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**Intercultural awareness at home and abroad:
a retrospective study of snapshot compositions**

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Liz Machin

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine study abroad in relation to intercultural awareness. If a key goal of study abroad is to generate an interculturally conversant workforce, is there clear evidence that this is actually happening?

It is obvious: students on study abroad programmes have more opportunities to engage with people from another culture(s) than if they had stayed at home. If learning the target language in location is also thrown into the mix (providing a linguistic key with which to unlock additional access to individuals from other cultures), how could they possibly fail to be more interculturally aware than their peers who stay at home?

However, not all study abroad students choose to seize opportunities for intercultural contact, and not all choose to learn the language of the country they arrive in. Some go through a period of culture shock (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, Todman, 2008). Indeed, recent research has blown wide open the idea that the process of acquiring intercultural awareness is an automatic consequence of simply being present in another culture, and calls for appropriate modifications to study abroad programmes. Not so obvious after all then.

Given the need for interculturally aware workers in our global knowledge economy, and the level of investment in facilitating the mobility of students, there is a clear and present need for empirical evidence that study abroad students are or are not, as the case may be, benefiting interculturally from their sojourns in other countries.

This study therefore investigates intercultural awareness amongst a group of students ($n=30$) enrolled in various faculties at a Catalan university and seeks to understand whether, in a snapshot in time in May 2012, there was a significant difference in their cultural attitudes and beliefs (expressed in compositions written in English), depending on whether or not they had experience of study abroad, whether they were studying abroad now or had studied abroad in the past, and also whether they were studying a language as a second language or as a foreign language. Whether their level of English was associated with their level of intercultural awareness is also considered, as arguably this would allow them to express themselves in more subtle ways.

All of the students were attending the university's language centre: those currently studying abroad taking Spanish and/or Catalan classes, and those at home English classes. These studies were additional to their main undergraduate or Master's programme.

This study adopts a mixed methods approach to the data. In terms of levels of intercultural awareness, study abroad *versus* at home, language learning context, and levels of written English did not make a difference. However, the significant finding of this present study is that those in the midst of studying abroad did have the edge over those who had returned from study abroad and were back at home.

Key words: intercultural awareness, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural sensitivity, interculturality, intercultural competence, Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, English as a second language, English as a foreign language, lingua franca, study abroad.

“Nothing is as peevish and pedantic as men's judgments of one another.”

Desiderius Erasmus

16th century humanist, philosopher and namesake of the European study abroad programme

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TABLE OF ACRONYMS

ALLENCAM	Adquisició de Llengües desde la Catalunya Multilingüe
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
DMIS	Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

EAIE	European Association for International Education
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EMI	English Medium Instruction
EMIC	Erasmus Mundus Intercultural Competence
Erasmus	European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
FL	Foreign Language
IDI	Intercultural Development Inventory
SA0	Study Abroad 0 (i.e., never)
SAB	Study Abroad Before
SAN	Study Abroad Now
SL	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
UPF	Universitat Pompeu Fabra

TABLE OF DEFINED TERMS

ALLENCAM	Adquisició de Llengües desde la Catalunya Multilingüe (or Language Acquisition from Multilingual Catalonia), a research group on language acquisition based at UPF since 2004. The present study has been conducted in association with the ALLENCAM group.
attention and noticing	Attention and noticing refers to the focusing of a learner's attention (concentration of mental powers) on a specific part of the language, allowing him/her to notice gaps between target language and interlanguage forms (this happens through interaction, for example: negotiation and recasts).
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning, the Primary and Secondary education equivalent to EMI.
DMIS	A theoretical framework set out by intercultural theorist Milton J. Bennett, known as the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), and as more particularly explained in Sections 1.2 and 5.4.2.
EAIE	European Association for International Education, which according to its website is a non-profit, member-led organisation serving individuals involved in the internationalisation of their institutions through a

	combination of training, conferences and knowledge acquisition and sharing, and as referred to in Section 2.2.
EMI	English Medium Instruction, the Higher Education level equivalent to CLIL, and as more particularly explained in Section 3.6.
EMIC	Erasmus Mundus Intercultural Competence, a European Commission funded research project, and as more particularly explained in Section 2.3.
Erasmus	Erasmus (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) is a European Union student exchange programme established in 1987, with a new programme known as Erasmus+ (2014 – 2020) and which brings together the EU's schemes for education, training, youth and sport.
ethnocentric	An individual views their own culture as central to reality (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003, p. 421).
ethnorelative	An individual's culture is experienced in the context of other cultures (Hammer et al, 2003, p. 421).
FL	One of the contexts for learning a language is as a foreign language (FL), which means that the language is studied in a classroom at home, and hence not present in the immediate social environment of the learner.
Georgetown Consortium Study	A four-year study designed to measure the intercultural and second language learning of more than 1300 US undergraduates studying on 61 study abroad programmes, and as more particularly explained in Sections 2.4 and 3.7.
IDI	The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is a model based on Bennett's DMIS, is used by some of the studies reported in this present study, and is more particularly explained in Section 1.2.
intercultural awareness	Some of the possible terminology, interpretations, theoretical frameworks, and assessment models relating to the competence associated with interculturality are explored in Section 1.2, with 'intercultural awareness' - the term chosen for the competence in this present study - more particularly explained in Section 1.4.
interlanguage	Interlanguage refers to the features of the language produced by a non-native speaker (i.e., the learner's output) at a particular stage of evolution of his/her developing interlanguage system (for example, a child's interlanguage when learning about plurals might have reached the stage of knowing the default plurals /s/, /iz/ and /es/ but no more, and so his interlanguage system leads him/her to say *sheeps).

island	Island study abroad is a programme where the students study and live with other students from their home university and follow a curriculum especially designed for them.
negotiation of meaning	Negotiation of meaning refers to the interruptions of a conversation by either participant for both to understand what the conversation is about. There are confirmation checks (<i>is this what you mean?</i>); comprehension checks (<i>do you understand?</i>); and clarification requests (<i>what?</i>). Gass (2013, p. 350), commenting on an example dialogue: "...the speakers spend the majority of their time involved in straightening out the meaning of words...".
non-island	Non-island study abroad, or integrated study abroad, is a programme where the students study alongside students at the host university.
recast	"Reformulation of an incorrect utterance that maintain the original's meaning" (Gass, 2013, p. 529).
SA0	The Study Abroad 0 participants ($n=7$) within this present study who were currently 'at home' at a Catalan university and had never studied abroad at the time the data was collected.
SAB	The Study Abroad Before participants ($n=6$) within this present study who were currently 'at home' at a Catalan university but who had previously studied abroad.
SALA Project	The SALA Project is a project run by a team of researchers looking into, amongst other things, the effects of different learning contexts on learners' linguistic progress, namely Formal Instruction, Study/Residence Abroad, and Integrated Content and Language, more specifically referred to as English Medium Instruction (EMI) or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and is based at two Spanish universities, UPF and Universitat de les Illes Balears in Palma de Mallorca. The present study has been conducted in collaboration with the SALA Project.
SAN	The Study Abroad Now participants ($n=17$) within this present study who were studying abroad at the time the data was collected.
savoirs	A term used by intercultural theorist Michael Byram in his theoretical framework which is based on five ' <i>savoirs</i> ', and as more particularly explained in Section 1.2.
SL	One of the contexts for learning a language is as a second language (SL), which means that the language is studied in the target location.

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INTRODUCTION

Some people live a lifetime without challenging the way that they were brought up and the customs and way of life of their country or region. They choose not to put themselves in situations which might force them to question their cultural attitudes and beliefs, or the opportunities to do this simply do not come their way. They stick rigidly with what they know. Either they do not move far from their place of birth or, if they do, they make comments like: "I've always done it this way, why change now?" However, this narrow viewpoint is not good currency within our global community and the knowledge economies of developed countries.

Study abroad has a clearer purpose now more than ever before: the generation of human capital which is interculturally aware and which will work productively within the global economy, living as good citizens of the world (Byram, 2008).

Whilst intuitively it might seem right to assume that study abroad provides an appropriate opportunity for a student's identity to be challenged and for reflections on 'otherness', without opening a research paper on interculturality and study abroad, it would be possible to come up with a list of challenges to this smooth development of intercultural awareness:

- i. **CULTURE SHOCK:** Perhaps for some the experience will be too overwhelming to achieve the desired results. Perhaps students will seek out others from their homeland with whom to spend their free time. Does it not depend on how the programme is organised? Perhaps the sojourn will be too short in duration. Perhaps finding opportunities to talk to others from different backgrounds will be difficult as the student is in housing and/or classes with others from the same country / home university. Or, indeed, perhaps the local students will not be prone enough to welcome and involve the sojourners in their daily routines and customs: not so much a rejection of those experiencing study abroad, but rather an invisibility to the local peer group.
- ii. **INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES:** Surely this development of intercultural awareness depends on individual differences: some students will be more curious about the culture they find themselves in than others. How is study abroad any different from going on a long holiday? Motivations for discovering the culture will depend on the individual: one might arrive with a guidebook and phrasebook/app, the other with a bikini and a beach towel. For others, the sojourn might reinforce stereotyping or fuel xenophobic attitudes. And in any event, will not the naturally more culturally curious put themselves forward for study

- abroad, and so what about the development of those who do not? What happens as numbers on study abroad continue to increase and the less curious start to arrive?
- iii. **MIGRATORY ELITE:** Is this not an elitist programme, not only because of the extra expense of the sojourn abroad, but also because those from more affluent and/or professional backgrounds are more likely to have the confidence to participate? Are these students not already interculturally aware by virtue of their family life (e.g., professional parents working overseas)?
 - iv. **LACK OF RETENTION:** Is there not a danger that there will be no real shift in perspective: the student returns from their sojourn viewing it simply in terms of a one-off adventure to be savoured later in life as an enjoyable memory? Intercultural awareness might ‘wear off’.
 - v. **EMPLOYERS’ ATTITUDES:** Do employers really rate the intercultural skills associated with study abroad? Are they already ‘on message’ as regards interculturality and hence ready to rate intercultural awareness as an asset in their employees’ profiles?
 - vi. **CULTURE THROUGH LANGUAGE:** Is there not a higher intercultural competence to be achieved by learning the language of the target culture? Is it not from that higher level of intercultural awareness that an individual will be able to exploit their intercultural skill set during their future working life and help secure the vision that their future belongs in the global community (i.e., the competence becomes more than a survival toolkit and more of an integration toolkit)? Is this not the passport they need to travel within the global economy? What are study abroad stakeholders are doing to rectify any damage caused in the sojourners’ prior education? Are there language classes freely available and geared to reversing any previous negative language learning experiences?
 - vii. **INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT HOME:** With the internationalisation of universities, might not staying at home be enough to benefit from the diversity of other cultures? Even if within a country there is not sufficient integration of ethnic and/or religious groups and cultures, or there is limited diversity, are not universities fostering intercultural ‘ecosystems’? Might not students who ‘stay put’ during their university careers have as much to gain as those who study abroad? Why is moving to another country for a brief sojourn necessary to challenge the identity of an individual? Intercultural studies could be taught at home.

As already mentioned, the intention behind this present study was to exploit particular data collected by the ALLENCAM research group in 2012 as part of the SALA Project, and with this came certain limitations. However, the obvious upside of this was that it facilitated the narrowing down of a huge and multidisciplinary area into whether mobility and language make

a difference to levels of intercultural competence. With this research the SALA Project comes to a close.

The purpose of this study then is to provide a fresh look at whether study abroad students (who were also second language learners) do have higher levels of intercultural awareness than their at home peer group (who were also foreign language students), and to consider this through compositions written by the students. The clear motivation being that the world has changed since study abroad first appeared on the educational landscape. *If* a key goal now of study abroad is to generate an interculturally aware workforce, is there clear evidence that this is actually happening?

This dissertation is divided into two main parts (I and II). Part I reviews recent research in three areas: interculturality (or, more accurately, its associated competence: 'intercultural awareness', the term chosen for the competence in this present study), study abroad, and language acquisition. More particularly, the literature review focuses on the areas where these three intersect, with the intention of revealing a research gap and thereby the justification for this study. Part I is divided into three chapters which cover the following.

Chapter 1 takes a brief look at some of the terms, definitions, theoretical frameworks and models in the field of interculturality. Two intercultural theorists in particular are picked out for special comment. Chapter 2 reports concerns about unproven but stated benefits of study abroad; gives examples of researchers advocating a constructivist approach to intercultural learning; and sets out concerns that it is a migratory elite who benefit from study abroad. Chapter 3 flags the friction between multilingualism policies and the emergence of a lingua franca; distinguishes how culture may be accessed *through* words, from the idea of culture *in* words; describes the changed language learning educational landscape; and focuses in particular on second language learning, which is the language acquisition context available during study abroad.

Part II is dedicated to the empirical study and is made up of Chapters 4 - 8. Chapter 4 reveals the present study through the research gap and a statement of the research questions. Chapter 5 layouts the method behind the present study, introducing the participants and the models adopted to assess intercultural awareness. The results are reported in Chapter 6 and discussed, along with the limitations of the study, in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 concludes the present study and includes future research goals.

Note that although no geographical limit was placed on sourcing studies reviewed whilst carrying out the research for this present study, when example facts and figures in relation to study abroad are cited, they are those relevant to the European Union.

PART I: BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1

INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

This Chapter 1 takes a brief look at some of the terms, definitions, theoretical frameworks and models in the field of interculturality (as employed in study abroad or language acquisition studies), in order to set the stage both for the rest of this literature review and the remainder of the present study. Two intercultural theorists in particular are picked out for special comment. The intention is not only to show the relevance and topicality of intercultural awareness in the field of study abroad research, but also to identify a possible border (albeit not perfectly drawn) between applied linguistics and interculturality.

1.1 A broader concept

We have chosen to learn the languages spoken by people in other countries and belonging to other cultures over time to satisfy our curiosity, to facilitate trade, and in the hope of co-existing peacefully with our neighbours. Mostly then we have learnt languages to communicate with people who do not speak the same language(s) as us, rather than just as a hobby or a skill to show off. In our post-industrial world, where human capital is the key resource, and where globalisation is fast changing the social, economic, political, and cultural landscape, the idea has emerged that a broader concept of ‘communicative competence’ is required than that which has interested those in the applied linguistics field since the term was coined by Hymes in 1972. That broader concept, which has grown rapidly in interest in the last two decades and is studied across a range of disciplines, brings interculturality to the applied linguistics table, in the shape of a desirability for “the knowledge, motivation and skills needed to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures” (Wiseman, 2002, p. 208 as cited in Cetinavci, 2012, p. 3445).

