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I, Angel Gamaliel Añorga, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Literacy and Second Language Studies.

It is entitled:
Students’ Self-Efficacy Perceptions of Second Language Learning: Experiences in a Short-term Study Abroad

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Students’ Self-Efficacy Perceptions of Second Language Learning: Experiences in a Short-term Study Abroad

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ABSTRACT

Short-term language study abroad programs have continued to capture the attention of college students in recent years. In an effort to measure the impact, language gain from a short-term study abroad program is measured using pre- and post-grammar-based assessments alone. Such practice takes away the essence and richness short sojourns can offer, especially as this type of assessment does not always account for those students considered to be bad test-takers. The process of language learning is, by nature, a complex task. When studying abroad, this process encompasses three main domains: the language learner, the second language, and the immersion setting. The intrinsic permeability among these domains reveals the complexity of the process of language learning abroad, particularly when the sojourn is short term.

Every language learner who studies abroad is unique and experiences the language learning process at a different level. Thus, from a self-efficacy theory perspective—and to allow the voices and stories of the participants to be heard—this study implements a phenomenological case study design to gain insights into participants’ self-efficacy perceptions of their language learning abroad. Self-efficacy is identified in the literature as the central phenomenon influencing students’ achievement as well as the determining factor of students’ success during a short-term sojourn. In this study, five cases shared their stories regarding the process of learning Spanish abroad in relation to self-efficacy perceptions and beliefs. Data sources included in-depth three-way interviews, field observations, and student artifacts. Inductive analysis guided the highlight of significant statements and the creation of clusters and themes; cross-case analyses allowed for a thorough analysis and aided the in-depth description of the essence of the phenomenon at hand for each case.

Several important findings related to the process of language learning during short-term sojourns emerged through themes and subthemes. Through interactions with the host family
and other native speakers, the participants discovered their real language level while abroad. Coming out of their comfort zones while interacting and using Spanish abroad enabled the participants to increase their self-efficacy perceptions. The more they took part in authentic language tasks, the more participants experienced an increase in their beliefs in their abilities to learn Spanish. Future research is needed in the area of self-efficacy in order to elucidate language learners’ beliefs in their capabilities to acquire a second language abroad.
DEDICATION

To my dad, Juan Añorga, who taught me the values of faith, perseverance, and never giving up. Dad, thank you for being my greatest supporter and for cheering me up during my college years. I know you would have not missed my graduation. I miss you!

To my mom, María Añorga, who is now with me and continues to instill in me love, faith, and perseverance. Thank you, mom!
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Dr. Camp provided her insights into the language learning process as well as practical examples of how to assess language abroad and approach measuring language gains abroad. Dr. Refaei motivated me to enter the world of qualitative inquiry and provided thorough feedback on my manuscript, including content and format. She took the time to share details on how to improve the manuscript by using a qualitative perspective. To both Dr. Camp and Dr. Refaei, I am thankful for their help.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Study abroad as a practice is becoming the norm in the United States (Farrell, 2007), especially among higher education institutions. In recent years, the proliferation of long- and short-term study abroad programs that emphasize language learning as the main goal has also grown. Moving from the traditional language classroom to the full-immersion site through a sojourn experience draws more attention and interest among college students. Accordingly, colleges and universities have embraced the vision of international education as an effective teaching and learning tool and as a relevant part of the curriculum. Study abroad is the norm among educational institutions promoting the globalization and internationalization of education (Doppen & An, 2014). Moreover, study abroad practices promote an education beyond the traditional classroom facilitating the implementation of experiential learning and providing authentic immersion in direct contact with the real world.

The implementation of long- and short-term study abroad programs has increased in the past five years. The Institute of International Education (IIE)’s 2015 report revealed that short-term study abroad programs accommodated one of the largest numbers of participants. Most recently, the IIE’s Open Doors Report revealed that 304,467 US students participated in study abroad programs during the 2013-2014 academic year with a 4.9% increase over the previous year. Of this total, approximately 23,748 students were reported to specifically have participated in a language program abroad through international studies.

Thus, as educational institutions continue to promote international travel particularly short-term study abroad programs with an emphasis on language learning, the need for more empirical studies to support this practice is paramount. Hence, in the last decade researchers have
dedicated attention to study abroad as a practice and also to language learning abroad. There is evidence that demonstrates language gain during short-term sojourns (Cadd, 2012; Gomez & Vicente, 2011; Kinginger, 2011). Nonetheless, others have reported minimum or no linguistic gain or even language attrition (Rees & Clapper, 2007; Segalowitz et al., 2004). This discrepancy in the literature calls for more empirical studies to address the central phenomenon. The myriad quantitative measures have illuminated crucial findings regarding language learning and study abroad. Conversely, these studies have also evidenced the need for more qualitative research to address this topic. Furthermore, the field needs more qualitative studies that would expose the voice of the participants in short-term language study abroad programs. This urgent call for more empirical studies on whether or not there is linguistic gain abroad leads to the purpose of this study.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore students’ perceptions on their self-efficacy to acquire a second language abroad through the use of phenomenological-case study. Thus, this study is designed to understand the meaning or meanings of students’ perceptions on self-efficacy to acquire Spanish as a second language while participating in a short-term language study abroad program. This study focused attention on students’ interactions utilizing Spanish in the abroad context (read: real world) where the language was spoken and had to be spoken beyond the classroom. I observed Spanish language and culture acquisition activities during the course of time devoted to Spanish language instruction as well as language task activities through daily interactions in the target culture. Thus, this study investigated how the participants’ self-efficacy perspective played a role in the process of acquiring the target language while experiencing the real world as a language immersion setting.
What follows are the research questions that guided this study:

1. What do students believe about their own abilities to acquire Spanish as a second language in a full-immersion setting?

2. What are students’ perceptions of their performance utilizing the target language to complete specific tasks?

3. What are students' perceptions of their self-efficacy to acquire Spanish as a second language while participating in a short-term language study abroad program?

4. How do students’ perceptions on their self-efficacy influence their Spanish learning abroad?

**Key Terms**

**Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy is defined as an individual’s personal judgment of his or her capabilities to perform and complete specific tasks (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is the personal beliefs one has in his or her own abilities to accomplish specific activities that demand some challenge. Self-efficacy can be measured through the implementation of tasks; thus, it is task and context specific (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). In academic contexts, self-efficacy is predictive of students’ academic success (Pajares & Graham, 1999).

**Self-agency**

Human agency or self-agency is associated with the ability to monitor and control personal choices of action to reach a goal. Consciousness plays an important role prior to action, during action, and after action. Our conscious beliefs assist the conscious decision to follow a goal, which is described as a conscious intention. This conscious intention produces an action of choice which humans as individual agents are able to consciously control (Pacherie, 2013).
Bandura (1989) identified self-efficacy, as an influencer of human agency, depending on how a person believes in his or her own capabilities, this person’s human agency or ability to make choices will be affected.

**Self-concept**

Self-concept is associated to self-awareness in general. It refers to a person and how this person embraces a concept of himself or herself. It explains how an individual thinks about himself or herself. Based on how a person self-evaluates himself or herself, a person builds a sense of distinction from others (Bee, 1992).

**Locus of Control**

The concept of locus of control was developed and studied broadly by Rotter (1954). According to Rotter locus of control denotes internal and external beliefs through which a person allows the control of his or her life. Internal factors express that a person believes he or she can control his or her life in a particular context. External factors describe that people believe that their lives are controlled by the environment or by chance. Bandura (1997) posited that locus of control is not empirically associated to self-efficacy.

**Short-term Language Study Abroad**

The Institute of International Education (IIE) provides information on several types of study abroad programs available for US students. There are several lengths of study abroad programs the shortest being one-week, two-weeks, one-month, and one summer session, which generally runs between five to eight weeks. For the purpose of this study, any study from one semester or one year long and more are considered long-term study abroad programs.

**Language Task**
Bandura (1997) emphasizes that self-efficacy is measured and observable through the completion of a task or tasks. For the purpose of this study, the participants, as language learners, were assigned several specific tasks at the study abroad site in which they had to utilize the target language to complete. Each participant had to report on the completion of each language task.

**Foreign Language versus Second Language**

Specifying the difference between learning a foreign language versus learning a second language is relevant for this study. While the participants studied Spanish in the US they are involved in learning Spanish as a foreign language. While the participants studied Spanish in the country where Spanish was spoken and was the main language, the participants studied Spanish as a second language (Harmer, 2004).

**Theoretical Perspectives**

Three domains are relevant in this study: the participant domain, the target language domain, and the study abroad domain. Consequently, three theories that relate to one another underpinned the theoretical background for this study. For the participant’s domain, this study draws from Self-Efficacy Theory, which was defined and conceptualized by Bandura (1977) and that provides ground for the participants’ overall performance in the sojourn. At the language domain, Language Socialization Theory (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008) provides ground and the point of connection for the participants’ goal to acquire the language while interacting and socializing in the L2 culture abroad. At the study-abroad domain, Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) provides path for the overall learning experience abroad.

**The Lens of Self-Efficacy Theory**

This study aligns with self-efficacy theory based on the work of Bandura (1977) and advocates second-language acquisition in relation to the immediate social environment and the
ability of an individual to perform tasks within that environment. Bandura defines self-efficacy as the belief in one’s abilities to complete specific tasks, and it is the main factor that influences an individual’s self-agency or capabilities to make choices and act on these choices. Self-efficacy theory suggests that individuals obtain information to assess efficacy from their successful performances, and personal observed experiences. Thus, the most effective way to assess efficacy is through the successful or non-successful performances individuals have on specific tasks. Additionally, individuals’ self-efficacy is strengthened by observing other individuals performing similar tasks and by comparing their successful performances to others.

Vuong, Brown-Welty, and Tracz (2010) associated self-efficacy with academic success and found that learners with positive levels of self-efficacy demonstrated greater persistence, effort, and proactive use of learning strategies. In connection to academic success, the factors that determine persistence and strength according to Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory are previous performances, observing how others perform, verbal persuasions from others, and interpreting others’ emotional reactions. Learners benefit from their previous successes or failures completing new tasks; moreover, seeing other successful performers or receiving appropriate modeling allows the learner to reinforce what has been learned. Through interacting with others, the learner can realize whether or not he or she is performing well and make adjustments.

In a language study abroad setting, the instructor provides tasks and provides feedback and encouragement as students perform the assigned tasks. At the beginning of the task students’ perceptions of their capabilities to acquire new information or knowledge differ from one another. Students’ self-efficacy improves as they develop skill in performing said tasks. Students’ performance in short-term, study-abroad language programs is related to their own
perceptions of their capabilities in acquiring the target language. This study is designed to
determine how these perceptions influence the success in acquiring the target language among
the participants.

Bandura (1977) identifies four components that affect the development of self-efficacy
perceptions. Thus, these four components provided ground and underpinning to this study.

Mastery experience. Learners who have experienced success completing a task tend to
develop high self-efficacy. Thus, past experiences are important as they shaped self-efficacy
perceptions. Bandura explained that past failures are also important in shaping self-efficacy. A
resilient self-efficacy needs experience to overcome challenges through effort and perseverance.
People who have a high sense of self-efficacy took time to become convinced that they are able
to accomplish a specific task. In this study, the participants brought their previous experiences
learning Spanish as a foreign language in the US. Later, these previous experiences shaped their
immersion experiences learning Spanish as a second language at the abroad site. In general,
positive statements with regard to completing a task provide an idea of the self-efficacy level of a
person. Bandura (1986) suggested wording as an important way to measure self-efficacy and
gave preponderance to the use of “can” which described a person’s subjective convictions. On
the other hand, pessimistic statements, frustrations, a sense of quitting, procrastination,
avoidance of tasks, characterize low self-efficacy (Kim, Wang, Ahn & Bong, 2015).

Vicarious experience. Bandura claimed that learners who observed their peers complete
a task successfully experienced positive beliefs about their own abilities and capabilities.
Consequently, this observation would strengthen the observer’s self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura
also contended that seeing other people similar to oneself succeeding in performing tasks could
raise the observers beliefs in his or her own capabilities to accomplish the same tasks. That is,
the impact of modeling on one’s self-efficacy is stronger if the models are similar people as the observer. Competent models could exemplify knowledge and teach observers the necessary skills to complete the demanding tasks. At the study abroad site, the participants had several opportunities to observe other peers interacting in the target language, completing language tasks and participating actively in the L2 culture.

**Social persuasion.** Bandura posited that verbal encouragement and positive feedback could influence self-efficacy. People who are persuaded verbally that they have what is needed to accomplish a task are more apt to exert effort and sustain it in the task-completion process. At the abroad site, students will experience feedback from their language teacher in addition to successful interactions with local residents as they complete their language tasks. One constraint in this area could be identified as unrealistic encouragement that may cause disappointment after failing completion of the task. However, Bandura, asserted that people who are persuaded negatively, or who are told they lack the corresponding abilities tend to quit soon after or make no effort to complete and get involved with the task. In general, learners who receive verbal persuasion from mentors, teachers, or superiors tend to develop high self-efficacy concerning the completion of specific tasks. At the abroad side the participants had opportunities to receive verbal persuasion in their language classroom, outside the classroom while interacting in-group activities, and while conversing and interacting with their host families.

**Physiological and emotional states.** Bandura explained that certain aspects of physiological nature such as fatigue could affect self-efficacy. By the same token, aspects of emotional nature such as stress could also affect self-efficacy beliefs. Consequently, learners who have low anxiety levels during the task performance tend to enjoy the task as they perceive it as pleasant; therefore, strengthening their self-efficacy beliefs. Learners who have low anxiety
at the time of the language performance tend to enjoy the task and therefore strengthen their self-efficacy perceptions regarding the language experience. Before participating in the language study abroad experience, students had several sessions of training and preparation in which they discussed possible stressful situations and how to cope with them in addition to understanding the concept of self-efficacy.

In this study, Bandura’s definition of self-efficacy is incorporated across the research design. Moreover, this study draws from Self-Efficacy Theory through the implementation of several language tasks which are part of the language-learning process at the study abroad site. Furthermore, the participants were exposed to opportunities in which they experienced the four factors for influencing self-efficacy: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and emotional states.

**The Lense of Language Socialization Theory**

Relevant to this study, Language Socialization Theory, first introduced by Ochs and Schieffelin (2008) provides context for the language-learning process at the abroad site. Ochs and Schieffelin defined language socialization as a lifelong process in which individuals, particularly novices, are introduced into new domains, which they access through language practices and social interaction. Duff (2010) defined language socialization as the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge through social experience; this experience entails developing cultural and communication competence. Duff also explained that language socialization is an exploration in how people learn to become part of everyday life activities and communication interactions. The local rules and norms empower individuals to actively function in the immediate culture which aids in the learning of proper language practices. Thus, one of the central focus of Language Socialization Theory is to investigate how individuals who are new to the culture or community
learn the linguistic norms mainly by observation and by interacting with proficient members of that culture.

Ochs and Schieffelin stated that in the process of learning the new language norms of the new culture, individuals are presented with the need to learn affective orientation and values associated with the culture. That is, individuals need to learn to express and interpret anger, affection, or desire in a culturally and linguistically acceptable manner. Appropriateness for daily life activities must be learned such as how to greet and how to express gratitude, for example.

In addition to studying how people learn the linguistic and cultural norms to immerse into a new culture to socialize with those with more advance discourse; Language Socialization Theory facilitates the study of nonlinguistic knowledge mediated by language. Nonlinguistic knowledge could include beliefs about the world, identity, social status, learning, social identities, values, epistemologies and religion. Additionally, people learn to socialize with different groups in the community including professional and non-professional groups. Thus, language mediates the acquisition of nonlinguistic knowledge, which is an important part for becoming proficient in the language and pragmatic knowledge (Fader, 2006; Paugh, 2008).

Since the process of language socialization relates to the development of an individual to become linguistic competent in interaction with the culture; at the study abroad site, the participants of this study found opportunities to learn the norms of the L2 culture. This learning process was mediated by the practice and use of Spanish on a daily basis and while living with local host families.

**The Lens of Experiential Learning Theory**

Language study abroad programs have the potential to provide enriching experiences to the participants. There are endless possibilities to gain meaningful and transformative
experiences while learning and practicing the target language abroad. Conversely, those
language study abroad programs that do not implement a holistic approach to language and
student learning abroad may become little more than a two-week restful vacation. To facilitate a
fully enriching language learning abroad, this study aligned with Experiential Learning Theory
(ELT) (Kolb, 1984). ELT defines learning by providing a holistic approach for individuals
participating abroad in which learning occurs by facilitating the transformation of experience
into knowledge. Kolb proposed six domains that characterize the essence of ELT.

Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes. Kolb explained that
learning entails a set of interrelated experiences in which knowledge is modified. More
importantly, learning does not end in performance or at an outcome. The study abroad site
provided an array of new experiences with the L2 culture. The participants encountered several
opportunities to learn on a daily basis, their whole personas were immersed in a new world. The
program itself did not rely on a final test score; however, other activities including daily
interactions, reflections, discussions, language tasks, and conversation reports were part of the
holistic view of the sojourn.

Learning is relearning. Kolb stated that learners should be in charge of their own
learning. The process of learning starts with the learners’ beliefs about a theme, then the learner
needs to examine this belief with refined knowledge. At the study abroad site, the participants
were given opportunities to take charge of their own learning and to participate in several
language tasks according to their schedules and personal preferences. The participants were
given responsibility to self-evaluate daily schedules and experiences.

Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectally opposed modes of
adaptation to the world. Conflict and disagreement is necessary and important in the process of
learning. This conflict should be resolved through reflection and action. At the study abroad experienced the participants encountered several opportunities to reflect on their new experiences with the language and culture. The participants were also able to reflect their personal experiences in the new culture in pairs and in groups.

**Learning is a holistic process of adaptation.** Kolb stated that learning goes beyond the state of cognition. Learning implies the participation of the whole persona; this process includes thought, emotions, perceptions and behavior. At the study abroad site, the participants had to rapidly adapt to the new culture, new host families, and new language school setting which included new language instructors with new classroom styles.

**Learning results from synergy transactions between the person and the environment.** Kolb posited that learning is directly influenced by the equilibrium between the learner and the learning space. At the study abroad site the participants understood that they needed to interact with the new culture in order to accomplish daily goals that included food, transportation, and interactions with people in the L2 culture.

**Learning is the process of creating knowledge.** ELT emphasizes the merging transaction between social knowledge and personal knowledge; the interaction between these two is the new knowledge. ELT affirms that knowledge is not the transmission of ideas, which are nothing but fixed ideas transmitted. At the study abroad site, each participant brought a set of language and culture knowledge. From that point, each participant found opportunities to put into practice their previous and new knowledge into the real world.

This section has provided insight on three important theories that have shaped the conceptual framework for this study. The study of self-efficacy beliefs regarding the participants second language learning experience abroad has been provided with strong background in its
three important domains: the participant, the language learning experience, and the study abroad site.

**Researcher’s Location**

**Self-Efficacy and Language Study Abroad: A Concern and a Personal Inquiry**

My decision to study participants’ self-efficacy perceptions to acquire a language during a short-term sojourn was based on personal concern and an inquisitiveness. The concern was at the level of both outcome and practice. I found it very problematic to see short-term language study abroad as a field that was rooted in a myth: language gain in short sojourns could be measured through a final assessment alone. At the outcome level, if the knowledge-base of obtaining linguistic gain abroad relied in the myth of a final grade in form of an average number based on a written or oral final test, I questioned both the underlying assumptions of this myth and the reasons for its continuation. What could a final grade on a written test say after two or three weeks of studying a language abroad? What related theories would support the myth of the implementation of written or oral assessment to measure linguistic gain in short sojourns? Why did some in the field of language study abroad continue to hold to the belief system of assigning a final test grade alone when the field of language study abroad intersects with other fields (such as sociolinguistics, intercultural communication, language ideology, bilingualism, pragmatics, cultural anthropology) that have suggested there are several variables influencing linguistic gain abroad? If a returning student from a short sojourn was not able to score high on grammar and vocabulary on a written or oral test but he or she was able to take public transportation and negotiate purchasing a bus fare abroad successfully, how was language gain measured for this student then? What ideology underlay minimizing the enriching experience provided by the short sojourn abroad to a post trip language test alone? Was language measured separate from culture?
How did we grade those participants that were successful in interacting with their host families abroad in the target language but yet were not able to pass the final oral or written exam upon their return? A field like short-term language study abroad needs a proactive underlying theory in order to move forward. An underlying theory based on a myth does not provide evidence for a substantial theory. I believe this was a genuine concern.

At the level of practice in the field of short-term language study abroad my concern was about the lack of understanding of what the participants experienced from a holistic point of view. Even though acquiring the target language was one of the main goals for participation, we still did not know how deep the impact of the sojourn among participants was. Those who relied solely on a final assessment for short language sojourns missed the overall picture of the experience. The moment students arrived to the abroad site, their whole personas experienced a different set of emotions; thus, self-efficacy became the determinant factor on how the participants put their skills into practice in an unknown environment (Dörnyei, 2003). As participants immerse into the new culture they have to learn how to negotiate new ways of life between the new dominant culture and their individual cultures and language identities; thus, there is a process of adaptation, learning and growth (Gonzales, 2004). In a short-term sojourn time may signify pressure, the participants have to learn how to shorten the differences with the new culture and have to make efforts to build bridges with the new culture immediately upon arrival. I was also concerned on how short-sojourns were put into practice with the solely focus of language as the only main goal. What aspects of language learning took preponderance while studying abroad? Who determined that the sojourn language experience could be minimized to a final grammar-based final exam? How did cultural excursions influence the interest on learning the target language? Were short-term language study abroad leaders trained to consider the big
pictured entailed in the task? Under the guise of pre- and post-grammar-based exams, practitioners and teachers of language study abroad programs were not addressing these issues. I believe this was also a genuine concern.

Having participated in short-term language study abroad programs -- having lead some of them and having being the product of study abroad education myself -- I have observed and interacted with language learners abroad. I have also seen program evaluation based on final language written and oral exams. Most importantly, I have seen that long-term language study abroad programs and short-term language study abroad programs cannot be equal in nature. Time makes a difference when it comes to learning and acquiring a language abroad. Nevertheless, we diminish the potential of short-term sojourns by not emphasizing what the participants have to say about their experiences from a personal standpoint. These experiences have triggered my inquisitiveness. There is a dilemma between the language expectations of the prescribed curriculum that sets short-term language study abroad programs and their outcomes. Some schools and some researchers suggest the measurement of linguistic gain in short-term sojourns can be done through a traditional final grade on a language assessment alone. Thus, in this study, I wanted to problematize this dilemma and explore what insight can be obtained from the participants self-efficacy perspectives to acquire the target language abroad.

**Underlying Assumptions**

This research was based on several assumptions about acquiring a second language abroad, the immersion setting, and students’ beliefs in their own abilities to use the target language abroad. First, acquiring a language where the language is spoken allows students to get first-hand contact with authentic experiences where interaction in the target language is expected to take place (Félix-Brasdefer, 2013). That is, students are taken away from the comfort of their
home city and the comfort of their home-city college classroom and are placed in a complete
different place where they have to attend a new college setting and will be expected to continue
using the target language after regular language classes. It is implied that these students, do not
utilize the target language beyond the classroom in the US as much. Moreover, as an important
component of language learning in the US, target culture knowledge is limited to indirect forms
of teaching materials such as readings, videos and class discussions in the students’ traditional
classroom setting (Gilmore, 2015).

Another assumption in this research is that the full-immersion setting itself provides
experiences that cannot be replicated in the regular language classroom in the US. In this type of
setting students will have to use public transportation, buy food, interact with their local families,
bargain in the target language, purchase groceries, go to the post office, pharmacy and participate
in numerous cultural study tours. These unique experiences can only be encountered in a full
immersion setting; what’s more, these experiences are expected to influence and enrich the lives
of these students. Goldoni (2013) encourages language study abroad students to integrate within
the L2 culture to obtain the most of the full immersion setting. Thus, in a language study abroad
program, the study abroad site becomes the full-immersion setting, the new context where
learning will take place.

Finally, students’ perceptions on their abilities at the abroad site are expected to elucidate
authentic feelings towards the acquisition of the target language in connection to its culture. As
students are no longer in the comfort of their L1 culture and are challenged to put into practice
their language skills their self-efficacy perceptions are also expected to be influenced by the new
and unknown context abroad (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2012). Furthermore, the students’ beliefs in
their own abilities to acquire the language in a setting where their L1 occupies the subordinate
place, provides a clear picture and reveals the true beliefs and the true meaning of learning Spanish.

**Significance of Study**

This study was designed to shorten the gap across the body of empirical studies documenting self-efficacy beliefs, second language learning, and the implementation of short-term language study abroad programs. From a self-efficacy stand, I was able to focus attention on five Spanish learning students who participated in a short-term language study abroad program. Evidence across the review of empirical studies demonstrated that there is a dearth of research that examines self-efficacy and language learning abroad. Additionally, myriad empirical quantitative studies measuring language gain abroad have shed important light on the language-learning phenomenon abroad; yet, these studies have also demonstrated the need for qualitative inquiry in this area. The present study investigated second-language learners and their self-efficacy beliefs to acquire Spanish as a second language in a context where Spanish was the main language. This is the first study in the literature that implemented a phenomenological case study designed to examine the process of second-language learning from the participants’ self-efficacy beliefs within the context of a short-term language study abroad program. Self-efficacy has been identified as the determinant factor for student academic achievement (Bandura, 1989). Thus, in this study, a self-efficacy stand provided inside perspectives of the participants with a holistic view of the short-term sojourn experience, much needed in the literature. Rather than evaluating language gain abroad through a pre- and post-language test; students’ self-efficacy beliefs to acquire the language abroad provided a deeper insight on the language-learning experience in the specific context of a short-sojourn.
The findings of this research may be useful for a variety of groups, including researchers, language programs, program administrators, language-curriculum specialists, all levels of language instructors, policy makers, and international education organizations. Language program administrators may utilize this information in their administrative practices to further promote language programs. Language-curriculum specialists may implement this information as they create new curricula that address study-abroad programs. Language teachers may use this information to improve their teaching practices as they promote international education more effectively. Policymakers may find this information useful as they advocate for international and global education in the US. I am hopeful that not only language educators but also teachers and instructors of other content areas will find this information useful in guiding their study-abroad programs.

It is my desire that the scope and design of this study may contribute to fill identified gaps in the literature and serve as reference for other studies in the areas of second-language acquisition, study abroad, self-efficacy, language teaching and learning.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine how students’ self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions played a role in their second-language learning experience while participating in a short-term language study abroad program. This study implemented a self-efficacy view in order to obtain a holistic scope of the short sojourn abroad.

Shaped by assumptions that emphasize the second language experience abroad to be more enriching and more in-depth than the foreign-language experience in a classroom setting within a two-year college in the US, this study attempts to contribute to the literature in different areas. These areas of contribution are identified as three main domains including self-efficacy
beliefs, language learning abroad and short-term language study abroad programs. To provide a strong background for these important domains, three theoretical perspectives guided the overall scope of this study: Self-efficacy Theory, Language Socialization Theory, and Experiential Theory.

In summary, this phenomenological case study attempts to explain the second-language learning experience in a context where the target language is spoken in and outside the classroom. Moreover, this study focuses on the participants’ self-efficacy beliefs to acquire a second language through participation in a short-term study abroad program.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This dissertation was designed to focus attention and acquire -- and expose -- additional knowledge with regard to students’ self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions to acquire a second language during one short-term language, study-abroad program. With this goal in mind, in this chapter, I discuss emergent themes found across the body of empirical studies on the central topic.

I first begin this review by introducing the search-search strategy section that explains the methodology followed for the selection of articles included. Second, I detail what has been researched in relation to self-efficacy and the learning context. This first theme provides a general context to situate self-efficacy within the learning process in different academic fields. Thirdly, I explain what has been found on the topic of self-efficacy and language learning. Situating self-efficacy within the language-learning context facilitates a clear road for the scope of this study. Next, I discuss current studies that address self-efficacy and language learning in study-abroad contexts. Despite its relevant importance, this section exposes the uniqueness of this topic in addition to the scarcity of empirical studies that address same. Fifth, I discuss the theme of motivation and language learning abroad. As self-efficacy shapes motivation, this salient topic is essential in addressing motives of students going abroad to study languages. Then, I discuss language and linguistic gain abroad; this theme provides analysis and discussion on the issue of linguistic gain during short-term language study-abroad programs. In the final theme, I discuss intercultural gain abroad. This final theme is essential as the participants’
intercultural skills are challenged while immersing at the abroad site; this challenge is inevitable as supported by the literature.

This last topic includes two other salient sub-themes essential for the scope of this study: cultural identity change and global cultural change in study abroad. Hence, I review the literature addressing the strengths, shortcomings and limitations of the current body of work. Before the conclusive remarks, I discuss how this study addresses the gaps in the literature; finally, I end this chapter with conclusive remarks highlighting each of the six themes across the body of this review. In this final section, I provide a succinct scope of the different findings and research designs that current and past research have implemented to study the identified salient themes.

**Search Strategy**

This review of the literature was designed to survey research over the last decade that examined students’ self-efficacy perceptions on short-term language study abroad programs. However, due to the scarcity of studies emphasizing self-efficacy and short-term language study abroad programs, the survey scope was extended to self-efficacy in general and to all study abroad programs. This survey of research was carried out by utilizing refine-search features that included a corpus of empirical articles from peer-review English journals from 2000 to 2016.

I utilized Summon as the main electronic search engine. The content in Summon comes from nearly 7000 publishers and 94,000-plus journals and periodical titles. Thus, the results offered by Summon provide information coming from ERIC, JSTOR, and many other databases related to education and humanities. My content search included 13 different compound terms: “Short-term language study abroad programs and students’ self-efficacy,” “students’ self-perception on their self-efficacy to acquire a second language,” “self-efficacy and language abroad,” “study abroad beliefs,” “self-advocacy and study abroad,” “self-agency and study

The inclusion criteria established for this review consisted of selecting studies that would include two population samples: American students abroad and worldwide college students learning languages abroad. Later, the scope of the selection criteria was open to include other students at any level of education studying abroad. Additionally and since the focus was on examining empirical studies in the field, these criteria did not include theoretical or opinion articles in the review. Another important consideration is the exclusion of studies that were not study-abroad based. For example, studies that focused solely on service-learning abroad were excluded. I applied these criteria to the abstract of each article I selected and referred to the complete article to determine its inclusion or exclusion from this review. In all, 59 studies meet my inclusion criteria.

Analysis Procedures

The analysis of the 59 articles included in this review was systematically and critically oriented. This analysis was guided by the following research questions,

What research problem or research questions were examined in each study?

What theoretical framework or frameworks were used to ground the investigation?

What type of empirical investigation was utilized? What was the methodology?
What were the findings and how they related to the researchers’ research questions?

In what capacity does this article benefit language study abroad through self-efficacy perceptions?

Keeping the scope of these questions based in analyzing empirical studies provided a clear path for the selection and determination of themes within the body of work.

The synthesis of research findings analyzed critically provides insight into the current conditions of the field of short-term and long-term language study abroad programs. This analysis may prove valuable for a variety of groups, including researchers, language programs, program administrators, and language-curriculum specialists, language teachers at all levels, policymakers, and international education organizations. Language program administrators may implement this information in their administrative practices to further promote language programs. Language-curriculum specialists may implement this information as they create new curricula that address study abroad programs. Language teachers may use this information to improve their teaching practices as they promote international education more effectively. Policymakers may find this information suitable as they advocate for international and global education in the U.S. I am hopeful that not only language educators but also educators of other subjects may find this information useful in guiding their study abroad programs.

Self-Efficacy in the Learning Context

In the last two decades, self-efficacy and its influence on learning continues to gain interest among researchers. This salient theme within the body of this review addresses self-efficacy within the general context of learning. Self-efficacy is studied within the broad scope of learning, which includes different fields. Thus, this section of the body of review unfolds the multifaceted dimensions of learning contexts and self-efficacy and provides a scope of how self-
efficacy is an essential factor that influences learning as a process (Dörnyei, 2003). The contextualization of self-efficacy within the broad scope of learning as a process is paramount for this dissertation. This provides insight on how different studies have focused attention on the importance of self-efficacy and its implications within different academic contexts.

From a cognitive-affective theory standpoint, Hong et al. (2016) studied how 117 Chinese students, enrolled in an internet-based guitar course, were able to use YouTube lessons to self-direct their learning. During the lessons the students were able to rewind or fast-forward the video lessons. The researchers departed from the assumption that self-efficacy of learning a musical instrument through internet-based videos correlated positively with learning satisfaction. The data was collected through convenience surveys which included a five-point, Likert scale questionnaire. The results indicated that an increased Internet cognitive failure decreased the participants’ self-efficacy of learning a musical instrument via social media. That is, difficulty in following the online learning materials affected self-efficacy levels. Additionally, the researchers found that increasing a learner’s self-efficacy as it applies to learning a musical instrument from social media also increased the learner’s learning satisfaction with social media.

In another similar quantitative study based on online learning, Shen, Cho, Tsai, and Marra (2013) studied the dimensions of online learning self-efficacy and the variables related to self-efficacy in online settings. The participants included online students from two US universities located in the Midwest. The researchers implemented the Likert scale survey to measure students’ online learning self-efficacy and learning satisfaction. Through descriptive statistics, the researchers found the following domains: self-efficacy to interact socially with classmates, self-efficacy to interact with instructors in an online course, and self-efficacy to interact with classmates for academic purposes. These three categories were significant
predictors of learning satisfaction. The researchers also concluded that self-efficacy reflected aspects of the learning context unveiled the complexity of online learning.

Määttä and Järvelä (2013) studied students’ perception on self-efficacy in relation to their learning experiences in the classroom. In this study, the investigators used the definition of self-efficacy as presented by Pajares (2003). This definition holds that self-efficacy is the confidence students have in their capability to perform activities in specific learning situations. Furthermore, the researchers focused on the observations of on-task involvement, based on Bandura’s theory (2006) that suggests the completion of specific tasks to study self-efficacy. As part of the analysis, the researchers studied other variables that included engagement and achievement. The researchers video-recorded 32 hours of observation of 24 children involved in different learning activities in literature classes. In addition to the video observations, the researchers gathered data from interviews with the student participants that populated three different grades: preschool, first grade and second grade. Määttä and Järvelä found three main levels of confidence and success experienced by the students: high, moderate and low (the “high” level of experience was the least common). The results showed that 91% of the time the young participants were able to justify their level of confidence. Thus, the researchers posited that even young participants were able to monitor, reflect and evaluate their learning actions in a supportive learning environment.

