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WHAT REALLY HAPPENS DURING STUDY ABROAD?
An in-depth analysis of learners' interactions during a short-term sojourn in Spain

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An in-depth analysis of learners' interactions during a short-term sojourn in Spain

by

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2017

Dedication

To family the one I was born into (the Douglin family: O'Neal Douglin, Patricia Douglin, Camille Douglin, André Douglin & Jamie Baker-Douglin, Danielle Douglin, and Aria) and the family I acquired along the way on this journey.

Acknowledgements

Before moving to Texas, I always said that it was Jesus and I making this move. It has been that way from Day One - Jesus and I during the hard times, during the easy times, during the dark times. There have been many promises that I have clung to during this process:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" (Jeremiah 29:11)

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." (Hebrews 6:19)

"See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands." (Isaiah 49:16)

"For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And *that* my soul knows very well." (Psalm 139: 13-14)

"'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (II Corinthians 12:9-11)

I have reached this milestone today only because of Jesus' constant hand on my life. God gave me the strength the resilience, the determination, the community, and everything I needed to get this far. I can't wait to see how God continues to write my story.

To my committee: Thank you, Dr. Kelm, you have been championing me and my progress from the day you took over as chair of my committee. Dr. Salaberry, you encouraged me to research what was really dear to my heart and gave me the freedom to

divorce T&A. Dr. Horwitz, you have been a constant in this journey. Thank you for your advice and guidance along the way. Dr. Schallert and Dr. Sardegna I fondly remember your classes and the one-on-one conversations I have had with you. Thank you for your advice, support, and encouragement. Thank you all for always believing in me and for not giving up on me.

To my family: O'Neal and Patricia Douglin, for the countless hours of prayer, and the decades of support and continued encouragement, I am forever grateful. To the sibs: Camille, André, Danielle, and Jamie you have all supported me in your own way during this process, and I could not have stayed the course without your support.

To my mentors: Dr. José Garcia, you encouraged me to go on my first study abroad trip and it changed my educational trajectory and my life. I am excited about the future and collaborating with you in the future. Dr. Carmen Gauthier, you planted the seed of going to graduate school and have supported me from Day One of this journey. I cherish our friendship and every conversation we have had at your dining room table. This long rope has finally come to an end. Minter & Andrea Goodson, our relationship started when I was an out-of-place immigrant in high school. You befriended me, and the rest is history. You have played a big part in this story.

To my graduate school friends: You understand every part of this process, and some of you have supported me while going through your own process. The process brought us together, and for that I am forever grateful. You made this road just a little easier to walk: María Concepción Cavazos, Ashwini Ganeshen, Barbara Idaliss Abadia-Rexach, Scott Spinks, Paula Park, Eliza Platts-Mills, Ranjana Natarajan, Erika Burt, Claire Parrish, Jared Abel, and Chelsi West.

To my friends: Even when I had to disappear off the face of the earth to birth this dissertation, you were still there upon my return. You have been a constant in my life

WHAT REALLY HAPPENS DURING STUDY ABROAD?

An in-depth analysis of learners' interactions during a short-term sojourn in Spain

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2017

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We often hear assumptions about students who study abroad: Students learn a foreign language faster, students interact more with native speakers, students are immersed in the target language, and host families provide endless target-language practice. Universities and private companies in the United States promote this scenario as the best way to learn a language, and this preference is reflected in the growing number of U.S. students studying abroad, with over 60 percent taking part in programs that last for eight or fewer weeks.

The goal of this study is to investigate these assumptions by examining the interactional practices of study-abroad students using the target language. We posed three research questions: (1) What types of interactions do students have outside of the classroom?, (2) How do learners interact with the host families?, and (3) How does technology and social media affect students' immersion experience?

The results show that short-term study-abroad programs, as viable language-learning contexts, are in jeopardy. Students in this program had few meaningful interactions with people in the target community. Conversations with host families

proved to be deficient in many areas (e.g., students' erroneous utterances were not corrected). The output of students during mealtime conversations proved to be linguistically poor, as students used few communication strategies. Furthermore, students used their electronic devices to communicate with friends and family, and to keep up with television shows and music from the U.S. They did not use social media websites and mobile applications to communicate with people in the target community nor did they use them to interact with the target language.

Based on the results of this study, we call for a revamping of study-abroad promotion. If 100 percent immersion no longer exists, study-abroad promoters should change the way in which short-term programs are marketed. Additionally, if we want short-term study abroad to actively foster language learning, foreign language acquisition researchers, study abroad-program designers, and language instructors need to design programs centered on meaningful student-native speaker interactions. Study abroad is a tool that, if used correctly, can be the catalyst that changes the trajectory of students' language-learning lives.

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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

"If you <u>really</u> want to learn [insert foreign language here],

you should study abroad!"

It is a natural assumption: Study abroad should provide excellent opportunities for students to learn a foreign language. Indeed, the number of students who study abroad with the objective of learning a foreign language has increased over the past few decades. This increase, however, may or may not coincide with more effective language learning. The objective of this dissertation is to investigate the language-learning context and environment of a study-abroad program. However, this objective is complicated by all the various factors that affect a study-abroad experience.

To set the stage for this research, this chapter will first discuss some of the common assumptions about study abroad and language learning. It will then analyze some trends observed in the study-abroad phenomenon over the past few decades. These trends will lead to questions about study abroad and study-abroad research that call for a more viable context for language learning. The discussion of these assumptions, trends, and questions will bring perspective to the specific research questions of this study.

Perceptions About Study Abroad and Foreign Language Learning

People make consistent assumptions about study abroad and its effects on language learning. This study begins by examining four of these assumptions, each of which makes a positive association between study abroad and language learning. Table 1.1 presents a summary of these assumptions.

First, people assume that students learn foreign languages better in study-abroad environments than they do in traditional classroom environments. Part of this assumption

stems from the fact that students attend traditional language classes for only 3-6 contact hours a week, which is minimal in comparison to the assumed complete cultural immersion of study abroad. People generally make this assumption without considering the actual length of time that students spend abroad, the amount of time study-abroad students actually spend in the classroom or how much time students spend interacting with native speakers outside of the classroom. As we progress through this dissertation, we will address the issue of time spent interacting with native speakers specifically.

A second assumption people make is that students in study-abroad programs spend an increased amount of time interacting with native speakers, which enables them to acquire language more effectively. This assumption evokes an image of a student constantly interacting with people outside of the classroom in the target community. This student forms new relationships and friendships, interacts in the target language while performing everyday tasks, and talks to all kinds of people: clerks, cashiers, travel agents, and people on public transportation or in other public areas. This assumption presupposes that every language learner abroad is highly motivated and extroverted and has a high level of willingness to communicate with everyone. This assumption also envisions a scenario where students who do not study abroad remain in a traditional classroom, receiving limited input from a language instructor and limited practice with fellow students.

In this dissertation, we offer evidence that shows specific data surrounding actual study-abroad language interactions outside of the classroom. The goal is to unveil some commonalities in these learner-native speaker interactions and uncover an under-researched aspect of the study-abroad experience.

The third assumption made about study-abroad programs is that students who participate in programs that include housing with local host families will engage in in-

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depth family activities, which in turn will cause them to more expertly acquire language. The assumption here is that host families will initiate simple conversations, correct students' grammar, teach vocabulary, and invite students to take part in familial and cultural traditions and practices. Essentially, the student will become a pseudo-family member. As we look at the data in this study, however, we see a different scenario emerging for some of the study's participants. The assumption that students with become integrated members of the host family is called into question by the fact that hosting foreign students has become a business in some cities. For some local families, hosting students has become a way of increasing earnings. Because of the contractual nature of the accommodations, students may experience something that feels more like a landlord-tenant agreement than a familial relationship. In these cases, family-student interaction is minimal and the student is left alone.

Lastly, another common assumption made about study abroad is that students in these programs enjoy an immersion experience in which they live almost exclusively in a target-language environment. Language learners presume that, if they participate in a study-abroad program, they will return from the program as fluent speakers of that foreign language. They believe that they will be completely surrounded by the target language 100 percent of their time abroad and that they cannot escape using, reading, hearing, or seeing the language at any given time of the day. Even though this assumption may not be empirically supported, students still maintain an unrealistic expectation that any time abroad will lead to foreign language fluency. The fact that English is now a *lingua franca*; it is very common for people to speak English in public areas in most major cities around the world. Moreover, because of the worldwide popularity of English-speaking musicians, coffee shops, clubs, and bars around the world commonly play music with English lyrics. Thus, the worldwide use of English affects the way

learners interact in the target community. The results of my study demonstrate that in today's world of technology, social media, and online connections language learners in a study-abroad context cannot immerse themselves in the target community, language, and culture 100 percent of the time.

Table 1.1 Assumptions about Study Abroad

Assumption	Explanation
Assumption #1: Students learn foreign languages better in study-abroad environments than they do in traditional classroom environments.	When compared to university classes that normally last 3-6 hours a week, study abroad seems to expose students to an endless amount of target language input.
Assumption #2: Students in study-abroad programs spend an increased amount of time interacting with native speakers, which enables them to acquire language more effectively.	When compared to at-home traditional classes, it seems as if study-abroad students have native speakers with whom to practice the target language at their disposal at all times.
Assumption #3: Students who participate in study-abroad programs that include housing with local host families will engage in in-depth family activities, which in turn will cause them to more expertly acquire language.	It seems as if host families love and completely accept their international students, involving them in every aspect of the family, family customs, and traditions.
Assumption #4: Students in a study-abroad program enjoy an immersion experience in which they live almost exclusively in a target-language environment.	It seems as if everything is in the target language: TV programs, radio, newspapers, and signs. Therefore, 100 percent immersion must exist.

Current Trends in Study Abroad

In light of the assumptions mentioned above, in today's world of increased study-abroad activity it is important to gain an accurate picture of how this phenomenon has changed over the years. The Open Doors Report (Institute of International Education, 2016) compiled by the Institute of International Education (IIE) meticulously examines students' study-abroad practices. Since 1985, the Institute of International Education specifically investigates students from the U.S. who study in other countries. This section will explore three trends that should be considered as they relate to students studying abroad. A summary of these trends in outlined in Table 1.2.

The first trend involves universities and private companies promoting study abroad as an effective way to learn a foreign language. Based on statistics from the 2015 Open Doors Report (Institute of International Education, 2015), the universities that sent the highest number of students abroad in the 2013—2014 academic year were New York University, The University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University, and The University of Southern California. The study-abroad promotional materials on these university websites add to the claims of improved language learning abroad. New York University's website ("NYU Madrid Study Abroad," n.d.) states, "At NYU Madrid students can study literature, history … while *significantly advancing their command of the Spanish language"* [italics added for emphasis]. The University of Texas at Austin ("UT AUSTIN-Santander, Spain-Study Abroad," n.d.) highlights the host family interaction and the possible positive effects on the students' target language: "Students live with local homestays to *practice their Spanish and gain insight into Spanish culture.* This program aims to *improve students' knowledge* of the Spanish language, *including the ability to speak correctly and effectively outside the classroom*, and integrate students as much as possible in the local culture" [italics added for emphasis]. Texas A&M

University ("Texas A&M Study Abroad," n.d.) not only requires its Spanish language majors to study abroad, but also claims a context of immersion leading to language gains: "A key component of the Spanish major is that students are required to have a minimum 10-week experience abroad in *order to advance their command of the Spanish language* and *immerse themselves in the Hispanic culture* of Latin America or Spain". [italics added for emphasis]. The University of Southern California ("Spain–Madrid (USC)," n.d.) advises its students that study abroad is effective for the self-motivated: "While the program directors inform students about opportunities to meet Spaniards and participate in Spanish culture, program participants are expected to be *highly self-motivated to actively seek opportunities to meet Spaniards and communicate only in Spanish as much as possible"* [italics added for emphasis].

Additionally, The Council on International Educational Exchange (Council on International Educational Exchange, n.d.), one of the biggest non-profit organizations that promotes study-abroad programs, similarly claims that each student will, "*[b]ecome a member of a Spanish family"* [italics added for emphasis]. Note that each of these institutions reaffirms the idea that study abroad and family stays enhance language learning. We mention this not to affirm or disagree, but simply to illustrate one of the trends that helps support overall assumptions about study abroad.

The second trend in study-abroad programs is the steady growth in the total number of students who attend these programs. The 2015 Open Doors Report (Institute of International Education, 2016) confirms that participants have more than doubled over the 14-year period between 1998—1999 and 2013—2014 school years, with the numbers increasing from 129,700 to 313,415, respectively. More astonishingly, since 1985, the first year that IIE compiled the Open Doors Report, the number of students studying abroad has increased more than six-fold. Even though the numbers continue to climb,

upon further investigation, the data reveals that the specific fields of study-abroad programs are drastically changing. In 1985, the second-most -popular field of study was Foreign Language, at 16.7 percent, but in the 2014 report (Institute of International Education, 2014), Foreign Language had fallen to the sixth most-popular field of study, at only 4.9 percent a decrease of 5.5 percent from the previous academic year. However, in the most recent 2016 report (Institute of International Education, 2016), Foreign Language and International Studies was the fourth-most-popular major field of study, with 7.7 percent of students sojourning abroad for that reason. With the addition of International Studies to the category of Foreign Language, it is unclear how many students are travelling specifically with the goal of studying a foreign language, meaning it is possible that Foreign Language numbers are still decreasing.

The third trend in study abroad relates to the length of the students' sojourn abroad. The number of students taking part in short-term programs is growing. Short-term study-abroad programs of eight weeks or less have been increasingly popular, with 63.1 percent of participants in 2014—2015 taking part in short-term sojourns. Thirty years ago, in 1985, this percentage was only 28 percent. Based on this set of data, we can conclude that the percentage of students traveling for language-learning purposes may be decreasing while the length of stay is also decreasing. This is a trend that cannot be ignored when discussing the potential effects of study abroad on foreign language proficiency. Although it is not a focal point of this study, we will draw some conclusions about the growing popularity of short-term study-abroad programs.

Table 1.2 Current Trends in Study Abroad

Trends	Explanation
Trend #1: Study abroad is promoted as the best way to learn a language.	Without empirical investigation or empirical supporting data, many study-abroad companies and universities promote study abroad by endorsing these assumptions.
Trend #2: The number of students studying abroad is steadily growing.	Over the last three decades the number of students studying abroad has grown exponentially. However, the number of students studying abroad for language learning purposes may be decreasing.
Trend #3: Over 60 percent of students studying abroad take part in programs of eight weeks or less.	Short-term study abroad is more feasible for students, due to the smaller time commitment. However, past research shows that students make more language gains the longer they are abroad, meaning that if sojourns are shorter, language gains may be smaller.

Questions That Arise From the Assumptions and Trends

The phenomenon of study abroad is constantly changing, as seen in the data from the Open Doors Report (Institute of International Education, 2014, 2015, 2016). Considering this fact—and the fact that the above-mentioned assumptions are so widely believed—some questions surface that should be empirically addressed to greatly benefit the field of foreign language acquisition as it relates to the study-abroad context.

The first set of questions relates to acquisition outcomes for students:

➢ Do students really acquire more foreign language proficiency as a result of study-abroad experiences, and, if so, what type of gains do they exhibit?

➢ Are these gains measurable or strictly based on students' perceptions?

➢ Are these gains evident immediately after the sojourn, or are they more evident months after the study-abroad experience?

➢ What grammatical, pragmatic, and metalinguistic knowledge falls under the term "language proficiency"?

➢ Does this characterization of "language proficiency" only pertain to oral proficiency?

➢ Have the tools used in the past to assess the language proficiency gains of study-abroad students been accurate or rigorous enough to detect slight and/or small gains?

If, in fact, students are successfully acquiring improved language proficiency due to study-abroad experiences, some additional questions must be answered:

➢ What are the actual factors that make gains possible?

➢ Are proficiency gains due to the amount of time spent abroad, or are they due to the different kinds of activities that the students engage in while abroad?

Conversely, if students are not acquiring the expected improved language proficiency during their time abroad, another set of questions arises:

➢ What are the factors causing this lack of gains?

➢ Could the lack of proficiency gains be correlated to students' unrealistic expectations about study abroad and its effect on language proficiency?

➢ Could the lack of proficiency gains be due to the lack of differences between the at-home and study-abroad contexts in regards to native-speaker interactions and lack of immersion?

The last question addresses a growing issue in the study-abroad experience: the idea of immersion. When it comes to immersion, we must consider the following:

➢ How much immersion do students actually experience while participating in study-abroad programs in the 21st century?

➢ Does the concept of immersion even exist anymore?

➢ Are students taking full advantage of everyday activities such as watching TV, reading, and listening to the radio in the target language?

➢ Are students leaving the world of their first language at home?

➢ Alternatively, are students bringing the world of their first language with them via technology and the Internet?

It is also important to address the issue of students' interactions with their target communities:

➢ What is the nature of students' interactions with native speakers and host families?

➢ Outside of the host families, are students forming relationships with other native speakers of the target language?

➢ Are students choosing to use the target language at all possible times, or do they resort to English, the world's most common *lingua franca*?

➢ Are students spending quality time with and talking to their host families?

Groups of students who study abroad together compose a large number of U.S. university short-term study-abroad programs. In these instances, we have to consider questions such as:

➢ When travelling in groups, do students pull away from their comfort zones to interact with locals?

➢ Do students spend the majority of their time outside of the classroom with their home-university group?

➢ If students are not putting themselves in positions to interact with target-language speakers, are these study-abroad experiences any different from the at-home language-learning context?

The fourth set of questions addresses the length of the sojourn, which is crucial to the language-learning process:

➢ How does the length of the study-abroad experience affect language learning?

➢ Can we assume that students who go on short-term sojourns have the same benefits and gains as those who travel for a semester or a year?

➢ On the other end of the spectrum, can we assume that short-term study abroad does not benefit students' language proficiency?

> If students are not experiencing language gains during the sojourn, what types of gains, if any, are they experiencing?

Finally, students' proficiency levels and individual differences (such as motivation and willingness to communicate) prior to the sojourn also play a role in their experiences, which means the following questions also must to be addressed:

> Should students have a certain level of proficiency before attending study-abroad programs, so that the length and type of study-abroad experience enhances improvement in a foreign language?

> What individual differences positively affect the students' study-abroad experience?

> Should students with certain proficiency levels and individual differences be discouraged from participating in study-abroad programs?

> Furthermore, how can program designers and foreign language instructors assess a student's *readiness*?

Thus far, we have introduced four common assumptions about study abroad, the study-abroad trends of the past few decades, and the questions that need to be empirically addressed to better inform the fields of foreign language acquisition and foreign language education. These notions come together in complex ways that raise questions about the future of short-term study abroad as it relates specifically to potential foreign language acquisition. The current study, discussed in the following section, addresses some of the assumptions and questions outlined above.

THE CURRENT STUDY

In an effort to highlight the gaps in previous research and thus emphasize the current study's necessity, the second section of this chapter will discuss some generalizations about past study-abroad literature (and this past research will be discussed in depth in Chapter 2). The discussion of the literature will lead to a brief overview of the current study's focus and the research questions that I aimed to answer. I describe the approach used to answer the research questions and the study's underlying framework in the summation of the research design. Finally, I conclude the section with a summary of some results of the study.

The Focus of Past Study-Abroad Research

The past study-abroad literature does not unequivocally support the claims that language acquisition happens as a direct result of time spent studying abroad (Collentine, 2004; Robert DeKeyser, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2010; Sunderman & Kroll, 2009). However, in an effort to investigate the validity of such claims and the appropriateness of study abroad as a favorable context for language learning, second-language acquisition researchers have investigated the effectiveness of study abroad by gauging a wide range of learner gains – for example, cultural, sociocultural, linguistic, and oral fluency (Bacon, 2002; Cubillos, Chieffo, & Fan, 2008; Robert DeKeyser, 2010; C. A. Isabelli & Nishida, 2005; C. L. Isabelli, 2000; Casilde A. Isabelli, 2001; Isabelli-García, 2010; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; R. A. Martinsen, 2010a; O'Brien, Segalowitz, Freed, & Collentine, 2007; Segalowitz et al., 2004). In addition to varying in types of gains assessed, the studies reveal inconsistent findings: Some show significant gains, some show perceived gains, and some show little or no gains. These varied results may be due to many factors: the length of stay in the target country, the skill being tested, the initial proficiency level of the learners, and the instruments used to determine gains. In the study-abroad literature,

some slight consistent findings have been found in the sub-area of intercultural sensitivity and awareness.

The gap missing in the previous research is an analysis of the study-abroad context and the factors that make it a more beneficial learning context for language learners. We must examine the validity of the context before we compare it to the at-home context and assume it is beneficial. In order to examine the validity of the context, researchers must examine the many different variables in a study-abroad setting: the different types of program designs, host families, classes and cities (particularly, the influence of or easy access to English in these cities). The current study will lay some of the foundation of this research by looking at student practices while abroad.

The Focus of the Current Study

Given the assumptions, and trends, and questions highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, the current study aimed to address some study-abroad concerns while also filling in gaps in the current study-abroad research. The study accomplished this by investigating several aspects of study abroad as it relates to the interactional practices of students.

First, I investigated the interactional practices of students while abroad, specifically as they relate to interactions with native speakers and the local population as a whole. I aimed to get a better idea of what activities students engaged in and with whom they interacted outside of the classroom. Furthermore, I also wanted to analyze the relationships that students formed while abroad. Did they make friends with the locals, or did they build more intimate relationships with students from their home university? I also examined program structure and how it potentially played a role in the way study-abroad students interacted with the target community. Did the program actually foster an

environment for language learning, or was it created in a way that leaves little time for interaction with the local community?

Second, I looked at students' engagement with host families. "Host family" is a multifaceted term because it includes not only the immediate host family, but also any extended family members regularly present in the home. Furthermore, there is a high probability that some families host more than one student. Thus, other university students or high school students from a different university and/or country, may also be living in the home. The presence of other family members and other students can drastically change the way one student interacts with the family. It can also change the way the host family interacts—or does not interact—with the student. For example, if the student's oral proficiency level is low, the host family may use a more proficient student as a translator instead of making the effort to communicate with the low-proficiency student. The dynamic with the host family can also be impacted if more than one student from the same home university stays in the home. In this situation, one student may shy away from communicating with the family if the other student is more outgoing and more vocal.

Third, I evaluated the role technology plays in students' experiences abroad. Does technology encourage or hinder interaction with native speakers? Does technology allow the students to bring their first language with them into the target country? Does technology take the place of potential conversations students might have with people in the service industry? It is impossible to make students travel to target countries without their electronic devices. Furthermore, it is absurd to forbid students from seeking out places where they can access the Internet. Therefore, the effect of technology on students' study-abroad experiences is an aspect that must be investigated.

These three topics of investigation will begin a much-needed look into the practices of study-abroad students. One cannot hail study abroad as the best or ideal

context for foreign language learning if one does not know what students actually do while abroad. Without this information, we cannot know if the at-home context differs much from the study-abroad context as it specifically relates to students interacting with native speakers of the target language.

The Framework

The current study did not aim to analyze learner gains but instead attempts to take an in-depth look into the practices, activities, and interactions of study-abroad students. To this end, I borrowed hypotheses from second-language acquisition research to ground my research, because my goal is to validate the effectiveness of the language-learning context and study-abroad program design to promote interactions with people from a target community. I based my research on three hypotheses: the Interaction Hypothesis (S. M. Gass, 1997; Long, 1981, 1983, 1996), the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1978, 1980, 1985), and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985).

The Interaction Hypothesis claims that, as learners interact with native speakers, there will be instances where the interlocutors will have to negotiate for meaning. The negotiation of meaning then leads the native speaker to adjust his or her speech, which leads to the learner comprehending the input, leading to language acquisition. Although I did not assess student gains, I did want to look at the number of instances in students' conversations with native speakers where students or interlocutors actually stopped the conversation to negotiate for meaning.

The Input Hypothesis focuses on the input that learners receive and argues that learners have to receive "comprehensible" input—that is, just a little higher than their current level of competence—for language acquisition to occur. The way I chose to judge the level of learner input was by assessing the topics of discussion during conversations

with native speakers. I propose that, if students repeatedly discuss the same topics, then they cannot be receiving input that is slightly higher than their current level.

The Output Hypothesis focuses on the utterances that learners produce and maintains that learners should be pushed to produce coherent and comprehensible output. Again, I did not look at the changes in output over time to make conclusions about the learners' language acquisition, but I did look at the quality and quantity of learner output by evaluating the turns that learners produce and analyzing the length of learner turns.

The Research Questions

In an effort to build the foundation for this area of research—focusing on the evaluation of program design and student interactions, and filling in the aforementioned gaps—the proposed study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What types of interactions do students have outside of the classroom while studying abroad?
2. How do learners interact with their host families while studying abroad?
3. How do technology and social media affect the immersion experiences of study abroad students?

Research Design

This section gives a brief overview of how the current study was designed. The participants were 13 students from a large southwestern university learning Spanish as a second language. Students studied in Santander, Spain, for five weeks during the university's first summer session of their annual hybrid faculty-led/affiliate study-abroad program. Students enrolled in the third-semester Spanish course and attended class for five hours each day from Monday to Thursday. The 13 students who made up the participant group were a subset of a group of 50 students from their home university.

While in Spain, the students resided with host families. They attended class in the mornings and took part in various activities during the evenings and weekends.

I collected both qualitative and quantitative data for this study. Data included audio-recorded mealtime conversations, audio-recorded interviews with the researcher, weekly surveys, and weekly journal entries. Students were asked to record 20—30 minutes of their lunch or dinner conversations with their host family once a week. Twice during the sojourn, students met with me for face-to-face interviews. On a weekly basis, students completed surveys and journal entries that specifically asked about their interactions outside of the classroom and their use of technology and social media. At the end of the sojourn, students completed an extensive survey about their experiences living with their host families.

Provisional Results

The first research question asked about student interactions outside of the classroom. The results showed that, of the 13 participants, 12 made a habit of spending time with people from their home university. One student, P#01, specifically said that he made every effort to make Spanish friends and spend time with them. He was very successful in his endeavors and made friends with a Spanish university student. On the other hand, all the other participants reported building stronger relationships with students from their home university. Furthermore, students confessed that, during the time they spent with students from their home university, English was spoken all of the time. These results speak to the program design and the effects of having a large group from the same university stay in the same city without explicit plans for having students interact with locals.

The second research question asked about students' interactions with their host families. Based on the analysis of the mealtime conversations, I exposed some interesting trends. There were five topics of conversation that were discussed the majority of the time by students and their hosts: food, students' future plans, the host family's history, students' past plans, and local topics. I saw very few instances of negotiation of meaning. Another interesting finding was the use of English to resolve breakdowns in communication. In regards to initiating new topics of conversation and turn-taking, the host family members dominated both categories. They initiated new topics of conversation over 60 percent of the time and produced over 60 percent of the turns during the recorded mealtime conversations.

The third and final research question asked how technology and social media affected the immersion experience of students while studying abroad. All of the students traveled with a smart-phone and a laptop or tablet. Twelve of the 13 students had access to the Internet at their host home, used it daily, and reported not feeling disconnected from friends and family back home. Students also reported using their devices to listen to English music, watch television shows from back home, and review the walls and pages of their friends on social media. These results show a decline in the concept of 100 percent immersion, because students can now bring their first-language lives with them via the Internet and electronic devices.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Below are topic-specific terms and definitions that will aid in understanding this dissertation

Faculty-led Study Abroad: Groups of students from the U.S. that travel to other countries to study while accompanied and, at times, taught by a faculty member from the

home university. In most cases, faculty-led study-abroad programs are more expensive than individual study-abroad options. In faculty-led programs, students receive a letter grade that affects their grade-point average. In contrast, students who travel independently and take classes at a language school or foreign university most likely receive a credit/no credit option for courses.

First Language (L1): Specifically, in regards to the participants of this study, the first language or dominant language of the students is English.

Group-mates: students from the same university studying abroad together.

Heritage speaker: For the purposes of this dissertation, heritage speakers are individuals who grew up in a household that spoke Spanish or individuals who spoke Spanish as a first language until going to a school where English became their dominant language. A heritage speaker understands Spanish but may have difficulties or deficiencies in writing and speaking the language.

Host family: Families that receive compensation in return for hosting foreign university students (or, at times, high-school students) in their homes while the students study at a local university or language school. The term "host family" also includes the immediate family of the host. For example, a widow in her sixties may act as a host to students, but, if her children come over occasionally for a meal, or if she helps to care for grandchildren, these individuals are also considered part of the host family.

Interlanguage: The language between a learner's first language and second language. It contains traces of their first language and some overgeneralizations of the second language.

Short-term study abroad: study-abroad programs that last eight weeks or less. These programs normally take place during the summer.

Sojourn: time spent living and studying abroad.

Study abroad: For the purposes of this dissertation, "study abroad" refers to a program where students from the U.S. travel to other countries and enroll in classes at foreign universities or language schools, with the goal of receiving university credits and, at times, to fulfill a language requirement.

Target language: For the purposes of this dissertation, and when specifically referring to the study participants, the target language is Spanish, the language the students have come to Spain to learn.

CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous chapter discussed some of the assumptions and trends related to study abroad that have been observed in the last three decades. In an effort to highlight the gaps in previous study-abroad research and thus emphasize the need for the current study, this chapter will begin with a review of some of the previous study-abroad literature. This discussion will lead to an outline of the theoretical framework in which I have based this study. I will then show the reasoning behind the data collection tools that I chose and finish the chapter with an overview of the variables analyzed in the data.

