

Student Perceptions of Language Learning in Two Contexts: At Home and Study Abroad

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This study investigated the relationship between students' self-reported perceptions of their learning experiences and outcomes on measures of oral fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, communicative ability and cognitive ability. Specifically, the study analyzed the correlation between activities in the classroom, in the social realm, and in the home environments with outcomes from measures Spanish acquisition. In addition, diary analysis was conducted to investigate which environment seemed most relevant to the learners during the semester.

The participants in this study were 37 college students learning Spanish in two contexts: at home (AH) in a university in Colorado, and study abroad (SA) in Alicante, Spain. The results of four companion studies that investigated linguistic gain were correlated with the student perception scores produced through diary analysis. These analyses were conducted in order to understand relationships between students' reports of their activities during the semester and changes in their overall Spanish acquisition.

The results indicated that differences existed between the AH and SA groups in terms of which environment seemed to be most relevant. While the AH group discussed classroom activities to the greatest extent, the SA group talked most about their experiences with Spanish in the social environment. In addition, while several measures of fluency, grammatical ability, and vocabulary acquisition were related to the home and social environments for the SA group, the AH group data showed relationships between the classroom environment and those measures.

Very few relationships were noted between communicative ability, vocabulary and cognitive measures and the perception scores. However, two especially noteworthy relationships were found. For the AH group, the positive classroom environment was related to better attention control, and the negative classroom environment was related to reduced ability to control attention in the target language.

It was concluded that differences between the two contexts were evident. While the AH learners were minimally exposed to native speakers outside the classroom, the SA group enjoyed a great deal of exposure. This contact, however, was generally only related to gains in their ability to communicate orally, and may have actually negatively affected learners' ability to produce grammatical forms.

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## **1. Chapter 1: The Problem**

### **1.1. Introduction**

Language learning during study abroad and context of learning have become the focus of a great deal of investigation in recent years and with good reason. Program administrators, educators and learners seek to understand features of study abroad that may enrich and expand learning. Research has focused on numerous elements of second language acquisition in the study abroad context such as pronunciation, fluency and syntax, as well as measures of proficiency in reading, writing, comprehension of spoken language, and speaking ability. These investigations have gained popularity because ultimately, there had been few empirical investigations into the nature of gains made by learners studying abroad (DeKeyser, 1986, Freed, 1990), or into what sorts of exchanges learners experience outside the classroom while abroad (Wilkinson, 2002).

The common belief that students who go abroad return home seeming to demonstrate, “significantly improved language skills” (Brecht, Davidson & Ginsberg, 1993. p. 1), has led institutions to hail study abroad as the best way for second language learners to “... become fluent and achieve the greatest proficiency in their use of the language” (Freed, 1990, p. 453).

As will be demonstrated below, the evidence presented by recent studies in this area has been fairly conflicting. Because experiences abroad vary greatly, and because most studies conducted thus far include very small sample sizes, it is extremely difficult to make generalizations about the effects of such experiences. However, investigations of features of language learning experiences that seem to facilitate acquisition of the target language (TL)



should expand our understanding of the nature of this learning and may improve our ability to offer programs that will increase benefits enjoyed by participation in such programs.

One of the newest areas of investigation focuses on the types of experiences learners have while in-country. The variable described as “Context of Learning” has been studied by Freed (1990, 2000), Laubscher, (1994), Segalowitz & Freed, (2004), Collentine, (2004), Lafford, (2004), Dewey, (2004) and Díaz-Campos, (2004) who have made attempts to quantify and qualify those elements that seem to improve the learning environment for learners in the classroom both at home and abroad. In an effort to understand the benefits of study abroad and in order to articulate why such experience should improve and assist learning, many researchers have recently investigated a wider variety of features of the study abroad experience.

Why then, should the variable context of learning receive specific attention by investigators? If the goal is to facilitate the learning of a second language, one must investigate and identify methods of teaching and learning that support this purpose. The current investigation examined learners’ descriptions of their experiences during a semester of language study in two contexts. Additionally an account of the sorts of activities learners described in and out of the classroom was investigated in an effort to reveal those behaviors that may have contributed to their language learning at-home and abroad.

The current study is in response to research by Freed (1990, 1995), in which she investigated many aspects of the students' learning of French in the study abroad context as well as in the classroom. Freed noted that it is believed that " ... students who seek to use the target language the most, either in the classroom or with native speakers in authentic encounter situations, will be the ones who ultimately make most progress" (Freed, 1995, p. 6). It is within

this framework that the current study is organized with an attempt to discover whether this often-held belief is true.

While quantitative data collection and analysis has received a large amount of attention, such methods may be corroborated by the use of qualitative procedures. The goal of qualitative investigation is to describe phenomena that are not easily measured using experimental methods. As explained by Seliger (1989), the use of qualitative analysis may “allow us to study individual performance closely” (p. 115). It is possible that the analysis of learner attitudes and perceptions of learning and environment may produce results that cannot be measured by quantitative methods alone.

Through the use of qualitative analysis of interview data and diary entries, the current study describes experiences inside and outside the classroom that may have led to gains in language proficiency, or the lack thereof. It is important to note that this study is only a small part of a much larger investigation originally undertaken by Barbara Freed, Norman Segalowitz and their colleagues (2000), with the financial support of the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE). For the project, a research team was assembled to investigate several other aspects of language acquisition, including oral proficiency and fluency, grammar and vocabulary, phonology, communicative strategies, and cognitive ability. The results of those quantitative studies were utilized by the current investigation to compare their results with the qualitative results that grew out of this study.

## **1.2. Rationale for the current study**

This study was motivated by a call by researchers for deeper investigation into study abroad learners activities’ that develop or diminish their second language acquisition (Wilkinson, 1998).

Although some investigations have indicated that learners who go abroad make greater gains on some measures of language acquisition than those who do not, few studies have set out to describe learners' reactions to their experience abroad and how those activities may be related to overall language learning.

In the *European Journal of Education* (1993) Lambert discussed the dearth of research on outcomes for study abroad participants:

In view of the great and increasing importance of language study abroad, it is startling that we know very little about what happens to American students enrolled in such programs. We do not know when is the best time to send students, what kind of students can profit most from language study abroad, how much and what kinds of language learning they should have before they go, or how best to manage the mix of informal and extra-classroom learning, and what happens inside the classroom. We do not even know what language gains these students actually make. Moreover, in the case of students who travel abroad to study in a particular discipline, little attention has been paid to ensuring that those selected have adequate language competence to enable them to fully benefit from their overseas language experience (p. 315).

Freed (1995), attempted to articulate the reasons for studying abroad. In *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (1995) she explained, "It has long been assumed that this combination of immersion... integrated with formal classroom learning creates the best environment for learning a second language" (p. 5). The question remains, however, whether this assumption may be verified through empirical research.

Other investigators have put forward suggestions for research based on their results. Wilkinson (1995), for example, recommended that future research investigate whether patterns

exist among learners' individual traits, circumstances and behaviors, whether additional participant characteristics influence learning and if so, under what circumstances?.

The questions raised by prior investigations are important and offer a starting point from which to initiate new studies. It is with these studies in mind that the following research questions were proposed:

1. What experiences do learners participating in this study report as most relevant to their language learning?

1a. Do experiences at home, in the classroom, or in social settings seem equally important or does one environment seem more important?

1b. Is there a difference based on context? (AH vs. SA)

2. How do individual experiences, as described in participant journals and interviews, relate to the acquisition of Spanish for learners in this study?

2a. Is there a correlation between learners' reported perceptions of their learning environment (Classroom, Social, Home, and Unknown) and outcomes on measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar, vocabulary, phonology, communicative ability, and cognitive ability as measured in the companion studies?

2b. Is there a difference based on context? (AH vs. SA)

The following section presents a review of literature relating to the Research Questions for this investigation. The studies discussed provide the foundation for this study, which will attempt to describe the learning process and connect that process with the outcomes or product of assessments provided by the companion studies.

## **2. Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The following section presents an outline of the types of study abroad programs available and a review of recent research on linguistic outcomes in the study abroad context. Descriptions of learner profiles and a summary of research methodologies employed in previous studies are also presented, as well as a review of a theoretical framework for this study.

### **2.1. Types of study abroad programs**

Study abroad has become increasingly popular in recent years with a large variety of programs available to those who wish to complement their learning at institutions of higher education. The Institute of International Education (IIE) annually publishes two volumes of information about programs that are available to sojourners. In *The Academic Year Abroad 2002* more than 2,000 programs offered around the globe by U.S. and overseas institutions are presented. The guide includes information about costs, housing availability, instruction, credit and eligibility criteria. The programs are quite diverse, with some offering instruction, internships and excursions. The extensive variety and availability of programs demonstrates that study abroad has become widely popular in recent years, both in the U.S. and throughout the world.

In addition to semester and year-long programs, learners may choose to participate in shorter-term programs. IIE publishes another guide entitled *Short-Term Study Abroad 2002*,

which is specifically geared toward those who choose to study for shorter periods. The following general description is presented in this guide:

*Short-Term Study Abroad* was formerly called *Vacation Study Abroad*. This new title more accurately describes the directory's focus and content, and the academic integrity of its programs. This publication lists short-term programs of varying lengths. Courses from one week to several months are listed, and include offerings for the winter and spring breaks, the summer, and other short-term overseas opportunities available throughout the year (p. ix).

As in the *Academic Year Abroad* guide, the *Short-Term Study Abroad* guide presents information about program costs, eligibility, opportunities for credit, internships and excursions. With such a large variety of programs available, learners have the option of choosing situations that support their educational goals. Whether the goal is to gain a greater understanding of the cultures of the world, to increase proficiency in a second language, or to simply broaden their horizons, the diversity of programs available enables individuals to choose a program to fit their needs.

With such an explosion of popularity, one might ask *why*? In the next section, a summary of some of the reasons students have historically studied abroad, and why they seem to be so interested in doing so now will be presented.

The most traditional types of study abroad programs involve one or two semesters in a country outside the U.S. These programs vary in many ways, but have been described and classified by Goodwin and Nacht (1988) in the following way:

*The "finishing school" and "the grand tour"*

*Broadening the intellectual élite*

*Internationalizing the educated citizenry*

*Fulfilling a distinctive institutional mission*

*Exploring our roots*

*Mastering a foreign language*

The last and possibly most relevant to the current study is the idea of international study abroad in order to *master a foreign language* (p.15). Goodwin and Nacht described this aspect of study abroad as "the most direct educational benefit" and "a key to both scholarly inquiry and to commercial success... the main route to cultural understanding (p. 15).

Other researchers have cited study abroad experience as the means by which language students may strengthen their classroom experience and broaden their knowledge of both language use and cultural understanding. (DeKeyser, 1986, Huebner, 1995, Freed, 1995, Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsburg, 1993).

## **2.2. Previous research on contexts of learning**

Several studies have been conducted with the goal of articulating exactly what linguistic benefits are derived from participation in the context of study abroad. Brecht, Davidson and Ginsberg (1993) reported on a very large investigation sponsored by the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) and the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC). The study measured gains achieved by participants in a study abroad context. Using pre- and posttest scores on several different measures, they were able to pinpoint specific changes occurring during the program. The measures included the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to measure oral proficiency, and the ACTR qualifying exams. The short form MLAT(SF) was used to measure analytic ability

(MLAT 3), synthetic (MLAT 4), and memory based strategies (MLAT 5). In addition, the Educational Testing Service tests for listening (ETSL) and reading (ETSR) were utilized.

The use of such a variety and range of instruments was expected to provide a good measure of the amount and kinds of learning taking place among the learners involved in a study abroad program in Russia. Based on the OPI data, the investigators claimed that, "The traditional wisdom that one does not acquire real speaking competence without a period spent in-country is borne out by the ACTR data" (p. 17). According to Brecht, et al., only thirteen percent of those learners included in the study who did not study abroad scored at an "advanced" level on the OPI. In contrast, of those students included in the study returning from one semester in Russia, almost 40 percent scored at the "advanced" level. Gains in reading and listening proficiency were not as striking, however, with most measures demonstrating no significant differences. One of the major problems in this study was the lack of a control group, and although statistics and data from other studies were discussed, they may not have been as useful as data derived from comparable groups studying at home and abroad during the same period.

The above example is relevant, however, to the question of what if anything, is actually accomplished by those who go abroad. Other studies have also investigated the context of learning and its relationship to linguistic gain. In *Getting Into, Through, and Out of a Survival Situation*, Barbara Lafford (1995) described the results of an investigation comparing OPI scores for students in two categories: those who had spent a semester studying abroad and those with no experience abroad. OPI scores were compared and showed that most of those who studied abroad scored at least "Intermediate-high" while the majority of the students with only classroom experience scored "Intermediate-mid" or lower (p. 100). Although supportive of the theory that the study abroad context produces positive results, the use of the OPI has recently come under



scrutiny because of its use of global scores, which may not be precise enough to show smaller gains (Freed, 1995).

In addition to the previously mentioned analysis, Lafford compared communication strategies of learners who had studied abroad with those who had had only classroom experience. Utilizing the oral interview data collected for the OPI, Lafford compared a number of communicative strategies used by each group. These strategies included channel openings, development and maintenance of conversations, information gathering, negotiation of meaning, and channel closings. According to Lafford, the results of these analyses show that, "... the study abroad experience broadened the repertoire of communicative strategies of L2 learners and makes them better conversationalists" (p. 119).

More recent research has focused on differences in classroom instruction, both in U.S. classrooms and abroad, and how these experiences may be reflected in the behaviors of learners in real life experiences with the foreign language. Wilkinson (2002) reported on an investigation of students' language use outside the classroom and the similarities between classroom discourse with the type of speech used outside the classroom. In *The Omnipresent Classroom During Summer Study Abroad: American Students in Conversation with their French Hosts*, Wilkinson reported that learners often utilized classroom discourse strategies even in conversations outside the classroom. She reported that, "... the natives and non-natives alike relied heavily on classroom roles and discourse structures to manage their interactions" (p. 157). This investigation questioned the notion that learners who have experience abroad are exposed to a different type of language learning opportunity than that which is available to them at home. Wilkinson utilized qualitative techniques and conversation analysis to show that interactions between learners and their host-families were often strikingly similar to those interactions found

between teachers and learners in classroom situations. This study questioned the true value of study abroad. If learners continue to be exposed to classroom-type discourse in the *real world*, what possibility is there for gaining proficiency with more normal discourse strategies?

Wilkinson (1998) also took a case study approach to the study of language learning in a study abroad context. She described the experiences and perceptions of two native English speakers studying in France for one semester and found that their experiences were quite different even though they were participating in the same program. Wilkinson concluded that although types of contacts in the study abroad context are similar, the learners' perceptions vary widely.

She found evidence that interactions with the host family can vary for participants and that there seems to be an interaction between the learners' expectations and their relationships in the home. Further, while one of the learners she studied found her host-family to be welcoming and warm, the other was frustrated with the family situation to the point that she began to avoid contact altogether, opting to spend time with American friends.

Kline (1993) found similar results in her study of an immersion program in France. She reported that most of the participants in her study chose to remain closely tied to their home culture, forming American cliques, and avoiding contact with French interlocutors. Although her study did not attempt to assess changes in participants' language acquisition, it questioned the benefit of study abroad if learners continue to cling to the home culture.

As mentioned above, the current study attempts to understand the role context plays in proficiency gain in the foreign language. Haneda (1997) discussed another method that may be utilized to understand changes in language learning. The theoretical framework of Haneda's study was Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of *Community of Practice* (COP), which focused

on the social context in which learning takes place. Based on investigations on the role interlocutors play in second language learning, Haneda described second language learning within the construct of COP, as a "... shift away from the traditional focus on individual learners to an emphasis on their shared membership in the community" (p. 14). The community, then, plays an important role in the learning process and those learners who go abroad are likely to be exposed to types of interactions that are quite different from those available to them at home. The question remains, however, whether study abroad participants are taking full advantage of these social situations and to what extent those interactions impact second language proficiency?

Two elements that seem to be beyond the learners' control are the social atmosphere and cultural differences experienced in the host country. Brecht et al. (1993) suggested that learners' perceptions of the social climate may affect their language learning as well. In their study of 658 students spending at least one semester in Russia, they found that the female participants "gain less than men in listening and speaking skills" (p. 18). One hypothesis offered by the investigators was that, "men and women have different learning experiences while abroad" (p. 19).

These differences were also explored by Polanyi (1995), who qualitatively analyzed diaries of some of those same learners. She reported that the women in her investigation often felt as if they had less exposure to Native Speakers (NSs) because of cultural differences. In addition, the women reported that they were especially excluded from intellectual conversations. Further investigation of the same diaries by Polanyi, (1995) demonstrated that female participants' encounters with men were often unpleasant and lead to "feelings of doubt, social awkwardness, and worry" (p. 280). The results of those studies suggest that the issue of gender may affect learner outcomes while abroad and further investigation is warranted.

The question of different types of exposure to the target language while in country have led investigators to turn to more in-depth analysis of self-report data. Through the use of interviews and diary analysis, researchers have begun to deepen their understanding of the importance of these reports as methods of data analysis.

Pellegrino (1997) postulated that the behavior of Native Speaking (NS) interlocutors may have important effects on learners' ability to utilize their experience abroad to the fullest extent. If learners' attempts to communicate with NSs are unsuccessful, learners may feel embarrassment or discouragement, which ultimately could lead to avoidance of such interactions. Consequently, the overall benefits of learning outside the classroom may be reduced. Using journal entries and interviews of six American students studying Russian, she found that learners reported a need for four basic elements that promoted learning (p. 109):

1. Learners need to feel that their status as a mature, intelligent adult is preserved.
2. They need to feel a sense of physical and affective safety.
3. They need to feel supported that their concerns, thoughts, questions, and efforts to speak are valid and worthy of others' attention and interest.
4. They need to feel they have a reasonable amount of control over their L2 use environment.

Other studies have used interviews and diary entries in an attempt to single out specific experiences reported by learners that help or hinder their language learning. Al-Ansari (2000) made an attempt to measure proficiency differences for learners who had two different kinds of exposure to English for a relatively homogeneous group of 155 English as a second language (ESL) students studying in Bahrain. The study compared “sheltered curricular exposure” with “unsheltered extra-curricular exposure” (p. 175). Sheltered curricular exposure refers to

coursework taught in English by native English speakers, while unsheltered extra-curricular exposure refers to experiences learners have outside the classroom with television, radio, newspaper and personal contact with native English speakers. In order to measure the amount of contact, both curricular and extra-curricular, that students were exposed to, a questionnaire was utilized. The findings were enlightening in that, overall, those learners with higher English language proficiency had more out of class contact with English speakers. Interestingly, however, in separating low-achievers from high-achievers, Al-Ansari found that those learners who were at higher proficiency levels did not measurably benefit from higher amounts of extra-curricular contact with English. As for a correlation between curricular contact and proficiency levels, a strong positive correlation is found for the group as a whole.

The results of this investigation bring into question the value of out of class contact for higher proficiency language learners. Al-Ansari hypothesized that this lack of correlation relates to ceiling effects because those with initially high levels of proficiency may have reached a level for which proficiency gains tend to be smaller and, therefore, were not significant for his investigation.

In addition to the above-mentioned studies, other researchers have investigated context of learning from the learners' perspective. Miller and Ginsberg (1995) described a study in which they used qualitative analysis to demonstrate the intricate nature of language learning. The study analyzed 80 narrative diaries, 29 audio-taped oral narratives and 10 student notebook journals. The data were collected for native English speakers during language study programs in 1990 and 1991 at six institutes in Moscow and St. Petersburg. This study described learners' theories about the nature of language, how it might be learned, and how language is stored in the mind.

The basis for the study was the theory set forth by Thomas that, "... if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (qtd. in Miller and Ginsberg, p. 295). One way to understand the meaning of the above quote is to acknowledge that learners' perceptions have a great deal to do with the reality of their learning. Miller and Ginsberg described several learner beliefs demonstrated by the data. First of all, learners saw language as "words and syntax" (p. 297). That is to say that for the learners in this study, language was made up only of the use of forms and lexical rules, with other linguistic elements such as formulaic language, sociolinguistic ability and pragmatics being categorized as cultural information. By excluding all but a few elements, learners may not make use of the rich variety of linguistic input available to them in the study abroad context.

Other elements derived from the data included learners' belief that, "there is one correct way to say things" (p. 298), "Russian is a unified system with fixed rules" (p. 300), "Meaning lies in the words themselves" (p. 301), and "the mind is a container" (p. 303). All of these factors derived from the data produce a picture somewhat distinct from institutional goals of broadening learners' contact in new contexts. Miller and Ginsberg hypothesized that when learners have difficulty in their interactions with native speakers, they habitually assume that it is a structurally-based linguistic problem" (p. 303). In addition, the authors demonstrate that learners monitor native speakers' language in terms of correctness and are sometimes surprised and disconcerted by what they deem to be incorrect use of forms and pronunciation.

This phenomenon was also described by Wilkinson (2002) who asserted that for the learners in her study classroom discourse strategies played a very large role in their linguistic behaviors even outside the classroom. Combining the findings of these studies, it seems

apparent that methods of teaching a second language may fall short when applying classroom learning to contexts outside the classroom.

DeKeyser (1995) described an investigation that utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to measure gains by two groups of learners. Both groups had similar exposure to classroom instruction in Spanish. One group, consisting of seven learners, spent a semester in Spain while continuing to study Spanish in the classroom. The other group, consisting of five learners, remained in the U.S. taking similar classes in Spanish. While the two groups did not show significant differences on measures of accuracy of *ser* and *estar*, nor in their use of communicative strategies, DeKeyser demonstrated subtle differences that did occur in the Spain group, presumably due to the immersion process. Those differences occurring between individuals consisted mainly of different communication styles but included differences in the use of forms as well.

The relevance of DeKeyser's investigation to the current study may be summed up in the following way: "Further studies should try to link data on the linguistic product with data on psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic processes. They should not be limited to a simple pre-post design..." (p. 117). Although difficult to assess, those psycholinguistic processes may be accessible through the use of interviews and diary analysis, and investigation into individual experiences and attitudes may create a new understanding of the nature of differences found for individual learners.

In an investigation by Brecht & Robinson (1993), the focus was on learners' perception of their own learning in the study abroad context. The investigators took a somewhat different approach to analyzing the value of classroom instruction during an immersion program. This approach consisted of asking learners direct questions about their learning while living abroad.

Brecht & Robinson postulated that, “Understanding student attitudes may contribute substantively to our knowledge of second language acquisition (SLA) as well as to the success of study abroad programs” (p. 318). The investigation included several components, such as observations, interviews and diaries for which qualitative analyses were conducted. The learners reported a wide variety of reactions to in-country classroom instruction, from those learners who found that it “focused their attention” (p. 324) to those who believe that the classes were “bad” or “worthless” (p. 326). One interesting finding reported by Brecht & Robinson reflects the facility with which learners seem to change their minds. They reported that even though some learners reported frustration with the classes offered, they often contradicted themselves later by describing the classes as “interesting and useful” (p. 327).

Attempts to understand the complex nature of learning a second language, such as the study mentioned above, offer small pieces of the puzzle of language learning. Combined with results reported from quantitative investigations of language gain, self-report data may offer specific evidence of elements not available to such studies. Measuring linguistic gains on syntax, phonology fluency, and other measures, may be complemented by describing activities in which learners participate -- in and out of the classroom. The combination of quantitative and qualitative measures should broaden our understanding of second language learning and may offer important information for future program development.