1.2 Being competent without language

On one level, to be able to read the literature on interculturality and its related competence, a broad understanding of the concepts is required. On another level, the devil is in the detail, and the distinctions in definitions and models offered by the theorists in the field need to be considered. In particular, what is the competence? And therefore what exactly is being

measured in intercultural studies? However, there is no clear or universally accepted term or definition of the competence. There is no standard assessment model, which has led to much focus on theoretical models in recent literature (Hu & Fan, 2011), and calls for standardization (Garrett-Rucks, 2014, p. 182). With no unifying competence, many instruments have been devised and also their susceptibility to social desirability bias raised (Almeida, Simões, & Costa, 2012; Bazgan & Norel, 2013).

In an attempt to pinpoint a measurable competence in relation to this phenomenon, theorists have variously attributed scope of meaning within their works to terms such as *intercultural sensitivity* (Bennett, 2009, p. S4 citing Bennett, 1993 and 2004); *intercultural competence* (Bennett, 2009, p. S4 citing Bennett & Castiglioni, 2004; Byram, 1997, pp. 70 – 71); and *intercultural communicative competence* (Byram, 1997, pp. 70 – 71; Wiseman, 2002, p. 208 as cited in Cetinavci, 2012, p. 3445; and Fantini, 2006, p. 48).

Indeed when it comes to studying interculturality within the field of linguistics, things ‘get messy’ (or become interesting, depending on your point of view) straight away, as acquiring the related competence, at least at one level does not, it seem, *require* an individual to learn and/or speak the language of the target culture. This is reflected, for example, in the works of two intercultural theorists highlighted here: Byram and Bennett. Byram was chosen for comment as he has been an important influence on European educational policies and also on the SALA Project’s assessment model adopted in this present study, and Bennett as he is much quoted in US study abroad literature and created the other assessment model employed in this study. (Emphasis added in italics in the extracts from their works below.)

Byram (1997), with a theoretical framework based on five ‘*savoirs*’: attitudes (*savoir être*), knowledge (*savoirs*), skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and/or interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s’engager*), explained intercultural competence as involving the first three of these *savoirs* and being present when:

“...individuals have the ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about intercultural communication, their attitudes of interest in otherness and their skills in interpreting, relating and discovering, i.e. of overcoming cultural difference and enjoying intercultural contact. Their ability to do this will probably derive from their experience

of language learning, *even though they do not use the specific language on a given occasion....*” (pp. 70 – 71).

Byram’s delimitation of the competence is even clearer here:

“By referring...to intercultural competence, omitting reference to communication, I want to indicate the emphasis on skills, knowledge and attitudes *other than those which are primarily linguistic.*” (p. 49).

Bennett (1986), with a Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) of six dimensions falling within either ethnocentric orientations (Denial, Defense and Minimization) or ethnorelative orientations (Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration), makes no reference to language at all when using the term intercultural sensitivity (i.e., the term he employs in his DMIS) (2009, p. S4 citing Bennett 1993, 2004). For him:

“The term intercultural sensitivity refers to *the complexity of perception of cultural difference*, so that higher sensitivity refers to more complex perceptual discriminations of such differences.”

Figure 1.1 DMIS: stages of development

Denial→	Defense→	Minimization→	Acceptance→	Adaptation→	Integration
ETHNOCENTRIC			ETHNORELATIVE		

Bennett makes it clear in his early work (Bennett, 1986, p. 179) that for him the competence is not an individual difference: “...intercultural sensitivity is not ‘natural’ to any single culture”. It is also made clear in later papers that movement along the six orientations of the DMIS is unidirectional: there are only occasional retreats (Hammer et al, 2003). And so development of intercultural sensitivity moves from left to right across the stages of the model above, half of which are ethnocentric, half ethnorelative (a term coined by Bennett). With the ethnocentric orientations, an individual views their own culture as central to reality, and with the ethnorelative orientations an individual’s culture is experienced in the context of other cultures (Hammer et al, 2003, p. 421). Bennett (1986, p. 182) argued that his model represents the real-life observations of educators in the field and the reported experiences of students. In describing

how he chose and sequenced the stages in the model, he also mentions a mix of theoretical considerations and personal experience of training in intercultural communication.

The question that these definitions from Byram and Bennett beg, however, is exactly how this development works. If the theorists sever language from intercultural awareness, how does an individual acquire the desired intercultural skills, knowledge and attitudes: gestures, other modalities, use of the lingua franca? It is the last that might go some way to explaining how Byram and Bennett were happy to leave language out: they speak English.

Both Byram's and Bennett's frameworks (at this level) have been employed as models to assess an individual's attained level of this now considered prized competence (for example, Garrett-Rucks, 2014 and Garrett-Rucks, 2013), and the DMIS is one of the assessment models adopted in this present study. In addition, further models have been constructed out of the frameworks, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer et al, 2003), which has been tested as a reliable model (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003), and which is not only used within academic research but also by businesses interested in their intercultural profile. The IDI is mentioned in some of the studies reported in this present study and is based on Bennett's DMIS.

The IDI is a 50-item instrument which measures five out of the six orientations with Bennett's DMIS, as well as a factor identified as Encapsulated Marginality (EM). The IDI takes 20 minutes to complete. Agreement or disagreement by the respondent to the 50 statements is via a 5-point Likert scale. An overall intercultural sensitivity (known as the Developmental Scale (DS)) is measured by the IDI software, along with 5 sub-scales: Denial/Defense, Reversal, Minimization, Acceptance/Adaptation, and Encapsulated Marginality. The IDI is, according to Bennett (2009 and citing Bennett, 1993 and Hammer et al, 2003) a recent technique:

“to translate some qualitative indicators of intercultural learning into valid and reliable quantitative data. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assesses the ability to perceive and organize cultural differences in increasingly complex ways, as construed by the DMIS (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity)”.

1.3 The promise of more...

However, both Byram and Bennett anticipate another level of the competence (as they each name and define it), which suggests further promise for a developing individual. For Byram that promise turns into something full-blown when it involves a foreign language, a negotiated “mode of communication”, and for Bennett when there is “potential for enactment...in another cultural context”.

For Byram (1997, pp. 70 - 71) this is set out in his definition of the term intercultural communicative competence (as opposed to his definition of intercultural competence) and involves all of his *savoirs*:

“...someone with Intercultural Communicative Competence is able to *interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language*. They are able to negotiate a mode of communication and interaction which is satisfactory to themselves and the other and they are able to act as a mediator between people of different cultural origins. *Their knowledge of another culture is linked to their language competence through their ability to use language appropriately* - sociolinguistic and discourse competence - and their awareness of specific meanings, values and connotations of the language. They also have a basis for acquiring new languages and cultural understandings as a consequence of the skills they have acquired in the first.”

And for Bennett (Bennett, 2009 p. S4 citing Bennett & Castiglioni, 2004) this is explained in his definition of the term intercultural competence (as opposed to his definition of intercultural sensitivity):

“The term competence refers to *the potential for enactment* of culturally sensitive feeling into appropriate and effective behaviour *in another cultural context*.”

Note that Bennett still does not state any requirement for the use of a foreign language, although he uses the word ‘enactment’.

Here then lies a possible border (albeit not perfectly drawn) between linguistics and interculturality, which goes some way to explaining the interest of applied linguists in study abroad, for the opportunities it provides for these students to cross into a contextual zone

(Bennett's alternative cultural context) where they may well be called upon to put their language learning into practice (Byram's interaction in a foreign language).

Arguably too, once an individual has acquired the intercultural awareness necessary for one interlocutor's culture, they can use that same 'toolkit' when, at some later date, they begin to interact with interlocutors from a different culture. Byram (1997, pp. 70 - 71) talks about a basis for acquiring new language and cultural understandings from ones acquired in the first, and Bennett's DMIS is (mostly) unidirectional. It may take someone a while to 'get up to speed' with this new culture (as some 'little-c' subjective culture input is required (Bennett, 2009, p. S3)), but they have already stopped disbelieving in what other people do and stopped believing that their own way of doing things is the only possible way (Byram, 2008). They are already open and curious about other cultures: perhaps they have a 'portable toolkit'?

In fact in this later work, Bennett (2009, p. S5) makes his ideas on transferability clear:

“Intercultural learning can be both an immediate and a long-term effect of exchange. In the short-term, intercultural learning involves the acquisition of intercultural sensitivity and the ability to exercise the intercultural competence in the exchange culture. A middle-term effect is the transfer of intercultural sensitivity and potential competence from the exchange culture to other cultural contexts. The longer-term effects involve the development of global citizenship and/or other manifestations of a permanently heightened awareness and appreciation of cultural difference.”

1.4 The SALA Project

It is not the intention of this present study to offer up a new term, definition, theoretical framework, model, or even instrument, as it is questionable what this would add. When reference is made to the competence within the rest of this present study, it is done in as neutral a way as possible, as whilst research studies measure the competence, they do so with different understandings of scope of meaning and various assessment models are used. For the purposes of this present study then, the term *intercultural awareness* is used, as it is arguably more neutral (i.e., than using a term already deployed by theorists), and also as it is the term employed by the SALA Project, of which this present research is part. This is the SALA Project's interpretation of intercultural awareness:

“how people become aware of other ways of thinking, living or behaving and how they perceive their experiences with others” (Merino & Avello, 2014, p. 285).

The SALA Project created an innovative model for the analysis of intercultural awareness in written discourse (Merino & Avello, 2014, p. 294). This is also the model used for the analysis of the data collected for this present study, using the same instrument as earlier SALA research. This is explained in more detail in Section 5.4.1.

1.5 Subjective to its core!

Whilst neutrality is difficult, so too is objectivity. Attention is drawn to the obvious dangers of subjectivity inherent in this phenomenon: in theorising/modelling it, and in assessing it (Garrett-Rucks, 2013, p. 192 citing Fantini, 2011). But perhaps more key is that at the core of acquiring the competence, albeit perhaps perversely, is subjectivity. Garrett-Rucks (2013, p. 192) refers to: “...the subjective process by which learners negotiate cultural differences...” and cites the following theorists who have addressed this subjective process: Bennett (1993), Byram (1997), Fantini (2011) and Kramersch (1993 and 2009).

Indeed Bennett (2009, p. S3 citing Bennett, 1998) again recently repeated his earlier distinction of ‘Big-C’ objective culture (for example, learning about the Culture of foreign countries with courses on art, architecture, literature, government and history) as opposed to ‘little-c’ subjective culture, and he did so in the context of study abroad. For Bennett, subjective culture is a person’s: “...unique perspective on how to discriminate phenomena in the world, how to organize and coordinate communication, and how to assign goodness and badness to ways of being.” He gives as an example North Americans being generally pleased with themselves for being practical problem solvers whilst Northern Europeans tend to view American decision-making as ‘shooting from the hip’. For Bennett this objective Big-C culture *versus* subjective little-c culture distinction is one of the oddities surrounding study abroad programmes: “Study abroad programs have not usually addressed learning about subjective culture as part of their explicit curriculums. The curricular imbalance in favor of Culture over culture is ironic, in that the explicit goal of study abroad is more likely to be stated in terms of subjective rather than objective culture.”

Having taken a look at the phenomenon at the core of this present study, Bennett's reference to study abroad provides us with a link into the next area for review. We turn now to review where intercultural awareness meets the research field of study abroad.

CHAPTER 2

STUDY ABROAD

This Chapter 2 reports concerns about unproven but stated intercultural benefits of study abroad; gives examples of researchers advocating a constructivist approach to intercultural learning (whilst flagging that some of these concerns have come from those researching ‘island’ study abroad programmes¹); and sets out concerns that some beneficiaries of these programmes are interculturally aware before they embark. This is done with a view to demonstrating that, whilst study abroad has a new economic impetus (the generation of an interculturally competent workforce for a global economy), the rationale that study abroad automatically leads to greater intercultural awareness has been thrown wide open.

2.1 Investing in our future

Investing in their young people, many governments across the world have taken the decision to promote, with renewed vigour, student mobility. Increasing numbers of students from across the globe are participating in study abroad. 230,000 Erasmus students per annum study abroad (European Commission, 2013). Much funding is ploughed into the programmes. For example, the new Erasmus for all / Erasmus+ programme 2014 – 2020 has an “indicative financial envelope” of over 15 billion EUR (European Commission, 2015, p. 15).

The recent Erasmus+ programme guide states that a desired outcome of mobility is enhanced intercultural awareness (European Commission, 2015, p. 31). However, recent study abroad research raises concerns about whether there is a danger that the target of study abroad is increasingly becoming quantity versus quality, and whether students can be blamed if they do not return home appropriately improved (Vande Berg, 2009, p. S25).

Studies looking at interculturality in the context of student mobility highlight globalisation (Hismanoglu, 2011, p. 805), global citizenship (Bennett, 2009, p. S2; Pedersen, 2010, p. 79),

¹ Note that ‘island’ study abroad programmes are ones where the student studies and lives with other students from their home university and follows a curriculum especially designed for them (generally these are American schemes), as opposed to a ‘non-island’ or integrated study abroad programme where the sojourner studies with students at the host university.

internationalisation of higher education curriculums (Yang, Webster, & Prosser, 2011, p. 70), a globalized working environment (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012, p. 213), the employability of interculturally competent graduates (Trooboff & Rayman, 2008, pp. 9 and 12), and the long-term socio-economic impact of mobility experiences (Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josić, & Jon, 2009).

2.2 Blind faith in mobility

Previously, student mobility seems to have been loosely considered an appropriate challenge to an individual's identity: if you send students to a different country, they will return somehow 'better', they will have learnt useful things (Vande Berg, 2009, p. S16). However, there appear to have been only vague notions of exactly how a student should return home. This 'betterness' appears to have something to do with learning more about another culture; starting to think differently about other cultures in general; and learning more of the other language. Until recently then, that students do return appropriately interculturally 'improved' after their sojourn elsewhere has been assumed: the students leave their home university, arrive in a place where their identity is challenged, reflect on 'otherness', and just get on with intercultural learning themselves, simply by being physically present in the other country².

On the other hand, much recent study abroad research takes the stance that experience of cultural difference does not occur just by being in the vicinity of events when they occur (Bennett, 2009, p. S8 citing Bennett 2004; Hammer et al, 2003, p. 423; Vande Berg, 2009, p. S16). A question raised in this research is why student mobility would automatically lead to a development of intercultural awareness. Bennett, in referring back to his earlier work, refers to George Kelly (Bennett, 2009, p. S8 citing Kelly, 1963) and paraphrases as: "experience is not a function of being in the vicinity of events when they occur, but rather it is how one construes those events that makes a person more or less experienced."

It is in this context that these studies express a concern about a possible lack of thought going into the design of study abroad programmes. What the authors come close to saying is that there is a blind faith attitude and belief amongst study abroad stakeholders who are happy to run with their own intuition: that if you send students to a different country, they will return somehow interculturally better.

² This is not to ignore two decades of research on the linguistic benefits that have been found in relation to study abroad, but is a comment on intercultural improvement.