THE FOCUS OF PAST STUDY-ABROAD RESEARCH

The previous literature that focused on study-abroad does not unequivocally support the claims or assumptions that language acquisition happens as a direct result of study-abroad time (Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2010; Llanes, 2011; Sunderman & Kroll, 2009). However, in an effort to investigate the validity of such claims and the appropriateness of study abroad as a favorable context for language learning, second-language acquisition researchers have investigated the effectiveness of study abroad by gauging a wide range of learner gains—for example, cultural, sociocultural, linguistic, and oral fluency (Bacon, 2002; Cubillos, Chieffo, & Fan, 2008; DeKeyser, 2010; Isabelli, C.A., & Nishida, 2005; Isabelli, C.A., 2001; Isabelli, C.L., 2000; Isabelli-García, 2010; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; R. A. Martinsen, 2010a; O'Brien, Segalowitz, Freed, & Collentine, 2007; Segalowitz et al., 2004). In addition to varying in the types of gains assessed, the studies reveal inconsistent findings: Some show significant gains, some show perceived gains, and some show little or no gains. These varied results may be due to many factors: the length of stay in the target country, the skill being tested, the initial proficiency level of the learners, and the instruments used to

determine gains. The results of studies focused on changes in students' levels of intercultural sensitivity and awareness have been more consistent. I address that subset of study-abroad research in the following section.

Intercultural Sensitivity and Awareness

Intercultural sensitivity and awareness is a construct that researchers within and outside the field of language acquisition investigate in both short- and long-term programs. Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, and Hubbard (2006) examined changes in the intercultural sensitivity of 21 business administration majors studying in the UK for four weeks. Using the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer & Bennett, 1998, 2002; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003), Anderson et al. (2006) discovered a statistically significant difference in scores showing overall development of intercultural sensitivity from the time of the pre-test to the post-test among students who participated in the program.

On the other hand, Bacon (2002), when looking at long-term study-abroad programs, completed an ethnographic case study of one student, Lily, studying Spanish as a second language in Mexico. At the beginning of her sojourn, Lily struggled to adjust, as her expectations about Mexico were not upheld. She found Mexican men to be disrespectful and felt that she was constantly being observed by the people around her. She was overwhelmed and unable to process all the cultural data she encountered. Nonetheless, over the course of the semester, Lily did show signs of cultural adjustment. She made friends with some Mexican women and ventured away from her British roommates. She traveled to different cities and, during her interviews, expressed empathy towards the Mexican community. Most impressive was Lily's own observation of her cultural adjustment. She said "that what she learned about Mexican culture was a better

appreciation of her own ignorance, making her less sure that her culture was the norm" (pg. 645).

Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004) performed a research investigation on groups of students in a study-abroad program for language-learning purposes. Her study compared two groups of students: 18 students who studied in Taxco, Mexico, for seven weeks, and 10 students who studied in Mexico City, Mexico, for 16 weeks. She too used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer & Bennett, 2002; Hammer et al., 2003) to gauge participants' intercultural sensitivity. Her results uncovered an effect for length of stay. Only 31 percent of the students in the short-term program showed an improvement by advancing to the next stage of intercultural sensitivity according to the IDI, whereas 67 percent of the students from the 16-week program showed improvement. Thus, her study showed that the longer the program, the higher the probability that students saw a change in their intercultural sensitivity.

Given that short-term programs have recently become more popular, Martinsen (2011) investigated both learners' cultural sensitivity and the factors that predicted a change in cultural sensitivity. He aimed to go a step further in the research beyond solely performing a cultural sensitivity pre-test and post-test. His participants were 45 second-language learners of Spanish who were studying in Argentina for six weeks. To determine their cultural sensitivity gains, Martinsen used the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS) (Cushner, 1999). He also examined four factors that could potentially predict a change in cultural sensitivity: "learners' pre-sojourn oral language proficiency," "learners' pre-sojourn motivation levels," "learners' interactions with native speakers," and "learners' relationships with their host families." Even though two of the participants showed no change in cultural sensitivity and 12 of the participants actually showed negative gains, 70 percent of the students did show cultural sensitivity gains. Similarly,

the overall results revealed a highly significant gain in cultural sensitivity amongst the entire group. Furthermore, Martinsen found that, of the four factors, only "learners' interaction with native speakers" significantly related to cultural sensitivity, meaning that no significant predictive relationship was found between gains in cultural sensitivity and pre-sojourn motivation, pre-sojourn oral proficiency, or relationship with host family.

Martinsen's findings on the role of students' interactions with native speakers are very relevant to the current study. This type of interaction will be discussed in depth later in this dissertation. However, before that topic is addressed, I must objectively analyze other aspects of past study-abroad research as they relate to oral proficiency gains.

Oral Proficiency Gains

In regard to oral proficiency gains, some study-abroad researchers have found that a percentage of learners show some improvement in their oral skills (Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Martinsen, 2010; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). Among the same group of learners, however, they also found learners who made negative gains or learners who did not show any change in oral proficiency level. Llanes and Muñoz (2009) used oral interviews to study English learners' gains in oral proficiency. They found that those students with lower proficiency levels showed more improvement in the areas of vocabulary acquisition and accurate fluent speech. Even though the difference in length of stay was only a week, the researchers discovered that those who studied abroad for four weeks spoke more fluently and showed greater accuracy in speech production than the three-week sojourners.

In addition to investigating learners' cultural sensitivity, Martinsen (2010) investigated the oral language proficiency gains of the same 45 participants who studied in Argentina—specifically, the factors that would positively affect oral proficiency. He

tested four factors: students' interaction with native speakers, students' pre-sojourn motivation levels, students' relationships with their host families, and students' pre-sojourn cultural sensitivity levels. On a scale of 4.6, the group showed a significant increase from 2.47 to 2.77 on the oral language test, which required students to talk in the target language for three minutes. The researcher and a team of trained native speakers then graded and analyzed the students' speech samples. Martinsen concluded that the improvement of the participants could be compared to an improvement from intermediate-low to almost intermediate-mid on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) guidelines (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1999). Additionally, Martinsen found that pre-sojourn cultural sensitivity levels showed the strongest significant correlation with gains in oral language skills. Conversely, none of the other factors showed a significant relationship with gains in oral language proficiency.

Instead of investigating influential factors, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) conducted a comparison study between study-abroad and at-home learners. Based on the results of oral proficiency interviews, they found that study-abroad learners improved their oral proficiency statistically significantly more than the at-home learners. However, they could not conclude that this improvement was due to the increased speaking opportunities available to learners in the target country. These last two studies speak to the very complex and varied findings of study-abroad research. The fact that the researchers claim the improvements were not due to time spent speaking with others in the target country means that more research needs to be done to uncover what learners are actually doing outside of the classroom, and what type of activities do influence language acquisition. The current study aims to begin such an investigation.

Gains in Grammar Knowledge

With reference to grammar gains, the research is extremely wide-reaching, as past studies have investigated many different aspects of grammar knowledge, such as preposition accuracy (e.g., *por* vs. *para)*, copular accuracy (e.g., *ser* vs. *estar)*, gender agreement, the acquisition of the subjunctive, mood accuracy, tense accuracy, and object pronoun accuracy (Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 2010; Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz, 2015; Isabelli, C.A., & Nishida, 2005; Isabelli, C.A., 2001; Isabelli, C.L., 2000; Isabelli-García, 2010; Lafford & Ryan, 1995; Ryan & Lafford, 1992). Some of the findings in this sub-category of study-abroad research show positive gains in learners' grammatical knowledge. However, a significant difference in these studies is that the majority investigated learners on long-term sojourns instead of students participating in short-term programs.

Collentine (2004) compared an at-home group and a group of study-abroad students in Spain. The groups were compared on 17 different morphological, syntactic, and morphosyntactic structures such as gender and number agreement, mood and tense accuracy, and copular accuracy. Initial results showed that there were not many differences between the two groups. They both used the indicative mood correctly; they both used the first and third person of verbs 99 percent of the time; and they both used the present tense 73 percent of the time. Additionally, both groups performed at a high level of accuracy (95.5 percent), on the pre-test and post-test when tested for gender and number agreement. Upon further analysis of the data, however, a few differences emerged. As a whole, the study-abroad group did not show improvement in grammar abilities. The at-home group showed improvement in the use of verbs and subordinate conjunctions, which reflects the grammar emphasis in the at-home classroom. However, the study-abroad group did show increased instances of narrative discourse. The author

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posits that "[i]t may be that day-to-day interactions with the target culture permit SA [study abroad] learners to practice retelling their daily or weekend adventures to friends and host-family members, and so they learn to produce numerous narrative behaviors within a given turn, which would also entail improvements in their abilities to generate a series of episodes" (pg. 245). This aspect of student narratives will be further investigated in the current study when I analyze students' conversations with host families.

Moreover, Isabelli and Nishida (2005) compared a group of study-abroad learners with a group of at-home learners in regards to their use of the subjunctive mood in Spanish. They found that, after nine months of study, the study-abroad learners were producing complex sentence structures that triggered subjunctive and correctly used the subjunctive mood 49 percent of the time (compared to 38 percent of the time in the fourth month of the sojourn). In contrast, at nine months, the at-home learners were correctly producing subjunctive mode in complex structures only 5 percent of the time. Thus, in this case, context had an effect on grammar, but it was only observed after nine months of study. One can speculate that during a two-month sojourn the numbers would be even lower or possibly nonexistent.

Isabelli-García (2010) also performed a comparison study of at-home and study-abroad learners, and found that, when testing for the acquisition of gender agreement, after four months both the AH and SA learners were performing at a high rate of accuracy. She found no effect for context. However, both set of learners were performing at a high rate of accuracy at the beginning of the program, which might mean that the learners had already acquired the construct being tested.

In the recent decade, research on short-term study abroad and grammatical language gains has begun to surface. DeKeyser (2010) monitored the progress of 16 U.S. students studying Spanish in a six-week program in Argentina. The results of the study

showed little to no linguistic gains. He found very minimal grammatical gains when he analyzed the questionnaires, written proficiency tests, aptitude tests, interviews, and observations used to measure the progress of the students. Most students showed some improvement in the accuracy of their speech, but it was not statistically significant. Moreover, the author concluded that, because students had inadequate grammar knowledge at the beginning of their time abroad, they would "reinvent the elementary grammar wheel in their classes and avoid practice opportunities with native speakers because they were too painful" (pg. 89). On the other hand, the students with more sufficient grammar knowledge performed better on the speaking test. The results of this study speak to the importance of students' readiness before they go abroad. We must ask ourselves if students should possess a specific level of proficiency before studying abroad.

Most recently, Grey, Cox, Serafina, and Sanz (2015) also tested the grammatical gains of 26 Spanish learners enrolled in an intensive language experience in Barcelona. They asked students to complete grammatical judgment tests during Week One and at the end of Week Five of their sojourn. The tests specifically looked at the students' accuracy in word order and number and gender agreement. The results showed that the students had statistically significant gains in word order and number agreement accuracy, but the improvement in gender agreement only approached significance. Even though this short-term study-abroad research shows positive gains, the researchers did not investigate the factors that may have affected those gains. The current study lays some of that foundational research by looking at student practices while abroad.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current study is not a second-language acquisition study in that it does not aim to analyze learner gains but attempts to take an in-depth look into the student study-abroad experience (i.e., students' practices, activities, and interactions both within and outside of the host home). As such, I am basing my research on three essential hypotheses in second-language acquisition. The Interaction Hypothesis speaks to the value found in language learners interacting with native speakers. The Input Hypothesis addresses the role of input in the second-language acquisition process. Finally, the Output Hypothesis focuses on the importance of learner output in the process of learning a second language. I will discuss these three hypotheses in reference to the goals of the current study and how this study impacts the study-abroad and second-language acquisition research.

The Interaction Hypothesis

The core of this investigation is learner interactions; for that reason, the core of my research focuses on the Interaction Hypothesis (Long; 1981, 1983, 1996). Using this hypothesis, Long (1996) claims that:

> *negotiation for meaning*, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS [native speaker] or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways. (pp. 451-452)

> It is proposed that environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner's developing L2 [second language] processing capacity, and that these resources are brought together most usefully, although not exclusively, during *negotiation for meaning*.

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Negative feedback obtained during negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of L2 [second language] development, at least for vocabulary, morphology, and language-specific syntax, and essential for learning certain specifiable L1—L2 [first language—second language] contrasts. (p. 414)

According to this hypothesis, as learners interact with native speakers, there will be instances where there is a breakdown in communication, either due to gaps in the learner's interlanguage or lack of comprehension on the part of the learner. This breakdown in communication leads to negotiation of meaning, which requires the native speaker to adjust his or her speech, which then leads to the learner comprehending the input and to language acquisition. Gass (1997) also focuses on learner—native speaker interactions and states that learners have the opportunity to notice gaps in their learner language. Upon noticing the gaps, the learners can then modify their second language knowledge. As previously stated, this study does not focus on students' language gains, but it does analyze host family—student interactions and looks for instances when the conversation breaks down to see how the student and host family repair the conversation. Part of this analysis includes examining instances in the conversation when the host family and the student negotiate for meaning as a technique to resolve conversation breakdowns.

The Input Hypothesis

Even though, as I discussed in the introductory chapter, the idea of 100 percent immersion is degenerating, students are still receiving some target language input in the classroom and during mealtime interactions with the host families. For this reason, I also

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base the study on the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1978, 1980, 1985). Krashen (1985) proposes that the acquisition of a second language depends on both modified and comprehensible input:

> The Input Hypothesis claims that humans acquire language in only one way—by understanding messages, or by receiving 'comprehensible input.' We progress along the natural order by understanding input that contains structures at our next 'stage'—structures that are a bit beyond our current level of competence (We move from i, our current level, to $i + 1$, the next level along the natural order by understanding input containing $i+1$). (p. 2)

This means that only receiving input at the "I" level, the learner's current level of competence, is not sufficient for language acquisition. Conversely, if the input is extremely advanced (at the "$i + 2$" level, for example), the student will be unable to process that information. For this reason, if the goal is language acquisition, and if students want to move from their current state of knowledge, they have to understand input containing "$i + 1$" information, which represents the next level along the natural order of acquisition.

The notion of "$i + 1$" input comes into play in the analysis of the mealtime recorded conversations. During these conversations, learners have opportunities to converse with native speakers about a variety of topics. My goal in this analysis is to see if the students are talking about different topics of conversation that will potentially have "$i + 1$" input, or if they are discussing the same topics repeatedly, which I interpret as "i"-level input.

The Output Hypothesis

In addition to the Interaction Hypothesis and the Input Hypothesis I also base this current study on the Output Hypothesis. Part of the analysis of the mealtime conversations between students and their host families examined the turn-taking patterns of all individuals at the table at the time of the recordings. Thus, the role that the students played during these conversations and the amount of output they produced is paramount to the investigation. Furthermore, focusing on output will also speak to the validity of the study-abroad context as a context that facilitates and fosters language acquisition, since comprehensible output is one of the criteria set forth by second-language acquisition researchers as evidence of language acquisition.

The Output Hypothesis was created by Swain (1985) as she observed French immersion students in Canada showing very few signs of second-language development after studying French for years. She concluded that input alone was not sufficient for the acquisition of a second language. The Output Hypothesis was not created in opposition to the Input Hypothesis but as a complementary addition to second-language acquisition theories. According to Swain (1985), the production of culturally appropriate language leads to the development of grammatical accuracy and precise and socially appropriate language fluency. Additionally, she claims that this kind of output must be pushed and comprehensible. Swain says that learners should be "pushed toward the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately" (Swain, 1985, p. 249).

Thus, in the data collected, I examined not only how much the students were taking turns during the conversations, but also the instances of breakdowns in the conversations that were solved by negotiation of meaning, because I wanted to see instances where learners and hosts alike were stopping the conversation to focus on the

grammatical, lexical, or phonological aspects of the language. The Output Hypothesis values negotiation of meaning, but goes one step further by claiming that learners should focus on comparing their production with that of native speakers or better users of the target language. When learners do this comparison, they can then modify their output to make it more comprehensible. My aim was not to discuss learner gains or acquisition in this study, but I did want to assess whether or not learners were significantly producing meaningful or robust output during the recorded conversation in order to uncover the benefits of the study-abroad context.

Interaction, Input, and Output Research

The previous sections gave an overview of the Interaction, Input, and Output Hypotheses, and how they fit together as the framework for the current study. This section is dedicated to second-language acquisition researchers' view of these hypotheses and how they have been researched in more recent years. Ellis (2015) has extensively researched different second-language acquisition theories and has concluded, after analyzing many studies, that negotiated interaction has a positive effect on language acquisition. He also highlights the positive effects of interactive input—input that learners receive while involved in social interactions with speakers of the target language. He concludes that when learners have the opportunities to interact with others, they are exposed to interactionally modified input that makes an incomprehensible utterance comprehensible to the learner. Mackey and Goo (2007) also found that interaction, in a laboratory-based setting, had a stronger effect on the acquisition of lexical items than it did on the acquisition of grammatical items.

In regards to output, researchers (Ellis & He, 1999; Fuente, 2003; Izumi, 2002; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993) have also found that when learners are

pushed to produce more target-like output, it has a positive effect on acquisition. The production of pushed output will most likely occur in a context of negotiated interaction as Ellis and He (1999) and Fuente (2003) discovered in their studies.

Participants in the Ellis and He (1999) study worked in pairs to place furniture correctly in an apartment. Learners either had to give directions on where to place the furniture or receive directions on where to place the furniture. The learners were divided into groups that received pre-modified input, groups that received interactionally modified input, or groups that had to produce modified output. The researchers wanted to uncover the learners' ability to comprehend, recognize, and produce certain vocabulary items. Their results showed that the group that had to produce modified output statistically significantly outperformed the other two groups in vocabulary comprehension, recognition, and production although both input groups did show signs of improvement.

Fuente (2003) analyzed students involved in computer-mediated conversations and those in face-to-face conversations to judge the effect of negotiation during interaction on vocabulary acquisition. The results showed that learners in both contexts acquired the target vocabulary.

I chose to use the Input, Interaction, and Output hypotheses as my framework because past research has shown how interaction, modified input, and modified output positively influence language acquisition in the laboratory and classroom settings. We believe that they also will work well together to foster acquisition in the study-abroad setting. Additionally, Gass and Mackey (2006) remind us that the Interaction Hypothesis is not meant to work independently of other hypotheses. Upon analyzing past research, they concluded that interaction does lead to language learning, but they also admonish us to rethink the terminology and include constructs like input, feedback, and output.

Previous study-abroad studies have analyzed gains by using a combination of oral proficiency interviews (OPIs) (Collentine, 2004; Robert DeKeyser, 2010; R. A. Martinsen, 2010b), grammaticality judgment tests (Cubillos et al., 2008; Casilde A. Isabelli, 2001; Isabelli-García, 2010; Segalowitz et al., 2004), language contact profile questionnaires (Hernández, 2010; Lafford, 2004; R. A. Martinsen, 2010b; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), surveys (Cadd, 2012; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Cubillos et al., 2008; Lee, 2011), interviews (Bacon, 2002; Robert DeKeyser, 2010; Lee, 2011; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Smartt & Scudder, 2004), and student blog or journal entries (Cadd, 2012; Lee, 2011). At times, these tools have been successful in gauging learner gains in the areas of grammatical proficiency, oral proficiency, intercultural awareness, listening comprehension, and motivation. However, some researchers have found that tools like the OPI may not be sufficiently stringent to truly gauge learner gains, especially during short-term study abroad. Freed (1990) is one such researcher who saw the inadequacy of the OPI for gauging gains:

> The OPI, which utilizes one global holistic score for various aspects of language use, is not sufficiently refined to capture growth in oral skills, particularly in a six-week period. Except for students at the very beginning level, there was little variation in OPI scores. We therefore found it difficult with this type of analysis to demonstrate any effect of out-of-class contact. In order to demonstrate change, future studies will have to utilize more finely-tuned analyses; those which will reveal, with specificity, development in students' lexical breadth, syntactic complexity, stylistic sensitivity, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, and cohesion and coherence in language use. (p. 475)

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Even with this negative assessment of the capabilities of the OPIs, they continue to be a very prominent tool in study-abroad research.

I chose a mixed methods approach for this study as more study-abroad researchers are calling for a broader scope of current patterns of investigation (McManus, Mictchell, & Tracy-Ventura, 2014). Thus, for the current study, I chose to use surveys, journal entries, audio mealtime recordings, and face-to-face interviews as tools for data collection, because the information I gathered helped me focus on the interactional practices of participants outside of the classroom and host home. Additionally, the audio-recorded mealtime conversations, along with the host-family survey helped me focus on how students were interacting, specifically with their host families. I also got insight into students' use of technology and how they used social media and mobile applications to communicate and interact with others. The sections that follow will discuss each of these tools and their validity as ideal tools for my data collection.

Surveys

The student participants completed a total of seven surveys over the course of the sojourn. First, a background survey (Appendix A) was used to assess the learners' history with the Spanish language, identify Spanish heritage learners, and verify if whether English was their native language. It also assessed the use of technology, social media, and other electronic devices that the participants planned to use while abroad. The background survey was also used to evaluate some of the learners' expectations, fears, and desires going into the study-abroad experience. Most of the participants completed this survey within the first week of arriving in Spain.

Second, the students completed short surveys of 4-10 questions (Appendix B) each week, where they reported on their target language interaction during that week.

These surveys were created using a modified, simplified version of the Language Contact Profile (LCP) (Martinsen, 2010b) as a guide. In other study-abroad research, the Language Contact Profile has been used as a pre-test and post-test (Lafford, 2004) or as an exit survey at the end of a six-week program (Martinsen, 2010b) or at the end of a semester abroad (Hernández, 2010). An abbreviated part of the LCP was used in the Week 3 Survey, and some of the questions from the LCP were used during both face-to-face interviews. I opted out of using the extensive LCP survey at the end of the sojourn because I thought the students would not remember the specifics about their use of the target language and English from the first few weeks. I concluded that it was more advantageous to ask these questions multiple times during the sojourn to get a more accurate report of student practices.

In addition to asking students about their use of the target language and their first language, I also asked them about their use of technology and social media. The general topic of each survey is given below:

- Week 1 survey: Access to the Internet or Wi-Fi, the use of email or social media, and the devices used to connect to the Internet

- Week 2 survey: Methods of communication with family and friends not in Spain

- Week 3 survey: Entertainment while in Spain; what percentage of the day spent listening to music or watching television in English versus Spanish

- Week 4 survey: Activities outside of the classroom and outside of Spain

- Week 5 survey: Developing new friendships or relationships in person or via social media

The final survey, the Host Family Survey (Appendix C), which was based on The Survey of Host Family Relationship created by Martinsen (2010b), was more extensive,

and students completed it at the end of the sojourn. This survey was designed to acquire feedback on the learner's experience with the host family, the level of comfort they experienced living in their host's home, and the type of activities in which they participated together.

When evaluating the use of surveys in other study-abroad research, it is common for background surveys to be given at the beginning of the sojourn (Hernández, 2010) or for evaluation surveys to be given at the end of the time abroad. The purpose of this is to receive feedback from participants about their intercultural awareness (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004), to evaluate their overall experience in the course while abroad (Cubillos et al., 2008), or to gain insight about participants' time interactions with people from the target community (Cadd, 2012). Unlike the research practices in past study-abroad studies, during this current study I thought it more beneficial to have the students complete surveys on a weekly basis so they could report on their behaviors as they were happening and not have to recall five weeks of behavior at the end of their time abroad.

Journal Entries

As part of the course, students were required to write weekly journal entries in English and in Spanish, responding to prompts I provided to the students. Each journal entry was made up of two parts: the initial journal entry in English and a response to a fellow classmate in Spanish. Given the students' initial level of Spanish, I opted to have students respond to the initial prompt each week in English, because their proficiency level in Spanish would not have allowed them to fully articulate themselves on some of the topics in Spanish. Each week, the class was divided into discussion groups to facilitate the writing of the journals. The size of the groups varied, from pairs to groups of four or five students. The topics of these journal entries indirectly solicited information

about their daily interactions and their relationship with their host family and others while in Spain. See Appendix D for a complete list of the journal prompts.

Past study-abroad researchers have used journals or blogs as a data source but with a varied set of purposes. Some of the past uses of journals or blogs include: to give feedback about the tasks students completed during their sojourn that aimed to foster intercultural competence (Cadd, 2012), to evaluate the change in levels of intercultural competence in students (Elola & Oskoz, 2008; Lee, 2011), to share the different factors that influenced their language learning (Stewart, 2010), and to express their feelings and observations about their experiences while abroad (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). These studies examined some type of learner gain regarding language or intercultural competence. Alternatively, the current study uses the students' journals to better understand the students' experiences abroad as they specifically relate to interactions with native speakers of the target language. The journals gave me one more set of data with which to triangulate my other types of data.

Face-to-Face Interviews

Interviews between participants and researchers before, during, and after study-abroad programs have widely been used as a data collection tool in past study-abroad research. The most popular type of interviews are oral proficiency interviews, which are normally used as a pre-test and post-test to gauge gains in learners' oral proficiency (Bacon, 2002; Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, Bown, & Martinsen, 2014; Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 2010; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Martinsen, 2010b). Smartt and Scudder (2004) used oral interview pre-tests and post-tests to examine the self-repair practices of their students. According to their findings, as instances of self-repair decreased, target language proficiency increased. Outside of the pre-test/post-test model that investigates

learner gains, other researchers (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002; Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004) have interviewed host families and students to better understand the dynamics within the home and validate the well-known assumption of the "homestay advantage," which asserts that living with a host family is advantageous for students because hosts help their students "linguistically, culturally and psychologically" (Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004, p. 6).

As previously mentioned, interviews are a very common data collection tool to assess student gains; however, in the current study the audio-recorded face-to-face interviews with the researcher served a different purpose. Two sets of interviews took place during the third week and the final week of the program. The goal of these interviews was multidimensional. First, the interviews allowed me to get a general idea of with whom the students were interacting and how the students were enjoying their study-abroad and host-family experience. Second, the interviews helped glean details about the learners' habits outside of the classroom, such as where they were going and with whom, which indirectly spoke to interactional practices. Third, the interviews opened an avenue to discuss learners' foreign language goals, which included the desire to improve speaking skills, which ideally occurs through interactions with native speakers. Fourth, the interviews also gave me an opportunity to discuss the student—host family audio recordings with the subjects. At this time, I asked questions about the student's level of comprehension when speaking with the host family and with which member of the host family the student was most comfortable speaking. This final aspect made the interviews retrospective in nature. Hulstijn (1997) reports that one of the benefits of retrospective interviews is to help the researcher assess how well the experiment was performed. Even though I was not assessing the gains of the students, the ability to discuss mealtime conversations during and at the very end of the sojourn meant that these interactions were

still fresh in the students' minds. Some of the questions used in the face-to-face interviews can be found in Appendix E. Thus, the over-arching purpose of these interviews was to focus on the interactional practices of the students.

Mealtime Audio Recordings

In recent years, study-abroad research has started to focus on student interactions with native speakers while abroad (Cadd, 2012; Fernández-García & Martínez-Arbelaiz, 2014; Lee, 2011). Lee's (2011) methodology included a unique combination of interview types. Her participants engaged in both computer-mediated communication (CMC) and face-to-face ethnographic interviews with native speakers from the target culture in an effort to improve their intercultural competence. Cadd (2012) also had his students engage in 12 face-to-face interviews over the course of the semester. They were required to talk to different native speakers about 12 different topics, with the goal of giving the researcher the opportunity to assess an improvement in (1) students' self-assessed self-confidence in using the target language, (2) their willingness to communicate, and (3) their perceived gain in oral proficiency. Fernández-García and Martínez-Arbelaiz (2014) studied the native speaker-non-native speaker dyads of university students in San Sebastian, Spain. The students were part of a language exchange program at The University of the Basque Country. The researchers examined the interviews to find the ways in which the native speakers aided the non-native speakers when there were breakdowns in the conversation. Their goal was to assess if the feedback from the native speaker created pushed and modified output on the part of the non-native speakers the premise being that pushed and modified learner output equates to language acquisition.

These studies reinforce the general trend in study-abroad research, which is the investigation of learner gains. In the current study, however, the audio recordings of

student conversations with their host family serve the purpose of evaluating student and host practices during said conversations. Eleven of the 13 students audio-recorded a mealtime conversation with their host family every week for the five-week duration of the program. The students were asked to record between 20 and 30 minutes of non-scripted conversation. The recordings were analyzed for interactional patterns: i.e., topics of conversation, initiators of new topics of conversation, instances of conversation breakdown and repair, and turn-taking practices. The goal was not to draw conclusions about learner gains, but to specifically look at the practices and patterns of behavior formed by both students and their hosts over the course of the sojourn. The following section will discuss these aforementioned variables and reveal why the investigation of student interactional practices is essential to the discussion of study abroad and its validity as a language-learning context.