The current study evaluates students' perceptions of learning in and out of the classroom by describing the value placed on specific types of learning by the individuals. Through the use of diary entries and interview data, it is anticipated that a broader understanding of the value of individual perceptions of personal learning in various contexts will be obtained. Individual linguistic goals, activities, and motivation are explored through analysis of these data.



### 2.3. Is Context Important?

There remains a debate on the importance of studying abroad for language acquisition. Even though it is often assumed that those who go abroad for language learning have an advantage over those who do not, the evidence has been contradictory. In addition to the studies mentioned above, current research continues evaluate the effectiveness of language learning in varying contexts.

A recent study by Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei (1998) and a similar investigation by Niezgoda & Rover (2001) set out to determine the effects that environment and language proficiency might have on learners' ability to assess pragmatic and grammatical errors. In both studies, the use of the term 'environment' refers to the input environment, comparing learners in an English as a foreign language (EFL) class on their home campus, to English as a second language learners (ESL) studying at U.S. universities. Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei compared the pragmatic and grammatical competence of two groups, one studying English in Hungary and the other studying English as a second language at a U.S. university. They reported differences between the groups in their assessments of the severity of grammatical and pragmatic errors. The EFL group reportedly assessed pragmatic errors less severely than grammatical errors, while the ESL group viewed pragmatic errors as more severe. The authors claimed that this effect is due, at least in part, to the wealth of pragmatic input that is available to the ESL learners. In a replication study, Niezgoda & Rover (2001) found some evidence to the contrary. In their study, which also analyzed the participants' awareness of grammatical and pragmatic errors, the major difference was not context or setting, but the achievement level and motivation of the participant. Using the same instrument as Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei (1998), they found that the EFL learners actually outperformed the ESL learners, identifying more of both types of errors

(pragmatic and grammatical) and also rating them as more severe than did the ESL learners. Niezgodna & Rover argued that the explanation; "... lies in an interaction between exposure to pragmatic and grammatical input and individual learner characteristics, specifically the degree to which learners actively attend to input" (p. 77).

The authors went on to say that the EFL groups in their study were not necessarily equivalent because, unlike the participants in the original study by Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, the EFL participants from Niezgodna & Rover's study were highly motivated learners planning to teach English in the future.

This type of contradictory evidence is fairly common in the literature, supporting the assertion (Freed, 1998) that many factors interact, thereby producing diverse results. Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) devoted an entire chapter in their introductory text on second language acquisition research to the "linguistic environment for language acquisition" (p. 114). Their use of the term 'environment' referred to the source of linguistic input, input frequency and modification, and comprehensible input. They emphasized that the linguistic environment, and especially input are of great importance to researchers and educators alike because input can be manipulated in the classroom. They reported on a number of studies that attempted to single out learning environments that promote language learning; however, as demonstrated above, a great deal of contradictory evidence exists. Larsen-Freeman & Long summarized the effect of input in the following way:

Neither production nor participation in conversation is necessary for acquisition, although certain types of each probably facilitate growth. Nor are input (linguistic) modifications necessary (p. 143-144).

Based on those ideas, the comparison of outcomes based solely on context (i.e. study abroad vs. at home) may not be enough, but a thorough understanding of the kinds of language contact situations that are possible, as well as other environmental factors, may lead to a better understanding of learning in any setting.

Since the 1967 report by John Carroll, which found that time studying abroad is one of the major predictors of language learning, there has been some concern about the belief that a period abroad was necessarily the ultimate means of achieving the goal of second language proficiency. Questions about linguistic outcomes from studying abroad, differences between learners, and whether those who study abroad make superior gains in all areas of language acquisition are becoming the focus of more and more research. This focus has promoted new and innovative ways of investigating learners' experiences with the objective of gaining a deeper understanding of the complex nature of learning a second language.

### **2.3.1. Defining Context**

Numerous researchers have employed a broad definition of context. Although each investigator proposes a slightly different conceptualization of the term, many elements tend to be quite similar.

Hymes (1974) was one of the first to suggest that speech should not be removed from the context in which it is produced, but should be analyzed with an understanding and description of the context of the community or network of persons from which it originated. He asserted that the ethnography of communication should be the frame of reference for the study of language. Such ethnography may include an analysis of cultural values, social institutions, personalities, roles, and even the history or ecology of the community (p. 4). That is not to say that analysis of

purely linguistic data doesn't play an important role in the study of language learning, but rather, should be complemented by the use of ethnographic investigation.

Based on the proposal that there be 'an ethnography of speaking', Hymes suggested a change in the number of orientations toward language. Specifically, researchers should examine language based on a large variety of contexts. One of those orientations should focus on "the community or other social context as a starting point of analysis and understanding" (p. 9).

Duranti & Goodwin (1992) have written an outstanding volume on context and the various directions the study of context has taken recently. As the title of their edited volume, *Rethinking Context*, shows, they believe that context is an interactive phenomenon requiring various types of analyses. They do not believe that it is possible to give one definition of the term because it may mean very different things depending on the research paradigm. That is not to say that studying the phenomenon is impossible, rather it is from multiple directions that context must be viewed and analyzed.

Lindstrom (1992) referred to context as, "...a set of cultural rules, conditions, and practices that govern how people talk" (p. 102). Bauman (1992) emphasized that context had previously been described as, "... the conventional, normative anchoring of an item or form within institutional meaning, and toward the active process of contextualization in which individuals situate what they do in networks of interrelationship and association in the act of expressive production" (p. 128). Through his study of folklore, he refined this definition and developed three specific interrelated dimensions of context: cultural meaning, functional context and situational context. Cultural meaning refers to a participants understanding of a culture, functional context refers to social and psychological aspects of a participants knowledge, and situational context refers to participants' specific conduct within culturally defined events.

One way to investigate context is within a frame surrounding an event, which provides resources for the appropriate analysis or understanding of that event. As Gumperz (1992) proposed, one must examine the surrounding circumstances, such as cultural setting, shared background assumptions and the speech situation itself in order to have a clearer understanding of the event. Although not a formal definition of context, this sort of examination is often believed necessary to illuminate situational and temporal circumstances affecting an event (in this case a speech event).

Duranti & Goodwin (1992) discussed context as a notion involving a study of the relationship between “a focal event” and the “field of action within which that event is embedded” (p. 3). This conceptualization is not very different from Dewey’s (2002) use of the terms “context” (place or setting), and “environment” (the aggregate of social, cultural and physical conditions for any context) (p. iv.).

One question posed by Bateson (1972) has to do with delineating a boundary between an event and the environment in which that event takes place. For example, if one intends to analyze the speech of a non-native speaker (NNS) of Spanish in an immersion setting, how are the events surrounding the speech to be analyzed? Is it enough to describe the place and time of the event? Is it necessary, as Gumperz (1992) maintains, to seek a detailed description of the cultural setting and background assumptions of the speaker? If so, what role does the listener play in such an event?

Duranti & Goodwin also believe that the perspective of the participant is of crucial importance, cautioning that one difficulty in analyzing context “is describing the socio-historical knowledge that a participant employs to act within the environment of the moment” (p. 5). This may be especially important since there are likely to be multiple contexts within each situation

that may rapidly and dynamically change as the events of the moment progress. Therefore, as Duranti & Goodwin explain, it is necessary to acknowledge that context “is a socially constituted, interactively sustained, time-bound phenomenon” (p. 6).

Context is sometimes referred to as setting (Ochs, 1992; Dewey, 2002), and although it may be a good starting point, when referring to language learning this is often too narrow a definition because of the reflexive nature of language, the unavoidable interaction with other speakers, and the socio-historical background they bring to the exchange.

Like Hymes and Gumperz, Cicourel (1992) proposed a need for an ethnographic description of background knowledge and of situational variables in order to gain a deeper understanding of the extrasituational context. However, Duranti & Goodwin warn of the difficulty in discovering precise descriptions of the context surrounding speech events. Researchers often remove bits of language from their original context in order to analyze them in the laboratory and although this sort of research design has produced a great deal of insight into the linguistic changes of participants, it lacks a deep understanding of the contextual conditions that may have influenced those changes. The study of context and a deeper understanding of its relevance to language learning should be the focus of current and future research.

Several researchers have used the terms ‘frame’ and ‘framing’ when describing context. Bateson (1992) described framing as the ability to acknowledge the acceptability of actions depending on the environment or context in which they take place. Thus, as Duranti & Goodwin assert, framing is a “prototypical example of context” (p. 24). Consequently, in analyzing the circumstances surrounding learners in various situations, it may be possible to link their reaction to those experiences with outcomes on measures of language learning.

Hymes (1972) developed a speaking model in which the frame of reference for interpreting speech shifts from the speech act itself, to the event. As part of this model, Hymes proposed an ethnographic description of what seems important to a speech event based on culturally defined categories. In addition, temporal and spatial factors surrounding the event, as well as participant factors are to be considered as frames of reference.

A discussion of context would be incomplete without some reference to Gumperz' work on 'contextualization cues. Gumperz (1992) described 'contextualization' as,

Speakers' and listeners' use of verbal and nonverbal signs to relate what is said at any one time and in any one place to knowledge acquired through past experience, in order to retrieve the presuppositions they must rely on to maintain conversational involvement and assess what is intended (p. 230).

The act of placing an event into a context in which it might be understood and acted upon by speakers is bound by past experience and previous assumptions on the part of the participant as well as by signals occurring in the moment. This representation of context incorporates many of the elements discussed above, such as participant roles and values, social and cultural understanding, and the relationship between past and present.

Cicourel (1992) asserted that investigators examining speech events must pay attention to several aspects of context in both a narrow and a broad sense, arguing that an ethnographic description of multiple elements should be considered, while at the same time, maintaining a focus on the speech event itself. In his study on the speech of doctors and patients, he examined "... a complex environmental setting in order to underscore the importance of context at different levels of analysis" (p. 296). Just as it is sometimes difficult to understand the specific meaning of individual words removed from the context of a sentence, the recorded speech he analyzed

makes little sense to the lay reader who is not aware of the background information surrounding the situation. His subsequent description of the ‘environment’ clarifies the situation and helps broaden the readers’ understanding of the speech event itself.

One of the most interesting and pertinent conclusions Cicourel offered in his final remarks was the issue of totality. It is difficult, if not impossible, to take note of and report on every tiny detail surrounding an event and the researcher must make decisions about what is important to the situation and what may be left unanalyzed. This is one of the intrinsic difficulties facing ethnographic researchers today and as Cicourel conveyed, it is the responsibility of the researcher to justify his decision to include or exclude information “...according to consistency and convincingness of an argument or analysis” (p. 309).

While the current study does not attempt to analyze speech samples, the previous discussion is quite relevant. One of the goals of this investigation is to uncover evidence of the participants’ perceptions of relevant events surrounding their learning of Spanish. Through qualitative analysis of participants’ remarks, an attempt is made to understand the everyday events and social contexts they perceive as relevant. The current study endeavors to employ the different discussions of context in order to uncover the relevant social and psychological aspects of participants’ learning.

Freed (2004) used the term context to identify two learning situations; study abroad and at home. While the current study followed suit, it also subdivided context into three environments within each context; in the classroom, in a social environment, and in a home environment. By dividing each overarching context into sub-contexts or environments, it was expected that a more detailed understanding of learners’ experiences in those environments would clarify the relationship between those experiences and outcomes on measures of oral



proficiency and fluency, grammatical ability, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, communicative ability, and cognitive ability as measured in the companion studies.

#### **2.4. Diary Studies**

The review of the literature thus far has included a discussion of several types of studies, but especially those relevant to the methods used in the current study. In support of the decision to use diary analysis, the following discussion presents further evidence of the usefulness of this method of inquiry in previous research.

In the past two decades, diary studies have gained popularity for several reasons. Brecht & Robinson (1995) postulated that, “understanding student attitudes may contribute substantively to our knowledge of second language acquisition (SLA) as well as to the success of study abroad programs” (p. 318). Laubscher (1992) stated that, “Through the medium of thick description (i.e., relating the students’ experience in extensive detail), we are able to acquire a greater appreciation for the students’ perspectives on what happens outside the classroom and how that complements the learning process” (p. 15).

In general, diary studies differ in many aspects, but the stated goals are similar. For example, some investigations include case studies of a single participant (Matsumoto, 1989), while others analyze the diaries of groups of learners (Bailey, 1983, Brown, 1983, Parkinson & Howell-Richardson, 1990, Kline, 1993, Brecht & Robinson, 1995). Each has taken a slightly different approach to analyzing the data, and each attempted to answer somewhat different questions.

Bailey (1983) analyzed the diaries of 11 learners in an attempt to verify her observation that competitiveness occurs within the second language classroom and, with that, language

classroom anxiety may become problematic. She found evidence of competitiveness and anxiety in reports by learners participating in her investigation. For those who became more competent, (able to compete), anxiety seemed to decrease. Her study is an example of the positive outcome associated with deep description of learners' perceptions.

Parkinson & Howell-Richardson (1990) also used diary analysis in their investigation of learner variables and their affect on anxiety. The investigators analyzed the diary entries of 74 learners of English studying in Scotland in 1986 and 1987. As is done in the current study, they analyzed comments about language use outside of class and the use of strategies as reported by the learners. The data were quantified and correlations are found between the rate of improvement and the amount of time spent outside the classroom in social interactions. This study is an improvement over the study by Bailey, because an attempt was made to relate their findings with specific language gain measured through the use of complimenting assessment methods.

The qualitative aspect of Parkinson & Howell-Richardson's study led the researchers to caution that the diaries include only subjective approximations of time spent in activities outside the classroom, and that the use of micro-analyses of the diaries help to understand that quantity is not necessarily equivalent to quality with respect to those activities. This cautionary statement is particularly relevant to the current study with regard to the use of the Language Contact Profile (LCP). In order to understand the possible benefits of language use outside the classroom, the current study analyzed the diary and interview data in an attempt to qualify the information reported in the LCP and to further understand whether specific types of contact seem to be more relevant to SLA.

Brown (1985) also used comparison groups studying the diary entries of two groups of second language learners, younger vs. older. He found differences in the learners' reactions to the classes, as well as differences among comments referring to the amount of input learners received. One of the most interesting aspects of his study was the use of inferential statistics to describe differences in self-report diary entries. In the investigation, the older participants' journals focused on second language input much less than the journal entries of younger participants. In addition, those in the older group wrote much more about desired changes with regard to the input they receive than the younger group. Brown's diary study utilized comparison groups and inferential statistics to report differences found through qualitative inquiry and this quantification of qualitative findings strengthen the conclusions enabling researchers to see group trends, while maintaining a focus on individual observations.

Other researchers have made attempts to triangulate the data elicited from diary studies as well. Ellis (1989) reported on his analysis of learners' diaries and questionnaires, cognitive testing, language aptitude testing, records of attendance and participation, measures of speech rate, word acquisition, and global proficiency tests to understand the complex nature of language acquisition for two learners of German as a second language. Although a seemingly formidable task, the use of multiple test types coupled with ethnographic inquiry of Ellis's study enabled him to achieve a seemingly remarkable level of understanding of the learning styles, and ability levels of the participants. His findings lead to the conclusion that individual differences may have profound effects on various aspects of acquisition.

The discussion above is a summary of several second language acquisition diary studies that included both individual case studies and investigations of various sized groups. The focus of most of the above investigations was classroom learning. Some were conducted in the U.S.

and others in Europe, but only one was directed specifically toward those learners who go abroad in order to learn a second language in a country where that language is the norm. In the following section, the discussion will focus more directly on study abroad programs and investigations of those programs that utilized diary studies as a component of their investigation.

The use of diary analysis has become increasingly popular among study abroad researchers and in recent years several investigators have chosen to utilize this powerful tool. In *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (1995), Barbara Freed dedicated a complete section to diary studies. In this compilation, Polanyi, Miller & Ginsberg, and Brecht & Robinson described a variety of methodologies and asked numerous types of questions about what learners were doing during their sojourns to facilitate their learning, and what sorts of reported experiences seem to affect (positively or negatively) acquisition of the target language (TL). The data for all three investigations were gathered as part of a project sponsored by the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) and the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) whose goal was to “explore the ‘value added’ of study abroad to the acquisition of Russian language by American college students” (Brecht & Robinson, 1995, p. 320)

In her investigation, Polanyi (1995) analyzed the narrative journals of 40 learners of Russian from the ACTR/NFLC project. The participants were asked to write about two or three events each week involving their language use outside the classroom. Polanyi used those accounts to describe, in greater detail, those components of language learning often ignored in experimental studies geared toward measuring gains in specific linguistic skills such as syntax and use of morphological and lexical items. Participants were given specific instructions and open-ended suggestions for how they might approach the task of journaling. The focus was to be on language use, corrections suggested by interlocutors, discussion of misunderstandings, and

feelings of discomfort associated with TL interactions. Those specific instructions were expected to result in richer entries, but this was not always the case. Polanyi described the entries as quite varied in style, from direct “matter of fact accounts” to “story like” (p. 272).

One of the most important aspects of Polanyi’s work was the deeper understanding of differences that seem to exist between male and female learners in Russia. The women in Polanyi’s study described negative experiences with Russian men and their feelings of inadequacy and guilt for not being able to handle new linguistic situations. These narratives were also used to explain differences found between the men and women of this study with respect to linguistic gains. Based on the test results described by Brecht, Davidson and Ginsberg (1993), Polanyi’s use of diary narratives was used as a way of explaining why, as a whole, the women in their study did not make the same gains as the men on measures of listening, nor did they “cross the crucial divide between Intermediate + to Advanced level” (p. 288).

The use of diary studies makes it possible to summarize attitudes, feelings and situational conceptions experienced by learners in a study abroad context. Without this ethnographic methodology, this summary would have been impossible. The implications for future program design are numerous and important, however, since this study did not attempt to compare similar groups of learners in other contexts, it is unclear if the study abroad context is the only one in which these *Folklinguistic Theories* exist. The use of a comparison group studying in the U.S. would have allowed the researchers to verify whether the participants differed to any great degree from their U.S. counterparts and would have enabled the investigators to identify specific theories that were context dependent. That being said, the goal of Miller & Ginsberg’s study was to understand, from the learners’ standpoint, salient features of the study abroad experience and for that, their methodology and conclusions are commendable.

Brecht & Robinson (1995) used a variety of data from the ACTR/NFLC project described previously including interviews, in-class and out-of-class observations, and narrative and oral journals and notebooks. From the total number of student participants, seven were specifically asked to describe in detail specific “connections between in-class and out-of-class learning over the course of the semester” (p. 320). One of the most fascinating elements of the study was that students often contradicted themselves when presenting negative opinions about the value of classes in the context of study abroad. This realization is of great importance to investigations based on self-report data. It seems necessary that the investigator carefully analyze the data utilizing complementing methods.

In a very well planned study that utilized a variety of data collection procedures, Dewey (2002) analyzed the diaries of his participants in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of differences found in the quantitative portion of his study. Dewey set out to distinguish differences between two groups of learners, study abroad (SA) and immersion students (IM) on measures of reading comprehension and the development of reading processes. Participant observation, interviews, and diaries were utilized to discover the nature of differences between groups. In his study, Dewey used the diary data to support self-report data on several questions about learners’ reading experiences. Comparing comments in diaries and from interviews to the data collected on the Reading Language Contact Profile (RLCP), he was able to make hypotheses about the nature of differences between groups and among individuals.

One interesting aspect of the study was the variability among SA learners’ scores and Dewey utilized diary entries to explain that variability. He described the SA learners’ experiences while abroad to be much more varied than those of their IM counterparts, living in a much less controlled environment, with a much larger variety of target language contact

available to them. Dewey summarized his findings by stating, "...the presence of great variability in SA supports the idea that students have their own agendas when it comes to learning during SA" (p. iv.).

In all of the above-mentioned studies, diaries are one of the central components of data analysis for purposes of explanation, comparison, and hypothesis generation and each of the studies offers insight into the complex nature of diary analysis. Understanding that different methods of data collection and analyses produce different sorts of conclusions contributes to the use of such tools for future analyses.

In this study, the use of quantitative measures of learning, combined with analysis of diary entries and interview data, will facilitate a much clearer understanding of the nature of learning in a study abroad context. Brecht & Robinson (1995) suggested several elements of a research design that would be most beneficial to understanding study abroad experiences:

... a research design rich enough to include, among other qualities: a specific and fairly easily recognizable topic of investigation; a reasonably large number of students; a data collection process which involves soliciting these student views at different times and in different conditions as well as by different modes of elicitation, and an analysis based on a thorough knowledge of the context in which the student[s] learn and in which they provide their reactions. (p. 319)

In studying learner diaries, it is important to remember several things. First, the information provided in the texts is truly subjective and reflects the opinions of the diarist. These opinions are context-driven and are therefore difficult to interpret from the perspective of an investigator who was not present during the activity being described. This poses challenges to the investigation and although difficult, the underlying context may be understood through

investigation of the description of the events. It is possible to use the data contained in individual diaries as a sort of window into the world of the diarist and gathering evidence from the Language Contact Profile (LCP) and the interview data will lend support to individual statements.

The researcher also plays an important role in analyzing the data. Bailey (1991) described the interaction between diarist and investigator in the following way:

A further variable to be taken into account is the value placed on various activities by the student himself. Clearly what a teacher or researcher may regard as 'linguistically relevant' is not always valued as such by the student diarist... (p. 72).

Even though it may be difficult to completely understand learners' experiences, it is possible to gather evidence that will aid in our understanding of the relationship between daily activities and outcomes in language learning.

Another important issue relating to the study of diary entries is bias on the part of the investigator. Just as the diary entries are subjective in nature, so is the analysis of those data. Before making the decision to investigate diary data, the researcher forms a series of questions to be answered through investigation of the data. The researcher distinguishes between what is relevant and what can be left out. The current investigation attempted to alleviate this problem by beginning the process with an open mind, without the anticipation of a predetermined outcome, but expecting the data to provide the structure for what is eventually reported.

This is a very difficult element of qualitative research because it contradicts the basic tenets of research that expect a set of questions or hypotheses to be formulated before the analysis begins. What diary studies offer is the opportunity to get a glimpse of what is relevant for the individual and although there are limitations in terms of making generalizations, the



information contained within the diaries may enable researchers to broaden their understanding of the effects student perceptions of their learning environment on learning outcomes. The current study attempted to highlight those event described by the participants that were directly relevant to their feelings toward experiences in the classroom, in social situations, and in the home environment.

## **2.5. Theoretical Framework**

In the last decade investigators have become much more interested in the variable of context of learning. Researchers have made attempts to measure linguistic gains in the context of U.S. classrooms versus those gains found through programs in countries where the target languages (TL) are spoken. These investigations have been in the form of both quantitative and qualitative studies, which seek to single out those elements that promote the best environment for learning the TL. Many researchers have looked at gains in various areas of acquisition, including syntax, pronunciation, fluency, and grammatical constructs, as well as global oral proficiency as measured by such assessments as the OPI (Krashen & Seliger, 1976, Spada, 1984, DeKeyser, 1986, Freed, 1990, 1995). These investigations have sought evidence that supports the often-stated belief that a study abroad experience is one of the best ways to increase second language proficiency.

The focus of recent research on context of learning presented information about learners' reports of situational and environmental issues that affect their choices (Wilkinson, 1995, Dewey, 2002), and how those choices might relate to their overall success in acquiring the TL. The current study sought evidence to determine whether the assumption that situational, social and psychological factors relate to learning for the learners included in this study. An attempt

will be made to present information that the learners in the study describe as relevant to their learning, including discussion of positive and negative experiences inside and outside the classroom.

The following section presents a discussion of Schumann's *Acculturation Model*, which will be applied to the results of this study as a basis for understanding the relationship between learners' perceptions of their learning and measures of language acquisition..

