The impact of semester-abroad experiences on post-sojourn L2 motivation

Xujia Du
Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, China
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5485-7283
du.xujia@hotmail.com

Abstract

Numerous studies have examined sojourners' L2 motivation during their stay abroad. Much remains unknown about the impact of study abroad (SA) experiences on their L2 motivation after they return to the home environment. This study tracked the English learning motivation of three Chinese university students from immediately after their semester-long exchange program in an English-speaking country until six months after the sojourn. The participants were requested to complete a questionnaire and took part in an interview immediately following their re-entry and another interview six months later. The participants' post-sojourn English learning motivation was influenced by their L2 selves and the context they were situated in. The motivational capacity of SA experiences was manifested in its profound impact on the participants' ideal L2 self-images. Satisfactory SA experiences contributed to an ideal L2 self with higher L2 proficiency and international posture, whereas unsatisfactory experiences led to a lessening role of L2 in the participants' future work and life. The findings also reveal that the participants' understandings of both their positive and negative SA experiences became fossilized after the sojourn. Some practical implications were discussed for higher education institutions to optimize the post-sojourn motivational impact of SA programs.

Keywords: L2 motivation; L2 learning experience in study abroad; post-sojourn phase; critical reflection

1. Introduction

Education internationalization in the past decade has enabled an unprecedented number of students to study abroad (SA) for different lengths of time. It is a commonly held belief that SA experiences can foster second language (L2) motivation (Serrano, Tragant, & Llanes, 2012). To acknowledge the motivational impact of various learning experiences, Dörnyei (2009) also includes L2 learning experience as a key motivational component in his L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). While most existing studies center on how L2 motivation can be influenced by classroom learning experiences (e.g., Piniel & Csizér, 2015; Waninge, Dörnyei, & Bot, 2014), a growing body of research has investigated the motivational power of L2 learning experiences in SA (e.g., Li, 2017). The empirical studies reveal wide individual variation in the impact of sojourn experiences on L2 motivation: some students greatly enhanced their motivation, whereas others became demotivated to learn and use the L2 (Allen, 2010; Irie & Ryan, 2015; Kormos, Csizér, & Iwaniec, 2014). Most of these studies, however, followed their participants up until the completion of their SA programs. Few studies have explored whether the either positive or negative motivational effect of SA is sustained after learners return to their home environment. This study fills this niche by tracking the English learning motivation of three Hong Kong-based Mainland Chinese university students from immediately after their semester abroad in an English-speaking country until half a year after the sojourn. The study is expected to unravel the longer-term motivational impact of SA experiences and the relationship between L2 learning experiences, context, and learners' L2 selves.

2. Literature review

This section begins with an introduction to different SA programs and the complexity of L2 learning in SA. Next, a brief summary of the L2MSS is provided highlighting the need to extend the scope of the L2 learning experience to SA. The section ends with a review of selected L2 motivation studies that focus on international exchange programs.

2.1. L2 learning in SA

With the advent of education internationalization, a wide range of SA programs are available to L2 learners nowadays including: (1) study abroad for a full degree; (2) study as part of an academic partnership within a home degree or a joint degree; and (3) exchange programs (Kinginger, 2009). Although SA learners may not necessarily take language improvement as their primary goal (Collentine & Freed,

2004), Kinginger (2009) observed that all participants in many SA studies "do want and have been enjoined in a serious way to learn languages" (p. 217).

Scholars hold that SA programs can be regarded as a type of experiential language learning as they provide opportunities for real-world exposure to L2 communities and self-reflections on those sociocultural experiences (Kohonen, Jaatinen, Kaikkonen, & Lehtovaara, 2014; Lafford, 2013; Wilson et al., 2016). While SA has traditionally been believed as a magic experience that would enhance students' L2 motivation and proficiency, empirical research shows that SA is not a "uniform construct" (Taguchi, 2016, p. 7). Students' L2 learning experience in SA is affected by a complex interplay of individual variables and host environment features and receptivity (Kinginger, 2011; Taguchi, 2016), leading to wide variations in learners' L2 learning motivation and outcomes (DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Jackson, 2017; Kinginger, 2009).

2.2. Extending the scope of the L2 learning experience in the L2MSS

In Dörnyei's (2009) L2MSS, three primary sources of motivation are identified: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience. The ideal L2 self is "the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). In addition to an integrative orientation toward the L2 community (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), it also encompasses instrumental motives with a promotion focus, denoting the desire to achieve growth or success. The ought-to L2 self is represented by instrumental motives with a prevention focus, which are usually externally driven to meet expectations and avoid negative consequences (Dörnyei, 2009). The L2 learning experience refers to "situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29).

Compared with the other two self-related constructs, the L2 learning experience remains the least theorized and researched component. Ample previous research has investigated the motivational power of learners' future L2 self-guides (e.g., Campbell & Storch, 2011; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009). Some studies have also examined the connections between learners' ideal L2 selves and ought-to L2 selves (e.g., You & Chan, 2015). Much less attention has been paid to how L2 motivation can be influenced by L2 learning experiences and how these experiences interact with learners' L2 selves.

Moreover, as it was included in the L2MSS to acknowledge the motivational impact of various classroom elements, the notion of the L2 learning experience has largely been associated with instructed settings (Dörnyei, 2009). Collentine and Freed (2004) and Collentine (2009) identified three contexts for language learning including foreign language classroom, intensive immersion setting,

and SA context. It is expected that different contexts may exert significantly different influences on various aspects of L2 learning (Magnan & Lafford, 2012). In contrast with classroom settings, L2 learning in SA contexts takes place not only in classrooms, but through exposure to and interaction with the L2 communities in daily life (Lafford, 2013). In addition to classroom-related variables, numerous factors outside the classroom can affect learners' motivation to learn and use an L2. The scope of the L2 learning experience should, therefore, be extended beyond classrooms to encompass more different learning environments.

2.3. L2 motivation in international exchange programs

With an increasing number of international exchange programs made available to university students, researchers are paying more attention to learners' L2 motivational trajectories during their stay abroad. Allen (2010) explored the L2 motivational development of six American learners of French during a 6-week exchange program in France. Main data sources included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and learning blogs. The findings show that increase in L2 motivation was evident among participants who joined the SA program to enhance their French skills, but not among those who learned French for more pragmatic reasons and viewed SA as a chance to travel and experience a different culture. Many other studies also revealed individual variations in SA learners' L2 motivation, yet most tracked their participants up to the completion of the sojourn or immediately after the sojourn (Isabelli-García, 2006).

Previous research on the post-sojourn phase mainly focused on the long-term impact of various SA programs on students' linguistic, social, career, and intercultural development (e.g., Campbell, 2015; Franklin, 2010; Jackson, 2015b; Steinwidder, 2016). Trenchs-Parera and Juan-Garau's (2014) study is one of the few that examined the long-term impact of a short stay abroad on L2 motivation. The study followed the motivational and belief development of 70 English learners in a Spanish university for two and a half years including three months abroad in their second year. Data were collected through a questionnaire at the beginning of their university studies, at the end of the first year, immediately after the SA, and 15 months after the SA. The findings show that the participants developed positive motivational stands during their semester abroad. Regarding the long-term retention effects, findings show no significant changes in the participants' motivational stands except for an increasing willingness to participate in class discussions when called upon by teachers. The study was based on a questionnaire and quantitative analysis. Much remains unknown about the individual differences in SA learners' motivational trajectories and how SA experiences affect their motivation following their return home.

3. The study

This article reports part of the findings of a longitudinal project which tracked the English learning motivation of a group of Hong Kong-based Mainland Chinese students from their senior high school in Mainland China, through their undergraduate education in Hong Kong, until half a year after their re-entry to Hong Kong following a semester-long exchange program in an English-speaking country. The present study aims to understand the longer-term motivational impact of a semester abroad by tracking the motivational trajectories of three participants from their re-entry home until six months after their return. The following research questions are answered:

1) How did the participants describe their SA experiences immediately after their return and six months later?
2) How did the participants describe their English learning motivation from their return until six months after the sojourn?
3) How was their English learning motivation affected by their SA experiences?