VARIABLES ANALYZED

This final section is dedicated to the discussion of the variables analyzed in mealtime conversations. I chose to examine the mealtime recordings for common topics of conversation, initiators of new topics of conversation, instances of conversation breakdown, and turn-taking practices. I will discuss breakdowns in conversation and turn-taking practices in this section. Within the discussion of turn-taking, I will also focus on the phenomenon of backchanneling that was a habitual practice of students during mealtime conversations. Previous second-language acquisition research has investigated learner interactions to see how learners interpret recasts and how they deal with breakdowns in conversation (Aparicio, 2010; Carpenter, Jeon, MacGregor, & Mackey, 2006; Egi, 2007; Iino, 2006; Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009; McMeekin, 2003; Pearson & Collingwood, 2007; Rassaei, 2014). The goal of these studies was to gauge improvement

in learners' interlanguage. The researchers wanted to promote recasts as a useful tool that draws learners' attention to language deficits and thus aids in language acquisition. If corrective feedback indeed aids in the process of language acquisition, the current study aims to quantify how often—and how—students were corrected during the mealtime conversations. Additionally, since I view the Input Hypothesis and the Output Hypothesis as theories that work together, I also examine and discuss turn-taking practices in order to see the level and quality of involvement students had in the conversations.

Breakdowns in Conversation

As previously indicated, I ground this current study in the Interaction Hypothesis and, by so doing, specifically focus on the interactions of the students while they talk with their host families. To better understand the interactional practices of the students, I analyze the instances of breakdown in these conversations. These breakdowns can be classified as: (a) instances where students and host families negotiate for meaning, (b) instances where students explicitly ask hosts for help in producing an utterance, and (c) instances where hosts correct the students using recasts. Long (1996) defines recast as "utterances that rephrase a child's [or learner's] utterance by changing one or more sentence components (subject, verb, or object) while still referring to its central meanings" (p. 434). Below is an example from P#06, where her host mother and host sister give a recast on the incorrect gerund form of the verb *aprender*—to learn.

P#06: Estamos aprendemos, aprendando?

Host Mom and Host Sister: AprenDIENDO

P#06: Aprendiendo sobre las diferencias, sobre ser y estar.

Transcript Translation:

*P#06: We are we learn, * aprendando [not a word in Spanish]?*

Host Mom and Host Sister – LearnING

P#06: Learning about the differences, about to be and to be [there are two copular verbs in Spanish that mean to be]

Previous second-language acquisition research has analyzed interactional patterns of language learners in the classroom or in a language lab, with predetermined learner-learner dyads, learner—native speaker dyads, learner-teacher dyads, or learners—researcher groups. Lyster (1998, 2001, 2004) has been one such researcher who has studied recast for decades. Over the years he has compared different types of correctional feedback, for example, prompts, negotiation of form, explicit feedback, or no feedback to recast. In Lyster's 2004 study, for example, he investigated the use of prompts versus the use of recast in the classroom and their effect on grammatical gender. Prompts, which were used by the instructor, were defined as a) clarification request – the use of phrases like 'I don't understand", b) repetitions – repeating the learners erroneous utterance with rising intonation and stress to highlight the error, c) metalinguistic clues – providing comments or information to the learner about the well-formedness of his or her utterance, and d) elicitation – asking the student directly how to say something in the target language. The results of the study found that learners who received prompts outperformed learners that received recasts on the written tasks. In regards to oral production, even though Lyster found a difference between the groups on the immediate posttest, when the learners' oral production was tested using a delayed posttest no statistically significant difference between groups was found.

In a more recent study, Lyster and Izquierdo (2009) tested learners of French using pre-tests, immediate post-tests, and delayed post-tests while comparing the students' acquisition of gender agreement. The learners received instruction in the classroom, but also completed tasks in a laboratory setting. The researchers divided

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learners into two different groups: one that received recasts and one that received prompts. In contrast to recasts that are a corrected repetition of a learner's utterance, prompts include metalinguistic clues that explicitly elicit a repeated, rephrased, and corrected utterance from the learner. The researchers did not find any statistically significant difference between the two groups. Both groups showed significant improvement in their scores from the pre-test to the immediate post-test, and there were no significant signs of regression at the time of the delayed post-test.

Aparicio (2010) had university students from the U.S. who were studying in Granada, for six months take part in a task-based study. The students were separated into groups that received negative feedback or recasts, and those that did not. She was examining the students' choice of Spanish mood (i.e., indicative versus subjunctive) while they completed the tasks. Even though those students who received recasts and negative feedback earned slightly lower scores on the post-test, the scores were not statistically significantly different from those who did not receive recast. However, in light of these results, the researcher still maintained that the use of recast and negative feedback was beneficial to the learner's acquisition of a second language.

Gass et al. (2005), for example, investigated how third-semester Spanish students completed picture-difference, consensus, and map tasks during their regular class while working in learner—learner dyads. Even though the goal of the study was to compare task-based interactions in the classroom versus in the laboratory, the investigators examined their recordings for instances of negotiation of meaning and for recasts to better evaluate the type of interactions the students had. The researchers did not find any statistically significant difference between the interactions in the classroom versus the laboratory; however, they found an effect for task type: The students negotiated for meaning more during the map task.

Indeed, recasts are considered to play an essential role in language acquisition because they prompt learners to notice gaps in their interlanguage. In past second-language acquisition research, they have been investigated as conversational tools that improve learner output. With time and more research more effective treatments like prompts have surfaced but these results have come from immersion or language classrooms or language laboratories. Furthermore, the native speakers have been trained researchers, programmed computers or language instructors. Additionally, the settings and tasks in which these studies have taken place have been predetermined. The current study is innovative in its methodology, in that the conversation topics are not predetermined nor are the conversations task-based. The interlocutors are regular native speakers that have not been trained nor are they language instructors. The conversations are normal, unprompted conversations that take place during mealtime between learners and their host families in a study-abroad learning context.

Moreover, I did not investigate how the use of recasts during these conversations led to language acquisition; instead I investigated how often learners are corrected and what both learners and their interlocutors do when there is a breakdown in conversation. One way that we saw host family members correct students was by using recasts. In addition to examining the conversations for instances when students received recasts from the host family members, I also looked for instances when students explicitly asked the host families for help when there was a breakdown in their production due to lexical, grammatical, or phonological problems.

Additionally, I focused on instances where both student and host family work together during periods of negotiation of meaning. I chose to analyze instances where there is negotiation of meaning, because, as proposed by Ellis (2015, p. 153), "noticing occurs more frequently in interactionally modified input than in interaction where there is

no negotiation." Although I am not specifically looking at learner gains in this study, I investigate learner interactions for situations that foster language acquisition. Schmidt's (2001) Noticing Hypothesis states that people will learn about things to which they specifically attend. Thus, in these conversations, I want to uncover instances where students have the opportunity to stop and pay attention to a particular grammar point or lexical item. Because my goal is to validate the study-abroad context as a viable context for language learning, I want to quantify how much learners are being helped and corrected during the mealtime conversations. To further investigate student involvement and learner output, I also look at turn-taking practices during these conversations.

Turn-Taking Practices

As referred to earlier, the Input Hypothesis and the Output Hypothesis work together as part of the framework of this current study. The dynamic between "*i + 1*" input and modified or pushed output are best seen in the data from the mealtime conversations. I chose to examine the turn-taking practices of my students and host families, because this information revealed the quality and quantity of student output as well as the quantity of host family input during mealtime conversations. Past researchers defining turns (ten Bosch, Oostdijk, & Ruiter, 2004; Weilhammer & Rabold, 2003) have said that "a turn starts with the first word in the dialogue or with the first word breaking the silence that follows the previous turn" (ten Bosch et al., 2004, p.564). In the current study, because the mealtime conversations are spontaneous and not predetermined, and because it is a cultural practice for Spanish family members to talk over each other and complete each other's sentences, I define a turn as any utterance made by someone during the conversation. The person does not have to exclusively have the floor in order for a turn to be tallied.

There has been limited research on student—host family conversations in the study-abroad context. Of the studies that use mealtime conversations as a source of data, the constructs investigated vary greatly. Wilkinson (Wilkinson, 2002) used conversation analysis to examine learner and host family conversations in French. She discovered that host families acted according to instruction norms. This means that, even though the conversations did not take place in the classroom, the native speakers adopted the role of teachers. They also saw one instance where the student took on the teacher role when helping the host family improve their English skills. Iino (2006) examined the conversation of learners of Japanese and their host families, and found that, due to cultural norms of politeness, the families were hesitant to correct the learners' errors. Furthermore, in regards to cultural knowledge, some families saw students as only recipients of cultural information, whereas others shared and received cultural knowledge from students, especially in contexts where Eastern and Western cultures were compared and contrasted.

Moreover, Pearson & Collingwood (2007) investigated the participation practices of three learners of Spanish during mealtime conversations with host families over the course of a semester-long sojourn. The researchers gauged learner participation over time by counting turns during the recorded conversations. They also tallied how often the students initiated new topics of conversation. Conversational data was collected during the seventh and the sixteenth week of the semester. The results show a small increase in turns from Week Seven to Week Sixteen. There was an increase of 1, 2, and 7 turns, respectively, among the three participants. Regarding initiation of topics, the researchers saw a decrease from seven to six instances of topic initiation for one participant, and an increase from three to ten, and from four to eight for the other two participants. The researchers concluded that, even though the number of turns did not greatly increase,

there was a change in the quality of the turns, meaning that learners' turns were longer and more detailed during recordings in Week Sixteen. Furthermore, the researchers stated that the decrease in the initiation of topics by one participant could be due to her having four members in her host family, compared to the other participants who were roommates and only lived with a host mother. Thus, she had fewer opportunities to take control of the floor and introduce new topics of conversation.

Undeniably, mealtime conversations offer a wealth of information regarding learner interactional practices. The current study not only looks at the quantity of turns (as previous studies have), but also examines the quality of learner turns. In the following section, I discuss in more detail the analysis used to examine learner turns, specifically as they relate to backchanneling and length of turns.

Length of Turns and Backchanneling

To better understand the quality of student output during the mealtime conversations, I performed more detailed analysis than simply counting the turns of each participant at the table. For student turns, I tallied the turns according to the following rubric:

> ➢ Backchanneling
> ➢ One-word turn
> ➢ Two-word turn
> ➢ Three or more word turn without a verb
> ➢ Three-word turn that includes a verb
> ➢ Four-word turn that includes a verb
> ➢ Five or more word turn that includes a verb

It was necessary to make this distinction in the length of student turns, because it spoke to the quality of student output. In past study-abroad research, Juan-Garau and Pérez-Vidal (2007) investigated the impact of study abroad on the acquisition of English of Spanish-Catalan bilingual students over the course of two years. During the two-year period, the students stayed in an Anglophone environment for three months. To determine changes in their oral proficiency, the researchers had the students complete role-play and narrative tasks. The researchers defined the construct of fluency as the number of words per clause or the number of words per sentence. The researchers discovered that, after a three-month sojourn abroad, the students increased their fluency by producing more turns as well as longer turns. While the current study is not investigating student gains in oral proficiency, it choose borrows from the methodology of previous research focused on study abroad in the way it analyzes student output.

In addition to counting the words per turns, I also tallied the use of backchanneling by students during these conversations. Yngve (1970) defines backchanneling as a channel "over which the person who has the turn receives short messages such as 'yes' and 'uh-huh' without relinquishing the turn. The partner, of course, is not only listening, but speaking occasionally as he sends the short messages in the backchannel. The backchannel appears to be very important in providing for monitoring of the quality of communication" (p. 568). Study-abroad researchers and discourse analysis have investigated the use of backchanneling in conversations.

Barron and Black (2015), for example, analyzed the Skype-voice interactions between two learner—native speaker dyads. The goal was to uncover how learners and native speakers co-constructed small talk by examining who initiated topics and tallying the number of instances of backchanneling. One learner was very active during the conversation, using topic shifts and helping to develop the topic of conversation with the

native speaker, in addition to using a wide range of backchanneling. On the other hand, the other learner introduced few new topics of conversation, used very short sentences in responses, and used very few instances of backchanneling—thus, giving the native speaker responsibility for the interactional burden of the conversation. The researchers saw the use of backchanneling as a way for learners to not only play a role in conversations, but also to support the native speaker during conversations.

Backchanneling has also been investigated by Lambertz (2011) as it relates to engaged listenership. Lambertz defines backchanneling as "the desire of the listener to portray active, supportive and polite listenership (p. 12)." Her study specifically analyzes Australian English corpus data, in addition to conversations that the researcher recorded to investigate how "yeah" and "mm" are used by listeners as they show engaged listenership. She concluded that "yeah" and "mm" have three different functions in the conversation. They work as continuers, alignment tokens, and agreement tokens. She further explained that the functions are not always clear and at times can be ambiguous, but in general that backchannels are an important part of the conversation.

It is certain that backchannels play an important role in conversation, be it in a language-learning context or in daily interactions. The current study analyzes the mealtime conversations for instances of backchanneling because they speak to the quality of students' conversations. The investigation of backchannels and turn-taking sheds light on the amount of input the learners are receiving, as well as how much output they are producing. Like Gardner (2001), I define backchanneling as any monosyllabic or and bi-syllabic utterance that does not trigger a change in who has the conversational floor. Some utterances that were classified as backchanneling were: *sí, umm, ohh, mmhm, ahh, haa, laughter,* and *okay*. *Sí* (– yes) is also classified as a one-word turn, but only when it is used as a response to a question. As previously explained, my overall goal is not to

access gains in language production or fluency, but rather to assess the quality of the learner output. Thus, by tallying the words in a turn and counting the uses of backchanneling, I will gain a better understanding of how much learners actually contributed to the mealtime conversations. In so doing, I will draw conclusions about the study-abroad context as a viable context for language learning that fosters rich learner—native speaker interactions that have the potential to lead to language acquisition. I end this chapter with a brief overview of the current study and the gap it fills in present study-abroad research.

FILLING THE GAP

As discussed in this chapter, most of the prior study-abroad research has focused on examining student gains with little research focusing on the actual context and student practices or activities while abroad. For these reasons, the current study focuses on investigating several aspects of study abroad as it relates to students' habits while in the target country.

First, I investigate the interactional practices of students, specifically as they relate to interactions with native speakers and the local population as a whole. I aim to get a better idea of what activities students engage in and with whom they interact outside of the classroom. Furthermore, I also want to analyze the relationships that students form while abroad. Are they making friends with the locals, or are they building more intimate relationships with the students from their home university? I also examine the program structure and how this can potentially affect the way students interact with the target community while abroad. Does the program actually foster an environment for language learning, or is it created in a way that leaves little time for interaction with the local community or native speakers of the target language?

Second, I look at students' engagement with their host families. The host family is a multifaceted concept, because it includes not only the immediate host family but also any extended family members that are regularly in the home. Furthermore, there is a high probability that some host families house more than one student. Thus, other study-abroad university or high school students may also be living in the home. The presence of other family members and students can drastically change the way one student interacts with the family. It can also change the way the host family interacts—or does not interact—with the student. For example, if the student's oral proficiency level is low, the host family may use a more proficient student as a translator instead of making the effort to communicate with the low-proficiency student. The dynamic with the host family can also be impacted if more than one student from the same home university stays in the home. It may be possible for one student to shy away from communicating with the family if the other student is more outgoing and more vocal.

Third, I evaluate the role technology plays in students' experiences abroad. Does technology encourage or hinder interaction with native speakers? Does technology allow the students to bring their first language with them into the target country? Does technology take the place of potential conversations students could have with people in the service industry? It is impossible to have students travel to the target country without their electronic devices. Furthermore, it is absurd to forbid students from seeking out places where they can access the Internet. Therefore, the effect of technology on students' experiences is an aspect that must be investigated.

These three topics of investigation will begin a much-needed look into the practices of students while abroad. One cannot hail study abroad as the best, or even ideal, context for foreign language learning if one does not know what students actually do while abroad. Without this information, the at-home context may not differ much from

the study-abroad context as it specifically relates to how students interact with native speakers of the target language.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In an effort to build the foundation of this area of research and fill in the aforementioned gaps, the proposed study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What types of interactions do students have outside of the classroom while studying abroad? (e.g., learner—native speaker, learner—learner, etc.)? This question aims to uncover with whom students spend time outside of the classroom and the host home.

2. How do learners interact with host families while studying abroad (e.g., mealtime interactions, evening activities)? This question is twofold: First, I look specifically at student interactions with host families during mealtime conversations to find trends and patterns in the way they communicate and repair conversations. I also look for the most-discussed topics of conversation. Furthermore, I tally the number of turns spoken by all individuals present at the meal. Additionally, I ask students about their time spent with the host family outside of mealtime to see if they truly integrate and become a pseudo-member of the family.

3. How does technology and social media affect the immersion experience of students while studying abroad? (e.g., use of smartphones, tablets, the Internet, and music/movies/books in the home language)? This final research question addresses the use of technology, how it affects students' interactions in the target country, and whether it aids or hinders interaction with native speakers.

CHAPTER 3—METHOD

INTRODUCTION

Before we can analyze the linguistics gains of foreign language learners who study abroad, or compare these gains with those who learn at home, we need to know what students actually do while abroad that is different from practices at home. The methodology described in this chapter assesses what activities students participate in when they are enrolled in formal study-abroad programs. This chapter describes the setting and participants; the recruitment and selection of informants; the data collection; and the methods for data analysis.

SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

The data for the current study were collected during the summer of 2014 in Santander, Spain, from 13 undergraduate students who were enrolled in a large university in the southwestern United States. These students spent five weeks at La Universidad de Cantabria (UC). This site was chosen as the primary study site for two reasons. First, the American university had been in partnership with La Universidad de Cantabria for almost a decade. Secondly, this particular program had repeatedly garnered a large number of participants over the past years. Thus, the program was chosen as the study site because the initial pool of prospective participants would be over 40 students. Additionally, the participants spent a total of five and a half weeks in Santander from late May to early July. Santander is a small coastal city in northern Spain in the province of Cantabria. Few English speakers reside there; however, in the later summer months of July and August, the city is inundated with many Erasmus[1] students from all over Europe and England.

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[1] Erasmus is a European Union student exchange program that provides foreign exchange options to college/university students in the EU.

The subjects were enrolled in a six-credit hour course that was taught in Spanish by a local instructor from the Universidad de Cantabria. They attended class from Monday to Thursday for a total of 20 contact hours per week. Moreover, the program included local excursions and evening activities, but students were free to travel as they desired most weekends.

Two factors determined the selection of the students in the study. First, many students who attend the summer program in Spain are also enrolled in a third-semester Spanish class. As such, all of the students in this third-semester course had similar prerequisites, capacity, and proficiency in Spanish. The second factor was the size of the summer program. The program is divided into two sessions, with the first session historically having the highest student enrollment. Therefore, I only studied those students who enrolled in the third-semester course and in the first summer session to take advantage of a larger study population.

The subjects consisted of 13 students whose ages ranged from 19 to 21 years old. Of the 13 learners, 11 were native speakers of English. One subject was a heritage Spanish speaker—she grew up with a mother who was a native Spanish speaker, and the student was a simultaneous bilingual English and Spanish speaker until the age of three. The remaining student was a native Arabic speaker who was learning Spanish as a third language. The students' majors were diverse, ranging from computer science to advertising and communication. None of them reported having Spanish as a major; however, one student did have Spanish as a minor. These 13 students were part of a larger group of 50 students, all from the same university. The remaining 37 students were not included in this study because they were not enrolled in equivalent language-learning courses.

While in Spain, the 13 students lived with host families. The 13 students were dispersed among 11 different host families, which meant that some of the students lived with a roommate from their home university who was also a classmate in the third-semester Spanish course. The demographics of the host families varied. Some host families consisted of middle-aged to retired couples and their children. Other families consisted of a widow who lived alone or with a child, or a widow who lived alone and was caring for her grandchildren. Moreover, six of the host families lodged additional students, either from the home university, from other U.S. universities, or from another country. This was the case for one host family that also hosted high school students from France. In the end, five of the 13 students lived as the only foreign guest in the home of their host family, and eight stayed in a home with other foreign students present.

As described, the demographic of each host family varied and it is important to note that this is one aspect of the study abroad experience over which program designers have little control. Per conversations with the program designers of the home university, the goal was for each student to reside individually in a host home. However, if students insisted, they were allowed to have a roommate from the home university reside in the same host home. Furthermore, the individuals, in Spain from La Universidad de Cantabria, in charge of placing students in host homes cannot dictate to the families how many students or individuals they are allowed to host in their home. Therefore, we cannot ignore this "*3rd element*" that greatly impacts the experience of a student in the host family home. If there are multiple students in a host home with varying levels of proficiency, there is a very high probability that the amount of interactions each student has with members of the host family will also differ. In Chapter four, of this dissertation I discuss the effects of family demographic and family size on learner interactions and learner output.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF THE INFORMANTS

Shortly after receiving permission to execute the study from the Language Program Director in the department of Spanish and Portuguese at the home university, the researcher received the complete list of names of the students enrolled in the third-semester Spanish course. The students were immediately added to a CANVAS[2] course specifically created for the purpose of the study. The CANVAS course would facilitate conversations between the researcher and the participants, as well as house the data collected over the course of the semester in a safe, password-protected system. The initial communication between the researcher and the subjects took place through a CANVAS email. Adding a student to a CANVAS course did not automatically enroll the student in the course itself. Instead, the researcher created an announcement to invite participants to be an active member of the CANVAS course, and to give students a brief initial description of the study. The students were not enrolled in an online course; CANVAS was the tool used to best communicate with the students as a group, and give the students a place to upload journals, recordings, and survey responses.

A second email was sent to students after they accepted the CANVAS invitation. It included a thorough explanation of the study: its purpose, methodology, and data collection timeline. The email also explained the requirements and expectations of a study participant (e.g., completion of audio recordings, interviews, surveys, and journals). Additionally, students were informed that they would have to give written consent to participate in the study on the first day of class in Spain. They were also informed that, before they gave their consent, they would have the opportunity to speak with the researcher face-to-face and ask questions or address concerns. They were informed that

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[2] CANVAS: A learning and content management system used by universities to communicate with students, post assignments, and store student grades

being part of the study was voluntary and, if they decided not to participate, they would have to complete a different assignment to fulfill the lab component of the course. Finally, students were informed that, because the data being collected was part of the coursework, there would be no monetary compensation for participating in the study.

On the first day of class in Spain, the researcher spoke with the entire class and once again gave a detailed overview of the study. She answered students' questions and concerns, and also asked for their written consent to participate in the study. The researcher reiterated the fact that, since the study was collecting data from the students' coursework, there would be no monetary compensation for participating in the study. All 13 students enrolled in the course gave their written consent to participate in the study on the first day of class.

The researcher also began recruiting host family participants on the first day of class. Prior to that day, the researcher had received permission from the director of El Centro de Idiomas (The Language Center) at the Universidad de Cantabria to conduct the study. Due to the confidentiality of host family information, all communication between the researcher and the host families took place via letters and with the help of the students. Once students gave their written consent to participate in the study, they were given a letter to hand-deliver to their host families. The letter gave a detailed explanation of the study and informed the families that this was part of the students' coursework that semester. It also informed them that their only responsibility was to be willing to be audio-recorded once a week during lunch or dinner. Furthermore, the letter reassured the families that the recordings were to be kept in a secure place and used solely for research purposes. The host families were informed that they would receive no compensation for their participation because this was part of the students' coursework. They were also informed that participation was not mandatory and they had the option not to participate.

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If they decided to do the audio-recording, the letter also included a copy of the host family consent form, which the family could sign and return to the researcher via the host student.

Additionally, the secretarial staff at El Centro de Idiomas (The Language Center) telephoned each host family to further explain the study and the concept of graduate student research. This was necessary because La Universidad de Cantabria is a research-focused university, and the concept of experiments was foreign to the families. The secretaries also reassured families that the university was familiar with the researcher and supported the data collection methods. Of the 11 host families, nine gave consent to be recorded. Two families did not give their consent to be recorded. One of these families did give consent but after the first week communicated to the researcher a desire to discontinue participating in the recording. The other family objected to being part of the study from the beginning, for fear of the recordings ending up on the Internet. This meant that 11 of the 13 subjects would complete all aspects of data collection, whereas two subjects would complete all other forms of data collection except the host family audio-recordings.

DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study were collected from four different sources: surveys, journal entries, audio recording of mealtime conversations, and face-to-face interviews. The previous chapter provides a detailed description of each data source and the reasoning for each source. In this section, I discuss how the data from each of these sources was collected.

Surveys

The participants completed seven surveys: A background survey (Appendix A), five short weekly activities surveys (Appendix B), and a host family survey (Appendix C). All of the surveys were placed on the online course management system, CANVAS. Students were given frequent reminders throughout the program to complete the surveys.

Journal Entries

In addition to the surveys, the participants also completed weekly electronic journal entries. The entire list of the weekly journal prompts created by the researcher can be found in Appendix D. Each journal was made up of two related prompts. The first prompt asked the students to write about a topic in English. The second prompt asked the students to respond to the journal entry of a classmate in Spanish. To facilitate the writing and the responses, the students were put into smaller subgroups using the discussion-board capabilities of CANVAS. Students were given frequent reminders at the beginning of each week to complete the first part of their journal entry so that their classmates could complete their second entry later in the week.

Mealtime Audio Recordings

In addition to the weekly surveys and journals, 11 of the 13 participants audio-recorded a mealtime conversation with their host family once a week for the five-week duration of the program. The students were asked to record between 20 to 30 minutes of non-scripted conversation. Of the 11 participants, two pairs of students were roommates; thus, a total of nine recordings were completed each week. The researcher had six digital recorders to use to collect data. On Monday mornings, six participants were randomly chosen and assigned a digital recorder. The following day, the six recorders were returned and the remaining three students had an opportunity to do their recordings. Each

digital recorder was equipped with a USB port. Students would download the audio file to their laptop or tablet, and then upload the file to CANVAS. As a safety precaution, before reassigning digital recorders, the researcher also downloaded the audio files to her personal laptop as a way to have duplicate copies of the files in case of technical problems.

Face-to-Face Interviews With Researcher

The final data collected were two sets of audio-recorded face-to-face interviews between the researcher and the students. The first set of interviews took place during the third week of the sojourn. The students met the researcher at a centrally located local cafeteria for this interview. During the second week of classes, the students signed up for a 30-minute interview slot that would occur the following week. The interviews occurred after lunch but before students' scheduled evening activities. This meant that the interviews took place roughly between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The second set of interviews took place during the fifth week of the sojourn—the day before the students' final exam. These interviews took place on one day at the University of Cantabria in a classroom in The Language Center. To help guide the conversations, the researcher prepared some initial questions (Appendix E) for the interviews. However, she also used some retrospective questions for each individual student based on some of the things she observed while listening to the mealtime recordings from the previous weeks.

Data Collection Timeline

Table 1 shows the order in which all the data were collected during the course of the first five-week session of the study-abroad program.

Table 3.1. Timeline of data collection

Week #1: 26th—29th May	- Complete Background Survey - Record Conversation #1 - Journal Entry and Response #1 - Complete Week #1 Survey
Week #2: 2nd—5th June	- Record Conversation #2 - Journal Entry and Response #2 - Complete Week #2 Survey
Week #3: 9th—12th June	- Record Conversation #3 - Journal Entry and Response #3 - Complete Week #3 Survey - Face-to-face interview #1
Week #4: 16th—19th June	- Record Conversation #4 - Journal Entry and Response #4 - Complete Week #4 Survey
Week #5: 23rd—26th June	- Record Conversation #5 - Journal Entry and Response #5 - Complete Week #5 Survey - Complete Host Family Survey
Week #6: 30th June	- The final face-to-face interview

METHODS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

This section outlines the analysis of the data. I begin with the surveys, followed by the journal entries and mealtime audio recordings, and finish with the face-to-face interviews.

Surveys

The surveys were analyzed by first tallying the rate of completion. Unfortunately, not all of the participants completed all the surveys every week. Given that these were part of the students' weekly class assignments, some students chose not to complete all of the assignments. Just as students decide to do or not to do their homework, the participants in this class decided, at times, not to complete the surveys, which could be classified as homework. In spite of the deficiency, I was still able to draw conclusions and fill the gaps in the survey data with other data sources, such as the face-to-face interviews and journals.

The information from the surveys was put into an Excel spreadsheet to aid in finding similarities or differences among the student responses. I focused solely on information that spoke to either the general assumptions about study abroad (as discussed in Chapter 1), or aided in answering the research questions. For example, the last section of the background survey asked students to share what they wanted to accomplish while in Spain. Through the content of their responses, I could see some of the same study-abroad assumptions unfolding. I also analyzed the weekly surveys to find commonalities in the students' use of technology and social media; their practices and interactions outside of the classroom; and their travels plans outside of Santander. The host family survey data was analyzed to find commonalities in student perceptions about their homestay, and student practices and activities with their host family.

Journal Entries

In addition to the survey, the participants also completed weekly electronic journal entries. As in the survey analysis, I began analyzing the journals by tallying their rate of completion. Even though all of the participants did not complete all the weekly journals, the information received from the face-to-face interviews solicited similar information, which allowed me to fill in information gaps and triangulate the data. The responses from the journals were combined in a Word document and then analyzed for commonalities that directly answered the research questions and supported the study-abroad assumptions discussed in Chapter 1. Not all of the journals entries were relevant to the current study, because I did not want students to discover that the research was specifically about their interactions while in Spain. Thus, some prompts were used as distracters. For example, the Journal #1 entry was about first impressions and culture shock, and was not relevant to the study because it did not solicit information about general study-abroad assumptions, student interactions, or use of technology. However, Journal #5 asked students to write about a goal they had prior to their sojourn and asked students if they accomplished that goal. The majority of the goals mentioned by students lined up with the general assumptions about study abroad. Participants #2, #4, and #5 specifically asked about student interactions, and I searched these entries to find patterns in how students interacted and with whom they interacted while abroad. Even though the students completed a host family survey at the end of the sojourn, the Journal #3 entry gave me a mid-sojourn look into host family-student relations. I searched these entries to see if any patterns of behavior or practices were forming between the students and their hosts.