### **2.5.1. Social-psychological Factors**

As supported in the review of the literature thus far, the social context and psychological effect that context has on learners' contact with native speakers outside the classroom may have an impact on their learning. Schumann (1978) proposed a model for second language acquisition (SLA) based on social and psychological variables, which he called the *Acculturation Model*. This model was based on the relationship between two distinct social groups in a contact situation whose native languages differ. Schumann believed that social factors could promote or inhibit inter-group contact, which in turn might affect the degree of acculturation. Under the category of Social Distance, Schumann described eight specific social factors that are believed to affect SLA in general.

The first, *Social Dominance Patterns*, refers to the perceived superiority or inferiority of one group over another. If one group is perceived as more culturally, politically, technically, or economically dominant than another, the less dominant group will tend to be more socially distant from the dominant group and will therefore be less apt to seek out interaction with that group.

The second social factor, *Integration pattern*, includes three integration strategies that may exist for the second language learner. These include assimilation, preservation, and adaptation. Assimilation occurs when the learner abandons his or her own values and lifestyle, choosing to adopt those of the target language group, which Schumann believes is beneficial in SLA. *Preservation* exists for the learner when he or she chooses to reject the target cultures' values maintaining social distance from the TL group making acquisition of the TL more difficult and less likely. *Adaptation* is seen to occur when the learner accepts the culture of the TL without abandoning his or her own cultural values. As might be expected, Schumann describes adaptation as a strategy that yields varying degrees of success for TL learning.

The third social factor described by Schumann is *Enclosure*, which refers to the extent to which the two groups share social activities such as church groups, recreational facilities, trades, and professions. If the two groups spend little time interacting in those situations, enclosure is high, and TL learning is more difficult; however, the greater the degree to which those activities are shared between groups, the smaller the degree of enclosure, which, in turn facilitates TL learning.

Two additional social factors, which are related, are *Cohesiveness* and *Size*. If a group of learners is cohesive, it is believed that they will separate themselves from the TL group and learning will be hindered. Similarly, if the group is large, more intra-group contact is expected and opportunities for TL contact will be diminished; this ultimately leads to reduced language learning.

Schumann also discussed *Congruence* as a factor that may inhibit or facilitate learning. If two interacting cultures are fairly similar, contact is more likely, and opportunities for learning

are increased. As one might expect, large differences in cultural norms are assumed to affect learners' desire for contact and may in turn reduce overall learning of the TL.

*Attitude* is another of Schumann's social factors that affects contact. A more positive attitude between groups is expected to produce more interaction and, therefore, greater learning.

*Intended length of residence* is the final social factor in the Acculturation Model and refers to the amount of time the learner expects to remain in the TL area. Expectation of living in the TL country for longer periods is thought to promote learning.

Another aspect of the Acculturation Model is the discussion of affective variables, which, unlike social variables, are specific to the individual. *Language shock*, *Cultural Shock*, *Motivation* and *Ego-permeability* are all considered to be individual affective variables that may have a profound impact on SLA. Language shock occurs when learners must use the TL but struggle with feelings of insecurity about their ability to say exactly what is intended. Adults are believed to differ in their degree of insecurity in such situations, and it is assumed that those with more child-like uninhibited attitudes toward communicating in the TL will be more successful.

*Cultural shock* is described by Schumann as "... anxiety resulting from the disorientation encountered upon entering a new culture" (p. 32). In a new culture, situations that were previously routine become much more difficult, which produces a state of dependency not experienced at home. In such cases anxiety and fear cause the learner to seek relief from the uncomfortable emotional state. This may cause a person to withdraw and ultimately avoid situations that would eventually enhance SLA.

The last affective variable discussed by Schumann is *Ego-permeability*, which he describes as having to do with lower levels of inhibition with regard to language learning. Those

learners who are more emotionally comfortable with the situations encountered in the TL culture are believed to be better second language learners.

In its original form Schumann's model was proposed to clarify and identify causal variables in SLA in a natural language acquisition setting. He believed that learners who were more acculturated would be those who attained higher levels of the TL and that the learner who was more psychologically open to the target culture and socially integrated would develop "sufficient contacts with TL speakers to enable him to acquire the TL" (p. 29). The investigator in this study proposes that certain elements of Schumann's model may be applied to the study abroad context as a method of explaining students' linguistic development in the target language while immersed in the target culture.

Schumann's model, although often cited, is not without criticism, and not every element of Schumann's model may be reflected in the data for this study. Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) raised a number of important issues with respect to the model, including the fact that accurate measures of acculturation are difficult to achieve. This is not to say that the Acculturation Model cannot be used as a device to describe and understand the importance of the identification and definition of social factors in SLA, and it is with this purpose in mind that the model is utilized by the current study. Through deep investigation of learners' experiences and micro-analysis of diary and interview data, the current study sought evidence of social and environmental factors that related to individual accomplishment.

Based on the interaction of social and affective variables described above, Schumann proposed that "... SLA is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the TL group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language" (p. 34). This acculturation is the theoretical basis for the current investigation. If the above

hypothesis holds true, it should be beneficial to attempt to understand to what degree the learners in the current study fit the model. This study relates the quantity and quality of interaction experienced by the participants by comparing the outcome from an in-depth investigation of diary entries and interviews with scores on the quantitative measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar, vocabulary, phonology, communicative strategies, and cognitive processes. Evidence of acculturation was derived from qualitative analysis of diary and interview data, which were assigned numerical values, and then compared to the quantitative measures mentioned above.

The situations learners experience and environmental factors they face may have specific consequences for learning the TL and the investigation of such experiences may stimulate further research as well as aid in future program organization.

### **3. Chapter 3: Method**

This section provides the research questions, a definition of terms used in the study, information about the participants and data collection methods, and a description of the methods utilized for data analysis. In addition, a description of data analyses conducted by other researchers on data collected as part of the CIEE project is presented.

#### **3.1. Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this investigation, the term ‘context’ must be fully understood and, therefore clearly defined. As described in the Literature Review Section, several authors have utilized the word to describe various ideas, many of which are directly pertinent to this discussion.

Researchers often set out to describe learning by comparing two different ‘contexts’, i.e. at home vs. abroad, but do not necessarily acknowledge the multitude of factors in each setting that may also affect learning such as language classes, content courses, individual differences, social influences and the like. Freed (1998) stated, for example,

...the extent to which the language (be it oral or written) is learned, and the style and dialect that is acquired, depends on numerous variables. In the case of American students studying abroad, these variables include striking individual differences in learning styles, motivation and aptitude, the features of the specific language to be learned, the degree to which they are actually “immersed” in the native speech community and the interaction of these variables with formal classroom instruction in the study abroad context (p. 1).

It may be assumed that a study of at-home learners is likely to discover the same sorts of variables and it would therefore be prudent to compare not only the setting, but the social, cultural, and physical conditions surrounding that experience.

The current study operationally defines *context* as place, referring to two specific learning locations: At-home (Colorado) and, Study-abroad (Alicante). For the purposes of this investigation, *Environment* is narrowly defined in terms of four settings within each context in which the description of events takes place: Classroom (C), Social (S), Home (H), and Unknown (U). Events described in the diaries were categorized as occurring in the unknown environment when there was not sufficient description of the setting in which an event took place to situate the event in any of the other environments.

By sub-dividing the two contexts into the individual environments or sub-contexts of classroom, social and home, it was hoped that a deeper understanding of the relationship between experiences in each environment and outcomes from the companion studies could be observed.

The distinction between environments or settings is important because although all the participants in the current study attended Spanish class, it is likely that their learning environments outside class were quite different. Those differences, and their possible effects on language learning were the focus of this investigation.

### **3.2. Research Questions**

Comparisons were made with the quantitative analyses produced in companion studies (a complete description of findings from the companion studies is found later in this section), with the data produced for this study, which was produced through microanalysis of the diary entries.



The Language Contact Profile (LCP) data will also be used to describe the learning situations of all learners. The following is a list of questions that frame the current study.

1. What experiences do learners participating in this study report as most relevant to their language learning?

1a. Do experiences at home, in the classroom, or in social settings seem equally important or does one environment seem more important?

1b. Is there a difference based on context? (AH vs. SA)

2. How do individual experiences, as described in participant journals and interviews, relate to the acquisition of Spanish for learners in this study?

2a. Is there a correlation between learners' reported perceptions of their learning environment (Classroom, Social, Home, and Unknown) and outcomes on measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar, vocabulary, phonology, communicative ability, and cognitive ability as measured in the companion studies?

2b. Is there a difference based on context? (AH vs. SA)

### **3.2.1. Participants**

As mentioned above, the current study represents only part of a much larger study of linguistic gain in the study abroad and at home contexts. The description of participants and data collection procedures came from the project entitled *Comparison of the Acquisition of Spanish as a Second Language in Two Different Contexts of Learning: Study Abroad versus the Regular Academic Classroom* (Freed, et al. 2004). Each of the companion studies described in the Data

Analysis section utilized varying data sets from the same participants. Therefore, this description will not be repeated in future sections.

The participants in the original study were 54 students, 20 remained in Colorado, and 34 studied abroad in Alicante, Spain for a semester. The Colorado group (At-home) was made up of 16 female and four male students and the Spain group (Study abroad) consisted of 20 female and seven male students. The at-home group ranged in age from 17 to 60, with one aged 48 and one aged 60. The rest of the at-home group was between the age of 17 and 26, with a median age of 20 and a mean age of 22. All students were native English speakers born in the U.S. except for one. The study abroad group ranged in age from 17 to 26, with a median age of 20 and a mean age of 21.

None of the participants had ever lived in a region where Spanish was spoken as a first language; however, 17 had previously had experience in which they used a language other than English with non-native speakers of English. Of the 17 learners reporting experiences with other languages, eight had had one such experience, seven had had two, one had had three and one had had four. Of the total of 29 experiences reported by the group, eight occurred in the U.S., five in Mexico, and the rest in conjunction with vacation experiences.

Data were not available for all participants for all portions of the current study. The sample size for each of the correlations is reported in turn.

### **3.2.2. Data Collection Procedures**

At the beginning of the semester of language study, the participants were asked to fill out a Language Contact Profile (LCP) (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004) designed to gather background data. The results of this profile will be reported with the final analysis, but generally

the learners were asked to comment on the amount of previous study in Spanish, and the amount of time per week that they used Spanish before the beginning of the semester. At the end of the semester, students were given an exit version of the LCP to determine the amount of Spanish they had been exposed to during the study. The questions contained two parts:

How often did you typically do [activity]?

How many hours per day did you typically engage in that activity?

In addition to the LCP, at the beginning and then again at the end of the semester, learners also took part in an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), were recorded reading a short paragraph, and wrote short essays. At the beginning of the semester, students also took grammar and reading tests designed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Data from those measures have been analyzed in studies conducted by other members of the research team and will be compared to the qualitative analysis of participants' diaries. Descriptions of the companion studies and their results will be presented later in this section.

The data analyzed for the qualitative portion of the current study consisted of diary entries collected over a three-month period in 2001. Two groups of participants produced those diaries: one group attended a university in Colorado (at-home), and the other participated in a study abroad program in Alicante, Spain (study abroad). The participants were directed to write in their journals in English at least once a week and were asked to describe their language learning experiences in and out of the classroom (See Appendix B). The participants also took part in face-to-face interviews conducted by two members of the original research team at the end of the semester. Participation in the original study was voluntary and the learners did not receive any incentives for their participation.

It was originally proposed that both the interviews and the diaries would be analyzed and that the information contained in both would be used in the quantitative portion of the current study. However, since the interviews were semi-structured, and the questions were fairly direct, and because they were conducted by different members of the research team, the interview data were excluded from the initial portion of the study, but will be used in the Discussion Section to substantiate the data from the diaries.

### **3.3. Data Analysis Section**

This section presents information about the diaries and the coding procedures utilized to quantify the information in the diaries. Additionally, descriptions of the companion studies, their results, and their relationship to this study are presented.

#### **3.3.1. The Diaries**

This section provides an in-depth description of the diary data that were analyzed with an account of the coding process and specific examples supporting the coding decisions.

The diaries were first typed into individual files using a word processing program and then printed as individual data records. This served two purposes: 1) the information from each diary was reviewed in a very general way without any coding whatsoever, which allowed for a general idea of what was contained in each diary, and 2) the ability to search for keywords and phrases was facilitated by having an electronic copy of each record. The following section describes the coding procedures followed for this study.

### 3.3.2. Data Coding Procedures

In order to answer Research Question One (How do individual experiences as described in participant journals affect the acquisition of Spanish for learners in the proposed study?), a rubric based on previous research about participant perceptions of learning was created as a basis for the initial analysis.

Several studies have been conducted specifically focusing on the individual learners' perceptions of learning. Varying methodologies have been employed in an effort to understand the effects of learner perceptions on second language learning (for an in depth review, see Pellegrino, 1998). From diary and interview studies, to case studies and other types of ethnographic investigation, many social and psychological variables have been proposed as factors in the acquisition of a second language. The categories chosen for the diary analysis portion of the current study were based on prior research in this area. What follows is a brief outline of the studies used to create the category rubrics for the current study (See Appendix C for this rubric).

The categories used in the current study were separated into two overall groups, positive or negative based on their description in previously conducted research. Four of the variables were considered to be both positive and negative depending on the context of the situation. For example, Robinson (1995) considered *down time from learning and venting of culture shock with compatriots* to be necessary for the adjustment process and, therefore, may be considered to have a positive effect on the overall psychological health of those immersed in a different culture. At the same time, Blender (1998) indicated that time spent speaking the first language essentially counteracts the benefits of studying abroad.

Similarly, *correction* may be viewed as both positive and negative depending on the circumstances. Learners often feel the need for some sort of correction in order to identify problem areas in their language learning (Wilkinson, 1997); however, if correction is perceived by the learner as *harsh* it may actually inhibit language acquisition (Pellegrino, 1997). Another variable that was categorized as both positive and negative for the current study was *competition of skills with other learners*. Pellegrino (1997) reported that learners sometimes compared their language skills with others' abilities. Those feeling inferior tended to limit their participation in interactions. At the same time, feelings of superior language ability may actually give learners the ambition to continue to improve, thus may be seen as a positive feature for second language acquisition.

Finally, *perceptions of differences in culture* was viewed as negative by Schumann (1980), and was considered as positive by Warden (1995). According to Hanvey (1979), although learners may consider cultural differences to be "quaint" during initial stages of contact, those differences can eventually become tiresome or even "grotesque" after continued contact. As with the first three variables, the context surrounding an event is of great importance in deciding whether the learners' perception of differences is positive or negative.

The remaining variables in the current study were categorized as either positive or negative. Often those variables may be grouped under common themes. For example, the positive variables of *attentive interlocutors* (Polanyi, 1995), *family responsiveness* (Kline, 1993), *sensitive interlocutors* (Schmidt & Frota, 1986), *validation by others* (Pellegrino, 1997), and *supportive interlocutor behavior* (Keating, 1994) all deal with the contribution of others toward learners' feelings of positive affect. Other variables are learner-oriented and have to do with the initiative of the individual. *Comprehension practice* (Lennon, 1989), *student initiatives* (Kline,

1993), and *stimulation to interact* (Lennon, 1989), are all directly related to the learners' desire to advance his or her learning.

*Improvements in speaking and listening* (Lennon, 1989), *self perception of substantially improved ability in speaking, listening, reading and writing* (Meara, 1994), and *success* (Warden et. al., 1995) all refer to perceived improvements in language learning observed by the participant. In addition, several of the variables relate to the interaction between the learners' self-perception and the world around them.

*Objectivity* (Laubscher, 1994), *appreciation for own culture and value system* (Bicknese, 1974), *accepting of cultural differences* (Laubscher, 1994), *personal development* (Warden et. al., 1995), *changes in opinions about themselves, the target language, the target culture, their own culture and values* (Bicknese, 1974), *new understanding of personal identity* (Laubscher, 1994), *personal growth* (Pellegrino, 1997), *independence* (Warden, 1995), *perceptions of differences in culture* (Warden, 1995), and *tolerance and confidence* (Laubscher, 1994) all relate to attitude changes and personal development that may occur as a result of language learning, immersion in another culture, or from simply learning about language and culture.

Finally, the *offer of colloquial, native-like idiomatic second language (L2) input* (Lennon, 1989) and *teaching methods* (Schumann, 1978) are thought to compliment one another to provide the most efficient means of language learning. With the exception of the first four variables described above, all of the variables described to this point were categorized as positive for the current study. The following discussion presents a summary of the negative categories that were used as variables for the current study.

Similar to the positive categories, the negative categories may be arranged according to related themes. For example, *exclusion in conversations with native speakers (NS)* (Brecht &

Robinson, 1993), *breakdowns in relationships with NSs* (Bacon, 1995), *rejection by NSs* (Campbell, 1996), and *insulting feedback* (Pellegrino, 1997) are all negative experiences that may be caused by interaction with NSs.

*Discomfort, ill feelings, and anger* (Schmidt & Frota, 1986), *discouragement*, and *embarrassment* (Campbell, 1996), as well as *feelings of frustration* (Miller & Ginsburg, 1995), are all variables that are concerned with negative affect and may occur in the classroom or in social situations. As a consequence of negative feelings, it is possible that learners will experience a *sense of loss of control over one's immediate environment* (Bacon, 1995) leading to a *lack of motivation because of negative experiences* (Campbell, 1996), or to complete *avoidance* (Wilkinson, 1998) of the TL and culture.

In addition, *fear of appearing stupid* (Warden et. al., 1995), *failure* (Keating, 1994), *confusing misunderstandings* (Wilkinson, 1997) and *difficulty communicating in Spanish* (Bacon, 1995), all relate to the learners' negative perception of his ability to use the TL and may also result in avoidance behaviors.

The variables described above were included in the scoring sheets as categories and were then used as part of the scoring process for the diary data. Each category was assigned a letter to simplify the coding procedure (See Appendix C) and the letters were assigned in no particular order. For example, negative category *exclusion in conversations with NS* was assigned the letter 'A' on the negative score sheet, and *student initiatives* was assigned the letter 'A' on the positive score sheet. The score sheets received a single tally mark representing the nature of the event positive or negative, the category, and the environment, and the code was written next to the event in the diary data record.



For the current study, one score sheet contained a list of perception of learning categories considered to be positive in nature and the other contained negative perception categories. If it was not possible to determine whether the participant perceived the reported experience as either positive or negative, the comment was noted; however, no tally was recorded for that event.

Then each event was first coded as either positive (P) or negative (N) and then assigned to the category that related to the event. The categories were further divided into four separate environments, Classroom (C), Social (S), Home (H), and Unknown (U) in order to answer Research Question 2b: “Do experiences at home, in the classroom or in social settings seem equally important or does one environment seem more important?”

In summary, each event in the diaries received three letters. P or N for positive or negative, A, B, C, etc. for the category to which it pertained, and C, S, H, or U, for the environment in which the event took place. An example will clarify this procedure: A positive student initiative in the social environment received a code of PAS. The P refers to a positive event, the A refers to positive category *student initiatives* and the S refers to the social environment.

The data coding process was somewhat difficult and complex. Decisions were made about what constituted a single event, whether the description of that event seemed positive or negative, which category should be assigned to that event by the researcher, and which environment, classroom, home, social, or unknown related to the event. Consistency was of great importance; therefore, the analysis of the records was completed in several phases, analyzing groups of records during a single time frame. Constant review of previous coding decisions was performed, and reflection about each decision was a continuous and essential part of the procedure.

Twice the principal investigator formally coded each diary. Each time notations were marked in the margins of the record and a tally was marked on the score sheet. As described above, each event was analyzed to determine whether it seemed to be positive or negative, to which category it related (i.e. *confidence*), and finally to which environment it referred; classroom, social, home, or unknown. The following is an excerpt of one of the diaries followed by the codes that were used to describe it. Again, all letter codes are listed in Appendix C.

**S003**

4/10 [date]

*It is strange because sometimes I feel totally comfortable with my family here and other times I feel like a caged rabbit. Like [sister's name] woke up this morning and didn't really say hi or anything. Then mi mama – [mother's name] wakes up, opens her door, says [sister's name] but realizes it's me and then shuts the door. So when I come home I really just go to my room because I just don't understand things sometimes.*

This excerpt was coded as *NCH*. The 'N' means it was a negative comment, the 'C' refers to the negative category of 'Breakdowns in relationships with NS' and the 'H' means that the environment was 'Home'. It was also coded as *NUH*, again with the 'N' referring to a negative experience, the 'U' referring to the negative category of 'Avoidance', and the 'H' referring to the home environment. Although the diarist started off by commenting that her relationship with her family was '*comfortable*', this was just a precursor to what she really seemed to want to report, which is that at that moment, her relationship with her host family seemed to be breaking down, and her solution was to avoid contact all together. The above example illustrates the use of multiple coding. If an event pertained to more than one category, it was coded multiple times, thus individual events sometimes received multiple codes, and multiple tallies.

The manner in which the diaries were written was often quite varied. The above excerpt from S003 demonstrates a story-like quality, in which the diarist wrote as if she were telling a story to a friend. The following excerpt from S031 is quite different in that he used a summary

sentence, and then listed the positive or negative experiences as if he were making an inventory of the events of the day:

S031

*01/09/01 – 06/09/01*

*So far, since I first got here I've noticed a few things about the Spanish language that have made me very frustrated:*

*How slow it takes me to communicate w/my family*

*How conversations in my house and on the streets are nothing more than noise to me because they're talking so fast.*

*How sitting at the dinner table for comida is very uncomfortable because I have no idea what they're conversing about and because I just sit there w/out saying anything*

*I want to practice w/ my friends but it takes us so long to explain the simplest things.*

*T.V. is very frustrating to watch*

Participant S031 was explaining his feelings of frustration in various situations, and the entry was initially coded as NHU referring to negative category *feelings of frustration* in an unknown environment, since the first sentence did not refer to a specific environment in which the frustration took place. However each sub-entry described an additional experience and each received a different code or multiple codes. Sub-entry number one referred to difficulty communicating in the TL and was coded as NEH, which relates to negative category *difficulty communicating in Spanish*, in the home environment, and was also coded as NSH referring to negative category *discouragement* in the home environment. Number two was coded as NDH, which relates to the negative category, *a sense of loss of control over one's immediate environment*, in the home environment. Number three was coded as NOH, referring to negative category, *exclusion in conversations with NS* in the home environment. Number four was coded with NSS, which relates to negative category, *discouragement* in the social environment. Finally number five was coded as NHH referring to negative category, *feelings of frustration* in the home environment.

The difficult task of assigning specific categories to individual entries is easily observed in the codes chosen for participant S031. It could be argued that sub-entry one should fall under category *S (discouragement)*, rather than category *E (difficulty communicating in Spanish)*, or perhaps other categories applied as well. Since the categories were used to help explain and show evidence of what the participants reported as important and were utilized throughout the Discussion section for the purpose of understanding and explaining the overall outcomes from the quantitative portion of the study, multiple categories were sometimes chosen for individual events.

A comparison of the styles of the above examples illustrates the variation that may be observed in the diaries. While participant S003 used 77 words to explain a situation for which only two tallies were assigned, participant S031 used 110 words to explain at least five events and received seven different tallies. Because of this type of diversity in the diaries, the proportion of events was used in this study to calculate the scores for the individual records. The proportion of positive events was calculated by dividing the sum of the positive tallies by the total number of all tallies for each diary record, and the proportion of negative events was produced by dividing the total number of all negative tallies by the total number of tallies for that diary record. The rationale was based on the fact that the participants used a varied style and levels of detail to explain what they perceived as important events during their participation in the programs, and the scores based on the proportion of events in the different environments for each diarist gave a better picture of the individual experience. At the same time, it allowed for a more comparable overall score between individuals.

