A Successful Study Stay Abroad (SA)  
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Outline

- What is a successful study stay abroad?
- What does the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting (FTI) of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) offer students on their stay abroad?
- Recommendations: before, during, and after students’ stay abroad
A successful study stay abroad according to

- The objectives of the European Commission’s Education and Culture Directorate-General
- Sending universities
- Research on L2 learning during SA
- Students
The European Commission’s Education and Culture Directorate-General

- “To enable students to benefit educationally, linguistically and culturally from the experience of learning in other European countries
- To promote co-operation between institutions and to enrich the educational environment of host institutions
- To contribute to the development of a pool of well-qualified, open-minded and internationally experienced young people as future professionals”

http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/study_en.htm
Sending universities

- To adapt EU goals to their degree programmes
- To set the requirements for their students
- British students in Modern Languages or similar areas usually spend their 3rd year abroad (of 4) in one or two destinations
- One of the main goals is for these students to improve their proficiency in the destination language(s).
Attitude toward the host culture and language contact

Students “who remained at the state in which they preserved the hegemony of their culture over the new host culture maintained a negative attitude toward the host culture. This attitude invariably influenced with whom they chose to interact, most likely an American.” (Isabelli-García, 2006, p. 256)
Research on L2 learning during SA

Integrative motivation, language contact and L2 acquisition

“student contact with the Spanish language has a significant effect on their speaking improvement.” (Hernández, 2010, p. 610)

“informal, out-of-class contact can greatly enhance acquisition.” (Isabelli-García, 2006, p. 257)

“students with higher integrative motivation had more contact with the Spanish language outside of class” (Hernández, 2010, p. 608)
Research on L2 learning during SA

Pre-departure level of proficiency and language gains

“the students who improved their speaking ability more in France had taken more advanced French courses before studying abroad.” (Magnan & Back, 2007, p. 53)
Research on L2 learning during SA: Summary of contributing factors

- The more interaction with NSs* the better, facilitated by
  - Positive attitude towards host culture
  - Integrative motivation

- The higher the initial level of proficiency, the better
  - More options to take courses with NSs
  - Easier to establish social networks with NSs

* NSs = native speakers
Symbiotic relationship

“In our study, the relationship between networks and language gains could be symbiotic. Those who make friendships with natives tend to use the language and therefore make gains, and those who make greater gains are more capable of making friendships with locals.” (Dewey, Bown & Eggett, 2012, p. 126)
Social networks

“A social network is a structure comprised of individuals who are connected with others by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, or common interests.” (Dewey, Bown & Eggett, 2012, p. 114)

“The more social groups a person reported belonging to, the greater gains he or she tended to indicate in speaking proficiency.” (Dewey, Bown & Eggett, 2012, p. 126)
Research on L2 learning during SA
Diagram of contributing factors

- Positive attitude towards destination culture, language and people
- Integrative motivation
- Advanced pre-departure L2 proficiency

Facilitate

Success enhances

Incorporation into social networks with NSs

Allow for

Increased interaction with NSs

Leads to

Greater L2 proficiency gains
Students’ personal goals

- To enjoy themselves
- To have a worthwhile experience
- To further their personal growth in terms of
  - self-awareness,
  - self-confidence,
  - self-reliance,
  - open-mindedness
  - ...

Students’ interpersonal goals

- Social and intercultural growth
  - A deeper understanding of
    - their own culture
    - their host culture
  - A heightened positive attitude toward host-country culture and people
  - Enhanced integrative motivation

- Consequently
  - Interaction with NSs inside/outside the classroom
  - Membership in NSs social networks (friends)
Students’ academic goals

- Fulfillment of the sending university’s requirements
- Quality of and success in courses enrolled
- Spanish language improvement
SA at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra Faculty of Translation and Interpreting