Mealtime Audio Recordings

The audio recordings were analyzed differently from the surveys and journal entries. The recordings were not transcribed. The researcher conducted an auditory analysis by listening to the recordings and cataloguing their different aspects. First, I analyzed the recordings to uncover the topics of discussion and instances when the topic of discussion changed. During this analysis, I also noted which family member (i.e., Host Mom, Host Dad, Host Brother, etc.) or student was introducing new topics of conversation. Once I accumulated the list of topics with its accompanying family member for each recording, all the information was placed in an Excel file. The information was also tallied to find commonalities in topics of conversation among all the participants.

Second, I listened to the recordings to find and catalogue instances of breakdown in the conversations. This meant I searched for instances where students explicitly asked for help with grammar or lexicon, and instances where the host family used recast or scaffolding to aid or correct students during the conversations. Moreover, I formulated conclusions about why some participants had more instances of recast than others, such as the number of people at the table during the conversation or the level of student proficiency. I also looked for factors within the host family that may have affected how and when students were corrected—for example if a family had an adult child that spoke English, an English translation might be given to the student instead of a recast in Spanish.

Third, I listened to each recording and tallied the number of turns each individual had in each conversation. The turns of the students were coded into certain categories, such as one-word turns, five-word turns with a verb, or one-word utterances. This information was entered into an Excel file, and I tallied the results for each participant and found commonalities in the data from the group as a whole.

Face-to-Face Interviews With Researcher

Each participant had two face-to-face interviews with the researcher. The goal of the interviews was multidimensional. First, the interviews served to gain a general idea of the people the students interacted with and how the students enjoyed their study-abroad and host-family experience. Second, the interviews helped glean details about the learners' habits outside of the classroom, such as where they were going and with whom. Additionally, the interviews opened an avenue to discuss the learners' foreign language goals. The interviews also gave the researcher an opportunity to discuss the student—host family audio recordings with the subjects. During the interviews, the researcher asked questions about students' level of comprehension when speaking with the host family and with which member of the host family they were most comfortable speaking. The researcher compiled data during and after the interviews. Then she analyzed the data to triangulate it with data from the journals and surveys to fill in any gaps that were present. Finally, the researcher aimed to find commonalities among the 13 participants, specifically as they related to answering the research questions.

STUDY OBJECTIVE

Although exploratory in nature, the objective of this study is to confirm or refute the assumption that study abroad students interact with native speakers. Moreover, this study aims to provide a more in-depth understanding of the student—host relationship through the study methodology and analysis of its results. The following chapter presents the results of the data analysis. It concludes by reexamining and answering the research questions.

CHAPTER 4—RESULTS

The previous chapter outlined the methodology used to collect the data for the current study. This chapter will focus on the results found in the data. I will present the results by addressing each of the three research questions.

TYPE OF INTERACTION

The first research question asked: What types of interactions do students have outside of the classroom while studying abroad? This first section will aim to answer this question by uncovering students' responses from journal entries and survey results, as well as from face-to-face interviews with the researcher.

Intragroup Interaction

Of the 13 participants, 11 reported spending all of their time outside of the classroom with groupmates. "Groupmates" refers specifically to the other members of the student group from the home university. All 13 participants were taking the same course while in Spain, but they were a subset of a group of 50 students from the home university. The fourth survey that the students completed specifically asked students to list the activities they participated in outside of the classroom. Furthermore, that question followed up by asking the students to mention with whom they did these activities. Of the nine students that completed this survey, all nine reported spending their after-class time with groupmates. Two students mentioned participating in activities with a housemate who was also a university student from another U.S. university. Below are some responses from the participants that support these results:

When asked, "With whom do you do after-class activities?"

- P#03 responded, "The girl from Michigan who lives with me, the other [home university] student that lives with me, or the group in the group activities."

- P#05 responded, "The rest of the students in the program."

- P#10 responded, "Friends from [home university] that I've made in the program."

- P#11 responded, "Friends from [home university] and sometimes our UC program *monitors* Paula and Gabriel."

The final journal entry prompt also asked students to talk about the person they spent most of their time with outside of the classroom. The prompt also asked them what language they spoke when spending time with said person. Of the nine students that completed this journal entry, all mentioned spending most of their time with someone from their home university group.

P#02 shared that most of her time was spent with her roommate, who was also her classmate:

P#02: La persona con quien pasé la mayoría de mi tiempo fue P#13. Ya que tenemos la misma familia anfitriona, pasemos mucho tiempo juntas. Muchas veces, vayamos a compras o haremos las actividades después de clases, pero otras veces hicimos cosa separadamente.

Journal Entry Translation:

P#02: The person with whom I spent the most of my time was P#13. Since we have the same host family, we spend a lot of time together. Most of the time, we go shopping or we do the after-class activities, but other times we do things separately.

P#04 states that she spends after-class time with a groupmate who is not her classmate:

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P#04: No hay una persona que me pasé tiempo con todos los días a fuera de clase pero me tengo una amigo en la programa que está en los clases de ingeniero que me pasé tiempo con mucho. No nos hablamos en español nunca.

Journal Entry Translation:

P#04: There is not one person that I spent after-class time with every day, but I have a friend from the program that is in the engineering classes that I spend a lot of time with. We never speak to each other in Spanish.

P#06 says that she spends time with her groupmates outside of class but she also mentions interacting with some locals:

P#06: Típicamente, estoy con mis amigas de Tejas en el grupo. Hablamos en ingles la mayoría de el tiempo, pero a veces cuando nosotros viajar y vamos a un bar o un otra lugar hablamos en español con los españoles.

Journal Entry Translation:

P#06: Typically, I am with my friends from Texas [i.e. groupmates from the home university]. We speak in English the majority of the time, but sometimes when we travel and go to a bar or another place, we speak in Spanish with the Spaniards.

P#07 also mentioned instances when she interacted with locals, although the majority of her time was spent with classmates from the home university:

P#07: Las chicas con quien pase la mayoría de mi tiempo en este viaje fueron P#11 y P#10. Habían muchas ocasiones en que teníamos que hablar en español, y eso fue buena práctica. Esos ocasiones incluyeron ordenando en las cafeterías, preguntando personas para direcciones, y hablando con nuestros mamas españolas.

Journal Entry Translation:

P#07: The girls with whom I spent the majority of my time this trip was P#11 and P#10. There were many occasions when we had to speak in Spanish, and this was good practice. These occasions included ordering in the cafés, asking people for directions, and talking with our Spanish mothers.

Finally, P#03 made an interesting and important observation that shed light on the effects of the students traveling outside of the country on the weekends:

P#03: La mayoría de mi tiempo afuera de clase he pasado con mi compañero de cuarto. Ella es de tejas también, y por eso usualmente hablamos en inglés. Yo he encontrado que después un fin de semana hablando en inglés, es más difícil para hablar en español con mi familia anfitriona el lunes.

Journal Entry Translation:

P#03: The majority of my time outside of class I have spent with my roommate. She is also from Texas and for that reason we usually speak in English. I have found that after a weekend speaking in English it is more difficult to speak in Spanish with my host family on Monday.

At some point during the five-week semester, all 13 students reported that they travelled either outside of the country or to a non-Spanish-speaking city in Spain at least once. The excerpt from P#03 above speaks to the "linguistic seesaw" that she experienced: the target-language linguistic high of being in classes from Monday to Thursday where only Spanish was spoken, to the target-language linguistic low of spending Friday through Sunday with groupmates with whom she spoke English. The

lack of use of the target language was further exacerbated by them leaving the host country during their three-day weekends.

Frequent international travel during the weekends is a habit that is more prominent in short-term study abroad programs. Students who sojourn in a European country have the desire to take advantage of being in Europe and want to see as many different countries as possible during their time abroad. Students who study abroad for a semester or a complete academic year also participate in international travel; however these students will not travel internationally on a weekly basis. For this reason, weekly international travel is a characteristic specific to students participating in short-term study abroad programs.

The survey and journal data unveiled a pattern of consistent interaction with other L1 English speakers. Other researchers have also found that students abroad have difficulties integrating into the target community and building meaningful relationships with locals (Mitchell, McManus, & Tracy-Ventura, 2015). Due to the lack of integration into the local community, the students repeatedly stated that, when they spent time with their groupmates, the majority of the time was spent speaking English. Of the 13 participants, two reported having some deliberate interactions with native speakers of Spanish. Their journal entries and comments in regards to these interactions are discussed in the following section.

Intergroup Interaction

The results in the section above demonstrate that the majority of the participant group spent their time outside of the classroom with group mates or other U.S. university students. These results fall in line with the results of Coleman (2015) who discovered that students abroad have a distinctive social network. They normally start interacting with

co-nationals, then other non-locals and finally they interact with locals. Of the 13 participants, there were two students, P#01 and P#12, who spent time with local Spaniards outside of the classroom. Participant #12—in his response to the last journal prompt, which asked him with whom he spent the majority of his time mentioned participating in activities with the University of Cantabria *monitores* in addition to his groupmates.

> P#12: En realidad no hay una persona en particular con la que paso más tiempo que los demás pero en general paso mucho tiempo con el groupo y hablamos en inglés. Durante los días de la semana hacemos la actividad del día con Gabriel y Paula con quien hablo mucho en español y me enseñan muchos palabras y frases locals.

Journal Entry Translation:

P#12: In reality there is not one particular person with whom I spent more time, but in general I spend a lot of time with the group and we speak in English. During the weekdays we have day/evening activities with Gabriel and Paula (the monitores*), with whom I speak Spanish and they teach me many local words and phrases.*

Although P#12 says that he spent a lot of his time with the groupmates speaking in English, on those occasions when the *monitores* were present, he made a point to speak to them in Spanish. This same student also played a game with a groupmate during the sojourn to see who could go the longest without speaking English. Although short-lived, the fact that they played this game demonstrates that they realized that they were not using Spanish outside of the classroom and wanted to change that behavior. Interestingly enough, during the first interview with the researcher, P#12 specifically asked to speak in

Spanish to continue practicing and avoid potentially losing the aforementioned game. No other student requested to speak in Spanish during the interviews with the researcher.

Participant #01 took the acquisition of Spanish friends extremely seriously even before departing for Spain. In the excerpt that follows, taken from the final face-to-face interview with the researcher, we see that P#01 desperately wanted to have a different kind of experience while abroad. In his first interview with the researcher, he mentioned wanting to completely disconnect from the U.S., and wanting to explore the city and meet locals. He tells us with more detail here how he was able to make that happen:

> Researcher: Thinking back on the first week, what were some of the things that you wanted to accomplish while here?
>
> P#01: Ummm my number one thing before I came here was to just kinda of like explore around and be kinda like on my own, and umm cause I am like a pretty solidly independent person and so I wanted to experience a lot of things, um, that I like personally would like to experience. Like not necessarily going to all the big cities and stuff and travel like by myself and stuff. And my point was like not to form relationships here it was just to like experience the things that I wanted to.
>
> Researcher: Not to form relationships?
>
> P#01: Yeah it's weird, I know, I know I had a really weird mindset. My number one thing is to get out and go on like backpacking trips every weekend and like do all those types of stuff.
>
> Researcher: But not to form relationships with who—with local people or with other [home university] students?

P#01: "[Home university] students. I wanted to form relationships with local
people that was another one of my things. I am going to get a group of
Spanish friends and I'm just gonna like [incomprehensible noise]."

Researcher: Right, so have you achieved those goals?

P#01: I achieved the Spanish group friend goal.

Researcher: Really? Tell me about that.

P#01: Yeah, it's been awesome, umm, I don't know. I've made really great
friends, and I'm really sad because a lot of them are, like four of them are
leaving this week. So then I made new friends last week and I'm gonna try
to like replace the old ones with them, I guess.

Researcher: Where are they all going?

P#01: They just graduated so they are going to their respective towns.

Researcher: And these are university students?

P#01: Yes.

Researcher: And how did you meet them?

P#01: Through Gabriel (one of the *monitores*). I actually went to Leon yesterday
with Gabriel [...] He showed us his house and I got to meet his family and
we just hung out and went to like all these different bars for tapas. It was
awesome!

Participant #01 makes it extremely clear in this conversation and in his first face-
to-face interview that the *monitores* played an important role in helping him accomplish
his goal of meeting and making Spanish friends. Also, in his first interview, he mentioned
a Spanish university student named Anna that he met through the university student from
Oregon who was also living in his host home at the time. As the final interview

continues, P#01 comments on the importance of having "program-provided" native speakers available to the students so that these kinds of relationships can be fostered:

> Researcher: Do you think that it would have been nice if there were more people like Gabriel at you all's disposal to meet?

> P#01: Yes! For me personally, and I think it would have been so much better for the other students too, cause like, since it was one of my goals to meet these people it's why I latched onto Gabriel, not just cause we get along really well and stuff like that but just because it was one of my goals. It just so happened that we get along really well and he has become one of my greatest friends, but yeah other people they like just didn't have that opportunity. At least they didn't want to attach as much as I did, so they weren't presented with like an easy way to meet Spanish people. I don't know. But I definitely think there should have been like mentors or something else, not like in a leadership position cause when there is a leadership position, there can be an odd dynamic in the friendship. But Gabriel and I moved past that somehow. I don't know. You know what I am saying? It's kinda like, you're kinda like my chaperone sometimes and it's weird because we are really good friends.

This participant concluded that meeting locals is not always easy and that the program should consider facilitating meetings between U.S. and Spanish university students. Further on in the conversation, P#01 mentioned that a student he met from another U.S. university did have such an opportunity. At the beginning of that student's program, the entire group spent a day with a group of Spanish university students, which facilitated the development of friendships that lasted throughout the students' time in Spain.

These results show that interacting with locals superficially is not difficult, because one can interact with locals in stores or at cafés and bars. However, the task of creating meaningful relationships or friendships proves to be more difficult, especially when the possibility of spending time with English-speaking groupmates is always available.

The following section takes a microscopic look at student—host family interactions to uncover the characteristics of their conversations and practices.

HOST FAMILY–STUDENT INTERACTIONS

The second research question asked how learners interacted with host families while studying abroad (e.g., during mealtime interactions, evening activities, etc.). First, I look specifically at student interactions with their families during mealtime conversations to find trends and patterns in the way they communicate. I also look at topics of conversation, initiators of new topics of conversation, family characteristics, the ways in which breakdowns in the conversations are repaired, and the turn-taking practices. Additionally, I ask students about their time spent with the host family outside of mealtime to see if they truly integrate and become a pseudo-member of the family.

Mealtime Conversations

The participants were asked to record a lunch or dinner conversation with their host family once a week for the five-week duration of the program. Five different aspects of the conversations or variables that affected these conversations will be discussed in this section: topics of conversation; the initiators of topics of conversation; family characteristics; recast and solving breakdowns in conversation; and turn-taking practices.

Topics of Conversation

Since the study-abroad learning context is hailed as offering many opportunities for students to interact with native speakers and is also claimed to be ideal for learners to receive *"+1"* input, this first section uncovers the common topics of conversation during mealtime conversations. The goal of this first set of analysis is to see whether students are talking about a variety of topics and thus exposing themselves to new vocabulary and expressions. Table 4.1 shows the different topics discussed by all of the students captured in twenty hours of recordings over the course of the five-week study-abroad program. It also shows the percentage that each topic was discussed in relation to all other topics of conversation.

Table 4.1 – Topics of conversation of all participants and their host families

Topic	#	%
1. Food/Objects in Kitchen/Cooking	152	27.99%
2. Students' Future and/or Travel Plans	79	14.55%
3. Host Family—History/Plans	68	12.52%
4. Local Topics—Traditions, Festivals, Customs, Places to Visit, Expressions, Directions	45	8.29%
5. Student's Past/History/Past Travels	42	7.73%
6. Student's Health	16	2.95%
7. Weather	15	2.76%
8. National Places to Visit	14	2.58%
9. School Work/Grammar	14	2.58%
10. Other (Manicures, Hairdressers, Colorblindness)	12	2.21%
11. Sports	10	1.84%
12. Animals/Pets	10	1.84%
13. Other Host Students in the Home	10	1.84%
14. Other Countries and/or Languages	10	1.84%
15. TV Shows and/or Movies	8	1.47%
16. Spanish Friends, Boyfriends, Girlfriends	8	1.47%
17. U.S. Culture	7	1.29%
18. History of Spain	6	1.10%
19. Shopping	6	1.10%
20. Local News	5	0.92%
21. The Use and Reason for the Recordings	4	0.74%
22. Dialectal Differences	1	0.18%
23. Religion	1	0.18%
TOTAL TOPICS	**543**	**100.00%**

Understandably, given that these are mealtime conversations, the majority of the topics about 28 percent are food-related. The discussion of food, however, was diverse. Students asked basic questions about the food served and its ingredients. There were discussions about the history of the food eaten during the meal and the region in Spain where it was produced. I also heard host families quiz students on kitchen-related vocabulary. There were also instances where the students took the opportunity to talk about how Spanish food was similar to or different from U.S. cuisine. Also included in this category were the two questions that every host asked at some point during the meals: "¿Quieres más?" and "¿Quieres postre/fruta?" (*Do you want more?* and *Do you want dessert/fruit?*).

After food, the most popular topic of conversation was the students' future plans. In many conversations, I heard the host mothers asking the students, "¿Vas a la playa?" *("Are you going to the beach?")* or "¿Tienes tarea?" *("Do you have homework?")*. These questions normally triggered lengthy responses from the students about their evening plans or what they were studying in class. On the other hand, there were many instances where students would make the host aware that they would be traveling that weekend. The students would give details about their destination, mode of transportation, planned accommodations, places they planned to visit, and things they planned to do while away from home.

The third most popular topic of conversation was the host family. This included topics like the history of the host family (for example, if they were not from the state of Cantabria, if they had visited other countries, and whether they had children and grandchildren living in other areas of Spain). This category also included the plans of the host family. During some conversations, the families mentioned having special weekend

plans or plans to go to their house in the country. The families that had younger family members would also share about their children's schooling, or children's experiences learning English or different school activities.

"Local topics" was the fourth most popular topic of conversation. This topic encompassed any conversation that included information about the city of Santander and its surrounding areas. The conversations included discussions about local festivals like "Noche de San Juan" *(Night of Saint John),* a pagan celebration of the solstice that is the shortest night of the year and also a celebration of the beginning of summer. The celebration takes place on the largest beach in Santander, el Sardinero, and includes an enormous bonfire and fireworks. Another local tradition that was discussed by some of the students was "La Pasá de vacas tudancas"—a parade of award-winning Tudanca cows and bulls through the main streets of Santander. Within the "Local Topics" category, I also saw the host families explaining to students how to get around the city or how to use the bus system. Lastly, this topic included the discussion of different local places, beaches, and stores that the hosts recommended that students visit.

The final category that I will discuss is the students' past plans. This topic of conversation relates to the topic of students' future plans. As mentioned above, students frequently discussed their travel and weekend plans with their hosts. Consequently, after their trips, students relayed their experiences visiting other cities and countries to their hosts. Furthermore, the host mothers had a habit of asking some very similar questions to solicit information about the students' past plans or previous activities: ¿Qué hiciste ayer/anoche? *(What did you do yesterday/last night?),* ¿Dónde estuviste anoche? *(Where were you last night?),* and ¿Qué tal ha ido hoy el día en la universidad? *(How has your day gone today at the university?).* On many occasions, these were some of the first questions asked during the recording to start the flow of conversation.

There were 18 less frequent topics of conversation that were not discussed in every host home. The large array of different topics demonstrates that students were exposed to different—and possibly new—vocabulary and topics of discussion in their second language. However, the low frequency of these topics shows that it was not a common habit to diverge from the five most frequently discussed topics.

This section ends with a brief overview of the statistical information in regards to the conversational topics. The top five topics were discussed at least once by all the participants over the course of the five weeks. Table 4.2 shows how many topics were discussed by each student and his or her host family members during each conversation. It also indicates the lengths of the conversations of each student. The length of recorded conversations ranged from 16 to 39 minutes, with an average of about 26.5 minutes. The number of topics per conversation ranged from 7 to 22 with an average of 13 topics discussed per conversation. This statistical information shows that topics of conversation changed almost every two minutes during the conversations. It is important to note that these statistics regarding the number of topics does not mean the number of *different* topics. It was common for the student or host family to revisit them during the same conversation. For example, during one conversation there might be 10 topic changes, but the family might discuss food or the student's future plans three different times during that one conversation.

Table 4.2. Average length of conversations with average number of topics discussed per conversation

Participant		WEEK					TOTAL	AVERAGES
		#1	#2	#3	#4	#5		
P#01	Length of Conversation	20:16	26:52	40:53	22:40	19:32	02:10:11	**26min.**
	# of Topics	8	14	14	7	13	56	**11.2**
P#02 & P#13	Length of Conversation	28:34	26:53	24:43	30:43	22:04	02:12:57	**26.6 min.**
	# of Topics	13	14	18	15	8	68	**13.6**
P#03	Length of Conversation	28:15	30:09	32:00	27:03	23:48	02:21:15	**28.2 min.**
	# of Topics	18	15	12	14	15	74	**14.8**
P#05	Length of Conversation	30:30	24:31	23:24	32:36	33:54	02:24:55	**29 min.**
	# of Topics	20	18	12	22	31	104	**20.8**
P#06	Length of Conversation	26:45	26:18	23:20	26:23	21:42	02:04:28	**24.8 min.**
	# of Topics	17	11	12	15	8	63	**12.6**
P#07	Length of Conversation	39:29	27:39	24:03	21:57	32:27	02:25:35	**29 min**
	# of Topics	14	9	11	13	11	58	**11.6**
P#08	Length of Conversation	39:01	30:35	NONE	25:38	29:27	02:04:41	**25 min.**
	# of Topics	16	11	NONE	12	14	53	**10.6**
P#10 & P#11	Length of Conversation	27:37	22:08	13:01	16:48	18:45	01:38:45	**19.9 min.**
	# of Topics	17	10	8	9	11	55	**11**
P#12	Length of Conversation	27:10	36:40	26:56	28:35	33:30	02:32:51	**30.6 min.**
	# of Topics	9	15	11	13	12	60	**12**

In summary, the topics of the host family—student conversations were varied, but five topics were discussed repeatedly. Outside of discussing food, the conversations focused mucho of the time on students' future and past plans, the life of the host family members ,and local theme—traditions, festivals, customs, and places. Even though there were a total of 23 different topics discussed, the other topics were discussed infrequently. The following section will discuss who initiated the different topics of conversation.

Initiators of Topic Changes

The information given below in Table 4.3, is twofold. It shows the number of times each individual introduced a new or different topic of conversation. Furthermore, it shows the diversity of people present during these mealtime conversations. The characteristics and makeup of each host family will be discussed in depth in the following section. This section will focus specifically on which family members initiate changes and new topics of conversation.

Table 4.3 – Tally of the family members who initiated new topics of conversation during the mealtime conversations

Participant		Initiators of new topics of conversation				
P#01	Individual	P#01	Host Mom	Host Dad	Host Brother	
	# of topics initiated	15	12	25	3	
P#02 & P#13	Individual	P#02	P#13	Host Mom	Host Friend	
	# of topics initiated	2	20	38	8	
P#03	Individual	P#03	Host Mom	Host Dad	Home Uni. St.	Other U.S. St.
	# of topics initiated	11	27	9	15	11
P#05	Individual	P#05	Host Mom	Host G_daughter	Host Daughter	
	# of topics initiated	21	80	2	1	
P#06	Individual	P#06	Host Mom	Host Sister		
	# of topics initiated	33	23	7		
P#07	Individual	P#07	Host Mom	Host Dad	Host Sister	
	# of topics initiated	17	30	5	6	
P#08	Individual	P#08	Host Mom	Host Dad	Host Brother	
	# of topics initiated	5	24	11	13	
P#10 & P#11	Individual	P#10&11	Host Mom	Host Sister		
	# of topics initiated	17	31	7		
P#12	Individual	P#12	Host Mom	Other U.S. St.	Host G_daughter	
	# of topics initiated	24	28	5	3	
TOTAL	**Individual**	**Students**	**Host Family**	**Other Host Student**		
	# of topics initiated	**165 (28%)**	**393 (67%)**	**31 (5%)**		**589 (100%)**

When evaluating the participants as a group, I found that the host family members dominated the conversations by introducing new topics of conversation 66 percent of the time. I define "host family" in this case as members of the same extended family. Other international students in the home are not included in the host family tabulation. In all of the families except one, the host mother was the most verbal and also introduced the most topics. As discussed earlier, the most popular topic of conversation was food; needless to say, host mothers introduced many topics related to food. As they brought food to the table, they would change the topics to tell the students what they were eating. In other instances, they would interrupt conversations to talk about the ingredients of the food. The most frequent habit of the host mothers was to change the topic of conversation to see if the student and other family members were satisfied, or if they wanted more food or dessert.

The students introduced new topics of conversation 28 percent of the time. In some instances, the students asked about a certain place, asked for advice on how to get around the city, or asked about local festivities. Often in the recordings, I heard the students introduce a new topic of conversation to ask for clean laundry or for a picnic lunch due to their extensive weekend plans. Furthermore, I heard students asking the host families for suggestions on places to visit and things to see in the cities they planned to visit during their weekend travels.

Many of the host families had other university students—either from the home university, from other states, or from other countries—also living in the home at the time. These students played a small role in the recorded conversations, because they were not present for the majority of the recorded meals. However, when they were present, they took an active role in the conversations by asking the students questions about their experiences in Spain. As was the case for P#03, the other two students in the home were

much more vocal, and the U.S. student from Michigan dominated the conversation every time she was present.

Finally, the television also played a role as an initiator of new topics of conversation. Two of the nine families had the television on during some of their recorded mealtime conversations. As the news would play in the background, someone in the host family would periodically change the topic of conversation to focus on what was being discussed in the news. There were also times when the student would explicitly ask the host family to explain what was going on in the newscast.

The following section will discuss the different characteristics of the host families and the aspects that affected how students interacted during the conversations.

Host Family Characteristics

The fact that the demographics of each host family were different cannot go unnoticed or unaddressed, as demographics played a large role in how students interacted during the mealtime conversations. Host-family demographics will be addressed again in the sections that follow as they relate to how students are corrected and to the turn-taking practices during the conversations. This section, however, solely addresses the demographics of each of the families and the unforeseen presence of English speakers in the host homes. Table 4.4 shows the makeup of the nine host families that took part in the mealtime recordings.

Table 4.4. Demographics of the host families

Participant	Members of the Host Family
P#01	Host Mom Host Dad Host Brother #1 *(speaks English)* Host Brother #2 Other U.S. Student
P#02 & P#13	Host Mom *(spoke some English)* Host Mom's friend *(visitor for one week, spoke English)* Other U.S. Student
P#03	Host Mom Host Dad Other U.S. Student (from home university) Other U.S. Student (from another state)
P#05	Host Mom Host Daughter-in-Law *(visits from time to time)* Host Granddaughter *(visits from time to time)* Host Grandson *(visits from time to time)* French high school girls
P#06	Host Mom Host Sister #1 *(speaks English)* Host Brother *(visits from time to time)* Host Sister #2 *(visits from time to time)*
P#07	Host Mom Host Dad Host Sister *(speaks English)*
P#08	Host Mom Host Dad Host Brother *(speaks English)*
P#10 & P#11	Host Mom Host Dad Host Sister *(speaks English)* Host Brother
P#12	Host Mom Host Granddaughter *(visits from time to time)* Other U.S. Student Young female professional from Mexico

One important factor is that some of the family members mentioned were not living at the residence but came to the house with enough frequency for the students to regard them as part of the family, and to at times take part in the recorded meals. It is also common in Spanish culture for members of an extended family to come together for meals throughout the week. Furthermore, other students in the host home (from other U.S. states or from other countries) were not residing in the home for the entire five weeks. For example, in the case of P#01, a San Diego student returned home in the third week of P#01's sojourn, whereas in the case of P#05, French high school girls arrived in the fourth week of her sojourn.

Table 4.4 shows that the overall number of individuals in each host home was three or more people meaning that, in each conversation, there were a varied number of family members at the table. As we will see in the sections that follow, the number of people at the table potentially affects how a student interacts and participates in a conversation. In the home of P#02 and P#13, for example, only the students and the host mother were present for most of their conversations, but they did have a conversation when the host mother's friend was visiting. Participant #05 had a similar situation, where the majority of her conversations were with her host mother, but in one instance the host mother's daughter-in-law came to visit during lunchtime. There was also one meal when the host mother's granddaughter was present. For the majority of her recorded conversations, P#06 only had two additional people at the table, but there was one instance when the conversation took place only between her and her host mother. The makeup of the families of P#10 and P#12 were similar, in that three of their conversations included the host mother and the host sister, and the other two only included the host mother.

It was more common for several additional people to be at the table during mealtime. During all five recorded conversations, P#01 had three or four additional people at the table. P#03 also had four additional people at the table for the majority of her conversations, but when the other U.S. student was away traveling, that number was reduced to three. The conversations of P#07 were diverse—during two weeks there were only two other people at the table, but there were also two weeks where three additional people were at the table, and one week there were four additional people. I saw more variety at the meals of P#08 and P#12. There were weeks with two or three people at the table, but there were also weeks where the students shared a meal with only the host mother.