These concerns are summarised on the European Association for International Education (EAIE) website, in an article about Erasmus mobility not being a value in itself (emphasis has been added in italics):

“A number of studies on the development of intercultural skills and competences have shown that first-hand *experience of ‘otherness’ and even sojourns in a foreign country are not sufficient conditions to foster interculturality*. Both study abroad and intercultural education literature state that, *in addition to experience, intercultural learning needs reflection and analysis*, and that *immersion in a different culture does not in itself reduce stereotypical perceptions of otherness*. Much of the *rhetoric* coming from national and European institutions and present in their programmes *implies that mobility automatically offers students a transformative experience*, often positively impacting on their future lives. But considering mobility as a value in itself may distract from focusing on the *quality* of the experience abroad, in other words, on the factors which can influence and foster the development of intercultural skills. In addition, *by putting emphasis simply on increasing the numbers of students who spend a period of residence abroad, higher education institutions may forget the core principles of intercultural education*, which are to render mobility an opportunity for reflecting on one’s own and others’ identities, for developing critical thinking, and for promoting the principles of social justice and anti-discrimination.” Beaven & Borghetti (2015).

2.3 Laissez-faire vs. constructivist approach

The Erasmus Mundus Intercultural Competence (EMIC) project, a recent European Commission funded research project which ran from October 2013 – April 2015, aimed to explore intercultural issues Erasmus Mundus students were facing and:

“...to develop an integrated learning programme that will help students deal with issues of cultural diversity and enable them to use intercultural contexts to their advantage.”

Although the existence of this project might imply a laissez-faire approach to intercultural learning on the Erasmus programmes prior to this, it would seem to be a step towards a new approach in the era of Erasmus+.

Researchers reviewing whether students learn better when left to their own devices while on study abroad or whether a constructivist approach works better, advocate proactive intervention of educators in student learning. These recent studies suggest the means by which the student might return home suitably ‘improved’ (i.e., in terms of the development of intercultural awareness). A strong theme in this literature (and not just coming out of US studies looking at island study abroad programmes) is the need for intercultural training, cultural mentoring and guided reflection to achieve intercultural development (Pedersen, 2009, p. S74; Pedersen 2010, p. 79; Jackson, 2009, p. S69; and Vande Berg, 2009, p. S21).

Other examples of programme design variables for which manipulation is also proposed include: psychological preparation to tolerate ambiguity and to be more competent with cultural difference (Abarbanel, 2009); pre-arrival linguistic and intercultural communication skills development and institutional support post-arrival (Kormos, Csizér, & Iwaniec, 2014); type of housing, required language use, language exchange with a local student and more (Engle & Engle, 2004, p. 222 – eight components identified with two specific goals in mind: acquisition of French as a foreign language and the development of cross-cultural sensitivity and skills); and the duration of the sojourn (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012; Pedersen, 2009; and Vande Berg, 2009, p. S15).

2.4 An inconclusive picture

Taking a closer look, the following six comparative ‘study abroad - at home’ studies provide more of a flavour of the concerns about student mobility, whilst also revealing that results are inconclusive. Two found greater gains in intercultural development amongst study abroad participants / those with overseas experience than a control group at home / with no overseas experience (Vande Berg, 2009; Hismanoglu, 2011); two did not (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). In fact, Pedersen (2010) found gains only when study abroad was combined with intercultural pedagogy, Hismanoglu (2011) found education assisted development i.e., the gain was higher, and Behrnd & Porzelt (2012) suggested the no gain found may be due to lack of training. (See Sections 1.2 and 5.4.2 for more on Bennett’s DMIS and the IDI.)

Turning to the first study to be considered: Vande Berg (2009)’s Georgetown Consortium Study (and as more fully discussed in Vande Berg, Paige, & Connor-Linton, 2009). This was a four-year study designed to measure the intercultural and second language learning of more than 1300 US undergraduates studying on 61 study abroad programmes and which used the eight

components identified by Engle & Engle (2004, p. 222 - see Section 2.3 above) as independent variables.

Vande Berg found that on average the study abroad participants *did* make significantly greater gains in their intercultural development than control group of students at home (gains in intercultural development were measured using pre- and post-IDI). However, Vande Berg makes the point that too many students did not learn significantly more than control students. They: “did not or could not take advantage of the intercultural learning opportunities that presumably presented themselves” (p. S20). However, those who met with a cultural mentor during their sojourn ‘very often’ or ‘often’ showed significantly greater gains than those who met ‘never’, ‘rarely’ or ‘sometimes’. And, students enrolled on studies designed to promote their intercultural learning made significant gains.

The same study identifies programme design elements and learner characteristics which were significantly associated with gains in intercultural learning abroad. For example, the study found that duration of study abroad was significantly associated with IDI gains abroad. From a gender perspective, females made statistically significant gains whilst male students made no more gains in their intercultural learning than control students at home, and in fact their IDI scores decreased abroad. And also, students enrolled directly at host universities (i.e., non-island study abroad programmes) developed interculturally significantly less than those on island programmes (i.e., with other US students). Vande Berg calls for intervention where students are put in the challenging learning environments of a non-island programme (p. S22).

Pedersen (2010), in a study assessing intercultural effectiveness outcomes in a year-long study abroad island programme, found that mere participation in study abroad *did not* lead to more intercultural learning. Three groups were compared (with change measured using IDI pre- and post- study abroad): study abroad with intercultural effectiveness and diversity pedagogy (group 1); study abroad without training (group 2); and a control group at home also with no training (group 3). Statistically significant difference was found between group 1 (the intervention group), including at all levels on the IDI subscales, and the other groups. Students did not move along the DMIS (as measured by IDI) by mere participation in study abroad (i.e., group 2) and, in fact, their results mirrored group 3 who studied at home. Results also indicated that the presence of previous travel experience had an impact on whether a student moved along the DMIS, whilst other variables measured, including whether they spoke a second language, did not have an impact on their IDI change scores. (Gender, work and extra-curricular activities,

family stays, keeping a journal, and significant friendships were also found to have no impact.) This study concludes that:

“This data suggests that *if* intercultural effectiveness is a goal of study abroad, we need to do much more than send students abroad to study. We need to look at quality beyond the academic curriculum we are offering. We need to work with students during their experience using guided reflection and intercultural pedagogy to help them to grow interculturally from that experience. It is this intentional work that will ultimately facilitate global citizenship.”

Interestingly, from the perspective of whether intercultural awareness can simply be taught and/or whether context matters, Pedersen (2010) states that it is unclear whether the intercultural education alone facilitated the changes in group 1 or if it was the intercultural education plus study abroad. This is something that a control group at home receiving intercultural pedagogy would have addressed and indeed Pedersen includes under recommendations for further research.

The students in group 1 (i.e., those with the intentional intervention: a Psychology of ‘Group Dynamics’ course for one term) had the benefit of intercultural support during their sojourn, including cultural education, guided reflection ‘just in time’, and intercultural coaching. The pedagogy focused on “the social construction of ‘difference’” and the DMIS model was incorporated into the curriculum as:

“...a way of understanding the development of such polarized conceptualizations of ‘other’ and moving beyond toward an understanding of the complexity of individual and group identity.” (p. 73).

Activities were intended to decrease the human tendency to ‘group’ and ‘categorise’. The intervention that group 1 received is described by Pedersen in detail (p. 73) and was varied, to the extent that investigating exactly what amongst the pedagogy facilitated the change is included under the recommendations for further research. The students in group 1 also met with their instructor for 20 minutes during the first week of the course for a 20 minute interpretation of their IDI profile and were then encouraged to focus on aspects of their IDI “primary orientation” that might help them to grow interculturally.

Pedersen (2009) presented the results of the year-long programme mentioned above in less detail in this earlier paper under the title: “Teaching towards an ethnorelative worldview through psychology study abroad”. Results of another study were also presented in this 2009 paper, which likewise included pedagogy during study abroad. This other study was a two week study abroad in psychology. It included cultural comparative training, with an emphasis on multiple perspectives, and on-site facilitated reflection. Change was measured with pre- and post-IDI, and although the study *did not* find a significant difference overall (i.e., in the pre-/post- Developmental Scale (DS) of the group compared with a control group), there was a significant change at the level of Denial and Defense. The same course was taught at home (as part of a different study) and there were no significant changes on the IDI sub-scales for those participants. Pedersen concludes on this 2 week study that study abroad works when combined with the intercultural backup outlined above, with students less likely to view the world in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’. (There was no control group studying abroad not receiving the intercultural support.)

Interestingly, Pedersen compares the short term 2-week study abroad group (i.e., an intervention group) in this study, with the year-long study abroad group with no intervention (i.e., as reported in this 2009 paper and also as considered in more detail in her 2010 paper above). The short term 2-week study abroad group changed more pre- to post-test than the year-long study abroad group with no intervention. Pedersen concludes that her results indicate that intentional intervention during study abroad makes a difference in intercultural growth and that duration facilitates even more development.

Behrnd & Porzelt (2012), in a similar vein, compared (using questionnaires) the intercultural competence of students with and without experiences abroad (non-island study abroad). Two studies *did not* demonstrate a statistically significant difference for being abroad, although higher scores in intercultural competence were found with a longer duration of stay abroad. That no significant difference was found was felt not to indicate that being abroad does not enhance intercultural learning at all, but that arguably being abroad without intercultural training does not necessarily foster intercultural competence. Again designs with a third group receiving intercultural training whilst on study abroad would have allowed the researchers to disentangle variables. However, the studies were conducted ex-post-facto and it is a limitation that the researchers themselves flag.

Hismanoglu (2011), in a quantitative study seeking to explore how linguistic proficiency, overseas experience (this was broader than study abroad) and formal education are related to the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence (the instrument used was an in-house questionnaire), found that those students who had had overseas experience *did* have higher levels of the competence and that formal cultural education assisted in the development of this.

Although the studies show an inconclusive picture about the benefits of study abroad alone, a strong theme arising out of these studies is the effect of the implementation of pedagogy, cultural mentoring or guided reflection. The final study reviewed here is not a comparative 'study abroad - at home' study: there was no control group at home. Indeed there was also no group on study abroad not receiving the intervention. However, it is a study which advocates the use of pre-, during, and post-intervention, whereas the studies outlined above, where they have intervened, have only put support in place for *during* study abroad (or, in the case of Hismanoglu's study, the intervention was *after* any overseas experience). Jackson (2009) looked at intercultural learning on a short-term sojourn. The pre-sojourn preparation lasted 14 weeks for a 5-week study abroad of Chinese students in England. This pre-sojourn preparation included classes in intercultural communication, ethnographic research, English literature, and strategies for daily life with an English host family (for example, how to deal with culture shock and politeness norms). The learning whilst on study abroad included cultural studies courses, debriefing sessions where students were encouraged to raise aspects of the host culture that they found confusing, unsettling or interesting, and ethnographic courses. Back home the students wrote a last entry in the diary they had been keeping about their stay and re-entry experiences. Change was measured with pre- and post-IDI. The post-sojourn administration of the IDI revealed that the group moved from the first to the second half of Minimization.

The findings of Vande Berg (2009), Pedersen (2010), and Hismanoglu (2011) specifically in relation to target language context are set out in Section 3.7, in order to consider whether gains have been seen to accrue in intercultural awareness when, in addition, a language is studied as a second language.

2.5 Stereotyping reinforcement

Related to the concerns about whether mobility alone is enough, are studies which have found stereotyping reinforcement, with students returning home with higher levels of ethnocentrism (Jackson, 2009, p. S59 citing Jackson, 2008). Indeed Tusting, Crawshaw, & Callen (2002) entitled their study: “I know ‘cos I was there!: how residence abroad students use personal experience to legitimate cultural generalizations.” Not only does this raise concerns about lack of support pre- and during study abroad, but also what guidance is in place for students when they arrive home.

2.6 A migratory elite?

If study abroad is about training a post-industrial workforce for the global economy, it is relevant to consider who is benefiting. Are the study abroad students a true cross-section of the students in their home countries, or is this experience being taken up by those who are already reasonably fluent in the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to interact with others from another country? 4% of all students in participating countries in Europe receive a grant during studies to go abroad (European Commission, 2013).

Murphy-Lejeune (2002) explored European student mobility and, taking a qualitative look at 50 students on three distinct study abroad programmes looked for a profile of the students taking up the challenge of mobility. What Murphy-Lejeune found (as cited in Kinginger (2009, p. 200)) was a ‘migratory elite’ and used the term ‘mobility capital’ for the skill set they already have access to when they arrive in a new location. These skills included second-language competence high enough to study or work in the new environment, and specific attitudes and capacities relevant to living abroad. These skills arose from frequent overseas travel, families of mixed language heritage and/or expatriate professionals, possibly having lived in a border area, and with an open house welcoming visitors from different cultures.

We have now seen where the phenomenon under consideration intersects with study abroad research, and given the title of this present study, that might be viewed as sufficient background. ‘Hidden’ within the title, however, is the question of whether language matters.

CHAPTER 3

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND INTERCULTURAL STUDIES

Whilst this study addresses the phenomenon of intercultural awareness in the context of study abroad, a second context – that of learning a language as a second language (i.e., learning in the target location) – may also be at play. This Chapter 3 flags the friction between multilingualism policies and the emergence of a lingua franca; briefly outlines the interactionist approach to second language acquisition, suggesting towards the end of the chapter that its mechanisms - such as language input, output and negotiation of meaning - may help explain how culture may be accessed *through* words; explains how the idea of finding culture *in* words has been challenged; describes the changed language learning educational landscape; highlights that within formal instruction foreign language pedagogy the need for cultural invention has been recognised; mentions English medium instruction (EMI) in the context of internationalisation; focuses on intercultural awareness gains (or not) seen in a second language acquisition context during study abroad; and proposes that, within the context of study abroad, we are experiencing a paradigm shift.

3.1 Battle between the lingua franca and multilingualism

The European strategy towards multilingualism grew out of a *White Paper* “Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society” (Commission of the European Communities, 1995). From this point onwards the European approach to CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) began to take shape. The *White Paper* proposed the formula 2 + 1 (i.e., all European citizens should be able to use their own language plus two others). Importantly, the goal of two other languages left room for another non-native language in addition to English. According to Pérez-Vidal (2010, p. 1), the mobility schemes for students (Erasmus, Comenius and Leonardo) are one of the central and most acclaimed features of the European linguistic policy towards multilingualism.

For the global village we now live in, English has emerged as the lingua franca (Alptekin, 2002, p. 57) and this is in some ways at odds with Europe’s linguistic policy towards multilingualism. Not only is English increasingly accepted as the common language in academia, business, medicine and tourism, but also many university courses across Europe are taught in English. At the beginning of the millennium, Crystal (2003) suggested that 1.5 billion people (around a

quarter of the world's population) were fluent or competent in English (p. 6) and referred to a British Council estimate that 1 billion people were engaged in learning English (p. 68).