Direito, Pereira, & de Oliveira Duarte (2012) studied how students’ self-efficacy and learning styles related to undergraduate students’ perceptions of soft skills. This study was based upon the assumption that engineering students usually lack people skills or soft skills after graduation. The researchers implemented quantitative measures that included one Likert-scale survey in addition to the General Perceived Self-Efficacy scale (GSE) by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). Through these instruments the participants had the opportunity to self-evaluate
their soft skills and find personal gaps that needed development. Additionally, the researchers’ measured preference of learning styles and perceptions of self-efficacy to attain the learning goal. Through statistical analysis, the researchers posited that participants with higher self-efficacy were inclined to rate their soft skills higher. Furthermore, the researchers suggested that self-efficacy or perceived ability in soft skills and preference of learning styles could impact curriculum design. Likewise, through correlation analysis, the results showed that soft-skills development promoted self-efficacy among the participants.

In another quantitative study, Sen and Yilmaz (2012) investigated how students’ self-efficacy and Melting and Dissolving Concept Test (MDCT) scores for learning and performance changed according to their learning styles distributions. The researchers implemented MDCT to gain insight on students’ misconceptions on the subject of melting and dissolving. Additionally, to measure self-efficacy the researchers utilized the Self-efficacy for Learning and Performance (SELP) included within a section in the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). The statistical analysis demonstrated that the effect of learning style was not significant on SELP. Also, certain learning styles were correlated to those participants having more misconceptions than others on the topic of melting and dissolving. The researchers suggested that more learning environments should promote different learning styles in order to positively influence students’ beliefs of their own capacities (self-efficacy) for learning and performance.

Thomson, Oberle, and Lilley (2011) studied how college students’ participation in sorority and fraternity groups was correlated to having greater self-efficacy and therefore, better academic performance as opposed to those who did not participate in sororities and fraternities. A total of 186 participants answered 10-multiple-choice questions that measured retention after reading one particular article. Additionally, the participants responded the New General Self-
Efficacy Scale (NGSES) presented by Chen, Gulley, and Eden (2001). The researchers found that self-efficacy scores were positively and significantly correlated with test-effort rating and learning effort. Thus, sorority and fraternity students demonstrated higher self-efficacy scores than other students. Nonetheless, the researchers posited that despite the higher self-efficacy scores of sorority and fraternity students that related to better academic effort, these scores did not relate to improved academic performance. That is, those in fraternities and sororities and students that were not, did not display significant GPA differences.

Previous research showed that academic self-efficacy influenced positively on academic achievement. Thus, Heng and Mansor (2010) studied how information-literacy skills training influenced academic self-efficacy and learning performance among Malaysian college students in a physics course. The researchers implemented a four-group, quasi-experimental design, and a total of 78 participants were assigned to two experimental groups and two control groups. The participants completed a pre-test questionnaire that measured the participants’ academic self-efficacy. The treatment or independent variable consisted in a two-hour information literacy skills training in which students participated in Problem Based-Learning (PBL) exercises that emphasized critical thinking. Self-efficacy and self-performance (dependent variables) scores were measured through Likert-scale questionnaires. Through the analysis of the pre- and post-tests and by the implementation of between-group factorial ANOVA, the researchers found that the treatment had significantly contributed to the improvement of academic self-efficacy of university students. The researchers concluded that information-literacy skills training might be essential to improve academic self-efficacy and learning performance among science students in a PBL environment.
In another quantitative study, Jackson (2002) measured Bandura’s (1977) fourth way to improve self-efficacy: verbal persuasion (encouragement). Bandura posited that individuals’ self-efficacy could improve by receiving positive feedback and encouragement while completing a task. In Jackson’s study, the participants included 123 college students enrolled in an introductory psychology course in two different sections. The participants filled out a self-efficacy survey based on the work of Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) before the first exam. Based on the first exam results, the researcher grouped the participants in three groups: below average, average, and above average. Next, the researcher implemented an efficacy-enhancing email note and a neutral email note. Each was sent to half the participants randomly before the second exam. At the end of class before the second exam, the participants again completed the self-efficacy survey. Through statistical analysis the researchers found a significant correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and exam scores. Moreover, the researchers concluded that self-efficacy beliefs were significantly affected by the use of verbal persuasion in the form of efficacy-enhancing email notes.

Within this section, the contextualization of self-efficacy within the broad scope of learning as a process has provided insight on the interest to measure self-efficacy in relation to academic achievement and success in addition to learning satisfaction. Most of the studies found within this salient theme across the body of review exemplify the extended implementation of quantitative studies to study and measure self-efficacy among participants within different academic settings. This section has highlighted the need for more qualitative studies, which would add to the literature the participants’ beliefs, and inside perspectives regarding self-efficacy in the learning context.

Self-Efficacy and Language Learning
A number of studies have concentrated attention to the relationship between academic self-efficacy and the process of language learning. Self-efficacy generally defined as “a person’s beliefs in his or her capabilities to accomplish tasks successfully” has been identified as a crucial variable influencing the language-learning process. This section provides recent and past studies that shed light on how language learning is shaped by the participants’ self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions to utilize the target language within an academic setting. The interest to study self-efficacy and language learning has grown among researchers in recent years. The studies presented within this section reveal the different research designs and methodologies used to study self-efficacy and language learning.

Badura (1993) posited that self-efficacy beliefs influence and determine self-motivation and personal goals. On this premise and implementing quantitative measures, Ersanlı (2015) studied the relationship between self-efficacy and language-learning motivation among a total of 257 eighth-grade Turkish students of English. To obtain self-efficacy scores in relation to the study of English, the researcher implemented the Children’s Perceive Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (Morgan & Jinks, 1999). The Language Learning Orientation Scale (Noels et al., 2000) provided scores on students’ motivation regarding the study of English. The statistical analysis showed a negative correlation between the self-efficacy beliefs and English language-learning motivation among participants. That is, students with high self-efficacy scores might not consider important the learning of English; thus, their motivation scores differed from their self-efficacy scores. Bandura (1986) identified this phenomenon as the outcome expectations affecting motivation; that is, students who do not consider important the learning of English do not make the effort to learn it, despite their high self-efficacy scores. Conversely, at the college level, students who compete to be able to participate in a language study abroad might not
consider learning a second language abroad of minor importance. However, in the case of the eighth-grade participants in this study, English was a compulsory subject and students may have felt forced to enroll in language classes rather than choosing voluntarily.

In another quantitative study, Kim, Wang, Ahn, and Bong (2015) examined how self-efficacy beliefs of Korean college students of English were associated to self-regulated learning strategies to improve their English. Based on Bandura’s (1986) Self-Efficacy Theory, Kim et al. (2015) implemented the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE) scale. This 32-item questionnaire was divided in four groups to measure self-efficacy for reading, writing, listening and speaking. Additionally, the investigators implemented a different survey to identify self-regulated learning strategies utilized by the participants. The scores of the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) were utilized to obtain the proficiency level of all the participants. The results allowed the investigators to create self-efficacy profiles in three categories: low, medium, and high. The researchers concluded that the medium and high self-efficacy groups were associated with students with more years of English study; the majority in these student groups was female. Additionally, the investigators contend that students with higher self-efficacy scores demonstrate a wide range use of self-regulated learning strategies.

Nosratinia, Saveiy, and Zaker (2014) examined the relationship between self-efficacy, metacognitive awareness, and language-learner strategies usage among 143 Iranian university (sophomore and junior) English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. The researchers implemented the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) in addition to two different surveys to measure metacognitive awareness and learning strategies. The statistical results showed a significant relationship between participants’ self-efficacy scores and metacognitive awareness. That is, participants, with high self-efficacy demonstrated a more
sophisticated insight on how to learn English. The researchers contend that participants with high self-efficacy scores demonstrate the utilization of better learning strategies to approach the study of EFL. Finally, the researchers posited that metacognitive awareness scores might be utilized to predict better use of language-learning strategies.

In a similar study and through statistical analysis, Bonyadi, Nikou, and Shahbaz (2012) studied the correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and the use of language-learning strategies among 130 EFL students at an Iranian university. The researchers administered the Persian Adaptation of General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer, & Jerusalem, 1995) among the participants who were first year EFL students. Additionally, the researchers administered another survey to collect data regarding the use of language-learning strategies. The findings revealed that the most used learning strategies were metacognitive strategies and social and cognitive strategies. However, the researchers contended that there was no relationship between self-efficacy and language-learning strategy use. The researchers claimed that due to the particular context of the participants, their study could not be replicated to correlate self-efficacy and the use of learning strategies as suggested by preceding studies. The researchers encouraged EFL instructors to assist their students with learning strategies to study EFL.

Wang, Schwab, Fenn, and Change (2013) carried out a comparative quantitative study between 200 Chinese and 160 German students of English. The participants completed surveys to report on their self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulated learning strategies for English language learners. Additionally, to measure the English proficiency of the participants, one English proficiency test was administered. The results revealed that Chinese students’ self-efficacy scores were lower than the German students. These results were according to previous intercultural studies that have demonstrated that Chinese students tend to have lower self-
efficacy scores than European and American students. Interestingly, the proficiency results of the English test showed that the scores of both groups were similar. Additional statistical analysis demonstrated that the use of self-regulated learning strategies were positive among Chinese students but negative among German students. This explained that Chinese students demonstrated a better use of self-regulated strategies to learn EFL. The researchers concluded that the perceived self-efficacy among Chinese students could not be the best predictor of academic performance in relation to the academic performance of European students of EFL.

There is an interest to study self-efficacy in relation to language learning and this interest has begun to gain more attention among researchers. Moreover, the body of this review has shed light on two main areas of emphasis within this section: the area of inquiry in which self-efficacy is investigated in relation to language academic performance among language learners; and, the area of inquiry in which self-efficacy is investigated in relation to language-learning strategies. Although a number of studies have elucidated important concerns within this area, more studies in the area of self-efficacy and language learning are needed. Furthermore, this section has provided evidence that qualitative inquiry is urgently needed to contribute to the body of literature in the area of self-efficacy and language learning.

**Self-Efficacy and Language Learning in Study Abroad**

Relevant to this dissertation, the study of self-efficacy in relation to language learning in a study abroad context is fairly new. Evidently, the number of studies in this area is also limited; thus, questions on how self-efficacy influences language learning at the abroad site remains unanswered.

Cubillos and Ilvento (2012) studied the impact of study abroad on students’ self-efficacy perceptions. The researchers studied 39 undergraduate students and revealed that self-
efficacy plays an important role in the acquisition of language and cultural skills while participating abroad. The study included four different study-abroad programs; two short-term language study-abroad programs of five weeks; and, two semester-long language study-abroad programs. The researchers measured the impact of study abroad on self-efficacy perceptions using pre- and post-trip, 20-item multiple-choice surveys. The researchers divided the questionnaire into four sections to match all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Through statistical analysis, the researchers found a consistent positive and significant gain in self-efficacy perceptions in all four language skills, in spite of the brevity of the program. The authors posited that the amount of interaction with the community influenced a positive self-efficacy among the participants. In addition, this study provides grounds for additional studies to address how students’ perceptions in their own abilities influence their acquisition of the target language. Although the findings of this study provide consistent numbers through regression analyses, the following aspects are still unknown: insight from the participants in their own words, self-evaluation of the participants’ completion of tasks, and a self-description of the steps each participant took in order to complete the language tasks. A volume of qualitative studies that would elucidate this type of insight is needed to provide a better understanding of the second-language acquisition process from the participants’ view.

Milstein (2005) examined how a sojourn experience influenced communication self-efficacy beliefs among 212 participants who were formerly part of a teaching-exchange program in Japan. The researcher implemented a 42-item instrument known as the Sojourner Self-Efficacy in Communication Scale (SSEC). This questionnaire included questions regarding prior to the sojourn and after the sojourn experiences. Milstein posited that the participants reported significant low self-efficacy scores before the sojourn. Additionally, the results also
demonstrated an increase of the perceived communication self-efficacy after the sojourn. Milstein contended that the findings suggested that participants who reported the sojourn being very challenging also reported a perceived increase in communication self-efficacy.

The study of self-efficacy in relation to language learning in a study abroad context is still new ground. There is an evident gap in the literature that calls for more empirical studies that may address this topic. However, two relevant studies elucidated how the study-abroad experience was preponderant in shaping the language experience overall in addition to demonstrating an effect on the participants self-efficacy. Consequently, to fill this gap in the literature it is crucial to study the benefits of short-term language study-abroad programs in connection to students’ perceptions on their self-efficacy to acquire the target language. Granted, Cubillos and Ilvento (2013) suggested that there is impact of study abroad on self-efficacy perceptions using quantitative surveys, additional studies are needed to gain better understanding of students’ perceptions on short-term language study-abroad programs.

**Motivation and Language Learning in Study Abroad**

Throughout the body of this review, there is a growing interest in determining why students decide to participate in study-abroad programs. How do we know the real motives of students who choose to participate in a short-term study-abroad program? Motivation is a complex construct to measure, as it pertains to each individual’s personal goals and interests in a particular context. In addition, other variables like self-agency, self-determination, and self-efficacy have been identified as factors that shape and precede motivation in an individual’s personal choices. Dörnyei (2003) posited that the determining factor to advance learning is directly associated with an individual’s self-efficacy beliefs. More importantly, there is evidence in the literature through a number of empirical studies that have demonstrated that self-efficacy
beliefs have a clear effect on motivational factors among learners (Bandura, 1993; Pajares & Valiante, 1997).

From a self-determination theory perspective and utilizing quantitative measures, Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao, and Lynch (2007) studied self-determined motivation and the content of goals as factors affecting Chinese students’ decision to participate in study abroad in Belgium and Canada. The authors found that preservation goals among the participants tend to have a negative influence on their adaptation process in the new country. Next, the authors discovered that self-development goals to decide to go abroad were intrinsically motivated. That is, the participants’ own desire to study at the college level and to progress in the learning of the language needed for college work influenced positively the motivation of the participants. In a similar study, Chirkov, Safdar, Guzman, and Playford (2008) examined how self-determined motivation and the personal goals of the participants affected the adaptation process of students abroad. The results of this study demonstrated that autonomous motivation for studying abroad could be used as a predictor of how well students will adjust within the abroad site. In addition, Chirkov et al. (2008) concluded that, when students decided to go abroad, this decision was mainly based on self-determined motivation. Moreover, self-determined motivation has been discovered to demonstrate more success among students at the abroad site than among their counterparts who are forced to go abroad.

In another quantitative study, Badstübner and Ecke (2009) analyzed the motivations that persuaded American students to participate in a one-month summer language study-abroad program in Germany. Using pre- and post-tests that gathered data from 23 participants at different levels of German knowledge, the researchers found that the most important goal among the participants was to study German, and the second goal was to travel. The next two goals in
order of importance were to interact with German people and to achieve cultural enrichment.
Although the sample population was small, Badstübner and Ecke found that learning the target language was the main driving force for these language students in a short-term language study abroad.

Allen (2010) studied language-learning motivation for six French intermediate students during their participation in a short-term study-abroad program. Based on the important role that motivational factors play in the process of learning foreign languages, Allen provided a framework for the study of motivation for learning languages from an activity-theory view. Through qualitative analysis, the researcher found that participants studying French in a short-term language study-abroad program demonstrated two main motives for learning the target language: Linguistic and pragmatic motives in addition to career motives. These motives were the salient themes motivating students to take French at the college level. In addition, the researcher’s findings showed the important role students’ agency played in the enhancement of their motivation abroad; however, the study did not reveal participants’ perceptions on their self-efficacy to acquire the target language abroad. Although this study shed light on important motives among students to take part in short-term language study-abroad program, the results demonstrated some contradiction among the variables. Motives and personal goals facilitated language learning for some of the participants, but not for all. Thus, additional research that uncovers participants’ perceptions on their self-efficacy and agency to acquire the target language abroad could provide clarity on what motives and personal goals influence contradictory outcomes.

In another study, Hernandez (2010) implemented quantitative measures such as pre- and post-tests using the OPI to study two types of motivation. The researchers were interested in how
integrative and instrumental motivation influenced students’ performance in speaking Spanish during one semester program in Spain. The researchers found that integrative motivation – an interest in learning the target language with the purpose of interacting with the culture – had a positive influence among the participants to use the language with local people. In addition, the researchers found that the participants were motivated to speak the language with future career plans in mind – instrumental motivation.

Utilizing an experiential intercultural learning model and a mixed methods approach, Yang, Webster, and Prosser (2011) studied Chinese students’ goals for their participation in a one-year overseas internship. The authors utilized pre- and post-departure surveys and 11 focus groups. The qualitative data, aided by content analysis, reported eight themes that revealed important goals of the participants to go abroad. The themes included: inter-cultural learning; cross-cultural communication; broadened perspectives of globalization; language improvement; professional skills; problem solving; self-awareness; and, leisure. Factor analysis reported three aspects in the goals of the participants: personal competence; intercultural development; and, career development. The researchers posited that there was a strong correlation between students’ personal goals, experiences at the abroad side, and personal achievements. Thus, study abroad leaders should gather this information from students before the trip in order to provide experiences that help fulfill these three important goals.

In a recent study, Bokareva (2014) reported empirical data collected from Russian students’ intentions for going abroad. Boakaveva argues that intrinsic or autonomous motivation is the higher influencer in the intentions of students to study abroad. Furthermore, the researcher reported the following driving forces that shape students intentions to participate abroad: to gain cultural experience and to earn a diploma from a foreign institution.
The body of studies in this section provides insight on several variables identified as students’ motives, motivation, or personal goals to participate in study-abroad programs. Studies that included a language component at the abroad site identified “developing language skills” as one of the reasons for students to enroll in these programs. Nevertheless, studies that did not have a language component as part of the learning outcomes reported “intercultural development” and “professional growth” as the main reasons for students to participate in foreign sojourns. Motivation as a construct is not easy to measure; in addition, the studies reported in this section have provided insight regarding the need for consistency across the methodology in addition the need for a theoretical framework that would support the study of motivation and study abroad.

**Linguistic Gain in Study Abroad**

The salient themes within the body of the literature offer insight on the current focus given to study abroad and its benefits for teaching and learning. Although insufficient, the volume of research on study abroad, particularly with reference to language and culture, has by far surpassed the attention given other topics such as self-efficacy, self-motivation and personal goals abroad. Despite the data that suggest long versus short sojourns have demonstrated more beneficial gains in a target language, there is still a large discrepancy in the literature as to whether or not short-term study abroad promotes language gain (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2013).

As further evidence, a review of research findings across the body of empirical studies suggests that more studies are needed to demonstrate whether there is *linguistic* gain as a result of short-term foreign study abroad participation. Some researchers’ findings claim language proficiency gain among their participants abroad; however, there is no consensus in the methodology used in these studies (Cadd, 2012; Gómez & Vicente, 2011; Kinginger, 2011;
Martinsen, 2010; Martinsen, Baker, Dewey, Bown, & Johnson, 2010). Other studies suggest that linguistic gain among the participants is minimum and therefore insignificant to support a claim for advancement in the target language (Rees & Clapper, 2007; Segalowitz et al., 2004). Several variables take place in the process of acquiring a second or foreign language, however. Most studied variables including time of stay, amount of contact with local people, and conversational interactions with native speakers have been identified as having no influence in linguistic gain during short-term sojourns (Cubillos, Chieffo, & Fan, 2008).

This discrepancy in the body of literature begs for the need of more empirical studies to investigate how short-term language study-abroad programs facilitate the acquisition of the target language. More importantly, this discrepancy accounts for methodological inconsistencies in the literature. That is, a great number of these studies have dedicated attention to extrinsic variables surrounding language acquisition in relation to the participants. Meaning researchers have dedicated efforts to measure linguistic gain, oral communication skills, vocabulary, grammar, and the amount of time receiving formal language training abroad in addition to contact with native speakers through pre- and post-trip tests.

These studies, though, pay little or no attention to the investigation of intrinsic variables that pertain to the language acquisition process: self-agency, self-efficacy, personality traits, learning style, linguistic ability, etc. Furthermore, a great deal of research has been dedicated to measuring the variables relevant to the process of second-language acquisition abroad using primarily quantitative procedures. These studies have provided critical insight on the effects of study abroad on the participants; they have also provided the groundwork for solid theoretical framework to support the findings and a need for more qualitative studies that would provide insight on the participants’ perceptions.
Different views have concentrated inquiry on whether participation in study-abroad programs benefits participant’s language skills. Although a number of studies have focused on this unanswered question, the results and critical analysis of literature in this area reveals the urgent need for more empirical studies.

Magnan and Back (2007) studied language proficiency related to social interaction of undergraduate students for the duration of one semester in France. The researchers considered different variables for their study including where the students stayed, people that students interacted with the most, and the contact students had with French language beyond one-on-one interactions. Twenty-four participants completed pre- and post-program questionnaires and Can-Do self-assessment scale based on the work of Clark (1981). The researchers obtained additional data from oral-proficiency interviews and language-contact profiles. Thus, the researchers argued that students gained self-confidence in speaking French after spending a semester in a French city. Moreover, the researchers affirmed that there was no correlation between the type of interactions with native speakers and the confidence gained in speaking the target language. The language gain and confidence speaking French was reported through statistical pre- and post-trip measures of the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). The researchers correlated the results based on the length of the program. These results showed that only 12 out of 20 participants improved their language oral skills through comparison of pre and post scores of the OPI. Although this study utilized open-ended questions to understand confidence in speaking the target language, the major part of the analysis was based on statistical analysis of language ability and student background.

In another investigation of short-term (two months or less) study-abroad programs and oral skills development, Martinsen (2010) used quantitative measures to analyze how
participants developed their Spanish, oral-language skills. The results of this study revealed that 78% of the participants displayed a small improvement in their language skills and 22% displayed no improvement or regressed on their oral language skills. Martinsen, in support of his findings, postulated that previous studies displayed similar evidence in reference to improving oral language skills abroad. In a much older study, Brecht, Davidson, and Ginsberg (1993) found that 80% of the participants learning Russian displayed a gain in their oral proficiency, according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guidelines. The other 20% remained at the same level after pre- and post-trip scores were compared using the ACTFL OPI. After studying the results provided by Magnan and Back, and Brench et al, Martisen assumed that another reliable measure was needed to be implemented to more accurately measure the impact of study abroad on language gain. Martisen utilized the Test of Oral Language Skills (TOLS). Which, without major differences, confirmed the quantitative measures and results previously explained. Evidently, second-language acquisition, as a process, is a construct that is very difficult to measure. In these previous studies the researchers failed to mention if the “attrition of language” or “no language improvement” were influenced by internal or intrinsic variables pertaining the participants (e.g. self-efficacy, self-agency, test anxiety levels, motivation, mood, personality traits, etc.). Moreover, these results revealed the need for qualitative analysis with foci on learners’ perceptions over their participation in short-term language study-abroad programs.

In another study, Amuzie and Winke (2009) investigated changes in language learning beliefs as a result of ESL students’ immersion in the US between two and six years. Through factor analysis, the researchers found three underlying dimensions of the participants’ belief systems: the teacher’s role, learners’ autonomy, and learners’ self-efficacy. Amuzie and Winke
postulated that the participants demonstrated a change in their language-learning beliefs in close relation to the teacher’s role and learners’ autonomy. Thus, the researchers argued that study abroad has an effect on learners’ beliefs in learning the target language. Contrary to the claims of Magnan and Back, the researchers in this study attributed the length of study abroad to the changes of participants’ beliefs on learning ESL.

In a study of 46 participants, using statistical analysis, Baró and Serrano (2011) studied language gain in relation to length of stay (between two months versus three months among Spanish-speaking students learning English in the United Kingdom). The authors found no statistically significant differences that suggested that three months was better than two months abroad. The researchers concluded that the results did not show an increase in written and oral production between the two groups of students. Additionally, the researchers posited that longer length of stay is not necessarily advantageous for language learners. The researchers also attributed the results to the age of the participants and the initial level of language proficiency. The participants for this study included adults with near to advanced level of English. In an earlier experiment, Díaz-Campos (2004) found that students of Spanish demonstrated language pronunciation gain thorough using the language while studying abroad. Contrary to Baró and Serrano’s findings, the participants studied by Díaz-Campos were beginner language learners who profited from the sojourn experience by improving their Spanish pronunciation.

Similarly, Menard-Warwick and Palmer (2012) examined the linguistic gains, particularly in the area of morphology, through a case study of three university students participating in one-month immersion learning Spanish in Mexico. The researchers associated language socialization to the improvement of morphological functions of language. However, the mixed-method analysis of the narratives of the bilingual journals of the students’ self-evaluations
revealed that one month of intense Spanish immersion was not enough to gain appropriate verb-tense usage. Additionally, due to their language limitations, the participants were not able to take part in intercultural mediations understanding colloquial meanings. The researchers posited the inconsistency of the findings was in direct relation to the short time abroad and recommended future studies with longer time abroad and a focus on participants’ meaningful linguistic practices. Although this study elucidates the differences individuals present in their language acquisition process abroad, the study focused only on the narratives of the participants to measure the improvement of particular verb tenses. Other important aspects including students’ perceptions on their learning, self-confidence or self-efficacy could have provided additional insight on the progression of understanding the improvement, or lack thereof, of Spanish.

In a mixed-methods study, Cadd (2012) examined whether requiring students to interact with native speakers in a semester-long study-abroad program improved students’ self-assessment in using the target language. The researcher assigned a total of 12 tasks for students to perform in relation to the interaction with native speakers; students self-evaluated their task performance and posted the results on blogs. The quantitative analysis consisted in Likert-scale surveys in relation to students’ language ability during the study-abroad program. Cadd concluded that the tasks encouraged students to interact with native speakers increasing the willingness of students to complete the tasks. According to Cadd’s interpretation, the interaction with native speakers facilitated students with regard to increasing their language fluency, particularly the improvement of their circumlocution abilities. One crucial aspect revealed in the conclusions of this study was the finding of important themes that shed light on participants’ insight while completing the tasks abroad. Students associated their interactions to anxiety, cultural understanding, fluency, and the examination of one’s culture. Evidently, the findings in
this study that presented a positive language improvement were related to the interactions between the participants and native speakers. However, the study did not investigate what kind of actions students took to complete the tasks. Identifying these actions of self-efficacy could provide insight on how each participant approached the completion of the task. Additionally, it is difficult to conclude whether or not students were really willing to participate in the interactions independently rather than making the tasks mandatory.

Félix-Brasdefer (2013) examined whether or not study-abroad programs as a learning context had an effect on language production in the forms of refusal, offer, and request. The participants described pictures that displayed different scenarios and recorded their descriptions that were analyzed as pre- and post-trip data. The researcher argued that after the eight-week program in Mexico, students in the study-abroad group demonstrated a change in frequency utilizing refusal functions of language in Spanish. Participants in the control group, which were students taking Spanish in the US also demonstrated a change in frequency; however, lower than the treated group. Additionally, the researcher found an increase of direct refusals away from native speaker norms among the experimental group utilizing pre to post test. The researcher argued that this phenomenon occurred due to the insufficient exposure of input, and the lack of intense interaction as reported by Magnan and Back in a previous study.

In a recent study by Pryde (2014) conversational patterns of Japanese students’ and their host families in New Zealand was studied. Utilizing digital recordings of the conversations between host families and the participants, Pryde concluded that hosts initiated the conversations and acted as teachers initially guiding the conversation. Moreover, through quantitative analysis, Pryde posited dominance from the host during conversation. Pryde postulated that the dominance displayed by the host families during the conversations limited students development over the
target language. Pryde’s insight on the conversation analysis between participants and host families provides evidence that more studies are needed to investigate. For instance, what causes passivity among participants allowing control of the conversation to fall to the host families, or why participant’s self-efficacy seems to be hindered to not initiate a conversation nor lead it?

The issue of language gain in study abroad still remains unanswered, although a few studies showed linguistic gain among the participants, others showed no gain or even an attrition of language gain. Although there are efforts in the body of literature to investigate the significance of study abroad and language gain through quantitative and mixed methods approaches, there is a need for a well-defined theoretical approach to study this construct. The underpinning frameworks in this area of investigation are not consistent within the body of this review. A number of studies have concentrated on language as the object of research diminishing the attention on the learners who play an important role in the process of improving language skills abroad. Additionally, the process of language acquisition as a mediated process implies the participation of individuals attempting to use the target language; thus, insight is needed from those subjects through qualitative analysis to further illuminate how these subjects approach the acquisition of language.

**Intercultural Gain in Study Abroad**

Study-abroad programs have provided opportunities to develop intercultural competence at different levels. Abroad immersion is one of the most vivid experiences an individual can participate in while interacting with members of the other culture and learning directly from the target culture. A number of studies have emerged in this review that shed light on the interest of researchers in this topic. Furthermore, these studies provide different perspectives and elucidate new directions of developing inter-cultural skills in study abroad contexts. Conversely, regarding
the issue of whether or not there is linguistic gain abroad, researchers within this theme have come to consensus on the positive effects of study-abroad programs on students’ intercultural competence, cultural awareness, and cultural identity change. There is a consistency of findings across the body of this review that demonstrates participants displayed greater intercultural competence and proficiency after participating in study-abroad programs (Allen, 2010; Covert, 2014; Clarke, Flaherty, Wright, & McMillen, 2009).

Taguchi (2008) examined the development of pragmatic competence among Japanese students of English abroad. Taguchi studied second language pragmatic gain in relation to cognitive processing ability and the amount of time of language contact at the abroad site. The participants completed computerized listening pragmatic tasks, a lexical task, and three language-contact surveys. Through descriptive statistics Taguchi found that the participants’ comprehension ability of the intentions of indirect speakers improved over four months. In addition, Taguchi argued that participants at early stages of English proficiency displayed more salient increase of performance speed. Taguchi’s claim for the improvement of pragmatic knowledge abroad demonstrated salient gains in accuracy of comprehension of indirect refusals. Although descriptive statistics provide insight of the gains in this study, the researcher does not provide insight on how participants feel about not understanding less conventional, indirect opinions with the purpose of providing rationale for the low performance in this area.

In another quantitative study, Clarke, Flaherty, Wright, and McMillen (2009) studied the gains of intercultural proficiencies (global mindedness, intercultural communication, openness to diversity, and intercultural sensitivity) among students from the US participating in a one semester business course in Belgium. The researchers investigated an experimental group of 70 participants at the abroad site and a control group of 87 students taking the same coursework at a
US university. The participants completed scale surveys that measured their intercultural proficiencies. Through statistical analysis, Clarke et al. (2009) argued that the students abroad obtained higher scores for global mindedness, intercultural communication, and openness to diversity. Although the control group demonstrated similar scores than the experimental group at the intercultural sensitivity level, adding open-ended interviews, however, could have provided additional insight regarding the difference between taking the same courses abroad and in the US.

Using quantitative analysis, Meredith (2010) measured the perceptions of American students while living with host families and studying at the university level in Spain for a period of seven weeks. These perceptions were measured in relation to Spaniards from two different age groups (youth and mature). The analysis of Likert-type scale questionnaires measured the participants’ perceptions of the frequency of their selective behaviors in accordance to what Spaniards considered typical. Meredith concluded that the perceptions of American students (median age 20) closely aligned with the group of young Spaniards (median age 17.5) rather than with mature (median age 43.36) Spaniards. That is, American students’ perceptions of the behaviors abroad changed as a result of their immersion in the target culture. Furthermore, staying with a host family during a study-abroad program immersion may assist the participants in gaining practical cultural knowledge in relation to their age. The researcher suggested that study abroad participants need to be instructed as to what is appropriate behavior abroad independently from the age of the participant. Although American students displayed an alignment of their behavior in accordance to a specific group age abroad, this study failed to describe the motives of students opting for these choices. In addition, there is no reference to personality traits and self-perceptions from the participants.
After measuring the participants’ intercultural sensitivity, Martisen (2011) correlated the amount of time participants spent interacting with native speakers abroad to the gain of intercultural sensitivity. Using the Inventory of Cross-cultural Sensitivity (ICCS) and assisted by statistical measures, Martisen found that participation in short-term study-abroad programs of six to seven weeks supported the participants in gaining significant increase in their intercultural sensitivity. Furthermore, Martisen postulated that students with lower Spanish-language skills demonstrated more gained in intercultural sensitivity than those with advanced language skills. Martisen’s findings revealed the prevalent necessity to promote interaction between study-abroad participants and native speakers in order to promote intercultural competence. Similarly, researchers and educators can anticipate that students who do not want to interact with the target culture due to personal inhibitions will be restricted in gaining intercultural competence.

Despite the prevalence of quantitative studies across the body of literature and in addition to the useful insight provided by statistical measures, the complexity of pragmatic gain as a construct highlights the need for more qualitative studies that could inform on the perceptions of the target culture from participants’ perspective. These perceptions could be studied in connection to the personal beliefs of the participants about their own ability to learn new cultural norms at the site abroad.

From a social-work perspective, Mapp (2012) surveyed 87 participants over a period of four years. The researcher collected longitudinal data of participants who took place in two-week or nine-day trips to Thailand, Ireland, Vietnam, Costa Rica, and Ecuador; none of these short-term study-abroad programs were language related. Mapp measured the participants’ pre- and post-cultural adaptability by the implementation of the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI). Mapp found that the participants displayed significant increase in their cultural
adaptability as they demonstrated gain in all four subscales (emotional resilience, flexibility, perceptual acuity and personal autonomy). This longitudinal study is a seminal piece in the area of cultural adaptability as it provides quantifiable improvement in cultural adaptability even among participants in nine-day trips. Moreover, it displays evidence that even when US baccalaureate students travelled to an English-speaking study abroad site, the results were positive.

Using a constructivist perspective, Covert (2014) studied undergraduate students’ perceptions on their intercultural development during one semester in Chile. The researcher utilized a narrative inquiry approach to collect data from the stories or narratives participants offered regarding their intercultural experiences abroad. Through criterion sampling seven US undergraduate students were chosen out of 14. Through the qualitative analysis of narratives and semi-structured interviews, Covert found that personal agency had an important role in developing intercultural competence. That is, the decisions made by the participants and the subsequent actions taken by the participants to improve intercultural competence made a difference in improving their intercultural competence. Furthermore, the researcher made clear that self-agency is closely related to self-efficacy as studied by Bandura (1997), these two variables are as important as confidence, self-esteem, and independence in the process of developing intercultural competence.