The final aspect that is critical in the characteristic of the host families is the presence of an English speaker. These came in two forms: anther U.S. student or a host family member who was usually also a university student or a young professional with an intermediate knowledge of English who had no problems conversing in English. Eight out of the nine families had another individual in the home that spoke some level of English. This meant that these individuals were used as linguistic crutches for the students. Conversational difficulties were resolved differently, because the use of English was an option to eliminate confusion and misunderstandings. The section that follows specifically discusses instances of breakdown in the conversation and instances where students were corrected or explicitly asked for help.

Recast and Conversation Repair

This section will discuss the different instances when breakdowns occurred in the mealtime conversations. Many people assume that students will benefit from living with host families because they have access to native speakers who will talk to them and correct their mistakes. People also assume that host families will explain the local culture,

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as well as any grammar points with which the student may be struggling. What I find in the data are some instances where the student asks for help but more instances where the family corrects the student using recasts. These instances of conversation breakdown were categorized into three different groups: recast from members of the host family, students asking for help, and students and host family members negotiating for meaning. Furthermore, the categories of recast and asking for help were divided into the following subcategories: lexical, grammatical, and phonetic.

The excerpt below is an example of a lexical recast where P#07 was trying to say "Father's Day" and instead said "the day of parents." The host father interjects to correct the error. The student partially acknowledges the correction, but does not repeat the entire correct word, and without hesitation the host mother continues the conversation.

Host Mom: ¿Hablaste con tus papas?

P#07: ¡Sí! Ummm, ayer era el día de padres.

Host Dad: El día del Padre.

P#07: De Papa.

Host Mom: ¡Ahh, sí!

P#07: Umhmm.

Host Mom: Aquí es el 19 de marzo.

Transcript Translation:

Host Mom: Did you talk to your parents?

P#07: Yes! Ummm, yesterday was the day of parents.

Host Dad: Father's Day.

P#07: Of Dad.

Host Mom: Ahh yes!

P#07: Umhmm.

Host Mom: Here it is March 19ᵗʰ.

The second excerpt taken from the recordings is an example of negotiation for meaning between P#01 and his host brother. The student and host brother had been talking about their favorite animals. The host brother mentioned that he liked sharks. The host dad joins the conversation by saying that his favorite animal has always been the woman. After that comment, the host brother rebukes the host father, and this instance of negotiation for meaning between the host brother and student ensues:

Host Dad: A mí el animal que más me gusta es …

Host Mom: [*cuts off Host Dad*] Sí la mujer, este siempre está igual.

Student: La mujerrr. [*in mocking tone*]

Host Brother: ¡Qué bruto eres!

P#01: ¡Qué tonto eres! [student tries to add to the rebuke]

Host Brother - ¡Qué bruto! [*corrects student because tonto ≠ bruto*]

P#01 - ¿Bruto?

Host Brother: Umm, b.r.u…. [*begins to spell the word*]

P#01: Ohhh, like, ahh, ohh, stupid?

Host Brother: ¡¡No!!

P#01: ¿No?

Host Brother: Ahh bueno puede, puede significar "stupid".

P#01: ¿Or maleducado?

Host Brother: umm también dependiendo del contexto en que se usa.

P#01: Ohhh okay, sí.

Host Brother: Pero alguien, generalmente, alguien bruto es alguien de poco conocimiento.

P#01: Ohhhh, sí, sí, sí, a brute.

Host Brother: Fuerte y grande y … [*growls*]

P#01: Sí, sí, sí, a brute, como un hombre de las cuervas.

Host Brother: Yea, eso es!!!

Transcript Translation:

Host Dad: The animal I like the most is…

Host Mom: [cuts off Host Dad] Yes, the woman, this one here [referring to husband] is always the same.

Student: The womannn [in mocking tone]

Host Brother: You are such a brute!

P#01: You are so stupid/dumb! [student tries to add to the rebuke]

Host Brother: What a brute! [corrects student because tonto ≠ bruto]

P#01: ¿Brute?

Host Brother: Umm b.r.u… [begins to spell the word]

P#01: Ohhh, like, ahh, ohh, stupid?

Host Brother: No!!

P#01: No?

Host Brother – Ahh, well, it can mean "stupid."

P#01: Or crude/rude/ill-mannered?

Host Brother: Umm, it can also mean that depending on the context in which it is used.

P#01: Ohhh, okay, yes.

Host Brother: But generally speaking, someone who is a brute is someone with little knowledge.

P#01: Ohhhh, yes, yes, yes, a brute.

Host Brother –Strong, and big and … [growls].

P#01: Yes, yes, yes, a brute. Like a caveman.

Host Brother: Yea, like that!!!

The student had a general idea of what "bruto" meant, but the host brother wanted to make sure that he understood the word in the context in which it was being used.

In the following example, P#13 is asking for lexical help. She is talking to her host mother and host mother's friend about her visit to the cathedral La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. She was describing different aspects of the building when this interaction took place. At the beginning, we see the student asking for help, then at the end we see the host mother's friend giving a phonetic recast:

P#13: Las ventanas son colores y representan, ohhh, no sé, el animal que hace miel.

Host Mom's Friend: Ahh, las abejas.

P#13: ¿Abejas?

Host Mom: Mmhm.

P#13: Las ventanas representan abejas, casas de abejas, beehives?

Host Mom's Friend: Sí, sí, sí, panales, panales.

P#13: ¿Banales? *[this is an adjective that means trivial/useless vain]*

Host Mom's Friend: Panales.

P#13 – Panales.

Host Mom's Friend - PA-na-les de abejas, donde sacan la miel.

P#13 –okay sí, mmhm, mmhm, ¡Es increíble!

Host Mom's Friend: ¡Sí!

Transcript Translation:

P#13: The windows are colored and represent, ohhh, I don't know, the animal that makes honey

Friend of Host Mom: Ahh bees

P#13: Bees?

Host Mom: Mmhm.

P#13: The windows represent bees, houses of bees, beehives?

Friend of Host Mom: Yes, yes, yes, honeycombs.

P#13: Vain/Useless/Trival?

Friend of Host Mom: HONeycombs.

P#13: Honeycombs.

Friend of Host Mom: HONeycombs, where honey is taken from.

P#13: Okay yes, uhmm, uhmm. It's incredible!

Friend of Host Mom: Yes!

Table 4.5 outlines all the statistics for each participant and their host family. It shows how many different kinds of recasts were given to students, how many times the students asked for help, and the number of instances in which students and host family members negotiated for meaning. The last column in Table 4.5 shows how many times the student and the host family used English to resolve the breakdown in conversation.

Table 4.5. Types of recast given to students and types of requests for help solicited from host families.

PARTICIPANT	TOTAL # of Convo Break-downs	Recast			Negotiation of Meaning	Asking for Help			Use of ENG
		Lexical	Grammar	Phonetic		Lexical	Grammar	Phonetic	
P#01	32	15	1	1	6	7	2	0	6
P#2 & P#13	39	11	8	2	2	12	2	2	10
P#3	6	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
P#5	13	4	6	0	1	2	0	0	0
P#6	27	9	5	0	3	8	2	0	2
P#7	14	4	1	0	0	9	0	0	2
P#8	15	6	2	0	3	4	0	0	1
P#10 & P#11	36	8	4	0	2	20	2	0	7
P#12	32	7	7	1	4	10	3	0	1
TOTALS	214	68	34	4	22	73	11	2	30
PERCENTAGES	100%	32%	16%	2%	10%	34%	5%	1%	14%

The following excerpt gives an example of the host sister explicitly asking the student to use English so she could help her find the word she was looking for more quickly. The student was talking about her time in Rome and was trying to say that while there she ate a lot of pizza.

P#06: Yo fui en Roma el verano pasado con mi familia.

Host Sister: Mmhmm.

*NOTE: No correction by host family: ("yo fui **a** Roma." or "**Estuve** en Roma" would be possible corrections)*

P#06: Y me gusta Roma mucho y todo fue ¿allí? ¿Ayer? ¡No! fue ¿aquel? ¿aquel? No allí pero…

Host Sister: ¡Espera! ¿En inglés?

P#06: Over there? There?

Host Sister: Allí.

P#06: ¡Allí! Fue allí para 4 días y yo come comí pizza.

*NOTE: No correction by host family—(**estuve** allí **por** 4 días)*

Host Mom and Host Sister: Cuatro días. [laugh]

P#06 - ¡Sin parar! Para dos comidas: almuerzo y cena.

Transcript Translation:

P#06: I went in Rome last summer with my family.

Host Sister: Mmmhm.

*NOTE: No correction by host family—("I went **to** Rome" or "**I was in** Rome").*

P#06: And I like Rome a lot. And everything it was there? Yesterday? No! He/She went that? That? No there but…

Host Sister: Wait! In English?

P#06: Over there? There?

Host Sister: There.

P#06: There! He/She was there for four days and he/she eats, I ate pizza.

*NOTE: No correction by host family: ("estuve allí **por** 4 diás"—I was there for 4 days).*

Host Mom and Host Sister: For four days [laugh].

P#06: Without stopping. For two meals: lunch and dinner.

In other instances when English was used to resolve a breakdown in communication, the conversation actually shifted to English. This was the case with P#10 and P#11 during a conversation with their host mother and host sister. The host sister was rather fluent in English. They were trying to find out if the host mother had a printer at home so that P#11 could print her boarding pass for her upcoming trip. An excerpt from that conversation is given below. Once English is introduced in the conversation, the host sister keeps speaking English even though the students are doing their best to reply in Spanish. She also begins to translate for her mother, even though the girls are backchanneling, showing that they understand what is being said in Spanish.

P#10: Um tenemos un, umm ¡no! ¿Tienen un impremir? [*impremir—is not a word*].

Host Mom: ¿Un qué?

P#10: ¿Impremir? Printer?

Host Sister: Ahhh, no. No, we don't. ¡No!

Host Mom: ¿Si tengo qué?

Host Sister: Si tenemos impresora.

Host Mom: ¡Ahhh no!

Host Sister: ¡No! Oh sea, tengo, pero solamente, it doesn't print. It's says, ehh no paper, no paper, no paper.

Host Mom: Que me lo manden a mi correo.

Host Sister: Ahhh, you can, ehhh, if you send her, her email, she can print it at work.

P#10: Oh, umm, necesito para mañana.

Host Mom and Host Sister: ¡No para hoy!

P#10: Sí, para hoy

Host Mom: Te lo traigo hoy.

P#10: Oh you can, ohh.

Host Sister: Send it to her after lunch and she will bring it tonight.

P#10: ¡Gracias!

Host Mom: Yo te lo traigo a casa.

P#10: ¡Perfecto!

Host Sister: The printer I have you can only, ay ¿Cómo se dice? When you put a document on it?

P#11: Scanner?

Host Sister: Yeah! Es igual en español. [laughs] It's the only thing that works. It says there is a paper stuck inside. I have opened it. It doesn't work. So I don't throw it away because you can scan. You can't print, it sucks.

Transcript Translation:

P#10: Um, we have an, umm, no! Do you all have a printer? [impremir: is not a word, however imprimir = to print]

Host Mom: A what?

P#10: ¿Impremir? Printer?

Host Sister: Ahhh No. No we don't. No!

Host Mom: If I have what?

Host Sister: If we have a printer.

Host Mom: Ahhh, no!

Host Sister: No! I mean, I have one, but only, it doesn't print. It's says, ehh, no paper, no paper, no paper.

Host Mom: Tell them to send it to me.

Host Sister: Ahhh you can, ehhh, if you send her, her email, she can print it at work.

P#10: Oh, umm, I need it for tomorrow.

Host Mom and Host Sister: No for today!

P#10: Yes, for today.

Host Mom: I will bring it for you today.

P#10: Oh you can, ohh.

Host Sister: Send it to her after lunch and she will bring it tonight.

P#10: Thank you!

Host Mom: I will bring it back to the house for you.

P#10: Perfect!

Host Sister - The printer I have you can only, ay how do you say? When you put a document on it?

P#11: Scanner?

Host Sister: Yeah! It's the same in Spanish. [laughs]—It's the only thing that works. It says there is a paper stuck inside. I have opened it. It doesn't work. So I don't throw it away because you can scan. You can't print, it sucks.

Finally, there were many instances where mistakes by students went uncorrected. For example, in the excerpt above, P#06 was not corrected when she consistently used

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the wrong verb conjugation. In the excerpt that follows, we see her trying to say that she was a little bit scared about staying in a hostel (*"tengo un poquito de **miedo** [not mierda] dormir en un hostal"*) and instead using a bad word:

P#06: Estoy un poquito, umm, ¿mierda?

Host Sister: ¿Mierda?

Host Mom and Host Sister: [*burst into laughter*]

P#06: ¿Qué es para preocupe?

Host Mom: Indecisa, preocupada.

P#06: Preocupada para duermo en un hostal.

Host Sister: ¡Ahhhhh! Preocupada para dormir en un hostal. ¡No pasa nada!

Host Mom: ¡No pasa nada!

Transcript Translation:

P#06: I am a little, umm, sh*t?

Host Sister: Sh*t??

Host Mom and Host Sister: [burst into laughter]

P#06: What is it for worry [what is the word for worry]?

Host Mom –Indecisive, worried.

P#06: Worried about I sleep in a hostel.

Host Sister: Ahhhhh! Worried about sleeping in a hostel. Don't worry about it!

Host Mom: Don't worry about ii!

Even though they find a resolution, initially the student wanted to say she was a little bit afraid and they never address that specific phrase. Participant #01 had a similar situation when he was talking about rock climbing with his host family. He specifically asked how to say "*steep,*" but the question was never answered. Instead, the host family gives him

other vocabulary, but not the word he initially asked for. We see the complete interaction in the excerpt below:

P#01: Hay muchas paredes para escalar cerca de la cuidad, y cerca del centro de la cuidad.

Host Mom - ¿Habías podido escalar un poco, ayer?

P#01 - ¿Oh Ayer? Oh no, no, no.

Host Mom: No, ¿verdad?

P#01: Ehhh, ummm, es con, se llama "scrambling" cuando es "steep," ¿Cómo se dice "steep"?

Host Dad: Trepar. *[a verb that means "to climb/scale" – not the adjective steep]*

P#01: Yeah, like the mountain is steep?

Host Brother: Mmhm *[back channeling that he understands, but does not give the Spanish word for "steep"]*

P#01: Y se puede "scramble" con los manos.

Host Brother: Y los pies.

P#01: Y los pies, sí.

Host Dad: ¡Palabra española: trepar! [*which means "to climb" or "to scale." Host Dad gives him a possible translation for "scramble" but not for "steep" the first word the student actually asked for*]

P#01: ¿Trepar?

Host Brother: Bueno, bueno, bueno [*does not agree with father's translation*], yo creo que refiere mas a *gatear* [*which means to climb/crawl --- but no one ever gives the student the word for "steep" = empinado/inclinado*].

Transcript Translation:

P#01: There are many walls to climb near the city and near the city center.

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Host Mom: Were you able to climb a little bit yesterday?

P#01: Oh yesterday? Oh no, no, no.

Host Mom: No, right?

P#01: Ehhh, ummm, it's with, it is called "scrambling" when it is "steep," how do you say "steep"?

Host Dad: Scale/climb.

P#01: Yeah, like the mountain is steep?

Host Brother: Mmhm [back channeling that he understands, but does not give the Spanish word for "steep"]

P#01: And one can "scramble" with his or her hands.

Host Brother: And feet.

P#01: And with his or her feet, yes.

Host Dad: A Spanish word: scale/climb! [which means "to climb" or "to scale." Host Dad gives him a possible translation for "scramble" but not for "steep," the first word the student actually asked for].

P#01: Climb/scale?

Host Brother: Well, well, well [does not agree with father's translation], I think he is more referring to crawl [which means "to climb/crawl"—but no one ever gives the student the word for "steep" = empinado/inclinado].

This section revealed that students were being corrected during the mealtime conversations. However, they were not corrected every time they made an error. There were also times when they asked for help with a specific word or phrase, and the host family did not address the request. In her second interview with the researcher at the end of her sojourn, P#08 says that the host family was not helpful when she had more complicated grammar questions:

I had the best relationship with my host mom […] but the only issue there is that she does not correct me as much, and with my host dad he corrects me a lot but he is not around as much. […] there have been times where I have tried to like conjugate verbs and when I can't think of it I try and ask them but just like how it is in English, if someone was to ask me, "what's the subjunctive of to walk?" I would be like, "what are you talking about?" […] but umm so like so like they weren't really able to help me.

Participant #01 mentioned that he asked his host family grammatical questions but that he preferred to use his Spanish university friends to ask the really complicated grammar questions. Participants #02, #07, #10, #11, and #13 reported that their host mother was more of a vocabulary resource and not a grammar resource. Participants #10 and #11 said that the mealtime conversations were more of a time to use their newly acquired grammar and also acquire new food vocabulary, but not a time to receive grammar help. This sentiment is reflected in the statistical data in Table 4.5. This table shows that 21percent of the breakdowns in conversation were because of a grammar problem, whereas 66 percent were due to lexical issues. This reinforced the repeated reports by students that the host families were more of a reliable resource for cultural knowledge and new vocabulary. These results reinforced what Mackey and Goo (2007) found in regards to interaction having a stronger effect on lexical items than on grammatical items.

Thus, when students were asked if they used their host family as a grammar resource, the common consensus was no. Participants #03, #05, and #12 shared that their host mother would correct their grammatical errors from time to time, but she was unable to provide the grammatical reasoning behind the correction. Participant #04 also shared that she specifically had to ask the host family to correct her grammar, because at the

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beginning of her stay they were not correcting her grammatical mistakes. In spite of this potential deficit, all the students mentioned that the host family was an excellent resource for cultural information and day-to-day vocabulary.

Once more, the statistics reinforce the general consensus of the students. Of the three different categories of recast and petitions for help, lexical was the most popular. On the other hand, I saw only 22 instances where students and host families negotiated for meaning. This low frequency may be explained by the fact that 14 percent of the breakdowns were solved through the use of English. Due to the fact that all host families, except for one, had a person in the home that spoke some level of English, I saw fewer instances of negotiation of meaning in Spanish and more instances of students and hosts using English to solve conversation breakdowns.

Interactional Turn-Taking

The final aspect of the mealtime conversations that I will be discuss is the turn-taking practices of students and hosts during the mealtime conversations. My initial research question asks whom students are talking to during their sojourn, but I also want to evaluate the quality of the conversations that students have with their host families. My goal in analyzing turns and the type of student turns is to shed light on the roles that students played in the mealtime conversations. Furthermore, the analysis reveals how involved or active the students were during these conversations.

I tallied the turns by all persons present at the time of the conversation. However, I evaluated the turns of the students more stringently to uncover different types and lengths of turns. Table 4.6 gives an explanation, with examples of each type of turn used by students. The first category of backchanneling refers to verbal cues used by students to let the speaker know that they understood or agreed with what was being said. The

students do not take control of the floor when these utterances are used. However, they are essential to this analysis because they made up such a large part of what the students said during the mealtime conversations.

Table 4.6 Explanation and examples of types of turns and utterances of students.

Turn Type	Explanation	Examples
Student Backchanneling	Student uses an utterance to let the speaker know that he or she understands and follows what is being said. At times, used to agree with what the speaker is saying. Used to align with the speaker.	sí, sí, sí (*yes, yes, yes*) laughter mmhm ohh ahhhokay umm wow okay
One-word Turn	Not considered back channeling because these are actual words used in response to a question by the host family member.	sí (*yes*) no (*no*) gracias (*thank you*) vale (*okay*)
Two-word Turn	Turns containing two words with or without a verb.	muy bien (*okay/very well*) no gracias (*no thank you*) estoy cansada (*I'm tired*) no entiendo (*I don't understand*)
Three-word Turn	Turns containing three words or more, but no verb. Many times the students answered a question not using a complete sentence.	en la playa (*on the beach*) en la Universidad (*in the university*) con mis amigos (*with my friends*)
Three-word Turn + Verb	Complete sentence with three words that includes a verb	Tengo que estudiar. (*I have to study.*) No me gusta. (*I don't like it.*)
Four-word Turn + Verb	Complete sentence with four words that includes a verb	Voy a la playa. (*I am going to the beach.*) ¿Dónde compraste los vasos? (*Where did you buy the glasses?*)
Five-word Turn + Verb	Complete sentence with five or more words that includes a verb	El viernes mis amigos y yo vamos a Barcelona. (*On Friday, my friends and I are going to Barcelona*) ¿Cómo se llama estas frutas? (*What are these fruits called?*)

As a group, the students use turns with words 65 percent of the time and use backchanneling utterances 35 percent of the time. When I evaluate the turns used 65 percent of the time, I find the largest subcategory is turns with five or more words including a verb, which made up 22 percent of these total turns. The second largest subcategory is turns with one word, which comprised 18 percent of student turns.

When I evaluate students on an individual basis, however, I see different turn-taking patterns. Table 4.7 below shows the numbers and percentages for the number of turns per student.

Participants #02 and #05 can be considered the outliers of the group because they were the only two students who had close percentages between backchanneling and turns with words. Furthermore, the category of one-word turns was their largest category after backchanneling. To put this information into perspective, 76 percent and 70 percent of P#02 and P#05's turns, respectively were one word or a non-word utterance. We can conclude that their contribution to the conversation was limited because they did more listening than talking. Participant #01 also had a higher percentage of one-word turns than five-word turns; however, his percentage of five-word turns was more than double that of P#02 and P#05 at 15 percent. That means he was more vocal and contributed more to the conversation, as opposed to simply answering questions and backchanneling.

On the other side of the spectrum, P#03, P#06, and P#12 all had less than 30 percent backchanneling and over 33 percent in five-word turns with a verb. This suggests that these three participants were substantially more vocal during mealtime and contributed more to the conversations. We see them asking questions and sharing stories about their experiences in Santander and about their time in other cities that they visited. Participants #10 and #11, who were roommates and whose turns were not tallied separately (due to the fact that they were identical twin sisters and it was impossible to

distinguish their voices on the recordings), also had a high percentage of five-word turns at 27 percent. However, they also had 18 percent of their five-word turns in English, which is a rather significant portion of their speech. These girls were extremely vocal, but they were also vocal in English because their host sister was quite fluent in English. Participants #07, #08, and #13 followed the group pattern, as backchanneling was their largest category, followed by five-word turns and then one-word turns. These statistics do not take into consideration the turns of the other people at the table. The subsection that follows will discuss the performance and turn-taking practices of the students while also taking into consideration everyone else at the table.

Table 4.7. Detailed breakdown of the turn-taking practices of the student participants

PARTICIPANT	TOTAL # of Student Turns	Student Back-channeling	Student Turns (words)	ONE-word Turns	TWO-word Turns	THREE-word Turns	THREE-word + VERB Turns	FOUR-word + VERB Turns	FIVE-word + VERB Turns
P#01	656 (100%)	232 (35%)	424 (65%)	136 (21%)	84 (13%)	49 (7%)	42 (6%)	15 (2%)	98 (15%)
P#02	271 (100%)	134 (49%)	137 (51%)	72 (27%)	15 (6%)	18 (7%)	6 (2%)	9 (3%)	17 (6%)
P#03	173 (100%)	31 (18%)	142 (82%)	33 (19%)	13 (7%)	17 (10%)	10 (6%)	10 (6%)	59 (34%)
P#05	634 (100%)	279 (44%)	355 (56%)	162 (26%)	63 (10%)	36 (6%)	27 (4%)	20 (3%)	47 (7%)
P#06	409 (100%)	115 (28%)	294 (72%)	48 (12%)	34 (8%)	22 (5%)	23 (6%)	14 (3%)	153 (37%)
P#07	458 (100%)	191 (42%)	267 (58%)	37 (8%)	43 (9%)	24 (5%)	15 (3%)	13 (3%)	135 (30%)
P#08	504 (100%)	187 (37%)	317 (63%)	88 (17%)	63 (13%)	27 (5%)	29 (6%)	13 (3%)	97 (19%)
P#10 & P#11	447 (100%)	85 (19%)	362 (81%)	67 (15%)	38 (8%)	24 (5%)	21 (5%)	13 (3%)	119 SPN—(27%) 80 ENG—(18%)
P#12	452 (100%)	109 (24%)	343 (76%)	69 (15%)	46 (10%)	28 (6%)	34 (8%)	12 (3%)	151 SPN—(33%) 3 ENG—(1%)
P#13	481 (100%)	180 (37%)	301 (63%)	86 (18%)	39 (8%)	21 (4%)	28 (6%)	22 (5%)	105 (22%)
TOTALS	4402 (100%)	1543 (35%)	2859 (65%)	798 (18%)	438 (10%)	266 (6%)	235 (5%)	141 (3%)	981 (22%)

Table 4.7 displayed the turn-taking statistics of the students apart from the host family in an effort to show each participant's individual practices on its own. Table 4.8 looks at the same data but now includes a column for all the turns of the other people at the table. The column labeled "Host Turns" includes members of the host family as well as other students staying in the home. Any time someone other than the student talked, it was tallied in this category.

The table shows that the host family members dominated the conversations by having 62 percent of all the turns. As a group, the students only had 38 percent of the turns during the mealtime conversations. Of that 38 percent, 13 percent were backchanneling and 25 percent were turns with words. Furthermore, only 9 percent of all the turns were student turns of five words including a verb.

Table 4.8 Statistics of the turn-taking practices of the students and host family members.

PARTICIPANT	TOTAL Turns	HOST Turns	Student Turns	STUDENT			
				Back-channeling	Turns – words *(Non-backchanneling)*	1-word	5-word+VERB
P#01	1742 (100%)	1086 (62%)	656 (38%)	232 (13%)	424 (24%)	136 (8%)	98 (6%)
P#02 & P#13	1273 (100%)	521 (41%)	P2 - 271 (21%) P13 –481 (38%)	P2 - 134 (11%) P13 – 180 (14%)	P2 - 137 (11%) P13 – 301 (24%)	P2 - 72 (6%) P13 – 86 (7%)	P2 - 17 (1%) P13-105 (8%)
P#03	1215 (100%)	1042 (86%)	173 (14%)	31 (3%)	142 (12%)	33 (3%)	59 (5%)
P#05	1454 (100%)	820 (56%)	634 (44%)	279 (19%)	355 (24%)	162 (11%)	47 (3%)
P#06	1016 (100%)	607 (60%)	409 (40%)	115 (11%)	294 (29%)	48 (5%)	153 (15%)
P#07	1189 (100%)	731 (61%)	458 (39%)	191 (16%)	267 (22%)	37 (3%)	135 (11%)
P#08	1244 (100%)	740 (59%)	504 (41%)	187 (15%)	317 (25%)	88 (7%)	97 (8%)
P#10 & P#11	892 (100%)	406 SPN 39 ENG (50%)	447 (50%)	85 (10%)	362 (40%)	67 (8%)	119 SPN—(13%) 80 ENG—(10%)
P#12	1122 (100%)	641 SPN 29 ENG (60%)	452 (40%)	109 (10%)	343 (30%)	69 (6%)	151 SPN—(13%) 3 ENG—(0.3%)
TOTALS	**11514 (100%)**	**7115 (62%)**	**4402 (38%)**	**1543 (13%)**	**2859 (25%)**	**798 (7%)**	**981 (9%)**

Upon further analysis of the students on an individual basis, I found only one instance where students produced more turns than the host family. In the case of P#02 and P#13, the combination of both girls produced 59 percent of the turns, and the host mother produced 41 percent. This is also an example where the characteristic of the host family played a role in students' participation. In this particular host family, for four out of five meals the host mother was the only other person at the table. This means that P#13, who expressed a high level of willingness to communicate, was active in these conversations. On the other hand, her roommate, P#02, had to be prompted and prodded to talk. At one point in a conversation, P#02 states that she does not talk much, even in English.

The family that had the second lowest percentage of host turns was that of P#10 and P#11. In this case, the students produced 50 percent of the turns. Unlike P#02 and P#13, the statistics for P#10 and P#11 are not separated because these were identical twin sisters and it was impossible to distinguish the voice of each sister on the recordings. The students were vocal and contributed to the conversations. Thirteen percent of their turns were five-word turns, which was higher than the group average. However, the family characteristics affected these numbers because, even though the host family only included a host mother and a host sister, the host sister was fairly fluent in English. Thus, in addition to the 13 percent of five-word turns, the sisters also produced 10 percent of their turns in English. The English turns included the instances when the girls were talking to each other in English and instances when they were talking to the host sister in English.

Participant #05 also had a high percentage of student turns at 44 percent. This student lived in a home where the only other adult was the host mother. There were meals with other people at the table but usually the additional participant was a grandchild around 10 years old. A large percentage of the conversations—30 percent—was made up

of the student backchanneling and the student's one-word turns. Even though P#05 did not have to fight to speak, her lack of fluency inhibited her from having fluid conversations with the host mother. There were times when she would change the topic of conversation because she did not understand what the host mother was talking about, which would frustrate the host mother because her questions were not being answered. The excerpt below shows one such instance where the student completely changes the topic of conversation, which causes the host mother to say that the student does not understand anything she is saying.

Host Mother: ¿Te imaginas que te echarías un novio español?

P#05: ¿Cómo?

Host Mother: ¿Te imaginas?