For this reason, motivations for learning and communicating in other languages may well have altered, perhaps narrowing the scope of interest in acquiring intercultural awareness for those already competent in the lingua franca.

On the one hand, the Council of Europe Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures proposed two over-arching global competences. C1: competence in managing linguistic and cultural communication in a context of "otherness" (in which languages and cultures different from one's own are encountered) and C2: competence in the construction and broadening of a plural linguistic and cultural repertoire (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 32).

On the other hand, there is concern that learning about cultures is a one-way street with English culture in its various forms dominating. Indeed Aptekin (2002, p. 62) argues that it is a global culture - rather than overloading on American, English and Australian culture - that we should consider incorporating into language teaching. Arguably then, there is a global culture that sits side by side with the global lingua franca.

This interplay between learning other languages and the increasing use of the lingua franca is evident in the context of study abroad, as shall be seen in the remainder of this chapter.

3.2 Interactionist approach

Whilst it may not seem immediately obvious why considering aspects of a specific theoretical approach to second language acquisition (SLA) might be relevant to this present study on intercultural awareness, its application will become increasingly evident as this chapter progresses. The theoretical approach to be explained (albeit in a simplified manner) is that of the interactionists.

Interaction is the hypothesis about SLA which considers a number of mechanisms to underlie the acquisition of second languages, and *conversational interaction* to be the locus of learning. As a formula, we could say:

interaction = input (i.e., exposure to language) + output (i.e., production of language)
+ feedback (i.e., arising out of the interaction)

For the interaction hypothesis, *comprehensible* input is important for language learning. Feedback, in its broadest sense, is where information is provided to a learner that their utterance is correct or incorrect. In Gass's view (2013, pp. 348 – 349, citing Gass, 2003, p. 224), interaction research: "...takes as its starting point the assumption that language learning is stimulated by communicative pressure and examines the relationship between communication and acquisition and the mechanisms (for example, noticing and attention) that mediate between them". Interaction also involves negotiation and recasts³.

The interactionist approach evolved out five hypotheses developed by Krashen in the 1970s and 1980s, known collectively as the monitor model (or the input hypothesis). Although mostly discredited for lack of empirical evidence, the hypotheses have been influential in language learning, especially in the US. The hypotheses put primary importance on the *comprehensible* input to which learners are exposed. According to the input hypothesis, to be useful for learning, *comprehensible* input needs to be slightly more advanced than the learner's current level of grammatical knowledge. Krashen defined the learner's current knowledge as *i* and the next stage as *i + 1*. (For Krashen language output did not have any effect on a learner's ability.)

Indeed the SALA Project identified a continuum of language acquisition contexts from: (a) formal instruction involving training the learner, (b) CLIL with a mix of training and communication (and following Ament & Pérez-Vidal (2015), EMI – as the Higher Education equivalent to CLIL - could now also be inserted in the continuum), and (c) study abroad which was described as a natural situation of immersion and viewed as essentially Krashen's monitor model (Pérez-Vidal, 2010, p. 6).

3.3 Culture in words

Falk & Kanach (2002, p. 166) state that language is the key to cultural understanding, adding that whilst Americans are able to conduct business in the lingua franca with the Chinese and Russians, they deprive themselves of levels of social interaction through their monolingualism. The Modern Language Association (2012) describes language learning as a portal to: "literatures, cultures, historical perspectives, and human experiences that constitute the human record". Other studies approaching interculturality directly from the perspective of language, talk of cultural messages in the act of communication (Miquel & Sans, 2004), the isomorphic

³ Attention and noticing, negotiation, and recasts appear in the table of defined terms.

nature of interculturality and language learning (Liddicoat & Scarino (2013, p. 48) citing Liddicoat (2004)), language being the privileged medium through which cultural messages are formed and communicated (Barker, 2003, p. 75), and language and culture being inseparable (Kramsch, 2006, p. 252).

However, this viewpoint has been challenged as too simplistic when considering how language learning can contribute to a learner's intercultural development. Durocher (2007, p. 155) makes the point, for example, that: "studying a foreign language does not, in and of its self, cure ethnocentrism and make students ethnorelative". And for Liddicoat & Scarino (2013; p. 48) there is a constant process of "...returning to the contextualized act of communication" for confirmation of meanings, to provide interpretations, and to monitor emerging understanding. Fantini (2006; p. 48) talks about a complex of abilities needed to develop intercultural competence, of which one is target language proficiency.

3.4 Changed educational landscape

This present study was carried out against the backdrop of a recently changed educational landscape, behind which, from a language learning perspective, sits the quest for authenticity and the affordance context gives for meaningful interaction.

Indeed in many respects, the international experience has come to those who currently stay at home: more than 90% (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, p. 7). With huge investment in Europe and beyond, the mobility of students has increased. Many university courses across Europe are taught in English (following a combination of the Schengen Agreement, the Bologna Process, and various European Regulations which have combined to promote the mobility and study abroad of students across Europe). English has become the lingua franca and provided a means, other than the local language, of students engaging with others across diverse cultures. More students have experienced CLIL or EMI at school or university, where subjects other than languages (say History or Geography) are taught through a second language. Interculturality has been inserted into foreign language classrooms (e.g., in published classroom textbooks) and by some universities as a subject to be taught. And students have become more extracurricularly mobile: with overseas work experience and other travel (e.g., for learning languages and participating in sports).

3.5 Formal instruction

Recent studies challenge the idea that simply learning a language is an automatic window onto another culture. Recognising that cultural invention at home may well be required, interest has grown in moving intercultural exchange into the foreign language learning classroom.

Seifert (2009) discusses the “Colored Glasses” project in Germany, which aims to enhance intercultural education by sensitizing high school students to topics such as stereotypes, discrimination and intercultural understanding. Garrett-Rucks (2013) found a sizeable growth in American students’ intercultural sensitivity (these were beginner French language learners) following an experiment where they posted online discussions in their L1 about their cultural instruction. The students did this in their native tongue as they had limited proficiency in the target language. (This was a discourse analysis study using Bennett’s DMIS assessment model.) Rivers (2011, p. 850), in a Japanese study of 120 English as a foreign language (EFL) students, considered imagined intercultural contact encounters to have the potential to challenge stereotypes and intergroup dynamics.

Research in the area of formal instruction has also addressed whether there are exploitable intercultural contact opportunities at home which have a role to play. Kormos & Csizér (2007), in a study investigating what sort of intercultural contact Hungarian school children have, found that whilst tourism did not create many contact opportunities, the students interviewed did regard contact situations as beneficial for the development of their linguistic and socio-linguistic competence, increasing their motivation, and decreasing their anxiety.

3.6 English medium instruction

EMI is still a new context for language learning. A recent survey revealed 2,400 EMI programmes taught entirely in English (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015, p. 49 citing Wächter & Maiworm, 2008). That having been noted, within the context of the internationalisation of universities, EMI is becoming more than instruction in the medium of English within a random intercultural context. Increasingly, ‘local’ students learning in this way may well have the opportunity to test their acts of communication: within their classes there may be native English speakers who travel with their culture. However, on the SALA Project’s spectrum of contexts, EMI would be further removed from opportunities for learning from cultural context than study abroad, as, following the interactionist model summarised above (in Section 3.2), the

opportunities for input-output-interaction are restricted to the classroom, while during study abroad these opportunities are accessible to the learner both inside and, most importantly, also outside the classroom.

3.7 Study abroad and second language learning

The SALA Project considered study abroad not only from various language acquisition perspectives (for example, the effects on phonology, and complexity, accuracy and fluency, and the role of length of stay), but also in terms of the development of intercultural awareness. The SALA Project's longitudinal study (Merino & Avello, 2014) looked at to what extent the cultural beliefs of a group of Catalan/Spanish learners of EFL ($n=28$) changed after a three-month study abroad programme. Intercultural awareness was found to increase immediately following study abroad, but to decrease 15 months after the participants' return from study abroad. Data from this group were compared with another study abroad group: native speakers of English studying abroad in Spain ($n=26$). No significant difference was found between the two groups, which Merino & Avello (p. 304) conjecture meant that study abroad programmes: "...seem to be effective tools for the development of intercultural awareness irrespective of the learners' L1 and L2 profiles...".

Contrary to the frameworks of Byram and Bennett (see Section 1.2), but note that there was no cultural intervention when the sojourners returned, Merino & Avello state (p. 301) that:

"It is apparent, therefore, that the development of intercultural awareness can only be efficiently achieved through interaction in the L2 community, and going back to one's own country reduces the opportunities for interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds (in spite of the multicultural atmosphere of cities such as Barcelona)."

In terms of the interest of applied linguists in intercultural awareness, Pérez-Vidal (2014b, p. 25) notes that a language learner needs to be aware of cultural differences in the target language culture if they are to be a successful communicator in their non-native language. Indeed intercultural contact has been highlighted as influential on language learning motivation (Kormos et al, 2014; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005, p. 328).

The following three wider studies were outlined in Section 2.4, but additional details are provided here to consider the specific issue in question, namely whether gains have been seen to

accrue in intercultural awareness when a language is studied as a second language, i.e., which is the situation at work in study abroad. As opposed to formal instruction at home, in which learners learn the target language as a foreign language, as it is not spoken in the environment.

Vande Berg (2009) in his Georgetown Consortium Study (1300 undergraduates studying on 61 study abroad programmes), found both that study abroad students who enrolled in core courses taught in the target language outperformed in terms of intercultural development those that took these courses in English, and that the intercultural gains of students who enrolled in second language classes whilst studying abroad were significantly higher than those who did not continue their formal study of the language. Pedersen (2010) found that whether students experiencing study abroad spoke a second language or not did not impact on their IDI scores. Hismanoglu (2011), in exploring how linguistic proficiency is related to the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence, found that students with higher linguistic proficiency gave more acceptable responses in communicative situations than students with lower linguistic proficiency (Takahashi & Beebe (1987) are referenced for their finding that higher proficiency learners softened their refusals with modal adverbs). Hismanoglu argues that the results also support the idea that L2 learning contexts (i.e., where the student had the benefit of overseas experience) provided richer input than foreign language learning contexts: “for learners’ exhibiting convergence to native speaker pragmatic behaviour”.

3.8 Culture *through* words

Whilst there is a view that language and culture are not synonymous (see Section 3.3 above), what more does the research say about whether or not input is indeed richer in a second language learning context, and whether an individual can get at culture *through* language? From what we have seen so far, it is a mix. Research work on introducing interculturality into the formal language classroom at the very least implicitly says that language is not a window onto a culture. With study abroad research, again the results are inconsistent, but offer a bit more promise. For Vande Berg (2009) language was at play in the acquisition of intercultural awareness, and in Merino & Avello’s study (2014) the subjects were EFL learners whose intercultural awareness was found to increase immediately following study abroad (although it was not retained). In respect of a theorist, for Byram (1997, pp. 70 – 71): “...someone with Intercultural Communicative Competence is able to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language”, whilst someone with only Intercultural Competence does not use the target language but has: “...the ability to interact in their own language with people

from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about intercultural communication, their attitudes of interest in otherness and their skills in interpreting, relating and discovering...”.

In the context of study abroad, this would appear to make sense. Not all study abroad students arrive needing to learn the language. Some are fluent. For some, it is their native tongue. Study abroad students from Latin America who speak Spanish have more obvious opportunities for accessing the culture they might find in any city in Spain than study abroad students from Germany attending an A2 Spanish class. But clearly not all study abroad students exploit the intercultural opportunities which come their way. For those from similar cultures, they may not be as curious or their identity may not be being challenged in quite the same way. Lack of curiosity could hinder any student in their intercultural development.

Bringing this chapter full circle, has this – accessing culture *through* words - anything to do with the interactionist theory? Input, output and feedback are mechanisms used in an SLA theory. If for a moment, however, we adopt the theory to take a look at intercultural awareness acquisition (i.e., something for which it was not intended), its mechanisms might help explain why the second language learning context may prove beneficial for intercultural learning, as well as for language acquisition.

What does learning a language as a second language have to do with intercultural awareness? With second language learning there is the context of being in the target language location, a context which is very different from a foreign language learning classroom, or even an EMI classroom (although arguably EMI in the context of a university ecosystem or cosmopolitan city ought to be providing some context). When a student is on study abroad, and the better their level of language, the more potential opportunities they have for gaining access to intercultural learning.

Whilst the student is language learning, according to the interactionists, the mechanisms of input, output etc. are at work. Arguably, there is intercultural learning going on in a similar manner too. The same context that gives the learner input (for example, watching the news on TV, buying food at the market, students chatting in the library) also gives him intercultural input. Each time s/he decides to be brave and speak the native language (output), there is a real context where s/he can, for example, watch his/her listener’s body language for clues that s/he is pitching what s/he is saying at the right level of formality, with the right tone, or simply s/he

receives direct feedback on this. And negotiation of meaning is not just working out with his/her interlocutor what the words were intended to mean at a superficial level, but there is a placing of those words in an intercultural context too. However, whilst these mechanisms would appear to be useful devices to consider how intercultural awareness might be acquired, gains in this competence are not the same as gains in language. Indeed Jackson (2009) cites Kramersch (1998), Byram (1997, 2008) and Park (2006) as all cautioning that: "...it is naïve to assume that intercultural competence develops at the same rate as linguistic ability in a foreign tongue."

Somewhere in the mix though, however we cut this, is language. At some point, study abroad students, wherever they are from, will need to communicate with others outside their immediate peer group and within the target language community. There is what the interactionists refer to as a *communicative pressure*. They are able to do this by whatever means they have open to them: the target language (at the level they have); signs (gestures such as pointing); the lingua franca; another language; or through a third party.

From a classroom perspective linguists were right to spot that communicative competence was not enough, something more was needed. But this is possibly the wrong way to look at it from the study abroad context. Arguably, in the context of study abroad, it is not that more was needed, but that there simply is more when learning a language as a second language (i.e., learning some students choose to pursue during study abroad). In the context of second language learning, each of the interactionist language acquisition mechanisms come gift-wrapped in little-c culture.

3.9 A summary: towards a new paradigm

Returning now to the question of whether the mobility of students within Europe is enough to produce an interculturally aware workforce, and whether language learning in the context of study abroad acts as a significant factor in intercultural development. The findings of the studies are not clear. As we have seen in this review, there are many variables to consider. Jackson (2009, p. S60) confirms that study abroad researchers are finding that simply living in the target language location does not necessarily spur growth in intercultural sensitivity, or indeed second language proficiency.

There is clearly a distinct flavour within the research set out here that, for the acquisition of intercultural awareness, mobility may not be enough and, indeed, that mobility plus second language competence may not be enough either.

