of the target language, in contrast to at home, where competing social, work and academic demands may often take centre place. While maintenance is more a feeling of proficiency than an attitude to improvement, the feeling of an inability to maintain the L2 reflects an overall negative attitude to the learning context, which hinders improvement. It should be noted that three participants (id1, id6, id12) noted both ‘able to maintain’ and ‘unable to maintain’. This was often the case where speaking was the skill on decline, while writing and reading remained as strong as while abroad. Again, this indecision reflects the nature of qualitative data generally.
4.4. Returnee Profiles

To complement the above listing of frequencies and collation of Categories and Composites, these three learner Profiles build on those findings and seek to contextualise the learner’s perspective more deeply. As regards the research questions, they describe qualitative changes to motivation, at the same time touching on temporal changes since return and post-SA perspectives on learning. One aspect that consistently struck the researcher about the data coding and interpretation was the general level of flux and vacillation within students’ responses as they sought to simultaneously come to terms, comprehend and communicate their post-SA experience. Furthermore, the exploratory nature of data collection to the post-SA context meant that classifying each learners’ profile was not an aim. Supporting this was a methodology where the data for interviewees was much fuller. Thus, the Profiles are presented as archetypes with some learners fitting one profile more than others, or fitting all three, and others participants not fitting any. The chosen quotes are hoped to highlight the phenomena inherent in the Profiles and the participants most indicative of these trends. However, at the risk of essentialising the individual learners, some comments are made regarding each Profile’s prevalence across participants.

Profile I- The more ‘integrative’ and ‘intrinsically’ motivated learner

A striking feature of interviews, not communicated to anywhere near the same level of salience by the comparatively static questionnaire data, was that many students described changes to their inherent love of all things ‘language’, an increased desire for NS contacts and engagement with aspects of the TL culture. These trends were presented in Figures 3.1 and 3.4 above and mirror in part findings relating to ‘Increased Commitment’. To borrow a term from the socio-educational model of motivation (Gardner 1985), we can see this as a marked shift to a more ‘integrative’ orientation, as students feel they became ‘closer’ to the target culture while abroad, this carrying over to their feelings after returning home. The statistically significant findings regarding changes to an integrative orientation further supports the validity of this Profile.

At the same time, many students described a newfound passion for the language, increased enjoyment at speaking it, noting the confidence that SA has given them and a ‘high’ feeling associated with the L2. This newfound or re-invigorated love of the language goes further than a positive disposition to the TL-culture, often being expressed as a change inhering in a new sense of self. Julia (id4) encapsulates perfectly the ‘high’ feeling associated with being a returned SA learner. As she states:
I like the feeling of speaking and knowing the language now, it’s just fun, never had that before, the high feeling when something comes on TV, speaking around the house even though no one else knows German. Study abroad definitely has made me more passionate and motivated like that.

This increased enjoyment using and learning the language could be described as a more ‘intrinsic’ motivation type, in keeping with Self-Determination Theory. While this was not reflected by the statistical findings, the sheer joy when discussing the SA experience had obviously carried over on return and eleven out of the fourteen interviewees noted some aspect of this new passion or life-changing experience as regards their view of the language.

A large part of the more ‘integrative’ and ‘intrinsic’ motivation types may be traced to the positive feelings toward opportunities afforded by SA for interaction with NSs and experiencing aspects of the target culture, as well as to the positivity regarding the SA experience in general. Figures 4.9 and 4.10 illustrate the importance ascribed by participants to NS interaction and the ‘cultural’ and ‘environment/context’ sides of the SA experience.

Figure 4.9. Native Speaker Opportunities While Abroad (Total Responses = 28)
Note: This item was closed-response.

The three highest frequency Categories in Figure 4.10 all attest to the importance of the SA as offering a new cultural context to participants’ L2 learning, and the changes that this can bring about.
Figure 4.10. Salient Non-Language Experiences of the SA (Total Responses = 84)

For many, this positive feeling toward NSs and the target culture and country translate to their experiences on return, and is reflected by the needs presented in Figure 3.4 above toward more chances for ongoing authentic experiences, especially in that 19 out of 28 noted the need for NS contacts. Dom (id21) reports that his involvement in the Melbourne University Japanese Club on return has been vital in continuing his use of the language, 2 years after return:

Having Japanese friends has definitely been an important motivation to at least maintain my current level of Japanese… However, the lack of exposure to Japanese (especially written Japanese) while in Australia is probably the largest barrier to me improving my language skills.

Speaking of making these friends (‘largely by chance’), Dom notes how the changes to his attitude toward native-speakers due to SA allowed him this chance:

My time abroad probably helped give me a better understanding of the people and the confidence to use the language on a regular basis, which is what led me to become friends in the first place.

Dom’s words reflect in a very real way the fostering of an integrative orientation by SA. In another example of the nature of SA as providing something that other learning contexts cannot, Joey (id24) used the ‘Further Comments’ section to state precisely how he views the SA as changing his inherent attitude to the study of Spanish:

Whereas language learning before I left provided me with basic skills, it has been my study abroad experience that has motivated me to pursue the interest long-term... I now
have a perspective on how the skills can be used and I can put much of what I learn into a real-world context.

Thus, for some, a change to a more integrative and intrinsic quality of motivation is linked to ongoing goals for language learning. This leads us to the next Profile.

**Profile II- The future-focused learner**

Joey’s comment above regarding the ‘long-term’ bring us to the next Profile, which is based on a trend perceived across a number of participants towards continuing L2 learning. This Profile augments the ‘Increased Commitment’ Composite presented above (see Figure 4.1) as well as echoing ‘future needs for improvement’ (see Figure 4.6). This Profile, however is mirrored by less participants as it relates to goals going beyond the current instructional context.

