Enhancing English Language and Culture Learning in Short-Term Study Abroad
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Introduction
This poster reports on a study which focused on the second language (L2) identities, language and intercultural (IC) learning of English Language Education (ELED) majors who participated in an eight-week English language and cultural immersion program in the U.K.

Profile of cohort
Cohort: 9 3rd year ELED majors
Sex: 3 males
9 females
Perceived English proficiency
(1 = very poor; 5 = excellent)
2 Fair
4 Good
3 Very good
Previous international experience
Mostly short-term travel in Asian countries; a few had short-term SA experience in secondary school

Pre-sojourn
Their attitude towards their use of English was relational and context-dependent;
Their L2 learning was driven by a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motives;
Their perceptions of their L2 identities and attitudes towards English were related to their previous L2 learning and IC international experience

Findings
Sojourn
All participants believed that they had enhanced their English, especially their speaking and listening skills;
Variations were found in their exposure to English/IC interactions;
Their emotions and attitudes towards English evolved as they used the language in the U.K;
Both internal and external factors contributed to their L2 and IC learning.

Post-sojourn
All participants maintained their identity as L2 learners. They believed that they had acquired more confidence, particularly in their listening and speaking skills;
They developed a stronger sense of being L2 users due to their ability to use the language in real life situations (e.g., interacting/ rapport-building with their hosts);
All believed that their SA experience had broadened their views about English language teaching, which in turn, boosted their confidence as future EFL teachers

Research questions
• What are the participants’ perceptions of their L2 proficiency and their attitudes towards the host language and culture prior to the sojourn, during the sojourn, immediately after the sojourn, and four months post sojourn?
• How do they perceive themselves as English learners and users, and future teachers of English at the four stages?
• In their estimation, how did the sojourn impact their L2 identities?

Pedagogical suggestions
Pre-sojourn preparation
Briefing sessions
• Explain L2 identity-related concepts and enhance students’ understanding of related dimensions;
• Prompt students’ observational strategies to enhance their sociopragmatic awareness;
• Allow students to share their SA concerns and discuss possible solutions

IC workshops
• Explore IC issues
• Raise their IC awareness, sensitivity, and understanding

Sojourn support
Regular debriefing sessions
• Encourage students to seek opportunities to initiate L2/IC interactions in the host environment;
• Prompt them to reflect on their SA goals and employ L2/IC learning strategies

Purposeful tasks
• Prompt students to Interview host members about a topic of mutual interest;
• Prompt them to write reflective auto-biographical narratives;
• Encourage the posting of blogs or multimodal texts (e.g., online sharing in an e-learning platform)

Reentry intervention
• Offer debriefing workshops;
• Encourage the writing of post-sojourn reflective essays about SA experiences;
• Prompt the setting of goals for further L2/IC learning

Methodology
• Multi-method, multiple-case studies;
• Qualitative data (e.g., interview transcripts, pre- and post reflective essays, sojourn journals) uploaded to NVivo 11 database and coded;
• Quantitative (survey) data processed by Excel;
• Cross-case analysis

Overview of study abroad (SA) program in U.K.
• 8-weeks
• Required, credit-bearing component of ELED program;
• Homestay;
• Language enhancement and pedagogical skills courses
• IC studies course
• School visits
• Cultural excursions

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References