Covert’s study sheds light on the importance of self-agency and self-efficacy while participating in study-abroad programs. Moreover, Covert clarifies that agency is closely related to the individual’s perceptions of his or her self-efficacy. That is, the importance of self-efficacy, which will be discussed later in this review, is relevant to the process of second language and culture acquisition in the study abroad context. Covert’s study demonstrates the limited number
of qualitative studies within the volume of literature in this section that has dedicated efforts to study intercultural development abroad.

The issue of intercultural gain abroad has been clearly elucidated by the previous studies. Although the methodologies are different or partially similar from study to study, the results seem to be consistent. There is evidence of intercultural gain abroad even when it comes to one-week sojourns. Evidently, there is an impact of the study abroad-side experience pertaining to the variable of intercultural gain among the participants. While it seems beneficial to study culture and language gain separately, two questions still remain unanswered regarding language and intercultural gain: is language not part of the culture? What influences the inconsistency of the results of language gain abroad and what makes consistent the results of intercultural gain? In this study, the abroad side as the full immersion site is also the source of a new culture that offers meaningful and authentic experiences. Thus, the participants’ voice is given importance through the study of self-efficacy. The voice of the insider as an active informant is crucial to elucidate the process of acquiring a second language abroad in connection to its culture.

**Cultural Identity Change in Study Abroad**

Throughout this review, few studies have emerged under the topic of cultural identity. The study of the language-acquisition process at the individual level at an abroad location has demonstrated critical individual differences (Kinginger, 2013). Thus, in order to address these differences, some researchers have attempted to connect this phenomenon to different aspects of participants’ cultural identities, which in general undergo identity shaping at the abroad site. Block (2007) argued that identities relate to negotiations, and these negotiations are identified as “negotiation of differences,” which the participants experience at the abroad site. Block claimed that negotiations of identity are contextualized in a setting of unequal power relations. Thus,
Block investigated individuals’ identities in immersion settings and concluded that this context is generally that in which individuals’ identities experience destabilization. That is, identity shaping while at the abroad site should be considered an important factor influencing the language acquisition process.

In a six-month ethnographic study of a tertiary-level English language program in Australia, Ellwood (2011) studied four individuals’ identities and their self-transformations. The researcher found that two of the participants reported a negative effect of the abroad experience in their identities. These participants reported feeling like they were “in a black hole of despair” (p. 69). Sadness was one of the variables found to affect the power to act at the abroad site. A third participant made an effort to re-territorialize in an attempt to escape to the safety of the familiar. Ellwood found that the fourth participant experienced dissolution of a fixed identity, allowing openness to the unknown. The researcher concluded that there is an inescapable relationship between the self and the outside world at the abroad site. That is, participants must be willing to expose themselves to the outside; this process of interaction allows transformation.

In a quantitative study, Savicki and Cooley (2011) studied the way in which university students’ identity was retained or disrupted due to their participation in a study-abroad program. The researchers compared the study abroad group’s surveys versus a control group (a home-stay group taking an identity-change course in an American university). Through descriptive statistics, the researchers found that the control group retained their foreclosed identity after one semester of the course and that the study abroad group had suffered changes in their identity after three months abroad. The researchers concluded that students at the abroad site were challenged to commit and to engage in active thought regarding their identity. That is, the American students at the abroad site had spent more time and effort thinking about their American identity.
than those who were part of the control group. Thus, the researchers claimed that an achieved American identity is the result of the contact between the participants with other cultures that differ from American culture.

In another study, Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, and Brown (2012) studied how Chinese students participating in English programs abroad were able to shape their second language identity. Through qualitative analysis, the researchers found three dimensions identified as: identity-related aspects of language proficiency, linguistic self-concept, and second language-mediated personal competence. Of the nine study participants, only one student reported no gain in any of these three areas, while the other participants demonstrated growth in each of the three dimensions of second language identity. Benson et al. (2012) concluded that, although individual difference was an important factor in the process of constructing second language identity, study abroad provided the participants several opportunities for second-language identity development.

The subjects of cultural-identity shaping and transformation at study abroad sites continue to gain interest among researchers. This section synthesized studies that have consistently demonstrated how participants’ cultural identity at the abroad site experienced certain levels of influence, change, shaping, or transformation in connection with the other culture. Participants at the abroad site encountered several opportunities to interact with the new culture and to allow themselves to reflect on questions like *Who am I?* or *Where do I come from?*

**Global Cultural Change in Study Abroad**

Globalization, defined as the intensification of worldwide relations in a world where geographical constraints are no longer an obstruction (Block & Cameron, 2002), continues to be an important topic among universities and educational institutions. Moreover, creating awareness of the importance of becoming a student with a global cultural view is one of the major goals of
today’s education systems. Thus, study abroad has become one useful strategy to promote international education from a cultural globalization perspective. Through study-abroad programs students are provided the opportunity to build their cultural global and international perspectives while studying and traveling beyond the borders of their native country.

Using a Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) supported by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), Jackson (2008) carried out an ethnographic study to inquire about the internationalization development of 14 Chinese students majoring in English who participated in a five-week language immersion program in England. The researcher’s findings displayed a gain in intercultural sensitivity among the participants. Jackson claimed that her findings support the assumption that intercultural relations increase when cultural experiences become complex in different contexts. The participants in this study demonstrated a development of their socio-pragmatic skills, improved their colloquial English and were able to build a connection across cultures, all are important aspects in developing internationalization skills.

In a longitudinal study that covered two-week business study tours over a period of nine years, Carley, Stuart, and Dailey (2011) measured the impact of study abroad among business students. The data collected through quantifiable surveys revealed increasing scores for the variables: increased global awareness, referring others to countries where participants traveled, acceptance of other cultures and more interest in world affairs. In an earlier study, Peppas (2005) surveyed graduate students participating in a two-week program abroad. Peppas found that the participants learned more about business through their participation in study tours when compared to more traditional face-to-face business classes. Additionally, Peppas reported that the participants displayed an increase in their cultural sensitivity as well as an increase in their
global business knowledge. These two studies also underscore the importance in promoting an increase in students’ global perspectives. Acquiring preparation for the global work environment is a crucial skill that business students need to obtain during the years of preparation; thus, short-term study-abroad programs implemented as business study tours are making a positive impact among business students.

With the purpose of preparing business students for the cultural global workplace Brandauer and Hovmand (2013) studied global perspective gain and preparedness among business students participating in entrepreneurship training in west Denmark and southern Sweden. The quantitative data collected for a period of four semesters consisted of Likert-scales surveys and self-assessments demonstrated that student-gain on preparedness for the global workplace was positive. The authors concluded that in addition to the course content, several experiential components of the courses such as field studies and well-integrated study tours contributed to student learning and preparedness for the global workplace. Additionally, the authors posited that through study abroad participation business students gain real-world knowledge, increase their global worldview, improve their comfort with difference and increase intercultural skill development.

Using quantitative measures Smith, Smith, Robbins, Eash and Walker (2013) studied the perceptions of study-abroad experiences of traditionally underrepresented students. The participants, who were students from a college of agricultural sciences and natural resources, registered in a semester-long course that culminated in a two-week study abroad participation. Smith et al. (2013) found that after the two-week experience abroad the participants displayed statistical-significant growth in knowledge of cultural global affairs, interpersonal competence and cultural awareness. The researchers contend that more opportunities need to be provided to
traditionally underrepresented students in agricultural science to become better-prepared and more effective citizens in a global culture or globalized world.

Recently, Doppen and An (2014) studied the impact of implementing study abroad experiences for pre-service teachers. The researchers surveyed pre-service teachers who participated in a study-abroad program known as Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching (COST) between 1995 and 2012. This, the first qualitative study within this category in this literature review, provides insight on how pre-service teachers explained the process of gaining personal cultural growth through study abroad in addition to the increase in cultural global awareness. The researchers concluded that participation in study abroad promotes pre-service teachers to gain the ability to consider multiple perspectives, and to implement cross-cultural themes within the curriculum.

Cultural global awareness change in study abroad is a salient theme within the body of work of this review; thus, study abroad is impacting educational programs by providing opportunities for students to develop their global business knowledge and skills for the global workplace. Study abroad as experiential learning has demonstrated a positive influence in providing these opportunities of growth among students. The volume of research in this topic has shown a consistent positive outcome in the development of global skills among participants. In addition, the quantitative volume of research in this area has offered a clear view of the relevance of study abroad, particularly short-term study-abroad programs, over students’ global education. Nonetheless, the volume of research is still insufficient. As the proliferation of study-abroad programs continues to grow among educational institutions in the US, the quantitative volume of research within this theme calls for more empirical qualitative studies to support study abroad as an effective educational practice to promote global awareness and global cultural change.
Addressing the Gaps: Towards a Self-efficacy Inquiry Perspective

There is strong evidence across the body of empirical studies that confirms that language gain at study-abroad continues to be a dilemma (Gomez & Vicente, 2011; Kinginger, 2011; Martinsen, 2010). The myriad of quantitative measures has elucidated several aspects of the overall learning experience abroad, including language learning, and has clearly demonstrated the need for a more qualitative inquiry to address this issue. Thus, the question of whether there is linguistic gain abroad remains unanswered.

Further, the body of this review shows that there is a lack in consensus as to the proper methodology to address this issue. A number of studies have implemented pre- and post-tests in addition to concentrating on external variables pertaining the process of learning a second language abroad. These external variables include the measure of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, amount of time speaking with local people, amount of time studying in the classroom, and pragmatic ability. The language experience abroad is minimized if intrinsic variables pertaining to language learning are not considered as part of the language gain process. Several of those internal variables include self-efficacy, confidence, motivation, and predisposition.

There is a need for more qualitative studies that allow for participants, as insiders experiencing the phenomenon, to be heard. Thus, this study implemented a self-efficacy inquiry perspective through which the participants were able to share their stories and experience learning a second language abroad. Additionally, this qualitative study, in an attempt to bridge the gap in the literature, provides an analysis of the stories told by the participants in which they elaborate on their perceptions of self-efficacy to learn Spanish abroad. A self-efficacy perspective allowed the participants to reflect on their abilities to use Spanish abroad through the
completion of specific tasks (Bandura, 1989). A self-efficacy perspective provided ground on which to explore participants’ previous language experiences, personal observations of language use abroad, interactions with peers, interactions with native speakers, and reflections on emotional challenges.

Summary of the Literature

The topic of self-efficacy and language learning in study abroad, particularly short-term language study-abroad programs, has been enriched by numerous research studies that have attempted to uncover its benefits among the participants. The vitality of self-efficacy and language learning in study abroad can be traced to the influence of six themes that stem from the body of this review: self-efficacy in the learning context, self-efficacy and language learning, self-efficacy and language learning in study abroad, motivation and language learning in study abroad, linguistic gain in study abroad, and intercultural gain in study abroad. The multiplicity of views on these topics has led to many new directions in the study of self-efficacy and language learning in educational sojourns. Although the field of self-efficacy and language learning in study abroad has benefited immensely from the six salient themes across the body of this review, there are obvious unanswered questions in addition to limitations and areas that require further discussion and exploration.

The topic of self-efficacy in the learning context has provided an array of quantitative studies that implemented Likert-scale surveys to measure self-efficacy in relation to academic performance, learning satisfaction and learning strategies. In the area of self-efficacy and language learning the same foci of study was implemented. Researchers have given attention to the relation of self-efficacy and academic achievement in language settings. Additionally, in the area of self-efficacy and language learning in the study abroad context, findings across a limited
number of studies revealed that the study abroad context has an impact on the participants’ self-efficacy beliefs to perform language tasks.

There is increasing interest to study the motives, expectations, and general motivation shaping study abroad among the participants. Throughout the extant research, several types of motivation have been studied and associated with the personal goals of the participants. Researchers have studied the construct of motivation for years and still seek answers. Thus, several personal goals of the participants have been identified in this section: language development, intercultural development, and profession and career preparation. Several questions still remain unanswered in relation to motivation and study abroad. Moreover, as supported by the literature, self-efficacy has been identified as the main influencing factor toward motivation. Thus, more empirical studies that provide a self-efficacy approach are needed to elucidate the construct of motivation and study abroad.

In the area of linguistic gain abroad, several quantitative studies have reported gain, no gain, or some language attrition among the participants. Statistical analyses of pre- and post-departure surveys and the extensive use of several interview tools in addition to the ACTFL OPI have served as the means for measuring linguistic gain. The dispersed results in this area call for consistency in the methodology to study this construct. In addition, there is a need for more studies that may shed light on intrinsic variables pertaining to second-language acquisition abroad. Thus, qualitative studies that address students’ perceptions of their self-efficacy to acquire the second language abroad are needed.

In terms of gaining intercultural competence abroad, the body of studies referenced within this review has demonstrated that students who traveled abroad improve their intercultural skills. Several studies in this category have demonstrated that even one-week sojourns have
impacted the participants positively in this area. Furthermore, other variables in this section have also displayed gain among the participants: pragmatics gain and cross-cultural communication skills gain.

Cultural identity transformation at the abroad site is a crucial factor influencing language acquisition. The participants’ openness to connect with the new culture facilitates negotiations between the participants’ identities and the target culture. Studies in this section have shed light on the role of second-language identity in immersion settings. However, the role of identity is not passive, and identity is not solely a transformation receiver; this transformation affects learning outcomes and the process of second-language acquisition abroad.

Similarly, the consistent findings regarding global cultural change at the study abroad site have indicated the effectiveness of this practice, particularly for language and business major students. Study abroad provides a wide array of opportunities for students to travel abroad to enhance their global perspectives through courses, internships, or simple study tours. Due to the proliferation of globalization perspectives in education, study abroad has become an effective tool for this purpose. One salient purpose of study-abroad programs that promote global cultural change is the preparation of the participants for the workplace through full immersion practices.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was designed to examine students’ self-efficacy beliefs in acquiring Spanish as a second language while participating in a short-term, language study-abroad program. The implementation of a phenomenological case study methodology provided a systematic and structured pathway in which to examine focal participants’ shared common-lived experiences. Self-efficacy beliefs, as the central phenomenon, provided insight on language learning abroad and allowed the participants’ voices and stories to be shared. Data sources included observations, field notes, in-depth interviews, and student artifacts collected over a period of five months that included pre-departure orientation completely through to the debriefing meeting that took place after the trip. The short-term study abroad experience lasted a total of 19 days, including departure and arrival. A phenomenological case study paved the way to compose a holistic description of the language learners’ self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions at the abroad location. Thus, following the structured designed of this study; I implemented inductive analysis of the data sources collected. Consequently, the data analysis unfolded a holistic view of the self-efficacy beliefs of the participants in relation to the second-language learning experience at the abroad site.

As part of the implementation of a qualitative phenomenological case study approach, this study strictly follows all the research requirements suggested by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRB approval was provided on January 6, 2015 and the IRB ID number provided was 2014-8337. Refer to Appendixes A – B for IRB related documentation: IRB letter of approval, consent forms.
Design of the Study

According to Merriam (1998) a case study analysis focus includes: first, the case is a particular bounded system; next, the case study has to be descriptive of this particular system (p. 29). This study focused on one particular bounded system (student participants) and their self-efficacy perceptions to learn Spanish abroad. In addition to case study analysis, I was able to provide rich descriptions of the lived experiences in the target language and culture abroad. These rich descriptions contributed to one of the central goals of qualitative case study analysis: to obtain an in-depth understanding of the bounded system or case (Creswell, 2013).

Gaining Access to the Research Site

In the fall of 2012, I applied to participate in a Mentor Mentee Study-abroad program at the University of Cincinnati. I, as a future leader of study abroad, would receive the necessary guidance to qualify for the creation of a new program and to lead that program. As a result of my application I received funding to be part of the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College (UCBA) Spanish Language Study-abroad program in May of 2013. As a result, I participated as a mentee working closely under the mentorship of the leader of that program in Costa Rica. This experience inspired me to present a proposal for a new location for the same language study-abroad program in the fall of 2013. Additionally, I received funding from UCBA to participate in a four-day scouting trip in August, 2013 to establish contact with Amauta Spanish Language School and to explore the program first-hand in the city of Cusco, Peru, South America. This new project, for which I created the entire program in connection with Amauta received official approval from the UCBA Foreign Language Department in the fall of 2013, then from the UCBA Study Abroad Committee in spring, 2014.

Context of Study Abroad Experience
Cusco, with a population of 350,000 and located in the Andes of Peru, sits at an altitude of 11,150 ft. above sea level. Cusco was once the capital of the Inca Empire and provides a large amount of resources that inform the merging of Quechua and Spanish cultures. These resources include archeological remains and colonial architecture that include hundreds of years’ history and linguistic encounters, where Spanish was first enforced in this region of South America. These were the reasons I selected Cusco as the new abroad location for the UCBA Spanish study-abroad program.

**The Short-Term Study Abroad Program**

The short-term language study-abroad program took place for a total of 19 days, from May 8 – June 1, 2015 in the city of Cusco, Peru. The first and last two days of the program took part in the capital city of Peru, Lima. Upon our arrival in Cusco on a Saturday morning, Amauta picked us up at the airport and transported us to the local school located two blocks from the central square known as Plaza de Armas.

The school building was a colonial mansion built over original Inca walls. Amauta prepared a reception for our group’s arrival and different sets of instructions and maps were given in Spanish. Students took one written and one oral interview as part of the Spanish language placement process implemented by Amauta. At the end of the reception, each student was introduced to his or her host mother, and then departed to their new host homes where they will reside until the last day of the program. During the two weeks of stay in Cusco, I was able to visit each host-family and was able to witness how each participant interacted with his or her local family.

Amauta organized classes and cultural activities according to the daily schedule. Amauta’s administration team included a general director and manager in addition to
coordinators in charge of the faculty members, cultural activities and service-learning projects. Several of the coordinators at Amauta were European students who spoke Spanish and who were part of different international volunteering programs working in Cusco, Peru. The group of coordinators also included local Peruvians, all faculty members were born in Cusco, Peru.

The focus of Amauta as a Spanish language school is communication and cultural immersion. Thus, as the faculty leader of the study abroad group, I gained access to all different classes at Amauta as well as to all cultural activities organized for the students. At the time of the program, Amauta had been providing Spanish language classes to international students for more than 20 years and the faculty members had been teaching at Amauta for at least 10 years. The experience of the language instructors -- in addition to the school’s reputation -- provided a positive and strong learning environment for the implementation of the short-term language study-abroad program.

In order to participate in the program students had to apply by November 15, 2014. In concert with two other professors there was a two-day group interview process of selection. After discussion and selection, 12 participants received an official letter of acceptance; however, one student withdrew due to passport issues. The next program requirement was to register in the Latin American Civilizations I course. The participants completed five 2.5-hour lessons for this course before departing to the study-abroad site. The classroom experience for this course included students watching videos and completing readings regarding the culture and history of the Incas. Students also completed discussion boards and uploaded answers on Blackboard. The theory part of this course took place in the US. During May 8, 11-14, 2015, the practical part of the course took place at the study-abroad site during the cultural excursions. At the study-abroad site the students participated in cultural excursions during the afternoons and during the
weekends. The cultural activities included cooking and dancing lessons, visits to historical sites, one weekend visit to Aguas Calientes and Machu Picchu, tours of the city of Cusco, museum visits, Andean music lessons, etc. (See Appendix C for an example of Schedule of Activities.)

During the week, students attended formal Spanish classes according to their competence level at Amauta Spanish School in the city of Cusco. The classes took place from 8 am-Noon, lunch took place from Noon-2 pm (the participants were required to buy lunch every day on their own). In addition, the participants had to report everyday to their host families; each student had a host father and a host mother. Students were expected to have breakfast and dinner at home every day with their host families. Breakfast took place in the morning before leaving for school. Dinner took place at 7 pm after students had completed their cultural activities.

The host families did not speak any English as part of the program requirements and students were immersed completely in the target culture as soon as they arrived in Cusco. After two days in Cusco, students referred to their host mother as their mamá cusqueña (mother from Cusco). As the study-abroad leader, I was able to visit either at breakfast or dinner time all 11 families during the study-abroad period. Thus I witnessed first-hand how students interacted at their abroad homes.

The classroom. A total of 10 different levels of classes were available in accordance to the different Spanish language levels for all Amauta students. Students attended classes during the week from 8 am-12:30 pm. The 11 participants were split into four groups according to their respective language levels. In the classrooms, the participants interacted with other international students who were also attending language classes. The language classes were not uniquely offered to the 11 participants in the program. The classrooms included other students from the US, Asia, and Europe in addition to one language professor provided by Amauta.
The classrooms were located on the first and second floor of the building, two groups stayed in the first floor and two others on the second. The colonial building with original Inca walls was impressive and captivating. In addition to the classrooms, students were able to enjoy a wooden colonial balcony around an inside patio within the building. Students entered each classroom through a large wooden door, original to the age of the building; the building had original constructions of the 1860s, 1930s.

The classrooms on the second floor had large windows that permitted viewing students from the outside clearly. The classrooms included wooden and stone floors in addition to a rectangular wooden table designed for eight to ten students. Each student had his or her individual chair, and all students in each class sat around the table. As class-size was relatively small, students had all the attention from their language instructors; the interactions were active and engaging. The instructors utilized a white board and their own laptop computers to display multimedia material. Additionally, there were materials for language games that were used at varying times. There were additional bookshelves and small tables that were only used by the instructors. Although the school did not have a language computer lab, Wi-Fi was available at all times and students were permitted to use the Internet without restrictions outside class time.

**The Language Instructors.** The names of all professors are not revealed in the following description; I used pseudonyms to protect privacy according to the request of the local school in Cusco. Professor Guzman, was a local young man in his early thirties who had been teaching for nearly 10 years at the time of the program. He possessed beginning knowledge of English; his native language was Spanish and had some knowledge of Quechua. Professor Flores, a native from Cusco, was the youngest of all four instructors assigned to the 11 participants. He was in
his late twenties, and had been at Amauta for four years; however, he had been teaching Spanish for more than nine years. He spoke Spanish, Quechua and beginning English.

Professor Torres was a 45-year old native from Cusco who had been teaching Spanish for almost 18 years. She coordinated several visits to the local street markets where students interacted with the local people and culture. Professor Torres spoke Spanish, intermediate Quechua and intermediate English. Professor Paz, originally from Lima was raised in Cusco almost all of his life. He was 52 years old with more than 25 years of teaching experience. He spoke Spanish, very little English, and identified himself as a proficient speaker of Quechua. All four professors were very friendly and open to my visits and observation during their class times. They also provided information on the language lessons for the entire program and the different cultural activities and excursions.

Participants

Recruitment for the program started immediately in the spring of 2014 until the application deadline for all participants in the program on November 15, 2014. Out of a total of 17 applications and after a two-day group interview a total of 12 participants were officially accepted into the UCBA Peru Spanish study-abroad program, out of these 12 one student dropped at the beginning of the program.

Of the 11 individuals participating in the Spanish language study-abroad program, five student participants were selected following purposeful selection criteria (Light et al., 1990, p. 53). This strategy permits the selection of participants that would potentially inform the relevance of the goals of a qualitative inquiry. Following Creswell’s (2002, pp. 194-196) possible goals of purposeful selection, the participants for this study were chosen based on three criteria. First, I selected students who had at least completed one year of Spanish and who were
current students at the time of the study-abroad program. Second, I selected students whose first language was English, and those who identified themselves as speakers of standard Midwestern American English in the classroom. Four participants were Caucasians, and one participant was African American. Third, I selected students who had completed all pre-trip orientation sessions. As all participants were students at an open-access college, age was not a factor of exclusion; neither was the requirement to study Spanish as part of a program.

Selecting participants for this study with a minimum language requirement was necessary to provide a baseline for all selected participants. However, these criteria did not exclude those who had more than the one-year of Spanish. The participants, as English native speakers, were all enrolled in Spanish classes in a two-year open access college. Selecting participants who had completed all pre-trip orientation sessions, allowed for common ground with regard to preparation in relation to the goals of the study-abroad program overall. The pre-trip training sessions allowed the discussion of goals in language and self-efficacy, self-reflection on language and culture differences in addition to recommendations for altitude sickness and all other health concerns. There were a total of four pre-trip orientation sessions in addition to five mandatory pre-trip lesson sessions. The five focal students in this study have been given the following pseudonyms: Jason, Hannah, Trisha, Henry and Evelyn.

**Jason**

Jason was born in a mid-size Midwestern US city. He was a 20-year old college student completing his second year at an open-access college. At the time of participation in the study-abroad program, Jason had completed three semesters of Spanish and was completing his second year at an open-access college. Jason identified himself as being the first member of his family to attend college. He had never left the country nor had he participated in any type of study-abroad
program. He expressed his desire to participate in a language study-abroad program in order gain knowledge of other cultures and to grow as a person. He believed that his participation in this study-abroad program would help him in his future aspirations in the area of political science.

Jason shared feeling nervous about meeting his host family because he was not sure if his Spanish would be enough to interact with host-family members while at the abroad site. During the departure flight, he was observed carrying a Spanish textbook. At the abroad site he carried the same textbook and read through it during recess time and while taking the bus from his host house to school. Jason also provided support in form of tutoring to other students by explaining certain Spanish topics. At times while at the cultural trips, he sat in the bus with two other friends whom he provided tutoring in Spanish verb tenses. Jason commented that going through his notes and textbook pages assisted him to warm up to conversing with native Spanish speakers. Jason was the encourager of the group. He was friendly and always ready to assist his traveler peers by carrying backpacks, carrying water bottles, and food (field notes: 05-18-15, pre-departure interview data: 4-28-2015 and pre-departure essay).

Hannah

Hannah was a 19-year-old college student who had four years of high school Spanish and was able to travel to a Spanish-speaking country for one week while in high school. She was able to get involved in the community during her travel. She had also traveled to an English speaking country where she toured by herself visiting friends. She was thankful that despite the fact that she belonged to a very traditional Midwestern family, her dad was supportive for her abroad experiences. She mentioned that she had aspirations to work for an international humanitarian company in the future. Moreover, knowing how her grandparents immigrated the US several years ago and how they struggled to survive in a new country, she decided to dedicate her life
working for an organization that emphasizes openness to other cultures. She commented that she possessed a strong interest to also work with Hispanic cultures in the US. For Hannah, becoming fluent in Spanish was an important tool to assist her in making a difference in the world. She believed her participation in the study-abroad program to Peru would increase her confidence in functioning in a different culture. She was excited that she was going to meet her host family; at the same time, however, a little nervous to interact with the people of Peru in Spanish. At the study-abroad site, she was observed talking to her host family and planning games with her host brothers and sisters, as they were younger than her. Hannah was often observed talking to street vendors, elderly people in the streets, and her teacher and classroom peers (field notes: 05-18-15, 05-21-15, pre-departure interview data: 4-30-2015 and pre-departure essay).

**Trisha**

Trisha, a 22-year old college student who lived with her mother in a small Midwestern city, had never left the country before her participation in the study-abroad trip. Trisha's mother commented that it was very difficult to bring her daughter to the airport much less to see her off to a place she did not know much about. Trisha had three semesters of Spanish and expressed that her goal to major in international affairs was the main factor that motivated her to participate in the study-abroad program. Trisha expressed fears about the experience of immersing in a different culture away from home for the first time in her life. She was the first member of her family to actually go abroad. Trisha said that she was conscious of her need to go abroad in order to be prepared for her future career. She felt very confident that her studies at a two-year, open-access college had been a great decision that would allow her to accomplish her academic goals. At the study-abroad site, Trisha was observed enjoying the different language games implemented in the classroom. She commented that she had never experienced games in which
she had to communicate for several minutes in Spanish. Additionally, Trisha was observed writing a daily diary in which she highlighted the new ways of life she found fascinating in the abroad site (field notes: 05-18-15, 05-21-15, pre-departure interview data: 05-04-2015 and pre-departure essay).

**Henry**

Henry was a 66-year-old ex-military and retired manager participant. Henry studied three years of Latin in high school and one year of German during his college years. Due to his military and business background, Henry had traveled extensively over many years in Asia, Europe, Canada and South America. Henry had been taking Spanish classes at an open-access college as a senior audit student. Even though Henry did not need official transcripts or grades, he commented -- and his letters of recommendation to participate in the study-abroad program confirmed -- that he attended classes daily, completed all homework, and took all tests and quizzes. Henry expressed that taking Spanish had been a challenge and that he had to work hard to measure up to his younger classroom peers. Henry also believed that he had done well academically and that he had thoroughly enjoyed studying Spanish. With his three years of Spanish study, Henry had also taken service-learning Spanish classes. Through service learning he was able to tutor ESL learners in the community and also one first-year of Spanish student over two semesters. Regarding his participation tutoring a first-year Spanish student, Henry mentioned that he learned a lot in the process. Henry's main goal in participating in a language, study-abroad program was to be able to improve his ability to communicate in Spanish with immigrant children he tutored in his local Midwestern city. Additionally, Henry thought that living with a host family in Cusco was going to provide him the opportunity to learn from the local culture and history of the Incas. At the study-abroad site, Henry was an active participant in
the classroom. He showed discipline and dedication by arriving several minutes early before each class. His peers and language teachers enjoyed his friendly and engaging personality as he used Spanish at all times while in the classroom. Henry's age was not an issue with regard to participating in the different cultural activities. He had prepared for months to be ready for the physical activity which the program sometimes required and even outperformed some of the other younger participants. He was often observed participating in extensive conversations with local people and with his host family. Due to his active participation in and outside the classroom, Henry was also known as señor preguntas (Mr. Questions) - he was never afraid to ask questions (field notes: 05-21-15, pre-departure interview data: 05-12-2015 and pre-departure essay).

**Evelyn**

Evelyn was a 19-year old college student who had started her freshman year at an open-access college with four years of Spanish in high school. She was enrolled in her second semester of college Spanish at the time of her participation in the study-abroad program. Before her participation in the program, Evelyn had traveled to Puerto Rico to visit her boyfriend's family. She explained that although people spoke Spanish in Puerto Rico, she did not feel she had left the US as English surrounded her most of her trip. She remembered, "diving into a Spanish speaking environment" once when she visited her boyfriend's grandmother, who only spoke Spanish. Evelyn expressed that her goal to study international business and to become fluent in at least two other languages in addition to English, would enable her to become more professionally marketable. She also thought that international cultural experience was necessary and indicated that her participation in the study abroad trip to Peru would help her improve her knowledge of both Spanish and the culture of Peru. Additionally, she recognized the importance
The number of Spanish speakers will continue to increase. Evelyn was born in a Midwestern city and indicated that she was the first in her home to attend college. During her Spanish classes abroad, Evelyn was very shy the first two days of classes. She commented that she was nervous about the new teaching styles of the professors and the new school setting. However, after the second day, she commented that all her fears were allayed as she realized how friendly Peruvian culture was. She was often seen taking notes of new words and taking pictures of people performing daily activities. She also mentioned that she did not feel physically prepared for the trip; she was not used to walking even to a bus station in her hometown (field notes: 05-18-15, pre-departure interview data: 4-28-2015 and pre-departure essay).

**Researcher’s Role**

My role from the start of the program was that of participant observer. The program started in January, 2015 with the start of the pre-departure orientation sessions five months before the actual trip. The group met for two hours once a month from January to April to discuss several important topics pertaining the trip. As the only faculty leader of the trip, my role could not be that of an outside observer (Merriam, 1998). From the beginning, I explained to students my role as an active observer and also mentioned my goals for this study in addition to coordinating the pre-departure interviews. The student participants were aware that I, as the leader, was in charge of the different activities and that they would have to report to me every day while at the abroad site. While visiting the classrooms I sat with students and took notes. My participation was passive in the classroom as there were other students -- in addition to the presence of the Amauta professor -- from other groups in attendance. My observations of
students in the classroom was also enriched as I was exposed to different pedagogical practices that informed my own teaching.

I found myself helping students with general questions regarding public transportation, food, how to operate showers, daily homework, where to buy food, how to find their classrooms, etc. During the run of this study, I remained a participant observer. This included cultural activities observations. At the cultural activities, I sat with students on the bus. (Amauta had their own tour teachers that explained everything in Spanish and sometimes in English where sophisticated language was needed.) At times, I struggled with bus trips that lasted between one or two hours, as the tour teacher also rested until the arrival to the cultural sites. During these long bus trips, I found myself taking advantage of the long trip by talking to students on the bus using the bus microphone.

I generally answered questions regarding their experiences and usually lead conversations with my students. For instance, one day I provided a Quechua (the language of the Incas) lesson while traveling through the Sacred Valley of the Incas. The participants were able to see how Spanish and Quechua were able to live together for hundreds of years. These types of lessons and conversations were necessary; I wanted to take advantage of any available time to hear back from the participants as a group.

Additionally, I organized my own tours of the city that were not included in the cultural program provided by Amauta. For example, after discussing Inca-colonial literature, we went to visit the house of famous poet Inca Garcilaso de la Vega in Cusco. My participant observer stance influenced the sources of data collection that included observation field notes, interviews, and student artifacts.

Data Collection
Multiple sources of data are conducive to a deeper understanding of phenomena (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Thus, following triangulation recommendations for qualitative studies (Maxwell, 2013), this study implemented three main sources for data gathering. The following are the main sources of data collection for this study. (See Appendix D for an example of Data Collection Instruments and Research Tentative Timeline)

**Data Sources**

**Observation field notes.** In collecting data in qualitative studies, field notes are one way to document what an investigator sees, hears, experiences and thinks while taking part in observations in the field (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). The field notes of my observations of the focal students’ interactions included three main sections: pre-departure observations, trip observations, and post-trip observations (including one debriefing meeting). While at the study-abroad site my observations took place on a daily basis. The field notes also assisted me with information to shape the questions I implemented during the interview sessions. Field notes were taken in a notebook and were later typed using Microsoft Word. Field notes were also taken via a laptop computer during classroom observations. Each day, I observed different aspects of students’ self-efficacy beliefs with regard to the process of learning and utilizing Spanish abroad. The field note observations assisted me documenting students’ interactions utilizing the target language in the classroom and outside the classroom.