The particular context of participant access and recruitment meant that 19 of the 28 students are yet to complete their course of language study. Only six did not take any language subjects on return, and many of those who have been back for one year or more are still enrolled in classes (n=5), while a lesser number have recently completed their courses of study (n=2). However, the nature of this Profile is such that in spite of having a negative view of classes (see Figure 4.5 above), or having completed them altogether, many learners still express a continuing need for use of the language. This often goes beyond the extracurricular activities and increased engagement with film, literature, etc many learners seek out.

The Composite of ‘future needs for improvement’ reflects that certain participants had already created plans for continuing involvement with the language. Felicia (id6) described a desire to return to Germany for post-graduate studies in fine arts, citing a list of renowned artists coming out of a certain institution in Dusseldorf. She noted the difficulty of gaining a place in a German University, stating: “it’s a bit of a dream, but I know what I want”. Furthermore, a number of students had begun further study at Melbourne University at the time of data collection. Paul (id12) came back from study abroad to undertake a Post-Graduate Diploma, researching Renaissance Italy, noting that as result of his time in Siena that: “the degree is not such a giant leap now”. For Paul, a myriad of further plans exist:

I would like to get into translating and interpreting after finishing the thesis. Get an accreditation at RMIT, but it’s the only place, and the exam is soon, in September. Otherwise I’ll have to wait a year, so maybe instead do an MA in Italian.
A number of other students noted a wish to undertake further study involving their language. Peter (id1) expressed a desire to enrol in German Honours but noted that his other major, Mathematics, was a more promising career. Gabi (id7) had recently begun Honours in Spanish, and Andrea (id2) was planning to do so for German.

Apart from making plans for further study, a general desire to return was noted throughout many questionnaires and interviews (n=12), and may come as a result of the trend towards increased integrative orientation and intrinsic motivation as outlined in Profile 1. This is often accompanied by a realisation that this will be the only way to truly progress in their language ability, in view of the oft-noted lack of exposure and interactions with native speakers in Melbourne. Luke (id13), a French learner who has been back for over two years and who has not continued to study French on return, but has been involved in French theatre and counts himself lucky to have had a history of NS contacts, seems particularly resigned to ‘forgetting a lot’, as he reports: “[my level] has gone down, I try to maintain it, but it’s never gonna improve unless go back… I have to go back, to New Caledonia maybe!”.

Ange (id11, French), another learner back more than two years but still enrolled, noted a similar effect of decreasing proficiency alongside a desire to return in the questionnaire: “the desire to return has faded… however, I am determined to get back there to further improve my French – but I just have to find someone who’s prepared to foot the bill”. By the time of the focus-group meeting, Ange expressed that she probably would be able to return to France for the summer, stating with typical verve: “I love it, I just hate French classes. I don’t know what to do, I just love speaking French. What else am I meant to do?”. 

**Profile III- The stable learner**

The comments from long-term returnees Luke and Ange provide a useful segue into the third general trend amongst learners. As noted above, many participants seemed reluctant to comment on temporal changes to their language learning, and many noted little overall changes to their attitudes, motivations, or learning styles whatsoever as a result of SA. At the same time, however, an element of flux pervades all data, as it does Ange’s case. This element of stability and flux is crucial to understanding the experiences of returned students. The ‘stable learner’ describes a Profile of sustained high ‘motivation’ in the face of lack of opportunities for use, time constraints and decreasing proficiency. Jane (id9, German) articulates perfectly this potent cocktail of simultaneous frustration and intrinsic inspiration:
After returning I am more motivated to maintain my German, however I find there are less opportunities to do so. Currently I am still very interested in German, however with other work, uni, social things becoming more prominent I am finding it difficult to be motivated to study when Germany now seems a long way away and I have finished the German component of my degree.

Jane had been back for half a year at the time of data collection. Echoing her is Norman (id17, Japanese), back for over two and a half years and who thus reflects more starkly the temporal effect of demotivation alongside sustained interest:

[there has been a] loss of motivation of studying Japanese outside of Japan due to the consequential slow progress of learning a language outside of its natural environment. However, motivation to improve my Japanese and overall interest in the language remain as high as before living in Japan. Motivation and interest still vivid, although slowly declining due to the lack of opportunities to practice Japanese on a regular basis.

Thus, this Profile may be described as a dual feeling of increased integrative or intrinsic type of motivation tempered by a lack of opportunity and potential for improvement or even maintenance. Indeed, some learners even describe their current language use in Australia as ‘practice’, conscious of the fact that it is more about maintenance than improvement. Frank (id23, Spanish) noted ‘practice’ three times in his questionnaire responses alongside stable motivation:

I don’t think I’ll do much, if any, formal study though. Practice will be the key for me…

[Motivation] has not changed much, except that I am finding it harder to find the time to practice…. [A help would be] finding the time to practice and people to practice with.

Ultimately, the element of flux may be flattened out by a qualitative change in motivation (described in Profile 1), which creates post-SA motivational stability. This stability remains despite a lack of language learning action. It is especially hard to state the pervasiveness of this Profile across participants, though it was evidenced by most interviewees who noted ongoing excitement with the L2 in the face of negative views to classes and the lack of meaningful uses of the language.

A final interesting note is that the tendency toward intense intrinsic inspiration may be limited to those who have been learning the language for a shorter period of time, and that these learners are more prone to flux. For those who have learnt the language throughout high school and University, flux may be much less of an issue, as with the case of Steven (id5), who spent
two years in France completing a Masters degree and will soon to return to France to begin a PhD in science. In response to Julia’s (id4) explications on the newfound fun and passion of speaking German (presented above), Steven noted:

I felt that kind of high feeling before exchange (when I worked in France for 7 months in 03-04), but now I feel a lot less arrogant and knows there’s a long way to go. Study abroad has made me realize the magnitude of learning a language. I wouldn’t want to undertake it again.
5. Discussion

The findings just presented hold a number of interesting implications for the theoretical and methodological approaches employed in this study. These will be presented in order of research questions. Firstly, some comments will be made relating to the changing quality of motivation. This is followed by a discussion of the temporal aspect of motivational change, and the ‘stable learner’ Profile reflected by many students. Thereafter, a discussion of the benefits of a learner-perspective approach to understanding the post-SA experience leads to some remarks on identity issues surrounding returned students. Finally, the potential for future research into the post-SA experience and concluding comments are offered.