- Overview
- Pre-arrival
- Arrival
- Return home
SA at the UPF FTI: overview

- We are on a quarter system
- Degree students take 40 UK credits each quarter (120 a year)
- We offer two 4-yr. undergraduate degrees
  - Applied Languages
  - Translation and Interpreting
- Languages offered:
  - L2: English, French and German
  - L1: Catalan and Spanish
The UPF Campuses
An urban university in the heart of Barcelona

3 spheres campus

Ciutadella campus:
social sciences and humanities

Mar campus:
health and life sciences

Poblenou campus:
communication and information technologies
SA at the UPF FTI: pre-arrival

- Mobility Office and Academic Adviser
- Spanish placement test
  - Two short compositions (descriptive, argumentative)
  - Reading comprehension (multiple choice)
  - Use of Spanish (gap filling and multiple choice)
- Online pre-enrolment
  - Courses only available to exchange students
  - Degree courses in the FTI
SA at the UPF FTI: courses only for exchange students

Language-related courses

- Spanish language
  - Intermediate / Advanced / Superior
  - Writing Workshop
  - Oral Language Workshop
  - Specific Texts
- Beginners’ Catalan Language
- Translation (Eng/Sp/Eng, Fr/Sp/Fr, Gr/Sp/Gr)
SA at the UPF FTI: courses only for exchange students

Cultural courses:

- Spanish Literature
- Catalan Literature
- Spanish Geography
- Spanish History
- Spanish Contemporary Economic History
- Spanish Art History
- Present-Day Spanish Cinema
SA at the UPF FTI: FTI degree
courses*

- Languages
  - English
  - French
  - German

- Translation from the above languages into
  - Catalan
  - Spanish

- Fundamentals of Translation...

*Language of instruction specified (Cat., Sp.)
SA at the UPF FTI: degree courses in other faculties*

For example in Humanities
- Fundamental Topics in Philosophy
- Great Religious Traditions
- Cultural Aesthetics and Philosophy
- Greek Art

For example in Audiovisual Communication
- Audiovisual Documentation and Communication
- Trends in Contemporary Cinema

*Language of instruction specified (Cat., Sp.)
SA at the UPF FTI: arrival

Mobility Office (OMA)

- Administrative matters
- Accommodation
- General orientation sessions
  - University Community Services
    - Sports, choir, theatre
  - Language Volunteer Services
    - Buddy system
    - Cultural outings
  - UPF Erasmus Student Network
    - Mentor system and leisure
## Semana de acogida estudiantes de intercambio septiembre 2013

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tiempo</th>
<th>Evento</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.00h.</td>
<td><strong>Bienvenida a la UPF</strong></td>
<td>Auditorio (Campus de la Ciutadella)</td>
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<td>Dr. Josep Ferrer, vicerrector de Relaciones Internacionales</td>
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<td>10.15h.</td>
<td><strong>Breve presentación de la UPF</strong></td>
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<td>10.30h.</td>
<td><strong>Idiomas UPF</strong></td>
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<td>Cursos de catalán y español</td>
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<td>Elisenda Campmany y Robert Hooworth</td>
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<td>10.45h.</td>
<td><strong>Servicio de atención a la comunidad universitaria (SACU)</strong></td>
<td>Mónica Sánchez</td>
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<td>Mónica Sánchez</td>
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<td>11.00h.</td>
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<td>11.10h.</td>
<td><strong>Voluntariado lingüístico UPF</strong></td>
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<td>Albert Servítje</td>
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<td>11.15h.</td>
<td><strong>Pausa (30 minutos)</strong></td>
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<td>11.45h.</td>
<td><strong>Consejos de seguridad en Barcelona</strong></td>
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<td>Mossos d'esquadra (policía catalana)</td>
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<td>12h.</td>
<td><strong>Sesión informativa sobre la biblioteca y los servicios informáticos</strong></td>
<td>Auditorio (Campus de la Ciutadella)</td>
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<td>13h.</td>
<td><strong>Visita guiada al campus</strong></td>
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<td>Conferencia inaugural: &quot;Barcelona, un poco de historia&quot;</td>
<td>Dr. Antoni Luna, profesor de Humanidades de la UPF</td>
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<td>Aula 40.002 (Campus de la Ciutadella)</td>
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<td>Feria de asociaciones:</td>
<td>Patio del edificio Roger de Llúria (Campus de la Ciutadella)</td>
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<td>Sesión informativa</td>
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SA at the UPF FTI: arrival
OMA and FTI academic advisers