To conclude Part I of this dissertation, Chapter 3 has introduced the idea that language is not so 'hidden' after all when considering intercultural awareness in the context of study abroad. If study abroad is intended to be a naturalistic language learning environment representing Krashen's $i+1$, there is a suggestion within the research that perhaps students are arriving with insufficient linguistic skills. That the environment turns out to be $i+>1$ (i.e., the input is incomprehensible). Kormos et al (2014, p. 164) flag the need for pre-arrival linguistic and intercultural communication skills development to be considered in programme design⁴.

Study abroad has moved on since linguists started researching these temporary immigrants. The focus is not now on students majoring in learning languages sojourning elsewhere to develop their linguistic skills. 41% of Erasmus students study language or philology (Collentine, 2009, p. 221), which clearly means that 59% do not.

As well as some of this new wave of students having inadequate language skills, perhaps with the growing number of university courses across Europe offered taught in English, there is an implicit permission for international students to use the lingua franca outside their classrooms. However, this should not preclude them from developing interculturally (there are many cultures to access in the context of internationalised universities).

Perhaps, as already suggested, semiotics and multi-modality come into play too, with students looking for clues other than verbal ones. Kramersch (2006, p. 251) argues that exposure to authentic and comprehensible language input is not enough in today's world and what is now needed by students is symbolic competence: "focusing on the meaning of form in all its manifestations" (she mentions: linguistic, textual, visual, acoustic and poetic). Alongside the

⁴ This arose out of a study which analysed changes in language learning attitudes and motivation, along with the frequency and type of intercultural contact of international students of English over the course of an academic year. The results indicated participants engaging in less frequent spoken contact at the end of the period but in more written and media contact, and this was alongside a decrease in students' motivation and language learning attitudes.

lingua franca this could 'top up' the capacity of students to gain intercultural awareness through being present in a country, but without knowing the local language.

PART II: THE PRESENT STUDY

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRESENT STUDY

4.1 The research gap

The challenge to the thinking that there is an automatic intercultural benefit to be gained from studying abroad is relatively new. Whilst studies are raising valid concerns about whether simple mobility (i.e., an alternative cultural context alone) is enough to progress intercultural awareness during educational sojourns overseas, they are, as yet, inconclusive. Generally addressed is whether intercultural awareness develops from *pre- to post-* study abroad; usually employed is a form of questionnaire to ascertain this; sometimes there is a control group at home, sometimes not; and often (but definitely not always) the focus has been on US island programmes. Indeed the comment has been made that most research on study abroad has focused on the American experience (Collentine, 2009, p. 229). The different language learning context study abroad affords has also sometimes been considered.

The gap identified for this present study then is whether mobility and a second language learning context make a difference during European study abroad. In addition, the data was gathered in the form of students' thoughts – collected through the medium of a written composition – on cultural habits. To this author's knowledge, the only other study to have used written compositions as the instrument in an interculturality study is Merino & Avello (2014), and in this case the study abroad students were back at home when the data was collected⁵.

This study therefore explores the intercultural awareness of three groups of students. The first, referred to as the study abroad group (or SAN), were from a range of universities across Europe (and beyond) who were actually present on a study abroad programme (i.e., in the *other* culture) when the data was collected at the Catalan university where the study was conducted. The second, referred to as the study abroad before group (or SAB), were home students from the Catalan university and had earlier enjoyed a study abroad experience. The third, referred to as the study abroad never group (SA0), were also home students from the Catalan university and

⁵ Note, however, that other forms of written instruments have been used, for example, analysis of reports written by returning Erasmus students (Papatsiba, 2003 as cited in Merino & Avello, 2014).

had never experienced study abroad. The data was collected at the same university whilst both the study abroad and the at home groups were experiencing, respectively - due to the international population of the Catalan university and Barcelona in general - opportunities for intercultural contact aided by second language learning (of Spanish and/or Catalan) or opportunities for intercultural contact aided by foreign language learning (which additionally was the global lingua franca i.e., English).

Clearly this choice in direction was influenced to some extent by the fact that this research was undertaken to complete the SALA Project and, as the data had already been collected, it came with certain limitations in terms of what could and could not be asked of it. In particular, the data was collected only once: hence the reference in the title of this study to the compositions being 'snapshot'. However, an experiment to observe data subjects *during* their actual experience – unlike other studies which have generally looked at the data subjects once they have returned – is valid, especially given that a study has shown that intercultural awareness can wear off (Merino & Avello, 2014). In addition, the data subjects do not just happen to be studying a language as a second language (i.e., studied in the target location) or a language as a foreign language (i.e., studied in a classroom at home). This is also relevant to the experiment. And so, whilst on one level, this study is about study abroad versus at home, on another it is about whether any gains seen in intercultural awareness wear off when back home, and on a further level, it is about intercultural gains in a second language acquisition context versus a foreign language acquisition context.

And so despite the potential levelling out of the playing field at home and abroad, and despite the fact that researchers are calling for more to be done (particularly in relation to intercultural pedagogy), the question here is whether study abroad in Barcelona was enough to give the study abroad students the edge, whilst acknowledging that all the data subjects were also language learners. And then, in the discussion, to propose reasons as to why those studying abroad did have the edge, or why they did not.

4.2 The research questions

For the purposes of the research questions below, 'now' means the time the data was collected i.e., in 2012.

Research question 1 (RQ1):

What is the impact of study abroad on levels of intercultural awareness during European study abroad?

RQ1.1:	Are study abroad students (i.e., $n=23$: those experiencing study abroad now (SAN) and those who have experienced it in the past (SAB)) more interculturally aware than at home students who have never experienced study abroad (SA0, $n=7$)?
Hypothesis 1.1:	Study abroad does have an impact on intercultural awareness, both in the short and the long term (i.e., there is a significant difference between the two groups), as mobility alone in the European non-island approach to study abroad does have a value in terms of intercultural awareness.
RQ1.2:	Are those experiencing study abroad now (SAN, $n=17$) more interculturally aware than those who have experienced it in the past (SAB, $n=6$)?
Hypothesis 1.2:	The SAN group, who are in the middle of study abroad, are not more interculturally aware than the SAB group, who no longer have cultural / language context (i.e., there is no significant difference between the short and long term effects of context, and over time intercultural awareness does not diminish – intercultural awareness is a ‘portable toolkit’).

Research question 2 (RQ2):

What is the impact of a second language learning context on levels of intercultural awareness during European study abroad?

RQ2.1:	Are those studying a language as a second language (SL/SAN, $n=17$) more interculturally aware than those studying a language as a foreign language (FL/(SAB + SA0), $n=13$)?
Hypothesis 2.1:	The SL group, who have opportunities for intercultural and language contact at the time of data collection, partly through learning the target language, but also through choosing to employ a mix of the lingua franca and semiotics in this context, are more interculturally aware than the FL group (i.e., there is a significant difference between the two learning contexts).

RQ2.2:	Are those studying a language as a second language (SL/SAN, $n=17$) more interculturally aware than those who have never studied a language as a second language (FL/SA0, $n=7$)?
Hypothesis 2.2:	The SL group, who have opportunities for intercultural and language contact at the time of data collection, partly through learning the target language, but also through choosing to employ a mix of the lingua franca and semiotics in this context, are more interculturally aware than the FL sub-group (i.e., there is a significant difference between the two learning contexts, especially when the FL learners have never studied a language as a second language).

Research question 3 (RQ3):

What is the impact of English level on levels of intercultural awareness during European study abroad?

RQ3:	Is there any association between the participants' level of English and their intercultural awareness?
Hypothesis 3:	There is an association between level of English and intercultural awareness, as having language ability affords cultural learning opportunities (where these are available), and also as someone who is more proficient in a language is able to express themselves in more subtle ways.

CHAPTER 5

METHODS

5.1 Design

Although the SALA Project has had a longitudinal pre-test/post-test design with four different collection times (Pérez-Vidal, 2014b, p. 34), the data for this present and final study of the SALA Project had only one collection point: during the time the SAN group of international students were participating in a study abroad programme at the Catalan university where the study was conducted.

The call for participation in the study was distributed to a total of 438 students at the Catalan university's language school. Of those, 322 were native Spanish/Catalan students learning English, and the rest were international students: 47 learning Catalan and 69 Spanish. 37 students contacted the researchers and, of those, 30 participants attended the research sessions. The data collection test was administered at either campus (depending on each student's preference) between the following dates: 29 – 31 May 2012.

Intercultural awareness was the dependent variable measured and the independent variables were either, depending on the research question asked: (a) the relevant study abroad or at home condition (SAN, SAB and SA0, either separately or grouped SAN+SAB and SAB+SA0), (b) the relevant learning context (SL, FL), or (c) the relevant level of English (Likert scale).

5.2 Participants

Data was therefore collected from students ($n=30$) studying at the Catalan university's language school. These participants were enrolled in language classes at the language school as supplementary study to their undergraduate or Masters' studies at the Catalan university, which were in a diverse range of subjects ($n=7$ were studying translation, languages or a joint honours including a language; and $n=23$ were studying subjects such as business administration, law, political science, journalism and biology).

There were more female ($n=21$) than male ($n=9$) participants.

For the purposes of this study, three groups were identified: SAN, SAB and SA0. All participants were non-native speakers of English.

SAN: Participants in the study abroad now group were from outside Spain ($n=17$). ($n=15$ were from EU Member States excluding the UK and Ireland, one was from Taiwan, and the other from Singapore.) All were non-native English speakers, however, $n=3$ of the group considered themselves to be bilingual with English as one of the languages: $n=2$ Chinese – English and $n=1$ Italian – English. These bilinguals were born in Taiwan, Singapore (where English is an official language) and The Netherlands. We included all of the international students within the SAN test group, but the special status of English for these participants is highlighted as the data collected was in English, and also this perhaps gave them an advantage when it came to communicating in the lingua franca. These international students were all learning Spanish and/or Catalan at the Catalan university's language school (only one was studying both) and were attending classes in the range A1 – B2.2 (Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)). ($n=8$ had had a previous study abroad experience.) The SAN group was composed of more females ($n=10$) than males ($n=7$), with an age range between 20 and 26 (mean=23.06, sd=1.82).

SAB: Participants in the study abroad before group ($n=6$) were born in Spain and were native speakers of Spanish and/or Catalan and/or French. $n=4$ considered themselves to be bilingual speakers: $n=3$ of Spanish and Catalan and $n=1$ of Catalan and French. These local students were all learning English at the Catalan university's language school and were attending classes in the range B2.2 – C1.2 (CEFR). They were mostly female: male ($n=1$) and female ($n=5$), with an age range between 19 and 22 (mean=20.50, sd=1.22).

SA0: Participants in the study abroad never group ($n=7$) were born in Spain and were native speakers of Spanish and/or Catalan. $n=1$ considered themselves to be bilingual speakers of Spanish and Catalan. These local students were all learning English at the Catalan university's language school and were attending classes in the range B2.1 – C1.2 (CEFR). They were mostly female: male ($n=1$) and female ($n=6$), with an age range between 18 and 22 (mean=20.14, sd=1.35).

5.3 Instruments

Two different data collection instruments were used. The main one was a composition test, used to assess the intercultural awareness of the participants. The topic of the composition was intended to tap into their cultural attitudes and beliefs, and was as follows:

“Someone who moves to a foreign country should always adopt the customs and way of life of this country, rather than holding on to his/her own customs”.

An individual linguistic profile questionnaire designed to gather personal and linguistic data was also completed by each of the participants. This included previous mobility experience and information on their language abilities. Part of the latter was a self-rating of their level of English on a Likert 1-7 scale for listening, speaking, reading and writing (1=beginner, 2=elementary, 3=intermediate, 4=upper intermediate, 5=advanced, 6=proficiency, 7=native-like/native). The self-ratings for written English were used as the language level data for RQ3. Whilst use of self-rating is widespread, a consideration is that it is known to be a subjective way of rating language competence. However, that this was the only available data on all of the participants' levels of English was one of the limitations which came with the data that the SALA Project had available for use on this present study.

5.4 Data analyses

Two models were adopted for the analysis of intercultural awareness (the dependent variable) in the written compositions.

In both cases, intercultural awareness was coded as a nominal variable with two levels: positive and negative (overall the participant was + *or* – *interculturally aware*).

The compositions were part of the SALA Project's corpus, stored on UPF's server following the university's current legal procedures, and had been typed into Word, with spelling and auto-correct disabled: errors were not corrected.

5.4.1 The SALA Project's model of analysis

The first model adopted in this present study is the model of analysis developed for the SALA Project (Merino & Avello, 2014, pp. 293 - 294). The model, with six categories known as 'macropropositions' M1 – M6, is reproduced here.

Figure 5.1 The SALA Project's model of analysis with extracts from the data

M1: Recognition of one's own and other people's cultural characteristics in terms of enrichment, exchange and sharing

I'm having the possibility to live in Spain and it's a totally different way of life of my previous one. I lived 12 months in Germany and 6 months in Austria. Now I'm feeling richer, I can see the difference between all these countries. For example a lot of people think that Austria and Germany have the same habits, but they don't know Austria is a mix of culture (Italian, German, Eastern Europe).

M2: Interaction with people from other cultures stimulates (auto)critical thinking

Recognizing one's way of living leads to a greater understanding of each person on this world; we have to abandon the old xenophobia, and adopt a more humane approach, in line with the recently globalized world.

M3: Empathy and motivation to interact with other cultures, despite certain moments of anxiety and uncertainty

When a person enters a new country its important to be open-minded and listen to people around you. Things will not always work out the way you are used to in your home-country, therefore its important to have patience and keep calm if weird situations occurs.

M4: Recognition of plural identities

I think it would be perfect if everyone could stick to this intermediate way: Adapt to the way of life of the new country, but still practice your own culture to some extent!

M5: Uni-directional thinking (assimilation and/or ethnocentric views)

A rejection of a custom can only take place after an adoption of the very same custom; living as locals.

M6: Definition of cultures in the form of stereotypes

In the Netherlands, people eat french fries with mayonaise, in Greece coffee is served cold, in Spain siesta is indispensable.

This was a new model created to analyse written discourse. Macropropositions M1 – M6 were decided upon: “through a recursive inductive and deductive approach to the data” from a mix of ideas adopted from existing theoretical models and what emerged from Merino & Avello’s data. Macropropositions M1 – M4 in the model are positive and M5 – M6 are negative. Following the rubric in Merino & Avello, to code the compositions using this model, each composition was broken into units of analysis (i.e., propositions, sentences or paragraphs). Each unit was classified as one of the six macropropositions within the model (and thereby each unit was assigned as positive or negative). The words beneath each macroproposition, which appear in italics in the model above, are extracts from the data collected during this present study. These are given as examples of how units of analysis from the compositions were classified within the model.