It was noted in Chapter 2 that the Socio-Educational model of motivation supports the social nature of learning an L2 and that SA, with the potential for interaction with NSs and the TL culture, would have potentially interesting effects on the integrative attitudes of SA language learners. For many of the returned students participating in this study, a shift to a more integrative orientation was found, with many students citing a desire and need for ongoing meaningful interaction, both with NSs and with aspects of the ‘culture’ in general. Reflecting this, many described the new perspective and context to learning that SA offered and a feeling of being closer to the L2. As regards behaviours, this manifested itself in the increased level of extracurricular L2 learning activities; such as watching films and trying to attend cultural events. The statistical analyses supported this finding in the Integrative Orientation and Motivational Intensity scales.

In addition to findings regarding a more integrative learner, a change to a more ‘intrinsic’ type of motivation was found. While this was not supported by the t-test results, the interviews especially illustrated the feelings of many students relating to the newfound passion and enjoyment associated with all aspects of the L2 that comes from having been on SA. Self-Determination Theory accounts for more intrinsic motivation as a more autonomous mode of learning (cf. Deci and Ryan 1985) and indeed, going abroad may be seen as an experience fundamentally based on the individual’s ability to be a self-directed agent; moving abroad and becoming independent perhaps for the first time in one’s life. In terms to changes to behaviours, many students disavowed the classroom context and noted a need for more self-directed learning on return. We can link the dual findings toward a more ‘integrative’ and ‘intrinsic’ type of motivation by their more internalised or self-incorporated aspect of identification with the L2. It thus seems that, for many, SA has significant consequences on the quality of motivation of returning and the learner’s self-concept. This is contra much of the literature on SA from the
U.S. (cf. Block 2007), a salient feature of which was that negative experiences abroad often damage the learner’s identification with the L2. In comparison, the level of negativity toward the SA was low for the participants of this study. The specific national context may play a role, with the findings coming out of studies on trans-European SA programs (cf. Murphy-Lejeune 2002, Laubscher 1994) being more akin to the Melbourne University students. This could be because of a pan-European identity (Block 2007), or, in the Australian context reflected by this admittedly small-scale study, a more internationalist cultural ideology, which values multilingualism (cf. Warren 2004) and thus determines the ability of students to cope while abroad.

The second aim of this study was to perceive the temporal effect of SA on motivation, attitudes and behaviours after return. Alongside the findings regarding a more integrative and intrinsic type of learner was a trend that seemed to reflect stability more than flux, both of motivational intensity as well as the feelings associated with the study and use of the L2. It has been noted that temporal changes were particularly hard to gauge and often-inconsistent answers were offered regarding the changes. The ‘stable learner’ profile was thus proposed to describe many students who noted simply no change to their motivation. Despite having little time or chances to use the language, they still felt the language was an important part of their self and had no plans to stop learning, using or to ‘lose’ it. In presenting her studies as an antidote to the psychometric tradition in motivation, Ushioda (1996, 2001) showed that flux and stability often go hand in hand, with an ongoing love of the L2 being the prime determinant of ongoing motivation, as it was for Alice (cf. Kinginger 2004) and many of the participants in this study. For many, SA reinforced their love of the L2 and the associated culture, marking them as learners with the self-internalised orientation described above. This trait, which may prove to be stable over time, could be a factor of the length of time the learner has been engaged with the L2, or it may be due to the nature of SA as a raiser of integrativeness and intrinsic motivation. Grace (id27) succinctly expresses this aspect of long-term stability in the Further Comments section of the questionnaire: “Since exchange [in year 11], French has been an important part of my life and study abroad was just an extension of that”.

A qualitative view of motivation uncovers the element of stability and flux, where the quality of motivation may have changed to ultimately remain stable and at a high level, despite a lack of language learning practices or use of the L2. Certain studies have argued for a need for a distinction between action and motivation. The notion of ‘action control’ has often been used in the motivational literature (Kuhl 1994, Dornyei 2001, MacIntyre, MacMaster and Baker 2001) to describe the difference between carrying out and intending to carry out action. In a study
attempting to incorporate Action Control theory and the Socio-Educational model, MacIntyre, MacMaster and Baker (2001) found a distinction between ‘Attitudinal Motivation’ and ‘Action Motivation’, proposed as factors accounting for non-correlating motivational variables, the one accounting for perceiving value in language learning, the other related to the ‘energized behaviour’ of the motivated student (MacIntyre, MacMaster and Baker 2001: 484). The lack of action, despite high levels of ongoing integrativeness and intrinsic motivation, has interesting implications for the construct of Motivational Intensity, central to traditional formulations of motivation in SLA.

The Action Stage process model (cf. Dörnyei and Otto 1998) also relates interestingly to the present context. SA could be described as the actional stage, with the post-SA experience providing the requisite evaluation and further planning of the post-actional stage. For Dörnyei and Otto (1998) success is a prime factor for determining continuing motivation because ‘learning is a goal-oriented activity’ (Dörnyei 2001: 97). This reflects the S-E model’s three aspects of motivation: persistent and consistent effort to learning, desire to achieve a goal, and positive affect in that the learner will enjoy learning, even if enthusiasm wanes (cf. Dornyei and Schmidt 2001). In the post-SA context, the ‘persistent and consistent effort’ may be lacking, but the new quality of ‘positive affect’ sustains motivation. Goal setting is key to both models, which in could be viewed as the decision to study abroad. This has interesting ramifications for post-SA learning, where further goals thus need to be set. Many students noted this, including not knowing how to go on with their learning as well as the lack of a goal. In this light, Dörnyei (2001) notes that when a goal (such as say, improving proficiency on return) has become unattainable, complete abandonment of an action is unlikely as learners are often unable to ‘cut their losses’. This has an interesting correspondence to the post-SA experience, where the L2 has become internalised, but because they may have no future goal or chance for learning or use, they are stuck with ‘unfruitful activity’ (Dörnyei 2001: 99) and so motivation remains high while action remains low. In attempting to provide a framework for analysis of something as long-term as learning a language, any such model is bound to be inherently flawed- both in its aim for comprehensiveness and discreetness of categories. Some students noted a realisation that comes from SA that learning a language is an often dauntingly involved process. As such, I would argue that no time frame or goal setting is ultimately needed, perhaps for the long-term learner.

