出国交换学习与大学生个人全面发展之个案研究

Exchange Abroad and University Students' Whole-Person Development: A Case Study

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内 容 简 介

本书通过问卷调查和访谈的形式分析了海外交换经历对大学生个人综合发展的影响，主要结果如下：（1）学生出国交换的目的和期望众多；（2）通过交换，学生们的学业和语言收获颇丰，提高了跨文化交际能力，增强了中国人的身份意识，提高了独立生活的能力和在不同文化中生活的能力。同时他们也发现要真正融入当地文化和生活中仍存在一定难度。

Preface

Since I finished my Ph.D study in Applied English Linguistics in 2005, I have been broadly conducting research on second/foreign language teaching and learning, with an enormous focus on individual difference such as language anxiety and motivation. Yet most of my studies have been put more focus on second/foreign language teaching and learning in the motherland.

As international education becomes a trend in the world and more institutions of higher education become internationalized during the past couple of years, Chinese students have the opportunities and take the initiative to study abroad by participating in international exchange programs. Concurrently, I became interested in the issue of those students' life abroad. This interest transformed into research practice when I was invited by my Ph.D supervisor, professor Jane Jackson at the Chinese University of Hong Kong to co-investigate the project "Assessing the L2 and intercultural learning of semester-long exchange students from CUHK and Tsinghua University" funded by the Direct Grant from CUHK (2011-2012). Largely thanks to her, I became a practical researcher on the issue of abroad/international education.

Most people instinctively assume that it is better and easier

to learn a foreign language and its culture in the native language environment. It is to some extent true. However, for an international exchange student who only has the chance to stay abroad for half to one year, what can be the most appropriate way to get better prepared for the short-period language study while struggling with culture shock, getting adjusted to the strange environment and trying to meet other learning targets at the same time? What are the variables which most affect the foreign language study in an international exchange scenario? In what way can exchange students be more effective with their learning of the target language and culture and make the sojourn a more fruitful stay? How to help them make better use of their time abroad? These were the questions which pushed me to conduct studies on study abroad and write this book. I endeavored to give answers to these questions through this book, yet after completion, I'm fully aware I can only shed some light on it due to the broadness of the issue and the variables. I will be content if this book can attract more attention to studies of this issue and can be of some help to prospective exchange students as well as their teachers and home universities.

This book reports on the results of one of the few studies that have investigated sojourners from China who spent varying lengths of time abroad on exchange programs. Via triangulated methods, the research examined the impact of university students' exchange experience on their whole-person development, centering on the following issues concerning the sojourners:

(1) their aims and expectations of their study abroad;
(2) the changes in their academic and linguistic competence before and after their sojourn abroad;
(3) the changes in their intercultural communication competence before and after their sojourn abroad;

(4) the changes in their self-identity before and after their sojourn abroad;

(5) the changes in their self-development before and after their sojourn.

It is hoped that the findings can shed some light on the variability that has been observed in previous research and will inspire more research on the issue in Mainland China or even other Asian contexts.

Contents

Chapter 1   Introduction

Since 2004, European universities have been encouraged to develop the internationalization of their study programs through the European excellence program, Erasmus Mundus. Erasmus Mundus is the joint EU (European Union) action program for improving the quality of university education and promoting intercultural understanding through cooperation with countries outside the EU. The program aims at establishing common master study programs, courses and doctoral programs with foreign partner universities. With the consolidation of the Erasmus program in Europe, stays abroad (SA) as contexts of language acquisition have become increasingly prominent in European tertiary education (Trenchs-Parera, 2009). It is similar in North America, where SA programs are now on the rise. For example, in Canada, 93% of all post-secondary institutions participating in an internationalization survey administered in 2006 by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC, 2007) showed that they had a high or medium interest in providing out-of-country experiences for Canadian students; and 77% suggested that student demand for such programs had increased during the past two years. By 2025, more than 7 million are expected to receive international education as at least part of their undergraduate degree (http://atlas.iienetwork.org; www.oecd.org).

Although some studies have shown that simply putting students in the foreign country, even with a host family, does not necessarily provide greater cultural awareness or linguistic opportunities than staying in the home university (Freed, 1995a, 1995b; Rivers, 1998; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Wilkinson, 1998b), language teachers and educators have long recognized the importance of exchanging programs

across international boundaries (Cohen, 1984; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Koester, 1986). People have long held the assumption that study abroad (SA) is generally believed to facilitate the learning and acquisition of the target language and culture as well as personal development (Huebner, 1995; Kinginger, 2008, 2010; Koester, 1986; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Pérez-Vidal & Juan-Garau, 2011; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Serrano, Llanes & Tragant, 2011). The prevailing expectation is that learners' oral performance will be more native-like after the sojourn in the target language country.