After the principal investigator completed the initial data analysis, an independent investigator with a background in educational research methods followed the following

procedures. Ten percent of the diary records (three for the study abroad group, and two for the at-home group) were randomly selected by lottery in which each record had an equal chance to be chosen.

Since initial examination of the data revealed subtle differences in attitude toward the participants' experience over time, it was determined that the second investigator should analyze data from different points in time. The data were collected over a three-month period and so each record that had been chosen for the second analysis was split into three parts corresponding to the three months of participation. One entry from each chosen record was randomly selected for analysis by the second investigator.

Both investigators met to discuss the coding process, and the second investigator was given specific instructions on the coding procedures and general examples of each code in the form of a written guide (See Appendix D).

After the second investigator had analyzed the chosen sections using the guide, the coded records were compared with the codes assigned by the principal investigator. The results of the comparison showed that 72% of the records were coded the same by both investigators (18 out of 25 events).

Overall, most of the discrepancies occurred in the decision about which category should be chosen for the event and none of those discrepancies was based on whether the event was positive or negative. Of the seven discrepancies, five came from category choice and only two came from environment choice.

In order to ensure the coding was as consistent, it was decided that another ten percent of the entries should be analyzed by the second investigator. Before doing so, however, both investigators met again to discuss their understanding of the categories. With a more specific

concept of the category descriptions, the second investigator analyzed another ten percent of the records following the same procedures discussed previously. The records that were initially analyzed by the second investigator were excluded from the second lottery in order to increase the total percentage of records that was examined. Again three diaries were chosen from the SA group, and two from the at-home group and one entry from each was selected for the second analysis. A comparison of the coded records from the second analysis was once again conducted and the results showed an increase in agreement about category choice, with agreement on environment remaining similar to the first comparison. For the second comparison, a total of fifty-seven events were coded with 86% agreement between raters. Taken as a whole, events from 20% of the diaries were analyzed by the second investigator, giving an overall inter-rater reliability rate of 82%.

The discrepancies between raters were reviewed and discussed and it was determined that the majority of the inconsistencies were related to misunderstandings about the category descriptions and it was determined that the disagreements about categories should be noted, and that only one of the choices would be included as part of the total count of positive or negative event categories within environments. The codes chosen by the primary investigator were maintained.

With regard to the information in the diaries, most of the categories described in prior research were found among the diaries. Explanation and examples of those results will be presented in detail in the Results Section and further described and analyzed in the Discussion. Section.

### **3.4. The Companion Studies**

In and of itself, the information in the diaries is quite interesting and might be used in a wholly qualitative study. However, the goals of the current study are not only to understand student perceptions of learning, but also to relate that information to the measures of learning utilized by the companion studies. What follows is a brief description of each of the companion studies, a description of the data analyzed in those studies, their results, and how those data and results were used in the current study. A description of the participants is presented in the Data Analysis section above; however, not all participants took part in all of the companion studies. Therefore, the population size will be reported with all statistics presented in the following sections.

#### **3.4.1. Oral Performance and Cognitive measures**

Segalowitz and Freed (2004) investigated the possible role of context on oral performance utilizing recorded data from the Oral Proficiency Interviews conducted for the CIEE project, as reported above. Oral performance was measured in terms of four fluency measures: speech rate, mean length of run without filled pauses, mean length of run without silent pauses of 400 ms or longer, and longest fluent run, as well as three additional measures of oral performance, number of words spoken, duration of speech, and number of words in the longest turn. (See Segalowitz & Freed, 2004 for a more in-depth description of these measures).

In addition, the OPI ratings were utilized for pre and posttest comparison. The results indicated that the at-home group made no significant gains on any of the oral performance measures (pretest/posttest); however, the study abroad group made significant gains on four of the seven measures: number of words in the longest turn, speech rate, mean length of run without

filled pauses, and longest fluent run. The current study correlated the oral performance scores with the perception scores and the results will be presented in the Results Section.

Segalowitz & Freed also investigated four measures of cognitive ability in the second language, including measures of lexical access speed and efficiency, and speed and efficiency of attention control. For the lexical access measures, computerized tests in English and Spanish, which required the participants to make animacy judgments, were used to produce measures of lexical access speed, measured in reaction time, and lexical access efficiency, measured in terms of the coefficient of variation (CV). The CV was calculated by dividing the standard deviation of individual reaction time by the mean reaction time. According to Segalowitz & Freed, the CV is a measure of the "...relative noisiness of the processes underlying a person's response time" (p. 177). In other words, a lower CV should indicate a more stable cognitive condition. This may be interpreted as reflecting an increase in automatization.

Attention control measures were produced in a similar way, utilizing a computerized test that involved matching groups of three words on a computer screen with one of five previously presented categories. Two conditions were separately presented for the attention control tests, one in which the participant was required to indicate whether stimulus words matched a given category (repeat condition), and one in which it was necessary to choose a response that was different than the category presented in the preceding trial (switch condition). Similar to the lexical access tests, the attention control tests were in Spanish and English and each participant received scores for both before and after the treatment period. The tests resulted in two additional measures for each participant relating to attention control, attention speed and attention efficiency.



Segalowitz & Freed reported that both groups made significant gains in lexical access for the second language vs. the first language and significant gains in second language processing efficiency but no significant differences were found between groups.

The study also included a comparison of data from the LCP and the measures of lexical speed and efficiency and attention speed and efficiency. No significant relationships were found between the amount of extracurricular language contact and the lexical access measures or for classroom contact. No significant differences were found between the amount of class-time and the measures of attention control; however, a significant negative relationship was found between the amount of time spent with the home-stay family and the attention speed measure.

For the current study, the residualized gain scores for lexical access and efficiency (LEXRTG and LEXCVG), and attention control and efficiency (ATTRTG, and ATTCVG) were correlated with the perception score and results are discussed in the Results Section. The residualized gain scores were computed by subtracting the post- from the pre-test RT scores for both L1 and L2, multiplying each score by -1 to produce a lexical speed score. Finally a lexical speed score difference was calculated by subtracting the pretest scores from the posttest scores yielding residualized gain scores for lexical access and lexical efficiency.

### **3.4.2. Grammatical and Lexical Abilities**

Collentine (2004) investigated the possible role context of learning plays by comparing the lexical and grammatical abilities of the at-home and study abroad groups before and after a semester of study. Each learner participated in two Oral Proficiency Interview's (OPIs). Segments were taken from the seventh and eighth minutes as well as the twelfth and thirteenth minutes, and the two segments considered for each learner made up the "corpus" for data analysis. The investigation compared the effects of context on several broad categories of

grammatical accuracy (gender, number, person, tense and mood), as well as seventeen so-called marked constructions (the correct use of the two Spanish copulas, as well as accurate use of prepositions, object pronouns, coordinate and subordinate conjunctions, present and past tense verbs, correct use of subjunctive and indicative forms, accurate use of person in both verbs and pro-forms, plural verb, pronoun, and adjective accuracy, correct use of feminine adjectives and pronouns, as well as coordinate and subordinate clause counts). In addition, Collentine compared the two groups' production of unique words in seven lexical categories (adjectives, adverbs, verbs, nouns, pronouns, conjunctions and prepositions) in order to determine differential effects of the two contexts on improvements in vocabulary.

With regard to general grammatical ability, Collentine found that after the treatment period, the two groups made progress in four of the five general categories examined, but the at-home group made significantly more progress than the study abroad group in their ability to mark tense.

Based on analyses of the seventeen specific grammatical categories examined, Collentine reported that five of the categories (accuracy in copula use, correct use of present-tense verbs, indicative and subjunctive-conjunction accuracy, and subordinate clause count) significantly discriminated between the two groups.

While the at-home group made significant gains on copula accuracy, accurate use of the subordinate conjunction, the accurate use of present tense verbs, and the indicative, the study abroad group remained stable for seven grammatical items and actually experienced a decrease on ten of the measures of grammar; copula accuracy, preposition accuracy, object-pronoun accuracy, coordinate-conjunction accuracy, subordinate-conjunction accuracy, present tense verb

accuracy, subjunctive accuracy, indicative accuracy, person accuracy and feminine-adjective accuracy.

Even though these findings seem to tell a story, it is a complicated issue that may not necessarily be explained by simply counting accurate usage. Collentine explained his findings in the following way:

Overall, then, the SA experience did not produce students with overall improved grammatical abilities. Indeed, it was the AH group that increased most significantly on the five variables that most distinguished the groups. And, the major differences between the two groups relate precisely to those grammatical aspects that formal Spanish instruction emphasizes. Namely, verbs and coordinate conjunctions ...” (p. 15).

This may help to explain differences; however, since the study abroad group received more formal instruction than the AH group, (three or more Spanish classes per day for study abroad vs. one-three credit course during the semester for at-home group), deeper investigation may be warranted.

Collentine further examined the narrative abilities of the two groups. In order to do so, he investigated differences between the groups in terms of five variables Biber (1988) considered to be associated with narrative ability: past-tense verbs, present and past participles, public verbs, and third person morphology. Collentine calculated a narrative score, summing the five variables associated with this type of discourse to examine differences between the groups. His results indicated that, although the at-home group outperformed the study abroad group on the seventeen individual measures of grammar, the study abroad group actually produced more examples of narrative discourse than the at-home learners.

In order to understand the changes in grammar use, the current study used difference scores from the seventeen specific grammatical categories as a measure of overall progress in grammatical ability. Those scores were then correlated with the perception scores produced from analysis of the diary data in order to produce a clearer understanding of the relationship between learners' reports of activities and changes in individual grammatical categories.

With respect to lexical ability, Collentine analyzed the corpus by using frequency scores. These scores were obtained by counting the number of unique words produced for seven lexical categories: adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, nouns, conjunctions, prepositions, and verbs. The data were then scaled and normalized to produce the number of unique words produced per 1,000 words. The use of those z-scores was intended to control for the possibility that, by virtue of speaking more, the opportunity to produce more unique lexical items might exist. The results indicated that the only item that significantly differentiated between the study abroad and at-home groups was adjectives, with the at-home group producing significantly more adjectives after the semester than the study abroad group.

This finding, coupled with the finding by Segalowitz & Freed (2004), that the study abroad group differed significantly from the at-home group on several measures of fluency, led Collentine to calculate individual informational richness scores. Those scores were based on Biber's (1988) identification of discourse that is considered to be informationally dense, containing numerous examples of nouns, attributive adjectives, multisyllabic words, prepositions and a high type/token ratio. Collentine considered both the scaled and non-scaled data and found that, as a whole, neither group improved significantly on their informational richness scores for the scaled data; however, the study abroad group improved significantly more than the at-home group when comparing the non-scaled data. According to Collentine, this means that the

narrative ability of the study-abroad group was superior to that of the at-home group, and he surmised that this result was related to the greater fluency enjoyed by the study abroad group as reported by Segalowitz and Freed (2004).

The current study utilized the individual scaled unique-word difference scores for the data analysis, correlating them with the perception scores produced for this study. The results are presented in the Results Section.

### **3.4.3. Phonology**

As part of the CIEE project, Díaz-Campos (2004) conducted a study of learners' phonological progress over time utilizing a formal oral reading task designed for his study. At both the beginning and at the end of the treatment period, the participants were recorded reading the same text of 60 words that included four types of phonological targets: word-initial stops, word-final laterals, intervocalic fricatives, and palatal nasals.

This task produced two sets of data for each participant, pre- and posttests, which were later digitized and judged on a binary scale in terms of faithful or unfaithful production (See Díaz-Campos, 2004 for a complete description of data coding procedures). That is, those phonological targets that were judged to be 'correct' were scored as faithful and those judged to be incorrect were scored as unfaithful. This type of scoring enabled the investigator to note progress over time. The sum of the total errors produced during the pretest was subtracted from the sum of the total errors during the posttest, producing a total difference score for pronunciation. The Pronunciation scores were then correlated with the perception scores from the current study in order to uncover experiences that may have had an affect on individual learners' phonological growth. The results from those analyses are presented in the Results Section.

#### **3.4.4. Communicative Ability**

Lafford (2004) studied the effect of context on the number and types of communication strategies (CS) used by participants in the study sponsored by the CIEE. She operationally defined CS as:

Strategies used by L2 learners in a conscious attempt to bridge a perceived communication gap, either caused by the learner's lack of L2 knowledge (resource deficit), problems with his or her own performance, or problems resulting from interaction with an interlocutor (p. 204).

She compared segments of the OPI data for the at-home and study abroad groups in the study and found that over time, the SA group consistently used fewer CSs. Research has shown that at the intermediated levels of proficiency, as proficiency increases, the use of CSs decreases (LaBarca & Khanji, 1986, Poullisse & Schils, 1989). Lafford noted that this phenomenon is not true for all levels of proficiency, as novice learners and high-proficiency learners do not follow the same pattern. However, the participants in the CIEE project were, as a whole, at the intermediate level of proficiency; therefore, they would be expected to decrease their use of CSs as their proficiency increases.

The results of Lafford's study indicated that both groups decreased their overall use of CSs over time, with the study abroad group reducing their use significantly more overall than the at-home group. Lafford posited that, in general, there may be three reasons for decreases in CS use: insufficient knowledge of the L2 to notice errors (as in Novice learners), sufficient knowledge of the L2 that fewer communication gaps occur, reducing the need for CSs, or greater focus on communicating meaning such that focus on form becomes less important. Since the participants in the study were not at the Novice level, nor did they possess greater grammatical

ability (See Collentine above), Lafford suggested the differences between the at-home and study abroad groups could be the result of the study abroad participants' focus on communication.

Since the experiences outside of the classroom in a study abroad context are expected to be qualitatively different than those experienced by a group studying at home, it may be that those study abroad experiences allowed for changes in the use of CSs.

The current study further investigated those experiences, by comparing the communication strategy scores produced for Lafford's study with the perception scores produced for the current study. Lafford used normalized scores for each of the variables studied; therefore the current study followed suit by normalizing all the scores over 500 words. The process consisted of dividing the raw number of CS scores for each of the variables on the pretest by the total number of words spoken during the pretest and then multiplying by 500. The post-test scores were computed in the same manner. The difference scores were produced by subtracting the normalized pretest-test scores from the normalized posttest scores.

Each of the studies discussed above contributed to the outcome of this study. The data for each study were correlated with the perception scores so that relationships between students' perceptions of their learning and outcomes from the companion studies might be underlined. The results of the diary analysis and the correlations between the data collected through the study of the participants' comments and the companion studies are reported in the following section.

## **4. Chapter 4: Results and Discussion**

The following section presents the results the analyses conducted for this study. First, the results of the first research question are presented with a discussion of those results. The second research question is then addressed in several sub-sections relating to the companion studies. Discussion of the results presented is integrated into each of the various sub-sections.

### **4.1. Research Question One and its sub-questions**

1. What experiences do learners participating in this study report as most relevant to their language learning?

1a. Do experiences at home, in the classroom, or in social settings seem equally important or does one environment seem more important?

1b. Is there a difference based on context? (AH vs. SA)

In order to answer Question One and its sub-questions, the diary data were analyzed. The completed diaries contained a variety of entries, many having to do with classes and experiences pertaining to the learning of Spanish. The entries produced by the Colorado group consisted mainly of information about the Spanish class in which the diarist was matriculated. Those entries were very similar to the references by the Spain group to their classes including reactions to classroom activities, materials, homework, professors and grades. Most of the diaries from the Spain group also included a great deal of additional information about their experiences outside the classroom, with references to interactions with Spanish service personnel, home-stay family members, and other American students participating in the program as well as discussions of their travels and leisure time activities.



Some of the participants wrote in their diaries every day or two, while others completed entries that related to an entire week. The amount written by the diarists varied greatly with total word counts ranging from 294 to 8249. The study abroad group tended to write a great deal more during the semester than the at-home group. While the average number of words in the diaries of the study abroad group was 3,711, ranging from 865 to 8,249 words, the at-home group wrote an average of 1,262 words, ranging from 294 to 2,899 words per diary.

Generally the participants related information that had to do with their learning of Spanish, but often included additional comments about their surroundings, travels, feelings, and relationships. One of the study abroad participants seemed to use the diary as a personal account of his feelings and experiences not relating to his language learning, but more to his state of mind, describing his adventures with his friends, his alcohol use, and his desire to be with his girlfriend in the U.S.

Several differences were observed between the two groups. For example, by and large the study abroad group tended to write more words, more often, however, the at-home participants tended to write once a week, in an abbreviated format, often excluding details about related experiences, and mostly discussing the individual Spanish class they were attending. These results are similar to Polanyi's (1995) investigation in which she described the stylistic diversity of the diaries. Like the accounts described by Polanyi, the journals analyzed for this study ranged from, "matter of fact accounts" to "story like" (p. 272).

One very interesting phenomenon was observed in the diaries. The data were collected beginning in the fall semester of 2001 during which time the World Trade Center and Pentagon bombings occurred. While twelve diarists in the Spain group spoke about the tragedies, only two of the Colorado participants mentioned them. Those in Spain who mentioned the bombings,

displayed a great deal of frustration, fear, and anxiety over the situation, especially since almost all the news reports they were exposed to were in Spanish and they did not understand. This information may be very important to the final outcome of the study since the experience for the study abroad group may have started out as much more difficult than it would have been during a less eventful time in the history of the U.S. Although minimal class time was lost due to the tragedies, as reported in the diaries, the participants' state of mind might not have been at optimum level for learning. The following excerpt is an example of the fear and frustration some of the study abroad participants reported:

*Sept. 14, 2001*

*Learning Spanish meant nothing to me after seeing those planes crash into the 3 most important edifices in America (monetarily & militarily). I could care less about being in Spain and learning the language.*

Interestingly, the same diarist only wrote about the U.S. tragedies for a few days, after which time, he began to report more positive feelings about his experiences in Spain:

*Sept. 22, 2001*

*OK. I've been here almost a month and I [am] becoming more comfortable w/ my surroundings. I've learned my way around the city and I've learned the bus route. I've managed to ask for help from strangers and not fumble on my words. I must admit that it's been a lot easier than I had anticipated. My host family is great! [S014]*

Only two of the at-home participants referred to the tragedies, and those references were brief and to the point without demonstrating the great deal of frustration displayed in the study abroad group members' journals. As a whole, however, those study abroad participants who did refer to the bombings only did so for a few entries, and quickly got on with the task of surviving in a foreign country with limited target language skills.

Almost all the diaries in both contexts included a large number of references to classroom learning, homework, professors, and grades. Some entries described the classes as going too

fast, while others included claims that the material was just review, still others seemed to describe contentment with the content and speed with which the material was presented. There were many references to upcoming exams as well as to grades received on previous exams and reactions to those seemingly very important aspects of classes.

As discussed above, the participants were fairly diverse in their reactions to their experiences. Because there were quantitative differences between the groups in terms of how much was written in the diaries and since there were 15 at home participants and 22 study abroad participants included in the analyses, proportions of comments were used to compare the data.

The proportion scores were produced in the following way. First, the sum of all positive events and all negative events coded through the qualitative analysis of the data produced the total number events coded for the group as a whole. An event refers to an individual diary entry that received a tally mark during the qualitative data analysis portion of the study. The proportion of all positive comments was produced by dividing the number of positive events by the total number of events coded. The proportion of negative comments was produced by dividing the number of negative events by the total number of events.

The total number of positive and negative comments was expected to facilitate understanding of how learners felt about their experience in a very general way. For insight into whether the learners as a group perceived the experience as positive or negative, a difference sum was calculated by subtracting the sum of the negative events from the sum of positive events. The results indicated that overall, the semester was perceived by both the at-home and the study abroad groups as positive since the mean difference score for the group was positive (0.18). That is to say, more positive events were observed in the diaries, than negative.

Proportions for each of the environments, classroom, social, home, and unknown, were produced in a similar way. First the sum of all positive and negative events in each environment was calculated, giving the total number of events in each environment. The total number of events recorded in each environment was then divided by the sum of all events, giving the proportion of events in each environment.

Table 1 shows the proportion scores by context and these results were used to answer Research Question One. In terms of which environment seemed most important or relevant to learners, differences between the two contexts were evident. The at-home group reported most on classroom experiences, with 72% of all comments referring to the classroom environment and the study abroad group discussed the experiences in the social environment the most, with 49% of the comments referring to activities in the social environment. The social environment was also somewhat relevant to the at-home learners since 19% of the comments were coded during the diary analysis in that environment. For the study abroad group, the classroom and home environments seemed somewhat relevant, but to a much smaller extent. For that group, comments coded in the classroom environment made up 22% of all events, and 20% of all remarks were in the home environment.

**Table 1** Diary data summary. Mean proportional scores by context given in percentage

|           | At Home | Study Abroad |
|-----------|---------|--------------|
| Classroom | 72      | 22           |
| Social    | 19      | 49           |
| Home      | 2       | 20           |
| Unknown   | 7       | 9            |

Several Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to determine if the differences between groups were significant. The results of the ANOVAs indicated that the differences between groups were, indeed, significant and those results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Analysis of Variance between groups**

| Source            | Dependant Variable | F value (1,41) |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Location (AH, SA) | SCLASSRM           | 116.41**       |
|                   | SSOCIAL            | 33.81**        |
|                   | SHOME              | 43.95**        |

Note: \*\*p< .01

In addition to differences between groups, an investigation of the relationship of comments within groups was conducted. Using a General Linear Model function, the following relationships were discovered between the three environments, classroom, social, and home within each of the contexts. For the at-home group, there was a significant inverse linear relationship between number of classroom events reported and the number of social events reported among at-home students ( $p = .006$ ). Therefore, at-home students that reported higher numbers of classroom events reported fewer events in social settings. Similarly, there was a significant inverse linear relationship between the number of events reported in the classroom environment and the number reported in the home environment. ( $p = .029$ ). Thus, those who reported more events in the classroom environment, also reported less events in the home

environment. No significant relationship was found between the number of events reported in the home environment and those reported in the social environment.

These results indicate that within the at-home group, not only were significantly more comments made by the learners about the classroom environment, but they seemed to be made at the expense of discussing activities in the home or social environments.

For the study abroad group, the picture is somewhat different. While no significant relationship existed between the number of events reported in the classroom environment, when compared with events reported the home environment, significant inverse linear relationships were found when comparing the number of events reported the social environment with events in the classroom ( $p = .016$ ) and home environments ( $p = .021$ ). Therefore, the more comments learners wrote about the social environment, the fewer they wrote about the home and classroom environments.

In summary, based on the data reported above, while the at-home group seemed to have perceived the classroom to be most relevant to their learning, the study abroad group discussed events in the social environment to a much greater extent, and it was therefore assumed that the social environment was most relevant to their learning of Spanish.

A more detailed analysis of the diaries was conducted to determine what sorts of comments were most evident for the groups. As discussed above, for the at-home group the great majority of comments were in the classroom environment. The three categories with the most positive events observed in the classroom were *satisfaction* with 19 events, *student initiatives* with 18 events, followed by *success* with 13 events observed. With regard to the negative events described most often in the classroom environment by the at-home group, the two categories with the most events were *discouragement* with 29 events, and *feelings of*

*frustration* with 28 events noted. The social environment also included a relatively large number of observed events in the positive category of *student initiatives* with 15 events noted. The remaining categories contained between zero and ten events, with no references to 15 of the 31 categories.