4. Method

The present study adopted a mixed-methods multiple-case study design to explore the participants' motivational development after their semester abroad. This section provides a detailed description of the selection of the participants, instruments, as well as the data collection and analysis procedures.

4.1. Participants

The participants of this study were selected based on a pre-sojourn questionnaire which was administered to all 2015/16 outgoing exchange students at a Hong Kong university during a pre-departure session. The following selection criteria were embedded in the questionnaire:

1) They were Mainland Chinese students enrolled in a full-time undergraduate program.
2) They had studied English as an academic subject in Mainland China.
3) They were accepted to take part in a semester-long exchange program in an English-speaking country in Term 2 (January-April) of the 2015-2016 academic year.
4) They had spent at least one year at the Hong Kong university prior to their exchange.
5) The exchange program would be their first extended stay in an English-speaking country.
6) They were willing to participate in the longitudinal study.

In total, 1,040 students joined an outgoing exchange program in 2015/16 at the Hong Kong university. Sixty-eight Mainland Chinese students who were accepted to go on exchange in Term 2 signaled their willingness to be interviewed later. Only 10 of them satisfied the other criteria. After initial contact, eight of them agreed to participate in the longitudinal study and signed their informed consent.

While the larger study followed all participants' motivational development from pre-sojourn till six months after the sojourn (Du & Jackson, 2018), this article zoomed in for a close-up of three participants, Gary, Maggie, and Jasmine (pseudonyms), from the completion of their sojourn till six months later. Studying business-related subjects, the three participants had an accumulative GPA (grade point average) of 3.20 (Gary), 3.56 (Jasmine), and 3.28 (Maggie) out of 4.00 respectively. To be included in an international exchange program, the participants were required to provide either TOEFL or IELTS test results. Gary's TOEFL score was 96 (IELTS equivalent 7.0) (Educational Testing Service, 2010). Taking the IELTS, Jasmine received an overall score of 7.0, and Maggie got 7.5. Gary and Maggie chose Canada as their exchange destination while Jasmine opted for the UK.

The three participants were selected as focal case participants mainly because they departed for their exchange destinations with a shared goal to be a proficient English speaker and a global citizen. However, their SA experiences varied and they exhibited different motivational paths after their SA. They were also some of the most forthcoming participants, who unreservedly shared their opinions and feelings. Comparing their cases provided deeper insights into the possible impact of a semester abroad on L2 learners' post-sojourn motivation.

4.2. Instruments

In addition to the pre-sojourn questionnaire that was used to select participants and establish their profiles, this study made use of a post-sojourn questionnaire and two semi-structured interviews, which were conducted immediately after the participants' re-entry to Hong Kong/Mainland China (post-sojourn interview) and six months after their return (post post-sojourn interview). The post-sojourn questionnaire (see Appendix A) consisted of both open and closed-ended questions (mostly using a Likert scale). The purpose of the questionnaire was for students to provide self-assessment of their linguistic, academic, social, and intercultural development at the end of their exchange period (Jackson, 2015b). As the main data source for this study, the two interviews aimed to track the participants' English learning motivation from their return until six months later and understand how their SA and re-entry experiences might have affected their motivation. Compared with quantitative methods, in-depth interviews are

"in many ways, better suited to explore the internal dynamics of the intricate and multilevel construct of student motivation" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 49). The post-sojourn interview protocol (see Appendix B) comprised questions about the participants' personal, academic, and sociocultural experiences during SA, their immediate re-entry experiences, as well as their perceived impact of these experiences on their English learning motivation (Jackson, 2015b). Most topic areas in the post post-sojourn interview (See Appendix C) overlapped with the post-sojourn interview protocol to capture any shifts in the participants' motivation and their interpretations of their SA experiences half a year after their sojourn.

4.3. Procedures

I had followed the participants since they joined the larger study a semester prior to their sojourn. Regarding the time phases reported in this article, the post-sojourn questionnaire was administered online to the three participants near the end of their stay abroad. Maggie attended the post-sojourn interview in person after she returned to Hong Kong. Gary and Jasmine were interviewed via Skype as they went back directly to their home cities in Mainland China. Six months after their re-entry, Gary and Maggie completed the post post-sojourn interview face-to-face while Jasmine was interviewed via Skype as she was engaged in an internship in Beijing.

All three participants responded to the questionnaire items in English but opted to use Mandarin in the two interviews. The average length of the post-sojourn and post post-sojourn interview was 82 minutes and 62 minutes respectively. The interviews were transcribed and sent to the participants for member check. The transcripts were then translated into English and the translations were reviewed by another Chinese-English bilingual.

4.4. Data analysis

The participants' responses to closed-ended questionnaire items were coded and processed in Microsoft Excel for descriptive statistics. Textual data including the answers to open-ended questionnaire items and the interview translations were imported into NVivo 11, a qualitative analysis software program. In NVivo 11, each participant had a case file, where all relevant information about them was stored.

Following an open-coding approach (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013), the initial categories were generated based on recursive reading of the transcripts. The relationships were analyzed between these descriptive categories. Informed by the L2MSS and other theoretical concepts discussed in the literature review, higher-order nodes were created from the preliminary data categories (Dörnyei,

2007; Saldaña, 2016). These coding steps were cyclic until data became saturated (Charmaz, 2014). Higher-order nodes in this study include L2-mediated academic and social experiences, L2 learning experiences, attitudes toward the L2 and the host, motivational trajectories, and the interactions among motivation, L2-related experiences, L2 selves, and contexts. The final set of nodes not only informed the design of the three research questions, but also the organization of the individual case studies of the participants (Yin, 2014).

5. Results

This section presents the individual case studies of the three participants. In response to the three research questions, each case starts with the participants' recollections of their SA experiences at the end of the sojourn and six months after the sojourn. This is followed by their depictions of their motivational trajectories during this period. The post-sojourn motivational impact of their SA experiences is then explored by examining the interconnections between SA experiences, self, and context.

5.1. Gary's recollection of his SA experiences and motivational trajectory

In Term 2 of his fourth year (Jan-April 2016), Gary went on exchange for a semester in Victoria, Canada. At the host university, Gary enrolled in three major-related courses and shared a cluster with other three exchange students from Hong Kong, Italy, and France respectively. After the sojourn, he flew back to his hometown for a short holiday before he embarked on a summer internship in Singapore. In September 2016, Gary started his fifth year at his home university as he deferred his studies for a year.

5.1.1. Recollection of SA experiences immediately after the sojourn

Gary aimed to enhance his English skills, make some international friends, and learn about the host culture and his area of study at the host university. In both the post-sojourn questionnaire and interview, his responses show that he had made use of the resources available in the host environment to accomplish his goals.

5.1.1.1. L2-mediated academic and social experiences

Gary saw the highly interactive classrooms and the heavy reading and writing workload at the host university as both a challenge and an opportunity to improve his English skills. He described his host academic environment as follows:

Students there liked to speak up in classes. I was encouraged by their active participation and started to voice my opinions. Although participation is assessed in many courses here [home university], *few people take it seriously unless each participation is counted.*

Gary felt that the fluency and clarity of his speech improved through contributing ideas in classes where L1 speakers were the majority. He also took advantage of the writing assignments and feedback from the lecturers to improve his writing skills.

Socially, Gary developed close relationships with his flatmates and also made several other international friends in the activities that he joined such as the buddy program and university soccer club. In the post-sojourn questionnaire, he indicated "international students from other cultures" as the group of people with whom he spent most of his time abroad and chose "six or more" for the number of international friends he had at the end of the sojourn. Gary considered social engagement an effective way of enhancing his oral English: "My mixed social network in Canada gave me a natural environment to speak English, alerted me to my language problems and pushed me to enhance my language skills."