Although Merino & Avello had different data from this present study, it was not found necessary to amend the macropropositions in any way, probably as a result of the instrument used to create and then analyse data in the SALA Project being identical: i.e., written compositions on exactly the same topic. The compositions generally had a mix of macropropositions within them, i.e., of + *and* – *interculturally aware*. In this case (and following Merino & Avello), if half +1 macropropositions were positive, the composition was categorized as positive, and vice versa. In this way, each composition could be allocated an overall value: either positive or negative.

5.4.2 Bennett’s DMIS

The second model adopted by this present study is Bennett’s (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (or DMIS). A summary of the ways of experiencing difference is presented here.

Figure 5.2 Summary of the orientations within the DMIS**Ethnocentric**

Stage 1—Denial: For the individual his own culture is experienced as the only real one. If cultural difference is experienced it is associated with an undifferentiated *other*: a ‘foreigner’.

Stage 2—Defense: The individual reacts against the threat of other cultures by denigrating difference (“negative stereotyping”) or assuming his own culture is the only viable one: “The world is organized into ‘us’ and ‘them..’” (Hammer et al, 2003, p. 424).

Reversal phase: In some cases, the individual undergoes a reversal phase and ‘goes native’: his own culture is subject to disparagement. There is still a polarised view of the world (‘us’ and ‘them’), but his own culture is not seen as a threat. For individuals at this stage, Bennett (1986, p. 183) comments that this may seem like a more enlightened state.

Stage 3—Minimization: The individual overtly acknowledges cultural differences on the surface but culture difference is trivialised. As Bennett states (1986, p. 183): “The last-ditch attempt to preserve the centrality of one’s own world view involves an attempt to ‘bury’ difference under the weight of cultural similarities.”

Ethnorelative

Stage 4—Acceptance: The individual accepts and acknowledges cultural differences in relation to behaviour and values, but acceptance does not mean agreement: some cultural difference may still be judged negatively.

Stage 5—Adaptation: The individual develops the ability to perceive and behave appropriately in relation to another culture. There is a shift in his frame of reference (beyond merely cognitive) to other culturally diverse worldviews through empathy and pluralism.

Stage 6—Integration: The individual’s experience of self includes movement in and out of other worldviews. Bennett (1986, p. 186): “As the culmination of intercultural sensitivity, the stage of Integration suggests a person who experiences difference as an essential and joyful aspect of all life.”

The level of intercultural awareness reflected in each written composition was also assessed by placing the composition within the evaluation framework provided in the DMIS. This second model was employed as a checking process.

Not unlike Merino & Avello's (2014) two levels of positive and negative, Bennett's six dimensions of intercultural sensitivity fall within either: ethnocentric orientations or ethnorelative orientations, as also referred to in the literature review in Section 1.2 above. For ease of reference, the continuum representation of the DMIS is repeated here.

Figure 5.3 DMIS: stages of development with positive / negative code

Denial→	Defense→	Minimization→	Acceptance→	Adaptation→	Integration
ETHNOCENTRIC (negative code)			ETHNORELATIVE (positive code)		

What became apparent when coding units within the compositions as either positive and negative using Merino & Avello's macropropositions was that, although there was often a mix of + and – *interculturally aware*, there was an overall sense of the composition being, using Bennett's terminology, ethnocentric or ethnorelative. Each composition was therefore also allocated an overall orientation of Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation or Integration. In other words, Bennett's model was used in a more holistic way: if the orientation overall was ethnocentric, the composition was categorized as negative, and if the orientation overall was ethnorelative, the composition was categorized as positive (as noted on Figure 5.3 above).

This proved to be a helpful method of verifying the overall positive and negative categorisations using Merino & Avello's model. In all cases, assessment using the two different models concurred: if the composition had been allocated positive overall using Merino & Avello's model, the checking process using the DMIS did indeed verify that the composition was ethnorelative on the DMIS (and therefore positively coded) and vice versa.

5.4.3 Reliability

Following the analysis of all of the compositions for intercultural awareness using the two models set out above, inter- and intra-rater reliability were granted. *Inter-rater*: with a random

sample (20%) of the compositions, additional evaluation was carried out by an independent analyst. There was 91% agreement on the allocation of macropropositions within the compositions. Where there was disagreement on the allocation of a particular macroproposition, this did not affect in any of the compositions sampled the overall value (+ *and – interculturally aware*) already assigned to the composition. *Intra-rater*: Similarly, although there was slight movement in where the compositions were broken into units of analysis (i.e., propositions, sentences or paragraphs), this did not affect, in any of the compositions sampled (20%), the allocation of macropropositions to the units of analysis or the overall value (+ *and – interculturally aware*) already assigned to the composition.

5.4.4 Quantitative analyses

The dependent variable (intercultural awareness: coded + *and – interculturally aware*) and the independent variables (the relevant study abroad or at home condition (SAN, SAB and SA0, either separately or grouped SAN+SAB and SAB+SA0); the relevant learning context (SL, FL); and the relevant level of English (Likert scale) are all categorical variables (more precisely nominal variables).

For this reason, a two-way group-independence chi-square was performed to assess whether there was an association between the nominal variables in RQ1.1 – RQ3 i.e., whether there was a relationship between intercultural awareness and the relevant participant group membership. The alpha level was set at .05. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 19) was employed for the statistical analysis. The results were reported according to the reporting conventions in Larson-Hall (2010).

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

In this Chapter 6, the main findings of the present study on intercultural awareness are presented so as to address the three main research questions outlined in Chapter 4 i.e., in relation to whether the levels of the participants' intercultural awareness / sensitivity differed significantly according to their mobility, their language learning context, or their level of written English. Here the research questions and hypotheses are presented again, along with the quantitative results. The discussion on these is developed in Chapter 7. For completeness, some qualitative data is presented to give a flavour of what was analysed and the topic of intercultural awareness as expressed in the participants' own words.

6.1 The impact of study abroad

Research question 1 (RQ1):

What is the impact of study abroad on levels of intercultural awareness during European study abroad?

The first research question therefore concerned the impact of study abroad and to address this two questions were asked, on which statistical analysis was conducted.

RQ1.1

The first sub-question (RQ1.1) concerned the level of intercultural awareness as a function of the mobility context (i.e., studying abroad now (SAN) or at home now but had studied abroad before (SAB) *versus* at home and had never studied abroad (SA0)).

RQ1.1:	Are study abroad students (i.e., $n=23$: those experiencing study abroad now (SAN) and those who have experienced it in the past (SAB)) more intercultural aware than at home students who have never experienced study abroad (SA0, $n=7$)?
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Hypothesis 1.1:	Study abroad does have an impact on intercultural awareness, both in the short and the long term (i.e., there is a significant difference between the two groups), as mobility alone in the European non-island approach to study abroad does have a value in terms of intercultural awareness.
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A two-way group-independence chi-square was performed to assess the relationship between (a) group membership (study abroad experience (SAN + SAB) and no study abroad experience (SA0)) and (b) + *and – interculturally aware*. A contingency table for this data is shown below:

Group	+ interculturally aware	– interculturally aware
study abroad experience (SAN + SAB)	16	7
no study abroad experience (SA0)	5	2

The results were not statistical (fisher's exact test $X^2 = 0.009$, $df=1$, $p>.05$). Those who were studying now or had studied abroad before were not significantly more interculturally aware than those who have not. In other words, interculturally aware status was completely independent of a participant's study abroad experience.

The results were not significant but we can deduce which group is better than the other by looking at the pattern in the contingency table. 5 out of 7 participants in the SA0 group (71.4%) compared with 16 out of 23 in the (SAN + SAB) group (69.6%) are + *interculturally aware*.

RQ1.2

The second sub-question (RQ1.2) was included to look at the retention effects of study abroad i.e., whether those studying abroad now (SAN) have a higher level of intercultural awareness than those who studied abroad previously but are now at home (SAB).

RQ1.2:	Are those experiencing study abroad now (SAN, $n=17$) more interculturally aware than those who have experienced it in the past (SAB, $n=6$)?
Hypothesis 1.2:	The SAN group, who are in the middle of study abroad, are not more interculturally aware than the SAB group, who no longer have cultural / language context (i.e., there is no significant difference between the short and

	long term effects of context, and over time intercultural awareness does not diminish – intercultural awareness is a ‘portable toolkit’).
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A two-way group-independence chi-square was performed to assess the relationship between (a) group membership (study abroad experience now (SAN) and study abroad experience in the past (SAB)) and (b) + *and* – *interculturally aware*. A contingency table for this data is shown below:

Group	+ interculturally aware	– interculturally aware
study abroad experience now (SAN)	14	3
study abroad experience before (SAB)	2	4

The results were statistical (fisher’s exact test $X^2 = 5.033$, $df=1$, $p=.045$), with an effect size of $w = .47$, which is a medium effect size. In other words, interculturally aware status was dependent on a participant’s study abroad experience.

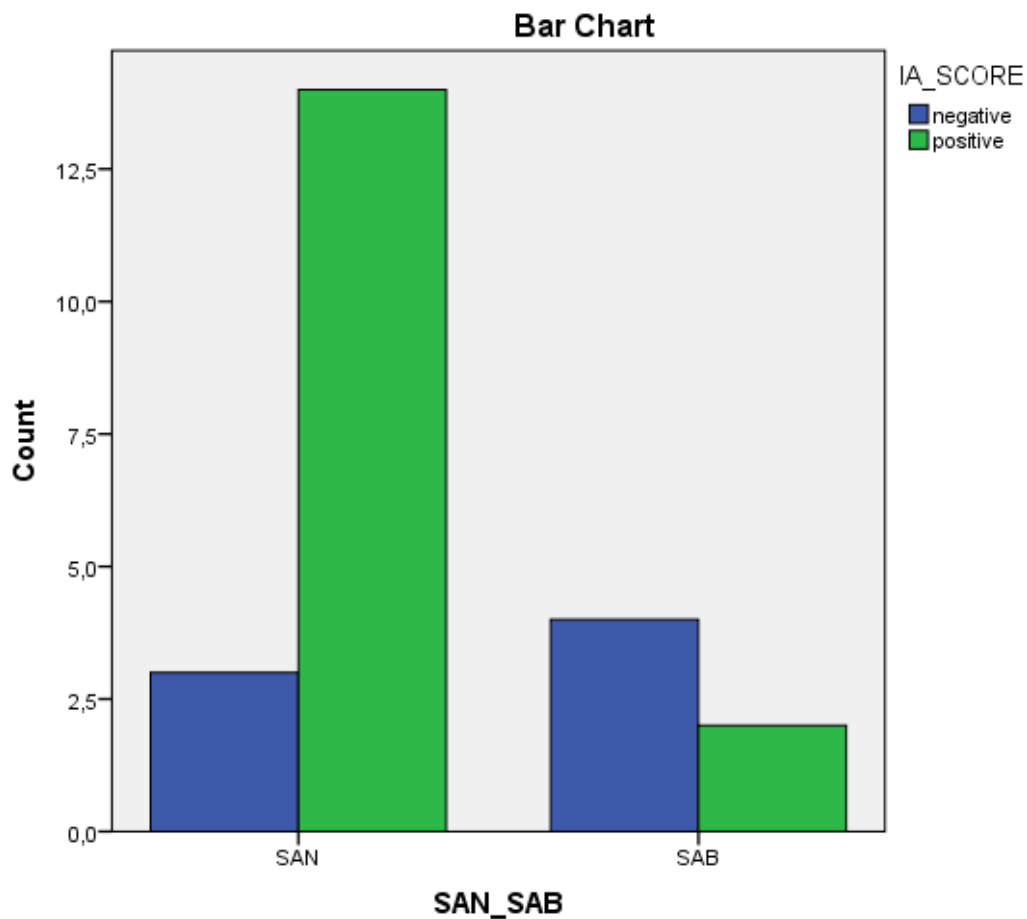
Since the chi-test is not a directional test, we need to look at the contingency table to understand the results. We can deduce which group is better than the other by looking at the pattern in the contingency table.

14 out of 17 participants in the SAN group (82.3%) compared with 2 out of 6 in the SAB group (33.3%) are + *interculturally aware*. Those who are studying abroad now were significantly more interculturally aware than those who had studied abroad in the past.

The odds of being + *interculturally aware* for the participants in the SAN group were 9.3 times higher than for the participants in the SAB group (odds ratio = $14/3 / 2/4 = 9.3$).

These results represented as a clustered bar chart:

Figure 6.1 Results from RQ1.2 as a bar chart



6.2 The impact of language learning context

Research question 2 (RQ2):

What is the impact of a second language learning context on levels of intercultural awareness during European study abroad?

The second research question therefore concerned the impact of the context of language learning and to address this two questions were asked, on which statistical analysis was conducted.

The following questions (RQ2.1 and RQ2.2) considered whether the levels of the participants' awareness / sensitivity differed significantly according to their language learning context (i.e., SL or FL).

RQ2.1

The first sub-question (RQ2.1) looked at those studying a language as a second language (the SAN group) compared with those studying a language as a foreign language (SAB + SA0).

RQ2.1:	Are those studying a language as a second language (SL/SAN, $n=17$) more interculturally aware than those studying a language as a foreign language (FL/(SAB + SA0), $n=13$)?
Hypothesis 2.1:	The SL group, who have opportunities for intercultural and language contact at the time of data collection, partly through learning the target language, but also through choosing to employ a mix of the lingua franca and semiotics in this context, are more interculturally aware than the FL group (i.e., there is a significant difference between the two learning contexts).

A two-way group-independence chi-square was performed to assess the relationship between (a) group membership (current second language learning context (SAN) and foreign language learning context (SAB + SA0)) and (b) + *and* – *interculturally aware*. A contingency table for this data is shown below:

Group	+ interculturally aware	– interculturally aware
current second language learning context (SAN)	14	3
foreign language learning context (SAB + SA0)	7	6

The results were not statistical (fisher's exact test $X^2 = 2.851$, $df=1$, $p>.05$).

Those who were currently learning a language as a second language were not significantly more interculturally aware than those who were learning a language as a foreign language. In other words, interculturally aware status was completely independent of a participant's language learning context.

The results were not significant but we can deduce which group is better than the other by looking at the pattern in the contingency table. 14 out of 17 participants in the SL(SAN) group (82.3%) compared with 7 out of 13 in the FL(SAB + SA0) group (53.8%) are + *interculturally aware*.

RQ2.2

The second sub-question (RQ2.2) looked at those studying as a SL (SAN) compared with those who had only ever studied a language as a FL (SA0).

RQ2.2:	Are those studying a language as a second language (SL/SAN, $n=17$) more interculturally aware than those who have never studied a language as a second language (FL/SA0, $n=7$)?
Hypothesis 2.2:	The SL group, who have opportunities for intercultural and language contact at the time of data collection, partly through learning the target language, but also through choosing to employ a mix of the lingua franca and semiotics in this context, are more interculturally aware than the FL sub-group (i.e., there is a significant difference between the two learning contexts, especially when the FL learners have never studied a language as a second language).