Following Bandura (1997) four factors to influence self-efficacy, I dedicated time to observe how students interacted with their peers in Spanish while completing specific language tasks. Bandura explains that a person’s self-efficacy beliefs are influenced vicariously; that is, by observing others complete specific tasks successfully. I observed how students reported to one another their abilities to complete those language tasks. Bandura also explains that a person’s
self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by emotional stress. Through my observation, I was able to note whether students displayed self-assurance or nervousness while in the classroom, or while completing language tasks in the real world. Additionally, Bandura also explains that a person’s self-efficacy beliefs are influenced through receiving encouragement from others. I observed how students received feedback from their language professors as well as from other peers. Moreover, my observations allowed me to witness and record students’ self-efficacy beliefs utilizing Spanish in and outside the classroom.

I also participated directly in observations of language tasks students were assigned at the abroad site. There were four different language tasks students had to complete and reflect on during the program abroad. For instance, I went at different times to the post office to see how students interacted in Spanish purchasing a postcard and mailing it to the US. I then interviewed the participants regarding self-efficacy beliefs in completing the language task. I also completed my own assessment for each participant and each language task and provided feedback to each participant. (See Appendix E for an example of a Language Task Protocol and Rubric of Evaluation).

Through observation field notes, I was able to answer central aspects for three of my research questions. To guide my first research question, observations were used to explore students’ beliefs in their own abilities to acquire Spanish as a second language abroad. To inform my second research questions, observations were crucial to view how students would complete the language tasks assigned abroad. I was also able to observe students’ perceptions regarding their own abilities to learn and use Spanish abroad, this informed my third research questions. (See Appendix F for an example of Research Questions Matrix Data Collection and See Appendix G for an example of an Observations Table).
**Interviews.** In carrying out qualitative research, investigators use interviews to survey participants’ experiences and interpretations (Hatch, 2002). Interviews informed this study and helped me understand participants’ self-efficacy perceptions while acquiring Spanish as a second language at the study-abroad site. Seidman (2013) explains that interviews permit the researcher to hear the participant’s story; by recounting their stories, the participants are involved in a meaning-making process. The implementation of interviews was closely related to my observations. The field observation notes taken at the abroad site aided the process of interviewing, as my observations allowed me to structure questions according to the context of the phenomenon observed. By the same token, hearing the participants’ stories during the interviews allowed me to evaluate my observations in addition to recording other information I was heretofore not able to observe (Maxwell, 2013).

Still, interviews were crucial as they provided one-on-one conversation in which I was able to hear directly from each participant experiencing the phenomena first-hand. The scope of the interviews while at the abroad site was unlimited; several times students took advantage of the one-on-one context to express their needs or simply elaborate on exciting experiences they had participated in with regard to Cusco’s language and culture.

Following a phenomenological case study design this study implemented extensive interviews to capture the in-depth stories of the participants as insiders experiencing the phenomena. In this study, self-efficacy was identified as the central phenomenon influencing the process of learning a second language abroad. According to Seidman (2013) the purpose of in-depth interviews is to focus attention and interest to better understand common-lived experiences and to explore the meaning or essence of these common-lived experiences. Furthermore, in-depth phenomenological interviews, as a method of inquiry, use primarily non-preset or
unstructured open-ended questions. However, this type of inquiry may use structured questions when needed. Additionally, the purpose of in-depth questioning is to facilitate guidance so that the participant may be able to build upon and reconstruct their story. (See Appendix H for an example of In-depth Interview Protocol and Interview Appendix I for an Interview Sample).

The implementation of in-depth phenomenological interviews suggests a three-series of interviews each with focal participant. Following is the rationale for the implementation of this interview model utilized in this study.

**The three-interview series.** Schuman (1982) proposed this in-depth interview model in order to better understand the meaning of the lived experiences in connection to the phenomenon. Seidman (2013) explains that in this model, there are three interviews that directly relate to the following sub-topics: the context of the experience; reconstruction of the experience; and, the meaning of that experience. During the first interview the researcher focus is to glean life history of the participant in connection to the phenomenon. The participants are asked to reconstruct their early and recent experiences in life. In the second interview, the participants are required to provide detail of regarding the current lived experience in connection to the phenomenon. During the second interview the participant is guided to provide as much detail as possible with regard to the experience. In the final or third interview session, the participant is invited to reflect on the meaning of the lived experience; the participant is asked to coalesce what he or she has experienced.

In keeping with the essence of this model, this study conducted three in-depth interviews taking place at different times of the program. The first interview took place approximately two weeks before departure. It was an hour interview that was not recorded; however, notes were
taken utilizing a pen and notebook. I met with each participant at a nearby sandwich café for lunch.

The interview was a relaxed conversation where participants were invited to discuss why they wanted to participate in a language study-abroad program. I also asked basic questions regarding self-efficacy (the participants had received orientation regarding the meaning of self-efficacy during the last orientation session that took place in April, prior to the May departure). This interaction afforded me the opportunity to get to know the participants on a personal basis and assisted me in preparation for the second interview that took place at the study-abroad site.

At the second interview (which was recorded on my laptop), I took 30 minutes to an hour with the participants while in Cusco. We met in a hallway of the language school or in a classroom. During this second interview at the study-abroad site students were asked to assess their beliefs in their abilities (self-efficacy) to acquire and utilize Spanish. I invited participants to relate their experience as students and also as members of a new community and culture. During this interview, I also asked students to talk about their performance utilizing Spanish to complete the four language tasks required for the two weeks of classes.

The last interview took place at the end of the program, either on the last day or upon the students’ return to their home school back in the US. During this 30-minute recorded interview, the participants were invited to talk about and to reflect upon the overall experience. They were invited to share what they thought it meant to experience learning a second language while abroad; and what it meant to believe in their own abilities to use Spanish in Cusco. The participants also were invited to a group-debriefing meeting, which took place at the two-year open access college. During the last debriefing meeting, I asked general questions regarding their
experience abroad, the debriefing ended with a group lunch in a local restaurant near school. (See Chapter 5 for technology limitations and workaround solutions at the study-abroad site).

**Student Artifacts.** Student artifacts were an essential way of gathering data for this study. As the participants were enrolled in the Latin American Civilizations I course, they participated in several aspects of classroom activities such as homework and assignments including Discussion Board activities within Blackboard. At the beginning of the program, students wrote an essay titled: “Why I Want to go to Cusco.” This essay was submitted on Blackboard and was also part of a self-reflection activity at the end of the first week abroad. During the last debriefing meeting, held in the US, all participants wrote a self-reflection journal on their four language skills. Students were asked to self-evaluate their listening, speaking, reading and writing Spanish language skills comparing them to before and after the sojourn. Additionally, all participants took the Computer Adaptive Placement Exams (CAPE) for Spanish before and after the trip in the language lab at their two-year, open-access college. The CAPE is a valid and recognized tool of assessment that is used to evaluate students’ competence in Spanish language. This test provides a final grade, which is assigned to a specific language level in Spanish.

At the study-abroad site, students completed daily homework that was revised by their language professors at Amauta. I did not have direct access to all the homework materials students completed; however, there was a detailed report for each student completed by each language professor. I received a copy of this report that included final grades of language performance in addition to participation. The report also included samples of students writing in Spanish.
While in Cusco and in addition to their school-related assignments, students were assigned four language tasks. The first language task was to visit a local pharmacy to purchase altitude sickness medicine or any other item needed by the student. In order to complete this language task I gave ten soles, which is the equivalent of three US dollars to each student. Students were required to write a self-evaluation paragraph describing their participation in this task. Then students met with me to discuss their experience. I then filled out the rubric of evaluation. The second language task was to report students’ negotiations regarding the hiring of a taxi, and to establish conversation with the taxi driver (a common and expected practice in the target culture). Taking a taxi in Cusco was a task that required bargaining the price in addition to explaining the destination. Each student took a taxi at least twice a week in addition to public transportation. Taxis in Cusco are very inexpensive compared to those in the US. However, students soon learned the fixed prices and began to negotiate the “right” price when confronted with an inflated price. All participants reported their experiences negotiating a taxi during the interview in Cusco. The third language task involved going to a local post-office and buying and mailing a postcard. For this activity, students were observed at the post-office and were asked to report on this experience. Based on my observations and the self-report of the students, I completed the rubrics of evaluation for language-tasks. The fourth language task was to purchase lunch for a total of 10 days. During this time, students were allowed to explore various places to acquire lunch before participating in the afternoon cultural activities. To evaluate this activity, I used the language task rubrics based on my observations, as I had the chance to observe all participants buying lunch at least twice during the pre-set time for this activity. In addition to my observations, I also used the students’ self-report and self-evaluation regarding their experiences in buying food during a recorded interview.
Finally, a private Facebook group was created in which all the participants were active members. The Facebook page contained a number of student postings and conversations in addition to photos and captions students shared while at the abroad site. The Facebook page proved to be an essential tool designed to provide guidance and also to communicate with the group and answer questions before, during and after the trip. It proved to be a solid platform for students to express their opinions and reflections on the language and culture immersion while abroad.

**Data Management**

I created a folder for each student participating abroad in which I stored student artifacts and field notes. These files were stored in a filing cabinet within my office and were securely locked. The Facebook group page was assigned the “Private” attribute to protect public viewing of the information. Additionally, the recorded files were stored in a local hard drive in my office computer that was secured with login password information. More importantly, personal identifiers were removed from focal students’ folders and files to protect the identity and privacy of each participant.

**Data Analysis**

**Phenomenological Case Study Analysis**

This study was carried out utilizing a phenomenological case study design. A phenomenological case study emphasizes the description of a common-lived experience or phenomenon among all participants (Creswell, 2013). Through phenomenology, I analyzed the participants’ common experience or experiences and provided a description in hopes of capturing its essence. I was particularly interested in gleaning the meaning or meanings of these common-lived experiences from the participants’ perspective. In this dissertation, I implemented a design
based on transcendental phenomenology that focuses more on the description of the common-lived experiences rather than my own interpretations as the researcher (Moustakas’s, 1994).

In this study, I focused on five student participants while I learned about the case of Spanish language learners abroad and their self-efficacy perceptions. In this study, the group of language learners participating in a short-term language study-abroad program was identified as the case rather than the study-abroad program alone or each language learner individually. Focusing on the participants as a group provided a broader analysis as the participants brought their uniqueness to interact with others as a group at the abroad site. The participants also immersed themselves in the target language and culture allowing their personal qualities permeate through the target language and culture. Thus, self-efficacy perceptions regarding Spanish-language learning abroad emerged while participants interacted with the target language and culture.

Consequently, to develop an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon, case study analysis provided ground for the participants to provide rich information while reconstructing their experiences and sharing their stories. Still -- based on the intent of qualitative inquiry -- this study implemented, specifically, instrumental case study. An instrumental case study seeks to understand the phenomenon in relation to the case, not necessarily focusing only on the case (Creswell, 2013, p. 98).

**Inductive Analysis.** The main goal of inductive analysis is to facilitate the emergence of research findings from common and significant themes; inductive analysis uses raw data (Thomas, 2006). Following a phenomenological case study design (Moustakas, 1994 & Creswell, 2013) data analysis of the transcribed interviews, observations, and written documents provided by the focal participants all allowed for a detailed description of the case (Stake, 1995).
In order to provide an understanding of the different complexities of the case, this detailed description was followed by the highlighting of significant statements (quotes or sentences) designed to shed light on the participants’ experiences at the study-abroad site. Next, I developed clusters of meanings into themes or key issues from these significant statements found across the collected data.

The case in this study is composed of five units or five student participants. Following Yin’s (2009) recommendations for case study analysis, I looked for themes or issues within each unit (within-case analysis); then I looked for common themes and differences across the units (cross-case analysis or thematic analysis across units). This was followed by assertions, which is the interpretation of the essential meaning or meanings of the case (Creswell, 2013). Through these assertions, I drafted an in-depth or textural description utilizing those same significant statements and themes. This analysis was a final composite description that unveiled the essence or the meaning of the phenomenon examined in this study. Three major themes emerged from the implementation of inductive analysis: preparation experience, immersion experience, and language gain experience.

**Self-Efficacy Analysis.** Self-efficacy as the central construct in this study was observed and analyzed following the structured model of self-efficacy introduced as part of the conceptual framework in Chapter 1. In the process of understanding self-efficacy abroad, I identified how participants reported their self-efficacy beliefs by focusing on utterances (indicators) through which students expressed opinion or description of their abilities or capabilities to learn and to use Spanish at the immersion site. As supported by the literature examples of those indicators include general statements, words and action verbs denoting *I can* or *I cannot* statements.
Additionally, through the data analysis I selected statements that shed light on what it meant to believe in one’s ability or abilities to learn Spanish. More importantly, I looked for statements that related to the four main factors that affect self-efficacy presented by Bandura (1989). These main factors are an essential component of Self-Efficacy Theory and explain four ways in which a person’s self-efficacy can be influenced or affected: 1) mastery experience or how previous successes using Spanish influenced new performances using the target language; 2) vicarious experience or how participants self-efficacy was affected positively by seeing others using the target language; 3) social perception or how feedback received from language teachers or peers affected positively the self-efficacy of the participants; and, 4) psychological states or how participants’ anxiety levels affected their performance using the target language. Through the implementation of self-efficacy analysis two major themes emerged: language tasks performance and language confidence as a process.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is a relevant element when carrying out qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 1998). The need for criteria to verify the authenticity of the findings is essential for the successful culmination of an investigation. For that purpose, multiple strategies to verify the accuracy of qualitative studies need to be implemented regardless the type of qualitative design in use (Creswell, 2013).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) established four criteria for qualitative research trustworthiness. Following these criteria, I first established *credibility* by demonstrating the accuracy of the findings, appropriateness of the data in accordance to the proposed design, and by using multiple sources of data to comply with triangulation requirements. Next, I provided a meaningful report that included a thick and detailed description for other readers to transfer findings to other
settings and contexts. This practice has allowed me to establish *transferability* to other similar language study-abroad programs. Thirdly, I demonstrated *dependability* by carefully documenting the evidence of the findings. These findings are consistent in accordance to the design, and other investigators can replicate the study. Furthermore, to establish *confirmability*, I reported the findings solely grounded on the collected data and the stories narrated by the participants rather than my biases and personal views or experiences.

The natural setting of this study reveals its authenticity, as it is a requirement in qualitative analysis. My observations and field notes recorded students’ authentic interactions in the immersion setting to learn a second language. Moreover, my observations assisted and guided the interview process allowing the participants confirm and clarify aspects of the observations. Conversely, the interviews assisted me in recording information that I was not able to document during my observations.

The variety of focal students selected for this study represents the typical student body found in two-year open-access colleges. Thus, the detailed descriptions provided from the language experience abroad for all five focal participants can be transferable to other similar educational settings.

Additionally, I completed a structured ethical reflection (Brydon-Miller, 2012) to guide and prevent ethical issues from arising during the course of this study. Consequently, the design of this study, research questions and data analysis procedures are consistent with the application of best practices for qualitative studies. Thus, establishing credibility for this study as well as a researcher lends itself to the authenticity of my findings as presented across this dissertation.

**Summary**
The methodology implemented throughout this study was crucial to explore participants’ self-efficacy perceptions related to the process of second-language learning during a short-term, language study-abroad program. As the only lead faculty I was able to gain unrestricted access to all student activities organized by the language school abroad. Purposeful sampling in this study allowed the selection of five focal participants (Jason, Hannah, Trisha, Henry, and Evelyn) who were current students at a two-year open access college at the time of the study-abroad program. The process of data collection involved multiple sources to comply with triangulation requirements necessary in qualitative inquiry. Within this section I introduced observations and field notes, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, and a variety of student artifacts.

Through the implementation of a phenomenological case study design, inductive analysis, and self-efficacy analysis I was able to gain insight on students’ self-efficacy perceptions to acquire Spanish as a second language abroad. The methodology including the design and the analysis procedures described in this chapter provide evidence for a sound, well-established qualitative study with demonstrated trustworthiness. Finally, all sections of the methodology are specific and well related to the research questions and conceptual framework as presented in Chapter 1 in addition to the supportive and extensive literature as presented in Chapter 2. In the next chapter, I discuss the results that include the themes and categories that made up the case that includes five units or participants.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to learn about five focal participants’ self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions related to their second-language learning experience in a study abroad context. For this purpose, I employed a phenomenological case study design to guide the data analysis as discussed in the previous chapter.

More importantly, focusing on one of the main goals of case-study inquiry, this study was designed to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon at hand. As explained in the prior chapter, inductive analysis and self-efficacy analysis were implemented and guided the thorough analysis of the observations, interviews, and student artifacts. Through this comprehensive and in-depth analysis five categories emerged. Inductive analysis facilitated the emergence of these following themes and sub-themes: 1) preparation experience (feeling nervous, meeting peers, warming up Spanish), 2) immersion experience (living with the host family, living in the new culture, the school experience, facing new challenges), 3) language-gain experience (exposure gain, recalling practice, thinking in Spanish, communication practice, language familiarization gain), 4) language performance experience (negotiating taxis, interacting at the post-office, interacting at the pharmacy, buying food), and 5) language confidence experience (perceptions on self-ability, perceptions on language ability). This chapter elaborates on what I learned about language learners’ self-efficacy beliefs in relation to learning Spanish during a short, study-abroad sojourn. The short-term study abroad site served as the general context where the participants experienced the phenomenon. In this study, each one of the five focal participants represents an individual case.
In the following sections, I present an in-depth description of each case highlighting salient themes that emerged from the data analysis. Each theme is presented with their corresponding sub-themes. Then, I provide cross case analysis in which I compare and contrast how the five themes were present across the five cases. In the cross-case I also report on the following questions: (1) What do we know about these five cases?; (2) What did I notice across all five cases? (Maxwell, 2013). The final section of this chapter includes a general summary.

**Construction of the Cases**

The analysis of the observations, interviews, and student artifacts data in this study resulted in the emergence of five categories. The first category is “The Preparation Experience.” This category explains the process of preparation in which the participants took part during the months before departure. Within this category, feeling nervous, meeting peers and warming up to understanding Spanish were explored and explained in meticulous detail. The feeling nervous sub-category explained the level of nervousness the participants experienced during the pre-departure meeting in reference to traveling to the abroad site. Within the meeting peers sub-category, the participants described why it was important to meet with other the other peer travelers to build ties and friendships before departure. The warming up Spanish sub-category enlightens how the participants view the importance of preparation in the target language before attempting to go to the abroad site.

The second category that emerged during data analysis was “The Immersion Experience.” This category explains and describes different experiences that were salient and important while students were at the abroad site. Within this category the host family, the school, and the new culture were explored and described in detail. Within the new culture sub-category, culture shock presented as a significant part of the sojourn experience. The host family sub-
category provides a descriptive scope of the different roles of the host family with regard to the language and the participants. The new culture sub-category elaborates on how the participants reflected or recounted their first impressions regarding the immersion experience. Within the sub-category of culture shock the participants described the impressions the new culture portrayed in relation to their US culture; some of them experienced reverse culture shock upon their arrival in the US. The school sub-category emphasizes how the role of the language school influenced the participants’ language-learning experience. The challenges sub-category explains the salient difficulties that were highlighted by the participants from their points of view. What was difficult for one or two was not difficult for the rest and vice versa.

The third category that resulted from the analysis of data gathered was “Language Gain Experience.” This category examined the crucial question of whether there was language gain during the short sojourn abroad. This category examined exposure, recalling, thinking, communication, and familiarization gain. The exposure sub-category explained how the participants became exposed to the language and culture during the immersion experience. The recalling gain sub-category elaborates on the importance of recalling and remembering certain practices abroad; the participants had to practice recalling of the language storage in their memory while abroad. The thinking gain sub-category explains how at the abroad site participants were challenged to learn how to think in the second language; participants were surrounded with different opportunities to practice thinking in Spanish. The communication gain describes how the participants were able to put into practice their speaking and listening skills during real-life and authentic conversation with native speakers at the abroad site. The familiarization sub-category explains how the participants learned to get used to the language and culture as the days passed.
The fourth category that resulted from the data analysis process in this study was “Language Task Performance Experience.” This category describes how participants got involved in specific language tasks that were part of the lives of the native speakers. This category examined the taxi, the post-office, the pharmacy, and the daily food experiences. The sub-category of the taxi experience describes how participants were required to take taxis by themselves over a period of two weeks and how the participants told their stories during the entire taxi experiences. The sub-category of the post office experience describes how participants were involved in buying and sending postcards twice during the period of two weeks while abroad. The sub-category of the pharmacy experience describes how participants were involved in their visit to the pharmacy to buy medicine and how they told their stories regarding their interactions at the drugstores. The sub-category of daily food experience explains how participants engaged buying food on a daily basis and how they interacted at local restaurants in Cusco.

The fifth category that emerged from the data analysis was “Language Confidence Experience.” This category describes how participants reflected on their improvement of self-efficacy to take new challenges and to learn the language abroad. This category examined perceptions on self-ability and perception on language ability. The sub-category of perceptions on self elucidated how participants’ belief on their ability to go abroad suffered change during and after the abroad sojourn. The sub-category of perceptions of language ability describes how participants’ self-efficacy-perceptions experience was shaped during the study abroad sojourn. In the next section, I present an in-depth description of the five focal cases.

Case One: Evelyn
“... nothing prepares you for the real thing other than just going and doing the real thing, you have to put yourself out there ... dive into the language.” (pre-departure essay)

Preparation Experience

Evelyn was a 19-year-old college student. She had a clear goal: she wanted to become fluent in at least two other languages other than English. Evelyn held the belief that by participating in a short-term, study-abroad program, it would assist in improving her language skills. Despite her initial fears of travelling outside the US, her previous immersion experience, in a short trip to Puerto Rico, had enabled her to recognize possibilities for language improvement offered at the immersion site. Prior to the trip she expressed feeling intimidated when speaking with native speakers. Although she believed that “diving into the language” was one of the best ways of learning a language, she still had doubts about her Spanish language skills. More importantly, she suggested that “those four months before the trip were very important, orientation and preparation were a strong support while having fears” (self-reflection).

Feeling nervous. In addition to feeling intimidated to speak with native speakers, Evelyn shared feeling very nervous about the experience. She explained that “not knowing what to expect about the program” made her feel very nervous. During daily discussions with her mother at home in the US she would generally share thoughts such as, “What if my host family does not like me?” “What if I do not like the place?” or “What if people think my Spanish is awful?” Evelyn also explained that knowing that she was not fluent in Spanish also contributed to feeling nervous. “I can’t believe that with all my three years of Spanish, I am not confident with my Spanish skills,” she added. Her current grades in her Spanish class at the open-access college were extremely good. Nevertheless, Evelyn asserted that she was not comfortable or
confident to speak particularly with Spanish native speakers pre-departure interview data, 4-28-15).

**Meeting peers.** Evelyn mentioned that one of the highlights of the trip was meeting new people. She said, “I enjoyed our first orientation session as I was able to see that there were other students who also felt and looked like me.” The orientation sessions as part of the preparation experience provided Evelyn with more of a solid foundation. “I felt like I had support, like I was not alone, I felt I was standing on solid ground,” said Evelyn. She also suggested that the pre-trip orientation sessions helped her tremendously, “I felt like it was important to spend time with other student travelers before trip” (pre-departure interview data, 4-28-15).

**Warming up Spanish.** One of the main concerns for Evelyn was her fluency level in Spanish. She was very intrigued to know whether or not her host family would speak at least “a little bit of English.” Thus, she followed the recommendations she received during the orientation sessions and decided to look for ways to practice her Spanish. One method she shared was “personal study time at home” where she took time to read her textbook and read her previous classroom notes. She also indicated that she downloaded an app on her phone that assisted her reviewing Spanish almost every day. Evelyn also described that one of her favorite practices was to create different vocabulary words and to post them around the house. Evelyn mentioned that the more she warmed up and practiced her Spanish, the more confidence she gained. “If I practice the language I will be better prepared to meet my host family,” she stated (pre-departure essay).

**Immersion Experience**

The second category or theme included Evelyn’s experience in the country. Evelyn had indicated that she had never traveled this far from home. She also mentioned that she had been
busy getting ready and had not taken time to realize the trip was actually happening and she will be exposed to a different culture for the next 19 days.

It wasn’t until the day we left, when we were in the airport, that it hit me: I am about to leave the country. When we got to Lima I was feeling so good. I was tired but I was so excited I just remember being excited. I just wanted to go check out everything. When we first got there and we ordered out food a lot of people went to McDonalds. There was a McDonalds and there was a Dunkin Donuts and when I ordered my food from McDonalds it was totally in Spanish. That was the first time I got exposed to soles and how they charge and how it’s different from the states and I was kind of confused. (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-20-15).

Evelyn clarified that one of the very first confusing experience occurred when she used the local currency, she did not realize that she no longer was able to utilize American dollars for purchasing food at an American fast food restaurant chain.

**Living with the host family.** Once Evelyn realized she was no longer in the US she started to feel a little more nervous, “I was nervous about making sure I said the right thing to my host family. I did not want to sound dumb or anything,” she said. Evelyn remembered that as the hour to meet her host family approached. She kept encouraging herself by thinking and saying: “I can do this” and “It is either now or never.” Evelyn indicated that one of the most remarkable moments of the study-abroad experience was meeting her host family. She thought about the importance of this moment months before the experience. She was conscious of the fact that she was going to live with this family during the entire immersion experience and that her relationship with the host family was one of the top priorities. Upon arrival to the abroad site and after meeting her host mother, Evelyn was taken to her new home.
She told me about her family, where she is from and what she did. I then told her about my family and the whole conversation was in Spanish, and it went great. I was so proud of myself at the end of the conversation. I was so happy. She made me dinner and we talked a little bit more. She was so welcoming. She really makes me feel like I am at home and like I am her daughter like part of the family. (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-20-15).

Evelyn’s first day at the immersion site was very important. She suggested that her nervousness started to go away after her first conversation with her host mother. “Yeah, that was the only thing that made me nervous and once I was there and met her all my nerves went away,” remembered Evelyn. She felt proud of herself, as she was able to establish first communication with her host mother completely in Spanish. Additionally, Evelyn expressed liking the house and more importantly her new bedroom. “I have my own room. It is really nice and clean.”

**Living in the new culture.** Evelyn had never visited mountainous areas in the US and did not know what to expect from the abroad location. She mentioned that she was a little overwhelmed to see so many mountains and was surprised how cold it was during the evening, “It is pretty chilly, it is kind of cold and I wasn’t expecting for it to be that cold.” Evelyn also pointed out that there was no central heater in the house and that she had to use extra blankets at night. One of her favorite activities was the daily walk to the bus station and then to the school, Evelyn said that the experience of walking with the people of Cusco was incredible. “I walk to school after taking the bus and honestly I love the walk. It is really nice to see the city,” said Evelyn. “It made me feel more part of the country and part of the people.” She also realized that becoming part of a new culture made her feel enriched as a person. “I did not realize that people are happy living here, experiencing this new culture makes me a better person.” According to
Evelyn, the cultural immersion was relevant for her as a person, immersing in the new culture helped her grow as a person. She also suggested she felt safe in Cusco, she felt safe walking around the different neighborhoods, and she thought people were friendly (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-20-15; field notes 5-24-15).

Evelyn could not understand why she had to bargain at the market place, before getting a good price. She was shocked to buy a nice set of alpaca gloves for a little more than – in Peruvian currency -- $5 US. Evelyn also could not believe that the locals in Cusco also spoke Quechua in addition to Spanish. She could not understand how there was a strong community of bilinguals, yet most of them did not speak any English. Evelyn also discussed how simple life was in Cusco compare to the US and how she was considering bringing her mother to Peru so that she could understand what she was experiencing. Evelyn added that Peruvian Spanish was clearer than what she thought. She pointed out that Peruvians spoke slower than what she had heard in her textbook listening materials.

**The school experience.** Evelyn believed that one of the best parts of the program abroad was the group language classes she attended. “I love my school, the classes are very small and personal,” said Evelyn. “My teacher is able to work with every single person in the group.” Evelyn recognized that attending school outside the US provided her with an invaluable experience. “It’s a dream come true.” For months, Evelyn wondered how classes would be abroad and how the interaction with the teachers and other peers would be different from her classes in the US. Evelyn said that the classes were very practical and would prepare her for the activities outside the class. Evelyn mentioned that as a group, they had activities and projects in Spanish; she was impressed with how everyone would do their best to use Spanish and to complete the projects. Evelyn added that the teachers in Cusco were not concerned about written
tests but they concentrated on communication. Evelyn described her teacher: “He is laid back and relaxed; he is helping us to use the language. It is not a quiz-based school” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-20-15; field notes 5-24-15)

**Facing new challenges.** Evelyn thought that every day at the study-abroad site was a new and challenging experience. She also expressed that as the days passed she felt better prepared to face new challenges. Evelyn recalled her first day struggle with the shower and not being able to get hot water. She explained that all she had to do was wait a few minutes for the hot water to come. She indicated that she was used to getting hot water in the US immediately. By the end of the first week, however, she reflected on how much better she was doing with the shower, the food, and the local transportation. Evelyn added that her host mother was integral in helping her with new challenges at the abroad site; Evelyn said that her host mother gave her a lesson on how to pay and use the local currency, for instance.

**Language Gain Experience**

The third theme of the study addressed language gain. Evelyn’s goal was to become fluent in Spanish, however, when asked about whether or not she could learn Spanish in 19 days she replied, “Even if you can’t get fluent in nineteen days it is a good start,” she said. “I feel like I have been given a boost and that I can learn Spanish easily now.” Evelyn had clear language goals and she had the belief that somehow the abroad immersion could benefit her aspirations to become fluent in Spanish. Evelyn explained that learning a second-language comes from not only learning from a textbook, but also living with the people (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-4-15).

**Exposure gain.** Evelyn realized that in 19 days she was not going to become a fluent speaker; however, she indicated that gaining exposure to the language and to the culture was experience that could not be compared to learning Spanish in the classroom alone. Evelyn
highlighted that gaining exposure to the practical use of the language (immersion) helped her to stay more aware of Spanish for daily life activities that she performed in English back in the US. Evelyn described the exposure gain as “A good start. Exposure can get you open to the language and can get you comfortable with the language,” she said. Evelyn recognized that the idea of openness to a second-language and to the culture was possible due to the exposure opportunity provided by the abroad site. Further, Evelyn mentioned that exposure also served as a facilitator of comfort; exposure made her feel comfortable with the language.

**Recalling practice.** Evelyn reported that at the abroad location she forced herself to remember the Spanish she learned. Every day was an opportunity to remember grammar and vocabulary. Evelyn shared that, “Living where the language is spoken forces you to make the effort to remember everything you have learned in the classroom” (in-depth interview 2, data 5-20-15). She also mentioned that she used her hands to sign certain things she could not remember. She used everything she had to be able to remember the language needed when she spoke with native speakers.

**Thinking in Spanish.** Evelyn expressed that “The abroad site gives you the opportunity to think in another language as soon as you leave your country of origin” (field notes, 5-29-15). She commented that when she learned Spanish in the US, she translated from English to Spanish and from Spanish to English. At the abroad site, however, Evelyn found herself “thinking in Spanish” several times a day. Evelyn thought that the process of thinking in Spanish was almost impossible; nevertheless, her immersion experience aided her thinking in Spanish in a natural way.

**Communication practice.** Evelyn shared that she had many opportunities to practice speaking and listening to Spanish at the abroad site. Cusco, was a place where she found
opportunities to become a better communicator in Spanish. Evelyn realized that in order to communicate well, she had to also listen attentively when interacting with native speakers.

The longest conversation I had in Spanish was with my host mom. It was during the second week and we had three days left and she made me this really nice dinner and we sat down and we talked. We talked about everything in Cusco and we talked about Brazil. She told me about the different places that she lived or visited in Peru. And she was also really interested in the United States. She wanted to know all about the States and how the weather was and all this other stuff, so that was the longest conversation we had. I felt like I dived into different things using the language. I could not believe I was able to converse this long in Spanish [almost three hours in Spanish].” (in-depth interview 3, 6-415).

Evelyn also mentioned that when they talked about certain aspects of Peruvian culture, she was able to recognize the custom and talk about it. Evelyn expressed that without being in Peru she would not have been able to talk about particular aspects of the culture like the names of places and food, for example. Evelyn also mentioned that she learned how to interact with the locals of Cusco and found how friendly and courteous people tend to be in Cusco. She learned how to greet, to shake hands, give hugs and to greet with a kiss on the cheek. Prior to this experience, Evelyn indicated she had no clue how important all these aspects were in daily life. She pointed out the textbooks did not provide this kind of instruction.

Language familiarization gain. Evelyn described another highlight of the study-abroad experience included, “getting used to the language.” She explained that not even with three years of learning Spanish in the US prepared her for “getting used to the language.” She explained that after the second week, she was completely saturated in Spanish and felt strange using English
when calling her mom who lived in the US. Evelyn expressed that “getting used to the language” helped open her eyes to the importance of learning another language and to value the culture behind it.

**Language Performance Experience**

The fourth theme of the study addressed language performance at the study abroad site. Utilizing Spanish to complete different tasks was fun and sometimes nerve-wracking for Evelyn. She reported that “getting out there into the city” to complete language tasks was new to her. She clarified that most of her Spanish homework in the US included workbook or grammar sheets. Evelyn expressed the need for more activities like this in her regular Spanish classes. “Why do we always have to fill out sheets and workbooks,” asked Evelyn. “We need to have more projects like the ones we are completing in Cusco” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-20-15; field notes, 5-21-15).

**Negotiating taxis.** Evelyn shared that one insight regarding task completion: she felt like the more she did the task, the better she became at completing it. Regarding the taxi experience Evelyn explained, “Negotiating a taxi was so difficult at the beginning, but now I feel like I always get the best price” (self reflection). Evelyn’s self-efficacy perspectives to negotiate a taxi improved daily to the point that by the second week she felt completely at ease. Evelyn explained that taxi drivers did not use a GPS so she had to provide her destination address indicating nearby land markers.

“It was just a matter of getting in the right taxi. Making sure you got one that was official. But taxis is where I used most of my Spanish and it’s where I would say I really came out of my comfort shell because the taxi drivers expect you to talk with them. You have to use Spanish. You have to know your surroundings you
really have to describe that because they do not have a GPS. The taxi drivers base it all off of what it’s near. So that was very cool.” (self-reflection).

Evelyn commented that coming out of her comfort zone was a remarkable event during her experience abroad. She was not used to taking taxis much less talking to the driver. Evelyn recalled one time when she took a taxi and felt very proud after the driver seemed to understand her Spanish.