The third aim of the study was to gauge learner-perspectives on the post-SA experience. Such a contextualising of the L2 learning context aided the analyses presented above in the findings relating to the perceived chances for ongoing learning and use on return from SA. Furthermore, the qualitative changes found concerning motivation benefited from the
methodology favouring student-generated data, which came from the nature of interviews allowing a teasing out of trends and, to some extent, by the open-ended responses in the questionnaire. Vitally, the ongoing identification with the language- the intrinsic ‘love’ or ‘passion’ and increased integrative attitude- will ultimately be defined by the chances for use and interaction afforded by the learning context on return home. This extends beyond the classroom and is shown in the widespread felt need for NS contacts and integration with elements of the L2 culture. The notion of a Participation Metaphor (PM) (cf. Sfard 1998) is useful in interpreting the experiences of the returned student. Used by Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) in an interrogation of NS/NNS dichotomies and identities, the PM is seen as a complement to SLA’s typical concern with the acquisition of grammatical structures, phonology, etc; this is termed the Acquisition Metaphor (AM). The PM allows a view of the L2 speaker as ‘having a participant status in a discursive community’ (Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000: 169)- and not just as a learner, concerned with continuing acquisition and proficiency gains. While few students noted that they had stopped learning, or had become ‘good enough’, the need for cultural engagement provides a stark view of their post-SA experience, most not being satisfied with or stimulated by classes, or with the chances for interaction with NSs in Melbourne.

The social context on return thus may play a crucial role in deciding the future of learners’ engagements with the L2 and culture, and may solely define the future of their TL learning and use through the chances for meaningful interactions. A distinct difference was perceived between different TLs in this regard, Spanish learners seemed to be able to take part in cultural events of the Spanish community while some learners of German were negative about the ‘nerdy’ aspect of events organised by the German Students Club and the lack of enticing options. One French learner noted the pretentiousness of ‘cultural’ activities in Melbourne valorising a hyper-romanticised France. Norton’s (1995, 2000) proposal of ‘investment’ sought to transcend the typical motivational formulation in SLA by including the social context of learning as an affective factor which the learner may have no say in, despite high levels of motivation. While many who fit the Profile of the ‘future-focused learner’ have found ways of continuing their engagement with the TL (whether it be further study or return), others describe themselves as having no way of enacting their inspired feelings of integrative and intrinsic motivation. While they may evidence the ‘stable learner’, ultimately however, they may simply reflect the underwhelming experience of returning from SA to a context unsupportive of their passion for and integrative attitude toward the TL.

2 This romanticising is a key aspect of Kinginger’s (2004) study of Alice, who finally felt satisfied when engaging in the quintessentially French practice of drinking coffee, smoking cigarettes and discussing philosophy in cafes.
The trend to self-identification with the TL was described above, and this can be seen as a process of identity construction on return from SA. Identity is only constituted in relations of difference (cf. Delanty 2003) and SA, like language itself, is a ‘marker of identity’ that sets apart those who have gone abroad from those who haven’t. The returned students self-consciousness as a group can be perceived in the way they view the others who haven’t studied abroad. In interviews, they often talked of the other students as having other needs, and while this was never demeaning, it is telling. In discussing the non-linguistic benefits of their SA, students often noted the cultural learning that comes with being abroad, and often feelings of being more knowledgeable, confident and independent individuals. The newfound or reinforced love of the TL, and the more integrative orientation, which transcends the classroom into interactions with NSs and every aspect of the TL all evidence a new identity of being an SA returnee. Unlike many of the social-constructivist studies on identity issues in SLA- which focus on inequitable power relations related to language use (cf. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004)- SA rather affords ‘symbolic capital’ (cf. Bourdieu 1984) to returnees as a prestige within the educational context of the University, or within a segment of multicultural Australian society as a whole. The returned students thus reflect a broad social ideology, manifested as the construction of an identity that provides a meaningful way of making sense of their self as a valid and worthy individual.3

At this stage, a notional ‘post-learner’ identity is proposed to define many students on return- that is, the combination of a more internalised feeling toward the TL and culture, which leads to a need for meaningful interaction beyond the classroom and the associated frustrations at the opportunities afforded them, both by the social and instructional context. This identity echoes the usefulness of the PM in stressing the importance of language use, and not merely language learning, in reflecting the individual’s needs for ‘affiliation and belonging’ (cf. Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000: 156). The frustrations of being a post-learner may lead to, or occur together with, a lack of action, but taken together with the oft-noted lack of change to motivation over time, we can see them having moved to a new quality of motivation. This new quality of motivation, typified by integrative attitudes and intrinsic enjoyment, may thus cancel out flux as the post-learner’s attitude toward the TL is more internalised in their self-concept. This stable identity may thus make consistent action and learning unnecessary, as the SA has internalised and/or reinforced their identity as speakers of the TL. Furthermore, this more autonomous, intrinsic motivation may reflect a more comfortable and persevering student (cf. Noels et al 2003). I would argue that the identity of a post-learner is a way of coming to terms with the change toward stable motivation and the more self-identified quality of motivation, as well as