P#05 - Mmhm.

Host Mother: ¿Que te eches un novio español?

P#05: Ummm

Host Mother: ¿Bien no? ¡Ya te aprendes español ya!

P#05: [*Laughter*] Ahmm, ahmm, donde, ahmm, estar en France, a, ahmm [*tries to talk about her upcoming trip to France*].

Host Mother: No, no, no me entiendes nada. Te pregunto un par de preguntas y no me contesta.

P#05: Um [*lost, because she does not know what is being said*].

Host Mother: [*Gives up; eventually changes the topic of conversation.*]

Transcript Translation:

Host Mother: Do you imagine yourself getting a Spanish boyfriend?

P#05 - What?

Host Mother: Do you imagine yourself?

P#05: Mmhm.

Host Mother: Getting a Spanish boyfriend?

P#05: Ummm.

Host Mother: That would be good, right? You would learn Spanish right away!

P#05: [Laughter] Ahmm, ahmm, where, ahmm, to be in at, ahmm [tries to talk about her upcoming trip to France].

Host Mother: No, no, no you don't understand me at all. I ask you some questions and you don't answer.

P#05: Um [lost, because she does not know what is being said].

Host Mother: [Gives up; eventually changes the topic of conversation.]

In this case, even though the statistics are high regarding student participation, the quality of the conversations was not high. I actually hear the student having more fluid conversations with the 10-year-old host granddaughter than she did with the host mother.

When I look at the statistics in Table 4.7, the person with the highest percentage of student turns was P#03. Participant #03 was the student with the highest percentage of student turns and the lowest percentage of backchanneling. On its own, these numbers look promising and imply that the student was active in the mealtime conversations. However, when I look at Table 4.8, with the same statistics in conjunction with the host family turns, I see a more complete picture of the turn-taking practices of this family. The student was minimally verbal during these conversations. Her turns accounted for 14 percent of the conversation turns. In this host home, there were four additional people, and, for three of the recorded conversations, all four were at the table. Some reasons for this low percentage could be that: (a) the student was not given the floor to speak, (b) the student had extremely low willingness to communicate, or (c) the host family did not do a good job of incorporating all students into the conversations. Whatever the reasons, this

is a student that mostly produced long strings of speech, but whose voice was drowned out by all the other people at her table.

The remaining five participants—P#01, P#06, P#07, P#08, and P#12—all contributed 40 percent of the mealtime conversations. Generally speaking, the amount of five-word turns by these participants was high. The number of people present during the conversations of these participants varied widely, from one other person to four other people. Overall, these five participants were vocal during the conversations and contributed by asking and answering questions, and introducing new topics of conversation.

The importance of this data is to uncover the characteristics and quality of conversations with the host family. We assume that students are constantly talking to the host family members, but it helps to see the types of conversations that are taking place in the host home. If the host family members are dominating the conversations, the students are only being exposed to target language input and are not given the opportunity to use the language. Furthermore, this data shows that families may need to be trained in how to communicate with students while encouraging students to take an active part in the mealtime conversations.

Other Host Family—Student Interactions

We assume that the host family provides a wealth of resources for students learning their target language. Most of the data collection in regards to the host family—student interactions were taken from the mealtime recorded conversations. However, in the host family survey and in the face-to-face interviews, I asked questions to see whether the students interacted further with the hosts. Did they truly become pseudo-members of the family and interact outside of mealtimes or outside of the home? What I discovered was that limited interactions occurred outside of mealtime conversations while at home,

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and nearly nonexistent interactions occurred outside of the home between the host family and the student. These findings lead me to conclude that, even though the majority of students felt welcomed in the home and had good relationships with their host families the idea of the students being pseudo-family members is farfetched.

Interactions Outside of the Home

Eleven of the 13 participants completed the host family survey during the last week of their sojourn. The students were asked to answer questions on a Likert scale from 1 (this did not happen at all) to 5 (this happened a lot). The results reinforced the idea that students spent the majority of the time with their host families during mealtime. Below are some of the questions from the survey, with the average score of the 11 students.

1. How much time did your family spend with you? **2.8/5**

2. How much did the family integrate you into family activities? **3/5**

3. I did projects with the family (e.g., helped cook, shop, etc.)   **2.1/5**

4. A family member asked me to accompany them outside the home on a trip or errand. **2/5**

The first two questions may have been a little misleading, as students may have considered mealtimes when asked about activities and the amount of time the host family spent with them. When the questions become more specific, I see that truly, little time was spent with the host family outside of the home. The raw statistical data to the fourth question above showed that eight students put "1" for their rating. That means that the majority of students reported not having any interaction with the host family outside of the home. Participant #11 expressed this sentiment: "I enjoyed having meals with them, and, while we didn't really do anything together outside of the house, they were always

great company." When asked about specific projects that the students did with the families, eight of the students responded with a "1" or with a "2."

Doing activities outside of the host home was not common, but the families did make an effort to spend some time with the students while at home. Participant #10 commented that the lack of interaction may have been due to the family's busy schedule: "All three members worked so we didn't do a lot of activities together, but I saw at least some of them at every meal." However, as she stated, a priority was placed on family members being present during the mealtime.

These results further call into question the preconceived idea that students who study abroad are fully integrated into host families and do various activities with their hosts while having limitless opportunities to practice and speak the target language. The students' responses to this survey uncover a pattern that shows host families mostly interacting with students only during mealtimes. I am exposing a void in the student—host family interaction that needs to be addressed. Again, this is another situation where host families may have to be trained to, or explicitly asked to engage with the students in more activities both inside and outside of the home.

Interactions in the Home

The data shows that interaction between host families and students outside of the home was rare. When I investigated additional interactions inside of the home, I discovered more frequent instances although they were limited. The activities that students reported doing with the host families revolved around cooking and watching the news, reality shows, or sports on the TV. In regards to cooking, some host mothers made the time to show the students how to cook certain foods. I heard P#05's host mother of promise to teach the student how to make tortilla española, which she did do at some point during the sojourn. Participant #09 also mentioned cooking with her host mother

during the second face-to-face interview with the researcher. She stated, "I asked her to show me how to make a tortilla [española] and she did, and we made pastries together one time." On the other hand, P#07, who was of Mexican descent, cooked a Mexican meal for her host family. One morning, she shared eagerly with the class the process she was going through to find Mexican ingredients in order to make tacos for her host family. Just as we saw in the topics of conversation, we again see that food played a large role in what students and host families did together in the home outside of the mealtime.

In addition to cooking, the most popular activity that students did with host families was watching TV. In the 11 host homes, five students reported watching TV with their host family regularly, about two or three times per week, after mealtime or while eating dinner. Four homes only watched TV sporadically during the five weeks, and two homes never watched TV at all. Participant #01 spoke of his times watching TV with his host father saying, "I watch the news every day with my host dad at dinner—not every night, but a lot, about three times a week." Participant #01 reported that he thoroughly enjoyed spending time with his host father, learning all kinds of things and gleaning cultural knowledge from him.

In contrast, P#12 mentioned watching TV but did not see it as a family bonding experience. When talking about his host family dynamic, he said, "I only have the host mom around all the time; since the other two are students on different schedules, I barely see them. I hang out with my host mom and whoever is at home during meals. He goes on to say, "It's her two other students and me, so we don't do activities together. I mean, it's friendly around the house, we talk to each other sometimes, and maybe after lunch or after dinner we watch TV, but it's not like a *family* family—more like roommate thing." In this case, I do not get the impression that the family is sitting together and discussing issues and sharing opinions. Watching TV was more of an activity to pass the time.

Participant #05 also mentioned watching TV only when the host mother's grandchildren were visiting. She would watch Disney shows with the grandchildren, which she noted was beneficial because she could understand the simple language used in those shows. Participants #10 and #11 mentioned that they only watched TV to see the coronation ceremony of the new Spanish king. Participants #6 and #07 said that they did watch TV, but it was infrequent and not something that they did often with the host family.

In summary, in the host family, student interaction with hosts is restricted mostly to mealtime conversations, some cooking lessons, and limited TV watching. The host family is seen as mostly a cultural and vocabulary resource. In the last face-to-face interview, all the students mentioned that they learned a lot about the culture and customs of Santander and Spain from their host family. As a group, they said that they did not use the families as a grammar resource, but that family members were helpful when they needed vocabulary help. The majority of the interactions between the hosts and the students took place in the home. Only P#06 and P#09 reported doing activities with the host families outside of the home.

The section that follows will look at the role technology plays in students' interactions with native speakers and others while abroad.

Role of Technology

The third research question asked how technology and social media affect the immersion experience of students studying abroad. These days, it is impossible to travel and completely disconnect from home with the availability of technology. In the case of my participants, I asked them to complete questions about the devices they brought with them from the U.S., as well as the way they used these devices to communicate, both with people in Spain and with friends and family back home. Furthermore, I asked

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participants about their use of social media and the various applications they used for communication while abroad. In an effort to answer the research question about the role of technology, I will first look at what electronic devices the students brought to Spain and what types of social media and mobile applications the students used. Secondly, I will present data about the frequency of use of social media and mobile applications for the purpose of students' interactions. Thirdly, I will reveal how students used their electronic devices to interact with locals.

Type of Devices, Social Media, and Mobile Applications

Table 4.9 details the types of devices that the 13 participants traveled with to Spain, as well as the different social media networking platforms and mobile communication applications used while in Spain. One of the most significant findings is detailed in Column Two of the table below. It is a valid assumption that students will have access to the Internet at the local university computer lab. The majority of participants mentioned using computers in the local university computer lab to do homework assignments or print out travel documents like boarding passes. However, having access to the Internet in the host family home was not a guarantee. Twelve out of the 13 participants had Wi-Fi at home; the one student who did not found a nearby local café that she went to on a daily basis to use free Wi-Fi.

Table 4.9. Types of devices, social media and mobile applications used by participants.

PARTICIPANT	Wi-Fi at home?	U.S. Smart-phone	Spanish "go" phone	Laptop or Tablet	Social Media	Communication Apps
P#01	yes	yes	yes	yes	Facebook, Instagram	iMessage, Viber
P#02	yes	yes	yes	yes	Facebook	iMessage, Skype
P#03	yes	yes	yes	yes	Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest	iMessage, Skype
P#04	yes	yes	yes	yes	Facebook, Instagram	iMessage, Skype
P#05	no	yes	no	yes	Facebook	iMessage, Skype, FaceTime
P#06	yes	yes	yes	yes	Facebook, Instagram, blog	Snapchat
P#07	yes	yes	no	yes	Facebook, Instagram	Skype, FaceTime
P#08	yes	yes	yes	yes	Facebook, Instagram	Skype, Viber, WhatsApp
P#09	yes	yes	no	yes	Facebook, Instagram	iMessage, Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp
P#10	yes	yes	yes	yes	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter	Skype, GroupMe
P#11	yes	yes	yes	yes	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter	Skype, GroupMe
P#12	yes	yes	no	yes	Facebook, Instagram	Tango, WhatsApp
P#13	yes	yes	yes	yes	Facebook, Instagram	iMessage, Skype, FaceTime

Due to today's reasonably priced international cell phone plans, all students brought their smartphones with them. It is also notable that some mobile applications like WhatsApp are accessible with the availability of Internet. In addition to their U.S. cell phones, all the students brought a laptop, iPad, or tablet with them. Nine out of the 13 students also bought a pre-paid Spanish "go" phone for the duration of their stay. These were not smartphones but phones with Spanish phone numbers with the capability of making local calls and sending text messages. The home university encouraged students to purchase a Spanish phone to aid in communication among the group members and with locals while in Spain.

In regards to social media, Facebook was the prominent and most frequently used social networking site. Instagram had the second highest use, followed by Twitter and Pinterest. Some students reported using Facebook Messenger to communicate with friends and family, but it was more common for students to communicate with people in the U.S. through mobile applications. The most popular communication application was Skype. Ten of the students used Skype on a regular basis to communicate with friends and family. After Skype, the most popular texting app was iMessage. Other texting applications used were Viber, Snapchat, GroupMe and WhatsApp.

Thirteen participants brought devices that allowed them to use social media or had pre-downloaded mobile applications to facilitate communication with groupmates and locals. The section that follows discusses the frequency with which students used these different platforms and applications.

Frequency of Use

Table 4.10 outlines the frequency with which participants used the Internet, their cell phones, social media, and mobile applications like Skype and FaceTime. These responses were taken from face-to-face interview data and weekly survey responses. The

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information points to a consistent use of the Internet and social media by all of the students. They used their phones as well as some form of social media every day. Furthermore, although the use of Skype or FaceTime was not as frequent, students still used these applications at least once a week.

Table 4.10. Frequency of Internet and social media use

PARTICIPANT	How often do you use Wi-Fi at home?	How often do you use your cell phone each day?	How often do you use Social Media each day?	How often do you use FaceTime/Skype each day?
P#01	every other day	once or twice	once a day	n/a
P#02	twice a day	once a day	2—3 times	1—2 times a week
P#03	several hrs. a day	several hours	5 times	2 times a day
P#04	1—2 hrs. a day	1—2 hrs. a day	1—2 hrs. a day	2 hrs. twice a week
P#05	at a café or university for 2 hrs. a day	3—4 times a day	2 times a day	once every 2 days
P#06	everyday	1 hr.	once a day	n/a
P#07	often/everyday	not much	2 hrs.	2 hrs.
P#08	40 min a day	10 min	30 mins	once a week
P#09	every night	a few times a day	often with Wi-Fi	once a day
P#10	everyday	once a day	once a day	1—2 times a week
P#11	everyday	a few hours a day	3 times a day	2—3 times a week
P#12	while at home	6—7 times a day	2—3 times a day	n/a
P#13	everyday	many times a day	a few times a day	once a week

During the final face-to-face interviews, I asked students to state with whom they communicated when using these different forms of social media. I discovered that the majority of interactions were with friends and family from the U.S. or with groupmates in Santander. Only P#01 said that he used Facebook to communicate with his new found Spanish friends. Participant #12 stated that he added about two or three new acquaintances to his Facebook, but he never used Facebook to communicate with these new individuals. He stated that, in general, he was not a frequent social media user, and neither he nor these individuals regularly posted to their individual Facebook pages. The other 11 participants unanimously stated that they used Facebook to communicate with groupmates. Moreover, a Facebook group was created at the beginning of the sojourn, which created a platform to announce afternoon and weekend plans. For this reason, Facebook was the main source of communication between groupmates. Furthermore, some participants stated that, when the minutes on their prepaid Spanish phones expired, they resorted to using Facebook as their primary means of communication instead of adding more minutes or Euros to their phones.

I also asked students whether they saw an increase in the amount of social media they used in Spain compared to their normal use in the U.S. The results varied. Participants #03, #06, and #07 did not see any difference in their social media use. They attributed this to the fact that they had regular access to the Internet at home. However, P#01, P#05, and P#09 used less social media for distinctively different reasons. Participant #01 made it a point not to use social media, because his goal in coming on this trip was to completely disconnect from his life in the U.S. He used Facebook to communicate with local Spanish friends and mentioned that his use of social media to communicate with his family increased in the last few weeks due to the illness of his grandfather. Participant #09 expressed that she was forced to decrease the time she spent

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on social media due to the time difference. Because her friends were not on social media at the same time as she was, she did not use it as much. Participant #05 reported using social media less because her host home did not have Wi-Fi. Thus, her Internet access was restricted to the university or a local café.

The remaining participants all reported using much more social media. They initially said that they used social media to communicate with groupmates, but, as they continued to talk with the researcher, other reasons for their use surfaced. Participant #13 stated that, due to Netflix and Hulu not working in Spain, she turned to social media to fill the time she would have spent watching TV shows or movies. Participant#04 stated that she increased her social media use to keep up to date with her friends in the U.S. Participants #10 and #11 explicitly stated that they used social media as a bragging tool, so that their friends and family could see what they were doing and the places they were visiting, in addition to using it to communicate with groupmates.

All the students who used mobile applications like Skype and FaceTime did so to communicate with friends and family. When the participants were asked if they felt homesick at some point during the program, all but one replied that they did. Most stated that the strongest feelings of homesickness came at the beginning of the trip when they were acclimating to their new environment and had not yet had the opportunity to make friends. However, they said that those feelings subsided after a few days because they were able to talk to and text with their family without restriction due to having Internet access in their host homes.

The data presented in this section shows that participants' social media use was regular in frequency. There was no drastic interruption in the way in which they used social media and mobile applications. The distance from home did not hinder their interaction and communication with friends and family members in the U.S. As much as

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these platforms were used among groupmates and with friends and family, they were used minimally to communicate with locals.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The goal of this current study was to understand what students do when they study abroad, by taking a microscopic look into the interactions of students during a short-term study-abroad program. The first research question asked about the students' interactions outside of the classroom. The 13 participants were a subgroup of a group of 50 students that participated in many afternoon and evening activities together. I found that most of students' interactions were with their groupmates. Furthermore, the students attended classes from Monday to Thursday and, during the three-day weekends travelled with fellow groupmates to other Spanish cities or European countries. For these reasons, the majority of the participants spent a large percentage of their time outside of the classroom and outside of the host home with other U.S. students from their home university.

Participant #01's interaction contrasted with that of the majority. He began his sojourn with a mission to isolate himself from his groupmates and completely immerse himself in the city of Santander. He was not completely successful; however, he was one of the only participants to create deep and lasting friendships with local Spanish university students. Participant #01 also befriended the *monitor* for the group, developing a friendship that involved excursions not associated with the home university. Moreover, P#01 said that, without the opportunity to meet the *monitor*, finding and building friendships with locals would have been challenging.

The second research question specifically addressed the students' interactions with host families. To answer this question, the students recorded 20 to 30 minutes of

mealtime conversation with their families once a week for each of the five weeks. I analyzed these recordings to find common conversation topics and identify the initiator of these topics. I also looked at host family characteristics to identify how they affected the resolution of breakdowns in conversation and the turn-taking patterns of the conversations. Moreover, I asked participants to share about their interactions with host family members outside of mealtime and outside of the home.

The results showed that there were five main topics of conversation all students discussed at some point during the five weeks. Food was the most frequent topic of conversation, followed by students' future or travel plans. The students took full advantage of their weekends to visit other places in Europe; thus, almost 15 percent of the conversation topics were about places they planned to visit, or their afternoon and evening plans with friends. The third most popular topic was related to the host family. This topic involved discussion of the host family's history, grandchildren, or places they had visited in Spain or the world. Eight percent of the overall conversation topics were about local traditions, festivals, customs, and places to visit. As the students became acclimated to the city, the host families explained the local customs and also suggested many places for the students to visit.

The students' past was the fifth most popular topic of conversation. During these discussions, students shared the experiences they had visiting other countries or other cities in Spain. They talked about activities they did the day before with their groupmates after class. Additionally, I found that the host family members dominated the conversation, becoming the most frequent initiators of conversation topics. Host family members introduced 66 percent of the topics of conversation while the students only introduced 28 percent.

The characteristics of the host families were varied. Eight out of the nine host homes contained someone who spoke English. This individual was either another university student from the U.S. or a young professional family member that spoke English. Because of the presence of these English speakers, resolutions to breakdowns in conversations often involved the use of English. Fourteen percent of the breakdowns used English to resolve problems, whereas only 10 percent used negotiation of meaning. By analyzing face-to-face interviews and mealtime recordings, I established that the majority of the breakdowns occurred due to lexical gaps. Thirty-two percent of recasts were for lexical mistakes, and 34 percent of the time students asked for help with a lexical item.

Family characteristics also affected turn-taking practices. Host family members produced 62 percent of the turns, and students produced 38 percent of the turns. The data varied significantly by individual participant, but the results of the group showed that backchanneling was the largest category for students, followed by five-word turns that included a verb. The third largest category was one-word turns that were words, most of the times answers to a specific question and not utterances, as is the case with backchanneling. This data revealed that students were constantly giving verbal signs to host family members to let them know that they understood what was being said. The large number of one-word turns leads me to conclude that students were engaging in the conversations by responding to many questions. Furthermore, the number of five-word turns points to the fact that students also contributed to the conversation from time to time.

I also investigated interactions between host families and students outside of mealtime conversations. I discovered that a minimal amount of student—host interactions took place outside of the home. Only two students reported doing an activity with their host family outside of the home. Inside the home, however, watching TV with the host

family was an activity that hosts and students most often did together. Seven of the 11 host families watched TV with their students at some point during the five-week sojourn.

Cooking was another activity that students shared with their host family. Three participants shared their experiences of learning to cook Spanish dishes with their host mother. All of the students reported feeling at home with their host families, but the idea that students would become pseudo-family members and would participate in activities with the families in and outside of the home was not supported by this data.

Finally, the third research question focused on the role of technology in student interactions while abroad. The face-to-face interviews and survey results uncovered an interesting pattern. The students brought at least two different electronic devices with them to Spain: a U.S. smartphone, a laptop or tablet, and a Spanish "go" phone. Furthermore, students reported that they did not experience a lapse in social media use. They all continued to use Facebook regularly. I examined the data for evidence of the people the students interacted with while using social media and mobile applications. The analysis revealed that all but one student used social media primarily to interact with groupmates and friends and family in the U.S. Only P#01 mentioned using Facebook to interact and communicate with his new Spanish friends.

The results of this dissertation are very telling. Gone are the days when students go abroad and are completely disconnected from their L1, thrust into the target community to survive and thrive. When I first studied abroad in 2001, I had to find a place that sold phone cards to then go to a phone booth and call home, or I had to go to a *locutorio*— a local-phone calling place—and communicate my need to call the U.S. with the clerk. Some of my fondest memories are the hours I spent at the local Internet café, where I went to use the Internet and socialize with the attendant and other locals. When I made plans to travel to another city, I had to physically go to the bus or train station and

communicate my need for a ticket in the target language. I also remember spending hours in my host mother's kitchen, watching her cook and talking about different recipes and Spanish food. I also remember buying a little alarm clock/radio and going to sleep listening to Spanish tunes playing on the radio station based in Las Canarias.

Unfortunately, because of technology, today the majority of these practices are extinct. Via Internet access, students can accomplish these tasks without having to use the target language and without having to interact with an actual human being. The local radio stations now play more music in English than they do in Spanish, and student—host family relationships are, for the most part, surface relationships. Regrettably, even though study abroad has drastically changed, and the idea of 100 percent immersion is out-of-date, our assumptions about study abroad and what students do when abroad have not changed. Because of this disconnect, the chapter that follows will discuss the different factors that shaped this study-abroad program and affected the way in which the students interacted. I will also discuss prospective modifications and recommendations to the current study-abroad practices to facilitate and create more opportunities for students to have meaningful interactions with native speakers, which will in turn aid students' language acquisition.

CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

I have discussed the assumptions about study abroad, the current trends in study abroad, and the results from the current study in the previous chapters. The results uncovered some practices that did not support assumptions about study abroad in regards to students' interactions with native speakers. They also called into question the concept of 100 percent immersion in the target culture and community while abroad. The results highlighted some shortcomings in program design and learner practices, and it is necessary to address these limitations. To that end, this chapter is dedicated to the discussion of various program design recommendations that aim to exponentially increase the students' opportunities to interact with native speakers while abroad. In light of my results, my goal is to answer the call from Kinginger (2009) for "more careful description of program design" (p. 217). Furthermore, I aim to analyze the current program design and learner habits to propose the creation of programs that "actually promote and organize opportunities for language learning" (Kinginger, 2009; p. 217). The ultimate goal is to validate and reclaim the short-term study-abroad context as a valid language-learning environment.

Where We Started

Consider Chapter One, where I began the dissertation by calling into question many of the assumptions that people have about study abroad: Students acquire language faster; there will be more interactions with native speakers; host families provide a continuous source of practice of the target language; learners are 100 percent immersed in the target language while abroad. The objective of this study was to provide data related to what short-term study-abroad experiences are really like, in terms of students'

interactional practices; students' relationships and interactions with their host family; and students' use of technology and its effect on their interactional habits.

The aforementioned assumptions complement the trends that we see in study abroad today. Universities and private companies all over the U.S. promote study abroad as the best way to learn a language. Statistics show that the number of U.S. students studying abroad each year is continuing to grow, and, most importantly, over 60 percent of students studying abroad are part of short-term programs that last eight weeks or less.

Further consideration of the assumptions and trends led me to ask some questions about study abroad. Do students really acquire more foreign language proficiency as a result of studying abroad? Are these gains, especially after short-term sojourns, measurable or strictly based on student perceptions? Do "language proficiency gains" only pertain to oral proficiency? What actual factors make the gains possible? Does the concept of immersion even exist anymore? Are students leaving the world of their first language at home or are they bringing this world with them via the use of technology?

Upon reviewing the assumptions, trends, and questions, I disputed the validity of the short-term study-abroad program and its ability to positively affect the language proficiency of learners. This brings us to the current study, which investigated the interactional practices and activities that learners of Spanish participated in while on a sojourn to Spain in an effort to answer some of the concerns raised.

Summary of Conclusions

Thirteen undergraduate students consented to participate in my study and completed weekly surveys, journal entries, audio-recorded conversations with host families and two face-to-face interviews with me as part of the data collection process. My goal was to assess with whom students were talking and interacting, the relationships

with the host families, the different aspects of mealtime interactions, and the use of technology while abroad.

The first research question asked about what types of interactions students had outside of the classroom while studying abroad. I discovered that the majority of the participants spent their time outside of the classroom and outside of the host home with other students from their home university. The 13 participants were a subset of a group of 50 students studying in Santander, Spain, at the time. Only one of the 13 participants created a meaningful relationship with a Spanish university student. The students participated in all afternoon and evening activities with the members of the group from their home university. Furthermore, in addition to evening activities, the students also traveled with groupmates to non-Spanish-speaking countries or cities during the weekends. All the students reported having visited at least one non-Spanish-speaking country or city during the five-week sojourn. These results caused me to question the quantity of native speaker interaction that students actually had during the five-week program.

The second research question asked about students' interactions with their host families. To better understand the interactional dynamic between host families and students, I asked the students to audio-record a mealtime conversation with their host families each week. The data from these recordings revealed that the topics of conversation were not very diverse. The main topic of conversation was food, but the subsequent popular topics of conversation were the students' future plans, the host family's history, discussions about local traditions or customs, and the student's past trips or activities. Furthermore, I saw that host family members dominated the conversations by initiating the majority of new topics of conversation and producing the majority of the turns in the recorded conversations. Moreover, the quality of the students' turns was not

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exceptional, as backchanneling utterances made up a large percentage of the turns, and a smaller percentage were turns of five or more words that also included a verb. I therefore concluded that the students were receiving high quantities of input, but their output was not on par with the amount of input they were receiving.

In addition to topics of conversation and turn-taking practices, I investigated conversation breakdowns in the recorded mealtime conversation. Host families and students resolved the breakdowns by using recasts, by students explicitly asking for help, and by negotiating for meaning. I expected to see more instances of negotiation of meaning but only ten percent of the instances were resolved using this method. Although, there were few instances of negotiation of meaning, there were many instances during the recordings when students made mistakes and the host family members did not correct them. Another interesting finding was the unexpected use of English during the mealtime conversations. I saw English being used to resolve conversation breakdowns. In other instances, host family members translated their utterances into English when speaking to students. At times, host families also used students as English tutors. These results lead me to conclude that these conversations were not optimal for language acquisition because student output was minimal, instances of negotiation of meaning were few, and students and host family members used English as a linguistic crutch.

Furthermore, regarding host family—student relationships and interactional practices, I asked students about the activities in which they participated with their host families outside of eating meals together. Students stated that, outside of the mealtime conversations, interactions with their host family were scarce. A few students reported doing an activity with their host outside of the home; three participants cooked with the host mother and five reported watching TV with the family from time to time (mostly

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during meals). Given the lack of activities shared between students and host, these results discredit the idea that study-abroad students become pseudo-members of the host family.

The third research question asked whether students' use of technology and social media affected their immersion experience while abroad. All 13 participants travelled to Spain with a smartphone and a laptop or tablet. All reported using these devices to connect to the Internet and stay in touch with family members and friends back in the U.S. Some students also had a Spanish "go" phone but, instead of using these devices to communicate with locals, they used them to communicate with other group members from their home university. Additionally, students reported listening to music in English and watching U.S. movies and TV series on these electronic devices. In summary, the students brought their first language music, TV shows, and movies with them, thus undermining the belief that 100 percent immersion exists in the study-abroad language-learning context.

Implications

Given the results outlined in Chapter 4, I have concluded that the current state of short-term study abroad is not conducive or ideal for language-learning purposes. Many study-abroad researchers have investigated the change over time of students' cultural awareness after a sojourn abroad. The overall positive results cause me to conclude that cultural awareness or personal development—not language acquisition—may be the benefit of short-term study abroad. Furthermore, due to the current program's design, students had the time and option to leisurely travel to multiple non-Spanish-speaking countries during their sojourn. The constant linguistic seesaw negatively affected the time students could have dedicated to interacting and building relationships with Spanish

speakers. These weekend excursions led to students building more intimate relationships with groupmates from their home university, not with people in the target community.

Each result from this investigation provides evidence that most assumptions people have about study-abroad experiences are, at a certain level, incomplete, inaccurate, or simply false. Given these conclusions, it is time to alter these assumptions. We—foreign language instructors, study-abroad program designers, and students—would all benefit from a change in the way we approach short-term study abroad. Thus, I make recommendations in line with the call from Kinginger (2011) that encourages "program[s] specifically designed to foster language learning through observation, participation, and reflection." Thus, to aid students in participating more with the local community, I make specific recommendations on how to change the way short-term study-abroad programs are promoted and designed.