Research on study abroad has included such variables as: changes in the target language ability; changes in self-concept, self-esteem, and self-confidence, the development of new intellectual interests and improved academic performance; changes in interest in world events, and, changes in career and job goals (Armstrong, 1982; Brown, 1983; Koester, 1986; Sell, 1983). The studies have generally revealed that the SA context constitutes a rich environment for language and culture learning and that immersion in the target culture is of great value in fostering acquisition of target language skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing, especially in speaking (Allen & Herron, 2003; Barron, 2007; Chen, 2004; Huebner, 1995; Isabelli, 2007; Kinginger, 2008; Lafford, 2010; Lindseth, 2010; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Magnan & Back, 2007; Martinsen, 2008; Nagy, 2008; O'Donnell, 2004; Opper, Teichler & Carlson, 1990; Pearson, 2004; Pedersen, 2010; Pérez-Vidal & Juan-Garau, 2007, 2009, 2011; Polanyi, 1995; Regan, 1995, 1998, 2004; Riazantseva, 2001; Ringold, 1998; Rose, 1999; Sasaki 2007; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Segalowitz, Freed, Collentine, Lafford, Lazar & Díaz-Campos, 2004; Serrano et al., 2011; Smartt & Scudder, 2004; Storch, 2009; Straffon, 2001, 2003; Sunderman & Kroll, 2009; Taguchi, 2008; Takai, 1989; Tarp, 2006; Teichler, 2004; Thibeault, 2001; Wang, 2010; Westrick, 2002, 2004; Wilkinson, 2002, 2005; Yamamoto, 1994; Yen & Stevens, 2004).

As demonstrated above, international exchange programs are increasingly popular all over the world. In recent years, East Asian students have become the majority of international students on university campuses (Xia, 2009). For example, in Mainland China, the number

of undergraduates who join exchange programs has also increased significantly as institutions of higher education sign more agreements to facilitate exchanges in recent years. Though no authoritative statistics can be found yet, this can be exemplified by the statistics from the university where the study was situated reported in this book. Starting from mid-2000s, the university has increasingly sent its students on exchange programs out to partner universities of the world, from originally 20-30 students to the present around 600 students (2013). It is the same with other high-ranking universities in Mainland China.

Even so, research on exchange students has been scarce in Asian contexts. As more and more Chinese higher education institutes and students are involved in exchange programs, research is urgently called upon in this area to examine the benefits of study abroad programs, how to prepare students who are going abroad to maximize their time abroad, and how to sustain their gains after the exchange experience.

Situated in a highly prestigious university in Beijing, China, the study reported in this book aims to document the development (e.g., changes in academic, linguistic, and intercultural communication competence, personal development, and changes in self-identity,) of semester-long and 1-year long exchange students via both questionnaires and interviews. The examination of Chinese learners' expectations of and concerns about the SA, and the changes in their academic, linguistic and intercultural competence and identity while staying abroad can also throw some light on the variability that has been observed in previous research. Hopefully, it will also inspire more research on the issue in other Chinese secondary school and university contexts. The particular research questions for the study reported in this book are:

(1) What are the students' aims and expectations of their study abroad?

(2) What are the changes in the students' academic and linguistic competence before and after their sojourn abroad?

(3) What are the changes in the students' intercultural communication competence before and after their sojourn abroad?

(4) What are the changes in the students' self-identity before and after

their sojourn abroad?

(5) What are the changes in the students' self-development before and after their sojourn abroad?

By exploring these questions, it is hoped that the present research can offer some practical suggestions and implications for school administrators, teachers and students when they plan for future study abroad programs.

To better document the research, this book is organized as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the issue; Chapter 2 reviews the relationship between study abroad and whole-person development; Chapter 3 describes the design of the research; Chapters 4-7 present the findings; Chapter 8 discusses the findings and provides suggestions for school administrators, teachers and students when they plan for future study abroad programs; and Chapter 9 is a conclusion.

Chapter 2
Study Abroad and Whole-Person Development

This chapter reviews the theories and empirical studies on study abroad and whole-person development in terms of the Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory (section 2.1) and empirical studies on study abroad (section 2.2) (changes in academic and linguistic competence, intercultural communication competence, self-identity, self development, and other aspects before and after the experience abroad). Section 2.3 summarizes the chapter.

2.1   The Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory

Though a theory of cognitive development, the underlying principles of the Sociocultural Theory have been applied to many studies on second language acquisition (De Guerrero, 1996; Donato, 1994; Frawley, 1997; Jimenez, 2003; Lantolf, 1994, 2000; McCafferty, 1998; Pavlenko, 1998).

As argued by Vygotsky (1978), higher forms of cognitive development derive first in the social world, in interactions between individuals before they are internally acquired. These higher cognitive functions refer to voluntary attention, conceptual thought, logical memory, problem solving, learning, voluntary inhibitory and disinhibitory faculties, and the planning, execution, and monitoring of mental processes. Individuals' functional systems are basically monitored and shaped by their experiences and interactions with the surrounding communities so that different communities are expected to provide different functional systems to their members. During this whole process, language is considered to

be the primary mediator through which speakers are involved in social interactions (Jimenez, 2003). During the process of social interaction, language is used and shapes how we think about the world and our relationship to it as it is being internalized (Jimenez, 2003; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). According to Vygotsky (1978), language activity, in either written or spoken form, serves as the tool through which individuals regulate each other and themselves when participating in different types of social and psychological activities.