---

3 It should be noted that the student is not solely implicated in the process of identity formation. This different group is largely ‘authenticated’ (cf. Bucholtz 2003) by the researcher; the process of being an object of study authenticating their experiences.
accounting for the lack of decision of many students when talking about their motivational changes over time.
6. Conclusion

Most researchers who opt for a learner-perspective approach to their work note the fact that, in the backlash against the validity of subjective data positions, perceptions ultimately shape reality in the definition of meaning and value, which favour certain paths of behaviour and action over others. This is reflected by George Mead’s poststructuralist truism that ‘people play an active role in creating their own lives’ (cf. Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000: 158). In regard to the post-SA experience, it is important to note that the way students view motivation will shape their future engagement with the TL (cf. Ushioda 2001). The findings of this study and the discussion offered above continues in this light, showing how fluctuating perspectives need to be taken as an analytic category, especially in regard to a process as long-term as learning another language. Theoretical notions such as the Participation Metaphor and ‘investment’ were offered as ways of transcending concerns of L2 learning, to show that the nature of an individual’s engagement with the language is linked to identity, and especially for those who have experienced something such as SA, that this identity can’t be viewed simply in terms of traditional models of motivation (such as the integrative orientation) because such distinctions fall short in providing an in-depth and contextualised view of not just learning, but use. The methodological approach thus highlighted the need for a qualitative, and student-generated approach to motivation, which then in turn can reflect back on the traditional theoretical models. The findings of this study attested to the validity of an integrative orientation and intrinsic type of motivation as categories, arrived at through learner-perspectives. The need for a distinction between motivation and action was also arrived at through such means.

If indeed the proposal of the post-learner has any validity or usefulness, further research will need to go beyond the classroom in a view of learner identity concerned with how further engagement with and use of the L2 is mediated by the social context, and how this in turn defines future engagement and use. Thus, it remains to be seen what the truly lasting effects of SA will be on these students. If the identity of the SA returnee is valued, as I argue it is, then there is all the more chance that its effects will last (cf. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Definite interest lies in investigating the long-term effects of SA, the experience after graduating, and how the effects of SA negotiate future life and language-related decisions. Other potential areas of inquiry are how SA returnees could be more accommodated by the classroom context- as well as a more thorough investigation of the social context of Melbourne and how learners can find meaningful engagement with the TL culture. These are all vital areas of examination in this field, and only touched on in this research.
References


Clement, R. 1978. ‘Motivational characteristics of francophones learning English’, Quebec, Canada: Centre International de Recherche sur le Bilinguisme.


‘Language Learning in a Study Abroad Context’: 167-203.


Arnold.


Isabelli-Garcia, C. 2006. ‘Study abroad social networks, motivation and attitudes: implications


Appendix I – Instruments

Appendix I-A. Questionnaire

Project: The effects of study abroad on the language learning of returning students.

This questionnaire should take around 10 minutes to complete.

Section I concerns the background to your language learning, Section II will tell us about your experiences abroad and Section III consists of questions about your reasons for and attitudes to language learning and changes as a result of studying abroad.

Please try to give answers that are as accurate as possible. Your responses will help us to understand the experiences of language students who have returned from studying overseas.

Note that the term ‘study abroad’ used throughout the questionnaire refers to both study abroad and exchange programs in which language learning was undertaken.

If you have any problems or queries do not hesitate to ask. Likewise, feel free to email me via the address provided on your Plain Language Statement.

For participation in a group interview, please provide contact details here:

Name: ________________________________
Email: ________________________________
Phone (optional): __________________________

Your identity will remain strictly confidential and will be used only to link your questionnaire responses to the interview. Students not wishing to participate in the group interview may remain anonymous. You will find a place to provide contact details at the end of the questionnaire also.

Thanks!

Section I

We are interested in the background to your language learning and study abroad. As such, these questions refer to the primary language of your study abroad (i.e. the language of the country where you studied).

1) Sex (please circle): M F
2) Current age (please circle): Under 18 18-20 21-23 24-26 27+
3) First and/or home language/s: ________________________________
4) Degree enrolled in at the University Of Melbourne, year of course (e.g. “third year”), and majors (please note if you have changed course since study abroad): ________________________________
5) Language of study during study abroad: ____________________________________________

6) Country/s and city/s of residence during study abroad program: __________________________

7) a) Number of years of language learning before study abroad (at all levels including primary and high-school): ____________________________________________

   Highest level reached to date (e.g. “post-VCE, Intermediate”): __________________________

   How many language subjects have you taken since returning to Australia including those you are currently taking? (please circle): None 1-2 3-4 4-5 5-6 Over 6

8) a) Period spent studying abroad (e.g. “From: early September 2005... To: mid December 2005”): From: __________________________

       To: __________________________

       Please list any time for travel, work, or other study before or after the study abroad course (e.g. “3 weeks of travel in Germany after course”): __________________________

9) Did you have any previous experience in the country of your study abroad? If ‘Yes’, please briefly describe this experience and the length of your stay (e.g. “in year 10 I was an exchange student for 3 months”): __________________________

10) Briefly outline the type and amount of instruction you received while studying abroad (please include both language and any other classes, e.g. “language classes-3 hours, 5 days a week, 3 hours literature per week (in English)”): __________________________

11) Briefly describe your living arrangements while studying abroad (e.g. “dormitory with foreign students, apartment with local and foreign friends, home-stay with local family”): __________________________
Section II

We are interested in learning more about your language learning experience and what occurred overseas. Bear in mind that we are interested in the primary language you studied while abroad. Please answer the following questions in short-answer form. Note that space is provided at the end of the questionnaire for any further comments you may wish to make.

Honest and detailed responses will be greatly appreciated.

a) Thinking back to before you left Australia, please outline the reasons for your decision to apply for study abroad.

b) Now moving on to your experiences abroad, if you undertook language classes, would you say they were i) very helpful, ii) somewhat helpful, iii) not helpful in improving your foreign language proficiency? Please circle one and briefly explain in the space provided. Please ignore this question if you did not take any language classes.

c) What kind of opportunities did you have while abroad to speak to native speakers of your study abroad language? With whom? How frequently?