Gary's English learning was intertwined with his academic and social experiences. In the post-sojourn questionnaire, Gary rated himself 3/5 (1 = poor to 5 = excellent) on his overall proficiency. This rating was confirmed in the interview: "I remember I gave myself 2/5 before the sojourn. I think I made progress in Canada." He also claimed that he had become more confident and willing to initiate conversations with people from other linguistic backgrounds.

5.1.1.2. Integrativeness toward the host and intercultural development

With no prior impression of Canada, Gary developed an emotional attachment to his host country and an integrative orientation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) at the end of the sojourn: "I recommended Canada to most of my friends. Canada is just great!"

Gary also demonstrated perceptible intercultural development as he had increasing contact with his international friends: "Interacting with students from all over the world forced me to consider what stereotypes I held of people from certain countries." His intercultural awareness is manifested in his response to an open-ended question in the post-sojourn questionnaire, which asked about the most important thing students learned from their exchange experience. Gary's answer was as follows: "Don't let your stereotype influence your judgment, especially when it comes to intercultural communication."

5.1.2. Recollection of SA experiences half a year after the sojourn

In the post post-sojourn interview half a year later, Gary again spoke very positively of his SA experiences and host country. A unique observation from this phase was

that he felt he had more global elements in his self-identity in comparison with some of his friends who had also joined an exchange program. In several conversations, he felt uncomfortable with their ethnocentric attitude when they compared their host countries with China. His opinion is expressed in the following excerpt:

> They [his friends] *bragged about China's huge land mass, the largest population, and a history spanning five thousand years. My feeling is that China is good in some aspects but not in the things that they are proud of. Sometimes I deprecated their views in a humorous manner. But deep down, I disdain their attitudes.*

Gary's positive view of his SA experiences and his ethnorelative attitude were reinforced through many informal reflective conversations with his friends after the sojourn. He appeared to be keen to jump out of the confinement of his ascribed national identity (Jackson, 2014) so that he could view his own and other cultures with a more open mind.

5.1.3. Motivational trajectory after the sojourn

After the sojourn, Gary was a bit worried whether he could retain his linguistic gains from the exchange program. In the post-sojourn questionnaire, he specified "continuing to enhance my second language proficiency" as the most challenging aspect about his return. Since he came back to his hometown, Gary had been using Mandarin all the time. Nevertheless, he commented that his English learning motivation remained as high as it was during the sojourn because he made a conscious effort to increase his exposure to English and create opportunities for linguistic enhancement: "There's no one around speaking English to me, but I speak to myself. I'm keeping updated on the international news and reading some books. I'll probably also find some time to practice my writing." In addition to self-learning, Gary used social media to stay in touch with the international friends he had made while in Canada and practiced his oral skills with his colleagues during his summer internship in Singapore.

In the post post-sojourn interview, Gary stated that there was a further boost in his English learning motivation in the new semester. He became more active in class discussions at the home university. He also chose an international student as his roommate and served as a buddy for incoming exchange students. In preparation for the upcoming job interviews, he watched and learned from model interviews on the internet and participated in several interview skills enhancement workshops.

5.1.4. Motivational impact of SA experiences

While Gary attributed his post-sojourn motivational enhancement mainly to his instrumental orientation related to job search, a further investigation into his L2 self reveals a more implicit but probably more powerful motivational impact of his SA experiences. Gary described his ideal I2 self as follows:

> *I now clearly know the ideal state I want to work towards. All Canadians were my role models. There were also some non-native speakers who spoke English very well. I want to be able to tell a story or explain things in detail and in a more organized way. This is quite difficult. You know many words. But you may not know how to use them properly. When you are telling a story, the ordering of the content may vary in a different cultural setting. It could cause misunderstandings if you are not familiar with the practices of your audience.*

Gary's intercultural communication experiences during SA consolidated his ideal L2 self-image as a near-native English speaker and highlighted the specific areas he strived to improve. Meanwhile, his SA experiences contributed to the expansion of his self-concept: "I think my Chinese identity is weaker than a global citizen now. I don't think it's necessary to confine myself to the Chinese identity."

Gary's self-positioning as a global citizen and his ideal L2 self-image guided his choice of Singapore for his summer internship and his goal to work in an international company after graduation and pursue further study in the US after he has gained some work experience. These decisions prescribed an important role of English in his work and life and drove him to proactively seek opportunities to enhance his English skills after the sojourn.

5.2. Jasmine's recollection of SA experiences and motivational trajectory

In Term 2 of her third year (January-April 2016), Jasmine participated in a semester-long exchange program in Cardiff, Wales. At the host university, Jasmine took four courses and only one of them was related to her major. She also signed up for a short oral communication course provided by the language center. Jasmine lived in a shared house with other three girls from Africa, Malaysia, and the UK respectively. In the summer following the sojourn, Jasmine did an internship in Shanghai. When the new semester started in September 2016, she deferred her studies in order to take part in another full-time internship in Beijing.

5.2.1. Recollection of SA experiences immediately after the sojourn

Jasmine wanted to improve her English, learn more about the host culture, and make some international friends through her participation in an exchange program

in the UK. As she revealed in the post-sojourn questionnaire and interview, her SA experiences were overall satisfying.

5.2.1.1. L2-mediated social experiences

Compared with Gary, Jasmine had much lower expectations of her academic performance. While she aimed to improve her English, she did not see the interactive host classrooms as a platform where she could hone her English skills: "I was not that eager to participate in their discussions. In the UK, I spent more time traveling and much less time studying."

In contrast with her attitude toward academic learning, Jasmine was much more active in her social life and culture learning. She took part in various social events and tours organized by the university for exchange students. In these activities, she met many international students and made friends with some of them. As their friendship grew stronger, they started to do more together and invite each other to private social gatherings. In the post-sojourn questionnaire, Jasmine chose 'international students from other cultures' as the people with whom she spent most of her time abroad. Her answer to "the number of international friends" she had was "four to five."

In the UK, Jasmine's main way of improving her English was through communication with her international friends. To catch up with their conversations, she started to follow videos that they were watching. In addition, Jasmine took an English language enhancement course that concentrated on British English pronunciation and the comparison of a few different varieties of English. She commented that this course raised her awareness of her own pronunciation of certain words and helped her better understand the local accent.

In the post-sojourn questionnaire, Jasmine rated her overall proficiency at 4/5 (1 = poor to 5 = excellent), a one-point increase from the pre-sojourn rating. In the post-sojourn interview, she added that her informal skills had improved more than formal skills as she paid much less attention to her studies.

5.2.1.2. Positive attitude toward the host language and culture

Another important element of Jasmine's SA experiences as she recalled was her attitude change toward the host language and culture. Although she looked up to the host people at the beginning of her sojourn, she doubted the sincerity of their politeness and felt that the host language was distant from her. With more observation and interactions with the host people, her opinion of them changed at the end of her sojourn: "At the beginning, I was wondering if they were pretending to be polite. Now I think they truly behave quite well compared with people in Mainland China."

After using English for daily communication for several months, she also felt much closer to the language: "I don't think English is high-end anymore. It's just another language for communication." Throughout the sojourn, Jasmine made a conscious effort to fit in the local community and was attentive to language learning resources in daily life situations.

5.2.2. Recollection of SA experiences half a year after the sojourn

Six months after the re-entry, Jasmine was doing an internship in a Chinese company in Beijing. She noticed that most of her colleagues were not willing to share information and knowledge. Because of her international experience, Jasmine felt that she was different from her Mainland peers. She expressed her feelings in the following excerpt:

> *I think it's because we have been socialized in different cultural environments. When I was communicating with other international students during my exchange, I could tell that they were all very sincere and happy to share their thoughts. I was influenced by them and I'm very happy to share what I know.*

Living in her own home country, Jasmine's appreciation of some of the values and habits that she had acquired abroad were strengthened. Speaking Chinese all the time, she also divulged that she missed the English-speaking environment in the host country.