**Interactions at the post office.** Evelyn shared that at the abroad site she had to always pay attention to how the local people did certain and follow their example. For instance, she recalled the first day taking a bus she had to observe carefully how the locals got off the bus at the bus stops. She also shared her post office experience where she sent postcards to the US. She recalled first going to the post office and watching people to better learn where things were located in the post office. She commented that the post office in Cusco was different to the post offices in the US. She pointed out that she visited the post office twice and that both times she was successful selecting stamps and paying for them. She added that while at the post office she talked to different people including the cashier in Spanish. She said she felt accomplished getting the receipt for the mailed postcards.

**Interactions at the pharmacy.** Evelyn suggested that her visits to the pharmacy were easier than her post office experience. She said that there was minimum interaction in Spanish at the pharmacy as it was a very busy place. However, Evelyn took time to browse around reading different names of pharmacy products. She purchased altitude-sickness medicine the first time and headache medicine the second time. She also mentioned that people who worked at the pharmacy seemed to be in a rush all the time.
Daily food buying. Evelyn described that buying food at first was very difficult for her. She had no idea what to buy and she was nervous. She mentioned she felt better eating food at home during dinner but eventually she had to venture out to buy lunch during the day between school and cultural activities. Evelyn remembered taking so long reading the menus. She talked to the waitresses and asked several questions, as she wanted to make sure not to eat anything uncooked. She explained her Spanish helped her obtain what she needed; she started with soups, for example, to remain on the safe side. Additionally, Evelyn recalled that the waiters and waitresses were very friendly and did not mind talking to her and answering her questions.

Evelyn adds, “During the second week I feel more [at ease]. I like diving into buying food and exploring places using my Spanish” (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-4-15).

Language Confidence Experience

The fifth theme of the study addressed language confidence experience abroad. Evelyn admitted that before the trip her level of confidence was not strong. She had doubts about her Spanish-language abilities. Although she had studied Spanish formally for three years, she still did not think she was fluent or able to establish conversation with native speakers. Evelyn mentioned that although the pre-departure orientation sessions were helpful, she really did not have the necessary confidence in her Spanish abilities to perform well abroad. Although she believed the experience was going to be beneficial for her language skills she still did not have confidence in her level of Spanish.

Perceptions on self-ability. Evelyn described feeling comfortable participating in the abroad experience. She believed her previous trip to Puerto Rico, her desire to learn, and her educational goals motivated her enough to participate in the trip. She also believed that she was able to cope with change easily as she had experienced traveling before. Evelyn believed that
going on a study-abroad trip had its demands and that she felt prepared to face them.

Nonetheless, she explained that not knowing much about Peru made her feel uneasy about the trip. Evelyn described herself as a determined person, she said, “I know what I want and I am going to do it, I am determined to go.”

**Perceptions on language ability.** Evelyn expressed how her confidence in her language abilities slowly changed. Before the trip she did not think her Spanish was good at all. During the trip, and as her fears slowly went away, her confidence in her ability to use Spanish improved. Evelyn felt like her confidence in her language abilities changed due to her immersion in the abroad site where she had to use her Spanish to survive and to communicate. Evelyn said, “The change of my confidence was a process. It was very unconscious, my fears to speak the language started to go away soon after meeting my host mother” (self-reflection). Further, Evelyn explained that her learning experience in Peru was “non-stop.” She believed that her Spanish language ability revealed itself while at the abroad site. She pointed out that while participating in the experience she discovered and had more confidence in her Spanish-language skills. The abroad experience provided Evelyn with a barometer to better gauge the real level of her language skills. Evelyn expressed that the language immersion abroad assisted her to appreciate her real level of Spanish. Evelyn expressed that by talking to her host family first and then to other native speakers was very important in helping her build confidence in her language abilities.

**Case Two: Jason**

“I’ve always been an adamant believer if you throw yourself in[to] something you’re gonna be able to learn it pretty easily” (in-depth interview 2, 5-22-15)
Jason communicated that he had a strong interest to improve his Spanish skills. He explained that he had dedicated almost two years studying Spanish. His grades were good. He said that he would have preferred having excellent grades but his busy schedule did not permit him the time necessary to achieve that goal. Jason said he was excited to participate in the study-abroad experience; this was going to be his first time leaving the country. He had never flown away from his home and he had never had a passport before this experience. Jason communicated his strong career aspirations in the political sciences for which he considered the knowledge of Spanish necessary. Jason said he hoped this type of immersion would help him with his Spanish and grow as a person. Although he was optimistic that an immersion experience would be beneficial for his language goals, he had no idea of what it would be to be abroad (pre-departure essay, interview data 5-22-15, 6-8-15).

**Preparation Experience**

Considering that this was his first trip outside the US, he said he had been preparing mentally for the experience, “I am going with an open mind ready to learn everything possible” (pre-departure interview data, 4-28-15). Jason mentioned that for years he had wondered how it would be to go abroad to study. He had looked for opportunities before but when found he did not pursue them as he thought he was not prepared enough. This time he was different, he said he felt like it was time to do something like this (the Peru study-abroad). Jason also mentioned that the key for his decision to participate in this experience, in addition to knowing it was time; it was the support of his parents. Both of his parents supported and permitted him to leave the country on a study-abroad program. Jason explained, “… being twenty it is not easy, my parents still play a role in my life … it feels good that they are willing to support me” (pre-departure interview data, 4-28-15).
Feeling nervous. Jason did not have any fears regarding the actual trip before departure. Not only did he feel he was ready for the experience but also for the associated responsibilities. He had served as a student ambassador and had been involved in assisting students, parents and instructors for one year at his hometown college in the US. This experience had prepared him to work as part of a group or a team. On the other hand, Jason did not feel sure about his Spanish-language skills, he was nervous in that he felt he would not be able to communicate fully in Spanish at the study-abroad site.

Thinking about the language is probably the thing I’m most nervous about. That I’m not able to communicate, that I don’t know how to talk or find my way or not knowing how to ask for directions or anything. I really don’t know if I’m clear enough for the people to understand what I say. I am not sure my Spanish is enough; this is the only thing that makes me nervous. (pre-departure interview data 4-28-15)

Jason also expressed his concern regarding his language skills when describing his classroom experiences. He had experienced several occasions where his teacher nor his peers could understand what he was trying to say in Spanish. Jason was nervous that similar experiences would happen at the abroad site and that he would be frustrated.

Meeting peers. Meeting his traveling peers before the trip and spending time with them before the trip was very important for Jason. He was happy to have met at least two other people from previous classes. Jason said that he could not go on a trip without knowing who he would be traveling with. Jason enjoyed the homework activities during the pre-departure orientations. Every orientation they were assigned partners to meet and have coffee while they discussed certain topics. Jason explained how much these assignments helped him to interact with his
traveling peers. He explained, “The partner homework was great, I was able to find out I was not the only one who had questions about the trip” (pre-departure interview data 4-28-15, field notes 5-14-15).

**Warming up Spanish.** Jason was busy with classes and his job and did not have enough time to review or warm up his Spanish. He would bring his Spanish textbook to work and read over the chapters during his break. Jason was taking Spanish during the spring semester prior to the trip and thought it was not necessary to review more from what he was studying in class prior to the trip. Jason also explained that there was so much online homework in his Spanish class that he was saturated to the point he did not want to do more extensive reviews over the weekend.

**Immersion Experience**

For Jason, the moment he left his house for the airport was the moment he checked out from his hometown. Jason said that the only hard thing for him to do while going to the airport was to have his mother drive him. He felt sad to leave her for the first time. At the airport, Jason had his Spanish textbook and soon after check-in he started reading chapters. He thought he needed to do so as he was getting ready to hear it everywhere. Jason explained he did not know what to expect from Cusco. Upon his arrival to the Lima airport he was so nervous that he had trouble communicating with the immigration officer. Jason did not pay attention to the immigration officer’s recommendations that he had to pay for a new immigration form on the return day. After passing immigration, Jason bought his first breakfast meal abroad, he felt very intimidated that a friend had to help him with the currency exchange in addition to reading the menu (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-22-15; field notes 5-21-15).
Living with the host family. Jason recalled, “I did not know what to expect when I got off from the plane. My family and friends in the US thought I was going to the huts.” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-22-15). Jason was glad to meet his host mother who was a professional and a very influential woman in her community. Jason described his new home as a modern condominium with all the amenities similar to the ones found in the US. Jason connected with his host mother immediately. “My host mother really is like my mother,” he recalled, “she is always taking care of me. We talked a lot during breakfast and dinner” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-22-15; field notes 5-21-15). Although Jason was not nervous about meeting his host mother, he explained that his host house was the first place he felt forced to survive utilizing his Spanish skills. Jason commented that it was very difficult to understand his host mother when she spoke. However, Jason felt better the second day in Cusco. One particular experience that motivated him to converse in Spanish was the meeting he had with one of his host’s sisters. Jason described her as a European lady who really spoke fluent Spanish and who also was an international student in Cusco. Jason was motivated by hearing the host sister converse in Spanish with others in the house. He thought he could do it also. Jason was thankful to have had the opportunity to live with a family abroad; he thought it was total immersion. He pointed out, “My host mother was basically the one that I spoke serious Spanish [with] for the first time. I think I did well. I felt pretty good talking with her” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-22-15). Jason also felt it was important for him to be accepted as part of a family, this was necessary as he had never been out of the US.

I just started speaking with her. [I was] just talking random stuff about who I am. I was, showing her pictures of my family. She took an interest in [my family]. She asked: What are you interested in? I’m like a politics major I like talking politics
and the economy. So we talked about that for a little bit and then she also made me watch movies with her so we watched three different movies in Spanish. I guessed what they said in most of the parts of the movies, but by the end of the night I was feeling great. (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-8-15)

Jason thought his host family played the role of assisting him to start using the Spanish he knew. He felt part of the family immediately and was able to start communicating with other family members.

**Living in the new culture.** Jason shared that he enjoyed walking as part of his new life in Cusco. “People walk everywhere here,” said Jason. “I am getting in shape by walking too” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-22-15). Jason thought that despite the fact that there was a lot of poverty in Cusco, he thought people there ate healthy and exercised more. Jason mentioned that people in Cusco were friendly and that it was very easy to establish conversation with the locals. He described one opportunity he had in which he conversed with a local vendor in one of the markets. The vendor sold typical paintings from Cusco. One afternoon, Jason asked for a price and then ended talking to the vendor for nearly one hour. Jason described this experience as unique and empowering. He felt proud of himself for being able to talk with this person. Jason also believed Peruvians spoke slowly and clearly. Based on that, Jason thought that Peru and particularly Cusco was the best place for him to practice his Spanish.

Jason enjoyed his time in Cusco. He also was taken aback at the overwhelming poverty he saw. “Even [when walking] to school sometimes I would see these houses that were just completely destroyed,” said Jason. “I’d see people living in them.” (self-reflection). Jason also said he did not understand why there were several abandoned dogs walking in the streets. Jason did not like the traffic in Cusco and how everyone drove. He could not understand why there
were not more accidents given the way in which everyone drove. Jason also realized that people in Cusco lived with much less than in his own hometown; however, Jason explained that people from Cusco seemed to be happier. He also recalled his visit to the children’s hospital. He added, “It was a humble experience.” (self-reflection). During his visit to the children’s hospital Jason spent an hour talking to the children in Spanish, he also had the chance to take one child out on a wheelchair (field notes, 5-25-15).

The school experience. Jason thought his experience, as a student at the language school in Cusco was unforgettable. Jason believed his language teacher was an expert in teaching the language. Jason did not remember another time attending a language class for approximately four hours of total immersion in which he had to hear and speak the language constantly. Jason thought the school was very well organized and that he really learned and reviewed things he had learned in the past. Jason expressed his opinion about his school in Cusco during his second interview, while at the abroad site, “Being a student here is fantastic, I cannot describe it better than that.” Jason also explained that before the trip he thought very poorly of his command of Spanish. Indeed, during the oral placement test abroad the first day of school he scored really badly. He explained that he was not happy with the level of class in which he had been placed. However, after his first week of immersion he asked to be evaluated again and he moved up to the right level of Spanish. Jason mentioned that just a few days in Cusco living and interacting with the language and culture had influenced the view of his Spanish language skills in a more positive and optimistic way.

Facing new challenges. For Jason the biggest challenge took place during the first two days. He felt terribly homesick as he missed his girlfriend’s birthday. Jason shared that he happened to see pictures of the celebration on Facebook and that he was deeply affected. Jason
said he did not enjoy the cultural activities very much that day because of how he was feeling. “I wanted to be back home just for those four hours to be with my girlfriend,” said Jason. “I was homesick” (in-depth interview 3, 6-8-15). Jason remembered his host mother asking if he was okay and did he want to share how he was feeling with her in Spanish. Jason’s host mother fixed a nice dinner for him that night.

**Language Gain Experience**

In this second theme for Jason, he shared that he had never really used Spanish outside the classroom in the US. Jason clarified that he did not have friends who spoke Spanish with whom he could have established a conversation. On the other hand, once at the abroad site, Jason was first motivated to begin using his Spanish with his host family. Jason went from not using Spanish to putting his Spanish to constant use. “I’ve never put my Spanish to use,” offered Jason. “I have no choice at the abroad side” (in-depth interview data 2, 5-22-15). Jason’s personal belief on how to learn influenced his decision to start using Spanish abroad,

> I’ve always been an adamant believer [that] if you throw yourself in something you’re [going to] be able to learn it pretty easily. That’s actually how I learned most of the things I know today. That is how my dad taught me to swim. He pushed me in the pool and I just had to fight for my life and that is [also] how I learned how to install and do the jobs that I’ve been on… (in-depth interview data 2, 5/22/15)

**Exposure gain.** Jason’s belief on how he learned what he knew influenced his willingness to use Spanish at the abroad site. His personal belief about learning in general geared and influenced how he approached the learning of Spanish abroad. Jason found opportunities to jump in while at the abroad site and he did just that. On the other hand, Jason was also aware that
he was not able to find similar opportunities after class back in his hometown college. Once at the abroad site, Jason understood that an opportunity had come up for him to practice what he knew and he did not let it pass. The exposure for Jason brought the opportunity he could not find in his hometown.

**Recalling practice.** Jason was forced to practice what he had learned in his hometown college classroom at the abroad site. Jason not only was forced to remember what he had learned but also he was memorizing new vocabulary and new customs of the culture (field notes, 5-25-15). Jason also expressed that being abroad provided him the opportunity to increase the number of new words and expressions that made more sense used in conversation rather than out of a textbook. Jason suggested that memorizing and remembering were two important components in learning another language. He explained how he felt about recalling at the abroad site: “I had to do it, I was forced and I forced myself to remember” (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-8-15).

**Thinking in Spanish.** Jason learned from his host mother who at times would correct his grammar and taught him how to use the language properly. On one occasion, his host mother and him spent almost two hours discussing sentence structure and the use of tense. That night, Jason went to bed and dreamed about the Spanish phrases he had practiced with his host mother. Jason indicated that he had never dreamed in Spanish before. He thought it was strange but he felt good about such an event. Jason compared the experience to a digestion process: “I had learned so much talking with my host mother that I digested it while sleeping” (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-8-15).

**Communication practice.** Jason had several examples in which he was able to communicate in Spanish for long periods of time. Jason first thought about the evenings when he and his host mother talked.
I mean I spoke to my [host] mom for probably two hours a night. So I got to know my [host] mom very well and she got to know me and we talked. Our most recent conversation was about me wanting to join the Peace Corps after I get my masters. We just kind of bantered back and forth about the pros and cons of joining the Peace Corps. She did not know any English so the entire time I was with my host family all I could speak was Spanish and if I tried English she wouldn’t understand it. This happened every night for at least two hours our longest one was probably three or four. (in-depth interview 2, 5/22/15)

According to Jason, his conversations with his host family in particularly with his host mother were remarkable. Jason talked about everything with his host mother. With almost two years of Spanish he was able to discuss serious topics for long periods of time. Jason had not found these types of opportunities back in his hometown. During these conversation sessions at home in Cusco, Jason practiced speaking and listening in a way he had never experienced before. Jason was amazed and impressed with how he understood his host mother and how she understood him in Spanish. Jason’s host mother’s feedback was positive and influential to motivate him to talk and not be afraid of making mistakes (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-22-15; field notes 5-25-15).

**Language familiarization gain.** Jason got used to the language and the culture by the end of the first week in Cusco. After five days he felt adapted to the altitude and food and it was no longer a problem for him. Jason believed that getting used to the different customs in Cusco also helped him to get used to the language. For instance, he described a time when he and two other peers went to visit a friend who was sick. During this time, he was impressed on how comfortable he felt going to somebody’s house (that he did not know) and interacting in Spanish
in such a natural and spontaneous way. Jason was getting used to the language, “Using Spanish everyday is almost like a common practice for me and my friends” (field notes, 5-21-15).

**Language Performance Experience**

The fourth theme for Jason is language performance experience. In this theme, Jason shared his story utilizing Spanish while completing specific language tasks.

**Negotiating taxis.** Jason thought that taxi drivers were nice and kind in Cusco. He also believed that it was impressive how much he was able to talk during the 10-15 minute taxi rides. During one of his first taxi experiences, Jason found himself negotiating the price and explaining where his house was located. He used a couple of names of nearby places to explain his destination. Jason said, “I must have given proper explanation and directions in Spanish, the taxi driver took me home,” recalls Jason. (self-reflection). The only problem was that he got so caught up with the excitement of talking to the driver in Spanish all the way home that he forgot to ask for his change back. The next morning during the debriefing session with the rest of the group members Jason told the story in a positive way: “Make sure not to get so excited that a taxi driver can understand you that you forget to ask for your change” (field notes, 5-29-15).

**Interacting at the post office.** Jason was very excited about the assignment of going to the post office to send a postcard. Of all the activities entailed to complete this language task, he recalled taking forever trying to select the right postcard for his girlfriend. He mentioned that he asked for help from the vendor who suggested more than just one postcard. Jason shared how he was embarrassed for using the word *estampas* for *stamps*. He said he found that word in a dictionary. However, the person selling stamps was very kind and corrected him by teaching him how to pronounce it properly (the correct Spanish word for *stamps* was *estampillas*). Jason
commented that the second time he went to the post office his performance was better and that he used the right word to get stamps and he was successful sending the postcards.

**Interacting at the pharmacy.** According to Jason, his first pharmacy experience went very badly. He explained how the pharmacist could not understand what he was asking for: “He [said] ‘I don’t know what you are trying to say (no comprendo lo que dices).’” (self-reflection). Jason needed Pepto-Bismol and apparently the pharmacist could not understand what he needed. Jason pointed out his stomach and said in Spanish *estómago alpaca* (to let the pharmacist know his stomach was hurting from eating alpaca meat). According to Jason, his stomach pain contributed to his lack of success in communicating what he needed. Later on, during his second visit to the pharmacy, Jason prepared in advance to order medicine for headaches and for allergies. Jason commented that the second time his experience went well and that the pharmacist was able to help him.

**Daily food buying.** Jason enjoyed visiting several restaurants during lunchtime. He learned a lot of vocabulary words and how to describe different food items. Jason liked the several food options and particularly the lunch menu known as *menú del día*. He described most restaurants had boards outside their main door that indicated the *menu del día* price and dish selection. Jason walked around and made his selection according to the type of food included and price. The *menú del día* included a soup choice, an entrée choice, a dessert choice and a complimentary drink. Jason indicated that ordering meals was very difficult the first few days of the trip. He felt a little nervous to see unknown dishes; however, he was surprised of how healthy the food was. Jason described his conversations with the servers to be very clear. He felt most of the servers were patient and took time to answer his food questions. Jason said that ordering food was much better the second week as he knew more about the dishes, the people and the
language. Jason shared that in the US he could never remember how to say bread in Spanish.

While in Cusco he stated that it was easy for him to remember the word *pan* for bread, as he had to ask for it every day (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-22-15; field notes, 5-25-15, 5-29-15).

Additionally, Jason commented that during one afternoon cultural visit to the Sacred Valley of the Incas, and after talking to the bus driver, he was convinced to try guinea pig meat and alpaca meat. Although the experience was unforgettable, Jason regretted eating both meats at the same time as he did not feel well for a couple days. “The *cuy* [Quechua word for guinea pig] experience was awesome,” remembers Jason. “Our driver really convinced me to try alpaca meat too. It was hard to say no to him in Spanish” (self-reflection).

**Language Confidence Experience**

In the fifth theme Jason shared his fears at the abroad site and how he experienced language confidence as a process. Jason’s only fear before participating in the study-abroad experience was not having enough Spanish to being able to communicate with Spanish speakers. He had apprehensions regarding talking to native speakers as he did not have the chance to speak much outside the classroom in his hometown. Jason described his experience at the end of the program as being life changing. He felt he had become a different person as a result of the experience. Although he made efforts to recall and think in Spanish, he reported having moments in which he would not be able to say or hear anything. “There are times in which my mind goes blank when I’m speaking Spanish to people,” said Jason. “That happens because I don’t have enough experience speaking it” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-22-15).

**Perceptions on self-ability.** Jason decided to participate in the experience abroad because he felt it was the time for him to participate. He had attempted to go abroad a few times in the past before the Cusco experience and at the time he felt that he was not ready to leave the
country. Jason described a few personal activities that had help prepare him for the Cusco experience like volunteering at his local college and his full-time job. Jason had never left the US and his family before, but his personal belief in learning had enabled him to participate in the experience. Jason was raised to believe that learning was like swimming, he saw himself jumping in the abroad experience the same way he learned how to swim (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-22-15).

Perceptions on language ability. Jason’s only fear before the trip was in direct relation to his Spanish-language skills. Jason was afraid that he was not going to be able to communicate with people at the abroad site. “Before the experience,” says Jason, “I was a complete different person. I thought my Spanish was limited” (self-reflection).

“I didn’t really have too much faith that I’d actually be able to communicate as well as I did for hours on end,” remembers Jason. “I did not believe in my abilities.” Jason experienced a change in his self-efficacy perceptions influenced by the different language experiences at the abroad site. Jason experienced a process of improvement as he described. Jason recognized that the abroad site provided opportunities to discover his language abilities and his real level of a language. Jason also believed that he could go back to a Spanish-speaking country and be comfortable (in-depth interview data, 6-8-15).

Case Three: Hannah

“This is a new place, this is a new set of people, this is like nothing you’ve experienced before and it can be a little scary but I think just putting yourself out there and exploring the new life and culture will change you forever” (in-depth interview data, 4-30-15)

Preparation Experience
In the first theme for Hannah, she shared how she prepared to participate in the program. Other than attending the pre-orientation sessions, Hannah did not want to do anything special or any extra activity to prepare for the trip. She explained she had enough traveling experience that she did not think extra preparation was necessary. Hannah commented that she enjoyed the pre-departure orientations because she was able to interact with peers as well with her future study-abroad leader. Hannah’s previous experience in Mexico had been very influential in her decision to go again to a Latin American country. However, she explained that at the time of her trip to Mexico she only had one year of Spanish. She believed the experience in Mexico was different. She remembered being very frustrated with language and culture differences while in Mexico. She was also younger and less experienced. Conversely, for the Cusco, Peru trip, Hannah had accumulated international experiences that had assisted her to stay prepared and ready (pre-departure essay, in-depth interview 1 data, 4-3015).

Feeling nervous. Hannah shared that the only concern she had was that she would not be able to remember the Spanish that she knew while abroad. She provided details about her previous trip to Spain where she had episodes of not remembering the language and not understanding what people said to her at all. She suggested: “This is the only thing that makes me a little nervous, I do not know how Peruvian people are with foreigners, I hope they don’t get impatient if they don’t understand my Spanish” (pre-departure interview data, 4-30-15). Her previous experience in Spain influenced how Hannah felt with regard to her trip to Peru. According to Hannah, when native speakers did not understand what she said in Spanish her level of frustration would rise while in Spain. She also commented that she would hope that in Peru she would do better than in the past.
**Meeting peers.** Hannah commented that she found it necessary to meet her peers before the trip. She recalled the activities planned to get to know her peers were wonderful. She had such a great time asking and answering questions during the pre-departure orientation sessions. Hannah thought that the partner assignment -- to take pictures of her hometown to show them to their host family in Cusco -- gave her the opportunity to realize that the trip was fast approaching. She also realized that her previous traveling experience was helpful in providing answers to questions her peers had about the trip. One important point about meeting her peers for the trip Hanna found important was to discover that not everyone had the same level of Spanish and that not everyone had the same major or educational goal.

**Warming up Spanish.** Hannah shared that she did not have the chance to practice speaking Spanish outside the classroom for almost a year. The only Spanish-language review she had previous to the trip was attending her regular classes. Although she felt like it was important to review, she simply did not do it. She recalled that during the pre-departure orientation sessions, one of the guest speakers had shared ways of reviewing the language. She recalled taking notes and making plans to put into practice some of those techniques but at the end she did not put any of those techniques into practice. She added, “I am busy with school, my job and my life, I am gonna have to just go with the Spanish I remember” (pre-departure in-depth interview data, 4-30-15).

**Immersion Experience**

In the second theme of immersion experience, Hannah talked about her first impressions abroad. “After a couple of days is when you are kind of getting settled and then you’re kind of getting used to your daily routine…” (field notes, 5-21-15). Hannah’s previous experiences traveling to Europe and Mexico assisted her in making arrangements to wait to settle in Cusco
after the first two days. Hannah knew that by Monday she would be ready to go to school and to start her new routine in Cusco. Hannah asserted that according to her personal experience, that was the average time to get settled in a new place and culture.

**Living with the host family.** Hannah had waited with expectancy for the time when she would finally meet her host family. She mentioned that she was glad the program included home stay instead of going to a hotel or student-housing facility. Hannah expressed that living in a hotel had taken her away from the culture in her previous trips. She was not going to do it this time in Cusco.

I think one of my favorite parts about being here is being with my host family because I think there’s something really valuable about when you stay in a culture with a host family. It’s not this hotel touristy thing when you’re secluded in that but this is their real life. This is their Cusco and they know it. This is like this is their city and so it’s been really exciting to hear stories about Peru and their favorite parts and their different experiences. They know the city better than anyone and they help me use my Spanish daily. (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-24-15).

Hannah also believed that her host family was her first language support. She explained that when she had any doubts or any questions about interacting with Spanish in the community she found answers from her host family.

**Living in the new culture.** Hannah described Cusco as an incredible and beautiful city. She said that one of her favorite activities was walking around the streets of Cusco and talking to vendors. Hannah explained that she was willing to learn about the new culture and that she took
every opportunity to experience the customs in Cusco. For Hannah the learning of the culture started at home with her host family.

I think you learn to appreciate the differences that our cultures have but at the same time you also see how similar we are. Just watching my host family; they have the same kind of routine that my family has: The parents have to wake up the little kids in the morning and [are] tired coming home from work. (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-24-15).

Hannah understood that despite the differences she found with her American culture at the abroad site; similarities between Peruvian and American cultures did exist. Hannah was much like a sponge when it came to learning about the new culture and language at the abroad site.

Hannah’s previous traveling experiences had shaped her maturity in adapting to a new culture and going through the process of adaptation in a more flexible way. Hannah said that she was impressed by the simple lifestyle in Cusco. She commented that people lived a very simple life. She observed them taking the bus or going to places walking. In addition, she witnessed families cooking fresh meals every day at a very low price. She shared that her abroad experience helped her grow as a person. She experienced reverse culture shock upon her return to the US. For example, she had a hard time seeing the amount of food that was thrown away at the restaurant where she worked.

**The school experience.** Hannah shared that she had really enjoyed attending language school in Cusco. Her previous experience learning Spanish in the US was remarkably different from the type of teaching she experienced at the abroad site.

A: Please tell me about your school and Spanish classes here in Cusco.
H: I really enjoy the classes because they're really small and so you get one on one attention. It's way more interactive then my high school classes back in the States. I think because it's interactive you can’t just sit in the back of the class and barely get by. You are learning whether you are trying to or not just because you have to be involved in what’s going on. So I really appreciate that and the teachers are amazing.

A: Could you please explain why you think your teachers are amazing?

H: Because I think they're genuinely interested. What we get out of this -- all the students and the teachers – [is that] we all come from different countries and they're always interested in what we have to say about where we come from and they're always happy to share about their culture and so that has been really interesting.

A: Tell me about the class here compared to the States

H: Well I definitely prefer having a small class [as opposed to] a 30 something class. Especially when it comes to language because that’s not something you can just take notes on and get by it's an interactive learning experience and I think that’s the only way that you're gonna learn. Real learning is by interacting and contributing. (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-30-15).

Hannah was aware of the need of more interaction in order to practice and learn the language. She found opportunities to interact with others in her small classes in Cusco. She explained that learning Spanish involves not only interacting in class with others, but also contributing ideas and participation to complete projects and to help make the class more interactive.
Facing new challenges. Hannah also shared that she found no challenges at the abroad site except for one time when she took the public transportation bus and her cell phone was pick pocketed. Hannah expressed that the bus was crowded and that she thought she was watching her backpack. She thought it was her fault that her phone was stolen and did not cry or call home to report the loss. Hannah also mentioned that the tour teacher recommended everyone to go back home by taxi and not by bus. She expressed that she should have know better. Additionally, the issue of her stolen cell phone was a real topic for conversation with her host brother and sister. They tried to console her and reminded her not to take public transportation at night. Hannah took a few minutes to share this experience in her Spanish class the next day and her teacher also gave another short lesson on how to travel in Cusco.

Language Gain Experience

In the third theme of this study Hannah talked about her language gain experience. Before the trip, Hannah thought that the study abroad experience was too short to learn anything. However, by the end of the program she expressed that she was surprised to see how much she had gotten out of the trip: “I mean you’re not [going to] become fluent by the end of the 19 days for sure but you learn more than what you think; I know more than when I came so I think that’s worth it” (field notes 5-29-15).

Exposure gain. Hannah commented that at the abroad site she was forced to take risks using the language. She recalled her first time taking the bus to go to school when she had to talk to the bus driver to make sure it was the right bus. The driver confirmed it was the right bus and she felt a big relief. Hannah said that one interesting aspect of the study-abroad experience, in addition to the language learning process, was the exposure to the culture. Hannah realized that there were things that did not make any sense in the textbook if compared to the real world.
Hannah also realized that the real world was very different from what she had read in her textbook. Hannah also said that she had found occasions in which she realized she had made a language mistake but the native speaker still had answered her question. “It is fascinating,” recalls Hannah, “when I speak and I know I am making a mistake but still my host dad answered me back in Spanish, he made the effort to figure out my mistake…” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-30-15; field notes, 5-22-15).

**Recalling practice.** Hannah was amazed at the amount of Spanish she remembered at the abroad site. She clarified she was not able to remember everything she learned in the past, but she remembered enough to be able to communicate. There were times, however, in which she could not remember words or phrases or tenses and got a little frustrated. Hannah explained that in Cusco her Spanish had come back to her as she attended school in the mornings and immersed in the culture and language the rest of the time. She indicated that recalling and remembering was in constant practice in Cusco and that she felt the more time she spent in Cusco the more she was able to remember (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-3-15).

**Thinking in Spanish.** Hannah shared that one of her ultimate goals in learning Spanish had been to be able to think in Spanish. She remembered one time when she was looking for food in the refrigerator and was not able to find the cheese she immediately asked her host mother, ¿Mamá dónde está el queso? Which in English means *Mom where is the cheese?* Hannah realized that she did not even translate the question in her mind, she shared that this was an automatic question because she was able to think in Spanish. Hannah also noticed that when it came to short answers, questions or descriptions her responses had been automatic in Spanish. Hannah added that being aware of the presence of the language and living in a home where
everybody communicated in Spanish assisted her to think in Spanish with short utterances (self-reflection, in-depth interview 3 data, 6-3-15).

**Communication practice.** For Hannah communication was very important, she always looked for opportunities to talk with vendors in the market and stores. She described that she felt like she wanted to talk in Spanish as much as possible to get rid of the frustration she at times had when she was not able to understand or say something clearly in Spanish. Hannah was one of the participants that was fond of talking to different people. At times her peers had to encourage her to finish her conversations due to other scheduled activities. Hannah shared that learning Spanish was synonymous with becoming able to converse with native speakers. She also said that the most difficult part of learning Spanish was to develop an ear to understand. Hannah explained that by the end of the second week her listening had improved tremendously to the point that she was able to follow what people were saying on radio stations. She admitted she did not understand every single word, but she noticed she was able to understand more than what she could before the trip.

**Language familiarization gain.** Hannah explained that being where the language was spoken gave her opportunities “to put herself out there.” Every morning Hannah woke up with the desire to hear more Spanish and to learn more about the culture. She waited with expectancy for the activities planned. She mentioned that she got very used to hearing and speaking Spanish every day. Hannah noticed that by the second week speaking Spanish almost became a normal activity for her. She was amazed that she felt speaking Spanish was a normal part of her life for at least a short period of time. Hannah also indicated that little by little she was getting used to Spanish and that she was also getting used to not using as much English (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-24-15).
Language Performance Experience

In this fourth theme, Hannah shared about her language performance experience. Hannah was surprised to hear about the different language tasks assignments scheduled for the abroad site, “I thought for a minute: Why do we have to complete assignments? In my mind, I was thinking worksheets and online homework…” (pre-departure interview data, 4-30-15). During a discussion with her group at one of the pre-departure orientation sessions, one of her friends explained to her that the actual assignments were activities in which she would have to use the language in Cusco. When Hannah realized the scope of the language tasks assigned for Cusco she felt thrilled to be able to complete these activities; she was not used to completing hands-on activities in her language classes.

**Negotiating taxis.** Hannah started to take more taxis at night after her phone was stolen on the bus. She was surprised how safe and cheap taxis were in Cusco; she just did not like how people drove in Cusco. “The taxi drivers really expect you to talk and they ask questions and tell you about their lives,” said Hannah. “The drivers at times do not stay in their lanes.” (self reflection). Hannah believed her performance negotiating the taxi prices were difficult at times. She did not mind paying one or two dollars equivalent to Peruvian money, but she knew bargaining was expected and she bargained by obligation at times. Hannah mentioned that she learned a great deal about Cusco by riding in taxis. The drivers shared names of places and at times even shared history. Hannah thought that talking to taxi drivers in Cusco was an enriching experience not only for the information received, but also for the language practice opportunity.