How helpful were they?

d) Are there any prominent aspects of your time overseas, not specifically related to language learning, that have played a role in defining your study abroad experience (e.g. interactions with a foreign culture, the lifestyle you led, being in a new environment for the first time, etc)? Please list, stating whether these experiences affected you positively or negatively.
e) Thinking now about returning to Australia, how would you describe the overall language progress you made during study abroad? You may wish to think about this in terms of the expectations you had before leaving Australia.

f) Finally, please briefly describe the key changes (if any) to your motivation and interest in studying the language that resulted from studying abroad.

Since returning, how has your motivation and interest changed over time? Please explain briefly, with reference to the way you currently feel.

g) Can you think of anything that would help you continue to learn the language? Or anything that may be hindering your progress?

Further comments:
Section III

This section provides you with a series of statements concerning reasons for learning the study abroad language, attitudes to language learning, language learning behaviours and any changes that occurred as a result of study abroad.

For each item, two scales are provided, as shown in this example.

E.g. “I enjoy fishing”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'BEFORE' SCALE</th>
<th>‘AFTER’ SCALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers represent a continuum of responses to the statement, from strong disagreement (‘1’) through to strong agreement (‘5’).

The scale one on the left-hand side reflects your feeling before you left to study abroad. The right-hand scale refers to feelings after returning to Australia. To use the example above, a ‘1’ on the left-hand scale and a ‘5’ on the right-hand scale would mean that I did not enjoy fishing at all before studying abroad, but on return I greatly enjoyed fishing.

When responding to the left-hand scale, please try to remember back to before you began your study abroad program. Don’t worry if it’s all a bit hazy- all answers are important. For the right-hand scale, if it has been a while since you returned from abroad; please give an overall impression of your feeling since return.

Space is provided at the end to note anything you may think of while answering the questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“BEFORE” SCALE</th>
<th>“AFTER” SCALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) “I learn the language because I like the associated culture.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) “I learn the language because it may be helpful in later career choices.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) “Language learning is fun to me, like a puzzle is fun.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) “I enjoy meeting people from the country of the language I study.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v) “I learn the language because it will give me a better education.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vi) “I feel calm and confident in the company of native speakers of the language.”

1 2 3 4 5

vii) “I learn the language because it will make me a more knowledgeable, well-rounded person.”

1 2 3 4 5

viii) “I seek and employ language learning opportunities outside of the classroom (e.g. watching films, reading in my own time, etc).”

1 2 3 4 5

ix) “When speaking the language in groups I am the one to initiate conversation.”

1 2 3 4 5

x) “Where possible, I put more effort into language homework than is necessary.”

1 2 3 4 5

xi) “I try to engage native speakers in conversation if I have the chance.”

1 2 3 4 5

xii) “I feel nervous and confused when speaking the language.”

1 2 3 4 5

xiii) “I work on aspects of the language that need improvement.”

1 2 3 4 5

xiv) “Learning grammar is a satisfying aspect of learning the language.”

1 2 3 4 5

Note that the last three items use only one scale.

xv) “Before studying abroad, success (e.g. grades, perceived improvements) in learning the language motivated me to continue learning.”

If it was rather a lack of success that motivated you, place a tick on the line and then circle the scale:

1 2 3 4 5

xvi) “Success learning the language during study abroad motivated me to continue learning throughout the program.”

If it was rather a lack of success that motivated you while abroad, place a tick on the line and then circle the scale:

1 2 3 4 5
xvii) “On returning to Australia, success as a result of my study abroad motivates me to continue learning the language.”
      Again, if it was a lack of success, please tick and then circle: ________

Please use this space to provide any **further comments** that you have thought of while answering the above questions. In particular, you may wish to clarify any changes to your language learning behaviours, attitudes and motivations that have occurred as a result of your study abroad. Please feel free to include anything not covered in this questionnaire.

**Anything else?**

---

**Thank you very much for your efforts in completing this questionnaire.**

*If you have not already done so, please provide contact details here for participation in a further short group interview:*

**Name:**

**Email:**

**Phone (optional):**

*Results of this research will be made available through the School of Languages and Linguistics once the project has been completed.*

*Also, please do not hesitate to contact me (details provided on your Plain Language Statement) if you have any further queries regarding the results, or about any other matter relating to this study.*

**Thanks again, Thomas Mendelovits**
Appendix I-B. Focus Group Interview Question Plan

1. How would you rate the study abroad (both language learning and as a new, cultural, fun, experience) overall on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 being extremely negative and 10 being extremely positive).

2. How would you rate your language learning experience since coming back on the same scale of 1 to 10?

3. a) How have you continued to study the language since returning to Melbourne? (“I know that some of you are enrolled now, and that you’ve taken some classes since coming back”… probes… how many more classes can you take?

   b) But apart from classes, how else do you try to learn? (probes… talk to NSs, films, books)

   c) Do you notice any changes to your learning practices which may have come about as a result of studying abroad?

   d) What kind of progress have you made since coming back? (probes… able to consolidate learning, or keep up your language, learn more all the time?)
e) How helpful have the **classes** you’ve taken since being back at Melbourne Uni been? *(probes… in keeping up your language, or learning new things?)*

f) What could help you to make more **progress**? *(probes… Do you need more classes? Different kinds of classes? Different opportunities?)*

g) Since being back, how have your **language learning practices** changed over time? *(probes… really motivated at first then slowing, underwhelming experience, unchallenging)*

4. a) Has your study abroad experience changed your **attitude or feeling** towards language learning in general?
b) In terms of **what you need to do?**

c) And what do you expect from classes, or elsewhere?

d) Since coming back to Melbourne, how have your **attitudes toward and motivation** to learning the language **changed** over time? (probes... this could include attitudes to the culture, native speakers, etc... easy to stay focussed, what about future?)

e) **Why** do you **continue** to learn? Still fun, for a major, wanna return to work, travel?
Appendix II – Documents of Administration

Appendix II-A. Invitation Email to Teachers

Dear language coordinators and teachers,

My name is Thomas Mendelovits. I am currently undertaking Honours in Linguistics at the University of Melbourne, with my thesis investigating the effects of study abroad on the language learning of returning students, specifically as regards ongoing motivation and attitudes to language learning.