5.2.3. Motivational trajectory after the sojourn

Like Gary, Jasmine also indicated in the questionnaire that "continuing to enhance my second language proficiency" was one of the top three post-sojourn challenges. After the return to her hometown, Jasmine exhibited a few symptoms of reverse culture shock (Gaw, 2000; Young, 2014). Although she desired to sustain her linguistic gains from the sojourn, her English learning motivation waned and she did not come up with any strategy for further enhancement at home. Her motivation resumed a little when she started her summer internship in an international company in Shanghai, where she had some chances to use English in documentation and written communication. She also initiated conversations with her international colleagues in informal settings.

In the semester after the sojourn, Jasmine revealed that her motivation dipped to a new low when she was working in a Chinese company in Beijing. She was disappointed that she could not build on her advantage in English in this professional context: "This internship demotivates me to further improve my English because English is the least important skill here."

5.2.4. Motivational impact of SA experiences

After the sojourn, Jasmine's motivational development appeared to be heavily influenced by the contexts she had been situated in. She was more motivated when English was needed and used in her environment. She became demotivated when English was not valued or used. While Jasmine's re-entry experiences and internship in Beijing negatively affected her motivation, they did not have much impact on her ideal L2 self-image as a global citizen with near-native proficiency, which was formed during her stay in Hong Kong and reinforced through her SA. In the post post-sojourn interview, Jasmine expressed a strong desire to work for multinational companies in the future.

> *I want very much to be offered a position in an international company. English is a bridge that links you to the world. Hopefully, English will be the working language of my future job. Such companies usually have many mobility schemes that allow the employees to work in overseas branches.*

Having had a taste of the language and culture of a Chinese company, Jasmine realized that if she found a similar job after graduation, the chance to accomplish her ideal L2 self would be slim. Her concern was evident in her comment: "I'm unlikely to reach my goals in a company like this. Now I'm soaked in the Chinese environment and I don't pay attention to any English information. I'm not updated at all."

Jasmine commented that her intercultural experience in the UK had strengthened her determination to work in an international environment so that she could connect to the most up-to-date things in the world and build on the language and interpersonal skills she had been trying to improve in the past few years. For the coming semester at her home university, Jasmine applied to share a dorm with an international student and planned to make better use of the resources at the university to polish her English skills.

5.3. Maggie's recollection of SA experiences and motivational trajectory

In Term 2 of her fourth year (January-April 2016), Maggie took part in a semester-long exchange program in a university located in an outer suburb of Toronto, Canada. At the host university, Maggie took four courses, only one of which was somewhat related to her major. She lived in a house off campus with a 60-year-old female host. When the sojourn came to an end, Maggie returned to Hong Kong for a summer internship. In September 2016, she continued her fifth-year studies at her home university due to a previous deferral arrangement.

5.3.1. Recollection of SA experiences immediately after the sojourn

Maggie left Hong Kong with a high expectation of the sojourn. She hoped to become a proficient English user, develop a diverse social network, and fit in the host culture. To her chagrin, she failed to achieve most of her goals at the end of her stay in Canada.

5.3.1.1. Minimal L2-mediated academic and social engagement

In the post-sojourn interview, Maggie divulged that she opted to be "an invisible girl who always sat in the corner" in the host classroom because she felt inferior to other full-time students. Being rather withdrawn in her classes, Maggie did not make any international friends in the academic community. She blamed the bad weather for her reluctance to join other social activities and meet more people. As evidenced in the following excerpt, Maggie lived an isolated life in Canada.

> *It was too boring. I'll never ever live like this. I ate every meal alone. I needed to cook by myself because the food there was just terrible! So my daily routine was cooking, writing assignments, watching TV, and playing with my host's cat.*

Maggie's limited social engagement is also evidenced in her questionnaire responses. "0" was her answer to "the total number of extracurricular activities you joined in the host university." She also indicated that she spent most of her time abroad with Chinese students and the number of international friends she had near the end of her sojourn was "one to three."

Due to her small social network, Maggie did not have many opportunities to use English in an English-speaking environment. She was disappointed that she did not make as much progress in English as she had expected. The excerpt below shows her evaluative feelings about her English skills at different stages of the sojourn.

> *In the beginning, I could communicate with my host smoothly. Later, I felt that I couldn't handle long, in-depth dialogues. Opportunities were rare for such interactions. My interaction with humans was basically no more than some greeting exchanges. I thought I would be able to speak fluent American English when I came back. Now it seems I speak Putonghua better.*

The drop in Maggie's linguistic confidence is also captured in her self-assessment in the post-sojourn questionnaire, where she rated herself 3/5 (1 = poor to 5 = excellent) in her overall English proficiency, a one-point loss as compared with her pre-sojourn self-rating.

5.3.1.2. Negative attitude toward the host

Maggie's unsatisfactory academic, social, and L2 learning experiences were accompanied by a negative attitude toward her host. She perceived low host receptivity, and discrimination in the host environment: "Discrimination was very bad there, although it was more covert rather than overt. Everyone was aware of the discrimination, but they all tried to appear nice and harmonious." Through her observation of a Chinese immigrant family, Maggie believed that these immigrants constantly suffered from loneliness in Canada. She described their lifestyles as follows:

> *Many Chinese immigrants' life in Canada is not very active. They usually stay at home because they don't have many friends or relatives there. I felt lonely in Canada and they felt the same. If I had been given a chance to choose, I would rather have come back home.*

The above two excerpts show that Maggie sensed host hostility and believed that loneliness and feeling out of place were some of the prices one had to pay for living abroad. While she distanced herself from the host community, her emotional attachment to her homeland became stronger.

5.3.2. Recollection of SA experiences half a year after the sojourn

Six months later, when Maggie talked about her sojourn experiences again in the post post-sojourn interview, some of her negative comments about the host country recurred. Her impression of the host is exemplified in the following excerpt:

> *I only know a little bit about Canada. But that's enough and I have no intention to know more. I'm so sorry to say that, Canadians! I don't like the culture of the Chinese community there. Their life is just so boring. The lifestyle of local Canadians is not too different. My host worked five days a week and finished very early every day. She came back home and fed her cat. That's it.*

Maggie's comment above indicates that her memory of her undesirable SA experiences and her negative attitude toward the host had fossilized after the sojourn.

5.3.3. Motivational trajectory after the sojourn

While Gary and Jasmine indicated "continuing to enhance my second language proficiency" as a top challenge in the post-sojourn questionnaire, Maggie was not at all worried about how to further enhance her English before she came back home. Immediately after her re-entry to Hong Kong, Maggie described her

English learning motivation to be lower than it was in Canada as there were even fewer opportunities to use English in daily life at home.

She did not become more motivated when she started her summer internship, where she could use English with some foreign colleagues. Maggie described her job as highly quantitative that relied more on one's technical skills rather than language skills. As she realized that Cantonese was the main communication language in the industry she aspired to enter, she was less concerned about not making progress in English.

In the semester following the sojourn, Maggie's English learning motivation remained low. She expressed no interest in having an international roommate or joining any activities that might bring her some new international contacts. Although she claimed that job interview was her only motive to improve her English, she had not been actively engaged in any job search process.

5.3.4. Motivational impact of SA experiences

Maggie felt that her SA in Canada had little influence on how she perceived and learned English after her return to the home university. Nevertheless, she emphasized the profound impact of the SA on her life philosophy and her ideal L2 self. She explained the influence as follows:

> *After my stay in Canada, my desire to work and live in a foreign country is not as strong as before. Did I say I want to be a global citizen before I left? I have changed now. Being a global citizen is no longer my goal. I think it is good to be Chinese, an open-minded Chinese person who harbors no stereotypes and discrimination against others.*

Hoping to become more international through joining an exchange program, Maggie did not achieve the ideal L2 self-image she had envisioned prior to the sojourn. Her revised future L2 self-guide emphasized the Chinese part of her identity and demonstrated her declining intention to integrate into the host or international community.