These results indicate that as a group, the at-home participants perceived the classroom experience to be somewhat satisfying and talked about their success and the desire to take their learning into their own hands through their own initiative. At the same time, however, the at-home group reported numerous feelings of frustration and discouragement in the classroom. In fact, when the negative affect categories of *feelings of isolation, frustration, embarrassment, discouragement, discomfort, ill feelings, anger, and loss of control over one's immediate environment* were collapsed into a single category called negative affect, the proportion of events coded was 32% in all environments.

The combination of the positive affect categories of *confidence, success, social psychological security, positive attitudes, and satisfaction* represented a total of 21% of the total number of positive comments in all environments. In general, the at-home learners' affective state was more negative than positive, even though they perceived the overall experience as positive.

For the study abroad group in the classroom environment, the greatest number of positive events was recorded in the positive category *success*, with 46 events noted. Three other categories seemed fairly important to the study abroad group. Based on the number of events coded, *student initiatives, satisfaction, and teaching methods* were all found to be relatively important with 18, 20, and 20 events noted respectively.

As discussed above, for the study abroad group the social environment had, by far, the greatest number of events observed through the analysis of the diary data. The categories containing the greatest number of events in the social environment were *student initiatives*, with 81 events; *improvements in speaking and listening*, with 50 events; *success*, with 34 events; and *supportive interlocutor behavior*, with 21 events noted.

The categories that seemed to be of greatest consequence in the home environment for the study abroad group were similar to those observed in the social environment except for the seemingly most relevant category, *family responsiveness*, which produced the greatest number of events (39) noted in the home environment. The two other categories that produced a relatively large number of events in the home environment were, *improvements in speaking and listening*, and *comprehension practice*, with 16 and 13 events noted respectively.

The study abroad group data were also collapsed into positive and negative affective categories, and the following results were found. Twenty-one percent of all positive events in all environments were related to positive affect. The proportion of events relating to negative affect in all environments for the study abroad group was determined to be 32%. Just as with the at-home group, when collapsing several categories into positive and negative affective events, the study abroad group reported more negative than positive affect in the classroom, social, and home environments.

Because many of the individual categories utilized were very similar, it was decided that several of the remaining categories could be collapsed into thematic units. The negative categories that related to interactions with Native Speakers (NSs) of Spanish were collapsed into a single category called problems with native speakers. The data from the categories *breakdowns in relationships with NS*, *negative attitudes toward NSs*, *NSs using English*,



*exclusion in conversations with NSs*, and *rejection by NSs* were combined into the collapsed problems with native speakers category

Another group of categories was collapsed into a category related to negative attitudes toward cultural differences. The negative categories of *perceptions of differences in culture*, and *negative perceptions of the target culture*, made up this category.

Several of the categories pertained to problems with communication; therefore, *difficulty communication in Spanish*, *confusing misunderstandings*, and *unsuccessful attempts to speak the TL* were grouped into one category. Four of the original categories related to the use of English. *Stay with other Americans and speak English*, *NS Spanish speakers using English*, *down time from learning and venting of culture shock with compatriots*, and *time spent speaking English* were grouped into a single category called English.

Four other categories related to interactions with others, with no specific reference to native speakers. They were also collapsed into a single category. *Insulting feedback*, *unfavorable comparison to other speakers*, *harsh correction*, and *competition of learners skills with other learners* made up the group category, learner problems.

The collapsed categories described above were analyzed to further examine the events that seemed most important to the participants in each context. ANOVAs were conducted to see if there were significant differences between the groups for the collapsed categories discussed above. These results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Results of ANOVAs conducted for collapsed categories. AH vs. SA.**

| Source            | Dependant Variable | F value (1,37) | P- value |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------|
| Location (AH, SA) |                    |                |          |
|                   | NNSPROB            | 20.33          | **0.0001 |
|                   | NNEGAF             | 15.84          | **0.0003 |
|                   | NNEGCULT           | 5.53           | *0.0245  |
|                   | NCOMPROB           | 7.45           | **0.0098 |
|                   | NENGLISH           | 26.43          | **0.0001 |
|                   | NINTERLC           | 4.89           | *0.0336  |
|                   | NMOTIV             | 0.61           | 0.4401   |
|                   | NFAILURE           | 1.24           | 0.2735   |
|                   | NAVOID             | 0.25           | 0.6222   |
|                   | POSCULT            | 0.20           | 0.6548   |
|                   | POSNS              | 16.48          | **0.0003 |
|                   | PCOMPET            | 5.87           | *0.0207  |
|                   | PAFFECT            | 2.16           | 0.1508   |
|                   | PENGLISH           | 6.13           | *0.0183  |
|                   | PSTUINIT           | 0.02           | 0.8974   |
|                   | POSABIL            | 7.88           | *0.0081  |
|                   | PGROWTH            | 1.83           | 0.1850   |

Note: \*\*p< .01 \*p< .05

The results of the ANOVAs showed that the two groups differed on the proportion of events that was observed under the following categories: problems with NSs, negative affect, negative responses to cultural differences, communication problems in the target language, the negatively perceived use of English, negative experiences in the target language with interlocutors, positive interactions with native speakers, competition with other learners viewed

in a positive light, the positively perceived use of English, and positive feelings of improved ability.

Thus, the three collapsed categories that obtained the highest proportion of events for both groups were the same. The categories relating to negative affect, positive affect, and positive student initiatives were the categories in which the greatest proportion of events was noted for both groups. There were differences between groups, however, in relation to which categories were most relevant to the learners as measured by the proportion of events. While the AH group reported most about experiences relating to negative affect, followed by positive affect, and finally events relating to student initiatives, the study abroad group related the greatest proportion of events in the student initiatives category, followed by negative affect, and finally positive affect. It is also interesting to note that, of the three major categories, only negative affect was significantly different between the groups, with the AH group discussing a significantly greater proportion of events relating to negative affect.

The above results aided in answering Research Question One and its sub-questions, providing an understanding of the most relevant events described by the participants in both contexts. These results also shed light on the outcomes from the correlations performed to answer Research Question Two and its' sub-questions. Those refer to the relationship between students' perceptions of learning with measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar, vocabulary, phonology, communicative ability, and cognitive processes.

A discussion of the results from both the diary and the interview data that help explain the relationship of individual experiences with outcomes on measures from the companion studies is integrated into the following sections.

## 4.2. Research Question 2

2. How do individual experiences, as described in participant journals and interviews, relate to the acquisition of Spanish for learners in this study?

2a. Is there a correlation between learners' reported perceptions of their learning environment (Classroom, Social, Home, and Unknown) and outcomes on measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar, vocabulary, phonology, communicative ability and cognitive ability as measured in the companion studies?

2b. Is there a difference based on context? (AH vs. SA)

In order to answer Research Question Two, the proportion of events score for each of the environments, classroom, social, home, and unknown, was used for the study abroad and at-home groups. Correlations were conducted between the data produced in the companion studies and the diary data and the results are presented below. Each of the companion studies is presented in a separate section for ease of consideration. Because of the large number of variables, only the significant correlations are displayed in tables with the results in this section; however, Appendix E presents tables that include the results of all the correlations performed.

#### 4.2.1. Oral Proficiency and Fluency

Several relationships were found between learners' perceptions of their environment and outcomes on measures of oral fluency. With respect to the at-home group, two strong correlations were found between two fluency measures in two environments. The positive classroom environment was significantly and positively correlated with the total number of words spoken  $F(1,14) = 0.719, p = .004$ , and the negative classroom environment was significantly negatively correlated with both total words spoken and rate of speech,  $F(1,14) = -0.800, p = .006$ . This means that the more positively the learners perceived the classroom environment, the more words they produced on the fluency measure and the more negatively they considered the classroom, the fewer words they spoke and at a slower rate. No other significant correlations were found for the at-home group.

For the study abroad group, significant correlations were found for three of the environments and five of the fluency measures. The proportion of comments in the positive classroom environment, showed a positive correlation with hesitation-free speech,  $F(1,19) = 0.495, p = .031$ . In the social environment, the proportion of comments in the negative social environment was negatively correlated with filler-free speech,  $F(1,19) = -0.505, p = .027$ . That is to say, the more negatively the study abroad learners perceived the social environment the more fillers they used in their speech.

The home environment produced the greatest number of significant correlations for the study abroad group, all within the negative home environment. Relatively strong positive correlations were observed between the negative home environment and total words,  $F(1,19) = 0.567, p = .011$ , and rate of speech,  $F(1,19) = 0.482, p = .036$  and a strong positive correlation

was found with turn length,  $F(1,19) = 0.785$ ,  $p = .000$ . It would seem that the more negatively the study abroad group perceived their home environment, the more positive their outcome on three important measures of fluency. These results are discussed in the Discussion Section.

In sum, there were differences between the study abroad and at-home groups in terms of how the progress they made with respect to oral proficiency and fluency related to their perceptions of their experiences. Additional discussion about the possible reasons for these differences, and their implications are presented in the Discussion Section.

#### **4.2.2. Grammar**

Individual measures of grammar produced in the companion study by Collentine (2004) were correlated with the perception scores and several relationships were found.

For the at-home group, two environments produced significant correlations with measures of grammar. The positive classroom environment was negatively correlated with the production of subordinate conjunctions,  $F(1,15) = -0.579$ ,  $p = .024$  and positive social environment was negatively related to plural verb production,  $F(1,15) = -0.602$ ,  $p = .018$ . That is to say that the more positively the at-home learners commented on the classroom environment, the fewer subordinate conjunctions they produced during the assessment, and the more positively they perceived the social environment, the fewer plural verbs they correctly produced.

For the study abroad group six relationships were found. The proportion of comments in the positive classroom environment was negatively related to the correct production of feminine pronouns,  $F(1,22) = -0.477$ ,  $p = .025$ . The positive social environment was negatively correlated with the correct use of feminine adjectives,  $F(1,22) = -0.479$ ,  $p = .024$ , and the negative social environment was negatively correlated with feminine adjective production,

$\underline{F}(1,22) = -0.447, p = .037$ , and the number of subordinate clauses produced,

$\underline{F}(1,22) = -0.443, p = .039$ . The negative home environment was positively related to the production of subordinate clauses,  $\underline{F}(1,22) = 0.430, p = .045$ , and finally, the positive home environment was positively related to correct plural pronoun use,  $\underline{F}(1,22) = 0.455, p = .033$ .

The results discussed above indicate that even though the study abroad learners reported positive experiences in both the classroom and social environment, their grammatical ability diminished on several measures. On the other hand, positive comments in the home environment were associated with increases in the ability to correctly produce plural pronouns. Further consideration of these data will be presented in the Discussion Section.

In summary, with respect to relationships between gains in grammar and student perceptions of their learning, very few relationships were found. These results are not surprising, since Collentine (2004) reported that only a few differences existed between the groups in terms of improvements in grammar, with the study abroad group actually experiencing a decrease on several measures. Of the five variables that did distinguish between the groups in Collentine's study, (Copula accuracy, subordinate conjunction accuracy, present tense verb accuracy, indicative accuracy, and coordinate clause count), only copula accuracy did not show a significant relationship with any of the environmental variables from the current study. Further analysis of these results will be presented in the Discussion Section.

### **4.2.3. Vocabulary**

The perception scores from the current study were correlated with seven vocabulary difference scores produced for the vocabulary portion of the Collentine (2004) study; adjectives, adverbs, conjugations, nouns, prepositions, pronouns, and verbs. An additional variable, vocabulary,

which was the sum of all difference scores, was also correlated with the perception scores in order to see if the vocabulary scores taken as a whole would result in any significant relationships with the environment scores. The significant results of the correlations are presented below.

For the at-home group, only one significant relationship was found: The positive classroom was negatively related to adjective production,  $F(1,15) = -0.520$ ,  $p = .047$ . For the study abroad group, two significant correlations were observed: The negative classroom was negatively correlated with the use of nouns,  $F(1,21) = -0.546$ ,  $p = .010$ , and the positive social environment was positively correlated with noun production,  $F(1,21) = 0.481$ ,  $p = .028$ . Although a very limited number of correlations were observed, the relationships identified are note-worthy and are considered in the Discussion Section.

#### **4.2.4. Pronunciation**

The pronunciation scores produced from the data analysis by Díaz-Campos (2004) were correlated with the perception scores. Although no significant correlations were found for the study abroad group, a significant positive correlation was found between overall pronunciation and reports of positive home experiences for the at-home group,  $F(1,15) = 0.535$ ,  $p = .040$ . In summary, the more positive comments an at-home student made about the home environment, the more likely she was to make improvements in terms of pronunciation measures. Explanation of these findings is presented in the Discussion Section.



#### **4.2.5. Communication Strategies.**

Several measures of communication strategies were correlated with the perception scores from the current study. As described in the Data Analysis section, normalized difference scores were produced by Lafford (2004) for the total number of communication strategies used. Those strategies were further divided into the following individual types of communication strategies: L1 strategies, L2 strategies, direct strategies, indirect strategies, resource deficit strategies, and self-repair strategies. .

For the at-home group, no significant correlations were found, however for the study abroad group, one significant correlation was found. The positive home environment was negatively related to self repair strategies,  $F(1,22) = -0.431$ ,  $p = .051$ , which means that the more positive comments the study abroad group made about the home environment, the fewer self-repair strategies they produced after the semester. Detailed consideration of these findings is found in the Discussion Section.

#### **4.2.6. Cognitive Ability**

Four measures of cognitive ability produced by Segalowitz & Freed (2004) were included in the analyses for the current study. Lexical access speed, lexical access efficiency, attention control speed, and attention control efficiency were correlated with the perception scores

Only two significant relationships were discovered. For the at-home group the positive classroom environment was a negatively related to the attention control measure,

$F(1,17) = -0.586$ ,  $p = .028$ , and the negative classroom was positively related to attention control  $F(1,17) = 0.616$ ,  $p = .020$ . No significant relationships were observed for the study abroad

group for any of the cognitive measures in any of the environments. In simple terms these results indicate that for the at-home group, a more positive classroom atmosphere was associated with lower scores on the attention control measure which means they had better attention control, and a negative classroom resulted in the opposite affect. These results will be further analyzed and discussed in the Discussion Section.

In summary, in answer to Research Question Two and its sub-questions, learners' reported perceptions of their learning environment were related to some measures of language acquisition and differences were observed between groups in terms those measures.

For the at-home group, correlations were found between the positive and negative classroom and measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar and vocabulary acquisition, and cognitive processes. Additionally, one significant negative relationship was found between the use of plural verbs and the social environment for the at-home group. No other relationships were found for that group.

For the study abroad group, a number of relationships, both positive and negative, were found. The perception scores in the classroom, social and home environments indicated some relationships with measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar, and vocabulary, however, no relationships were found in any environment with the communication strategy and the cognitive ability measures for the study abroad group.

Although only a small number of significant correlations were found, it may be that not all important differences were highlighted by these analyses. Individual differences and patterns found in the individual data may help to understand the relationship between learners' perceptions and changes in their overall abilities in Spanish. Those trends will be analyzed and presented in the Discussion Section.

### **4.3. Discussion**

The following section will discuss the relationship between individual perceptions of learning and the results of the companion studies and present possible explanations for the differences between the groups in terms of those measures. The results of the data analyses from this study will be presented individually with each of the companion studies.

#### **4.3.1. Oral Proficiency and Fluency**

With regard to measures of oral proficiency and fluency, Segalowitz & Freed (2004) reported that a number of measures differentiated the groups. While the study abroad group showed improvement on several of the oral proficiency and fluency measures, the at-home group remained fairly stable during the semester.

Segalowitz and Freed reported that, while as a group, the at-home participants did not make significant gains on the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), the study abroad group did. In addition, none of the at-home group members made significant gains on any of the measures of fluency (total words, duration, turn, rate, speech with fewer hesitations and fillers, and length of fluent run), however, the study abroad group data showed significant gains on four of the fluency measures (turn, rate, filler-free speech, and length of fluent run).

Relationships were found between the perception scores and some fluency measures for the at-home group. Although no significant improvements were observed for the at-home group on measures of fluency, three significant relationships were found between the perception scores and measures of fluency for this group. The positive classroom environment was strongly and

positively related to the fluency measure total words, and the negative classroom environment showed a strong negative relationship to both total words and rate of speech.

These results seem to indicate that the at-home learners' perception of the positive or negative classroom environment affected their learning. It may be that a positive classroom environment served to encourage oral practice among learners, which, in turn led to improvements in their ability to produce more Spanish. By the same token, reports of negative experiences in the classroom seem to have inhibited learners' ability to speak quickly and produce more words. The implication of these results is that the classroom environment must be positive for students to make progress in oral fluency.

Several relationships were found between the fluency measures and the perception scores for the study abroad group data. Similar to the outcomes for the at-home group, the group data correlations for the study abroad participants showed that the positive classroom environment was strongly and positively related to hesitation-free speech signifying that the more positively the study abroad participants viewed the classroom environment, the fewer hesitations they made in their speech. As suggested above, a more comfortable classroom atmosphere may relate to improvements in language learning. In the case of the study abroad learners, although positive comments about the classroom environment did not show significant relationships with most of the fluency measures, it did seem to be related to hesitation-free speech.

In addition, a negative social environment seemed to inhibit the study abroad learners' ability to speak without the use of fillers. Since the negative social environment was significantly negatively correlated with the fluency measure filler-free speech, it seems as though those learners who viewed their social environment negatively were more likely to use fillers in their speech. Without the opportunity to speak comfortably, learners may have begun to stutter,

hesitate, and resort to native language fillers such as um, well, etc. It may be that their discomfort in the social environment encouraged the habit of using such fillers when the need to communicate arose which resulted in the negative relationship found between the negative social environment and filler-free speech.

The setting that produced the greatest number of relationships for the study abroad group was the home environment. Total words spoken, rate of speech, and length of turn were all positively related to a negative home environment. Although it would seem that the perception of positive relationships with native speakers would help improve fluency, in fact, the data showed the opposite. It may be that the negative experiences that the students discussed in their journals were actually helpful to them in terms of improved fluency. Several of the study abroad participants discussed their relationships with their families, and although they often complained that they did not participate in intellectual conversations with the host-families, they generally claimed to appreciate the feedback, both positive and negative, they received from the family members.

The finding that the negative home environment was significantly related to measures of oral fluency is in direct conflict with one of the reported findings by Segalowitz & Freed. In addition to measuring changes in oral proficiency and fluency, they also investigated the relationship between in-class and out-of-class contact with those measures. They reported that the observed gains did not seem to be a function of the number of hours spent in the classroom, nor were any significant relationships found for out-of-class contact. However, they did find one relationship that approached significance; contact with the home-stay family was negatively related to the variable, length of turn. That is to say, the more time reportedly spent speaking

with family members for the study abroad learners, the less they were able to produce lengthy discourse in a single turn.

The implication of these conflicting findings is that continued investigation is warranted and a variety of measurements should be employed. It may be that assessing the quantity of hours spent in the home is not the most effective way to understand language learning and that the quality of interactions is also important.

The following information relates information about study abroad learners' interactions at home. These remarks may help clarify the sorts of exchanges that seemed important to the participants. For example, many of the study abroad participants asserted that they spoke to the family on a fairly regular basis, even though they often demonstrated frustration with those conversations. Participant S020 talked about a conversation with her family about the bombing of the World Trade Center and Pentagon:

*I also quickly got fed up with my inability to understand my family's interpretation of what was going on.*

Participant S019 talked about her relationship with her family and about their interactions.

*I moved in with my family a week ago, which has been an adjustment. I haven't lived with a family for a few years because I have always lived with friends in apartments at school. Apparently water is not as abundant in Spain as in the US. So now I can only take 1 shower a day. One day I took 2 showers because I had worked out in the afternoon and my mom here made sure I knew that was NOT okay. For the most I know what my family is saying but I am never exactly sure. It is very frustrating when I can't explain something because I don't know the words. Then my family just kind of stares at me like I am crazy. None of them speak English at all.*

Both of the examples above relate negative feelings about relationships with the home-stay family members.

A possible reason for the positive relationship between the negative home environment and measures of fluency may have to do with Swain's (1985) concept of Pushed Output. She argues that the best sorts of exchanges for acquisition to occur are when there is some sort of communication breakdown and the learner is 'pushed' to convey a message appropriately.

Although the study abroad learners did not discuss the home environment to the same degree as the social environment, the kinds of comments they discussed in the diaries relating to their home-stay families often related to a need to be understood. Since they also reported that interactions with family members tended to be fairly narrow, relating to scheduling, meals, travel and the like, they may have become more comfortable with those topics over the course of the semester, and although they reported negative feelings about those conversations, the constant repetition may have led to gains in fluency on those topics and more confidence speaking Spanish in general. Since the fluency measures were based on data from Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPIs), which relate to communication in the TL, the practice they had may have led to positive outcomes.

The social and home environments for the at-home group may not have been of great consequence to them because they were not abroad, and therefore, did not have the relatively large number of experiences outside the classroom that the study abroad group was exposed to. In fact, no one in the at-home group reported any negative home experiences and only two participants reported positive experiences in the home environment. In the social environment, twelve of the at-home participants included in the analysis reported positive experiences, and only three reported negative experiences. Those results support the assumption that the classroom environment was the most relevant to their learning and as such, the at-home

participants were not exposed to the same kind of language, nor would they be expected to have the same opportunities for practice with everyday conversations in the TL.

One important factor to keep in mind when attempting to explain the outcomes from the measures used in the companion studies is that those measures that seemed to give an advantage to the study abroad learners may not relate to the same sorts of information often found in classroom evaluations. The OPI is a whole language assessment that does not necessarily divide the interview into specific categories such as vocabulary use, grammatical ability, pronunciation etc. Although those elements are important, in order to obtain a rating of Intermediate-Mid a learner must be able to handle a number of different tasks, which are communicative in nature and generally relate to the types of exchanges necessary for linguistic survival in the target culture.

Classroom practices may not always prepare students for oral communication in the real world, and although a description of the methodologies employed by the instructors for either group was not available, it may be that the learners did not have sufficient practice with spoken language in the classroom to make the same progress in oral proficiency and fluency. Evidence from the journals suggests that they spent a great deal of time in and out of class focusing on grammar exercises and assessment. While the at-home participants often discussed the use of written grammar exercises, watching movies, reading, writing compositions and giving presentations in Spanish, they rarely discussed conversing in Spanish, and hardly ever described interactions with native speakers.

Even though the study abroad learners claimed to use English and spend a great deal of time with Americans in the group, they also discussed every day exchanges they had with family members and service personnel. Several of the interactions they participated in directly relate to



the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines for speaking (1999). For example, an OPI rating of Advanced-Mid requires the speaker successfully handle the following: (Adapted from a description in Omaggio-Hadley (2001 p. 472).

A large number of communicative tasks.

Informal and formal exchanges relating to work, home, school, leisure activities, current events, public interest and individually relevant information.

Narrate and describe in present, past and future time frames.

Produce paragraph-length discourse.

Handle complications or unexpected turns of events.

Use a variety of communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution.

Use extensive vocabulary, although primary in nature.

Demonstrate accuracy, clarity, and precision.

Should be readily understood by NS.

Many of those requirements may not be learned in a classroom situation, where the use of accents and correct verb endings, reading comprehension and writing skills tend to be the focus. Since both groups attended Spanish classes, it is assumed that they were exposed to similar sorts of language learning in the classroom environment, however, since the study abroad learners also lived in a Spanish speaking culture where communication was often necessary for survival, they were likely to have had a great deal more practice with spoken language in a communicative context.