A two-way group-independence chi-square was performed to assess the relationship between (a) group membership (current second language learning context (SAN) and a sub-group of foreign language learning context (SA0)) (b) + and – *interculturally aware*. A contingency table for this data is shown below:

Group	+ interculturally aware	– interculturally aware
current second language learning context (SAN)	14	3
foreign language learning context (SA0)	5	2

The results were not statistical (fisher's exact test $X^2 = 0.359$, $df=1$, $p>.05$).

Those who are currently learning a language as a second language were not significantly more interculturally aware than those who had only ever learnt in a language in a foreign language learning context. In other words, interculturally aware status was completely independent of a participant's language learning context.

The results were not significant but we can deduce which group is better than the other by looking at the pattern in the contingency table. 14 out of 17 participants in the SL(SAN) group (82.3%) compared with 5 out of 7 in the FL(SA0) sub-group (71.4%) are + *interculturally aware*.

6.3 The impact of English level

Research question 3 (RQ3):

What is the impact of English level on levels of intercultural awareness during European study abroad?

RQ3

The third research question therefore concerned the impact of level of English and, to address this, one question was asked, on which statistical analysis was conducted.

The final question for consideration in this present study was whether there was an association between the participants' level of intercultural awareness and their level of written English. (See Chapter 7 and the discussion as to why it was the written Likert levels that were used for this test.)

RQ3:	Is there any association between the participants' level of English and their intercultural awareness?
Hypothesis 3:	There is an association between level of English and intercultural awareness, as having language ability affords cultural learning opportunities (where these are available), and also as someone who is more proficient in a language is able to express themselves in more subtle ways.

A two-way group-independence chi-square was performed to assess the relationship between (a) group membership (self-assessment for written English on a Likert scale 3-7: no participants self-rated 1 or 2) and (b) + *and* – *interculturally aware*. A contingency table for this data is shown below:

Group	+ <i>interculturally aware</i>	– <i>interculturally aware</i>
Likert3	1	0
Likert4	8	2
Likert5	8	5
Likert6	1	1
Likert7	3	1

The results were not statistical (likelihood ratio $X^2=2.049$, $df=4$, $p>.05$).

Those at any of the Likert levels were not significantly more *interculturally aware* than those at any of the other Likert levels. In other words, *interculturally aware* status was completely independent of a participant's self-assessed written level of English.

The results were not significant and deducing which group is better than the other by looking at the pattern in the contingency table is not that helpful here (as there are 5 groups). For the record, the figures are: Likert 3 group 100%; Likert 4 group 80%; Likert 5 group 61.5%; Likert 6 group 50%; Likert 7 group 75% are + *interculturally aware*.

6.4 Summary of the quantitative results

Study abroad had no impact on levels of intercultural awareness during European study abroad. Indeed, although the results were not significant, the contingency table tells us that the SA0 group (71.4%) were more + *interculturally aware* than the (SAN + SAB) group (69.6%).

However, if study abroad is considered from the perspective of those on study abroad now compared with those who had studied abroad before, then there is an impact. The results were significant and the contingency table tells us that the SAN group (82.3%) were more + *interculturally aware* than the SAB group (33.3%). The odds of being + *interculturally aware* for the participants in the SAN group were 9.3 times higher than for the participants in the SAB group.

The language learning context of those on study abroad now (i.e., learning as a second language) had no impact on levels of intercultural awareness during European study abroad, whether compared with those studying a language as a foreign language now or those who had only ever studied a language as a foreign language. The results for both tests were not significant and, whilst the contingency table for RQ2.1 tells us that the SL(SAN) group (82.3%) were more + *interculturally aware* than the FL(SAB + SA0) group (53.8%), the contingency table for RQ2.2 shows us that this difference is probably due to the 4/6 SAB compositions coded – *interculturally aware*: the SL(SAN) group (82.3%) were more + *interculturally aware* than the FL(SA0) sub-group (71.4%).

The level of written English did not impact on levels of intercultural awareness either. Those at any of the Likert levels were not significantly more intercultural aware than those at any of the other Likert levels.

6.5 In their own words: qualitative results

Whilst this is primarily a quantitative study, to end this chapter we are simply going to let the participants speak on intercultural awareness in their own words.

Some might argue that a quantitative approach to data misses the richness of the individual differences. In this study the data analysis stayed close to the data: what the participants expressed in writing in the compositions was used directly to allocate to a + *and* – *interculturally aware* macroproposition, and indeed those macropropositions were themselves developed partly out of similar data on the same topic. That having been said, certain topics (such as language and religion) recurred within the compositions and so there would seem to be a value in hearing the voices of the students. Here they recognise that moving to another country might be about the acquisition of intercultural awareness; make a connection between intercultural awareness and future employability; link language and culture (not always positively); acknowledge plural identities; and comment on religion.

The codes included below reflect whether the composition was coded + *and* – *interculturally aware* and also give the stage of development within the DMIS (see Section 5.4.2). +5, for example, means overall coded positively intercultural aware and, for extra information, Adaptation (stage 5) on Bennett's DMIS.

Extracts from written compositions

A recognition that moving to another country might be about the acquisition of intercultural awareness:

FEMU 31.05.2012 (SAN participant) +5

The way of life of each country is like the “passport”, if you want to own it, if you want to feel yourself home wherever you are: be richer, learn new habits but never be ashamed of you real home.

DAPR 31.05.2012 (SAN participant) +5

We are moving to other countries (students) not only for learning foreign languages and studying on foreign universities but also to discover a different culture and its habits.

Making a connection between intercultural awareness and future employability:

DAPR 31.05.2012 (SAN participant) +5

My idea is that when you stay somewhere for more than a week you should learn something. Especially for us students it is another way how to study something else than just what our grade is about. It is important to pay attention to other nation’s customs and habits to understand the world we will once work in.

KEZO 30.05.2012 (SAN participant) +4

I think it’s very usefull to get to know the customs and way of living of other courtries. It really helps you to understand people who are different from you; who speak another language, who have other rituals & behavior. For example, it could be very easy when you’re working in a multinational company with employees from all over the world.

Linking language and culture (not always positively):

KESK 31.05.2012 (SAN participant) -3

Language is the key to creating a new social life and understanding the culture. It is important to talk to locals, know how the political system works and know which TV show is the most popular in the new country.

KAHA 31.05.2012 (SAN participant) +5

Therefore, I would suggest that people coming to a foreign country and intending to live there should learn the language properly to communicate with others and most importantly should not isolate themselves, but integrate themselves and mingle with person's of the "new" country.

SECE 31.05.2012 (SAN participant) +4

I don't agree for exemple with Catalan linguistic politic which litterally obliges you to learn and speak it immediately.

A recognition of plural identities:

JUBA 31.05.2012 (SAN participant) +5

But on the other side you still should hold on to your own customs, because this is what identifies a person and helps you from getting lost. Also in my opinion not everything from the other country will be good and because of that it could feel strange. For me it is important to respect other cultures, especially if you live in an other country, but you should always be yourself. Thus I would recomend to find the middleway, so that both sides will end up happy.

Comments on religion:

ROAL 29.05.2012 (SA0 participant) +5

Here, in Catalunya this topic are discussed frequently because there are a lot of people from other countries (Africa, Asia...). In general this people have a different customs because in most of cases they have a different religion of Cristianism. A lot of people is musulman and they have a different coustums they wear and eat different... They can't eat pig, the women wear burka...

This customs are annoying to the most of natives catalans, because they have a different customs and they don't like the people that don't wear or eat the same for example. Nowadays, it has a lot of racism...

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

We are now able to address the Research Questions on the basis of our findings.

7.1 The impact of study abroad

The first research question concerned the impact of study abroad and to address this two questions were asked, on which statistical analysis was conducted.

RQ1.1

The first sub-question on the impact of study abroad enquired into to what extent study abroad has an impact on intercultural awareness, both in the short and the long term (i.e., whether there is a significant difference between the two groups).

RQ1.1 read as follows:

Are study abroad students (i.e., $n=23$: those experiencing study abroad now (SAN) and those who have experienced it in the past (SAB)) more intercultural aware than at home students who have never experienced study abroad (SA0, $n=7$)?

The results were not statistical. In other words, with our sample, those participants who were studying abroad now and had studied abroad before were not more intercultural aware than those who have only ever studied at home.

This present study asked a different question here than the studies reviewed in our review of the literature (Part I) above.

The question was not just study abroad (now) compared with study abroad never (as with previous studies), but those with prior experience of study abroad were grouped in alongside the participants currently on their sojourns in Barcelona. The reason for this was that it was the impact of study abroad that was being addressed: does it make a difference during your education if you go on study abroad or you do not go on study abroad.

The results confirm Pedersen (2010) who found that mere participation in study abroad did not lead to more intercultural learning, but note that was on an island programme. The participants in the present study (all on non-island programmes) arguably had more opportunities for intercultural contact open to them, of which they perhaps did not take advantage. The results differ from Vande Berg's Georgetown Consortium Study where he did find that intercultural development was higher in study abroad participants than those who stayed at home, but note that he commented that too many of his study abroad participants did not learn significantly more than his at home control group. And he also found that those on non-island programmes developed significantly less than those on island programmes.

That the results were not statistical suggests a number of possibilities including: mobility on its own is not enough: for example, intercultural pedagogy, mentoring and/or reflection may well have an important place, which has yet to find its way onto most study abroad programmes (i.e., as seen in the studies presented in the literature review, this intercultural backup, had it been available, might have boosted the impact of study abroad on the level of intercultural awareness); there has indeed been a levelling of the international experience for study abroad and at home students, and the at home students are finding intercultural input from the university 'ecosystem' within which they find themselves or from the wider cosmopolitanism of Barcelona (i.e., the at home finding here may have been boosted in this way); and/or study abroad experience is now open to more than the migratory elite who do not arrive with prior 'mobility capital' - Murphy-Lejeune made her comment in 2002 (i.e., the study abroad finding here might have been diminished in this way).

The participants of this present study did not, to the knowledge of the SALA Project, receive intercultural pedagogy, or related mentoring or reflection sessions prior to the collection. With good preparation before departing on study abroad, along with mentoring / guided reflection during, then the impact of study abroad may have been larger. Future research could tackle non-island European student mobility with this intercultural backup.

One final point, we do have the results to compare study abroad versus at home in the way conducted by other studies (i.e., SAN versus SA0). Although RQ2.2 is set out in terms of SL versus FL, SAN=SL and SA0=FL. The results of RQ2.2 were also not statistical. One way of interpreting the results in RQ2.2 is that, with our sample, those participants who were studying abroad now were not more interculturally aware than those who have only ever studied at home.

(An alternative interpretation in relation to language learning context is set out with the discussion on RQ2.2.)

RQ1.2

The second sub-question on the impact of study abroad enquired into whether the study abroad now group, who are in the middle of study abroad, are more interculturally aware than the study abroad before group, who no longer have cultural / language context (i.e., whether there is significant difference between the short and long term effects of mobility context: whether, over time, intercultural awareness diminishes or if intercultural awareness is a ‘portable toolkit’).

RQ1.2 read as follows:

Are those experiencing study abroad now (SAN, $n=17$) more interculturally aware than those who have experienced it in the past (SAB, $n=6$)?

The results were statistical. In other words, with our sample, those participants who were studying abroad now were more interculturally aware than those who had studied abroad before. This present study asked a different question than most of the studies reviewed. The question here was not study abroad compared with a control group at home (as with prior studies), but rather, does it make a difference if you are in the middle of experiencing study abroad or if you experienced it but you are back home? For this reason, those with prior experience of study abroad were separated from the participants currently on their sojourns in Barcelona, and then compared.

The results of this present study follow the one study found and reviewed which considered the retention effects of study abroad i.e., Merino & Avello (2014), where intercultural awareness had diminished 15 months after a return from study abroad. Merino & Avello’s comments on this were: “...learners seem to be more open and more prone to interact with others when they find themselves in a situation in which they feel themselves to be foreigners and, therefore, have the need to rely on other people.” And yet these findings appear to contradict the intercultural theorists selected for particular comment in this present study, i.e., Byram and Bennett, who both express the idea that the competence is something that can be built on and that perhaps their views could be expressed as intercultural awareness having the characteristics of a

‘portable toolkit’ to which an individual has access to once acquired. In any event, implicit in both of their theories is that intercultural awareness does not wear off.

What needs also to be considered here is why, given the results of RQ1.2 are significant, the results of RQ2.2 are also not statistically significant. As set out in RQ1.1 above, one way of interpreting the results in RQ2.2 is that, with our sample, those participants who were studying abroad now (SAN) were not more intercultural aware than those who have only ever studied at home (SA0). (An alternative interpretation in relation to language learning context is set out with the discussion on RQ2.2.)

It is curious then that the findings of RQ1.2 are that, with our sample, those participants who were studying abroad now (SAN) were more intercultural aware than those who had studied abroad before (SAB). There is a possible contradiction here which was not, due to limited time and the small sample sizes of SAB and SA0, explored quantitatively further within this present study. As discussed at the end of this Section 7.1, the result in RQ1.2 was, however, explored qualitatively. No evidence of a reinforcement of stereotypes was found within the – intercultural aware coded SAB compositions.

That the results in RQ1.2 were statistical suggests a number of possibilities including: intercultural awareness is a portable toolkit but that it is only ‘switched on’ when in another culture; intercultural awareness is not necessarily a ‘portable toolkit’ and it ‘wears off’ over time i.e., that there is regression; a sojourn abroad might strengthen / cause stereotyped and ethnocentric views which crystallise and are expressed once back at home (however, a qualitative review of the negatively coded compositions did not suggest this); and the students once back at home are not interacting with international students and exploiting intercultural contact opportunities.

The study abroad before (SAB) participants did not, to the knowledge of the SALA Project, receive intercultural pedagogy, or related mentoring or reflection sessions on returning home from study abroad. With good debriefing post-sojourn then, the impact of study abroad may have been larger / been retained. Again, future research could tackle European non-island student mobility with this intercultural backup. It could also consider – with a bigger sample size than available in this present study – if there is a difference in intercultural levels amongst at home students: ones with prior study abroad experience and ones with none. It seems counter-intuitive to think that levels would be lower in the former than the latter group, but the

possibilities that a sojourn abroad might strengthen / cause stereotyped and ethnocentric views which crystallise and are expressed once back at home, and/or that the students once back at home are choosing not to interact with international students and not to exploit intercultural contact opportunities, bear exploration.

RQ1.2: a qualitative approach to the SAB group

Whilst this is primarily a quantitative study, there was a need to dig a little deeper with what might be behind the statistically significant result in this RQ1.2.