**Interacting at the post office.** In her self-reflection Hannah described that her visit to the post office was unusual. First, she was not prepared with exact change to pay for the stamps. She then had to go to a local bank to get change. She explained that despite the unusual walking and
time invested she was able to complete the task of sending her postcards. Hannah added that her conversations at the post office and bank were short. She also indicated that Peruvians were kind and attentive at both places. Hannah shared that the use of Spanish was concise and specific at the post office. Hannah remembered that during her years of study of Spanish she had completed a few assignments that included writing and sending postcards in the textbook. Hannah explained that despite the shortness of the activity, the actual visit to a real post office made an impact and provided her with a more real experience.

**Interacting at the pharmacy.** The day Hannah went to the pharmacy she was experiencing some allergy symptoms. She was stunned that her conversation with the pharmacist was almost like a doctor’s visit. The pharmacist took her temperature and explained to Hannah what her symptoms were. Hannah indicated that the pharmacist prescribed her medicine and she followed the pharmacist’s advice. Hannah’s visit to the pharmacy lasted about half an hour and she came out with the medicine she needed. She could not believe that she was able to find this type of service in a local pharmacy. Hannah reported that her Spanish was very useful during this interaction; however, she had to look up the medicine names online to make sure she was asking for the correct medication. The next morning, Hannah consulted with the doctor available at school and he confirmed what she received was according to her symptoms.

**Daily food buying.** Hannah purchased her food everyday for lunch at different local restaurants. She recalled the first time she bought lunch she was with two other friends. She indicated that in her conversations with the server she used questions addressing the formal form of the second singular personal pronoun, ¿usted puede ayudar[me] a mí por favor? (can you help me please?). Hannah said she did not expect her formality to be corrected in a restaurant. The server asked Hannah to address him with familiar form of the second singular pronoun, por favor
tráteme de tú which in English means please address me in familiar form not formal. Hannah said that it took her a few seconds to process the server’s request at the restaurant. Later on, she discussed with her friends at the table, “The book says we have to use formal forms for the first time” (field notes 5-29-15). Hannah shared the incident the next day and the teacher explained that if the server looked young there was no need to address him or her with the formal form of the second singular personal pronoun.

**Language Confidence Experience**

In the fifth theme of the study Hannah, shared about her language confidence experience. Hannah’s confidence using Spanish improved after the program. Hannah recognized that staying where the language was spoken provided her with opportunities to build her overall confidence. Hannah’s four years of previous Spanish and her traveling experience assisted her in preparing for the Cusco program.

**Perceptions on self-ability.** Hannah was aware that the experience abroad had helped her grow as a person. She stated that seeing differences in her cultural immersion had contributed to enriching her as a person. Hannah’s belief that: “The study abroad experience offered opportunities for personal improvement.” She continued to remain confident after her experience in Cusco.

My experience abroad was really unexpected in a really great way. I fell in love with the culture, the people, in ways that I didn’t think I was going to. I mean you learn so much. And every new experience that you have like that [allows you to grow] as a person and you get to see life and appreciate life in a different way because you’re living in a culture that is so different than yours. Like nothing you’ve ever experienced before. (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-3-15).
Hannah’s perception of her abilities to participate in a study-abroad program had been shaped before in her previous trips. Hannah came to Cusco with a solid belief in her traveling abilities based on her previous experiences.

**Perceptions on language ability.** Hannah’s fears for not being understood in Spanish went away slowly at the abroad site. She explained that as the days passed her confidence in her communication skills improved and she felt more relaxed to take risks in speaking the language. Hannah also commented that never in her entire life had she spoken that much Spanish. She felt very accomplished with her experience abroad. One particular issue she highlighted was the results of the online language exam the participants took before and after the trip. Hannah’s score on her after-trip language exam was slightly lower than the pre-departure score (See Table 5 for CAPE scores). She commented that she was not a good test taker yet she was able to recall hours of full immersion using Spanish in real life situations.

**Case Four: Trisha**

“I didn’t think I was gonna learn that much at all for two weeks, and a few days is not a long time at all, but I guess it’s different because you are actually consumed in the language and you have to use it” (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-3-15)

Trisha’s participation in this nineteen-day study abroad experience was influenced by the support of her mother. Trisha had never left her home, nor she had traveled (other than with her family); she had only crossed the border to a neighboring state near her hometown once during a summer family vacation. Trisha’s aspiration to learn another language and immerse herself in another culture was also influenced by her international business interest. Trisha was a dedicated student; her grades were excellent, and she regularly did very well in her Spanish classes.

**Preparation Experience**
In the first theme of the study, Trisha shared about her preparation experience. As far as preparing for her first abroad experience, Trisha dedicated time to attend all the pre-departure orientations; her mother helped her attend these and not miss a single session. In addition, Trisha’s lack of experience as a traveler was the number one reason for her perseverance to attend all the pre-departure orientation sessions.

**Feeling nervous.** Trisha shared that, although she did everything possible to remain calm during the pre-departure orientation sessions, she experienced great levels of anxiety about leaving the country for the first time.

> Um, I was really really nervous before the trip because I’ve never left the country before and, um, we had met and you were telling us about all these medicines I should bring just in case I get sick, and so I was nervous about getting sick, um, I was nervous about getting homesick really. Um, and then also like I was nervous I would get there and I would hate [it] and I would want to come back … other than that I was also excited, but I was like kind of we’ll see how it goes when I get there... (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-3-15).

Trisha had a very positive view of her Spanish skills. Having completed almost two years of Spanish courses, she thought her Spanish was good. She enjoyed studying it at the college level and always obtained excellent grades. Trisha thought that her writing and reading in Spanish were very good, at least for her level of language experience. Nonetheless, Trisha thought that her speaking ability was not good enough for her level. She also felt nervous about not being able to speak while abroad: “When I get in situations where I have to speak Spanish I get really nervous and I tense up and I forget everything, so I am really nervous” (pre-departure in-depth interview, 5-4-15).
Meeting peers. Trisha found the pre-orientation sessions to be very helpful. She mentioned that meeting her traveling peers was important for her as an inexperienced traveler. Meeting peers, interacting with them, and talking about the trip helped ease her fears and anxiety about traveling. Trisha recalled the very first orientation session, in which she had to introduce herself and share her travel experience. She indicated that she felt terribly bad when she had to share that she had never traveled before. Conversely, she was surprised and happy to hear that she was not the only one without any travel experience.

Warming up Spanish. Trisha indicated that she did not want to study any additional time to prepare to go abroad. She thought that studying extra Spanish would instead make her feel more nervous about the experience. She did not want to take time to study or prepare with additional practice. She mentioned that her only practice was that she sometimes watched her favorite cartoons in Spanish, with English subtitles, at night. As she was aware of her speaking fears and difficulty, following one of the pre-departure orientation sessions, Trisha adding occasionally watching cartoons to her weekend schedule. She also explored a few pictures related to Peru, although she indicated that she did that only once and only for one hour. She wanted most of the trip to be a surprise and did not want to even do the pre-departure homework that included using Google maps’ street-view feature to tour the city.

Immersion Experience

In the second theme of immersion experience, Trisha talked about her arrival abroad. Although Trisha was excited at times about the experience, she also felt afraid to go far away from her family, particularly her mother. Just before leaving the airport, she cried so hard that she could not contain it. Trisha’s mother was her support from whom Trisha received the strength she needed to take the first step into the airplane. Once in flight, Trisha started to write
in her journal, which helped her relax and soon she was able to fall asleep (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-26-15; field notes, 5-21-15).

**Living with the host family.** Upon her arrival in Lima, Trisha was very tired and really did not want to eat anything, so she rested while waiting for the next connection at the airport. Upon her arrival to Cusco and after meeting her host mother, she was comforted; she indicated that her host mother greeted her in Spanish and was very kind, calling her *mi hija* (“my daughter”). The warm welcome relieved Trisha so much that she almost felt like she was truly going into a new home with people who cared for her. After getting settled into her hosts’ home, she was invited to dinner, where Trisha had the opportunity to meet all of the members of the host family. Trisha started to forget she was away from home and really felt safe and was glad to be there. Trisha’s first language experience at the dinner table was exciting; she was able to enjoy her first Peruvian dinner while practicing her Spanish.

**Living in the new culture.** Trisha recalled walking around Cusco with her host parents for the first two days. Her host dad taught her how to take the bus and how to walk and cross the streets. Trisha’s host dad accompanied her the first two days of classes and showed her the bus stop and how to recognize important places. Trisha thought local people in Cusco were very friendly and kind; most of the time when she looked for something, she found people who would give her directions and try to help her. Trisha explained, “Cusco is a nice place, the culture and history are everywhere … I did not imagine Cusco to be this pretty … I would like to explore more like going to the Inca market more often” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-24-15). Trisha was a little nervous thinking about the new culture, but once in Cusco and with the support of her host family, peers, and school, she started living and enjoying the culture.
Trisha had heard of culture shock before traveling abroad, but she had never really experienced it before. She thought that people were happy in Cusco and was amazed how people were able to enjoy life and be happy despite not having as much in terms of material wealth as people in the U.S. Trisha commented that, although her host house was beautiful, she still saw how simple life was overall. She described that her host brothers and sisters came home every day to eat lunch together; they then rested a bit before going back to work. Trisha commented she wished she had the same schedule and opportunity back in her own country.

The school experience. Trisha believed that formally learning Spanish was important. Her language school in Cusco was a great experience for her: “I’m so excited to go to school here. The classes are amazing, and the language games are awesome. I don’t remember ever playing and laughing so much while learning Spanish” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-26-15). Trisha explained that the games in class were very interactive, and everyone participated. Trisha asserted that the people in her classroom were serious about learning. She was impressed with how much everyone contributed during the games. She learned a lot during her classes, which were intensive and enabled her to learn new things every day. Trisha commented that, with four hours of Spanish class every day, there was a lot to learn.

Facing new challenges. Trisha’s major challenge overall was her fear to leave home for the first time. Trisha explained that the immersion experience went well overall due to the people she had around her during the trip; without these people, she did not believe she would have been able to stay. Her host family, her peers, her school friends, and teachers were key to helping her overcome her fears to the overall experience. Trisha recalled, “The second day of classes my host dad walked with me to school, but I remembered I was not feeling that nervous or anxious
Language Gain Experience

Trisha’s belief of the importance of learning formally in school was beneficial when attending her Spanish classes in Cusco. Moreover, she commented that attending school in the morning and then exploring the city in the afternoon helped her so much because she was able to use the language she had learned or reviewed during the morning. Trisha shared that, initially, it was somewhat difficult to express herself in Spanish, but after the third day in Cusco, she felt a little more confident using Spanish at home and at school. Her language teachers were also very encouraging and continuously motivated her not to be afraid to talk and use Spanish with native speakers as much as possible (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-26-15; field notes 5-25-15).

Exposure gain. Trisha recalled spending one afternoon with her host mother. Initially she decided simply to rest, but when she heard her host mother in the kitchen, she went down to the first floor to talk to her. Trisha was happy that her host mother was making one of Trisha’s favorite drinks: chocolate caliente (“hot chocolate”). Her host mother made her a cup, and they sat and chatted for almost two hours about different topics. According to Trisha, her host family was very respectful and did not invade her privacy, but she noticed that she had to reach out and leave her comfort zone to go to where her host mother was in order to spend time with her. Trisha explained that she had the choice to stay in bed, but she was glad she did not: “In Cusco I learned to come out of my comfort zone in order to practice the language and to meet people … I can’t imagine hiding in my room the entire time, but I was tempted to do it at times when I was tired” (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-10-15).
Recalling practice. Trisha kept a journal of all the new things she learned in Cusco, writing about her reflections of her cultural experience. Keeping a record of and remembering new words were also a part of her days in Cusco. Trisha mentioned that she learned new words by reading signs on the streets. There were times when she stopped and said to herself, “I have seen this word ... I know this word.” When she could not remember the word, she would write it on her journal and look it up later. Her favorite activity was the vocabulary games at school, when she and her classmates practiced vocabulary words for different daily life activities (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-10-15; field notes 5-29-15).

Thinking in Spanish. According to Trisha, she was challenged to think in Spanish every day. She admitted to not having had the chance to practice thinking in Spanish before her study abroad trip. Trisha recognized her limited travel experience affected her ability to travel to a Spanish-speaking country and speak to native speakers:

… in my mind, I first use the words that I know in Spanish and when I cannot remember how to say something, I switched back to English and then translated into Spanish. It is hard to think in Spanish. I wish I had the practice, but I’m trying every day. I have the chance to do so here.” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-26-15)

At the immersion site Trisha, was aware of the importance of learning how to think in Spanish. She recognized that she was not yet able to think in Spanish, but at the same time she recognized that she had opportunities to practice thinking in Spanish at the immersion site.

Communication practice. Trisha’s worst fear was not being able to communicate in Spanish. Her first serious conversation with her host family at dinner time helped her realize that native speakers were able to understand most of what she said in Spanish. Trisha admitted that
she did not know how much she was able to hear and understand: “My listening was pretty bad in the U.S. I feel like my ears are now able to understand better” (self-reflection). Trisha made an effort to use her Spanish in Cusco. She was determined to practice when she found opportunities. In order to communicate well, she had to concentrate on the other person and pay attention; she would avoid distractions when talking with her host parents at home.

**Language familiarization gain.** Trisha shared, “I love being surrounded by Spanish. I do not know that I would like to go back to my regular classroom in the U.S” (self-reflection). Hearing Spanish everywhere did not bother her; she got used to hearing and using Spanish after arriving in Cusco. Trisha explained how much she looked forward to returning home every night to be with her host family during dinner. Trisha’s language experience in Cusco benefited tremendously from the interactions with her host family.

**Language Performance Experience**

In the fourth theme, Trisha talked about her language performance experience completing specific language tasks. Trisha’s language performance abroad helped her practice listening and speaking, which she believed were her weakest language skills. She strongly believed that her writing and reading skills in Spanish were much better than her listening and speaking skills. Although she had to do some reading and writing in Cusco, her listening and speaking were the main skills that she practiced on a daily basis.

**Negotiating taxis.** Trisha shared that she “freaked out” the first time she had to take a taxi by herself. Although she was taught where and which taxis to take, she was still nervous because she had never taken taxis in the U.S. After taking her first taxi and arriving home safely, she immediately called her mother in the U.S. to let her know about her success. “I was so proud
of myself that I wanted to tell everyone one about taking a taxi in Cusco for the first time … I posted it on Facebook” (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-10-15).

**Interacting at the post office.** Trisha was very nervous to go to the post office; she commented that she generally would not go to the post office in the U.S. and had minimum experience using its services. At the post office, Trisha was observed speaking to a police officer. She had her postcards in her hand and showed them to the police officer, who guided her to the first line to purchase the proper stamps; the police officer also indicated where to go next. The entire conversation was conducted in Spanish. Trisha later commented, “I had no idea he was a real police officer. I thought he was the security officer, but he was kind and directed me where to go—but he spoke very fast” (field notes 5-29-15).

**Interacting at the pharmacy.** Trisha explained that she visited two different pharmacies before completing the assignment to buy medicine. During her visits, she walked around the pharmacy to see what pharmacies were like in Peru. Trisha commented, “There are drugstores on every corner in the city … people get what they need anytime here” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-26-15). Trisha’s interaction at the pharmacy was very successful, although she commented that she was not able to find the shampoo she sought. She also explained that the pharmacist gave her directions to a nearby grocery store where she could find the shampoo. Trisha commented that she did not feel embarrassed by the pharmacist’s suggestion; she felt good that she understood what the pharmacist said.

**Daily food buying.** Trisha was fascinated by the variety of dishes and exotic fruits she found in Cusco. She shared her experience visiting the local and biggest food market in Cusco. During this visit with her Spanish class, she purchased fresh juice made from a combination of several local fruits. The vendor explained to Trisha the different varieties of Inca fruits in
addition to the fruits with which Trisha was familiar. She recalled her conversation with the juice maker and explained that she took note of several new names of fruits she had never seen before. She found buying lunch to be a fun activity when she did it by herself. She commented that buying food with friends was very difficult as the server had to explain and answer questions for everyone and their time before they needed to attend the afternoon activities was limited. Trisha followed the recommendation of the servers and, to stay on the safe side, she ordered a variety of soups. She avoided salads and fried dishes. Trisha commented, “I enjoyed exploring different types of soup. My favorite one is sopa de quinúa con verduras (‘quinoa soup with vegetables’)” (self-reflection). Her one-on-one conversations with the servers provided excellent Spanish practice; at times the conversations were short, and at other times they lasted the entire time she was at the restaurant.

**Language Confidence Experience**

In the fifth theme of language confidence experience, Trisha shared how her confidence to speak the language experienced transformation. Trisha recognized a change in her beliefs in her ability to speak Spanish at the immersion site. She explained that she went through a process of growth that lasted nineteen days and left her with the desire to continuing growing. Trisha’s strong beliefs in her writing and reading Spanish skills gave her the impulse she needed to start practicing her speaking ability in Spanish.

**Perceptions of self-ability.** Trisha’s self-efficacy experienced a transformation at the study abroad site. She believed that traveling to Cusco helped her build stronger confidence in her personal abilities overall. The experiences she lived, the challenges she overcame, and her frustrations and successes all influenced her, resulting in a change in her views of her personal capabilities.
Even though it was just a little over two weeks, um, but on the way back it was such a great experience that I promised myself that in the future, if I ever have a decision that is really hard to make, I’m always gonna make the hardest decision. So like if I feel like [it would be] easier just to stay rather than go, I’m always gonna go … Sometimes making the hardest decision causes that you have the best of experiences. Um, that’s definitely something that I learned … I feel like I’m the type of person that always plays it safe, like I was too afraid to leave. I almost thought about not going after I got accepted because I was too afraid to leave. (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-10-15)

**Perceptions of language ability.** Trisha’s belief in her speaking and listening abilities in Spanish were transformed while she was abroad. Trisha explained that not having opportunities to practice speaking in a real world or with native speakers had influenced her previous belief that she was not good at speaking Spanish. Such a lack of opportunities helped shape her negative belief about her speaking and listening abilities.

Because my host family had been complimenting me on how much I’ve learned but, um, that definitely made me realize that I could probably keep doing this and get a lot better. Because I never thought that I could do that. I didn’t think my Spanish was that good—to be able to actually have like a deep meaningful conversation—but I did and, I mean, there [were] a few times where she [the host mother] had to clarify what she was saying to me because I couldn’t understand—but, I mean, it wasn’t more than two or three times. (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-10-15)
Trisha’s self-efficacy perceptions related to her language ability were influenced by the opportunities she encountered to utilize the language abroad. Her personal beliefs about her capabilities to learn Spanish abroad were influenced by the variety of experiences she had and by immersing herself in the language and culture. Trisha learned that, in order to change at the immersion site, she had to come out of her comfort zone, thereby placing her in position to put her language skills into action.

**Case Five: Henry**

“I was very well prepared for the grammar, I had studied grammar a lot, there was no new grammar covered for me abroad, but I realized our college in the U.S. doesn’t teach as much speaking as they did in Cusco” (in-depth interview 3 data, 6-11-15).

**Preparation Experience**

In the first theme of this study, Henry shared about his preparation experience. Henry was a sixty-six year old retired military veteran who had also worked for a prominent company as a corporate manager. Henry had several years of experience in traveling around the world; he had traveled to five continents and had been to several Spanish-speaking countries. With this strong traveling background, Henry thought that he was more than prepared for his nineteen-day study-abroad experience in Cusco, Peru.

**Feeling nervous.** Henry admitted that he did not have any particular fears regarding the trip. He was not nervous or anxious; rather, his only concern was the altitude of Cusco and how to best avoid altitude sickness. During the pre-departure sessions, Henry actively participated by asking questions. On his own he investigated several possible ways to avoid altitude sickness. Physically, Henry was in very good shape, but he was cautious and wanted to prepare accordingly.
Meeting peers. Henry was happy to participate in the pre-departure meetings. He soon realized that was the oldest and most experienced person in the group, but he did not allow either his age or his experience to rob him of the experience. He demonstrated a very humble attitude, attended all orientation sessions, and completed all requirements along with the rest of his peers. Henry thought that meeting his traveling peers before the trip was a great idea; he interacted with them and completed all the group and partner assignments. At times, Henry thought his younger peers would look at him as an example, and he made a strong commitment to participate the best he could.

Warming up Spanish. Henry commented that as an engineer he had to examine language, particularly grammar, to understand concepts. His intense language preparation for the trip was rooted in his continuous study of Spanish. He was studying his first semester of intermediate Spanish (fifth semester of Spanish) at the time of the trip. He was aware that a lot of the spoken language was too fast for him, so he had been studying diligently to be ready for his abroad experience. Henry was a dedicated student and had excellent grades in the class. Very often he mentioned, “I have to study more hours to be able to compete with the young kids” (field notes, 5-18-15).

Immersion Experience

In the second theme of immersion experience, Henry shared about his experiences upon his arrival at the abroad site. Henry commented that he was particularly interested in living with a host family in Cusco and that this was one of his motivations to go to Cusco. He explained that living with a host family would give him the chance to practice and better learn the language.

Living with the host family. Upon his arrival to Cusco, Henry’s host father (who was about his age) picked him up at the school. Henry commented that his host father was a very
interesting man. Henry described him as an energetic person who, as a tour guide, knew a lot about Cusco and the Incas. Henry indicated that on his very first day his host father took him out for a walk and showed him important parts of the city. Henry was excited to stay with this particular host family, “I’m very impressed with the organization of the school here in Cusco, and they matched all of us with [an] almost similar host [family as] the ones we come from …” (field notes, 5-21-15).

**Living in the new culture.** Henry described the people of Cusco as friendly and kind. He was impressed with the level of altitude at which the city was built and how the entire city was built upon the earlier constructions of the Inca Empire’s constructions. Henry believed that adapting to Peruvian culture was not difficult, but rather easy. He mentioned that most of his initial contact with the real culture began at his host family house.

Henry did not share experiencing any culture shock during his experience in Cusco. From his first day of arrival in Cusco, Henry had an excellent relationship with his host family. His extensive travel background and excellent athletic condition aided Henry in not having any issues with the altitude of Cusco.

**The school experience.** Henry indicated that his experience at the language school in Cusco was very different from his experience in the classroom in the U.S. He thought the classes in Cusco were faster paced and the teachers challenged the students to use more Spanish in the classroom.

That’s my sense because you [at the U.S. college] have to teach us grammar ... And the school here doesn’t. The classes offer explanations in Spanish. Ask a question and you get the answer back in Spanish … They use Spanish to define a concept as in your classes [in the U.S.] you guys have to use English to define the
Henry enjoyed being challenged in the classroom and expressed his preference for having the entire language class in the language that was being taught. As an intermediate student, Henry was aware of some of the most difficult grammar tenses in Spanish. Thus, he enjoyed practicing those tenses in the classroom through the full-immersion teaching style.

**Facing new challenges.** Henry explained that the only big challenge for him was actually a good challenge. Henry was afraid to be placed in a class that was not appropriate for his level. That is why Henry commented that he was glad to be in the class in which he was placed.

[Name] is a very good student, [name] is also great, there is also a woman from Holland she is even better; I am in a very good class. So I am just hanging out, I mean it is a challenge, but good challenge. It helps me to study more and to learn more from my peers and teacher … (field notes, 5-21-15).

**Language Gain Experience**

In the third theme of language gain experience, Henry described his experiences acquiring Spanish abroad. Henry had asked himself whether he could learn Spanish in such a short period of time. He forced himself practice the language on a daily basis as much as possible. Henry thought that his host family was a great resource for learning and practicing Spanish. He shared that, at night after dinner, he often spent several hours with them chatting and talking about several different topics.

**Exposure gain.** Henry suggested that his level of Spanish and knowledge of the culture were put to test at the abroad site. He commented that he was glad to complete some of the video
lessons on culture and history before the trip. Once at the abroad site, armed with his reading and writing skills and previous knowledge, he had the opportunity to be exposed in the real world. Henry was glad to have come on the trip, as he was able to use what he had learned previously in a more active way (self-reflection).

**Recalling practice.** Henry described himself as the type of person that followed the rules, which is influenced by his engineering disposition. Henry was used to looking for patterns and connecting the dots. His previous knowledge was key to building on new things he had been learning in Cusco. He suggested that his memory problems, in reference to things (words, grammar) he tended to forget, were related more to age than a willingness to remember. Henry also shared that the moment he decided to study Spanish a few years ago, he knew he would be competing with young kids so he had to do his best to remember the things he had learned. At the study abroad site, Henry made great effort to remember the things he had learned in the past.

**Thinking of Spanish.** Henry explained that thinking in Spanish was a very hard activity. He assured that he was in the process to be able to do it, but he felt he was not there yet.

What I do is I cover up the Spanish word and read the English equivalent to practice. It is very easy to translate from Spanish to English, [but] it is more difficult to do it from English to Spanish. This is the type of practice I use to be able to improve my vocabulary and to force myself to think in Spanish. (field notes, 5-24-15)

Henry had studied Spanish for almost five semesters before going on the trip and he was aware of the difficulty of thinking in Spanish. Henry also stated that during the cultural activities he was able to hear more Spanish, which allowed his ears to open to the language. Henry
believed that allowing his ears to open to the language would also assist him in practicing thinking in Spanish.

**Communication practice.** Henry’s goal while participating in this experience was to develop his communication skills, basically speaking and listening. For this purpose, Henry often engaged in conversations with native speakers on the streets, markets, and school.

In one of the shops in the shopping area, near the trains, there was a woman there with a one-month old baby and I wasn’t buying anything, but she and I talked for forty-five minutes about different topics. I also started talking to the daughter about [her] school homework and found out that she plays volleyball … all in Spanish but I kept it simple. I used short sentences present tense, past tense, thinking slow … (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-27-15)

Henry learned to follow the advice of one of his U.S. professors who told him to use Spanish as much as he could but to keep it simple. Henry said he did not worry about using the Spanish subjunctive. He was able to survive with the present and past tenses.

**Language familiarization gain.** Henry shared that at the abroad site he found all kinds of opportunities to stay familiar with the language, “There are so many opportunities to hear Spanish, you hear it a home, in the streets and almost everywhere … Spanish becomes part of you and part of your day-to-day routine.” (field notes, 5-24-15). Henry did not struggle with the amount of Spanish available in Cusco; Henry’s expectations to learn the language helped him accept that Spanish was the norm in his new immersion home.

**Language Performance Experience**

In the fourth theme of language performance experience, Henry indicated that he completed all the language tasks according to the program. He described participating in the
different language tasks as a very important component of the class’s movement away from traditional homework to more real-life experience assignments. He also denoted that he was at the study abroad site not to shoot for the stars or to impress anybody, but to practice and to improve his language skills at his own pace.

**Negotiating taxis.** Henry took a taxi just a few times in Cusco and was able to negotiate his price very well. Henry shared that he preferred walking to school as it provided a better view of the city and better allowed him to learn the culture. He was able to establish short and serious conversations while riding the taxis at night. Henry recalled that the taxi drivers were usually friendly and spoke clearly to him. His conversations with the taxi drivers were interesting, but always short (field notes, 5-29-15).

**Interacting at the post office.** Henry was one of the first ones in the group to find and visit the closest post office to the language school. He commented that his experience in sending the postcards was very easy and simple. Henry enjoyed paying for his stamps, and he recalled completing the activity in Spanish and was able to clearly converse with the cashier at the post office. Henry commented during the exit interview that after almost twenty days, the postcards had not yet reached their final destination (self-reflection).

**Interacting at the pharmacy.** Henry shared that visiting a drugstore in Cusco was not difficult. Henry mentioned that he had found the customer service to excellent and that he was able to purchase the medicine that he needed. Henry remembered that the only trouble he had while at drugstore was the particular Spanish pronunciation of the names of the medicines. Henry indicated that he learned to be careful how to pronounce medicine names during his second drugstore visit. Henry also stated that for the first part of this assignment he received three soles (Peruvian currency) to go to the pharmacy.
“I went to the pharmacy and bought some band aids …but when I was at the pharmacy I pointed out to the box because I did not know [what] to call it in Spanish…” (self-reflection). Henry recalled that when he walked into the pharmacy he pointed out to the box and said in Spanish, “¿Cuánto cuesta?” (How much is this?).

**Daily food buying.** Henry stated that during lunch he enjoyed different places and foods. He did his best to talk to his servers or the greeter at the door of the restaurant. Henry described his lunch experiences as positive as he was able to try food that was cooked fresh for the day. Most of the time, his servers were very helpful and he was able to ask questions and make a selection with their help. Henry was observed reading attentively through the menus and then taking the time to ask questions regarding his selection in Spanish. Henry was very respectful and had good rapport with his servers, who were in return very attentive to him (field notes, 5-29-15).

**Language Confidence Experience**

In the fifth theme of language confidence experience, Henry reported that his confidence in using the language started to change as he began to use more Spanish in the real world. Henry described how, when he spoke with native speakers, he felt motivated and engaged. Henry’s host father also described Henry as a very well-educated man with clear Spanish pronunciation. Through his years of study, Henry had developed a sense of confidence in his abilities, and as long as he was able to build patterns and connect the dots (according to his engineer’s disposition) he was able to figure out the language process.

**Perceptions on self-ability.** Henry went to the study abroad site with strong perceptions of self-efficacy, as his previous extensive traveling experience and his previous careers allowed him to develop confidence in his abilities to participate in this short sojourn. Henry was never
afraid to participate in the study abroad experience; he came into the program knowing that his goal was to become more immersed in the culture and learn from it. Participating in the short sojourn added to his personal perceptions of self-efficacy, “I noticed my confidence has improved especially when I speak with my host father.” (in-depth interview 2 data, 5-25-15).

**Perceptions on language ability.** Henry’s views of his personal ability to use Spanish abroad improved from his experience abroad. Henry commented that his ears had improved for Spanish; in other words, Henry’s listening skills had improved, as he was able to hear and understand more Spanish due to the immersion experience. Henry also shared that he had found that, by keeping it simple, he was able to speak more and with less tension. He realized that in the Spanish-speaking world, he did not have to make things complicated for himself with difficult tenses and conjugation. He successfully communicated with others while in Cusco, he understood what he needed, and others could understand him. While Henry shared that he felt he had done and performed well with his Spanish in Cusco, he also felt that he could have done better and was also aware of his limitations.

Additionally, Henry shared that his grammar scores on the post-trip test were lower than the pre-trip scores. Henry expressed that, at times, his computer test-taking skills might not be one of his strengths. Nonetheless, he felt like he successfully engaged in long conversations abroad.

**Cross Case Analysis: Comparison and Contrast**

Presenting a cross-case analysis refers to the analysis of findings across the five cases presented. Following a multi-case methodology for cross-case analysis, the purpose of this section is to report upon the comparison and contrast across the five individual cases (Stake, 2006). In the first section of this chapter, I presented all five cases (Evelyn, Jason, Hannah,
Trisha, and Henry) by providing an in-depth description of each. These in-depth descriptions have been situated across all five categories or themes and sub-themes that have emerged from the data. In this second section, following an introduction of all five cases, I present a cross-case analysis of all five cases within the five related categories: preparation, immersion, language gain, language performance, and language confidence experiences, as well as the sub-categories shared. Within this section, I also address a key question about what these cases must be suggesting in relation to language focused study abroad programs.

The Five Cases

An important trait across all five cases was the commonality of being Spanish-language students attending a two-year, open-access college. Each case belonged to a different level of Spanish, except for two (Hannah and Henry who were at the intermediate level). Hannah had more years of Spanish experience than all the cases including Henry. All cases, except Henry, reported an interest in becoming fluent in a second language to be utilized for future career goals. Henry’s goal to learn Spanish was to complete an unaccomplished past goal that he was able to pursue as a retiree. Hannah and Henry had traveling experience before their participation in the study-abroad experience. Evelyn had traveled once to Puerto Rico for a few days; Trisha and Jason had never left the country. Of the five cases presented in this study three were women and two were men; additionally four were Caucasian and one was African American.

Preparation Experience

Across all five cases, preparation was a common factor. All participants were identified doing something in order to prepare for the experience abroad. Pre-departure orientation sessions were an important part of the preparation, according to all participants. These orientation sessions were identified as “supportive,” “informative,” “necessary,” “key,” and “well-
prepared.” Pre-departure orientation sessions, as a pedagogical practice was an important component of the short sojourn. These sessions were viewed as an important component of the actual abroad program and their practice demonstrated effectiveness when prepare with anticipation.

**Feeling Nervous.** All five participants reported different levels of “feeling nervous” regarding going abroad except for Henry. Henry came to the program with several years of traveling experience which had enabled him to have strong self-efficacy perceptions compared to the other participants. Trisha and Jason had never left the country; they both had hesitations about being away from home. Trisha’s greatest fear was to go “too far away” from her mother. Although Jason did not have traveling experience, he felt prepared to go on the trip based on his previous volunteering activities and current job. Evelyn had the opportunity to travel to Puerto Rico for a few days before her Peru sojourn; this experience had provided her with some preparation. Hannah had traveled before to Europe and Mexico and she reported not having preparation issues with regard to the travel experience to Peru. The cases previous traveling experiences was key for stronger confidence and self-efficacy in participating in study sojourn.

Jason, Trisha, and Evelyn reported feeling nervous about not being able to communicate in Spanish once at the abroad site. Hannah reported feeling nervous for not being able to remember what she needed to communicate once at the abroad site. Hannah reported that part of her nervousness was related to previous experiences in which she felt frustrated when unable to communicate clearly. Despite his traveling experience and before the sojourn, Henry also communicated that “oral communication” could be problematic for him at the abroad site. He expressed this nervousness generally as: “I feel nervous about . . .” “I’m nervous,” “I think I’m nervous” and/or “It makes me nervous.” All these expressions of his reported nervousness were
associated with his perceived language ability, particularly, the ability to communicate orally in Spanish.

**Meeting peers.** All five participants agreed upon the importance of meeting their traveling peers before the experience. The participants believed that interacting and getting to know each other before the trip would strengthen the group and would facilitate a more supportive group. Trisha and Jason indicated that because they had never been outside the US they felt that meeting their peers before the trip through pre-orientation sessions instilled in them the feeling of support and even allayed some of those fears. Evelyn, Hannah and Jason expressed that meeting their peers before the trip was essential and looked forward to getting involved in peer assignments in order to get to know everyone better.