As discussed in Vygotsky (1978), human activity is mediated by culturally constructed artifacts. Based on this, Leont'eve (1981) differentiated between collective and individual activity and claims that "only through a relation with other people does man relate to nature itself, which means that labor appears from the very beginning as a process mediated by tools and at the same time mediated socially" (p. 208). He proposed a three-level model of activity: (1) the level of motives, which is driven by an object-related motive and explains why something is done, (2) the level of action, which is driven by a conscious goal and accounts for what is done, and (3) the level of operations, which explains how something is done and comprises the physical and temporal circumstances under which activities take place.

Later on, Engestrom (1987) expanded the three-level model to include three new elements: the community, the rules, and the division of labor. The community consists of one or more people who collaboratively participate in an activity; rules regulate actions and interactions within the activity system; and the division of labor involves how tasks are divided between community members as well as the division of power and status. Gradually, interactions and activities between individuals from different cultures and traditions are incorporated into the concept of activity (Cole, 1988).

Another important concept in the Sociocultural Theory is participation, because learning is the process of becoming a participant or member of a community (Sfard, 1998). In order to accomplish this, learners have to achieve "the ability to communicate in the language of this community and act according to its particular norm" (Sfard, 1998, p. 6). Then, what

may happen when individuals belonging to a specific community are immersed in a different linguistic and cultural environment, such as immigrating to or studying abroad in a second/foreign language (SL/FL) community? According to the Sociocultural Theory, different types and levels of participation with the SL/FL community determine how well the speaker needs to be in the new mediating language in order to fulfill his/her goals/expectations (Lantolf, 2003, 2006; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). It is like a continuum, along which the better one needs to be able to control the language, the closer one should be able to use the language to regulate himself or herself. Then, the language shapes the speaker's cognitive system as "the speaker has more control over the language, the language mediates the way he thinks" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 6).

Thus comes the role of language in the whole process. Within the Sociocultural Theory, language is the tool through which individuals engage in different types of social and psychological activities, and is intrinsically related to the process of thinking (Jimenez, 2003; Shively, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978). Through internalization individuals gain increasing control over the higher forms of cognitive activity provided by the surrounding community and control over their own behavior and mental processes, becoming self-regulated. As discussed in this theory, beginners do not possess enough control of the language to successfully participate in a communicative activity. Thus they may rely on the help of others, which needs to happen within their zone of proximal development. Zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to the "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Through interaction, beginners start to develop to be more knowledgeable and independent users of the language. Thus, interlocutors they interact with are of high importance in shaping their interactions and determining their learning opportunities (Cheyne & Tarulli, 1999; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Shea, 1994).

To conclude, a primary tenet of the Sociocultural Theory is that

all knowledge has its origins in social interaction and collaboration between individuals. An individual is not an autonomous knower or an autonomous language learner, but rather, a social being situated within a particular cultural and historical context (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). Thus, an individual's ability to comprehend and produce utterances in the SL/FL cannot be considered static across different social situations and different tasks (Frawley & Lantolf, 1985; Kinginger, 2002; Shea, 1994). On the contrary, it is changing as his/her type and level of participation in the SL/FL community activity changes.

2.2   Empirical Studies on Study Abroad

Language teachers and educators have long recognized the importance of exchange of students across international boundaries (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Coleman, 1998; Koester, 1986). A long-held assumption is that immersion in another culture enhances cultural learning as well as language learning (Koester, 1986; Sasaki, 2007; Taillefer, 2005).

As more higher institutions and students become interested in study abroad, an abundance of research has been done on the issue, which often include such variables as (1) changes in students' target language ability, (2) changes in self-concept, self-esteem, and self-confidence, (3) the development of new intellectual interests and improved academic performance, (4) changes in students' interest in world events, and (5) changes in career and job goals (Armstrong, 1982; Brown, 1984; Koester, 1986; Sell, 1983). Despite that some studies have found minimal or no effect of SA on students' acquisition of the target language (Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 1991; Dewey, 2004; Díaz-Campos, 2004; Freed, So & Lazar, 2003; Isabelli-García, 2010; Lennon, 1990; Mora, 2007), the majority of current research has shown exchange programs to be effective in fostering acquisition of SL/FL skills (i.e., listening, reading, speaking and writing) (Hernández, 2010a, 2010b; Kemp, 2010; Lafford, 2004, 2010; Lapkin, Hart & Swain, 1995; Lindseth, 2010; Liskin-Gasparro, 1998; Mancheno, 2008; Marriott, 1995, 2000; Martinsen, 2008; Masgoret,