Half a year after the sojourn, Maggie revealed in the post post-sojourn interview that her integrative orientation and international posture (Yashima, 2009) stayed low. The importance of English in her future life decreased as she realized how much she valued the bond with her friends and family in the Chinese environment. In the following excerpt, Maggie explained the impact of her reinforced connection with her home culture on her language use.

> *My dominant language is Chinese at the moment. In future, it will depend on where I go. I don't feel like going to a place where I need to speak English every day. My use of English or the effort I expend to improve my English will be mainly determined by the need for it at work.*

Maggie's comment above indicates that she tended to build an ideal L2 self that was responsive to the needs arising in the local context. Given the social and financial capital of English in Hong Kong (Bolton, 2011), she was not significantly demotivated to learn English due to her negative SA experiences. However, her revised ideal L2 self-image had a great impact on her choices of social network and future location, which in turn influenced her access to English. While Gary frequently used English in informal settings with his international friends at the home university, Maggie's complaint about the lack of opportunities to use English signaled her reluctance to seek such opportunities.

6. Discussion

Sharing a very similar academic and social background, the three participants' L2 learning experiences during SA varied. Gary's L2 learning was intertwined with his academic and social engagement in the host environment. Jasmine improved her English mainly through communication with her international friends. Due to her lack of belonging to the host university and her small social circle, Maggie's English learning and use was largely confined to the host family setting. The participants' differing experiences confirmed the multi-dimensional and idiosyncratic nature of SA (Coleman, 2013; Jackson, 2017; Kinginger, 2011).

After their return until six months later, few changes were found in the participants' interpretations of their SA experiences and perceptions of the host country and people. Gary and Jasmine's positive views of their experiences in the host country were sustained half a year after their re-entry. So was Maggie's memory of her unsatisfactory SA experiences. Scholars have stressed the importance of critical reflection for learners to learn from and build on their linguistic and intercultural gains from the sojourn (Savicki & Price, 2017; Zull, 2012). Pagano and Roselle (2009) argue that recalling an experience without a shift of perspective does not constitute reflection. Following their return, except for recalling their SA experiences in the two interviews, none of the participants were engaged in any systematic reflection sessions, where they were prompted to analyze their previous responses to certain events and construe their SA experiences from a different perspective (Bennett, 2012; Kohonen et al., 2014; Savicki & Price, 2017). The lack of opportunities for critical reflection provides an explanation for the fossilization of the participants' impressions of the host country and people. While not every student may necessarily benefit from reflection sessions, previous research has rendered evidence for the power of theory-inspired, guided reflections in helping SA returnees to rethink their behaviors abroad and their attitudes about their own and the host culture (Jackson, 2015a, 2017).

Regarding the post-sojourn motivational impact of SA experience, Gary and Jasmine acknowledged that their pleasant social experiences abroad enhanced their willingness to get involved in L2 intercultural communication at home. Nevertheless, all participants agreed that their English learning motivation tended to be more responsive to needs arising in the local contexts. Gary kept a high level of motivation during his summer internship and his motivation was further enhanced in the new semester when he was preparing for English-medium job interviews. Jasmine's motivation waned after she came back home and resumed a little during her internship in an international company. It plunged again in the new semester when she started another internship in a Chinese company. Maggie did not experience a perceptible boost in her English learning motivation while abroad. After the sojourn, there was a small drop in her motivation as English was even less used at home. The participants' post-sojourn motivational trajectories reflected the fluidity of L2 motivation and its interaction with the context in which the learners are situated (Ushioda, 2009).

While the participants' post-sojourn motivation appeared to be more directly affected by their current environment and experiences, they were all aware of the profound impact of their SA experiences on their attitudes toward other cultures and their ideal L2 self-images. Gary and Jasmine's English and intercultural learning strengthened their goal to achieve near-native proficiency and global citizenship. In contrast, Maggie's SA experience led to her waning international posture (Yashima, 2009) and her choice to recoil to her Chinese identity. Having been validated as a key motivational source, the ideal L2 self exerts its motivational influence by guiding learners' perceptions of the role of L2 in their future work and life (Al-Shehri, 2009; Dörnyei, 2009). In this study, the participants' varied ideal L2 self-guides influenced their choices of social networks, preferred locations and future work environment. Although Jasmine was demotivated by the Chinese work environment, this internship experience made her more determined to have her future career with an international company where she would have international mobility and more opportunities to use English. In contrast, taking English-medium courses at a university with many international students, Maggie was not active in taking advantage of the linguistic resources as she believed that English would not have a critical role in her future life and career. Compared with local contextual factors, the participants' SA experiences had a more implicit, yet long-lasting effect on their motivation through shaping their idealized L2 self-images.

Another key observation is the different levels of English learning motivation exhibited by Gary and Jasmine immediately after their re-entry to their hometown. Both participants had an ideal L2 self-image as a global citizen with near-native proficiency upon the completion of their sojourn. While at home,

Gary took strategic steps to further improve his English whereas Jasmine was very much demotivated after the context switch. Compared with Gary, Jasmine was more easily influenced by contextual elements and she showed less agency in creating opportunities for learning. Some researchers have argued that having an ideal L2 self does not ensure motivated behaviors (Hessel, 2015; Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004). A self-regulatory ideal L2 self-image has to fulfill a few criteria including being detailed and connected to specific strategies (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Hessel, 2015; Irie & Brewster, 2013). The distinction between regulatory and non-regulatory ideal L2 selves may provide some insights into Gary and Jasmine's different post-sojourn motivational trajectories. While this study confirmed the relationship between SA experiences and the ideal L2 self, it posed questions about the motivational impact of different types of ideal L2 self-guides. It is worthwhile for future research to examine the regulatory effect of learners' ideal L2 selves and how they can possibly be affected by their SA experiences.

7. Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of a semester abroad in an English-speaking country on the English learning motivation of three Chinese students immediately after they came back home and six months later. Immediately after the sojourn, the participants' perceptions of their SA experiences varied. Some talked positively about their sojourn, whereas others expressed a negative opinion about their host country and their experiences there. This variation was sustained until six months after the sojourn. Although the participants mainly attributed their post-sojourn motivational ups and downs to the local contexts at home, the motivational capacity of SA was manifested in its profound impact on the participants' future L2 self-images. Gary and Jasmine's shared ideal L2 self as a global citizen with near-native proficiency influenced their preference for a more international social circle and work environment. In contrast, with strengthened attachment to Chinese culture, Maggie aimed to stay in the Chinese environment in the future.

The study has some practical implications for higher education institutions to sustain and enhance SA returnees' L2 motivation and intercultural development. The three participants' understandings of their SA experiences and their attitudes toward the host culture had remained largely the same since their re-entry. To optimize the long-term motivational impact of an SA program, home universities can organize a series of guided reflection sessions, where SA returnees are encouraged to critically re-examine their views of the host environment, reflect upon their inner selves, and seek alternative interpretations of their experiences (Mezirow, 1991; Savicki & Price, 2017). The critical reflection

sessions can help learners establish an ideal L2 self that is devoid of the negative impact of unprocessed stereotypes and unhappy experiences. Moreover, home universities can create more opportunities for interaction among SA returnees, international students, and students who do not have SA experiences. Such interactions can not only facilitate SA returnees' critical reflection by offering them a platform to experiment with their new assumptions (Kohonen et al., 2014), but also provide students who have not participated in a SA program with some opportunities for L2 intercultural communication.

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APPENDIX A

Post-sojourn Questionnaire used in the study

As you are nearing the end of your stay abroad, we would appreciate it if you would take a few moments to complete the following questionnaire. The information you provide will help us better prepare future exchange students from CUHK. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you!