The result from RQ1.2 was statistically significant. This result did not support the hypothesis we had established, i.e.:

<p>Hypothesis 1.2:</p>	<p>The SAN group, who are in the middle of study abroad, are not more interculturally aware than the SAB group, who no longer have cultural / language context (i.e., there is no significant difference between the short and long term effects of context, and over time intercultural awareness does not diminish – intercultural awareness is a ‘portable toolkit’).</p>
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The result instead confirms Merino & Avello’s (2014) finding that intercultural awareness wears off over time. What it also made sense to review within our data was whether there were signs of a reinforcement of stereotypes expressed within the compositions of the SAB group (i.e., following Tusting et al’s (2002) ‘I know, ‘cos I was there’).

To do this the written compositions of the SAB group were read again. For intercultural awareness coding purposes, the anonymous participants had not been tagged as belonging to the SAB group (or not).

On reviewing the four out of seven SAB compositions coded as negative, it was not the case that there was evidence of a reinforcement of stereotypes. Two participants were within Bennett’s Minimization (and so at the top end of ethnocentrism). And although two participants were at Defense, one composition was more or less Bennett’s notion of Reversal. The final composition was the only one that came close to expressing stereotypical ideas, as it was about cultures being different, not in the sense of allowing for exchange and sharing, but

rather in the sense that the participant felt they were able to pick and choose what personally to get out of an alternative culture.

7.2 The impact of language learning context

The second research question concerned the impact of the context of language learning and to address this two questions were asked, on which statistical analysis was conducted.

RQ 2.1

The first sub-question on the impact of the context of language learning enquired into whether those learning a language as a second language, who had opportunities for intercultural and language contact at the time of data collection, partly through learning the target language, but also perhaps through choosing to employ a mix of the lingua franca and semiotics in this context, were more interculturally aware than those learning a language as a foreign language (i.e., whether there is a significant difference between the two learning contexts).

RQ 2.1 read as follows:

Are those studying a language as a second language (SL/SAN, $n=17$) more interculturally aware than those studying a language as a foreign language (FL/(SAB + SA0), $n=13$)?

The results were not statistical. In other words, with our sample, those participants who were learning a language as a second language were not more interculturally aware than those who were learning a language as a foreign language.

RQ 2.2

The second sub-question on the impact of the context of language acquisition enquired into whether those learning a language as a second language, who had opportunities for intercultural and language contact at the time of data collection, partly through learning the target language, but also perhaps through choosing to employ a mix of the lingua franca and semiotics in this context, were more interculturally aware than a sub-group of those learning a language as a

foreign language (i.e., whether there is a significant difference between the two learning contexts, especially when the FL learners have never studied a language as a second language).

RQ 2.2 read as follows:

Are those studying a language as a second language (SL/SAN, $n=17$) more interculturally aware than those who have never studied a language as a second language (FL/SA0, $n=7$)?

The results were not statistical. In other words, with our sample, those participants who were learning a language as a second language were not more interculturally aware than those who had never learnt a language as a second language.

The results of this present study again confirm the findings of Pedersen (2010) who found that whether students spoke a second language did not impact on their IDI scores. Whereas they again differ with Vande Berg (2009) in his Georgetown Consortium Study, where the intercultural gains of students enrolled in second language classes whilst studying abroad were significantly higher than those who did not continue their formal study of the language.

That the results for either sub-question were not statistical suggests a number of possibilities including: that the second language learners' level of Spanish and/or Catalan was not of a good enough standard to deploy as a tool to initiate intercultural contact; intercultural materials have found their way into foreign language learning materials and this had an impact in foreign language classes at the university's language school; and/or members of the foreign language group had better language skills and put them to use, enjoying intercultural input through their use of the target language with lingua franca speakers.

41% of Erasmus students study language or philology (Collentine, 2009, p. 221), which clearly means that 59% do not. This ratio is more stark in relation to the participants in this present study: 23% were studying translation, languages or a joint honours including a language, and 77% were studying subjects such as business administration, law, political science, journalism and biology.

Given that there is a suggestion in some of the research that speaking the language offers a key to open doors onto more intercultural contact, it would be interesting for future research to

investigate intercultural awareness levels across the spectrum of languages abilities (including native speaker level) amongst study abroad students. Does a study abroad student from Mexico studying in Barcelona have higher levels of intercultural awareness than a fellow international student from Germany with A2 Spanish/Catalan? In addition, open to investigation is the role of the lingua franca and semiotics in the acquisition of intercultural awareness.

7.3 The impact of English level

The third research question concerned the impact of level of English and to address this one question was asked, on which statistical analysis was conducted.

RQ3

The question on the impact of the level English enquired into whether there is an association between the level of English and intercultural awareness, as having language ability affords cultural learning opportunities (where these are available), and also as someone who is more proficient in a language is able to express themselves in more subtle ways. RQ3 was mainly raised to look at the latter i.e., sophistication in written expression, because the data was in the form of written compositions. For this reason, the participants' self-assessment for written English was used in the statistical test.

RQ3 read as follows:

Is there any association between the participants' level of English and their intercultural awareness?

The results were not statistical. In other words, with our sample, participants at any of the Likert levels were not significantly more interculturally aware than those at any of the other Likert levels. In other words, interculturally aware status was completely independent of a participant's self-assessed written level of English. This is helpful as the main reason for raising RQ3 was to rule out that the results were being skewed by some having a more sophisticated means of expressing themselves and so 'sounding' more interculturally aware.

The results of this present study differ from Hismanoglu (2011) who found that students with higher linguistic proficiency gave more acceptable responses in communicative situations than

students with lower linguistic proficiency. Although the instrument in this current study was a composition, and so not eliciting communicative responses, it was Hismanoglu's research which largely prompted RQ3.

That the results were not statistically significant suggests a number of possibilities including: the levels of ability were not sufficiently high to sound more interculturally aware and so skew the results in this respect; and/or general levels of English (i.e., not just written) were not high enough to exploit intercultural contact opportunities through using the lingua franca.

As raised in RQ2.2, future research could consider intercultural levels amongst all ranges of language abilities and focus beyond what was the main concern for this RQ3. In other words look at whether or not language does indeed provide a linguistic key onto intercultural awareness. The data in this present study did not permit this as the compositions for the SAN group were not written in the target language: everyone wrote in English.

7.4 Overview of the results and discussion

The quantitative results showed us that study abroad had no impact on levels of intercultural awareness during European study abroad, unless considered from the perspective of those on study abroad now compared with those who had studied abroad before. Possible interpretations of the results in terms of the impact of study abroad included: mobility on its own is not enough: for example, intercultural pedagogy, mentoring and/or reflection may well have an important place; there has been a levelling of the international experience for study abroad and at home students; and study abroad experience is now open to more than the migratory elite who do not arrive with prior 'mobility capital'. When considered from the perspective of those on study abroad now compared with those who had studied abroad before, and in terms of the retention of intercultural awareness, we put forward the following interpretations of the results: intercultural awareness is a portable toolkit only 'switched on' in another culture – intercultural awareness 'wears off' over time i.e., regression; a sojourn abroad strengthens / causes stereotyped and ethnocentric views which crystallise and are expressed at home; and once back home, the students are not exploiting intercultural contact opportunities. All of these scenarios for the significant finding in this present study are an unfortunate state of affairs, given the multicultural world we live in and the ultimate end goal of intercultural competence, namely global citizenship.

The language learning context of those on study abroad now (i.e., learning as a second language) had no impact on levels of intercultural awareness during European study abroad, whether compared with those studying a language as a foreign language now or those who had only ever studied a language as a foreign language. The possible interpretations we have considered are: the SL learners' level of Spanish and/or Catalan was not good enough; intercultural materials have found their way into foreign language learning materials; and members of the foreign language group had better language skills and put them to use, enjoying intercultural input.

Finally, the level of written English did not make a difference to levels of intercultural awareness either, and possible interpretations considered were: levels of ability in written English were not sufficiently high to sound more interculturally aware; and general levels of English (i.e., not just written) were not high enough to exploit intercultural contact opportunities through using the lingua franca.

7.5 Limitations of the present study

As set out above, the quantitative results are open to a number of possible interpretations, some of which are due to limitations inherent in the data. It makes sense at this point to look at these limitations, to show that interpreting the results of this present study is not clear-cut and why.

RATING: As has been set out, subjectivity goes to the core of interculturality and this includes the dangers inherent in rating the compositions: not only in deciding where to cut each composition into units of analysis (i.e., propositions, sentences or paragraphs), but also where then to classify within the six intercultural awareness macropropositions within the SALA Project's model and the six dimensions of intercultural sensitivity within Bennett's DMIS. Albeit to help lessen this issue, inter- and intra-rater tests were carried out.

SOCIAL DESIRABILITY BIAS: In addition, these were educated participants who were aware that what they wrote was going to be read and analysed. To some extent they are likely to have guarded their opinions. And so the danger of social desirability bias was inherent in the choice of a composition as the instrument and to some extent in the wording of its title.

MULTIPLE VARIABLES: As has been seen, many variables arguably contribute to the acquisition or not of intercultural awareness (see reference to Engle & Engle, 2004 in Section

2.3). However, the analysis in this present study was kept simple: three distinct groups (those who were studying, or had, or had never studied abroad: SAN, SAB and SA0), with an additional context, that of language learning: as a second language (SL) or as a foreign language (FL). To some extent this simplicity was determined by the data: what had been collected and the sample size.

DURATION OF STAY: So, for example, there is no record of study abroad durations of the participants studying abroad (the SAN group), nor at what point during their sojourns the data was collected.

ACCOMMODATION: There is no record either of the type of housing any of the SAN / SAB students lived in (e.g., student residence or homestay).

INTERCULTURAL PEDAGOGY: The participants did not, to the knowledge of the SALA Project, receive intercultural pedagogy, or related mentoring or reflection sessions prior to the data collection. However, it is possible (although not that likely, given that studies are highlighting this as a shortcoming) that some members of the SAN group (from a mix of universities, all bar one in Europe) received cultural pedagogy before departure or had access to (say) an online mentor during their sojourn. The SALA Project had proposals for assistance with cultural awareness for the Catalan university's study abroad students, but to the knowledge of the SALA Project, these had not been put into practice so to have been of benefit to the SAB group.

MOBILITY CAPITAL: Also, there was no specific analysis of whether any of the participants (study abroad or at home) had more access to what Murphy-Lejeune (2002) called 'mobility capital' than any of the other participants (as seen earlier, Murphy-Lejeune found evidence of a 'migratory elite' participating in study abroad programmes). Clearly $n=23$ of the total participants had or were experiencing study abroad at data collection, but note that only $n=1$ of the SA0 group had any overseas experience.

DEVELOPMENT: Related to mobility capital is that, whilst data collection was *during* the SAN students' study abroad period (which is, as mentioned, interesting as few studies do this, choosing instead to assess pre- and post-sojourn), this had its own draw backs. Most importantly, there is no sense of the development of intercultural awareness. There is no way of knowing

whether those in, for example, the SAN group were more, less, or equally interculturally aware on the day of testing than on the day that they arrived in Barcelona.

SPANISH/CATALAN DATA: RQ2 addresses whether intercultural awareness levels are higher in a second language learning context i.e., by virtue of the affordance knowledge of a language (namely here the target language of Spanish and/or Catalan) gives the speaker to exploit intercultural contact opportunities. It is therefore open to challenge that the data (the compositions) was collected in English from the SAN participants. (This made sense for the SAB and SA0 groups as their target language, being learnt as a foreign language, was English.)

SAMPLE SIZE: From a purely statistical point of view, the sample sizes were small and this factor arguably contributed to not finding significant results.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The significant finding of this present study is that those studying abroad now did have the edge over those who had returned from study abroad and were back studying at home. The result indicates that there is a statistical difference between the short and long term effects of study abroad, and that overtime the effects of study abroad either diminish or are ‘switched off’ when at home. Looked at qualitatively the relevant data did not suggest a more worrying crystallisation of stereotyped views once back at home.

In general, however, and in terms of levels of intercultural awareness: student mobility, language learning environment, and level of written English did not make a difference.

The combined groups of students who were experiencing study abroad or had in the past were not more interculturally aware than their peers who had stayed at home. The result indicates that when it comes to levels of intercultural awareness, there is no value in study abroad alone.

Whilst all taking lessons at the university’s language school, those participants studying Spanish and/or Catalan in the target language location were not more interculturally aware than those studying English as a foreign language at home in Barcelona (or than those who had only ever studied a language as a foreign language). Looked at another way, those studying abroad now – in the midst of their sojourn in Barcelona – did not have the edge over those who, arguably, were enjoying the international experience at home. Learning a language as a second language did not prove to be a ‘linguistic key’ with which to open more doors onto intercultural contact. And adding the lingua franca and semiotics to the mix too, did not help those sojourning in Barcelona either. The results indicate that, when it comes to levels of intercultural awareness, there is no inherent value, even if study abroad is also combined with language learning. (However, challenges to this interpretation have been discussed in Chapter 7, including that the level of target language knowledge was not sufficiently high to exploit contact opportunities.)

What can we now say about intercultural awareness at home and abroad after reviewing our snapshot compositions? Whilst this present study showed that levels are no different, it opened up many questions too, for instance, whether this is down to a levelling of the playing field, with levels of the awareness increasing amongst those who have not experienced mobility at all.

Areas identified for possible future research include: the effects of intercultural backup (pre-, during, and post-study abroad) in a European non-island study abroad programme; the levels of intercultural awareness across a spectrum of language abilities amongst study abroad sojourners (including at native speaker level); levels of intercultural awareness amongst at home students: ones who have prior study abroad experience and ones who do not; and, finally, the role of the lingua franca and semiotics in the acquisition of intercultural awareness.

If a thesis exists to prove the hypotheses set out at the outset, this present study has not succeeded in this end. Some of the studies reviewed were based on island studies, where on the face of it there is less opportunity for intercultural contact, and there were also inconsistencies in findings across the studies. However, what much of the literature review did raise concerns about was this: when it comes to intercultural awareness, mobility on its own may not count, and mobility plus target language may not count either. Also, where intercultural awareness gains have been identified, these have been shown to wear off. The hypotheses taken then in this present study (a non-island study) were perhaps unrealistically optimistic about what might be happening in terms of intercultural awareness during study abroad in a European context. As seen in Chapters 6 and 7, the results in fact support the rather more pessimistic picture: mobility alone is not a value. Study abroad stakeholders need to rethink their programme design if enhanced intercultural awareness is a desired outcome, as it indeed is of the Erasmus+ programme. This present study points to a possible missing something in study abroad programmes. Perhaps as other studies suggest, that missing something is intercultural backup for students with education / mentoring / guided reflection pre-, during, and post-study abroad.

This all having been said, if studies are finding that mobility is not enough and that some form of intercultural pedagogy may be a key missing link, what cost rectifying this omission in comparison with, for example, the budgeted 15 billion EUR spend on the Erasmus+ Programme.

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