An important finding from the study by Collentine, was that the study abroad learners performed worse on several measures of grammar at the end of the semester when compared to

initial levels of proficiency in grammar. The following section discusses those results in terms of the activities described in the journals and offers suggestions for why this occurred.

#### **4.3.2. Grammar and Vocabulary**

Only a few significant correlations were found between the perception scores and the measures of grammar and vocabulary. The summary of the language contact profile (LCP) data discussed in the Data Analysis Section showed that differences between the groups in terms of exposure to Spanish during the semester were fairly large, and although the study abroad group had a great deal more experience with spoken and written Spanish in the social and home environments, this exposure did not seem to aid in their ability to improve on the majority of the measures of grammar or vocabulary. In fact, while the at-home learners performed better on a number of measures of grammar, the study abroad learners actually became less proficient on several measures.

The relationship between learners' comments about their learning environment and measures of grammar indicated several negative relationships. For the at-home learners both the positive classroom environment and the positive social environment were related to a loss in the ability to correctly produce subordinate conjunctions and plural verbs. This finding is somewhat puzzling because it shows that, as a group, the more the at-home learners discussed positive experiences in the classroom and social environments, the worse they performed on these two measures of grammar. It may be that those constructs were not the focus of their classroom learning and thus, even though they positively viewed their environment, they did not have sufficient instruction and feedback on the use of those constructs to produce positive results. It is also likely that the correlation found between the social environment and the at home learners'

use of subordinate conjunctions and verbs was related to the fact that relatively few comments were observed in that environment for the group. In fact only 17% of the comments in the at-home learners' diaries were noted in the positive social environment and three of the participants made no reference to social interactions. Therefore, it is possible that the statistically significant relationships found between the social environment and subordinate conjunctions and plural verbs were an artifact of the data.

For the study abroad learners, the positive classroom and social environments were also negatively related to two measures of grammatical ability. As a group, the more positively they perceived those environments, the fewer feminine pronouns and adjectives they accurately produced. The negative social environment was also related to a loss in production of feminine adjectives. These results are difficult to explain, but may be related to the study abroad group members' overall loss in grammatical ability. Equally perplexing, however, is the fact that as a group the study abroad learners actually improved somewhat on the accurate production of feminine pronouns, although not significantly more than the at-home group. A relatively large standard deviation on the measure of feminine pronouns may indicate that large individual differences existed for the study abroad group. It may be that, for those who did not improve, the social environment, both positive and negative, related to difficulties in acquiring feminine pronouns in the study abroad context. Other learner variables may have also been related to the outcomes described above. It may be that although some learners positively perceived the classroom and social environments, they did not have sufficient knowledge of those forms, or were unable to develop a sufficient understanding of their use to show significant improvement. It may also be that the combination of individual differences and the use of such a small group of individuals skewed the results of the correlations for this study.

Vocabulary measures were also correlated with the perception scores and the results indicated only three relationships. For the at-home group the positive classroom environment was negatively related to the number of adjectives produced. Since the at-home group data produced by Collentine actually showed an increase in the number of adjectives produced by the group, this result is also difficult to understand. As discussed above, it may be that those learners who produced the fewest number of adjectives still perceived the classroom in a positive light, thus the overall outcome of the correlation was negative. Individual differences and intervening variables may also have played a role. Measures of learners' attitudes, motivation, and aptitude were not available, and those variables may have affected in the overall outcome of the companion studies.

Measures of vocabulary from the study abroad group data showed a positive relationship between the positive social environment and production of nouns. In addition, the negative classroom environment was negatively associated with the number of nouns produced. These results are more intuitively acceptable and indicate that those learners who discussed negative experiences in the classroom also produced fewer nouns. Similarly, those who described numerous positive experiences in the social environment were ultimately able to produce more nouns.

These results, combined with the finding (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) that the study abroad learners were measurably more fluent than the at-home learners and that they produced more informationally rich discourse on the non-scaled data (See Collentine, 2004) may indicate that the positive social environment contributed to the learners' acquisition of nouns. Alternatively, a negative classroom experience actually seemed to inhibit their ability to correctly produce nouns. It may be that the classroom experience was more restrictive in terms

of the range of nouns presented and that when the learners positively perceived the social environment, it allowed them to gain access to a wider variety of nouns and ultimately acquire a larger number of nouns.

The relationships discussed above indicate that associations between learners' perceptions of their learning environment and outcomes on measures of grammar and vocabulary acquisition are complex. Prior research on study abroad has shown that large individual differences are quite prevalent (DeKeyser, 1991, Dewey, 2002, Freed, 1998, and others). It may be that individual differences account for the mixed results in this study as well, and future studies should focus on such differences in order to more fully understand the relationship between perceptions of learning and second language acquisition.

In distinguishing differences between contexts of learning, it is necessary to attempt to understand a wide array of variables that might have an effect on outcomes. One such variable is the amount of classroom exposure each group had. A peculiar fact that would seem to have aided the study abroad learners to be more successful in their acquisition of Spanish was the number of Spanish classes taken during the semester. While all of the at-home group members took only one Spanish class, each of the study abroad participants took at least three courses in Spanish, with some taking four or more. The at-home group took a variety of Spanish classes, including intermediate level skills classes, as well as literature, culture and conversation courses and discussed those classes to a large degree in their journals and interviews. Alternatively, everyone in the study abroad group took at least three classes, a grammar and syntax class, a conversation class and a reading and writing class and several also attended additional elective courses in Spanish literature, business, culture, and history.

As mentioned above, Segalowitz & Freed investigated relationships between time spent in class and measures of oral fluency and proficiency and found no significant relationships between several different types of contact and oral proficiency and fluency. One might assume that the number of hours per week spent in Spanish classes by the study abroad group would have resulted in higher levels of achievement; however this was not the case for grammar and vocabulary acquisition.

Since the study abroad learners discussed the social environment to a much greater extent than the at-home participants, it is assumed that it was the social setting that was most relevant to their learning. As such, the activities described by the study abroad group may serve as evidence that grammar and vocabulary acquisition were not always the goal for them.

A discussion of Schumann's (1978, 1986) Acculturation Model was presented in the Literature Review Section and a number of learner variables presented in the model may apply to the study abroad learners' experience. Evidence for several of the tenants of Schumann's model was observed in both the diary and interview data for the study abroad group. This information was useful in explaining why the those learners did not generally improve on measures grammar or on the number of lexical items they produced during the assessment, even though they had a great deal more exposure to written and spoken Spanish and more opportunities to speak Spanish. As presented above, since the study abroad group described experiences in the social setting to a greater extent than the classroom, it may be that affective and social factors in an immersion situation played a role in their language development and in their inability to make strides in overall grammar and vocabulary acquisition.

The belief that students who study abroad should develop better language skills is not always supported by the measures obtained for the companion studies and an attempt was made

by the current study to highlight differences in the two contexts based on learners' reports of their experiences in the classroom and out. Some of the most salient features of the diaries for the study abroad group were the comments by the learners about their daily use of English, their desire and tendency to maintain ties to the American group, and their sometimes negative attitudes toward the learning environment in Spain.

The Language Contact Profile (LCP) (Freed, Segalowitz, Dewey & Halter, 2004) results also revealed that the study abroad learners spent a great deal of time interacting in English both with their American classmates, and with their friends and family members in the U.S. via e-mail. It may be that they failed to assimilate to the new culture, constantly attempting to preserve their own cultural behaviors, and using their first language. Although difficult to understand, the comments in the diaries and interviews revealed clues as to the reasons the study abroad learners often avoided opportunities to use the target language and a discussion of those comments is provided in the next section.

#### **4.3.2.1. Acculturation**

Several of Schumann's (1978, 1986) ideas seemed to be related to the study abroad group members' experience. The focus of the following discussion offers evidence that the study abroad learners may not have become acculturated to any great degree, and as such, did not differ significantly from the at-home group in their acquisition of grammar and in fact, became less proficient in terms of the use of several grammatical structures.

One of the tenants of Schumann's Acculturation Model that may be associated with the study abroad learning environment is *Integration Pattern*. According to Schumann, the behaviors of second language learners who are immersed in a new culture will likely fall into one of three categories: assimilation, preservation, or adaptation. Very little evidence of assimilation

was found among the diary and interview data and although the study abroad learners had daily exposure to the language and culture of Spain, their comments about cultural differences were often negative.

In addition, many learners did not discuss to any great extent, activities that would lead to the assumption that they were attempting to assimilate to the new culture. In fact, one of the complaints the learners often communicated about the learning situation was that they spent too much time with the other Americans in the group, and did not make the effort to make Spanish friends. The following explanation by study abroad participant S015, who talked about his use of Spanish, supports this idea:

*All my friends are Americans, all my friends are in a group, so at first I used it all the time in class and then I'd go home and talk to the family, but now lately, I only use it in class, but then I don't out of class because I'm with my friends all the time.*

The majority of the study abroad participants related similar accounts about their use of Spanish outside the classroom and about the social atmosphere in Spain. It was as if they had created their own little community within Alicante, socializing for the most part with their friends from the program. The evidence found in the diaries and interviews showed that as a group they tended to distance themselves from the language in social situations, thus inhibiting their opportunity to acquire the target language (TL). Rather than assimilating or fully adapting to the Spanish culture, they seemed to preserve their native culture even though they were living in Spain.

Wilkinson (1998) and Kline (1993) found similar results in their qualitative studies of students studying in France. Both investigators cautioned that individual experiences are quite varied, however, and that generalizations are ill-advised. Nevertheless, as Pellegrino (1998) asserted, through the study of multiple programs, and larger numbers of participants, common



themes may become evident. The information found in the diaries for this study provide further evidence that although learners are exposed to more ‘real language’, they do not always take full advantage of the situation.

A great many comments in the study abroad diary and interview data also related to two additional social factors described by Schumann: *Cohesiveness* and *Size*. Since the American group was relatively large, they often separated themselves from the TL group and, as Schumann postulates, learning was most likely hindered. The following examples show that the study abroad learners not only reported spending a great deal of time with Americans, but also that they often perceived this behavior as having a negative effect on their learning process.

S003

*...I unfortunately find myself conversing too often with American students and end up not talking enough in Spanish*

S005

*I've been hanging out with my American friends and traveling so much lately that I haven't been speaking Spanish a lot.*

S006

*I'm starting to find that I've made a big mistake in making friends with a lot of Americans because in a way it inhibits my learning process.*

*Intended length of residence* is also a factor in the Acculturation model and according to Schumann refers to the amount of time the learner expects to remain in the TL area. Schumann proposed that the expectation of living in the TL country for longer periods should promote learning. Generally, the study abroad learners planned to stay in Spain for only one semester, although a few intended to spend an additional semester with the program in Alicante or in another Spanish city. A great many learners discussed their plans for the next semester in their U.S. universities and their feelings of homesickness.

S010

*I am excited to go home .... When I get back to the U.S. I don't have room in my class schedule for more Spanish classes. I wish I did though, but I have too many other requirements (that my school requires) it doesn't allow me too.*

*I have been realizing that we only have (including this week of school) 4 weeks left. That isn't very long at all. I do feel I need more to really be able to speak/understand Spanish well but t the same time I don't think I could stand to be away from home any longer.*

Another aspect of the Acculturation Model is the assertion that affective variables may ultimately relate to language learning. As described in the Results Section, negative affective factors seemed to be one of the most observable features in the diaries, both for the at-home group and for the study abroad participants. Several affective factors might have come into play for the learners.

Gardner (2001) for example, described learning a second language in terms of learners' attitudes and motivation. By and large, his discussion of language learning is in the context of the school setting, in environments where there is limited access to a TL community, however, his research compliments the ideas proposed by Schumann, who studied language acquisition in an immersion context. Together, the theories put forth by Gardner and Schumann may be used as a basis for understanding the outcomes from this study.

Gardner discussed motivation as one of the major contributing factors to second language acquisition and claimed that there are three basic elements to motivation: effort, desire, and positive affect. For the learners participating in the current study, it is assumed that their goal was to learn Spanish and evidence of their motivation level was drawn from comments in their diaries and interviews. The following example from SA participant S009 shows that motivation is sometimes difficult to maintain.

*To be honest, I'm losing interest. I have no doubt in my mind that coming here has improved both my Spanish (necessity being my main motivator; my parents "who are*

*paying for this ...”, being the secondary one), and my life. But I miss home, so I’m losing motivation.*

Like Schumann, Gardner discussed the need for learners to have the desire to make use of opportunities arising to improve proficiency. Both the at-home and study abroad students in the current study discussed their opportunities to put their language skills to use in for the purpose of real communication.

Although the study abroad learners described numerous opportunities to interact with shop-keepers and the like, they often complained that they were not able to form relationships with native speakers and even when they had opportunities to speak with host family members and other native speaking interlocutors, the conversations consisted mainly of brief interactions with little possibility of conversing in deeper and more meaningful ways. Often their interactions consisted of routine and repetitious themes such as how classes were going, what they did last night, and what would they like to eat that day. Many of the study abroad participants’ comments reflected this attitude, and the following excerpts from the post-semester interviews referring to conversations with the host-families give evidence of this feeling.

S011

*... sometimes you wouldn’t really have conversations with them as much as like you know planning when you’re going to eat and doing laundry, stuff like that...*

When asked what she did at meals, participant S016 said,

*I don’t really talk. We just kind of sit there. We watch TV. Sometimes I’ll like tell them what I did over the weekend or something, but we don’t have in depth conversations.*

Many of the comments about opportunities to interact with native speakers by the study abroad participants seemed negative. It may be that their initial expectations were not met, and that as a

result, they really did not put forth the effort to utilize the opportunities made available to them while studying abroad.

The at-home learners did not discuss social activities to any large degree, however, a number of comments by individuals indicated that when faced with the opportunity to interact with native Spanish speakers, they often rose to the challenge and found the interactions to be quite rewarding. Many of the interactions discussed by the at-home group were light and casual, similar to the conversations the study abroad learners often complained about. The learners' expectations in the two contexts may have been quite different and as such may have impacted their acquisition. While the study abroad group expected to participate in deep, meaningful conversations with native speakers because of the availability of Spanish speaking interlocutors, the at-home learners seemed pleased and encouraged by the slightest opportunity to use their Spanish speaking skills. The following excerpt from a diary by at-home participant C005 illustrates this point:

*I talked to a lady at the cafeteria today. I went to lunch right from Spanish so I was still "thinking" in Spanish. I heard her speaking Spanish to another worker and without thinking I thanked her and asked how she was in Spanish. She looked incredibly surprised at first, then said she was good and asked me how I was. It was a fun chance to have a casual conversation with someone in Spanish.*

Other learner variables may have been working against the study abroad group in terms of grammar and vocabulary acquisition. In addition to the variables mentioned above, Schumann discussed the concepts of Language Shock, Cultural Shock, Motivation and Ego-permeability, which are all considered to be individual affective variables that may have a profound impact on language learning.

Language Shock occurs when learners must use the target language but struggle with feelings of insecurity about their ability to say exactly what is intended. A great deal of evidence

of Language Shock was found among both the diary and interview data for the study abroad group, and to a smaller degree for the at-home group. Difficulty in communicating using the TL, problems with comprehension, unsuccessful attempts to speak Spanish, anger and frustration were all common themes for both groups. Participant C011 expressed her insecurity and frustration when attempting to use Spanish.

*Learning a new language can be so frustrating. Sometimes I feel like a child who can't accurately explain what they are thinking. In their case they just start to scream and whine to let out their frustration. Unfortunately, if I were to express myself in the same way, my Spanish teacher would send me to the mental health department.*

Language shock was also a very common theme among study abroad participants who often seemed frustrated with Spanish communication. Participant S013 described her experience at a hair salon:

*... today I went to the hair salon to do something with my hair. I had an incredibly hard time telling the hairstylist what I wanted. Thank God for hair magazines. Still, he would tell me to do things, for instance, to tilt my head to the side and I was all confused. So he had to show me what he was trying to tell me, and I was like "Oh, I see, like a big idiota, I felt. I feel like screaming, "I am not stupid, really I'm not. I'm smart if only I could be fluent in your language, you would see.*

When confronted with the need to convey their needs in the TL, the study abroad learners were often surprised and discontented by their inability to communicate. Participant S025 described a similar problem:

*Today I had some trouble conversing in Español. I just wanted to buy a bus pass, a very simple task and it frustrated me so much I have been in a bad mood all day. I just hate that I can't do simple things like that and I wish when learning Spanish a little more emphasis could be placed on survival type things.*

Schumann posited that anxiety and fear result causing the learner to seek relief from the negative emotional state and in turn may withdraw and avoid situations that would eventually develop language skills.

Since the at-home learners were safe in their own culture, no evidence of *Culture Shock* was observed in the diaries or interviews; however, some of the study abroad participants described circumstances in which they were very uncomfortable with the Spanish culture. One of the most often discussed situations was the use of cat-calls by the Spanish men. Quite often the female participants were exposed to whistles and other advances by men when they were walking through the streets of Alicante. Although part of the Spanish culture, the American women were often angry, discouraged and even frightened by the verbal advances. Schumann hypothesized, *Culture Shock* may cause avoidance behaviors, and evidence of such behavior was observed.

One of the questions in the interviews was directly related to the opportunities available to male versus female learners, and in answering the question, several of the participants discussed their feelings about men and women in Spain. The following excerpts from the interviews are examples of the frustration felt by some of the study abroad participants:

S012

*I think girls get hit on a lot. Especially in Spain very aggressively. I think it's scary. I've been scared several times by men here.*

S024

*I think that depending on your setting, there are huge differences. I know when I go out to the bars, it seems like my guy friends meet a lot more guys, girls, and speak with them a lot more than I meet guys in particular, because I'm, because of the culture, and being blonde and Spanish are very attracted to the blonde light skin. I feel a little intimidated to go over and speak to males.*

There were very few references to other cultural differences in the diaries and the study abroad group did not seem to have a great deal of difficulty living in the new culture. One participant discussed her frustration with the hours of operation of local shops since many stores close between 2:00 and 5:00 in the afternoon so the workers can go home for the main meal of the day, however, since Spain is a modern country with easily accessible transportation and offers most of the same comforts enjoyed by U.S. citizens, culture shock may not have been an important negative element in their learning experience.

The above discussion is an attempt to understand why the study group did not generally make greater strides in their acquisition of grammar and vocabulary than their U.S. counterparts. In general, the study abroad participants seemed to maintain their ties to the home culture through various activities, and avoidance behaviors were observed in the diaries and interviews. Evidence of language and culture shock, enclosure, and group cohesiveness was quite evident among the diary and interview data for the study abroad group. Their desire to spend time with native speakers seemed somewhat questionable since they often did not make the effort to interact in Spanish in the social realm.

The learners needed to use the target language for service-related interactions; however, they did not seem to be highly motivated to seek out social relationships with native speakers. That is not to say that none of the study abroad participants formed such relationships, but the vast majority claimed to have had no real Spanish friends, and even though many described positive relationships with their host-families, they also complained that they did not have opportunities to interact with them in meaningful ways, often participating in short conversations for the purpose of exchanging information or planning daily activities.

The discussion above offers an explanation for the lack of positive results on measures of grammar and vocabulary for the study abroad learners, but also provides evidence that supports several findings presented in the companion studies. While Collentine (2004) found that the study abroad group did not make as much progress on measures of grammar and vocabulary as the at-home group, his data did show that the study abroad group was able to “produce more instances of semantically dense lexemes” (p. 22) , and were able to, “generate more instances of narrative discourse” (p. 16). Collentine surmised that those results related to the study abroad learners’ day-to-day interactions in the host culture and the discussion above complements this suggestion. Although the study abroad learners seemed discontented with their repetitive and routine interactions in the target language, it may be that they actually benefited from them.

Second language acquisition is complex and must be studied from multiple perspectives. In addition to the previously mentioned studies, the current study investigated relationships between learners’ perceptions and changes in pronunciation. The following section discusses the results of correlations between the perception scores and pronunciation.

#### **4.3.3. Pronunciation**

Díaz-Campos (2004) studied the phonological ability for the learners in this study. He reported that both groups improved their pronunciation over time; however, no significant differences existed between the groups on measures of phonological accuracy. The student perception scores from the current study were correlated with the phonological data, and only one significant relationship was found. For the at-home group a significant positive correlation was found between pronunciation and the home environment. These results indicated that, in



general, the at-home participants' home environment was associated with positive outcomes on pronunciation. The following excerpt from the journal of participant C014 suggests why.

*Reading aloud the reading assignments will help me dramatically improve my accent. All I have to do is do the reading in my own room instead of in the library.*

Although the home environment did not generally seem to be very relevant to the at-home learners' experience, several participants mentioned activities done outside the classroom whose goal was to improve their listening comprehension and speaking ability. As is evident from the journal entry above, sometimes the learners took it upon themselves to improve their skills, focusing on problem areas.

Oddly, the study abroad participants discussed problems with pronunciation to a much larger degree often searching for methods to improve, with several seeking out tutors or asking family members to help them with difficult words. In fact, one of the most often-cited communication problems described by the study abroad group was that native speakers could not understand their speech often due in part to their poor pronunciation.

Since neither group outperformed the other in terms of improved pronunciation, Díaz-Compos's assertion that neither context is superior for the acquisition of phonological forms has merit. Because several studies on the acquisition of phonology (Asher & Garcia, 1969, Oyama, 1976, Payne, 1980, and Major, 1987) have emphasized that accent-free speech is difficult, if not impossible to attain after a very young age, it may be that the learners in the current study, who according to the LCP data, generally began their study of Spanish in Junior High School or later, were all at a disadvantage for the acquisition of phonology.

Similarly, little evidence was found in the journals and interview data that would suggest that pronunciation was a major element to the classroom learning. In addition, those study

abroad learners who admitted having problems with pronunciation often claimed that they were unable to correct their pronunciation errors to any large degree even through increased effort and practice. Study abroad participant S007 described her difficulties with pronunciation in the following way:

*Today at dinner the family was giving vocab of fruit. I couldn't pronounce well and so finally the mom asked if I even listened. I was mad I wanted to hit her. I try every single day to understand a language and then for someone to ask if I try kills me.*

In general, neither group outperformed the other in terms of pronunciation, nor was there an indication that pronunciation ranked as one of the most important aspects of the participants' learning in either context. As suggested by Díaz-Campos (2004), in order to improve pronunciation in any setting, it may be necessary to combine formal pronunciation practice with all types of programs.

#### **4.3.4. Communicative Ability**

Lafford (2004) found differences between the groups in terms of the number and variety of communication strategies used, with the study abroad group using significantly less after the semester. It seems clear that living in Spain was advantageous to the study abroad group in terms of communicative ability. Since the at-home learners did not report being exposed to native speakers to any great degree outside of the classroom, the results of the companion studies, that generally show greater gains for the study abroad group on variables related to communicating in the target language, do not seem out of the ordinary.

Leeman-Guthrie (1984) suggested that even when instruction is considered to be communicative in nature, teachers often assume the role of authoritarian, directing conversations, correcting learners' errors and choosing topics. These activities do not promote communicative

ability and although, a description of the methodologies employed in the classrooms during the semester was not available, the learners' discussion of their classes offered evidence that real communication was not the central goal of those classes. Both the at-home and study abroad learners discussed their classes in the diaries and interviews often describing homework assignments and classroom activities. The following excerpt from the diary of participant C001 presents evidence of the types of activities utilized in the classroom:

*I had a Spanish test last Friday. I felt like I did a great job on writing paragraphs and on the grammar section, but I had trouble w/ the audio part. The teacher read a paragraph and then we had to answer questions on it. I sort of was not paying the best attention when he as reading the passage and I had a lot of trouble remembering what was said. I definitely need to work on that.*

While writing and listening are important elements of learning a second language, the description of the listening portion of the exam does not provide the learner with the opportunity to interact with or negotiate the meaning of the teachers' utterances. All of the at-home learners and most of the study abroad learners described similar activities, which supports the claim that the classroom experience often does not include a communication element. Based on this assumption, it would be inherently difficult for classroom learners in this study to improve their communicative ability, and as such, their scores on communicative assessments such as the OPI are apt to be lower than students having training or experience in target language communication.