- FTI Orientation session
  - To have students and academic advisers meet
  - To provide students with specific information about our faculty
  - To explain the Add & Drop days
  - To provide yet another opportunity to find a language partner
  - And to answer questions

- Guidance given throughout the stay as needed
SA at the UPF FTI: return home

- Feedback on stay abroad collected by sending university
  - Not available to host university
- Credits acknowledged according to sending university’s requirements, for example
  - Flat rate (attendance but no marks)
  - Course by course
    - Same number of credits as at home university
    - Fewer credits than at home university
  - Course credits + project
- Students continue their degrees
Recommendations for students to make the most of their SA

- General
- Before
- During
- After

- A word of caution
Recommendations for students to make the most of their SA: general

- Foster a positive attitude toward the destination culture, language and people
- Promote integrative motivation
- Stress the importance of
  - classes with NSs
  - out-of-class relationships with NSs (social networks)
  - limiting their use of English as much as possible
Ideas to help students make the most of their SA: before

- Have students find (cool) things out about their destination places ➔ blog, forum
- Skype / email pals
- Supply language for social interaction:
  - Accommodation: se alquila, fianza, paga y señal, enchufe, piso soleado, calefacción …
  - Shopping: la tanda, ¿Quién es el último?, names of fish, cuts of meat, …
  - Meeting other students (role playing)
Ideas to help students make the most of their SA: during

- Specific projects which will help students interact with NSs, reflect on experience:
  - **Interviews** with NSs according to their interests
  - **Introspective diaries**: time spent with NSs, attitudes, difficulties, successful moments, specific instances of language learning, sociolinguistic awareness...
  - **Scrapbooks** of their stay abroad: photos, tickets, flyers, maps, brochures, with a section on people they have met and friends they have made...
Recommendations for students to make the most of their SA: During

- Advice to students (1)
  - Avoid contact with English-speaking students
  - Grasp opportunities to be with NSs

- In class
  - Take courses with Spanish students
  - Do group projects with NSs
  - Sit with NSs
Recommendations for students to make the most of their SA: during

- Advice to students (2)
  - Grasp opportunities to be with NSs

- Out of class
  - Accommodation with NSs
  - Extracurricular activities: sports, theatre, orchestra...
  - Volunteer work
  - Combined study abroad / work abroad
  - Language buddies
  - Spend as much time as possible with NSs (friends)
Ideas to help students make the most of their SA: after

- Help students maintain their relationships via Skype, Facebook, email...
- Work on those aspects of Spanish that students noticed they were lacking
- Use materials they have returned with in class
- Have students offer advice to future outgoing students
Recommendations for students to make the most of their SA: caution

Students may have unrealistic expectations. Unfilled expectations can be detrimental to a successful stay abroad. For example:

- I will speak Spanish with my English-speaking friends.
- I will make friends easily in Spain.
- Everyone will speak to me in Spanish.
- Just by going to Spain, my Spanish will improve immensely.
Recommendations for students to make the most of their SA: caution

You can help your students to align their expectations to reality.

- Discuss your students expectations with them before they go abroad.
- Help them to revise their unrealistic expectations.
- Help them to see how to turn their hopes into reality.
Conclusions: you can contribute to the success of your students’ SA

- As NSs you can foster a positive attitude towards your culture, people and language thus promoting integrative motivation.
- Your interest in improvement coupled with recent research in SA and language learning can provide you with new insights and ideas for your classes.
- You know that more contact with NSs lead to more language gains.
References cited


The European Commission’s Education and Culture Directorate-General. (last update: 09/07/13) *Erasmus Student Mobility for Study. What are the objectives of student mobility for studies?* Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/study_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/study_en.htm)
Thank you!

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