**Warming up Spanish.** For some of the participants, reviewing Spanish was a regular feature in their Spanish classes. Not all the participants took part in reviewing Spanish outside of class as helpful. Hannah and Trisha reported doing minimum Spanish language review before the trip. Hannah did not do additional review other than attending her classes. Trisha revealed that she practiced watching Spanish cartoons in hopes to improve her Spanish before the trip. Jason, Henry and Evelyn reported taking the time to read, study or practice Spanish in addition to school work. Evelyn downloaded a phone application to practice more Spanish. All five participants were enrolled in Spanish classes and had to be responsible for their class obligations. Not all of the participants were in the same class. Hannah and Henry, however, were both in intermediate Spanish class.

**Immersion Experience**
All five cases reported experiencing the immersion setting upon arrival in the country. The first common place of experience of the immersion setting for the first time for all cases was the airport in Lima, where all the cases had the first encounter with the language and culture.

**Living with the host family.** At the immersion site the first source of language support for all five participants was the host family. Additionally, it was reported that the host family provided protection, care, accommodations and emotional support for all five participants at varying levels. The participants’ Spanish-language skills were immediately tested upon meeting the host family. The family represented the first scenario where all five participants were invited to freely use the language. It has been reported that all types of inhibitions, fears and nervousness (associated with the use of Spanish) were confronted first in the host house and with the support of the host family members, primarily the host mother. The role of the host family was preponderant to support the success of language learning abroad as exemplify across all five cases. The role of the host family was described by the participants as “important,” “necessary,” “knowledgeable,” “impressive,” “warm,” “welcoming,” “enjoyable,” “supportive,” “clean,” and “approachable.”

**Living in the new culture.** The new culture provided context for the abroad experience for all five cases. Interestingly, the impact of the new culture was different for each case. Evelyn, Trisha, and Jason discovered more of the new culture as they walked around the city every day. Hannah reported learning about the differences and similarities between the culture in her host family and the culture in her US home. Henry found the culture present everywhere he went in Cusco. Common phrases or words used to described the new culture included, “friendly,” “open,” “unique,” “empowering,” “different and also similar,” “kind,” “not difficult but easy,” “makes me a better person,” and “safe.”
Four participants reported some sort of culture shock or reverse culture shock. Henry did not report any; this could be attributed to his extensive experience traveling. Jason’s culture shock occurred when he saw extreme scenes of poverty, including homes in bad condition. Evelyn reported culture shock after learning about the inexpensive cost of living compared to her hometown. Trisha and Hannah could not believe how people had little but were happy. The participants who went through the process of comparing their American and the Peruvian cultures experienced culture shock. Hannah experienced reverse culture shock upon her return to the US. The study abroad site produced culture shock particularly on those who did not have much experience visiting other cultures.

The school experience. All five participants agreed that attending language school in Cusco was an important component in boosting their confidence and supporting their language learning. Across the five cases the language school played an important role in providing concrete review and practice to daily face the immersion experience outside the classroom. The participants also agreed that the teaching methodology implemented abroad was more interactive and was completely in Spanish; there was no English mentioned during classes. The language school abroad was also a place of support and where students were encouraged have no fears when using the language. Key descriptors and phrases identified in relation to the language school experience included: “a dream come true,” “I love the school,” “everyone participates,” “everyone speak Spanish in class,” “I did not know I could talk in Spanish for long periods of time,” “enjoyable,” “different,” “less grammar oriented more speaking,” “less test oriented,” “laid back,” “intense,” “real immersion experience,” “expert teachers,” “very interactive,” “conversational,” “encouraging,” “the best experience ever,” “do your best in the placement test,” and “feel free to practice Spanish.”
Facing new challenges. Challenges were common at the abroad site; despite the language level or traveling experience no one was exempted from challenges. For all participants every day brought new challenges from simple to complex, as days passed, every participant reported that the challenges were less intimidating. Evelyn was not able to operate a simple shower. For her, learning to operate a new shower system was a challenge that she needed to face on a daily basis. Jason experienced higher levels of homesickness at the beginning of the experience. Hannah’s new cell phone was stolen while taking a bus on her way home. Trisha’s biggest challenge was her fear to leave the country for the first time. Henry wanted to make sure he was placed in the right class with the right level of Spanish. The specific examples of challenges were in direct correlation to the amount of traveling experiences of all cases. Previous traveling experiences seemed to lessen the amount of difficulties and challenges. Additionally, pre-orientation sessions may have been helpful in easing the number of challenges among all cases.

Language Gain Experience

The issue of whether there was actual language gain abroad in only 19 days of study in Cusco was experienced by all participants first-hand. Traditional views of language gain (the amount of grammar knowledge, number of tenses, conjugation and out of context vocabulary) were not reported by the cases. Although the formal Spanish classes at the language school in Cusco included review of grammar, the teaching pedagogy emphasized communication and oral skills. The participants, as insiders, reported several aspects of what they considered important components of language gain in the process of language learning abroad. Language gain as reported by the cases included: exposure gain, recalling practice, thinking in Spanish gain, communication gain, and familiarization gain.
**Exposure gain.** All participants reported that *exposure gain* was an important component provided at the abroad site. All participants concurred that in a regular US classroom there was not exposure to the authentic language and culture as it was in Cusco. For Evelyn, exposure provided the opportunity to feel “openness to the language.” For Jason, immersion provided opportunities “to jump in the language freely.” For Hannah, exposure allowed her to discover that learning from a textbook was not the same as immersing in the language. She became more analytical in Spanish. For Trisha, exposure provided opportunities for her to “come out of her comfort zone to practice the language.” Henry was happy to have found opportunities to practice oral language through the exposure found abroad. Exposure gained abroad helped each case with developing language skill by being involved in language and culture activities on a daily basis.

**Recalling practice.** Across all five cases *recalling practice* experiences was reported as another aspect of the language-gain theme. All participants concurred that at the abroad site there were lots of efforts to remember what had been learned before the trip and during the trip. The participants were forced to execute *recalling practice* in order to become effective communicators with native speakers every day all day. Although there was not parody with regard to the level of Spanish-language confidence, the issue of “making a conscious effort to remember Spanish” was a new skill that had to be practice abroad. While in the participants’ US classrooms they had to be able to remember new words and grammar, at the study abroad site, however, recalling learned language became a more aggressive task, which had to be practiced as part of the daily routine.

**Thinking in Spanish.** All participants discovered the need of learning how to think in Spanish. All cases reported finding opportunities to practice “thinking in Spanish” while living in Cusco. However, not all cases were able to think completely in Spanish. The level of Spanish
and time studying and practicing the language were key factors to influencing higher levels of thinking in Spanish. Each case exercised thinking in the second language on different occasions and at the participants own pace. One important aspect of learning to think in a second language, according to all participants, was that “thinking in Spanish” could be practiced at any level of language knowledge at the immersion site.

**Communication practice.** Another language gain across cases was the development of communication skills. The participants agreed that at the abroad site there was a substantial amount of opportunity to practice listening and speaking. The participants experienced a process of development as their listening and speaking skills began to evolve while abroad. The immersion site provided myriad opportunities to engage in authentic conversations on a one-on-one or group level. Evelyn, Jason, Hannah and Trisha encountered opportunities to face their fears of speaking Spanish. Before the sojourn experience, they were afraid of not being able to be understood by native speakers. Henry one of the most experienced travelers had to discover his level of conversation language while living in Cusco.

All participants had not had the chance to practice much speaking in college back in the US; therefore, they were not able to discover their real Spanish-speaking level as it was revealed in Cusco. Moreover, all five cases reported experiencing the phenomenon of being “pushed” and “forced” to speak at the abroad site. All five cases discovered speaking Spanish was integral in surviving abroad; thus, becoming a good communicator to survive abroad was a daily practice in Cusco.

Further, while experiencing the language daily, all five cases realized that to become good communicators, understanding “every single word” they heard abroad was not necessary. A common awareness of improving their listening and speaking skills over their reading and
writing skills were reported by all five cases. Several descriptors in reference to improving listening and speaking skills included: “my ears are being opened,” “I listen more here,” “I even understand what they say on the radio,” “Peruvians speak slowly and clear,” “I hear Spanish everywhere,” “I need to speak daily,” “speaking is important here,” “when I speak I keep it simple,” “I’m learning to concentrate on what the other person says,” “I was able to discuss serious topics during long periods of time,” “I receive verbal feedback from my host mom,” and “learning about the culture makes you a better speaker.”

**Language familiarization gain.** Another important language gain abroad across all cases was familiarization. All the participants experienced familiarization with the language or “getting used to the language” as part of the language-gain process. The participants agreed that in their language classrooms back in the US there was very little familiarization because there were no opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom. The cases were able to experience living with the language and getting used to the language in accordance to the level of Spanish each participant had. There was further impact on the language-learning process abroad when all cases learned to incorporate the target language as a natural part of their daily routines.

**Language Performance Experience**

All participants were required to complete specific language tasks in order to put into practice their language skills. Although language practice was available daily at the abroad site, participants were given specific language tasks to promote the use of language in specific real-world scenarios.

**Negotiating taxis.** All participants concurred that taking taxis in Cusco was an enriching experience that provided both language and culture gain. All the cases were given opportunities to practice taking a taxi in Cusco and were expected to follow the local tradition: establishing a
conversation with the taxi driver. All five cases reported an initial challenge taking taxis and negotiating prices; however, time and rehearsal made a difference. By the second week, taking taxis showed a marked development of skill. All cases reported proficiency in completing the task of taking a taxi.

**Interacting at the post office.** All cases reported visiting the local post office where they were able to get involved in the process of sending a postcard. The cases not only employed the language but also allowed the participants to follow social rules established in the community for these particular scenarios. Implementing language tasks in the immersion setting provided opportunities for all language learners to practice the language beyond the traditional worksheet or handout, generally overused in language classes.

**Interacting at the pharmacy.** From the analysis and presentation of cases it was apparent that four of the five cases found language opportunity practice at the pharmacy. At the pharmacy, pronunciation challenges were encountered, the medicine terminology provided challenges for all participants. There was a level of sophistication and difficulty to pronounce medical terminology and the names of medicine were not necessarily the same in English and Spanish. One case was not able to utilize the language as the pharmacy was reported to be extremely busy.

**Daily food buying.** All participants agreed that purchasing food every day and interacting with servers at different restaurants were tasks that provided a great source of language practice as the use of new vocabulary was called upon. All five cases also agreed that buying food at local restaurants as part of an assignment allowed the participants to learn social norms applied to restaurants at lunchtime. All five cases reported learning about food traditions and practiced reading board (menu) signs outside restaurants that listed prices and food
description. An increased level of expertise in food selection was observed across all cases by the end of the abroad sojourn. Immersing in the culture and language had demonstrated being a “process.” The more time and the more the task was repeated, the better each case became at performing it.

**Language Confidence Experience**

All five cases experienced an increased level of self-efficacy improvement at the abroad site. Evelyn, Trisha, and Jason all shared apprehension regarding going abroad due to the lack of previous traveling experience.

**Perceptions on self-ability.** The immersion experience and their personal lived experiences in Cusco enabled them to reshape their beliefs in their capabilities to participate in similar programs. Evelyn and Trisha were considering traveling abroad again for a longer period of time. Hannah and Henry came to the abroad site with previous backgrounds of language and traveling experience, both claimed the experience reshaped their beliefs in their personal capabilities. Hannah and Henry developed a stronger sense of confidence in their own abilities.

**Perceptions on language ability.** One important aspect of the immersion sojourn even though the experience abroad was short was the positive influence on self-efficacy. All five cases discovered their real language abilities abroad. All five cases were required to utilize Spanish abroad and were invited to come out of their comfort zones to use the language. Evelyn, Trisha and Jason discovered how much Spanish they really knew while living and interacting with their host families. Hannah reaffirmed her knowledge of Spanish as she was able to communicate without frustrations. Henry was able to discover that he did not have to over think when using the language. He was able to communicate effectively by keeping it simple and by not stressing with trying to impress the native speakers.
The self-efficacy perceptions to learn Spanish abroad among all five cases experienced a process of transformation over the 19 days of full immersion. One key factor observed in this change was the amount of utilization of Spanish at the abroad site. There was a strong demand to use Spanish while at the abroad side and thus the participants all reported that their collective confidence in utilizing Spanish had grown over the course of the 19-day sojourn.

Summary

In this chapter, I present the findings of the analysis of five focal cases: Evelyn, Jason, Hannah, Trisha and Henry. Through the implementation of phenomenological case study design the analysis of the gathered data assisted the emergence of five themes and nineteen sub-themes: 1) preparation experience (feeling nervous, meeting peers, warming up Spanish), 2) immersion experience (living with the host family, living in the new culture, the school experience, facing new challenges), 3) language-gain experience (exposure gain, recalling practice, thinking in Spanish, communication practice, language familiarization gain), 4) language performance experience (negotiating taxis, interacting at the post-office, interacting at the pharmacy, buying food), and 5) language confidence experience (perceptions on self-ability, perceptions on language ability).

In the second section of this chapter, I presented cross case analysis of the reported findings emphasizing comparison and contrast across all five cases. This analysis revealed several commonalities and differences across all cases. I presented comparison and contrast across cases following themes and sub-themes. Within each section, I provided several examples through quotes reported by the cases to elucidate on the theme or sub-theme presented. These examples contributed to the completion of the thorough cross case analysis for this chapter. In the next chapter, I present the conclusions and implications pertaining my study.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

My research study was designed to examine and explore five focal participants’ perceptions of their own self-efficacy with respect to learning Spanish as a second language during a short-term, language study-abroad program. From a Self-efficacy Theory perspective, I implemented a phenomenological case study design as explained in Chapter 3. Following the design for this study, I presented five cases to illustrate how focal participants responded to their experiences during the study abroad.

In this chapter I attend to two issues. First, I present conclusions in relation to the four research questions that directed this study. I answer the four research questions from the evidence presented in chapter four. I also present a discussion of implications for: students interested in short-term language study abroad, short-term language study-abroad programs; faculty who lead short-term language study-abroad programs; those who want to do language teaching in an immersion program; short-term language study-abroad program assessors; and, those who carry out research on short-term language study-abroad programs. Finally, in the second and last section of this chapter, I present recommendations for future studies providing suggestions and directions for research in the following areas: short-term language study-abroad programs; student learning outcomes for short-term language study-abroad programs; self-efficacy perceptions on language learning abroad; research focus on the role of the host families and home stay experience; and, research focus on cultural awareness and cultural norms abroad.

Answering the Questions
Question 1: What do students believe about their own abilities to acquire Spanish as a second language in a full-immersion setting?

Across the five focal participants, previous traveling experience influenced abilities to acquire language abroad. Thus, participants who had previous travel experience exerted stronger beliefs in self-abilities (personal abilities) to immerse in the abroad site and to acquire the second language abroad. Among these experienced participants, previous traveling provided opportunities to immerse in other cultures and to learn how to communicate in a culture where English was not the dominant language. Across the five focal participants, I found that previous traveling to other cultures provided opportunities for participants to more easily learn the vagaries of new cultures and to learn how to negotiate between the first culture and the target culture.

Consequently, those focal students who did not have previous traveling experience displayed apprehension regarding their ability to cope with the immersion experience in addition to speaking the target language abroad. I found that if given the right support, these students were able to improve their self-efficacy perceptions and their abilities to cope with the study-abroad site and acquire the language abroad. Support was a key factor for these non-experienced travelers to be able to overcome their fears and to believe they were able to succeed in the immersion and language experience.

The support abroad for these participants generally came first from the host family, then the language school, next the group of peers and finally the study-abroad leader. For all focal participants, living with a host family provided care and a sense of security. Living in a home where they could speak and practice the language freely provided an excellent source of support that aided the language learning process. Additionally, attending full-immersion language classes
everyday for four hours helped the focal participants discover their abilities to interact in the target language for long hours with other peers and local instructors.

Furthermore, I found that focal students who exhibited fears and a sense of low self-efficacy regarding their language ability, generally felt that way due to the fact that they had not encountered opportunities to test their language skills in a real immersion setting prior to the experience. For all the participants, the immersion setting, as a natural environment, offered several opportunities to interact with native speakers or with other proficient speakers. Once all five focal participants had the chance to put into practice the language they knew, they began to discover their real language abilities; then, they began experiencing a change of self-efficacy perceptions. The participants’ beliefs in their own abilities to learn Spanish abroad exhibited positive change as long as they kept trying using the target language. Once the participants discovered they were able to learn and use what they knew through oral communication, their beliefs in their personal abilities improved.

Still, I found that the immersion setting had an influence on the participants as language learners, this influence was present at all times abroad. The participants received input in the target language and culture on a daily basis. The participants as language learners put into practice the language they knew as they began to interact, live and survive abroad. At the abroad site, the real language level of the participants unfolded enabling them to use what they knew. Even participants with minimum language knowledge were able to begin communication with their basic language skills. Some participants realized that they did not have to understand one hundred percent of what was said and that sometimes communication kept simple could flow very well.
The five focal participants’ beliefs in their capabilities increased incrementally as they continued to use more of the language and as they continued to come out of their comfort zones. For these participants, operating out of their comfort zone was an important practice to become successful speakers.

**Question 2: What are students’ perceptions of their performance utilizing the target language to complete specific tasks?**

I found that the five focal participants were nervous when it came to involving themselves in activities that were usually performed by native speakers at the abroad site. I also found that it was necessary to provide opportunities to practice similar activities for the participants at the abroad site. These activities entailed engaging in native-speaker activities in which the participants could utilize the language in short encounters and build confidence from the experience. Short conversation encounters with native speakers were designed to help ease anxiety problems.

What Bandura (1989) identified as *mastery experience* (a person improves his or her self-efficacy beliefs based on previous successes completing a task) took place at the abroad sight. The more participants were involved in completing a task, the more they could build their expertise in the task and the language required. For the five focal participants, previous successes completing a task helped provide opportunity to complete the same task at a higher level; thus, improving self-efficacy beliefs. When completing tasks abroad, the participants indicated that the more they practiced specific language tasks the more proficient they became in performing those tasks. Episodes in which learners had to take taxis, buy food or medicine improved tremendously during the second week relative to the first week.
The completion of language tasks, however, did not only depend on *mastery experience* alone. The participants as language-learners abroad also were able to complete language tasks by observing others complete the same tasks (*vicarious experience*). At the abroad site, learners are able to complete the tasks by observing native speakers complete the same tasks. When visiting public places like the post office or pharmacy, for example, native speakers (as language and culture models) performed the social norm and the participants followed the models. The more participants understood the social norms and customs they were successful in completing language tasks. Consequently, the focal participants’ knowledge and understanding of culture were important to become successful speakers.

Another important component of the participants’ perceptions of their performance completing language tasks abroad was receiving feedback and encouragement from teachers, peers, and/or host family members (*social persuasion*). Receiving encouragement and feedback before and after the completion of a task abroad assisted the five focal participants to perform language tasks successfully. The participants’ self-efficacy beliefs were influenced abroad particularly when the individuals were involved in completing particular tasks, in this case, language tasks.

**Question 3: What are students' perceptions of their self-efficacy to acquire Spanish as a second language while participating in a short-term language study-abroad program?**

For the five focal participants, self-efficacy perceptions to acquire Spanish abroad were influenced by the amount of language and culture contact they experienced abroad. Each participant brought his or her personal set of self-efficacy perceptions to the abroad site. Thus, I found that previous participants’ experiences utilizing Spanish influenced self-efficacy
perceptions for language-learning abroad. Participants’ successful contacts with the language and culture greatly influenced positive self-efficacy perceptions to acquire Spanish abroad.

Participants who went to the immersion experience for the first time, arrived abroad with doubts and hesitations regarding their Spanish-language skills. These participants, who came from traditional language schools in the US, brought solid knowledge of grammar, conjugation and vocabulary (which was learned at times out of context). These students came abroad with previous reading and writing preparation in the target language. Conversely, their speaking and listening were not as strong. At the abroad site, where the concentration was on speaking and listening, these participants were challenged to practice a set of language skills that have been dormant. The main task at the abroad site was to wake up their speaking and listening skills. The participants abroad rapidly discovered what they could not in the US, they were able to understand and communicate little by little. The participants began building strategies that best work for them to initiate conversations with native speakers abroad. Thus, for the five focal participants self-efficacy perceptions experienced a process of change that by the end of two weeks crossed over from “I don’t think I am able to communicate with native speakers,” to “I enjoy talking to my host family.” The participants’ self-efficacy perceptions were influenced by the abroad experience, particularly by the language and culture contact opportunities provided to all participants.

**Question 4: How do students’ perceptions on their self-efficacy influence their Spanish learning abroad?**

Self-efficacy perceptions influenced the five focal participants’ learning of Spanish. Self-efficacy beliefs direct academic success and student accomplishment (Bandura, 1989). I found that participants who believed they did not have sufficient skills to learn the language limited
themselves and did not advance in learning the language. These participants needed to be given opportunities in which they could complete specific tasks utilizing the language. This practice allowed the participants to reflect on previous experiences completing that task until mastery was obtained through repetition.

Practicing language gain through the completion of language tasks allowed participants to better prepare for additional attempts. The participants reported their success to peers and study abroad leader, they discussed the challenges and received feedback and then attempted to perform the task again. This way of practicing language success in relation to self-efficacy perceptions elucidated the participants’ perspective of what happened before, during and after the completion of a certain task utilizing the target language. Avoidance of task was present when the participants demonstrated a low level of confidence in their abilities to use Spanish abroad. However, avoidance of task was diminished when the participants’ self-efficacy beliefs improved due to successful experiences using Spanish with native speakers. For all five participants improving their self-efficacy beliefs to acquire Spanish abroad assisted them to report on different aspects of language gain: gaining exposure, practicing recalling, thinking in Spanish, practicing communication skills, and gaining language familiarization. In the following section, I present the implications based on the findings of this investigation.

**Implications**

The research findings in this study include a number of implications: for students interested in short-term, language study-abroad programs; short-term, language study-abroad programs; faculty leaders of short-term, language study-abroad programs; those who want to language teach in an immersion setting; short-term, language study-abroad program assessors; and, investigators who carry out research of short-term, language study-abroad programs.
Students Interested in Short-Term Language Study-Abroad Programs

The number of students interested in participating in short-term, language study-abroad programs has been growing every year for the past decade [The Institute of International Education (IIE), (2015)]. Hence, potential student candidates for short-term, language study-abroad programs should be aware of the need for preparation to get the most of the experience abroad. These potential candidates should make the attempt to travel locally to nearby cities and/or states for a few days to gain the experience of traveling.

My data demonstrated that the abroad-site participants were forced to come out of their comfort zones in order to interact using the target language abroad. This implies that future participants need to expect interactions in the target language and culture and that they will have to be willing to come out of their comfort zones. Additionally, it seems perfectly appropriate for potential students to participate in pre-departure orientation sessions in which they can interact with others peers traveling abroad.

Potential students for short-term language study-abroad programs should also be aware that the language immersion abroad cannot be compared to their traditional language classrooms in the US. These potential candidates need to be aware that the language experience abroad goes beyond learning and memorizing grammar and vocabulary. There needs to be real communication included. Further, potential candidates should be aware of the language-gain experience abroad as the sum of the entire experience including language and cultural immersion. Moreover, potential students need to understand the importance of understanding language gain in terms of exposure, recalling practice, thinking in Spanish gain, communication skills gain and language familiarization gain, which will be available at the abroad site.
These potential language learners abroad need to be aware of the fact that while abroad, they have to learn how to live with the target language daily. Finally, potential students should make an effort to understand the concept of self-efficacy and what it means to believe in one’s personal abilities to learn a language. The understanding of self-efficacy through basic reading available in the literature may help facilitate academic achievement abroad.

**Language Study-abroad Programs**

There are certain sectors of teaching that do not see short-term, language programs as beneficial. However, short-term, language study-abroad trips may offer a plethora of opportunities for learning and growth to student participants. This study demonstrates that short-term language study-abroad programs, when organized properly, have the potential to provide enriching experiences with language and culture abroad. Thus, language study-abroad programs should continue to focus on the whole immersion experience and how it affects the participants.

Hence, language study-abroad programs need to continue to promote more short-term, language study-abroad programs. Language study-abroad programs may want to consider integrating more short-term, language trips as they are feasible and affordable if correctly organized. In contrast to long-term, language study-abroad programs, the short-term version are less expensive and can easily accommodate the busy schedules of students, therefore, better facilitating recruitment of participants.

Establishing student learning outcomes for short-term, language study-abroad programs should emphasize student work and participation abroad instead of grammar assessment alone. Student learning outcomes for short-term language study-abroad programs should consider that learning a language abroad is a complex task. Additionally, language study-abroad programs
need to be aware that measuring outcomes solely through the implementation of grammar-based assessment takes away from the overall enriching experience.

Language study-abroad programs should prepare the sojourn experience by engendering anticipation and paying attention to details such as the abroad cultural activities selection, pre-departure orientation topics and lessons. The thoroughly and well-planned sojourn needs to provide a clear and well-organized program for the participants’ review and therefore becoming aware of the benefits of the experience. This study has demonstrated that organizing the activities prior to the trip is also beneficial. There should be a schedule of activities for each day of the sojourn in concert with a local language school. It is important to connect with a local language school that can assist in facilitating cultural activities for the program.

**Faculty Leaders of Short-Term Language Study-Abroad Programs**

This study demonstrates that the participant selection process is vital for a successful short-term, language study-abroad program. During the selection process there should be an interview that involves other faculty members who can assist with the evaluation and selection process of the participants. Further, study-abroad leaders need to be aware that it is important to get to know each student participant prior to the experience. Thus, faculty leaders need to provide pre-departure orientation sessions that help to inform and create the cohesiveness of the group.

It is important that during the preparation time through pre-orientation sessions participants focus on simple partner or group-oriented activities. Study-abroad leaders should dedicate time to select proper activities to create cohesiveness among students. These activities need to be conducted in order for the participants to feel comfortable with each other and forge strong relationships before the trip. Faculty leaders also need to familiarize themselves with the
participants in the same fashion he or she allows the participants to get to know each other. Further, the findings in Chapter 4 suggested that before to the sojourn, particularly during one of the pre-departure orientation sessions, language study-abroad leaders need to scaffold the concept of self-efficacy among participants as this construct plays a key role for student achievement abroad.

Once at the abroad site, study-abroad leaders need consider stepping away from the traditional US language-learning classroom mentality. Study-abroad leaders should be aware that at the abroad site language learning and teaching should not be the same as it is in the US where Spanish is not spoken. Likewise, study-abroad leaders should let the students voice concerns, and experiences with the group and on an individual basis. Study-abroad leaders should understand the importance of becoming reflective leaders, someone who documents things that work well as well as things that don’t.

It is also important that at the abroad site, the faculty leader should have active involvement in the daily activities of the participants. If the groups of students attend language classes during the day the faculty leader should visit those classes and talk to the students everyday about their classroom experience. In addition, the faculty leader needs to visit the host families and enjoy a meal with the family to see how the students are interacting in a home setting. Staying connected with students and monitoring the language-immersion experience is a necessary practice among study-abroad leaders in order to assure the success of the program.

**Those Who Want to Teach Language in an Immersion Setting**

For a successful immersion experience, language-immersion instructors should emphasize the teaching of both speaking and listening. Language-immersion instructors need to be aware that it is important to avoid the traditional grammar-based classroom. Language-
immersion instructors should focus on oral communication since this is priority at the immersion setting. Language-immersion instructors should also prepare activities in which students may have opportunities to practice the language in authentic ways. The abroad site provides authentic opportunities that cannot be found in a traditional classroom. Hence, language-immersion instructors should take advantage of the immersion setting by avoiding worksheets and workbooks, which are sometimes overused in US language classrooms. It seems particularly helpful to learn how to take advantage of authentic tasks at the immersion site. Language-immersion instructors may want to consider the implementation of language task-based activities. At the immersion site there are great opportunities to implement language task assignments as opposed to in-class exercises or activities alone.

Language-immersion instructors need to recognize that the immersion site offers opportunities to teach the language with the possibility of hands-on experiences. Hence, language-immersion instructors need to facilitate students language gain and learning through field trips, cultural activities and conversations with native speakers.

Language-immersion instructors need to remember that short-term, language study-abroad programs do provide a set of research-based language gain indicators. Hence, language-immersion instructors should promote those language gain indicators abroad: exposure gain; thinking-in Spanish gain; recalling practice; conversation-skills gain; and, language-familiarization gain. The field of short-term, language study abroad would benefit from promoting language gain abroad; hence, language-immersion instructors should encourage the participants to actively take charge of their learning while abroad.

**Short-term Language Study-Abroad Program Assessors**
Short-term language study-abroad program assessors should consider that the impact of language learning abroad is best served with a holistic assessment to capture the essence of the short-term experience abroad. Program assessors may want to consider stepping aside from the implementation of pre- and post-grammar-based assessments to measure language gain abroad. At the abroad site, program assessors may want to consider measuring language gain through the implementation of task-based methodology that could include specific language tasks in which participants take part. Program assessors should be aware that traditional assessments for language gain implemented in regular classrooms in the US -- such as the traditional written, multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank grammar tests -- cannot and should not be utilized alone abroad as effective measures for language gain, even less so if the program is a short-term experience.

Measuring language-gain abroad after a short-term sojourn is a very complex and delicate endeavor. There are several variables that affect the process of language-learning abroad. However, when it comes to a short sojourn, the best way to measure language gain is by allowing the voice of the participants to be heard. The participants as insiders know what happens during the second-language learning process as they are the protagonists, and every protagonist is different from one another.

Furthermore, as an example, the computer adaptive placement exam (CAPE) is a useful and generally accepted assessment tool used to measure the level of language among learners. The CAPE is a vocabulary and language structure and grammar-based exam currently available to language students in the two-year, open-access college where all the participants in this study are students. As part of their participating in the program, each took a pre- and post-version of the CAPE.
Program assessors should keep in mind that when it comes to short-term language study-abroad programs, pre- and post-tests are not reliable especially if used alone. Program assessors need to consider that the implementation of these types of assessments do not take into consideration students who do not perform well on tests, yet are able to interact well with native speakers abroad.

On the other hand, program assessors should understand that the field of short-term, language study abroad would benefit in measuring the impact from a self-efficacy perspective. This perspective creates opportunities and allows the participants to share their experiences learning the language abroad. Program assessors need to be aware that a self-efficacy perspective may provide a greater scope to measure language gain abroad in short-term, language study-abroad programs. Program assessors should also keep in mind that self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions influence academic success; learners with high self-efficacy language beliefs perform better when learning and utilizing the target language abroad.

**Investigators of Short-Term Language Study Abroad**

The issue of whether there is language gain abroad during a short-term, language study-abroad program continues to be a dilemma among investigators. Nevertheless, the findings detailed in Chapter 4 show that the participants identify language gain as they tell their stories -- from an insiders’ perspective, if you will -- language gain occurs during a short-term, language study-abroad program. The short-term immersion offers myriad opportunities to gain an enriching language experience while learning abroad. Hence, researchers are challenged to carry out more qualitative studies that may consider the voice of the participants as insiders in this phenomenon. These investigations could contribute to the advancement of the field of short-term, language study abroad.
In carrying out qualitative inquiry on this issue, short-term, language study-abroad program researchers should consider implementing other qualitative designs, in addition to more phenomenological case studies that would include other populations of students. This study demonstrates that -- through the implementation of case studies methodologies -- study abroad researchers could provide thorough descriptions for each individual’s story, highlighting each individual’s experience in relation to the same phenomenon. Language study-abroad researchers should investigate each language learner abroad as unique. Through this case study methodology, different voices can be heard. These voices tell their stories about the language learning experience abroad. However, this recommendation comes with great caution, as I understand other studies’ contexts of language learning abroad may not be the same as this study and the goals of inquiry may also be different.

Further, language study abroad researchers should also focus on students’ beliefs and perceptions of self-efficacy to learn a second language abroad. Focusing attention on participants’ self-efficacy beliefs may provide insight on student achievement learning a second language abroad. More inquiry into the constructs of self-efficacy and language learning abroad could provide an important understanding of the language-learning process abroad.

Further, study-abroad researchers should consider inquiry of the language study-abroad process including: pre-departure season and preparation, during the trip experience and post-trip experience. Study-abroad researchers may want to consider implementing the three-way interview, as it is very useful for interviewing participants in study-abroad programs. This interview process allows in-depth interviews before the sojourn, during the sojourn, and after the sojourn. Observations are vital while at the abroad site; however, I suggest that researchers participate in observations during the pre-departure orientation sessions.
Additionally, as observations provide great insight on the phenomenon at hand, it seems perfectly appropriate to use observations while at the abroad site. For instance, investigators should visit the host families and take time to observe how participants are interacting with their host families. Further, these observations should be implemented while participants are experiencing language immersion school activities. Observations at the language school are also important, as they provide an opportunity to see how students interact and use the target language in a full-immersion setting. For this purpose, the researcher should have full access to the classrooms and conversations with school administrators abroad in addition to the language instructors.

Also, the field of short-term language study abroad would benefit from investigations that implement group debriefings, as they are important to ensure the participants understand what is required abroad. Investigators should be advised that debriefings are useful in maintaining the cohesiveness of the group and that group insight may be helpful in addressing various aspects of the immersion experience. It is also important that researchers end the sojourn with a similar group-debriefing meeting upon returning from the sojourn experience. It is important to keep communication lines open with all participants while abroad and also upon return. Investigators should be aware that participants may experience reverse culture shock upon return; hence, one way to help the participants is through group debriefing.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

According to the findings of this investigation, there are specific areas that need additional study conducted to assist study-abroad leaders, educators, researchers, and other practitioners in understanding those areas more completely. There is a necessity for more inquiry
in the areas of short-term, language study-abroad program; student-learning outcomes for short-term study-abroad programs; and, self-efficacy perceptions of language learning abroad.

**Short-Term Language Study-Abroad Programs Inquiry**

In this study, inquiry has been carried out with regard to students’ language learning and their participation in a short-term, language study abroad. There are some that view short-term, language study-abroad programs as being of less importance based on the length of the experience. In this study, the participants have highlighted several benefits of participating in a short-term language study-abroad program.

Based on my experience with short-term, language study abroad and language learning, I found evidence that short-language sojourns do have an effect on the language learning process. Future research into language study in short-term, study-abroad programs needs to concentrate on the experience as described from the personal viewpoint of each participant. Different people experience the process of learning a language abroad in different ways. When conduct a survey of all participants or through pre- and post-language grammar tests, we lose a holistic picture of the experience. More opportunities are needed for the participants to be able to share their personal stories about their experiences in the process of language learning abroad.