The assumption that the neither group was exposed to natural communicative contexts while in the classroom is supported by evidence in the diaries and interview data. The LCP data also showed that the study abroad group had a great deal more exposure to native speakers during the semester and more opportunities for real communication outside the classroom than their at-home counterparts.

Additionally, the information presented above that described types of interactions the study abroad learners' discussed is quite relevant to communicative ability. Although no relationships were noted between the perception scores from this study and measures of communicative ability, the information in the diaries supports the findings described by Lafford. The study abroad learners discussed the social environment most and the implication is that those experiences may have given them the necessary exposure and practice that led to improvements in communication strategies.

The daily interactions with native speakers in the home and social environments were often described by the study abroad participants as frustrating, repetitive and 'mundane'. They also often talked about breakdowns in communication that left them feeling unsure of their abilities. However, since they were living in Spain and needed to communicate in order to buy necessities, order food in restaurants, and make reservations, they were forced to get their point across. The following diary entry by a study abroad participant shows not only that she had to speak Spanish to communicate, but also that she recognized the value of the experience:

S022

*I was thinking about whether I am learning more Spanish here than I would in a normal classroom in the U.S. and I honestly think the by being constantly immersed in it you pick up sounds, body language and accent so much better than a classroom in the US could ever provide. This trip has allowed me to get part of my fear of trying to speak Spanish because there are many times that you have to speak Spanish, there is a way to smile you way our of it.*

The need to communicate was a common theme among the diary and interview data, and the relationship between those experiences and the learners' communicative ability was evident. It seems as though such experiences gave the learners not only the necessary practice, but also improved confidence in their ability to communicate orally.

The diary entries provide evidence of the learners' activities during the semester and their attitudes toward the learning situation. Segalowitz & Freed considered one additional group of variables and the relationship between those variables and the student perception scores is presented in the next section.

#### **4.3.5. Cognitive Ability**

Examples of learners' reports of their own learning behaviors have been offered as evidence of what sorts of activities seemed to promote learning and which may have impeded growth for various aspects of the acquisition of Spanish for both groups. The following discussion relates to changes in learners' cognitive abilities and relationships with the perception scores.

In addition to oral proficiency and fluency, Segalowitz & Freed (2004) investigated the learners' cognitive ability in both the first and second language. They hypothesized that speed and efficiency of lexical access, as well as speed and efficiency of attention control would be related to measures of oral performance and the results of their investigation showed that both speed and efficiency of attention control were related to fluency for the both groups on the pretest, and efficiency of attention control was negatively related to rate of speech in the posttest.

The current study correlated the measures of speed and efficiency of lexical access and attention control with the student perception scores and found two significant relationships for the at-home group only. A positive classroom environment was related to improved attention control, and a negative classroom environment was related to inferior ability to control attention. This finding is relevant to the comfort level of the learners in the classroom situation and supports Segalowitz & Freed's hypothesis that a less challenging setting favors attention control.

It may be that those learners who discussed the classroom environment in a positive way were able to focus their attention more on second language acquisition which led to improvements on measures of cognitive ability in the second language. Conversely, the more unfavorably they rated the classroom experience, the more difficulty they may have had focusing their attention, leading to lower levels of cognitive control.

No significant relationships were found between the perception scores and measures of cognitive ability for the study abroad group. It may be that living in a different culture with all of the cognitive demands associated with day to day living, understanding interlocutors, attempting to communicate ideas and the like, was somewhat cognitively demanding for the study abroad learners, but not so much so that it caused them to suffer any real loss in attention efficiency and control in the second language.

The discussion above attempted to offer some explanations for the findings in this investigation and although there were limitations to this study, a number of important findings were presented. Learners' perceptions of their environment were associated with measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammatical and vocabulary acquisition, and cognitive ability and those associations were the focus of the above discussion.

The following sections provide a presentation of some important conclusions related to the findings of the study, a description several limitations, as well as suggestions for further research in the area of student perceptions of learning.

## **5. Summary and Conclusions**

This section will provide a summary of the results of this study. In addition, conclusions based on the data analysis, implications of the results, and recommendations for future research will be presented.

### **5.1. Summary**

The goals of this study were to investigate two specific questions relating to second language learning in two contexts; at-home and study abroad. The first related to the learners' attitudes toward the learning situation in three environments; in the classroom, in the social realm, and at home. By quantifying events reported in each environment, it was hoped that a clearer understanding of the environments the learners perceived as most relevant or important to their language learning would result.

The second question related to the relationship between the learners comments in each context and in each environment with measures of language acquisition. This was accomplished by correlating the quantified diary results with data produced in the companion studies of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, communication strategies, and cognitive ability.

Based on prior research, a rubric was created to help organize and categorize comments in the diaries. Those comments were assigned to the various categories in the rubric during the initial analysis of the diary data. The comments were further divided by the setting or

environment to which they pertained, (classroom, home, or social) resulting in quantitative measures of individual learners' remarks in each category and environment. Those scores, combined with measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammatical ability, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, communicative ability, and cognitive ability were used for the purpose of answering the following questions:

1. What experiences do learners participating in this study report as most relevant to their language learning?

1a. Do experiences at home, in the classroom or in social settings seem equally important or does one environment seem more important?

1b. Is there a difference based on context? (at-home vs. study abroad)

2. How do individual experiences, as described in participant journals and interviews, affect the acquisition of Spanish for learners in this study?

2a. Is there a correlation between learners' reported perceptions of their learning environment (Classroom, Social, Home, and Unknown) and outcomes on measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar, vocabulary, phonology, communicative ability, and cognitive ability as measured in the companion studies?

2b. Is there a difference based on context? (at-home vs. study abroad)

In answer to Research Question One, the experiences that seemed most relevant for the learners included in this study were those that related to positive and negative affect, as well as initiatives taken by the learners to improve their Spanish. Additionally, while the at-home group discussed classroom experiences to the largest extent, the study abroad group referred in large



part to their social experiences. These findings support the notion that one of the most important differences between learning a language at home vs. learning in a study abroad context is the enormous amount of TL contact available to the learners outside of the classroom in the Study abroad context and implies that the social environment was probably most relevant the study abroad participants' language learning .

A number of relationships existed between learners' perceptions of their learning and outcomes on measures of oral fluency, vocabulary, and grammar. However, very few relationships existed for this group between measures of pronunciation, communication strategies and cognitive ability and student perceptions.

Research Question Two referred to relationships between learners' perception of their learning environment and measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, communication strategies and cognitive ability. The greatest number of associations was found between the perception scores and measures of oral proficiency and fluency. The at-home group data revealed significant negative correlations between positive and negative classroom experiences and rate, and a significant positive correlation between positive classroom and total words. The study abroad group data showed a significant positive relationship between the positive classroom environment and speech with fewer hesitations, a significant negative relationship between the negative social environment and filler free speech, and significant positive relationships between the negative home environment, total words spoken, rate of speech, and length of turn. Of all the correlations performed, those relating the perception scores with fluency measures were by far the strongest.

Although the correlations between measures of oral proficiency and fluency and the perception scores produced the greatest quantity of significant relationships, the correlations

between the perception scores and measures of grammar also generated a number of significant relationships. For the at-home group, significant negative relationships were found between the positive classroom and subordinate conjunctions, the positive social environment and plural verb use, and the negative social environment and the correct use of feminine adjectives. For the study abroad group significant negative relationships were found between the positive classroom and production of feminine pronouns, the positive social environment and feminine adjective use, and the negative social environment and both feminine adjective use and the correct use of subordinate clauses. Only one significant positive correlation was found for the study abroad group with measures of grammar. The positive home environment was significantly and positively related the use of plural pronouns.

The correlations between the perception scores and measures of vocabulary only produced three relationships. For the at-home group only one significant correlation was observed; the positive classroom environment was negatively related to adjective production. For the study abroad group, only two significant relationships were observed; the negative classroom was negatively correlated with noun production, and the positive social environment was positively related to noun production. No other significant relationships were observed by context.

With respect to cognitive ability, the at-home group correlations produced only two significant relationships. The positive classroom was negatively associated with attention control, and the negative classroom was positively related to attention control. No significant relationships were found for the study abroad group.

Finally, for pronunciation and communicative ability, no significant correlations were found between any of the environments (classroom, social, or home) and pronunciation for the

study abroad group, however, a significant positive relationship was observed between the positive home environment and pronunciation for the at-home group.

This study investigated numerous aspects of language learning in two contexts; at-home in a university in Colorado, and study abroad in Alicante Spain. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were performed and the results showed that language learning in the two contexts was indeed quite different. The discussion section presented several hypotheses about those differences, and their relationship with several measures of language learning. The following section presents several conclusions related to this study and suggests a number of implications resulting from this study.

## **5.2. Conclusions**

The goals of the current study were to attempt to gain a deeper understanding of learners' perceptions of language learning in two learning contexts, at-home and study abroad, and in three environments within each context, in the classroom, social, and home environments. Further, an investigation of the possible relationships of second language learners' perceptions of their learning environment and measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, communicative ability, and cognitive ability were examined.

Based on the results of the diary data analysis, it was concluded that while the classroom environment seemed most relevant for the at-home learners, it was the social environment that the study abroad learners discussed most in their journals. In their diaries, the at-home learners generally related information about classroom activities, homework assignments, and quizzes and tests in their Spanish classes. Some of the at-home learners also talked about activities outside of the classroom, such as talking to waiters and waitresses and other service personnel,

but only to a very limited degree. As a group, the at-home learners made very few references to activities in Spanish in the home.

The study abroad learners also discussed the classroom, reflecting on in-class activities, homework, and tests, however, the main focus of their journaling referred to their use of Spanish in the social environment in Spain. Those activities varied somewhat between diarists however, it was clear that the majority of the study abroad learners had similar experiences. They wrote about talking with service personnel such as waiters, travel agents, and store clerks, as well as spending time in bars, traveling with American friends, and going to movies. The study abroad learners also discussed their home-stay family members and activities associated with daily routines, but to a lesser extent than their social and classroom activities.

The results of the companion studies showed that the study abroad group did not surpass the at-home group on measures of grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation, although their narrative ability proved to be better than that of the at-home learners. In fact, it was the at-home group that improved more on several measures of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation in many cases. Since the study abroad participants had more classes and were exposed to a great deal more *real language*, this finding may seem puzzling, however, the diaries were an extremely valuable resource that helped explain these findings.

While it was apparent that the study abroad participants were exposed to native Spanish speakers on a regular basis, information from the diaries also illustrated that they often did not make the best of the opportunities unique to the learning context. Almost all of the study abroad diarists discussed their desire to break out of the American group in order to spend more time interacting with native Spanish speakers; however, the majority of them were not successful. They often wrote about spending free time with other members of the American group in social

situations, but in the diaries and interviews few of them claimed to have any Spanish-speaking friends.

It may be concluded that, for these learners, both contexts facilitated learning but in different areas. The at-home context, seemed to help learners correctly produce several grammatical forms, expand their lexical repertoire, and improve their pronunciation. In terms of oral proficiency and fluency Segalowitz & Freed demonstrated that it was the study abroad learners who showed greater development. Similarly, Lafford demonstrated that the study abroad group members used significantly less communication strategies after the semester concluded that this was the result of fewer breakdowns in communication. Although no significant relationships were found between the use of communication strategies and the student perception scores, several relationships were noted between oral fluency and student perceptions.

These results were explained through deep description of diary entries, which, combined with data from the Language Contact Profile, provided clues as to the sorts of activities that may have had some effect on the outcomes. As would be expected, the study abroad group was exposed to a great deal more input in the target language than the at-home learners and the diaries gave a more detailed account of those activities and of learners' attitudes toward their experiences. Since the study abroad learners seemed to have many more opportunities to speak the target language than their at-home counterparts, it was concluded that those opportunities may have contributed to their improved fluency and communicative ability. Through experiences with shopkeepers, tourist agents and the like, the study abroad learners were often forced to communicate. This communication, however, did not seem to aid in improvements in grammatical ability, vocabulary acquisition, or pronunciation since the at-home group did as well or better on those measures.

Differences existed between the type and amount of target language exposure language learners had access to and through the analysis of learners' diaries, it was possible to glimpse into the world of the participants to expose those differences. Based on the evidence presented here, it may be concluded that, although learners in a study abroad context had a great deal more access to native speakers, they are not always successful in their attempts to become fully assimilated into the target language culture.

The implication of these results is that, as Freed (1998) asserted, the study abroad experience is decidedly complex and it is necessary to continue to approach the study of language learning in any context from multiple perspectives. Through an examination of the comments made by participants, it is clear that study abroad offers learners the opportunity to practice their language skills in real-world settings. However, learners may not always take full advantage of the learning situation and it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual to utilize this opportunity to its' best advantage.

### **5.3. Directions for Future Research**

Diary studies can be extremely useful as an aid to understanding the experiences of language learners, and how they affect learning. Descriptions of events by learners may compliment the results of various measures of language learning giving researchers greater insight into the activities that seem to facilitate or detract from learning. Although the goals of this study were to gain a better understanding of learners' perceptions of their experiences in at-home and study abroad contexts, and to seek relationships between those experiences and outcomes on measures of oral proficiency and fluency, grammar and lexical development, pronunciation, communication strategies and cognitive ability, it provides only a few pieces to the puzzle of

language learning. A multitude of questions remain, and this section will provide suggestions for future research that may compliment the findings presented.

The current study focused on learners' perceptions of their learning environment through qualitative analysis of diary and interview records. It attempted to relate information from the qualitative portion of the data analysis with quantitative analyses of the changes in learners' abilities in several areas of second language acquisition. Future studies may follow suit, however, additional elements may be included.

One of the problems with this study was that the classroom component of the two contexts was quite different. While the at-home group took only one language class, the study abroad learners attended at least three. Additionally, the students took a number of different courses at differing levels of acquisition. Future studies should control the number and type of courses the learners take in order to compare the groups and assess the changes in a more direct way. The courses should be at a similar level in both contexts, and the learners should be at a comparable level in their language learning.

The comparison of multiple programs is also important. Future studies should attempt to compare students in several different universities in the U.S. with several different study abroad programs. One of the difficulties with the current study was the small number of participants. In order to make firm conclusions, it is necessary to gather a great deal of evidence and although the comparison of two small groups may be enlightening, generalizations cannot be made. It is the accumulation of evidence that guides and informs investigation. As such, the study of multiple groups in various settings would enable researchers in the field of second language acquisition to gain a clearer understanding of the possible connection between learners' self-report data and outcomes on second language learning.

One of the major findings from the current study was that, although the study abroad learners found the social environment to be most relevant to their overall language learning experience, they found it exceedingly difficult to break out of the clique of American students. In their diaries, they acknowledged that spending so much time with Americans and speaking English was detrimental to their language learning, however many of the participants were not successful in their attempts to create personal relationships with native Spanish speakers. This may have been the result of studying abroad with a relatively large and cohesive group of Americans. Future investigations might compare learners who study abroad within a group, such as the study abroad participants in the current study, with learners studying in programs in which they are more isolated from students who speak their native language. This sort of investigation would allow investigators to understand whether either situation has an advantage for learners.

The information in the diaries and interviews was quite enlightening; however, there was a great deal of inconsistency between learners in the two contexts and even within groups. The participants received written instructions at the beginning of the semester to assist them, but, diarists often claimed that they did not know what to write next. They sometimes complained that they felt as if they were writing the same things in every entry. Future studies should attempt to help learners remain focused on the project. It might be useful to maintain contact between the researcher and the participants via e-mail or other such electronic formats. In this way, the researcher could offer the learners some direction with regard to their journaling activities and encourage participants to continue to reflect on their learning.

Several suggestions have been proposed in this section for future research and undoubtedly many more might be suggested. It is necessary to bear in mind that it is the accumulation of evidence that will eventually lead the field of second language acquisition to



make generalizations and the current study attempted to present information that will advance the general understanding of the relationships between process and product. Language learning is dynamic and learners are diverse in their abilities and in their desire to become integrated into the language-learning situation. It is necessary to continue to approach the study of second language learning from different viewpoints in order to discover methods that ultimately facilitate second language learning.

This study showed that differences definitely did exist between the at-home and study abroad experiences for these learners. Many of those differences related to the individuals' effort to make the best of the situation. As Wilkinson (1995) commented, the study-abroad experience is much more complex than, "... a linear tale of linguistic achievement." (p. 16), and as such must be investigated through multiple perspectives. Future investigations must continue to evaluate not only the learning environment and contexts of learning, but also must investigate the role of the individual and his contribution to his own language learning in any context.

## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Are there any special general thoughts you'd like to share about your language learning experiences this semester – in class and out?
2. How would you describe your language learning experiences this semester? (in-class and out)
  - a. Were experiences the same or different from other language learning experiences; in what way?
  - b. Did you have any especially challenging or frustrating learning experiences in class this semester? Tell me about it.
  - c. How do you feel about language learning in class?
  - d. Do you think attending class is important in order to be successful in the process of learning the language?
3. Did you get to use Spanish much out of class? With whom and where?
  - a. How would you describe the differences between the Spanish used in class and the Spanish you used outside the class while interacting with native speakers?
4. I noticed that in your journal you said...

(Note – Prior to interview we should look for things students have said that appear important and try to build on things they've said, especially anything particularly interesting, and explore the questions below to the extent possible:

  - a. Do you try to use Spanish outside the classroom? Tell me about it –social setting/ where you were/ comfort level?
  - b. Have you had the opportunity to have contact with native speakers of Spanish?

FOR ALICANTE ONLY: (Where lived, use of Spanish at home, in dorm, out of class, with friends, more or less than expected with family/ friends?)

- c. Did you have any especially interesting language learning experience? Tell me about it social setting/ where you were/ comfort level?
- d. Did you have any interesting, challenging or frustrating learning experiences outside of class this semester? Describe what happened?
- e. In what way do you feel using Spanish outside the classroom is helping you to learn? How does it differ from classroom learning? (I THINK THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT)

FOR ALICANTE ONLY:

- f. Do you think there are any differences for males as compared with females for language learning experiences abroad? For opportunities to interact with native speakers? Can you describe them?
5. Have you learned new strategies this semester to help you achieve your goal of learning Spanish?
- a. What strategies do you use to learn new vocabulary?
  - b. What strategies do you use to master grammar topics?
  - c. What activities (speaking, listening, writing, and reading) do you find most useful for your own process of learning during class time?
  - d. How many of these activities do you do at home while studying Spanish?
  - e. Do you usually do other activities to practice Spanish beyond class time and homework assignments?
  - f. Is there anything you feel proud about in your process of learning Spanish this semester?

Conclusion:

I wonder if you have any general thoughts about the Spanish program/class in general. What they liked and didn't like? Courses, professor's homework, opportunities for excursions, etc.? What could the program have done to help them learn Spanish better? (e.g., set up conversation partners, hold social gatherings between Spaniards and the CIEE students?). These are the kinds of questions I would want to ask if I were the CIEE.

I agree and a good way to end.

## APPENDIX B

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR JOURNAL ENTRIES

Dear Spanish Student:

We are delighted that you have agreed to participate in our study and hope that you will find the experience rewarding. As we have indicated elsewhere, once our results are complete we will be pleased to share them with you.

To help us learn more about your experiences learning Spanish this semester, we are asking that you keep a journal of your thoughts/ reactions/ experience in learning Spanish. You might consider this a diary of sorts that is dedicated exclusively to your language learning activities.

To best complete this journal we ask you to do the following:

1. Write in English.
2. Spend at least 10 minutes a week writing in this journal. Ideally, you will write in it a few minutes per day, while your thoughts and experiences are still fresh. PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO WRITE A FULL WEEK'S WORTH OF THOUGHTS IN ONE RUSHED PERIOD!
3. Note any observations you have, thoughts, experiences, frustrations, accomplishments that relate to your learning and use of Spanish, both in and outside of the classroom. Please be as honest about your thoughts and experiences – positive as well as negative – as you can be. Remember, this information will not be shared with *anyone*, teachers, project staff or other faculty and your name will never be used.

Thank you once again for your willingness to devote your time to this project.

Barbara Freed, Carnegie Mellon University

Norman Segalowitz, Concordia University

William Cressey, Council on International Educational Exchange

## APPENDIX C

### DATA CODE SCORE SHEET

| P  | Positive Categories  | Environment   |            |          |             | Total |
|----|--|---------------|------------|----------|-------------|-------|
|    |  | Classroom (C) | Social (S) | Home (H) | Unknown (U) |       |
| A  | Student initiatives  |               |            |          |             |       |
| B  | Perceptions of differences in culture  |               |            |          |             |       |
| C  | Family responsiveness  |               |            |          |             |       |
| D  | Confidence   |               |            |          |             |       |
| E  | Improvements in speaking and listening   |               |            |          |             |       |
| F  | Comprehension practice   |               |            |          |             |       |
| G  | Stimulation to interact  |               |            |          |             |       |
| H  | Offer of colloquial, native like idiomatic L2 input  |               |            |          |             |       |
| I  | Appreciation for own culture and value system  |               |            |          |             |       |
| J  | Accepting of cultural differences  |               |            |          |             |       |
| K  | Stay with other Americans and speak English  |               |            |          |             |       |
| L  | Supportive interlocutor behavior   |               |            |          |             |       |
| M  | Self Perception of substantially improved ability in speaking, listening, reading, and writing |               |            |          |             |       |
| N  | Independence   |               |            |          |             |       |
| O  | Success  |               |            |          |             |       |
| P  | Objectivity  |               |            |          |             |       |
| Q  | Correction   |               |            |          |             |       |
| R  | Attentive interlocutors  |               |            |          |             |       |
| S  | Sensitive interlocutors  |               |            |          |             |       |
| T  | Social psychological security  |               |            |          |             |       |
| U  | Positive attitudes   |               |            |          |             |       |
| V  | Validation by others   |               |            |          |             |       |
| W  | Ability to predict the course of interaction   |               |            |          |             |       |
| X  | Personal development   |               |            |          |             |       |
| Y  | Changes in opinions about themselves, TL, Target culture, own culture and values               |               |            |          |             |       |
| Z  | New understanding of personal identity   |               |            |          |             |       |
| AA | Personal growth  |               |            |          |             |       |
| BB | Satisfaction   |               |            |          |             |       |
| CC | Teaching methods   |               |            |          |             |       |
| DD | Tolerance  |               |            |          |             |       |
| EE | Competition (of learners skills with other learners)   |               |            |          |             |       |
|    | <b>Total Positive Score</b>  |               |            |          |             |       |

| N  | NEGATIVE CATEGORIES   | Environment   |            |          |             | Total |
|----|---|---------------|------------|----------|-------------|-------|
|    |   | Classroom (C) | Social (S) | Home (H) | Unknown (U) |       |
| A  | Exclusion in conversations with NS                                    |               |            |          |             |       |
| B  | Perceptions of differences in culture                                 |               |            |          |             |       |
| C  | Breakdowns in relationships with NS                                   |               |            |          |             |       |
| D  | A sense of loss of control over one's immediate environment           |               |            |          |             |       |
| E  | Difficulty communicating in Spanish                                   |               |            |          |             |       |
| F  | Negative attitudes toward NSs   |               |            |          |             |       |
| G  | Feelings of isolation   |               |            |          |             |       |
| H  | Feelings of frustration   |               |            |          |             |       |
| I  | Confusing misunderstandings   |               |            |          |             |       |
| J  | Negative perceptions of the target culture                            |               |            |          |             |       |
| K  | Stay with other Americans and speak English                           |               |            |          |             |       |
| L  | NS Spanish speakers using English                                     |               |            |          |             |       |
| M  | Down time from learning and venting of culture shock with compatriots |               |            |          |             |       |
| N  | Time spent speaking English   |               |            |          |             |       |
| O  | Exclusion in conversations with NS                                    |               |            |          |             |       |
| P  | Unsuccessful attempts to speak the TL                                 |               |            |          |             |       |
| Q  | Rejection by NS   |               |            |          |             |       |
| R  | Embarrassment   |               |            |          |             |       |
| S  | Discouragement  |               |            |          |             |       |
| T  | Lack of motivation because of negative experiences                    |               |            |          |             |       |
| U  | Avoidance   |               |            |          |             |       |
| V  | Unfavorable comparison to other speakers                              |               |            |          |             |       |
| W  | Failure   |               |            |          |             |       |
| X  | Insulting feedback  |               |            |          |             |       |
| Y  | Harsh correction  |               |            |          |             |       |
| Z  | Discomfort  |               |            |          |             |       |
| AA | Ill feelings  |               |            |          |             |       |
| BB | Anger   |               |            |          |             |       |
| CC | Social isolation  |               |            |          |             |       |
| DD | Fear of appearing stupid  |               |            |          |             |       |
| EE | Competition (of learners skills with other learners)                  |               |            |          |             |       |
|    | <b>Total Negative Score</b>   |               |            |          |             |       |

## APPENDIX D

### EVENT CATEGORIES WITH DESCRIPTIONS

It is important to remember that the categories listed below are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It is possible, and even likely that one entry may be coded with multiple categories. The following examples associated with individual descriptions may be useful for several categories, however, each one is used below to indicate that it fell under at least the category for which it was given.