The supervising researcher is Dr Neomy Storch (neomys@unimelb.edu.au, ph. 83445208) of the School of Languages and Linguistics.

The data for my thesis will come from questionnaires and focus-group interviews, which I hope to administer at the University during the next couple of weeks, before assessment sets in and makes life difficult for everyone! It is in this regard that I write to you, as coordinators and teachers of language programs from which I may draw participants.

With your consent, the method for data collection would be to come into class five or ten minutes before the end, give a short speech introducing my research, and then ask relevant students to fill out the questionnaire (taking around 10 minutes). Students will be asked to provide contact details if they wish to participate in a focus-group interview, to be held at a later date. This is the preferred method for administration of the questionnaire, although, of course alternate arrangements could be made, subject to your support. Such an arrangement could be to email a group of students with the questionnaire.

I apologise if you have mistakenly received this email. If you are currently not at the Department or not working in the role of coordinator, then could you please forward this email onto the appropriate person? Further, could you please forward this to any individual teachers currently taking courses that may contain students who have returned from a study abroad or exchange program.

You will find attached a Plain Language Statement detailing the main information and aims of the study, as well as the questionnaire.

I hope to hear from you soon. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries or concerns that you may have. My phone numbers are 9596-3261 (home), and 0439600776 (mobile).

Kind regards,

Tom Mendelovits
Appendix II-B. Plain Language Statement

Plain Language Statement

Project: The effects of study abroad on the language learning of returning students.

Dear language student,

The purpose of this study is to further our understanding of the impact of a study abroad program on language learning. Information collected will serve as data in the Honours thesis of Thomas Mendelovits (t.mendelovits@ugrad.unimelb.edu.au, 0439600776), a student of the School of Languages and Linguistics at the University of Melbourne.

Participation in this study will involve two components. The first is completing a short questionnaire (of around 10 minutes) concerning aspects of your time abroad, your language learning before and after the study abroad and the impact your study abroad has had on your experience and attitudes after your return to Australia.

Secondly, a group interview will be arranged at a future date with the purpose of providing additional, in-depth data supporting the questionnaires. If you are willing to participate in this interview, please provide contact details on the first page of the questionnaire. The date for the interview will be arranged during the next few weeks to suit your availability. The interview will last no longer than forty-five minutes and will be audio recorded.

Please note that the identity of all participants will be protected and will in no way be used for purposes other than this study. If you do not wish to volunteer for the interview you may choose to remain anonymous. Names will only be used to link your responses to the interview and will be changed so that you will be unidentifiable after completion of research. Furthermore, only the research student and supervising researcher will have access to the data, although confidentiality of information is subject to certain legal restrictions. Also, the nature of a small sample size may have implications for protecting respondents’ identities. Note that participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

A detachable consent form is provided on the next page, and is to be placed in a separate envelope to the questionnaire.

Thanks very much for volunteering your time! You are invited to keep this page to direct any queries you may have regarding the research either to myself (see contact details above), or to the supervising researcher (see contact details below).

-Thomas Mendelovits (Research student)

Supervising researcher: Dr Neomy Storch (neomys@unimelb.edu.au)
School of Languages and Linguistics.

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Melbourne. For any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project please contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics (ph: 8344 2073; fax 9347 6739).

Human Research Ethics Committee ID number: 0716037.1
Plain Language Statement version 5. Date: 28.07.07

School of Languages and Linguistics
The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3010, Australia, Telephone +61 3 8344 5488, Facsimile +61 3 83448990
Consent Form

**Project:** The effects of study abroad on the language learning of returning students.

Please retain the Plain Language Statement. Participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Data will be kept confidential and your identity will be protected, although legal limitations and a small sample size may have implications for this.

If you agree to participate then please sign and detach this section now. This section is to be retained by the researcher.

1) I agree to participate by filling out a questionnaire only,

   **Signature:**

   **Date:**

2) I agree to participate by filling out a questionnaire and taking part in an audio-recorded group interview (please provide contact details on the first page of the questionnaire),

   **Signature:**

   **Date:**

Thomas Mendelovits (Research student)

Dr. Neomy Storch (Supervising researcher)
Appendix II-D. Consent Form for Focus Group Interview

Consent Form for Group Interview:

Project: The effects of study abroad on the language learning of returning students.

If you are willing to participate in this group interview, please sign below and return this form, which is to be retained by the research student. The interview will be audio-recorded.

Note that participation in this research is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time. Data will be kept confidential and your name will be changed after completion of the interview to protect your identity. Note, however that certain legal limitations and a small sample size may have implications for confidentiality of data and protection of identity.

I agree to participate in this group interview,

Signature:

Date:

Thomas Mendelovits (Research student)
Dr. Neomy Storch (Supervising researcher)

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Melbourne. For any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project please contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics (ph: 8344 2073; fax 9347 6739).