**Student Learning Outcomes for Short-Term Language Study-Abroad Programs**

As the implementation of short-term, language study-abroad programs continues to proliferate, the need for accurately measuring student-learning outcomes continues to escalate. Research in the field of short-term, study abroad has grown over the last decade; however, according to the findings in this study, short-term study abroad has to be viewed in a more holistic way. That is, there are several components affecting the experience abroad: the program
and activities; the accommodations and whom participants stay with; the quality of the cultural activities; and, the quality of interactions abroad.

Research needs to incorporate all of these aspects pertaining to short-term study abroad, in addition to what the participants say about the sojourn, in order to account for student learning outcomes. Measuring learning outcomes for short-term, study-abroad programs cannot rely solely on quantitative measures. This study has demonstrated that in the abroad experience, the transformation and growth of students vary according to their previous and current experiences.

**Self-efficacy Perceptions on Language Learning Abroad**

Research on self-efficacy perceptions has provided insight on how participants viewed their personal ability to learn a language abroad. Measuring self-efficacy perceptions from a personal perspective or by hearing what the participants’ report has shed important light on this construct. For future studies, the emphasis on hearing the participants’ voice with regard to their self-efficacy needs to continue to be incorporated. There are several quantitative tools available, however, when it comes to language learning abroad in a short-term program. The abroad site influences each participant in a different way. Thus, keeping research on self-efficacy as informed by the participants should be practiced consistently. Additionally, the literature has demonstrated that studies on self-efficacy and language learning abroad are scarce.

**Research Focus on the Role of the Host Families and Home Stay Experience**

The role of the host families abroad has been preponderant to the language-learning experience abroad. Research on how the host family permeates language and culture to influence positively on the participant’s learning experience needs to continue. The first relevant and extensive language contact at the abroad site is with the host family. In addition to providing modeling and authentic feedback, the host family provides a safe and caring environment where
the language learner can feel free to take risks and thereby avoid fears with regard to using the target language inappropriately. Moreover, the host family is the main language support as it is a source of continuous encouragement to the learner. Future research should investigate the role the host family plays and how the learners perceive these roles as important to aid the language-learning experience abroad. Future research could delve deeper as to why students studying abroad benefit more from a host home rather than student housing or other traditional accommodations.

**Research Focus on Cultural Awareness Abroad**

The full-immersion setting represents a source of language and culture input as opposed to just language alone. Previous research on intercultural gain abroad has consistently demonstrated that short-term sojourns assist the participants’ intercultural gain and development despite the short duration of the sojourn (Allen, 2010; Covert, 2014). Despite myriad research that provides evidence that short-term sojourns are beneficial in relation to cultural gain, future research needs to concentrate on how intercultural-gain abroad is related to the construct of language gain during a short sojourn. Particularly, the immersion site as a source of both language and culture; hence, learners who learn more about the culture are also learning more about the language. Additional research is needed regarding this relationship.

**Summary**

The purpose of this investigation is to focus attention on five focal participants’ self-efficacy perceptions to acquire Spanish as a second language during one, short-term, language study-abroad program. There have been attempts to measure language gain in the field of short-term language study abroad in the last decade. Despite the number of empirical studies, the issue of whether or not short-term sojourns involve enough time to learn a second language abroad
remains unanswered. The number of empirical studies has emphasized quantitative measures and has provided insight on the issue at hand. Further, these studies have demonstrated the need for more qualitative studies.

As a contribution to the field of language study abroad and from a Self-efficacy Theory perspective, this is the first phenomenological case study to investigate participants’ self-efficacy perceptions to acquire Spanish abroad. Rather than implementing pre- and post-quantitative measures to learn about language gain, this study shared the voices and stories of the participants as insiders or active participants experiencing the phenomenon. These stories have been thoroughly described to elucidate insiders’ perceptions on personal capabilities to use Spanish abroad. Hearing the voices of the participants has provided a better understanding of the language-immersion experience during one, short-term, language study-abroad program. This is significant to the field of short-term language study abroad.

Pre- and post measures, although useful, cannot accurately capture the language experience abroad in 19 days. The language and cultural immersion experiences that occurred at the abroad site (especially in a short program abroad) are difficult to quantify. Thus, this study presents the voices and stories of five cases that experienced language-learning abroad. Through these stories the cases have provided insight regarding their self-efficacy perceptions in relation to the second language abroad.

Finally, the study of self-efficacy, as a central factor affecting academic success has provided insight as to how the immersion experiences influenced participants’ perceptions on their capabilities to utilize Spanish. The influence of the abroad site over participants’ self-efficacy perceptions took place as a process on a daily basis. This process was closely related to
the successful experiences utilizing Spanish with native speakers abroad. This is also significant for the field of short-term language study abroad.
References


Badstübner, T., & Ecke, P. (2009). Student expectations, motivations, target language use, and perceived learning progress in a summer study abroad program in Germany. *Die Unterrichtspraxis / Teaching German, 42*(1), 41-49.


Appendix A

Institutional Review Board - Federalwide Assurance #00003152

University of Cincinnati

Date: 1/6/2015
From: UC IRB

To: Principal Investigator: Angel Anorga
   UCBA Foreign Language

Study ID: 2014-8337
Study Title: Students' Perceptions of Their Self-Efficacy to Acquire a Second Language

During Study Abroad Programs

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) acknowledges receipt of the above referenced proposal. It was determined that this proposal does not meet the regulatory criteria for research involving human subjects (see below): Not generalizable – QA/QI of UCBA Spanish Study Abroad Program. Ongoing IRB oversight is not required.

Please note the following requirements:

Statement regarding International conference on Harmonization and Good clinical Practices. The Institutional Review Board is duly constituted (fulfilling FDA requirements for diversity), has written procedures for initial and continuing review of clinical trials: prepares written minutes of convened meetings and retains records pertaining to the review and approval process; all in compliance with requirements defined in 21 CFR Parts 50, 56 and 312 Code of Federal Regulations. This institution is in compliance with the ICH GCP as adopted by FDA/DHHS.

Thank you for your cooperation during the review process.
Appendix B

Consent Form

Dear Student,

As the Peru study-abroad leader this year, I plan to utilize this experience to report through research findings on the outcomes of our language experience abroad. I would like to invite you to share this great experience through your participation via an interview with me (Angel Anorga) before, during, and/or after the trip. Your input will be valuable for future language study-abroad programs and to inform my dissertation research. This is completely voluntary, and will not require any extra work.

Depending when and where we are at the time of the interview, I will provide you with breakfast, lunch or dinner, or perhaps just a simple appetizer.

If you agree to help this initiative please print and sign your name here:

Name: __________________________________
Signature: _________________________________
Date: _________________________________
Appendix C  
Syllabus and Tentative Calendar of Activities Sample  

**Tentative Calendar**

**Tuesday, May 11, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction to course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Origin of the Inca Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Who were the Incas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. La Pachamama, El Inti, El Inca, La Colla, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The 13 Incas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The arrival of the Spaniards 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Trip Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPLETE YOUR PACKING - Suggested (1 backpack + 1 carry on)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tuesday, May 12, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The arrival of the Spaniards 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Who was Tupac-Amaru?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Spanish-Quechua literature: Inca Garcilaso de la Vega</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Ollantay Poem and Inca Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The encounter of two worlds and the very first Spanish documents registered in Cusco.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Trip Orientation -----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DOUBLE CHECK YOUR COMPLETED PACKING

**Wednesday, May 13, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Machu Picchu the Sacred City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sacred Valley of the Incas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cusco as the Archeological Capital of South America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Quechuismos (influence of Quechua in the Spanish Language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Trip Orientation -----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EVERYONE BRINGS LUGGAGE TO CLASS
Thursday, May 14

Lesson 4 Online

Please complete the following topics on Blackboard:

1. Inca foods
2. Colonial and criollo foods
3. Andean music and dances
4. Inca musical instruments

Friday, May 15, 2015

Be at the airport by 2:00 pm. and prepare to have lunch or snack with your group. MAKE SURE TO BRING YOUR PASSPORT

Saturday-May16, 2015

6.00 Arrival to Lima
8.30 Connecting flight to Cusco with Star Peru
9.45 Transfer to AMAUTA
10.15 Welcome meeting at AMAUTA, briefing
11.00 Transfer to host families for light lunch
Free afternoon/ evening to rest and get acclimatized or explore the city center by yourself.
19.30 Dinner with host family

Sunday, May 17, 2015

8.00 Breakfast with homestay
10.30 pickup and transfer to train station
11.00 departure by bus from Cusco to Ollantaytambo
12.58 Train departs from Ollantaytambo to Machu Picchu
14.00 Arrival to Aguas Calientes
Walk to hotel, lunch
Free afternoon to explore Aguas Calientes and or visit the Hot Springs.
ENTRANCE FEES NOT INCLUDED
20.00 dinner in Aguas Calientes

193
Monday, May 18, 2015

5.00 breakfast at the hotel
6.00 bus from Agua Calientes up to the Ruins
7.00 Trek Huayna Picchu
10- 11.00 rest to explore the ruins or relax
11.30 Guided Tour Machu Picchu
13.00 Lunch buffet at Machu Picchu
14.30 back to Agua Calientes
16.43 train to Cusco
21.00 Arrival Cusco, transfer to Homestay
21.30 Late night snack at the host family

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

7.00 Breakfast at host family
8.15 Meet at School
8.30 Spanish classes till 12.30
12.30 end of the classes
14:30 – 15:30 Field Experience 1 with Professor Añorga
Free afternoon
18.30 Presentation on Inca Ruins or other cultural topic
20.00 Welcome Dinner at Restaurant La Estancia (or similar) in Cusco

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

7.00 Breakfast at host family
8.30 Spanish classes till 12.30, 20 minutes break in the middle.
12.30 End of the classes
12.45 Visit to a clinic for disable children (one hour and a half) – till
14.00 / 14.30
14:30 – 15:30 Field Experience 2 with Professor Añorga
Rest of the afternoon free
20.00 Dinner at host family
### Thursday, May 21, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>Breakfast at host family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>Spanish classes till 12.30, 20 minutes break in the middle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>End of the classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>15:30 Field Experience 3 with Professor Añorga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>Cooking class at AMAUTA</td>
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<td>20.00</td>
<td>Dinner at the host family</td>
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</table>

### Friday, May 22, 2015

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>Breakfast at host family</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>Spanish classes till 12.30, 20 minutes break in the middle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>End of the classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>Visit Inka Museum – Field Experience 4 with Professor Añorga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>Option to participate in salsa class with other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>Dinner at the host family</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Saturday, May 23, 2015

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>Breakfast at the host family</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>Spanish classes till 13.00 (making up for missed Monday classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>End of the classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>Cusco City Tour till aprox. 18.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Included: visit to Ccoricancha, Catheral and &amp; 4 nearby Inca Ruins: Sacsahuaman, Qenqo, Tambomachay, Pukapukara. Transport, guide, Entrance fees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>Dinner at host family</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Sunday, May 24, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>Breakfast at homestay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>Sacred Valley Tour, ends 18.30 / 19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes visit to Pisac market, Urubamba, Ollantaytambo, Chincheros.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transport, guide, entrance fees. LUNCH BUFFET INCLUDED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>Dinner with host family</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Monday, May 25, 2015

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>Breakfast at host family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>Spanish classes till 12.30, 20 minutes break in the middle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>Workshop Peruvian music (Field Experience 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>Dinner with host family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tuesday, May 26, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>Breakfast at host family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>Spanish classes till 12.30, 20 minutes break in the middle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>Visit Chocolate Museum (Field Experience 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>Dinner with host family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix D

Data Collection Instruments and Research Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Instruments</th>
<th>Data Collection Stage</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary interview 30 minutes</td>
<td>Background information, general language background and career interest.</td>
<td>May 4 to May 8, 2015 (Before trip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Proficiency Test pre- and post-trip</td>
<td>The participants will take the CAPE language proficiency exam in Spanish</td>
<td>May 11 to May 13, 2015 (Before the trip) June 6, 2015 (after the trip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth, recorded interview, 30 - 50 minutes</td>
<td>Language learning description, self-efficacy questionnaire, open ended questions to elicit the meaning of the experience.</td>
<td>May 15 to June 1, 2015 (While at the abroad site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit Interview (30 – 60) minutes</td>
<td>Overall experience with the abroad language experience</td>
<td>June 2 to June 15, 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Performance Tasks</td>
<td>Four language tasks will take place: Sending postcards (one during the first week, another during the second week) -Ordering lunch and interacting at the restaurant -Buying groceries (water, hygiene products, food, etc.) -Interacting with host family</td>
<td>May 15 to June 1, 2015 (While at the abroad site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflection</td>
<td>After completing the language task, participants are asked to self-reflect on their performance utilizing the target language. Participants write a self-reflection on the meaning of this experience in</td>
<td>May 15 to June 1, 2015 (While at the abroad site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Artifacts</td>
<td>Several student artifacts will include essays, language assignments, blogs, Facebook communication, Blackboard Discussion Board.</td>
<td>May 15 to June 1, 2015 (While at the abroad site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy language skills self-evaluation</td>
<td>Students provide insight on their four language skills in connection with the study-abroad experience.</td>
<td>Before and after the trip May 11 to June 6, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Researcher will follow the observations before (during orientation sessions), and while participants are abroad (classroom visits, tours, and during cultural activities).</td>
<td>Before and after the trip May 11 to June 6, 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Protocols for Language Task Performance

The following Integrated Performance Protocols (IPAs) have been obtained from the ACTFL website. These protocols are created to evaluate performance of language tasks, which are pertinent to this dissertation. According to Bandura (1989), self-efficacy is affected by the performance or tasks.

Interpersonal Rubrics (Novice, Intermediate, Intermediate High, Advanced)

Why am I adding all these levels? The participants will take a language placement test at the study abroad site, this placement test will place each participant at one of these four levels. Although the requirement for all participants is to have at least one year (two semesters of Spanish), there could be participants with higher level of knowledge.

The ACTFL interpersonal mode rubrics are for four levels of language learners. The performance aspects that are evaluated include:

- Language Function (tasks that the speaker is able to handle)
- Text Type (words, phrases, sentences, connected sentences, etc.)
- Communication Strategies (quality of interaction)
- Comprehensibility (who can understand the speaker)
- Language Control (grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, fluency)

The Ohio Department of Education published these rubrics from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and acknowledges permission to reprint these copyrighted resources.

This information comes from the ACTFL publication, Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment:

### Interpersonal Mode Rubric—Novice Learner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (5-4)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (3-2)</th>
<th>Minimal (1)</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Expectations (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Function</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language tasks the speaker is able to handle in a consistent, comfortable, sustained, and spontaneous manner</td>
<td>Creates with language by combining and recombining known elements; is able to express personal meaning in a basic way. Handles successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations, primarily in concrete exchanges and topics necessary for survival in target-language cultures.</td>
<td>Uses mostly memorized language with some attempts to create. Handles a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks involving topics related to basic personal information and some activities, preferences, and immediate needs.</td>
<td>Uses memorized language only, familiar language.</td>
<td>Has no real functional ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of engagement and interactivity; how one participates in the conversation and advances it; strategies for negotiating meaning in the face of breakdown of communication</td>
<td>Responds to direct questions and requests for information. Asks a few appropriate questions, but is primarily reactive. May try to restate in the face of miscommunication.</td>
<td>Responds to basic direct questions and requests for information. Asks a few formulaic questions but is primarily reactive. May clarify by repeating and/or substituting different words.</td>
<td>Responds to a limited number of formulaic questions. May use repetition or resort to English.</td>
<td>Is unable to participate in a true conversational exchange.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensibility</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Who can understand this person's language? Can this person be understood only by sympathetic listeners used to interacting with non-natives? Can a native speaker unaccustomed to non-native speech understand this speaker?</td>
<td>Is generally understood by those accustomed to interacting with non-natives, although repetition or rephrasing may be required.</td>
<td>Is understood with occasional difficulty by those accustomed to interacting with non-natives, although repetition or rephrasing may be required.</td>
<td>Is understood, although often with difficulty, by those accustomed to interacting with non-natives.</td>
<td>Most of what is said may be unintelligible or understood only with repetition.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language Control</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammatical accuracy, appropriate vocabulary, degree of fluency</td>
<td>Is most accurate when producing simple sentences in present time. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax are strongly influenced by the native language. Accuracy decreases as language becomes more complex.</td>
<td>Is most accurate with memorized language, including phrases. Accuracy decreases when creating and trying to express personal meaning.</td>
<td>Accuracy is limited to memorized words. Accuracy may decrease when attempting to communicate beyond the word level.</td>
<td>Has little accuracy even with memorized words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRITERIA</td>
<td>Exceeds Expectation</td>
<td>Meets Expectations</td>
<td>Does Not Meet Expectation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language Function</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language tasks the speaker is</td>
<td>Handles successfully</td>
<td>Creates with language</td>
<td>Has no real functional</td>
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<td>able to handle in a</td>
<td>uncomplicated tasks</td>
<td>by combining and</td>
<td>ability.</td>
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<td>consistent, comfortable,</td>
<td>and social situations</td>
<td>recombining known</td>
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<td>sustained, and spontaneous</td>
<td>requiring exchange of</td>
<td>elements; ability</td>
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<td>manner</td>
<td>basic information</td>
<td>to express own</td>
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<td>related to work,</td>
<td>meaning expands in</td>
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<td>school, recreation,</td>
<td>quantity and quality.</td>
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<td>particular interests,</td>
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<td>and areas of</td>
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<td>competence. Narrates</td>
<td>uncomplicated</td>
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<td>and describes in</td>
<td>communicative tasks</td>
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<td>all major time frames</td>
<td>in straightforward</td>
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<td>although not</td>
<td>social situations,</td>
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<td>consistently.</td>
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<td>and topics necessary</td>
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<td>target-language</td>
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<td>cultures. These</td>
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<td>exchanges include</td>
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<td>preferences, as well</td>
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*Expectations: (5-4) Exceeds, (3-2) Strong, (1) Minimal, (0) Does Not Meet*
Interpersonal Mode Rubric—Intermediate-High Learner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Expectations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language Function</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language tasks the speaker is able to handle in a consistent, comfortable, sustained, and spontaneous manner</td>
<td>Consistently narrates and describes in all major time frames. Able to participate in most informal and some formal conversations on familiar topics, which may include current events, employment, and matters of public interest. Can handle appropriately an unexpected turn of events or complication.</td>
<td>Handles successfully uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring exchange of basic information related to work, school, recreation, particular interests, and areas of competence. Narrates and describes in all major time frames, although not consistently.</td>
<td>Creates with language by combining and recombining known elements; ability to express own meaning expands in quantity and quality. Handles successfully a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations, primarily in concrete exchanges and topics necessary for survival in target-language cultures. These exchanges include personal information related to self, interests, and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs such as food, shopping, and travel.</td>
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<td><strong>Text Type</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantity and organization of language discourse (continuum: word - phrase - sentence - connected sentences - paragraph - extended discourse)</td>
<td>Uses connected sentences and paragraph-length discourse.</td>
<td>Uses mostly connected sentences and some paragraph-like discourse.</td>
<td>Uses strings of sentences, with some complex sentences (dependent clauses).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Strategies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of engagement and interactivity; how one participates in the conversation and advances it; strategies for negotiating meaning in the face of breakdown of communication</td>
<td>Maintains conversation. May use communicative strategies such as paraphrasing and circumlocution.</td>
<td>Converses with ease and confidence when dealing with routine tasks and social situations. May clarify by paraphrasing.</td>
<td>Responds to direct questions and requests for information. Asks a variety of questions to obtain simple information but tends to function reactively. May clarify by restating.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensibility</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Who can understand this person’s language? Can this person be understood only by sympathetic listeners used to interacting with non-natives? Can a native speaker unaccustomed to non-native speech understand this speaker?</td>
<td>Is understood by native speakers, even those unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives, although this may require some repetition or restatement.</td>
<td>Is generally understood by those unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives, although interference from another language may be evident and gaps in communication may occur.</td>
<td>Is generally understood by those accustomed to interacting with non-natives, although repetition or rephrasing may be required.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language Control</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammatical accuracy, appropriate vocabulary, degree of fluency</td>
<td>Demonstrates minimal fluency and some control of aspect in narrating in present, past and future time. Vocabulary may lack specificity. Speech decreases in quality and quantity when attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level.</td>
<td>Demonstrates significant quantity and quality of Intermediate-level language. When attempting to perform Advanced-level tasks, there is breakdown in one or more of the following areas: the ability to narrate and describe, use of paragraph-length discourse, fluency, breadth of vocabulary.</td>
<td>Demonstrates significant quantity and quality of Intermediate-level language. Accuracy and/or fluency decreases when attempting to handle topics at the Advanced level or as language becomes more complex.</td>
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**Evidence of Strengths:**

**Examples of Where You Could Improve:**

—

202
### Interpersonal Mode Rubric—Advanced Learner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (5-4)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (Strong 3-2)</th>
<th>Minimal (1)</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Expectations (0)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language Function</strong>&lt;br&gt;Language tasks the speaker is able to handle in a consistent, comfortable, sustained, and spontaneous manner</td>
<td>Narrates and describes fully and accurately in all major time frames. Can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those related to particular interests and expertise. May provide a structured argument to support opinions and may construct hypotheses.</td>
<td>Consistently and extensively narrates and describes in all major time frames by providing a full account. Participates actively in most informal and some formal conversations on a variety of concrete topics and topics relating to events of current, public, and personal interest. Can handle successfully and with ease an unexpected turn of events or complication.</td>
<td>Consistently narrates and describes in all major time frames. Able to participate in most informal and some formal conversations on familiar topics, which may include current events, employment, and matters of public interest. Can handle appropriately an unexpected turn of events or complication.</td>
<td>Handles successfully uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring exchange of basic information related to work, school, recreation, particular interests, and areas of competence. Narrates and describes in all major time frames, although not consistently.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Text Type</strong>&lt;br&gt;Quantity and organization of language discourse (continuum: word - phrase - sentence - connected sentences - paragraph - extended discourse)</td>
<td>Uses paragraph-length discourse and some extended discourse.</td>
<td>Uses connected, paragraph-length discourse.</td>
<td>Uses connected sentences and paragraph-length discourse.</td>
<td>Uses mostly connected sentences and some paragraph-like discourse.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Strategies</strong>&lt;br&gt;Quality of engagement and interactivity; how one participates in the conversation and advances it; strategies for negotiating meaning in the face of breakdown of communication</td>
<td>Converses with ease, confidence, and competence. Maintains advances and/or redirects conversation. Demonstrates confident use of communicative strategies such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and illustration.</td>
<td>Converses with ease and confidence. Maintains and advances conversation. Uses communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution.</td>
<td>Maintains conversation. May use communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution.</td>
<td>Converses with ease and confidence when dealing with routine tasks and social situations. May clarify by paraphrasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensibility</strong>&lt;br&gt;Who can understand this person’s language? Can this person be understood only by sympathetic listeners used to interacting with non-natives? Can a native speaker unaccustomed to non-native speech understand this speaker?</td>
<td>Is readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives.</td>
<td>Is readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives.</td>
<td>Is understood by native speakers, even those unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives, although this may require some repetition or restatement.</td>
<td>Is generally understood by those unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives, although interference from another language may be evident and gaps in communication may occur.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language Control</strong>&lt;br&gt;Grammatical accuracy, appropriate vocabulary, degree of fluency</td>
<td>Demonstrates full control of aspect in narrating in present, past and future time. Uses precise vocabulary and intonation, great fluency, and ease of speech. Accuracy may break down when attempting to perform the complex tasks associated with the Superior level over a variety of topics.</td>
<td>Demonstrates good control of aspect in narrating in present, past and future time. Has substantial fluency and extensive vocabulary. The quality and/or quantity of speech generally declines when attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level.</td>
<td>Demonstrates minimal fluency and some control of aspect in narrating in present, past and future time. Vocabulary may lack specificity. Speech decreases in quality and quantity when attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level.</td>
<td>Demonstrates significant quantity and quality of Intermediate-level language. When attempting to perform Advanced-level tasks, there is breakdown in one or more of the following areas: the ability to narrate and describe, use of paragraph-length discourse, fluency, breadth</td>
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### Appendix F

#### Research Questions Matrix and Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Data Collection Instrument to Answer Research Question</th>
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</table>
| (1) What do students believe about their own abilities to acquire Spanish as a second language in a full-immersion setting? | Interviews  
Student Artifacts  
Observations |
| (2) What are students’ perceptions of their performance utilizing the target language to complete specific tasks? | Interviews  
Student Artifacts  
Language-tasks and reflection  
Observations  
Language Log |
| (3) What are students’ perceptions of their abilities (self-efficacy) to acquire Spanish as a second language while participating in a short-term language study abroad program? | Interviews  
Student Artifacts  
Observations  
Language Log |
| (4) How do students’ perceptions on their self-efficacy influence their Spanish learning abroad? | Interviews  
Student Artifacts  
Language Protocols  
Language Skills Self-Assessment  
CAPE test  
Language Teachers’ report  
Observations  
Language Log |
Appendix G
Self-Efficacy and Spanish Language Acquisition and Learning Abroad

Field Observation Table

Participant Number: _________

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
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Appendix H

Sample Interview Questions
Based on Seidman (2013)

Preliminary Interview (before the trip)
1. Tell me about your goals for going abroad
2. Tell me about your language expectation abroad
3. Do you believe you can learn the language abroad? What makes you believe so? Explain
4. Follow open conversation, let the participant talk

In-depth Interview (While at the abroad site)
1. How is your experience abroad going?
2. Tell me about your language experiences
3. Tell me about your abilities to use the target language
4. What about your interaction with your host family?
5. Tell me about your daily interaction buying lunch
6. Did you go to the post office? Tell me how the experience go?
7. Follow open conversation, let the participant talk

Exit Interview (after the trip)
1. How was your language experience overall?
2. Tell me about your language abilities
3. Tell me more....
4. What would you tell future language students who will travel abroad?
5. Follow open conversation, let the participant talk
Appendix I

Final In-depth Interview Sample
6-4-15

A: Yeah. Tell me about your fears once you arrived at the host family?
E: I was still confident. I was just like nervous about like making sure I said the right thing. I wanted it to be you know like right. I didn’t want to sound like dumb or anything. But other than that Yeah I was still feeling confident I said I can do it, it is either now or never. So I just got to start practicing speaking it now. So I was... I was alright.
A: And how was your experience meeting your host family?
E: Oh it was great. When I first met her, you know she is this little lady and she is so nice and so sweet and she showed me my room and you know showed me around the house and we .... when we first met we had like a really good talk. She told me all about her family and where she is from and what she did and then I told her about my family and the whole conversation was in Spanish and it went great. Like I was so proud of myself at the end of the conversation. I was so happy.
A: Mm hmm. Did you...you know when you all left I was just so like... I felt like a father letting his children go away. All of a sudden I found myself alone in this room and everybody is gone and it was like oh.
E: Yeah, awe.
A: And it finally just dawned on me like oh their gone.
E: Oh.
A: I was here for like 24 hours.
E: Yeah.
A: But you guys were experiencing new experiences I guess with the host family.
E: Yes.
A: So how was your first day in general?
E: My first day was good um I believe when I got there she let me rest. She wanted me to get some rest and kinda get used to the altitude and everything and after my nap when I first got there I woke up and she made me I think it was like around dinner time. She made me dinner and we talked a little bit more. She was so welcoming and it was it was such a great experience. She really made me feel like I was at home and like I was her daughter like a part of the family. So it was just great like the first time was amazing.
A: Wow ’cause you were nervous.
E: Yes.
A: That was the only thing that made you nervous right?
E: Yeah, yeah that was the only thing that made me nervous and once I was there and met her all my nerves went away. Like she was the nicest lady and she made me feel so comfortable. Like I loved that.
A: And what about the house? Did you like your house?
E: Oh yeah the house was really nice. I actually wasn’t even expecting it to be that big but it was it was a pretty nice size. I had my own room and I had two beds in my room. Two little beds like uh single beds in my room and it was you know really nice and made up, really clean and it was it was just really nice like she did a good job with you know preparing the house for me.
A: Wow, very nice. And so tell me about your life in Cusco?
E: Cusco… Cusco okay um so it was when we were there it was pretty chilly it was kind of cold and I wasn’t all the way expecting that for it to be that cold. So that was one of the only things that was kind of um a struggle was trying you know get used to the temperature there ‘cause it was kind of chilly. I think it was like the winter season there. I’m not sure but um in the room like the houses my house didn’t have central heating so it was cold like in my room as well but um I had a couple of sweaters with me and my bed like she like had two really nice and plush like comforters so at night I would be really warm I wouldn’t have to worry about being cold but um every day I would walk to school and I honestly I loved the walk. I thought it was it was really nice just to see the city and you know just like breathe the air the fresh air and it was really good it was a good experience. I liked it made me feel more a part of the country to be able to walk to school and see the people and just be a part of that. Um so it was really good.
A: Was your Spanish challenged at one point?
E: My Spanish was definitely challenged um when I would have to use the taxis when I would have to get in a taxi because most of the taxi taxi drivers there didn’t speak any English so you literally had to speak Spanish to them like 100%. They wouldn’t even be able to help you with the smallest word so that was that was a challenge but I loved the challenge and I feel like with that it made me stronger and it made me um more like comfortable speaking it.
A: How did your Spanish grow in two weeks?
E: In two weeks um so every day going to school I think that really helped improve my Spanish because I was like um it was really like review. I was reviewing a lot of things I forgot and also when I would order food or when I would talk to the um the workers at the school that was all in Spanish. And I think it really improved honestly I do even my ear for Spanish hearing it and understanding it I really adapted and I got used to hearing it and I got used to speaking it and understanding so it definitely improved.
A: So if somebody says oh two weeks, what are you going to learn in two weeks? What would you tell this person?
E: In two weeks you’re gonna learn how to basically um use Spanish for yourself versus how you learn it in school you know you how you learn Spanish in school is really um like the the basics and you learn like basic conversation but it’s a lot more to that just like in English you know you learn how to speak it on your own and say what you want to say. I think going on this trip you’ll learn how to use Spanish on your own so you can say what you want to say and have your own mind. You learn how to think in Spanish and everything like that’s what this trip does.
E: You know how you said uh you know you were not really concerned about your Spanish so much in a sense of you know I’ve done this for years in high school. I feel confident I feel confident in my own abilities to learn Spanish. How was that feeling when you were in Cusco? Did that change or is it the same?
E: Um no it actually stayed the same um it was just more so I’m confident in my ability and I know if I can do it um but it was like I was trying remember and recall things that I learned. And if anything it made me even more confident. It really it really challenged me and pushed me to my limit pushed me to my full capacity. So my feelings of you know being confident and all of that it didn’t change it just it showed me yeah you’re confident and you know it but you know go even further with that. So... yeah.
A: Do you recall any long conversations in Spanish besides your first day?
E: I do. Uh okay the longest conversation I had in Spanish was actually with my host mom. And it was one day it was I believe it was during the second week and it was our almost we had like three days left and so she made me this really nice dinner and we that was when me and her sat down and we talked we talked everything about Cusco we talked about brazil um she told me about you know the different places that she lived or visited in Peru. And she was also really interested in the united states she wanted to know all about the states and how the weather was there and all this other stuff so that was like that longest conversation we had was you know just really diving into different things.
E: Yeah it was really cool.
A: So can a person learn Spanish in two weeks?
E: Uh I definitely I mean I wouldn’t say they can learn it in two weeks. Like you can’t become fluent in it in two weeks but you can that’s definitely a good start and it’s it’s like great exposure. It can get you it can get you open to it and get you comfortable with it. I wouldn’t say learn it but it can expose you.
A: What happened to you being exposed to it?
E: Me being exposed to it you you I learned a lot that I didn’t know before, different words. Um it improved my confidence um and it showed me how to um be my own like have my own mind and think for myself like in Spanish. Yeah.
A: You built your own mind in Spanish. Wow that’s powerful.
E: Yes its good stuff there seriously it is. ’Cause I think one of the hardest things for people to do when they’re learning another language is to think in that language. They’re thinking in you know say for example my first language in English I’m always thinking in English. To think in Spanish is just hard it’s extremely difficult to do. Because I don’t have the vocabulary but when you’re there you know you really your mind starts to change you’re hearing so much Spanish and you’re learning so much Spanish you’ll start to really think in Spanish and I think that that helps a lot, it really does.
A: Did the building of the Spanish mind help you with your Spanish?
E: Definitely um the more the better you get in thinking in another language in Spanish the faster you are with responding the better you are with communication. So if if when I was there if someone would ask me something you know I’m already expecting them to ask it in Spanish so I’ll be thinking of what they’re saying and I’ll be thinking of a response and it can come out faster and I can be able to speak to them more effectively because I’m already my mind is already working in that way.
A: Now how was your experience in in the school as a student? Tell me about the classroom.
E: The classroom okay I loved my school like the classes there and I loved them so much because they were kind of they were really small and they were personal. So the teacher was able to literally work with every single person like they were able to check homework and show you specifically what you did wrong but like they would correct you. It was really like one on one and we all got to work together because it was like a little group so the classes I thought were honestly one of the best parts because they would help you with things that you would need probably for that day or for another day and it was really helpful. It was the best.
A: You have a good interaction with your teachers there?
E: Oh yeah the teachers honestly I like the teachers at that school better than I like like American teachers because the teachers there are they're so laid back and relaxed and they're not worried all about you know grades and testing. They're worried about you actually learning how to use the language you know it’s it's not a oh it’s a test based or quiz based school. It's really about learning there so that’s what I loved about it.
A: Mm hmm, so based on your experience learning Spanish here I mean four years in high school and how many in college; two as well?
E: Uh yeah two semesters in college.
A: Two semesters. So five years total studying Spanish in the U.S. compared to two weeks of studying Spanish in Peru? What could you say about that?
E: I would say I can’t even lie I learned more I really learned more um my first year of Spanish at school in college and my two weeks in Peru then I did in four years of high school. And I think the reason behind that is the people that were teaching me are you know that’s their first language. They’re natural Spanish speakers like and I don’t think anybody can teach it better than them. So honestly I think I learned way more. I definitely learned how to tell time. It took me after four years of high school I still could not tell time in Spanish and I go to Peru and I’m just busting out telling time like I can look at a watch oh yeah …. Mmm …. you know and it was amazing.