I. MY PROFILE

1. Full name: _____   2. CUHK student ID number: _____
3. Nationality_____   4. Gender: ❏ male ❏ female   5. Age: _____
6. Birthplace: ❏ Hong Kong ❏ Mainland China ❏ other: _____
7. Faculty: ❏ Arts ❏ Medicine ❏ Business Admin. ❏ Science ❏ Education
          ❏ Social Science ❏ Engineering ❏ Law
8. Year of study while abroad: ❏ UG1st ❏UG 2nd ❏ UG 3rd ❏ UG4th ❏ UG5th ❏ postgraduate
9. Major code: _____ 10. Minor: _____ 11. My cumulative GPA: _____
12. The longest period of time that I had traveled, studied or lived abroad at any one time BEFORE this exchange program was: ❏ not applicable ❏ one month or less ❏ more than one month but less than six months ❏ six months to a year ❏ more than one year
13. I now read a newspaper or internet report about international/global affairs _____.
❏ never ❏ once a month ❏ once a week   ❏ 2-3 times a week   ❏ daily
14. I now watch TV reports (e.g., newscasts) about international/global affairs _____.
❏ never ❏ once a month ❏ once a week   ❏ 2-3 times a week   ❏ daily

II. MY EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

15. Exchange period: ❏ 1st Term ❏ 2nd Term ❏ Summer ❏ Academic Year at one location
                ❏ Academic Year at two locations (Term 1 in one country & Term 2 in another)
16. Host University/campus: _____ 17. Host country: _____
18. I have been living in _____ while on exchange. ❏ on-campus housing (not I-house)
    ❏ A dorm/house with international students ❏ off-campus (not homestay) ❏ homestay
19. I have been sharing a room with _____. ❏ someone from the host country ❏ someone from my home country ❏ an international student from a different culture ❏ not applicable
20. Total number of credits taken while studying abroad: _____.
21. While abroad, the total number of courses I've taken about the host country (e.g., history, culture, geography, politics, religion) (NOT language courses):
      ❏ none ❏ 1 course ❏ 2 courses ❏ 3 or more courses, please specify: _____
22. The total number of courses I've taken that have focused on perspectives, issues, or events with an international/ global theme: ❏ none ❏ 1 course ❏ 2 courses ❏ 3 or more courses, please specify: _____
23. The total number of courses I've taken that have focused on intercultural or cross-cultural communication (Do not include language courses): ❏ none ❏ 1 course ❏ 2 courses ❏ 3 or more courses, please specify: _____
24. The total number of extracurricular activities I participated in at my host university: ___.
25. My time abroad has included: ❏ Service-learning/volunteering ❏ Work placement/internship ❏ Both ❏ Neither
26. I expect to transfer _____ credits back to CUHK.

III. MY LANGUAGE USE/ LEARNING ON EXCHANGE

27. No. of language enhancement courses I have taken that have focused on the host country language (e.g., Finnish in Finland):

❑ none   ❑ 1 course   ❑ 2 courses   ❑ more than 2 courses

28. The language-of-instruction in most of my courses has been:

❑ English ❑ French ❑ German ❑ Japanese ❑ Putonghua ❑ Spanish, other, please specify: _____

Please rate your proficiency in the language that has been used in most of your courses:

29. Listening   ❑ Excellent ❑ Very good ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ Poor
30. Speaking   ❑ Excellent ❑ Very good ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ Poor
31. Reading   ❑ Excellent ❑ Very good ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ Poor
32. Writing   ❑ Excellent ❑ Very good ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ Poor
33. Overall proficiency ❑ Excellent ❑ Very good ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ Poor

Estimate how much time you spent doing each of the following activities in the language that was used in most of your courses. (Scale: 1 = never, 2 = a few times a year, 3 = monthly, 4 = weekly, 5 = daily)

34. watching television   1 2 3 4 5
35. reading newspapers   1 2 3 4 5
36. reading novels   1 2 3 4 5
37. listening to songs   1 2 3 4 5
38. reading magazines   1 2 3 4 5
39. watching movies or videos   1 2 3 4 5
40. talking with native speakers   1 2 3 4 5
41. e-mailing   1 2 3 4 5
42. volunteering/ service-learning /internships 1 2 3 4 5
43. talking with international students   1 2 3 4 5
44. other activities/ frequency, please specify: 1 2 3 4 5

IV. MY EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

Please complete the following sentences by checking the appropriate box, using this scale: *1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.*

My exchange experience . . .

45.	enhanced my knowledge and skills in my discipline (major and/or minor)	1	2	3	4	5
46.	helped me become more mature and independent	1	2	3	4	5
47.	enabled me to travel and see many new places	1	2	3	4	5
48.	enhanced my proficiency in a second or foreign language	1	2	3	4	5
49.	was fun	1	2	3	4	5
50.	enabled me to experience life in another culture	1	2	3	4	5
51.	enhanced my résumé and increased job opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
52.	increased my understanding of global/international issues and events	1	2	3	4	5
53.	challenged me intellectually/academically	1	2	3	4	5
54.	improved my interpersonal skills (ability to relate to others)	1	2	3	4	5
55.	enabled me to make friends with people from other cultural backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5
56.	increased my understanding of MY OWN culture, identity, and values	1	2	3	4	5
57.	increased my ability to interact effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5

58.	increased my ability to cope with/ adapt to new situations	1	2	3	4	5
59.	helped me develop leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
60.	increased my understanding and appreciation of OTHER peoples and cultures	1	2	3	4	5
61.	provided me with valuable experience for my future career	1	2	3	4	5
62.	increased my level of comfort with people different from myself	1	2	3	4	5
63.	enhanced my critical thinking skills	1	2	3	4	5
64.	increased my appreciation for the study of foreign languages	1	2	3	4	5
65.	enhanced my intercultural sensitivity (helped me become more open-minded)	1	2	3	4	5
66.	added diversity to my academic program (e.g., take courses not offered CUHK)	1	2	3	4	5
67.	increased my desire to travel/ work/ study abroad in the future	1	2	3	4	5
68.	improved my practical academic skills (e.g., writing essays, doing project work, giving oral reports, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
69.	enabled me to gain exposure to a second/foreign language in daily life	1	2	3	4	5
70.	increased my ability to communicate in the language used in the host community	1	2	3	4	5
71.	developed my ability to look at problems/situations from different perspectives	1	2	3	4	5
72.	helped me become more self-confident	1	2	3	4	5
73.	helped me become a more cosmopolitan, global citizen	1	2	3	4	5
74.	Others, please specify:	1	2	3	4	5

75. I have spent most of my time abroad with _____. ❑ students from my ethnic group (e.g., Chinese) ❑ local students from the host culture ❑ international students from other cultures ❑ on my own

76. Number of international friends I have now: ❑ none ❑ 1-3 ❑ 4-5 ❑ 6 or more

77. My openness to other cultures is: ❑ Excellent ❑ Very good ❑ Good ❑Fair ❑ Poor

78. My ability to communicate appropriately and effectively with someone from another culture is: ❑ Excellent ❑ Very good ❑ Good ❑Fair ❑ Poor

79. Please rate your degree of global-mindedness (interest in/concern about international issues). ❑ Not global-minded ❑ Somewhat global-minded ❑ Global-minded ❑ Very global-minded

80. Please describe an encounter with cultural difference that went well. _____
_____

81. Please describe an encounter with cultural difference that *did not* go well. _____
_____

82. What have you gained from this exchange programme that you could not gain at CUHK? *(check the 3 most important items)*
    a) diversity in my academic program (e.g., took courses not available at CUHK)
    b) exposure to a second/ foreign language in daily life
    c) exposure to courses with an international/ global focus
    d) increased understanding of MY OWN culture, identity, and values
    e) increased understanding of OTHER people and cultures
    f) development as a more well-rounded person
    g) the skills to communicate more effectively with people from diverse backgrounds
    h) more self-confidence, maturity, and independence
    i) field study opportunities (internship, service learning, research)
    j) firsthand experience with life in another culture
    k) others, please specify: _____

83. What were the most challenging aspects of your exchange experience? *(rank top 5)*
    a) coping with culture shock (adjusting to cultural difference)

b) heavy workload
c) language barrier
d) homesickness
e) making friends across cultures
f) personal safety and security
g) accommodation problems
h) participating in class (e.g., class discussions)
i) managing my finances
j) interacting with people from other cultures
k) racial discrimination
l) making the best use of my time
m) difficult courses at host university
n) unpredictable situations
o) others, please specify: _____