MODIFICATIONS TO CHANGE ASSUMPTIONS

To change assumptions and expectations about short-term study abroad, I propose the following modifications, which can act as a step toward reclaiming short-term study abroad as a viable context for language learning.

First, we need to modify the way we promote short-term study abroad, to truthfully reflect the actual language-learning benefits for students. Far too often, in an effort to pique students' interest in study abroad opportunities, faculty members, study-abroad organizers, and promoters sell the opportunities to travel all over the world (be it Europe, Asia, or Latin America) more than they sell the opportunities for language learning while abroad. Furthermore, students perceive more language gains than they may actually acquire. Well-crafted pre-tests and post-tests can be helpful in gauging students' progress in foreign language learning—if, and only if, these tests are thorough

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enough to detect small or minute changes over time. However, few study-abroad programs administer pre-tests and post-tests to their participants, thus making it difficult to pinpoint gains of students. By implementing a continuous analysis of student performance, professors and researchers alike will gain a more realistic view of their programs' outcomes.

Second, we need to modify our perception of student practices while on a short-term sojourn. For example, we must consider with whom the students talk and form new relationships. We must research how students spend their time outside of the classroom and how they accomplish everyday tasks in the target country. We must assess their use of social media and technology while abroad, and determine whether they are using technology to interact in their first or target language. If, for example, the majority of U.S. students who study abroad for language-learning purposes are only speaking the target language in the classroom, only interacting with native speakers when they talk to host family members during mealtimes, or finding themselves in large metropolitan cities where a large percentage of the inhabitants speak English, then our perceptions must change. If the concept of 100 percent immersion has faded away, then the assumption that students are interacting in the target language 100 percent of the time while abroad must also change.

The sections that follow give realistic and feasible recommendations for how we can reclaim short-term study-abroad programs as contexts that foster language acquisition through extensive interactions with individuals in the target community.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE STUDENT—NATIVE SPEAKER INTERACTIONS

The first research question asked specifically about the interactions that students have while abroad; thus, this section is dedicated to discussing recommendations for

changes to the study-abroad program design that will increase student interaction with native speakers. An increase in student interactions will increase and change the quality of the students' time abroad. Kinginger (2008) studied the experiences of 23 U.S. students studying French while in France for a semester. Six students were chosen for more in depth case studies. Kinginger concluded that "language development in study-abroad programs is shown to relate closely to the qualities of student experiences". Thus, if students in short-term sojourns are solely interacting with groupmates while communicating in their first language, we can conclude that the quality of their experiences is very low as it relates to language development. For this reason the recommendations that follow give specific ways in which learners can improve the quality of their experiences by increasing the opportunities that they have to interact with locals while abroad.

Interaction Recommendation 1: Create Designated Language Partners

In the results chapter, I discussed how P#01 formed a relationship with the *monitor* Gabriel and how valuable that relationship was for him. People assume that students go abroad and easily form relationships with locals, but this assumption is unfounded because there are many variables that affect the way students interact with locals while abroad. Yes, students may interact with locals in the customer service industry when buying food or clothing. However, forming more meaningful relationships with locals is usually a challenge. Local young adults come to the university campus, bars, and clubs with predetermined social groups, making it difficult for a foreigner to break that social barrier. For these reasons, students reported speaking to other university students or tourists from the U.S. instead of locals when they went to cafés and bars.

To combat this disconnect, I suggest giving students opportunities to meet and interact with fellow university students from the beginning of their programs. Most universities in Spain offer classes for students learning English as a second language (ESL), as La Universidad de Cantabria did. It would be prudent to have ESL classes team up with Spanish-as-a-second-language classes and run simultaneous summer courses where evening and weekend activities are planned and executed together as one group.

For the purposes of this recommendation, the study-abroad students are studying in Spain as they learn Spanish as a second language. The logistics of the recommended program would be as follows:

> ➢ Create a study-abroad group of 10—15 students who are learning Spanish.
> ➢ Choose 10—15 students from a local ESL course to serve as language partners.
> ➢ Conduct a program launch social event the weekend before the program begins, where all 20—30 students and language partners get the opportunity to meet each other.
> ➢ Reinforce the goals of the language-partner program at the social and during the first week of classes:
>> o Plan evening activities and excursions where all 20—30 students participate.
>> o Students form organic relationships and subgroups.
>> o Avoid forced one-on-one learner-language partner pairing.
>> o Admonish the local language partners to invite learners to take part in regular activities with their friends and families.
>> o Encourage learners to interact with language partners and their friends and family, which will give them access to situations and

settings where most, if not all, of the people will be Spanish-speaking.

- o Plan weekend trips where all 20—30 students visit famous cities within the country.

- o Assign the local language partners as tour guides when the group visits other cities and famous monuments.

- o Establish language-exchange practices where learners are required to speak in Spanish, while the locals speak in English.

Some universities have "exchange (or *intercambio)*" programs where they pair language learners with one local student. The disadvantage of this model is that this type of *facilitated* friendship may lead to pairing two people who do not get along. In the model proposed above, each person has the option to form deeper relationships with 10—15 different people, and making the relationships more organic and less forced. In time, both local and foreign students will bond as they discover commonalities among themselves. The overall objective of this program design change is to give learners numerous opportunities to interact with fellow university students in a low-anxiety setting while using the target language.

Interaction Recommendation 2: Planned Weekends Trips

All the participants in the current study traveled to a non-Spanish-speaking city or country at least once during the five-week sojourn. During the second interview with the participants, P#03 mentioned the negative effects of traveling outside of the country during the weekends. She said that, on Monday morning, it was more difficult to switch back to talking Spanish when she and her groupmates had been speaking English among themselves all weekend. For this reason, I propose structured weekend trips within the

country where students are accompanied by language partners and host families to avoid complete disconnect from the target language and culture during the weekends. When students participate in a five-week program, they initially have about 35 days in the target country. If students are in the classroom from Monday to Thursday and travel to other countries from Friday to Sunday, a program that was initially 35 days long now becomes a 20-day program in the target country. This shortened length of stay does not positively influence language acquisition.

A very feasible and beneficial alternative is national travel that the students, their host families, and language partners have a role in planning. What follows are five different options for weekend travel.

Option 1: Students travel to a nearby small town with their host family. In Spain, it is very common for a family to have a country home or farm in the small towns surrounding the larger cities. The host families of P#05, P#10, and P#11 invited the students to visit their farm in a nearby town on many occasions, but, due to the students traveling every weekend, they were not able to accept these invitations.

Option 2: Students and language partners plan a day trip together to a nearby attraction. This first destination should be inexpensive and easy to access. Some suggestions for day trips include: language partners invite students to spend the weekend with family living nearby, or students and language partners visit a local attraction in small groups.

Option 3: The program director works with instructors and directors of the ESL program to plan a trip for the students and their language partners. This program-planned trip is more elaborate and includes excursions to museums, national monuments, and cultural activities. In the case of Spain, for example, this could include a trip to Granada,

where the students visit places like the Alhambra, Generalife, and Parque de las Ciencias. The weekend can end with a nice dinner that includes a flamenco show.

Option 4: Students and language partners work together to plan a more extravagant two-day trip. In small groups, the students work together within a certain budget to plan a trip within the country. The students will have the option to use a travel agent or plan the trip on their own. Students are required to document different phases of the trip that they will later share with the whole group upon their return.

Option 5: I reserve the final weekend for activities of the students' choice and the *fiesta de despedida* (farewell party). Because my ultimate goal is to be more community-oriented in the way we interact in the target country, this farewell dinner will include instructors, language partners, and host families. It will be an opportunity for students to express their gratitude to the host families and language partners. This is also an occasion for the U.S. university to thank the ESL program directors and instructors for the roles they played in the language-learning journey of their students. The common habit is for the U.S. university to host a farewell dinner for the students only, but that practice reinforces the idea that the group has come to the target country and remained self-inclusive.

The aforementioned plan allows students to maximize their time in Spain and experience things they would not have experienced if they had traveled without the input of local language partners. Thus, the plan creates a more enriched student experience even when they are only in the target country for five weeks. Furthermore, in regards to the students' language-acquisition journey, students get the opportunity to travel with native speakers and continue learning the target language outside of the classroom. Participant #01, who had the opportunity to create a meaningful relationship with the Spanish university student, Gabriel, commented that he would ask him about the

grammar that he was learning in class. He also said that Gabriel taught him a set of vocabulary and phrases, and explained the Spanish culture to him, in a way that his host family did not. The fact that P#01 learned different cultural knowledge from Gabriel was because they were peers and his host family was from the generation of his parents. P#01 had a much richer language-learning experience because of the two different sources of information to which he was privy.

Interaction Recommendation 3: Volunteer Opportunities

Some study-abroad programs are service-oriented (International Studies Abroad, n.d.; "IPSL," n.d., "La Poderosa Media Project," n.d.) and include a goal of working on a project or working with a nonprofit organization. This is not a recommendation that I am making in this case. Participants #05 and #12 both had small children in the host home, and they both remarked on how much easier it was to communicate with these children, who were six and ten years old. Because most short-term study abroad students do not have advanced oral proficiency, they could benefit from interacting with young children with whom they could have simple conversations.

Thus, it could be very beneficial for language learners to work with elementary, middle, or high school students as part of their program. The Ministry of Education in Spain has a program where they hire university students from numerous countries to be cultural assistants in their schools (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, n.d.). The goal here is not to create a program as elaborate as that one. However, if the home university could collaborate with a local elementary, middle, or high school and come to an agreement where language learners spend 30 minutes a day, once a week, with students in their classrooms, it could be beneficial for both parties.

The logistics of this short-term cultural assistant program would be as follows:

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➢ Form a partnership with a local elementary, middle, or high school, or with an organization that runs summer camps (given that most short-term study-abroad programs take place during the summer).

➢ Create a reading and comprehension activity that study-abroad students and K—12 students can complete collaboratively.

➢ The details of the activity are as follows:
   ○ In small groups of three or four, U.S. students and K—12 students take turns reading a text out loud in English.
   ○ U.S. students lead a reading comprehension discussion with K—12 students in the target language.
   ○ During discussion time, U.S. students are required to share a cultural anecdote with the K—12 students while using the target language. The anecdote must relate to the topic of the text just read.

Similarly, the same type of activity can translate to a context where U.S. students interact with a group of elderly locals in a nursing home or rehabilitation ward at a hospital, for example. These settings give students access to people that would welcome visitors. As with the K—12 students, the learners can read a text in the target language with these individuals and later discuss it. Due to the older generations not speaking much English, these interactions may prove to be more challenging for the students. Thus, to better prepare, I suggest that the students read the text, and prepare questions for discussions beforehand. The students can also benefit from discussing the text during class time, which will give them the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the text and get comfortable discussing the topic. Visiting the elderly is an activity that the students should do once a week. As the students build relationships and rapport with

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these individuals over the course of the sojourn, their conversations will become more organic and the texts should grow into a catalyst for conversation, not the focal point of the conversation.

Interaction Recommendation 4: Interactional Tasks

Using the study of Cadd (2012) as a catalyst, I believe it is imperative that study-abroad program designers facilitate ways for students to have more interaction with locals. As we saw in the study results, students spent the majority of their time with groupmates. During the face-to-face interviews, I asked students if they ever spoke to anyone in the target language when they booked flights or reserved rooms or hostels, and they all responded that they completed the reservations online. Thus, online reservations have completely replaced one of the main previous ways that students used to interact with native speakers in the target country.

What follows is a list of activities for students, designed to increase opportunities for interaction with local residents. Over the course of a program, students could choose five or six of their favorite activities to do.

> ➢ Go to a concert, play, or some kind of musical or theatrical presentation, and have a conversation with at least two people about the performing arts in that city.

> ➢ Go to two different gyms and ask about membership packages. Ask about short-term access to the gym or about a day pass. Take a class at the gym, or join the gym.

> ➢ Go to a local supermarket and buy ingredients to make a sandwich, as well as some fruit. Go to the counter to get cheese and meat sliced by the deli worker. When buying fruit, ask a fellow shopper what fruit is in season.

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➢ Research a sports class (for example, a dance class, surf class, water sport, yoga class, or horseback riding). Go to two or three different locations and get information about the classes. Pick one, and attend a class.

➢ Go to a church service or mass, and compare it to a church service or mass in the U.S.

➢ Research spas. Get information about haircuts, manicures, pedicures, waxing, and massages. Visit two to three locations. Pick a location and get a treatment done.

➢ Research a food that is made or produced in the region. Find a factory in the city or in a city nearby, and visit the factory to find out more about this food. Another alternative is to find a restaurant that specializes in serving that food. Eat a meal at the restaurant, and ask the server more about this delicacy.

➢ Visit a local museum or monument with a language partner(s), and discuss its significance for the city or country.

➢ Research outdoor activities (for example: zip-lining, ropes courses, hiking trails, mountain climbing, sailing, rock climbing, or mountain biking). Visit two to three different locations and get information. Pick one, and do an outdoor activity.

➢ Attend a local festival, parade, or cultural celebration. Talk to at least three different people, and ask about its significance in the culture.

The overall goal is to design a program that intentionally creates daily interactional opportunities for learners. When we create opportunities for daily interaction with local residents, students become empowered and, with time, less timid about approaching and talking with people in the target community. From the results we

can infer that the comfortable place for students is with their groupmates and that talking with strangers can be very intimidating. However, program designers can greatly enrich students' experiences abroad if they encourage these types of interactions. Furthermore, by giving students such a variety of interactional options, language learners can pick the activities that most appeal to their preferences. Additionally, researching and completing these activities will give students new things to talk about with both their host families and their language partners, as both sets of locals can give the students suggestions and recommendations as they decide which activities to complete.

Interaction Recommendation 5: Adjust Group Size

It stands to reason that if a group of 50 people travel together to a foreign country, take classes with each other, and do planned activities after class together, the tendency will be for those group members to cling to each other and not branch out into the target community or form relationships with locals. My results uncovered theses habits in the study-abroad program. Due to the design of the program, students solidified old relationships and formed new relationships within the group of 50 students from the U.S. university. The final recommendation, therefore, calls for a change in group size.

A study-abroad program with 50 students hinders the way in which students build relationships with locals when there are no planned activities fostering interactions with individuals from the community. Thus, I recommend that language-learning-focused study-abroad groups be comprised of 10—15 students who collaborate with another group of 10—15 language partners. The logistics of all the suggestions above become more feasible with a smaller group of students. It is easier to place 10—15 students in an elementary, middle, or high school than it is be to place 50. Similarly, it is easier and less

chaotic to place 10—15 students in a nursing home or rehabilitation ward than it is be to place 50.

Another advantage of the smaller group size is the potential for students to enroll in classes with local university students or other foreign students instead of self-contained classes. When the learner groups are made up of 50 students, the university in the target city creates classes solely for these U.S. students, which encourages groupmates to further solidify their relationships. However, if students took classes with locals or other international students also learning the target language, the students would build relationships with non-groupmates. Furthermore, these classroom relationships could potentially continue outside of class time.

The recommendations to increase students' interactions with locals has been given by other study abroad researchers (Dewey, Belnap, & Hillstrom, 2013; Goulah, 2007; Kiely & Nielson, 2003; Raschio, 2001; Shively, 2011) in the recent years because we are seeing an growing habit of students going abroad and not integrating automatically into the target community. Kinginger (2008) observed that some of her students had a difficult time forming relationships with locals and they even had difficulties forming relationships with the program-provided language partners. Thus, she recommends that, "more could be done to assist language learners in developing durable contacts with local inhabitants of the places where they study; that is, the research points to the crucial role of in-country

program directors in helping students to connect to local communities and interpret their experience in ways that are productive for learning" (Kinginger, 2008, p110). Sadly, she saw firsthand, that when students are not assisted in making these local connections or refuse to make an effort on their part to deepen the connections facilitated by the program director they become socially isolated and as a result suffer from loneliness. In the case of

the current participants the lack of local connections meant that the learners connected more deeply with other students from their home university, a phenomenon also seen by other study abroad researchers (R DeKeyser, 2007; Dewey, 2008).

Data from this study indicate that students fall short of the assumed interaction and second-language practice in a host-family experience. The results in the previous chapter uncovered a pattern of host family—student conversations revolving around five particular topics of conversation. Furthermore, there were many instances in the mealtime recordings where students made erroneous utterances and the host families did not correct them. Participants #08 and #04 explicitly stated that their host families were not correcting their errors during conversations, and P#04 had to ask her host family to correct her grammatical errors, which they did thereafter. Additionally, students reported that host families were a resource for cultural knowledge and a new vocabulary; however, they were not as helpful in regards to grammatical knowledge. Participants #02, #07, #08, #10, #11, and #13 commented that host family members were not able to answer their grammatical questions. Given these results, I now focus my attention on recommendations to improve host family interactions and language practice.

Host Family Recommendation 1: Host Family Training

Provide training for the host families before the arrival of the study-abroad students to improve host family—student interactional relationships, the quality of interactions, and corrective feedback for students. Although host families are not expected to be language teachers they still play a role in the language learning process of learners. Diao, Freed and Smith (2011) discovered that host-family members were the locals with whom their students spent the most time interacting in the target language. I

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also saw this phenomena in this current study as the majority of students did not have meaningful relationships with locals outside of the host home. Thus, in addition to creating more interactional opportunities for learners outside of the classroom and outside of the host home, we must also maximize the interactions they have with their host families. In order to do this, some host family training is needed.

In his study of Japanese students studying English in New Zealand, Pryde (2014) analyzed learner-host family conversations and found that the conversation mimicked learner-teacher conversations from the language learning classroom. Because the host family took on the role of teacher, Pryde noticed that the students' willingness to communicate was impeded. Thus he suggested a possible solution to this problem would be to "offer seminars for host parents so as to help them understand the program's goals, clarify the difference between "guest" and "student" status […] Once the host's role has been clarified, it would be helpful […] to highlight conversational strategies that will promote extended discourse." (Pryde, 2014, p. 501)

The output of the learners in the current study proved to be poor with 35 percent of their utterances being backchanneling. This statistic shows that the learners had room to improve their output, but that the host families also needed to learn how to create a linguistic space for the learners to produce higher quality output. Therefore, what follows are some possible components of training sessions for host families: there are specific things they can do to enhance the language-learning experience for learners during a short-term sojourn.

> Attend an orientation before the students arrive where program directors can set expectations and train host families on how to interact with and help students in learning the target language. Program designers can also communicate expectations about student behavior at this time.

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➢ Share at least two meals with the student every day. During mealtimes, hosts should describe the food, the ingredients, the mode of preparation, and the associated traditions with their students.

➢ Judiciously correct students' lexical, grammatical, and phonological errors during conversation. Per my results, host families *are* correcting students' lexical and phonological errors; however, host families need to improve their correction of grammatical errors. The goal is not to have host families correcting students' every word and thus discouraging them from engaging in conversation. I do suggest, however, that host families set aside some time, about twice a week, where they have a conversation with their students focused on pointing out and correcting grammatical errors. Students are also encouraged to seek more in-depth explanation of these errors from their instructors.

➢ Do not hesitate to interrupt student speech in order to correct an error that affects comprehension. Some errors do not drastically affect comprehension—for example, the use of a feminine article with a masculine noun. If a student were to incorrectly say *"la problema"* it would be understood that the reference is to a problem. However, if a student were to say *"tengo hombre"* (I have man) instead of *"tengo hambre"* (I am hungry), he or she would not be understood. Thus, I ask host families to interrupt students when their errors significantly affect the comprehension of their utterances. Furthermore, I ask that host families discuss specific recommendations so that the student can be better understood.

- Engage students in conversation, and do not dominate the conversation, allowing students to produce output. The mealtime conversations should not only be a source of input for the students. To allow students to produce meaningful, complex, and coherent output, host families should receive training in techniques used to solicit information from students and ways to include students in daily conversations.

- Use English minimally. With English becoming more of a global language, the younger host family members often speak English. However, hosts should not use English in place of negotiation of meaning. Furthermore, family members should not "help" students by translating their utterances into English. An essential part of the study-abroad experience is negotiation of meaning; when there is a breakdown in communication, students should not be deprived of the opportunity to wrestle with the language. Furthermore, if students know that the host families speak English, they will be tempted to use English and not the target language.

- Inform host families about the grammar that students will cover in their classes, and suggest topics of conversations and ways in which the students can use the grammar in conversation. If host families are aware that students are learning the past tense, for example, they can try to create conversations that would trigger the use of that grammar point.

In addition to these orientation components, provide host families with a list of questions and topics of discussion that they can use to foster communication. To aid in more collaborative conversations, I propose the use of the following questions:

- So far, what do you like most about this city? Why?

- What was the most surprising thing or aspect about life in this city?

- What has been the most unexpected thing that you experienced in this city?

- What is the biggest cultural difference between this culture and your own?

- What is your family doing back home while you are here? Tell me about your relationship with your siblings/family/parents.

- What are your friends doing back home while you are here?

- What is your favorite TV show back home? Tell me about it. Is there a character on the show with whom you relate?

- Tell me about the last book you read, or about a book you would like to read. Do you have a book you would like to read in [the target language]?

- How do you hope to use [target language] in the future to influence others?

- Do you volunteer your time/skills to others in your hometown? Tell me about what you do. How did you get interested in that organization?

- What do you plan to do upon returning home to continue learning [target language]?

- What are you learning right now in class? Can you explain it to me?

- What do you see yourself doing after you finish university?

- Have you made friends with any local university students? Tell me about them. How are they similar or different to your friends back home?

- Do you practice a religion? If you do, why is that important to you?

- What is a difference you see between the political system in your country and in this country?

Host Family Recommendation 2: Host Family—Student Activities

Based on the results of this study, I see that students spent the majority of the time with their host families during mealtime. Participant #10 mentioned, "All three members worked so we didn't do a lot of activities together, but I saw at least some of them at every meal." Participant #11 said, "My host family was wonderful! I enjoyed having meals with them, and while we didn't really do anything together outside of the house, they were always great company." That was the consensus from most of the participants, except P#03, who commented that she "felt more like a student living there than a family member." The hosts were welcoming, but time spent with them outside of mealtime was limited. Some students reported watching TV with their hosts but for the majority of these students this practice also took place during mealtime. Of course, the demographic of each host family is different and, in some cases, the host parents may work outside of the home. However, I recommend that part of the program design include specific activities with the host family that will be essential in integrating the student into the family.

Three of the participants cooked a Spanish dish with their host mothers. This is one such activity that can help the student feel like part of the family. Furthermore, this activity can teach students essential vocabulary and help them to better understand the customs and traditions of the target community. To this end, I recommend that the student and host parent cook at least one dish together each week. The student will learn new vocabulary as well as the skill of cooking a new dish, and the host parent will open a space for the student to feel more like a family member and less like a tenant.

The second recommendation is for each student to go to the grocery store with a host family member. Study-abroad students have a unique experience because they are *living* in a country but not performing everyday tasks such as buying groceries, putting

gas in a car, reading mail, or paying bills. As a study-abroad student in Madrid in 2003, I did not realize just how much vocabulary I was lacking until I had to go to the grocery store to buy some sliced cheese and ham. Also, while in Santander, I went to the grocery store to buy ingredients for chicken soup and again was fascinated that chicken drumsticks are called *jamoncitos* (little ham legs). It made total and complete sense because that was relevant to Spanish culture—chicken drumsticks look like a miniature version of the pork legs that hang from the ceilings of every meat shop in Spain. In that moment, I began to wonder what other Spanish-speaking countries called drumsticks. Thus, an experience in a Spanish grocery store or market can not only improve students' vocabulary, but can also be a cultural experience, seeing the different foods, meat, and fish that are sold and experiencing the process of buying food. Students have many experiences ordering food at restaurants; however, the opportunity to go to the market, buy ingredients, and then go home and cook with the host is a unique and valuable experience.

The final recommendation is for the host family and student to go out and have a meal at a restaurant together, because there may be a local dish that is too time-consuming to cook at home, or the host family may know an authentic local restaurant that the student would not normally visit. The experience of eating together at a restaurant will give the host family an opportunity to share the history of the restaurant, the history of that part of the city, and the history and traditions of the food served at the restaurant. Students go to different restaurants and cafés throughout their sojourn, but sharing a meal with their host family at a local establishment will be much more enriching than going to a restaurant that caters to tourists.

These three recommendations aid in solidifying the host family—student relationship and also expose the student to the culinary traditions and practices of the target community.

Host Family Recommendation 3: Conversation Series

My results showed host families and students—for the greater part of their conversations—talking about the same five topics of conversation: food, students' future plans, students' past plans, host family history, and local topics. Every student and host discussed these topics at least once during the recorded conversations. I understand that, because of students' varying levels of proficiency, these may be the topics they are most comfortable discussing; however, the benefits of having the same conversation multiple times will allow students to see the gaps in their language and address them before the next conversation. In so doing, students will become more confident in discussing the topic and will make fewer mistakes as they repeat the conversation. Therefore, I recommend a strategic series of conversations that take place each week of the sojourn.

While collecting the data for this study, the king of Spain abdicated his throne. Only two families mentioned it during the mealtime recordings. It is very possible that the students discussed this topic with their family in an unrecorded conversation; however, when one host mother brought up the topic, the student commented that they had discussed it in class and quickly changed the topic of conversation. I recommend that students receive a new, relevant topic every week that relates to local or national news, or that compares and contrasts the home culture with the host culture. I recommend organizing these conversations in the following way:

➢ First, students discuss the topic in the classroom in pairs and take note of the vocabulary they will need or questions they may ask when discussing this topic.

➢ Second, students go home and have this discussion with their host families, while taking notes about their host families' views on the topic.

➢ Third, students have the discussion again with their language partners, who will most likely be from a different generation than the host parents.

➢ Fourth, students have this conversation with a stranger or with the elderly people they interact with each week. By the fourth time that the student has this conversation, they will have become familiar with the vocabulary, they will be more confident talking about the topic, and they will know how to share their opinion about the topic. By having the same conversation multiple times, their levels of anxiety should lower. By the time they talk about this topic, they will be very familiar with the vocabulary and know how to express their personal views about it.

➢ At the end of the week, the students will compare and contrast the opinions of all the different people they talked to about the topic. They will also compare and contrast the way each person shared their opinion: for example, the vocabulary they used, their body language, and their passion about the issue. Finally, they will share any new insights they received while having the conversations.

These topics of conversation will go deeper than talking about food and trips of interest. Possible topics of conversation could include comparing and contrasting governments, religions, or systems of education. The topics can also include minorities or

immigrants and how they are treated in each country. The goal is to have thought-provoking and even controversial topics of conversation that fuel discussion.

Host Family Recommendation 4: No Groupmates As Roommates

The final recommendation to improve host family—student interaction is to limit the number of students from the same university in a host home. In optimal situations, each host family would receive only one student at a time. When multiple students reside with the same host family, the opportunity for one person to speak is normally diminished and the use of English increases exponentially.

I discussed the dynamic between P#02 and P#13 in the results chapter. In this host home, P#02 barely spoke and P#13 did all the talking and acted as a linguistic crutch for P#02. Furthermore, P#03 was in a home that hosted three other students: a student from Michigan, a student from the host university, and P#03. During the recorded mealtime conversations, P#03 produced an average of 35 turns to an average of 210 turns from everybody else in the family. This shows that she was drowned out because there were so many people at the table. Furthermore, it was very evident that the student from Michigan had already established a relationship with the host parents because she had lived there for some weeks before the arrival of P#03. Due to this relational capital, the Michigan student completely dominated the conversations and rarely made space for the other students to talk.

If only one student from the host university lives in a home, students will speak more Spanish, have more opportunities to bond with the host family, have more space in the conversations to talk, and will not use other students as linguistic crutches. The students will have to learn how to communicate to the host family and how to navigate within their new environment without the aid of another student. As we also saw between

roommates P#10 and P#11, students speak more English when there are English-speaking roommates in the home. There were many instances when the students completely reverted to speaking English, and they stated that, when the host family members were not around, they spoke in English in the home. If our goal is to increase the number of interactions students have with native speakers, having more than one student from the same university in the host home will undermine that goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE TECHNOLOGY USE

As my results uncovered, all students came to Spain with a smartphone and a laptop or tablet and some also came with a Spanish "go" phone. Additionally, all the host homes, except one had Internet access, and there were numerous cafés and restaurants in Santander that offered customers free Wi-Fi. Although the learners had unlimited access to the internet, social media, and mobile applications, unfortunately these tools were not used to interact with locals. After surveying 100 students who had previously studied abroad, and doing a focus group with eight of said participants Wooley (2013) discovered that the use of technology and social media negatively affected the study abroad the experience. The learners desperately wanted to stay connected to their social networks which meant that full cultural immersion in the target community did not take place. The participants in the current study displayed similar practices where they continuously updated their social media for friends and family back home, but did not use the same social media to connect with local individuals.

Hofer et al. (2016) also uncovered a pattern of students connected to technology that later hindered their experiences while abroad. Open ended questions on their survey received comments from participants admonishing future study abroad students to "Cut your phone off and take the world in," "Stay away from cell phones for a bit to practice

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being more fully in the present," and to "Stop looking for a WiFi signal every minute! Enjoy just being on your own and take time to explore some things without friends and see what happens!" (Hofer et al.;, 2016, p. 35). Even though this is great advice, it will be a challenge to require or even suggest that students in this millennium operate without their electronic devices. Thus, given how often students connect to the Internet and use mobile devices, there are many opportunities to enhance students' interactional practices via the technology they use on a daily basis. To that end, the sections that follow outline how to design programs to incorporate technology in increasing students' interactions with locals and the target language.