Human Research Ethics Committee ID number: 0716037.1

School of Languages and Linguistics
The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3010, Australia, Telephone +61 3 8344 5488, Facsimile +61 3 83448990
Appendix III – Table of Participants

**Note:** Names in bold show those who were also interviewed (14 out of 28).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID Code</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Length in months since return</th>
<th>Language subjects since return</th>
<th>Language enrolment status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Steven</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gabi</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Hons in Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Finished course after SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Finished course after SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ange</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Hons in Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Finished course after SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Finished course in 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Finished course after SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Over 6</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sandra</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Katja</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Dom</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Stopped course after SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Finn</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Since finished course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Finished course after SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Joey</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Bernard</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Since finished course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Morris</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Still enrolled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Groups by time since return</th>
<th>Subject tally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1-3 months = 6</td>
<td>0 = 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4-11 months = 13</td>
<td>1-2 = 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12+ months = 9</td>
<td>3-4 = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5-6 = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>6+ = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix IV – T-tests for questionnaire Section III items

#### Paired Samples Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>B-1</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>3.8571</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.00791</td>
<td>.19048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-1</td>
<td>4.3929</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.73733</td>
<td>.13934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.08866</td>
<td>.20574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-4</td>
<td>4.8214</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.39002</td>
<td>.07371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.1. Integrativeness

#### Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>B-1 - A-1</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>-.53571</td>
<td>-.96417</td>
<td>-.10726</td>
<td>-2.566</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>-.82143</td>
<td>-1.20272</td>
<td>-1.44013</td>
<td>-4.420</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.2. Integrativeness

#### Paired Samples Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>B-2</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>3.1071</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.13331</td>
<td>.21418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-2</td>
<td>3.8571</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.07890</td>
<td>.20389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>3.8214</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.15642</td>
<td>.21854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-5</td>
<td>3.8571</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.17739</td>
<td>.22251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.3. Instrumental/Extrinsic

#### Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>B-2 - A-2</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>-.75000</td>
<td>-1.20545</td>
<td>-.3955</td>
<td>-3.379</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>-.03571</td>
<td>-.20198</td>
<td>.13055</td>
<td>-.441</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.4. Instrumental/Extrinsic
### Paired Samples Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>B-3</td>
<td>3.6071</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.25725</td>
<td>.23760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-3</td>
<td>3.7857</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.19744</td>
<td>.22629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>B-7</td>
<td>3.8214</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.02030</td>
<td>.19282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-7</td>
<td>3.9643</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.92224</td>
<td>.17429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td>B-14</td>
<td>3.3571</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.22366</td>
<td>.23125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-14</td>
<td>3.5714</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.23013</td>
<td>.23247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.5. Intrinsic

### Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Std. Error Mean</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>B-3 - A-3</td>
<td>-.17857</td>
<td>.66964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-7 - A-7</td>
<td>-.14286</td>
<td>.59094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-14 - A-14</td>
<td>-.21429</td>
<td>1.39728</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.6. Intrinsic

### Paired Samples Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>B-6</td>
<td>2.5357</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.31887</td>
<td>.24924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-6</td>
<td>4.1071</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.91649</td>
<td>.17320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>B-12</td>
<td>3.0357</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.17006</td>
<td>.22112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-12</td>
<td>4.1429</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.93152</td>
<td>.17604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.7. Anxiety

### Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Std. Error Mean</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>B-6 - A-6</td>
<td>-.57143</td>
<td>1.06904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-12 - A-12</td>
<td>-.10714</td>
<td>1.10014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.8. Anxiety

**Note:** xii) means flipped due to negative wording
Table IV.9. Motivational Intensity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>B-8</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>B-8 - A-8</th>
<th>-92857</th>
<th>1.43833</th>
<th>.27182</th>
<th>-1.48630</th>
<th>-.37085</th>
<th>-3.416</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>.002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-8</td>
<td>4.1071</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.03062</td>
<td>.19477</td>
<td>-1.12500</td>
<td>1.14261</td>
<td>.21592</td>
<td>1.21592</td>
<td>.23846</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-10</td>
<td>2.9615</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.06595</td>
<td>.20145</td>
<td>-1.14286</td>
<td>1.23871</td>
<td>.23409</td>
<td>1.62318</td>
<td>.66254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-10</td>
<td>2.8077</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.09615</td>
<td>.21497</td>
<td>-1.14286</td>
<td>1.23871</td>
<td>.23409</td>
<td>1.62318</td>
<td>.66254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-13</td>
<td>3.3929</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.06595</td>
<td>.20145</td>
<td>-1.12500</td>
<td>1.14261</td>
<td>.21592</td>
<td>1.21592</td>
<td>.23846</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-13</td>
<td>3.5000</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.92296</td>
<td>.17442</td>
<td>-1.12500</td>
<td>1.14261</td>
<td>.21592</td>
<td>1.21592</td>
<td>.23846</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.10. Motivational Intensity

Note: x), two students did not answer

Table IV.11. Willingness to Communicate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>B-9</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>B-9 - A-9</th>
<th>-1.25000</th>
<th>1.14261</th>
<th>.21593</th>
<th>-1.69306</th>
<th>-.80694</th>
<th>-5.789</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>.000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-9</td>
<td>3.7143</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.04906</td>
<td>.19825</td>
<td>-1.14286</td>
<td>1.23871</td>
<td>.23409</td>
<td>1.62318</td>
<td>.66254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-11</td>
<td>2.7143</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.32936</td>
<td>.25123</td>
<td>-1.14286</td>
<td>1.23871</td>
<td>.23409</td>
<td>1.62318</td>
<td>.66254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-11</td>
<td>3.8571</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.00791</td>
<td>.19048</td>
<td>-1.14286</td>
<td>1.23871</td>
<td>.23409</td>
<td>1.62318</td>
<td>.66254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.12. Willingness to Communicate
### Paired Samples Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-15</td>
<td>3.9048</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.83095</td>
<td>.18133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-17</td>
<td>3.8095</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.03049</td>
<td>.22487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.13. Perceived Success

### Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.14. Perceived Success

**Note:** Deleted if one was lack of success…
Author/s: Mendelovits, Thomas Bjoern

Title: There and back again: a study of the effects of study abroad on the language learning of returned university students

Date: 2007-11


Publication Status: Unpublished

Persistent Link: http://hdl.handle.net/11343/39383

File Description: There and back again: a study of the effects of study abroad on the language learning of returned university students

Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.