84. I was_____ for study and residence abroad.
    ❏ Very well prepared ❏ well prepared ❏ Somewhat prepared❏ Not well prepared
85. This exchange experience was_____ for my academic life.
    ❏ Very valuable   ❏ Valuable❏ Somewhat valuable ❏ Not valuable
86. This exchange experience was_____ for my personal life.
    ❏ Very valuable   ❏ Valuable❏ Somewhat valuable ❏ Not valuable
87. This exchange experience was _____ for my future career.
    ❏ Very valuable   ❏ Valuable❏ Somewhat valuable ❏ Not very valuable
88. Have you changed your major or plans for your future career because of your exchange experience?
    ❏ no ❏ yes If yes, please specify: _____
89. Do you plan to do postgraduate studies abroad after you graduate? ❏ yes ❏ no
90. Do you plan to work or live abroad after you graduate? ❏ yes ❏ no
91. While abroad, I kept a diary, journal or blog. ❏ yes ❏ no
92. The length of my stay abroad was: ❏ too long ❏ just right ❏ too short
93. What is the most important thing you learned from your exchange experience?
    _____
    _____
94. Were there some aspects of your 'self' or 'identity' that became especially clear to you as a result of your exchange experience?
    _____
    _____
95. What do you think will be the most challenging about your return? *(check 3 items)*
    a) reconnecting with friends and family
    b) missing friends made abroad
    c) readjusting to the workload at CUHK
    d) finding someone to talk to about my exchange experience
    e) dealing with my emotions (e.g., frustration, restlessness, boredom)
    f) adjusting to less freedom (e.g., living at home)
    g) feeling out of place
    h) feeling misunderstood
    i) continuing to enhance my second language proficiency
    j) others, please specify_____

96. Would you recommend an international exchange experience to your friends?
     ❏ yes ❏ no If not, why not:

     _____
     _____

97. What advice would you give to CUHK students who are considering going on exchange?
     _____
     _____

98. What suggestions would you make to improve the pre-departure orientation for exchange students?

     _____
     _____

99. Please feel free to make additional comments about your exchange experience.

     _____
     _____

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX B

Post-sojourn Interview Protocol used in the study

Overall impression
1. Compare your exchange experience with your study/ life at CUHK. What was different? What stood out for you? What was your most memorable experience?
2. What goals did you set for your stay abroad (e.g., linguistic, academic, professional)? Did you meet them? What ones did you not achieve? Why?
3. What did you gain from studying abroad that you would not have been able to gain if you'd stayed at CUHK for this time period? Did you lose anything by studying abroad?
4. Did you make the most of your time abroad? If you could do the sojourn again, what would you do differently? Would you prepare for it differently?
5. Was your stay abroad about the right length or would you have preferred a longer or shorter time abroad? Why?

Academic development
1. What courses did you take while abroad? How did they relate to your major/minor? Did the courses meet your expectations? What did you like most about them? Dislike the most?
2. Did you notice any differences between your classes at CUHK and those at the host institution? How did you feel about these differences? How did your academic experiences in Hong Kong influence your transition to the academic environment at your host institution? Did any of your CUHK courses prepare you for study/life abroad?
3. Was the difficulty level of the courses/workload/assignments similar to CUHK? If different, in what ways? Did you find it easy or difficult to adjust to the academic environment and expectations for your coursework?
4. How well did you do in your courses? How do your results compare with those at CUHK?
5. What did you gain from the academic program at the host institution?
6. What English skills were most important for your academic success at the host university (listening, reading, speaking and writing)? Did this motivate you to improve these skills? What did you do to improve?

English Learning motivation and usage
1. Did you take any English language enhancement or culture courses at the host university? If yes, why? What did you gain from them?
2. Have you visited the ILC (or a similar center) in your host university with the aim of improving your English? What ILC-related activities did you join?
3. What language did you use most often (at university/at home/with friends/Internet entertainment)? Did your language use change over time? If you used English was it challenging?
4. How would you describe your motivation to learn and improve your English in the second half of your exchange period? Did your motivation change during your stay abroad? If yes, in what ways?
5. What motivated you to improve your English in the host country? Were you motivated by exams like the GRE or GMAT, academic goals, career (internship) aims or your social life? Did the main motivators change over time during your stay abroad?
6. What courses, activities, or experiences in the host country motivated or demotivated you to learn and use English? Please provide specific examples.

7.   How would you describe your language learning efforts in the host country? Which English language skills did you expend the most effort trying to improve? Did you take any steps to learn or improve English on your own? Did your level of effort and focus of your efforts change over time?

8.   How would you rate your overall English proficiency before and after your stay abroad? (1 = poor to 5 = like a native speaker). What aspects or skills improved the most (listening, speaking, reading, writing)? The least? Did this meet your expectations? Would it have been possible to achieve this level of proficiency if you'd stayed in Hong Kong during this period?

9.   Did you feel confident or anxious to express your ideas in English in class and talk to English-speaking people? Did your oral skills in everyday conversations improve? Which improved more, your formal or informal language skills? Please explain.

10. Did you have any awkward moments because of your language use (e.g., fluency, inappropriate vocab/expressions)? How did that experience influence your motivation?

11. What do you think is the most effective way to enhance your English skills, especially speaking? Did spending time with host nationals or other international students help enhance your proficiency in English? Did you become more willing to initiate conversations with other English-speaking people?

12. Have you ever asked other international students around you about their English learning experiences? If yes, what did they do to improve their English in the host environment? How did that influence your motivation and strategies for English learning?

Attitudes toward the host language, people, culture and country
1.   What's your attitude toward the host language (English), people and country now? Did this change while you were abroad? What stereotypes/expectations of the host culture did you have before you went and how were they confirmed or dispelled?

2.   Have you ever asked other Chinese or international students around you about their attitudes toward the host language, people and culture? If yes, what were their views? Did their views influence your attitude?

3.   Did you watch TV programs/films, listen to music, or read books that are about the host country during your exchange? If yes, why did you do that? What was your impression?

4.   In your opinion, how do local and international people in the host country view Chinese people who speak good English and those who don't? How did that influence your motivation to enhance your English?

Residence abroad
1.   Did your living situation change in the second half of your exchange period (relationship with your roommates/language use with your roommates/social opportunities with local and international students)?

Free time and travel
1.   Please describe a typical day in the host environment. How much free time did you have? How did you spend it? Did this change over time?

2.   Did you join any campus/community organizations or activities while abroad? If yes, which ones? Were they new to you? Did they bring you into contact with locals? Other international students? What did you gain from these activities?

3. What trips did you take in the host country or other countries? Who did you travel with? Where did you go? How did you travel? How long did you stay? Where did you stay? What did you gain from these trips? Had you ever travelled like this before?

Social development
1. Did your social circle change in the second half of your exchange period? Do you wish you had done anything differently to improve your relationships across cultures?
2. How did your social circle influence your language use? Did the people in your social circle encourage you to use and improve your English?

Intercultural adjustment and learning/intercultural communication skills
1. How well did you adapt to the new environment? Did your English skills make you confident and ease your transition to the host environment?
2. Please describe an encounter with cultural difference that went well. What did you learn from this experience? How did that influence your language and cultural learning?
3. Now describe an encounter with cultural difference that did *not* go well. How did you respond? What did you learn from this experience? How did that influence your language and cultural learning?
4. To figure out a cultural misunderstanding, what did you do? How did that influence your motivation to improve your language and intercultural communication skills?
5. Compared with your first week abroad, how did you feel at the end of your stay? Did you fit in? How did you feel about leaving? Would you have been happy to stay longer?
6. Did your intercultural communication skills improve after studying and living abroad? Why or why not? What areas improved? What areas do you wish to improve further? How important are English skills to intercultural communication?
7. What is most interesting or intriguing for you in interacting with people from other cultures? What is most challenging for you when interacting with people from other cultures?