Technology Use Recommendation 1: Technology and the Arts

Continuing to work within the recommendation of having language partners, I propose that the language partners play an essential role in use of technology. This section is dedicated to a detailed explanation of the language and cultural exchange that will take place between students and their language partners while exploring the arts and using technology.

Each week, the students and their language partners will meet with the specific goal of discussing some form of media, including movies, TV shows, documentaries, and music. Each person will bring the name of his or her favorite artist or title within a category to the discussion. Using programs like Netflix, Hulu, Spotify, YouTube, or Pandora, the students will share clips and discuss each person's top movie/documentary/musical artist/film/TV show. At the end of the discussion, I will admonish students and language partners to make time to watch together the movies, shows or documentaries at some point in the week. Because I know that students already have this technology and the devices with which to use it, these activities channel the use

of technology to further and foster interactions. Not only am I fostering interaction, but I am also exposing the students to new aspects of the culture that they may not otherwise encounter.

As a study-abroad student, it can be intimidating to watch a movie, or read a book in the target language that has not been dubbed or translated from English. Encouraging students to watch local films or read books originally written in the target language will expose them to both the language and culture of the community. Furthermore, receiving a recommendation from a peer or having the option to watch a movie or documentary with a Spanish speaker makes the experience much richer for the student. The language partner can explain parts that are unclear—for example, jokes, idioms, or expressions specific to the target community. In my study, the only two movies that the participants mentioned watching in the target language were during class and on the bus during an excursion. Additionally, students mentioned keeping up with U.S. TV shows and programs while in Spain. Thus, I conclude that students have the time and the means to watch movies and TV shows; however, they need help and encouragement to make the switch to performing these activities in the target language. My hope is that, once the students have exposure to these new media forms in the target language, they will continue to explore these artists and shows on their own.

Technology Use Recommendation 2: Interaction and Mobile Apps

During the second week of the sojourn, I asked my participants how they stayed in touch with family and friends in the U.S. Their responses revealed a long list of mobile applications and social media websites, including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Skype, Viber, FaceTime, Snapchat, and GroupMe. At the end of the sojourn, however, I asked the students if they used any of these applications to communicate with locals.

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Only three participants reported having added a local Spaniard to their Facebook. One reason for this result is the fact that most of the students did not form relationships with locals. However, for the few who did, even when they added these new friends on Facebook, they did not communicate with them via that medium. Thus, given the large number of cell phone applications and social media websites that students already use, I outline in the following section ways in which a study-abroad program can be designed to use these tools as catalysts for interactions with locals. These recommendations are based on some of the previous recommendations (for example, having students work closely with language partners)

Group Communication

During the face-to-face interviews, the participants shared that one of the group members had created a Facebook group where all 50 students could communicate and plan excursions during the sojourn. This idea could be more linguistically beneficial for students if language partners were included in this group. Students would be required to post in the target language, and the language partners would post in English. In this way, as individuals become aware of a cultural event or excursion, they also share the information on the Facebook group in the target language. In addition to a Facebook group that includes all students and language partners, I will encourage subgroups to create a communication group in GroupMe or WhatsApp. For example, if two students and three language partners become friends, the subgroup of five will have their own smaller group chat that they use to communicate amongst themselves. The advantage of all three of these mobile applications is that they are free; however, one does need access to the Internet to use them.

Maintaining Connections During the Weekends

In the weekend schedule outlined above, there are three different instances when the students are not all together: the weekend when they travel with their host families, when they take a day trip with language partners, and when they go on a two-day trip with their language partners. Ideally, each subgroup of students will travel to a different destination. During these weekends, each student and subgroup will have a specific assignment to share their experience with the group, with the help of mobile applications.

First, during the weekend when students are travelling with their host families, students will have to upload at least six pictures to their Facebook wall that tell the story of their trip with captions in the target language.

Second, when students go on a day trip in subgroups with their language partners, they will share their journey and experience with each other using Snapchat. Since there will potentially be 30 students in the main group of learners and language partners, students will be required to post snaps to their story, so that the pictures and videos are accessible to their followers during the duration of their day trip.

Third, when students go on extended trips with their language partners, they are required to set up a Skype or FaceTime session with their instructor. Students will also be required to upload pictures to Facebook or Instagram documenting their trip, but for a short five minutes they will have to complete a virtual "check in" with their instructor. Using the target language, they will tell their instructor about their trip and the places they are visiting.

These suggestions require students to use the social media and mobile applications they are already using; however, they will now use them to communicate and share information in the target language.

Social Media As a Corpus

The final suggestion in regards to the use of technology is to have students use social media as a corpus for data collection and analysis. The few participants who said they added a local Spaniard as a friend on Facebook also commented that they reviewed the wall of this new friend, but did not notice anything interesting there. This is not because there was nothing interesting about these people, but more likely due to the learners not wanting to take the time to read, understand, and further investigate the posts. Again, since students will have access to 10—15 language partners, they will also have access to 10—15 Facebook or Instagram accounts in the target language. The first night when students meet their language partners, they will add their language partners to their Facebook or Instagram accounts. To maximize this opportunity, students will have assignments that ask them to view their language partners' pages and answer some of the following questions in regards to the language partners' activities:

> ➢ What kinds of things are the language partners posting about on social media?
>
> ➢ What are they passionate about? What do they like to do? Who are they taking pictures with?
>
> ➢ Compare and contrast what the language partners are posting on social media with what your U.S. friends are posting on social media.
>
> ➢ Analyze the language on the walls of the language partners, Can you identify any "chat language" or shorthand? If so, make a list of the expressions and their meanings. Are they using English shorthand, such as "LOL"? Do they use hashtags? Do they post in English?

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➢ Analyze what the language partners are linking to on their walls. Are there similarities in the things to which they link? For example, is there a Spanish version of BuzzFeed?

As previously mentioned, students are already on these websites looking at what their friends back home are doing and adding their own updates. This is an opportunity to take their screen time and make it beneficial to the language acquisition process. Having students answer these questions will require them to read, research, watch videos, and analyze the target language in a currently unexplored genre. The students will be required to review Facebook or Instagram walls at least once a week to collect supportive data as they answer the questions outlined above. At the end of the sojourn, students will write a report summarizing their findings about the social media use of their language partners.

LIMITATIONS

There are a number of limitations to this study which will be discussed briefly in this section with suggestions for future research. First, the fact that I received consent from some host families to do the weekly recordings and not others caused the data to be unbalanced. There were two participants who only completed the weekly surveys, journals entries and the two face-to-face interviews, which meant that my view of their interactional practices with their host family was limited.

Second, the lack of audio-recording devices created a lack of consistency in the mealtime recordings. I mentioned in the results chapter that, when the king of Spain abdicated his throne, very few students talked about this topic with their family. However, this conclusion is not fully supported by the audio-recorded data since some students did not have the recording devices on that exact day. Thus, to rectify this inconsistency in the data, it would be best to have one recording device per participant,

which will allow all students to have access to recording devices on the same day. In regards evaluating the discussion of national or local news and events, researchers will be assured that all the recorded conversations are taking place on the same day.

Third, although I had varied data types which allowed for triangulation of the data, the fact the all students did not complete all surveys, journal entries and audio recordings did create a gap in the data. Indeed, those gaps were addressed during the face-to-face interviews, however, the interviews did not take place every week. The journals and surveys captured current practices of the participants, and they did not have to recall their habits like they would have done during the interview at the end of the sojourn. To prevent the possibility of incomplete data sets I recommend giving the participants the option to complete the surveys and journals online as well as on paper. For example, if some students have not completed the surveys online by Wednesday night, then some class time is allotted to survey or journal completion on Thursday. In regards to the audio recordings, both host families and students will be informed of the specific day when recordings will take place. Only one student in the participant group did not complete a recording for all five weeks. She reported that there were days when the family was not present during mealtime; thus, not allowing her the opportunity to complete the recording. By allotting class time on Thursday for completion of surveys and journals, and my assigning a specific day of the week for the audio recordings to take place, I will ensure that all data sets are complete.

Fourth, the length of the mealtime audio recordings varied drastically. Students were instructed to record for 20 to 30 minutes, however, the recordings ranged from 16 to 39 minutes. This wide variety in recording length meant that some participants provided me with a larger quantity of conversations to analyze. To better systematize the length of each participant's recording, I will ask students to set a timer on their mobile devices that

will sound after 30 minutes. In this way, the length of each recording will be standardized.

Fifth, as I mentioned in the results chapter, the fact that each student was not individually placed in a host home affected the way he or she interacted with the host family. Thus to create a more homogeneous host-family experience more than one student should not be placed in a host home. I cannot control the demographic of each family, however, we can control how many students from the home university are housed in each home.

Finally, even though the number of participants was small, I do not recommend an increase in the study-abroad group, giving that one of my recommendations is to have group size be between 10—15 students. However, to increase the number of participants, which will allow for more in-depth statistical analysis, I recommend including students from different student abroad programs. Analyzing the experiences of students in multiple programs will uncover similarities and potential pitfalls that we as researchers and instructors can continue to address.

CONCLUSION

All the data from this dissertation confirms that the realities of current study-abroad practices differ from the traditional assumptions maintained about the study-abroad experience. Studying abroad is becoming more and more popular for students in U.S. universities; however, the validity of this context as one that facilitates language learning is in question. The concept of immersion is disappearing due to increased access to the Internet and the more advanced electronic devices that students can take abroad. This means that students now have access to their social media, music, and streaming websites like Hulu, Netflix, and YouTube. Furthermore, inexpensive nonstop flights

between major countries and famous cities mean that students want to travel to different countries during their sojourn abroad. In light of all these changes, it is imperative to assess the practices and habits of students while abroad to better understand whether the short-term study-abroad context in today's world is still conducive to language learning.

The results of this study have shown that short-term study abroad is in jeopardy as a viable context for language learning. The participants traveled in a linguistic bubble. They traveled with a group of 50 students. They took classes together at the local university, and some took classes with faculty members from the home university. They participated in afternoon and evening activities with their groupmates and consistently traveled to other non-Spanish-speaking countries on the weekends. In regards to their interactions with host families, the host families dominated the conversations, producing over 60 percent of the turns, and they generally discussed the same five topics of conversation. When students were not with their host family or groupmates, they spent their time using technology and electronic devices to catch up on U.S. TV shows or to roam the walls of social media sites of their friends back home.

Thus, to reclaim the context of short-term study abroad, I made multiple recommendations for study-abroad program designers and foreign language instructions. The core of these recommendations was to create and foster environments for deep and meaningful community with individuals from the target culture. I recommend that students build relationships with fellow university students, with school-aged students, with the elderly, and with the host family. Students should build relationships around interactional activities that they participate in throughout the week. In an effort to make this model a reality, I call for a drastic change to the traditional short-term study abroad model. To create space for these activities, the classroom, in some cases, may be at a local elementary, middle, or high school. It may even be in the rehabilitation ward at a

hospital. Students will still travel on the weekends, but in the new model, students will partner with host families and language partners to explore cities and national sights. Additionally, students will maximize the use of social media and mobile applications to foster, enhance, and promote interactions in the target language.

All of these recommendations demonstrate that there are opportunities for increased interaction and language practice during short-term study abroad. As we develop study-abroad programs, focusing on these increased interactional opportunities, the results will be revolutionary. We will have the potential to see students forming deep, meaningful relationships with local university students. Students will no longer feel like outsiders in their host homes, but will feel like valued members of their host families. Students will break out of their L1 bubble and give back to the target community, as well as integrate into the community as they serve local children and the elderly. Students will have enriched experiences of a city, culture, and language through the eyes of locals. Linguistically, students will discuss various topics in the target language with their host family and language partners as questions arise while learning. As these recommendations are implemented, my hope is that the "bubble"-type study-abroad programs described in this dissertation become a thing of the past, and that program designers and language instructors embrace a new kind of short-term study abroad. This new kind of study abroad will stretch students and encourage them to leave the comfort zone of their L1 and wholeheartedly explore the target community and culture while taking part in numerous interactions that lead them to actually acquiring the target language.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A—INITIAL BACKGROUND SURVEY

IMPORTANT: PLEASE type your answers in **BOLD**, in *Italics,* or in a different COLOR,

General Questions

Name: _____ Gender: Male Female   Age: _____

What year (university classification) are you in school? Circle one option:
         Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior   Graduate Student

What are you studying? Major(s): _____
                       Minor(s): _____

Yes, I agree to be a participant in the study titled: "What really happens during study abroad?"

Language Background Questions
1. What is the first (native) language of your mother?
2. What is the first (native) language of your father?
3. What is you dominant language (the language you speak most comfortably today)?
4. Do any of your grandparents speak Spanish? **Yes No**
   a. If yes, do you ever speak with your grandparents in Spanish?
5. Do any of your parents speak Spanish? **Yes No**
   a. If yes, do you ever speak with your parents in Spanish?
   b. Does your family speak Spanish at home? **Yes No**
6. At what age did you begin to learn Spanish?
7. Have you had contact with Spanish outside of school? **Yes No**
8. If yes, rate your exposure according to the categories below:
   a. listening mostly   N/A   at home   with friends
             other:_____
   b. listening and speaking   N/A   at home   with friends
             other:_____
   c. reading   N/A   at home   with friends
             other:_____
   d. reading and writing   N/A   at home   with friends
             other:_____

9. How many years have you studied Spanish at each of the levels of education described below?
   a. Elementary School: ___
   b. Middle School: ____
   c. High School: ____
   d. University/College: ____
   e. Other (e.g., church courses): ____
10. Have you previously studied abroad? **Yes No**
    a. If yes, to what country? _____
    b. For how long? _____
11. Do you plan to study abroad again in the future? **Yes No**
12. Are you using the study abroad to decide to major in Spanish? **Yes No**
13. Are you using study abroad to decide to minor in Spanish? **Yes No**
14. Rate your ability across different tasks in Spanish
    a. Listening Comprehension -- Excellent   Good   Fair   Poor
    b. Speaking --   Excellent   Good   Fair   Poor
    c. Reading Comprehension --   Excellent   Good   Fair   Poor
    d. Writing --   Excellent   Good   Fair   Poor
15. Do you speak any language in addition to English and Spanish? **Yes No**
    a. If yes, which language? _____
    b. Describe level of education when you studied it:
    c. Elementary School: ___
    d. Middle School: ____
    e. High School: ____
    f. University/College: ____
    g. Other (e.g., church courses): ____
    h. How well do you speak this language?
    i. If not in a traditional classroom, how did you learn it?
16. List the countries you have visited or lived in, the total length of time you have spent in each country, and the reason you were there (place of origin, work, study, travel, vacation, etc.):

Country	**Length of Stay**	**Reason for Trip**

17. Briefly comment on any additional circumstances, people, places or events that have influenced your experience with learning Spanish.

Technology Questions
1. Do you own a cell phone?
2. Is your cell phone a smart phone?

3. Do you plan on taking your cell phone to Spain?
4. How do you plan on using it while in Spain?
5. Do you own a laptop?
6. Do you plan on taking your laptop to Spain?
7. How do you plan on using it while in Spain?
8. Do you own an iPad or tablet device?
9. Please specify which kind _____
10. How do you plan on using it while in Spain?
11. Do you plan to use the Internet while in Spain?
12. If so, how do you plan to get access to Wi-Fi?
13. Do you plan to call friends and family in the U.S. while in Spain?
14. If so, how do you plan to call them?
15. Do you plan to text friends and family in the U.S. while in Spain?
16. If so, how do you plan to text them?
17. Do you plan to FaceTime or Skype with friends and family in the US while in Spain?
18. If so, how do you plan to do that?
19. Do you plan to use Social Media (*Facebook/Instagram/Twitter*) while in Spain?
20. If so, how do you plan to connect to and use social media?

21. Do you plan to call local Spanish friends or friends you meet while in Spain?
22. If so, how do you plan to call them?
23. Do you plan to text local Spanish friends or friends you meet while in Spain?
24. If so, how do you plan to text them?
25. How do you plan to communicate with classmates and local Spanish friends?

26. Have you used CANVAS for any of your previous classes?
27. Do you have a personal blog or online journal?

While in Spain:
1. What do you hope to accomplish while in Spain?
   a. Places you hope to see:
   b. Things you hope to do:
   c. Skills you hope to acquire:
   d. People you hope to meet:

2. What do you think the homestay (living with a host family) will be like?
3. What kinds of activities would you enjoy participating in with your host family?
4. What aspects of the Spanish culture are you excited to experience?
5. What aspects of the Spanish culture make you a little nervous?
6. What are some aspects of the Spanish culture that you have no clue about, but would like to learn more about on your trip?
7. How well do you know other students taking part in this program?
8. List and describe the students that you already know going on this study abroad trip.

APPENDIX B—WEEKLY SURVEYS

Weekly Survey #1: *(Internet Access, Use of Social Media, Modes of Communication)*
IMPORTANT: PLEASE type your answers in **BOLD**, in *Italics,* or in a different
COLOR,
Name: _____

1. Does your host family have Internet access at home? Yes   No
2. If yes, how often do you use it? _____
3. If not, where do you go to use the Internet? _____
4. How much do you use the Internet at these places? _____
   _____
5. Do you use the computer lab on the university campus? Yes   No
6. Tell me about your communication habits while here in Spain:
   a. Do you e-mail? Yes   No
      i. How often each day?
   b. Do you use Social Media? Yes   No
      i. How often each day?
   c. Do you use FaceTime or Skype? Yes   No
      i. How often each day?
   d. Do you use your cell phone? Yes   No
      i. How often each day?
      ii. For texting or for phone calls?
7. What device do you use to connect to the Internet? (phone/laptop/tablet)

Weekly Survey #2 *(Staying in Touch With Family/Friends in the U.S.)*
IMPORTANT: PLEASE type your answers in **BOLD**, in *Italics,* or in a different
COLOR,
Name: _____

1. How do you keep in touch with your family and friends in the US?
   _____
   _____
   _____
2. Do you call them regularly? Yes   No
   a. How regularly?
3. Have your family or friends called you at your host home? Yes   No
4. Do you mainly communicate with your family via e-mail or text or Facebook?
   _____

Weekly Survey #3 *(English vs. Spanish Input)*
IMPORTANT: PLEASE type your answers in **BOLD**, in *Italics,* or in a different
   COLOR,
Name: _____

1. On a daily basis, how much are you listening to music in English?
   _____ percent of my day OR _____
2. On a daily basis, how much are you watching TV in English?
   _____ percent of my day OR _____
3. On a daily basis, how much are you listening to music in Spanish?
   _____ percent of my day OR _____
4. On a daily basis, how much are you watching TV in Spanish?
   _____ percent of my day OR _____
5. Are you still watching US TV shows on Hulu or a similar website?
   a. Yes No
   b. If Yes, Which shows? _____
   c. If Yes, Which website do you use? _____
6. What are you watching and listening to while in Spain?
   _____
7. Is there a TV show, in Spanish, that you watch regularly?
   _____
8. What percentage of the show do you understand? _____ percent
9. Have you discovered any music here in Spain that you really like?
   a. Yes No
   b. If yes, what artist? _____
   c. If yes, what music type? _____
10. Do you ever listen to music in Spanish on your electronic devices
   (*phone/laptop/tablet*)? Yes   No
   a. Which device? _____

Weekly Survey #4 *(Time Outside of Class/Spain)*
IMPORTANT: PLEASE type your answers in **BOLD**, in *Italics,* or in a different
   COLOR,
Name: _____

1. How do you spend your out-of-class time?
   a. What activities do you do?
      _____
   b. With whom do you do these activities?
      _____
2. Is there a café or bar or discoteca that you like to visit regularly?
   a. Yes   No
   b. Which one? _____

c. Why do you like it there?

    _____

3. Have you planned a trip to a city outside of Santander/Spain?
    a. Yes   No
    b. If yes, how many?
    c. Where? _____
4. Did you make travel reservations online or in person with a travel agent?

    _____

<u>Weekly Survey #5 (*New Relationships*)</u>
IMPORTANT: PLEASE type your answers in **BOLD**, in *Italics,* or in a different
        CO**L**O**R,**
Name: _____

1. Have you met any Spanish-speaking friends that you have "friended" on
    Facebook? Yes   No
2. Do you communicate with them in Spanish, via Facebook? Yes   No
3. Have you read their wall? Yes   No
4. Are their posts in Spanish? Yes   No
5. Have you noticed anything interesting about their posts? Yes   No
    a. If yes, what?

        _____
        _____
        _____
6. During your time in Spain, have you posted anything on social media
    (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram etc.) in Spanish? Yes   No
7. Have you had difficulty maintaining your relationships with your friends and
    family in the US? Yes   No
    a. If yes, why do you think that is? _____

        _____
        _____
    b. If no, what helped you maintains these relationships?

        _____
        _____

APPENDIX C—HOST FAMILY RELATIONSHIP SURVEY

IMPORTANT: PLEASE type your answers in **BOLD**, in *Italics,* or in a different
  COLOR,

NAME:_____

Living Arrangements

1. List the members of your host family (*e.g., mother, father, one 4-year-old daughter, one 13-year-old son; also include regular visitors*) AND indicate whether any of them spoke English and how well.

Name	English speaking? Yes/No	How good of an English speaker?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

2. Were there other nonnative speakers of Spanish (*other students/tenants)* living with your host family? Circle one: Yes   No

#3—#9: Put the number that best describes your feelings in the blank.
Scale: 1-strongly disagree   2-disagree   3-agree   4-strongly agree

3. My host family and I got along very well. _____
4. My host family made an effort to involve me in their activities. _____
5. My host family was patient with my difficulties in communicating in Spanish. _____
6. My host family helped me get used to the way things are done in Spain. _____
7. My host family helped me feel comfortable in their home. _____
8. My host family encouraged me to speak Spanish with them. _____
9. My host family liked to hear what I had to say. _____

Homestay Adjustment Questions
#1—#8: Put the number that best describes your feelings in the blank.
Scale: (*Not at all*) 1   2 3 4 5 (*A lot*)
  1. At first, adapting to the family was difficult. _____
  2. At first, adapting to the school was difficult. _____
  3. At first, adapting to the city/society/culture was difficult. _____

4. I was well matched with my family._____
5. How comfortable did you feel with your family at the end of the first week? _____
6. How comfortable did you feel with your family at the end of your experience? _____
7. How open were you to new experiences? _____
8. How homesick were you? _____

Homestay Advantage Questions
#1—#6: Put the number that best describes your feelings in the blank.
Scale: (***Not at all***) 1   2 3 4 5 (***A lot***)

1. How much time did your family spend with you? _____
2. How much did your family help you learn Spanish? _____
3. Did you learn as much Spanish as you thought you would? _____
4. How much did the family integrate you into family activities? _____
5. Did you make Spanish friends? _____
6. Do you plan to keep in contact with your family? _____

Questions on Host Family—Student Relationship
#1—#6: Put the number that best describes your feelings in the blank.
Scale: (***Not at all***) 1   2 3 4 5 (***A lot***)

1. My family encouraged me to talk and always answered my questions. _____
2. I initiated many conversations with the family. _____
3. I did projects with the family (e.g. helped with cooking, shopping, etc.) _____
4. I fit in well with the family _____
5. A family member asked me to accompany them outside the home on a trip or errand. _____
6. My family helped me understand the Spanish culture. _____

Please add any additional comments about your Host Family and your stay:

APPENDIX D—JOURNAL PROMPTS

Week 1 Journal: First Impressions

Week #1 - Prompt **(Write half a page to answer these questions)**
- You have been in Spain for a little less than a week. What are your first impressions?
- Are you experiencing culture shock? What's the most shocking aspect about this culture so far?

Week #1 – Response **(Write a few sentences EN ESPAÑOL in response to a groupmate)**
- **En Español**, Da algunos consejos o recomendaciones a tu compañero/a de clase.
- ¿Qué debe/puede hacer para asimilar a esta nueva cultura?
- *(Translation: In Spanish, give your classmate some recommendations and advice—what should he/she do to assimilate to this new culture?)*

Week 2 Journal: Alguien interesante

Week #2 - Prompt **(Write half a page to answer these questions)**
- Tell your group about an interesting person you have met here in Santander. Where did you meet? What were you doing at the time? Have you done other activities with this person?

Week #2 – Response **(Write a few sentences EN ESPAÑOL)**
- **En español**, Usando el verbo ser, y el vocabulario de capítulo 1, describe a una persona/profesor/estudiante que conociste aquí en la universidad o en la ciudad. **¿**Cómo es esta persona?
- *(Translation: In Spanish, using the verb "ser" and the vocabulary from Chapter 1 in your textbook, describe a person/professor/student that you met here at the university or in the city. What is that person like?)*

Week 3 Journal: Mis familias

Week #3 – Prompt **(Write half a page to answer these questions)**
- You have been in Spain for almost three weeks. What is your host family like?
- List the members of your host family. What activities do you do with them?

Week #3 – Response **(Write a few sentences EN ESPAÑOL)**
- **En español**, Haz una comparación entre la familia anfitriona de tu compañero/a y tu propia familia en los EEUU.

- *(Translation: In Spanish, make a comparison between the host family of your classmate, and your own family in the U.S.)*

Week 4 Journal: Una aventura

Week #4 – Prompt **(Write half a page to answer these questions)**
- You have been in Spain for four weeks now. Tell your group about an eventful outings—i.e. a trip to the movies/museum/concert/mall/mercado/another city
- Where you able to communicate with the people you wanted to during this trip?
- How do you ask the interlocutor for help if you do not understand what they are saying?

Week #4 – Response **(Write a few sentences EN ESPAÑOL)**
- En Español, comparte con tus compañeros/as algunas estrategias (*strategies*) que usas cuando no entiendes lo que te dice la gente.
- *(Translation: In Spanish, share with your classmates some strategies that you use when you don't understand what people say to you - while they are speaking Spanish)*

Week 05 Journal - Una meta

Week #5 - Prompt **(Write half a page to answer these questions)**
- List one goal that you had before coming on this trip.
- Did you accomplish that goal? How?

Week #5 – Response **(Write a few sentences EN ESPAÑOL)**
- En Español, Cuéntanos sobre la persona con quien pasaste **la mayoría** de tu tiempo aquí en España (*fuera de clase*). ¿Qué hicieron ustedes? ¿Hablaste en Español con esta persona?

*(Translation – In Spanish, tell us about the person with whom you spent **most** of your time here in Spain (outside of the classroom). What did you all do together? Did you speak in Spanish with this person?)*

APPENDIX E—SAMPLE FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Week 3 Interview During Sojourn
1. What are some of the things that you do outside of the classroom?
2. Describe some of the friends you have made, or the people you have met.
3. Did you experience culture shock when you first arrived? How did you overcome it?
4. What percentage of your day is spent using English?
5. What percentage of your day is spent using Spanish?
6. Who is in your host family?
7. Who do you feel the most comfortable speaking with? Why?
8. Do you have the floor when speaking with them?
9. Do they correct you a lot and do you understand the corrections?
10. What percentage of the conversation did you understand when talking to your host family?
11. When they are talking between themselves, what happens?
12. How has traveling affected your experience???
13. How would you summarize your experience so far? What has been great and what do you hope to still do?
14. How does having 50 students in the program affect the experience?

Specific questions related to findings in Recordings:
    Based on some of the patterns I hear in the students' recordings I will create questions specific to each student's interactional practices.

Week 6 Interview at End of Sojourn

1. Think back to the first week of your study-abroad experience. Describe the objectives that you had at that time for your study-abroad experience.
2. Do you think that you were able to achieve these objectives? Explain.
3. What was it about the study-abroad experience that most contributed to your language development?
4. How was the relationship with your host family?
5. What are some things that you learned from your host family?
6. Have you made friends with any of the locals?
7. What percentage of your day is spent using English?
8. What percentage of your day is spent using Spanish?
9. Have you done these activities in Spanish? How about in English? How often?
   a. Read a book
   b. Watched at a movie
   c. Attended a concert

d. Sent an e-mail
        e. Read a newspaper/blog/article
        f. Watched a TV show
        g. Listened to the radio
        h. Listened to recorded music
        i. Used Social Media
10. Did you miss your family/friends back home? How did you communicate and/or
    keep in touch with them?

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VITA

I grew up in the West Indies and started learning Spanish in elementary school. I studied Spanish for four years in high school. In college, I had an opportunity to study abroad and that trip did changed the trajectory of my education. I added Spanish to my Mathematics major and studied in Mexico for the last semester of my undergraduate studies. I also had the opportunity to do an internship with the university's IT department while in Mexico.

Over the years, I have co-directed college study-abroad programs, and directed high school programs in Spain. These experiences have given me a unique insight into the changes that have occurred in study abroad due to technology and English becoming a *lingua franca*.

Due to the impact that study abroad has had on my life, I am passionate about how it can affect the lives of students. In my own life, as an English-Spanish bilingual speaker, I have been able to join organizations that help the Spanish-speaking community, both in the U.S. and overseas, and impact the lives of people and children in ways I never dreamed possible. Learning a language should not stop at book knowledge; it should impact lives. I strongly believe that, if designed correctly, study abroad can be the catalyst that changes the trajectory of language students' lives.

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