Identity
1. How do you define your language identity now? Do you think you are more of a proficient English user than learner? Has this changed because you spent time abroad? Has this changed how you see yourself?
2. In your opinion, how did other people in your host environment perceive your language identity? Was your language identity contested? If yes, how did that experience influence your motivation to use English?
3. What's your desired language identity? What can you do to become the person you want to become?
4. To what extent did you want to fit in or even be a member of the local academic and social community in the host country? How did you position yourself? Did your positioning change over time? How did your self-positioning influence your motivation to learn and use English in the host environment?
5. Have elements of the host country become part of your identity? Do you feel more like a global citizen after living abroad?
6. In your opinion, how did other people around you perceive your cultural identity? Did their perceptions have an impact on your motivation to use English with them?

7. What's your desired cultural identity? Did this change while you were abroad? Would you like to possess a bicultural or even a multicultural identity?
8. While abroad did you see yourself as an ambassador of Hong Kong or China? If yes, how did you feel in that role?
9. Did you become more proud of Hong Kong and/or more attached to China? Did you become more nationalistic? If yes, why? How did that influence your motivation to make international friends and your language use?

Service-learning/volunteering
1. Did you take part in any service learning/volunteering?
2. What did you gain from this experience? Did it enhance your English skills? Did it enhance your knowledge of the host culture?

Reentry – Back to Hong Kong

Feelings and personal development
1. How do you feel to be back in Hong Kong? To be back at CUHK? Have your perceptions of Hong Kong and CUHK changed? If yes, how?
2. What do you miss most about the host culture/your exchange experience?
3. Was the exchange experience transformative for you? If yes, how have you changed?
4. Do you want to keep your exchange experience alive? If yes, what would you do?

Academic development
1. Have you changed your major or minor after coming back to CUHK? If yes, why?
2. Has your exchange experience affected your choice of courses at CUHK? (e.g., Are any of your courses related to the country where you studied abroad? Are you taking any language enhancement courses?)
3. Are your study habits or in-class behaviors different now because of your exchange experience (e.g., Are you/do you plan to be more active in class? Do you now view students who speak up in class differently)?

Social life
1. Are you keeping in contact with friends you made while abroad? If yes, how? How often? Do any plan to visit you here? Do you plan to go back to visit them?
2. Do you now spend more time with int'l students than you did before you went abroad?
3. Which college are you living in now? Where is your roommate from? What language do you use to talk with your roommate?

Current English learning motivation and usage
1. What language do you use most often now?
2. How would you describe your current motivation to learn and use English? What motivates you to learn and improve your English now?
3. How is your reentry experience influencing your English learning motivation?
4. What steps do you plan to take to continue to learn and use English?

Future plans

1. What advantages do you think you have compared with CUHK students who have not studied abroad (e.g., in the job market, in your profession, in your personal/social life)?
2. What do you plan to do after you graduate? (e.g., postgraduate studies at home or abroad? Work abroad? Travel abroad? Work for an international company?)
3. Have you thought about studying, living in, or even immigrating to your host country later in your life? If yes, why? What's your parents' attitude toward this?
4. How has your international experience influenced your future plans? Did you change your plans after your international experience? Do you think that the international experience will help your future plans?

APPENDIX C

Post post-sojourn Interview Protocol used in the study

Goals
1. What do you hope to accomplish in your remaining time at CUHK? What are your personal, linguistic, cultural, academic, and professional goals?
2. What strategies have you been using or are you going to use to accomplish these goals?

English learning, use, ability and motivation
1. Are you taking any ELTU courses this semester? Please describe them and tell me what you have gained from them.
2. Are you taking any elective English language or culture courses?
3. This semester have you sought language support from relevant CUHK units to improve your English skills for job interviews or graduate programs application? What activities have you joined?
4. Are you taking any steps to learn or improve English on your own?
5. What courses, activities, or learning experiences have enhanced your motivation to learn or use English this semester?
6. What language do you now use most of the time (academic/social/Internet entertainment)? Is your language use different from what it was before your exchange experience?
7. How would you rate your overall proficiency in English (1 = poor to 5 = like a native speaker)? Which skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, sociopragmatic competence) have improved since your return to CUHK? Why?
8. Do you feel more confident speaking English with native speaker or non-Chinese speakers of English as an international language? Are you more willing to initiate conversations with them in English?
9. What has motivated you to improve your English since your return to CUHK? (Exams? Academic? Career? Social life?) How would you describe your current motivation to learn and use the language as compared with your time abroad?
10. How would you describe your language learning efforts since your return to CUHK? Which English language skills have you tried to enhance the most? How? What elements do you still need to improve?

Academic development
1. What courses are you taking now? Have you noticed any differences in your courses at CUHK and at the host institution? How do you feel about these differences?
2. Are your study habits or in-class behaviors different now because of your exchange experience (e.g., Are you more active in class? Do you now view students who speak up in class differently?)?
3. What English skills are most important for your coursework now? Are you still motivated to improve your English skills by a desire to achieve academic excellence? If yes, what do you do to improve? If not, why?

Social network
1. Please describe your current social network. Where are your friends from? What activities do you do together? What language do you use with them?

2. When you returned to CUHK, to what extent did you want to have a diverse social circle? What have you done to expand your social circle?

3. Which college are you living in now? Where is your roommate from? What language do you use to talk with your roommate? (Did you request an international roommate?)

4. Have you kept in contact with the international friends you made during the exchange program? If yes, how? Have you visited them (or have they visited you)? Or do you have any plans to meet up in the near future?

5. Since your exchange experience, have you made any new international friends? How many international friends do you have now? How often do you see them? What do you do together? What language do you use with them?

6. How does your social circle influence your motivation to use English? Do the people in your social circle encourage you to use and improve your English?

Sociocultural experience

1. Have you joined any English-medium activities organized by your college/university or outside the university since you came back? If yes, what did you join? Why?

2. Since your exchange experience, have you travelled, worked, or studied abroad? If yes, please provide details.

3. Are your social and cultural experiences after your return to CUHK influencing your motivation to learn and use English? Please explain.

Career development and plans

1. Please tell me about your recent internship experience in Hong Kong. What did you do? What did you gain from the experience?

2. Were good English skills essential in your workplace? Did the experience encourage you to use and improve your English?

3. What do you plan to do after you graduate? (e.g., postgraduate studies at home or abroad? Work abroad? Work for an international company?) What concrete plans do you have?

4. How has your international experience influenced your future plans? Do you think that it will help your future plans?

5. How important are good English skills for your future plans?

Attitudes toward English, English-speaking people and countries

1. Do you miss your host country from time to time? If yes Why?

2. How much do you think you know about your host country, culture and people? How do you view your host country and other English-speaking countries now?

3. Do you want to study or work in your host country or another English-speaking country for a longer period of time? If yes, why? Do you have any concrete plans?

4. What is your attitude toward English in general, native speakers' English and other speakers' English?

5. Do you now watch TV programs/films, listen to music, or read news/magazines/books that are about your host country? If yes, why do you do that?

Identity

1. How do you define your language identity now? Do you think you are a more proficient English user because you have experience in an English speaking country?

2. In your opinion, how do the people you interact with in Hong Kong perceive your language identity?
3. Has your language identity been challenged in any way in Hong Kong? (e.g., Have you met locals who think your English is not as strong as you perceive it to be?) If yes, how has that experience influenced your motivation to use and learn English?
4. What's your desired language identity? What can you do to achieve it in Hong Kong?
5. How do you identify yourself and feel about your cultural identity now? Do you see yourself as different from Chinese students who do not have overseas experience? If yes, in what ways?
6. In your opinion, how do the people around you perceive your cultural identity? Do they see you differently because you have overseas experience?
7. What is your desired cultural identity? Has it changed since your re-entry? Do you see Hong Kong, Mainland China and the host country differently now?
8. How do your ideal identities influence your motivation to make international friends and enhance your proficiency in English?