#### Positive Categories

##### Student Initiatives

Relates to any reference by diarist to activities that allow him to have more experience with Spanish language and culture excluding basic needs. For example, going to the movies, reading magazines or newspapers, initiating a conversation with NSs in social situations, watching Spanish television, volunteering in the community, joining a sports team or other social activities in which NSs are likely to be available. Events for this category were only coded if the person actually participated in the activity, not if he said he should. For example, participant S010 claimed, *“I definitely need to practice reading and just seeing Spanish,”* however this entry does not actually say that he did practice, just that he should. Participant S033 took action by joining a choir at the university: *“I also started Coral Universitaria today.”* Whereas the reference by S010 was not be coded as a student initiative, the one by S033 was. Classroom participation and assignments were not considered to be initiatives on the part of the learner, since they were a normal part of student life and may therefore have fallen under one or several other categories.

##### Perceptions of difference in culture

Relates to references in which the diarist favorably compared activities or other cultural information from home culture to other cultures. For example, participant S028 described a party in the following way,

*“For comida we had a huge spread of food because it was Edu’s “saint day.” There were about 10 people and it was a lot like Maria’s birthday. The food was so good! We had these big cake type things and sang happy birthday to Maria and the other song for Edu (I assume it was the song for the saint day).”*

### Family responsiveness

Refers to any reference to host families taking initiatives to interact with the diarist. Examples include offering physical or emotional support, inviting the learner to participate in family activities or efforts to help the learner in any way. For example, participant S016 talked about receiving help with her homework from her host sister,

*“Today I worked with my sister here on my homework. It was good because she was able to give me many examples and explain things a little better. I also was able to explain to her what I needed help with which was good.”*

### Confidence

Refers to references to self-assurance. Examples include any entry that utilizes the word *confidence* or any description of circumstances in which the learner described a feeling of ease or comfort with his TL use. Participant S024 discussed an increase in her speaking abilities,

*“I’ve noticed I’m much more confident in my speaking abilities and I’ve branched out and done some traveling on my own.”*

### Improvements in speaking and listening

Refers to any entry by the diarist describing her own recognition of improvements in speaking or listening. For example, students may have described a positive interaction with NSs and favorably compared the current interaction with those in the past. Participant S025 described positive outcomes in listening and speaking in the following way,

*“I am becoming much better at understanding Spanish. I have no doubt that my comprehension abilities have improved thus far...” “... I am getting more comfortable speaking”*

### Comprehension practice

Refers to any exposure to written or spoken input in or out of the classroom. Examples include reading books, newspapers, magazines, etc. or being exposed to the spoken word in any context. Participant S026 wrote about going to a movie:

*“Saw a movie today in Spanish, ‘Y tu madre también’.”*

### Stimulation to interact

Refers to learner initiated contact with NSs. Examples include the need to communicate for basic needs or in social situations. Participant S027 described his need to communicate in Spanish while his parents are visiting from the U.S.

*“... I am traveling around Spain with my parents. Actually it is also very beneficial because almost everywhere we go I have to be the person who interacts with the natives.”*

### Offer of colloquial, native like idiomatic L2 input

Refers to situations in which the learner reports exposure to ‘real Spanish’. Examples include interactions with NSs using slang such as the following description of a discussion with a conversation partner by participant S014,

*“... I also picked up a lot of how young people talk, about love, sex, life.”*



### Appreciation for own culture and value system

Refers to reports of experiences that encourage reflection of basic cultural norms from the learners' home culture. Examples include positive comparison of personal cultural experiences and values such as the availability of supermarkets, appreciation of home cultural icons such as music and art, and reflection on positive cultural experiences from the home culture. Participant S024 discussed her pride in America:

*“Being here in Spain I’ve discovered that I have a serious appreciation for being an American. Considering all that’s happened to our country at the moment we are of the greatest country in the world, and I think it’s because → ‘In God we trust’.”*

### Accepting of cultural differences

Refers to learners' ability to compare the home culture with the target culture without choosing one over the other. Examples include differences in food, religion, language and social norms. Participant S014 described an interaction with children learning English,

*“Working with them made me realize a little how silly the English language is. Nothing is spelled like it sounds!...I learned English long ago so I don’t remember these weirdnesses”*

### Stay with other Americans and speak English

Refers to positive feelings due to interactions with Americans. Examples include spending time with Americans in various settings and speaking English as a brief escape from the constant use of the TL.

Participant S005 talked about her need to be with Americans after the terrorist attacks in the U.S.

*“After all that I only wanted to be with the other Americans in our group so we could talk about what happened. We all met in Alicante and got some food. Everyone was absolutely devastated. Then we went to a bar that was playing CNN in English and hung there watching the news for the rest of the night.”*

### Supportive interlocutor behavior

Refers to interactions with NSs who accept and assist the learner in social situations. Examples include NSs slow rate of speech to aid in comprehension, patience and understanding attitudes toward the learner.

Participant S003 referred to conversations with NSs during a trip:

*“I had great conversations with the people I sat by going both ways. They were both very helpful, talked very slow for me and were just plain nice and understanding. The older woman gave me her address and telephone number in case I ever needed anything.”*

### Self-perception of substantially improved ability in speaking, listening, reading or writing

Refers to positive comments by the learner about significant changes in any of the four skills. Examples include positive comparisons of initial and current language skills. Participant S016 described a situation in which she used her Spanish skills to find a flower shop:

*“... it is a good thing my Spanish has improved a lot or I never would have gotten my flowers for my birthday.”*

### Independence

Refers to self-reports of self-sufficiency. Examples include references to self-reliant behaviors such as making positive personal decisions, traveling alone, or being self-sufficient. Participant S029 described an experience in which he purposely separated himself from the American tour group he was traveling with:

*“I talked to some Spaniards in a bar and I could more or less converse with them only in Spanish. It was a good feeling knowing I could go to a Spanish place and get by fairly well by myself.”*

### Success

Refers to positive outcomes in the TL. Examples include references to interactions with NSs in which the learner is able to communicate his needs or desires as well as positive outcomes in the classroom.

Participant S025 told of his success on a conversation quiz:

*“Had a conversation quiz today, an oral one and it went pretty well. I felt like I could more or less express what I wanted to say...”*

### Objectivity

Refers to the learners' ability to remove herself from the situation. Examples include references in which the learner understands that not every situation is under her control and accepts outcomes. Participant S021 discussed her difficulty with pronunciation in terms of how others perceive her:

*“... they would point out things I said in Spanish which sounded a bit strange to them thanks to my accent. At the same time I realized how difficult so many American words are hard for them to pronounce.”*

### Correction

Refers to interactions in which interlocutors correct the speech or writing of the learner and the learner views the correction in a positive way. Many of the participants discussed the use of correction, as in the following entry by participant S028:

*“I hung out with my intercambios [conversation partners] though, and they are all really nice. I appreciate the fact that they correct my grammar when I say something incorrectly. Very helpful.”*

### Attentive interlocutors

Refers to interactions with NSs in which the NS appears to listen to the learner without judging him and encourages him to speak the TL. Examples include situations in which the interlocutor seems to listen without interrupting the learner, and encourages him to get his message across without relying on English.

Participant S022 described a conversation with a travel agent who listened attentively while she attempted to inquire about reservations using Spanish:

*“Then when my friends arrived we went to a different man and he mad me ask in Spanish and then on a part I wasn't really sure about how to say he said the right words for me in English, and I said, “Oh you know English” and he responded “yes but I wanted you to practice your Spanish”, he went on to say no one was in line so he had plenty of time.”*

### Sensitive interlocutors

Refers to interactions with NSs who seem to understand the difficulties experienced by the learner. Examples include emotional support and positive attitudes toward learners. Participant S023 wrote about a personal problem that her host mother helped her to resolve:

*“I did have to explain to my Señora that I am constipated, not very exciting. Anyway I kept saying the word constipado and wasn’t realizing that it actually means to have a cold or be congested. Well I finally managed to say I can’t use the bathroom. She got that!”*

### Social psychological security

Refers to feelings of emotional and psychological safety. Examples include descriptions of interactions in which the learner feels completely comfortable without feelings of anguish or distress. Participant C004 wrote about a class in which she felt comfortable:

*“In class I really like doing group oral projects. I think it’s one of the most important ways to improve our language skills. I also feel more comfortable talking in a small group setting before talking in front of the whole class.”*

### Positive attitudes

Refers to references by the diarist that show that she plans to keep trying even if she experiences feelings of frustration or stress. Examples include reports of negative interactions or outcomes that the learner experiences but comments on the more positive aspects of the situation or claims to improve future situations that may be similar. Participant S023 described feelings of dismay over the tragedies in New York and Washington, D.C., but plans to keep trying:

*“If things happen to get worse in the States then I’ll seriously consider going home, but for now I’ll try to make the best of being here.”*

### Validation by others

Refers to experiences in which others confirm improvements in learning. Participant S025 talked about a conversation with an American companion:

*“Had a friend from home visit this weekend and he was impressed with my Spanish.”*

### Ability to predict course of interaction

Refers to learners’ capacity to foresee outcomes from interactions. Examples include predictions of events through the use of contextual cues and body language. Participant S033 described her experience with a choir director.

*“I also started Coral Universitaria [university choir] today. I understood the professor who warmed us up pretty well. She demonstrated and gestured a lot, so I knew what she meant even if I didn’t catch all of her words. I’ve been in chorus for years, so that also helped me understand what she wanted.”*

### Personal development

Refers to learners' reports of changes in attitudes or understanding of his personal abilities in the social world. Examples include references such as "I never thought I could do this on my own."

Participant S022 talked about her experience in the following way:

*"It was enough for me to live in Spain for 4 ½ months with a family that doesn't speak my language at all and to know that I survived it!"*

Changes in opinions about themselves, TL, Target culture, own culture and values

Refers to new understanding about oneself, language or culture. Participant S012 summed up her experience in the following way:

*"The most important, biggest, most in depth thing I have learned here in Spain speaking and learning Castellano is that your language is your culture. Within the words you say and how you say them lies your culture (way of thinking, of doing, of being)."*

### New understanding of personal identity

Refers to descriptions of newfound knowledge of one's personal characteristics or heritage.

Participant C010 explained how learning Spanish will restore her cultural heritage:

*"I am a Chicana , so I have roots from Mexico. I want to learn more about Mexican traditions that I practice and I definitely want to learn Spanish fluently so that I can get back what my family has lost over the generations."*

### Personal growth

Refers to the ability to modify actions to achieve goals.

Participant C013 overcame her fear of speaking Spanish and celebrated her newfound ability.

*"I was very proud of myself yesterday at work. I used my Spanish and Spanish alone to take an order of one of my tables (as I'm a waitress) who spoke mainly Spanish. It is difficult to go out there and just do it sometimes I know. I know the basic grammar but it takes confidence to put myself out there on a limb and just do it."*

### Satisfaction

Refers to reports of happiness, fulfillment or pleasure with reference to learning. Examples include positive outcomes in the social world and the classroom that the learner reports as agreeable or fulfilling.

The following entry by participant C013 is a good example:

*"I got my first quiz back (grammar) and I got practically perfect, an A... It made me feel so good."*

### Teaching methods

Refers to positive attitudes toward teaching methods employed in classes.

Participant S030 commented on the speed with which material is presented in the following entry:

*"We're still learning the subjunctive in class and it's getting easier to know when to use it and when not to. I think it's good that they spend a lot of time on it because they really do use it a lot in conversation."*

### Tolerance

Refers the learners' ability to accept difficult situations. Examples include accepting negative behavior by interlocutors such as rudeness or impatience. Participant S005 related her feelings about a NS with whom she has had a problem in the past, but is resigned to the fact that it may have been an isolated incident.

*"This afternoon I'm going over to Jessies house for comida which should be good. Even though her mom and I got into a little tiff on Thanksgiving, she is a nice lady and always fun to talk to."*

### Competition

Refers to comparisons to other learners that encourage the diarist to strive to be better. Examples include reports of differences in achievement between self and other learners in social situations or in classes that motivate learner to improve.

Participant C008 compared his listening comprehension to that of others:

*"I don't seem to be much worse off than others in my class in terms of listening comprehension, but I just want to improve faster!"*

### Negative category descriptions

#### Exclusion in conversations with NS

Refers to situations in which NSs interact without including the learner. Examples include feelings that the learner is not welcome in the conversation or that the learner does not have the comprehension or speaking ability to fully participate. Participant S033 talked about a frustrating experience with her family:

*"... sitting at the dinner table for comida is very uncomfortable because I have no idea what they're conversing about and because I just sit there without saying anything."*

#### Perceptions of differences in culture

Refers to negative attitudes toward host culture. Examples include reports of negative feelings about social and cultural norms. Participant S023 wrote about her negative feelings toward the host city in which she studies.

*"... I'm highly disappointed with Alicante. Why are they so backwards? Did time and technology pass them by?"*

#### Breakdowns in relationships with NS

Refers to negative interactions with NSs that result in feelings of anger or disrespect. Examples include fights with family members or other NSs with whom the learner has repeated contact. Participant S008 described her feelings toward her host mother during a particularly difficult day.

*"Today at dinner the family was giving vocab of fruit. I couldn't pronounce well and so finally the mom asked if I even listened. I was mad I wanted to hit her. I try every single day to understand a language and then for someone to ask if I try kills me."*

A sense of loss of control over one's immediate environment

Refers to the learners' inability to manage day-to-day tasks in the classroom or in the target culture. Examples include breakdowns in communication that leave the learner emotionally or physically defeated. Participant S007 wrote about a problem in the classroom:

*"Had an awful day – started crying and crying when my professor said I need to start reading out loud because my pronunciation is bad. I just lost it... it isn't like I try every second of everyday to speak correctly and I just can't do it I feel like I will never speak this language."*

Difficulty communicating in Spanish

Refers to the breakdown of communication between learner and interlocutors, or lack of ability to use the TL to express oneself. Participant C013 related a problem with communicating his real feelings:

*"For the past few days we have been discussing the recent terrorist attacks on the USA. What a horrific tragedy. My teacher has been asking us to tell the class how we feel and think about what has been going on. I have found that it is very difficult to think of vocab. words when I am trying to express something from my heart."*

Negative attitudes toward NSs

Refers to feelings of anger, resentment, or bitterness toward NSs. Examples include negative feelings toward individuals or toward stereotypical groups such as bus drivers, clerks, etc.

Participant S013 described his feelings toward a group of Spanish travelers:

*"My friends and I are going on a cruise of the Mediterranean. The people (passengers) on the boat are all Spaniards and so far I'd have to say they are pretty rude."*

Another learner voiced a similar complaint:

*"We've been on this train for about 3 hours now and the Spaniards look at us like we're some kind of animals. It's quite obvious that we aren't from Spain, but we are humans. At least we have a desire to get out and expand our cultural horizons which is the least I can say for them."*

Feelings of isolation

Refers to situations in which the learner feels separated or secluded from others. Examples include feelings of loneliness or emotional or physical distance. Participant S027 talked about her living situation and feelings of remoteness:

*"For the last couple of weeks I have felt depressed and often I have no idea why. I think a big reason for this is because I repressed a lot of problems about my living situation and a lot of other things from earlier and they are now getting me really down. Because my family lives so far away I don't get much of a chance to try and get out into the market or stores and use my Spanish."*

Feelings of frustration

Refers to the feeling of loss of control coupled with feelings of anger, helplessness or disgust. Examples include irritation, aggravation, annoyance or disappointment in learning situations. Participant C007 described his aggravation with reading assignments:

*"I hate reading when I don't know the vocab. It takes so long to look up the words and by the time you find them you forget the context of the rest of the story. It's irritating."*

### Confusing misunderstandings

Refers to interactions in which the learner suffers from a lack of comprehension. Examples include the inability to listen or follow directions, or to understand NSs. Participant S025 related a story about a conversation with her host sister:

*“I totally misunderstood my host sister today because I didn’t catch the pronouns she used. It is frustrating how little things like that make such a difference and they are very difficult for me to understand at this point.”*

### Negative perceptions of the target culture

Refers to reports of negative attitudes toward the host culture. Examples include negative comparisons of the target culture with the home culture. Participant S006 talked about differences in the way men behave toward women:

*“Tonight I went into Alicante to have a few drinks, and I came back with the realization that I can’t stand some Spanish men and the way that they think and act! It’s horrible – I walk down a street and I can’t take 5 strides without some man yelling “guapa!” or some other word or phrase to try to get my attention. I know its just part of their culture and that the Spanish women are used to it, but I’m not and I can’t stand it anymore!”*

### Stay with other Americans and speak English

Refers to situations in which the learner reports social activities with only compatriots in which English is the language used to the greatest extent. Examples include only descriptions of such activities that the learner views as negative. The following example from participant S003 illustrates the negative feelings associated with speaking English with Americans from the group:

*“I unfortunately find myself conversing too often with American students and end up not talking enough in Spanish”*

### Native Spanish speakers using English

Refers to situations in which NS interlocutors refuse to use Spanish. Examples include storekeepers, teachers and other social contacts that prefer to speak English with learners. Participant S012 described her experience with NSs.

*“I noticed while in Madrid that almost everyone who works in the stores/restaurants/businesses speaks English. As an English speaker trying to learn Spanish you really have to almost tell people to speak to you in Spanish.”*

### Down time from learning and venting of culture shock with compatriots

Time spent with Americans negatively comparing the home culture with the host culture or target language. Examples include social situations excluding NSs in an effort to escape the pressures of language learning. Participant S016 explained her desire to escape the stress of classes and the constant barrage of Spanish:

*“Classes in Spanish are tough. I like the class that I am in now but after about 30 minutes I start to go nuts. Understanding all of what he has to say at once is difficult. I am not sure how I feel about this Spanish class because all I ever feel like doing after class is going to my friends and speaking English. It really starts to tire me out. I think this is the worst part, getting tired of trying to understand and practice speaking.”*

### Time spent speaking English

Refers to any negative report by the diarist of speaking English. Examples include going out with Americans and speaking English, traveling, writing letters or e-mails in English and conversing with Spanish speaking interlocutors in English. Participant S008 described her experience in the following way:

*“My Spanish has hit somewhat of a plateau because I am speaking so much English. It is present in all my classes and my friends. I wish that we were not enrolled with all these other students. Just way too much English.”*

### Unsuccessful attempts to speak the TL

Refers to experiences in which the learner is unable to get her point across. Examples include attempting to buy things or to interact in any way with NSs that result in a total lack of communication. Participant S017 wrote about an incident in a barber shop.

*“... haircut today at a good old barbershop – very difficult to explain what I wanted done as demonstrated by the hairdo I now model!”*

### Rejection by NS

Refers to refusal by NSs to interact with the learner. Examples include being ignored by service personnel or by those in social situations. Participant S003 explained an incident in a train station:

*“... I miss the train back to Alicante. Then I talk to the ticket office about my Eurail situation, and the guy is a complete jerk! I’m sitting there struggling through my Spanish and this guy is not about to do anything to help me out!*

### Embarrassment

Refers to feelings of awkwardness, shame, or humiliation. Examples include interactions in Spanish

that leave the learner feeling uncomfortable about his language skills or his culture. Participant S027 described his feelings in the following way:

*“Many times at home I feel kind of shy or not wanting to talk out of difficulty or embarrassment.”*

### Discouragement

Refers to feelings of disappointment, despair or depression associated with the language learning experience. Examples include negative experiences that lead the learner to want to give up. Participant C008 related his feelings in the following entry:

*“So, everyone is chatting away and I’m sitting there thinking I need to go back to Span 101, because I must have missed something along the way! At this point I want to quit because I don’t see how I am possibly going to become fluent through this typical kind of program.”*



Lack of motivation because of negative experiences

Refers to a loss of incentive to learn or to interact based on previous negative occurrences. Examples include failure to communicate one's needs and choosing to give up rather than continue to try. Participant S021 described her frame of mind after studying Spanish for several weeks:

*"I feel like there is so much to know and wonder when I will know it all. Everyone was having problems today but I just wish I could snap my fingers and know Spanish."*

Avoidance

Refers to learners' complete evasion of situations in which he should speak Spanish. Examples include choosing not to interact rather than having to use Spanish. Participant S014 wrote about her family situation:

*"I think that I am just not too self-confident about talking Spanish, and because I worry about saying the wrong things I usually don't say anything"*

Unfavorable comparison to other speakers.

Refers to negative feelings about other learners. Examples include the feeling of inferiority or superiority with respect to other learners. Participant C023 compared herself to her classmates:

*"Spanish is a very hard subject for me. I seem to get good grades... but I don't feel that I am understanding it as well as other people in my class."*

Failure

Refers to complete inability to achieve one's goals. Examples include failure in classes or in social situations. Participant S029 talked about failing a test:

*"I failed a test yesterday and I'm not happy."*

Insulting feedback

Refers to negative responses from interlocutors. Examples include criticism by NSs about learners' language abilities or culture. No entries were coded with this.

Harsh correction

Refers to severe, insensitive attempts by interlocutors to correct Spanish usage. Examples include unsympathetic correction by family members, teachers, or social contacts with no regard for the feelings of the learner. Participant C023 discussed her feelings toward a teacher:

*"I don't think my Spanish teacher is very good. She doesn't explain things well and yells at us when we have questions or make mistakes."*

Discomfort

Refers to physical or emotional feelings of uneasiness, distress, or anxiety. Examples include general feelings of unhappiness when exposed to Spanish. Participant C008 described her emotional state in the following way:

*"Learning a second language as an adult is very intimidating...so for the first week or two of each new class is stressful as I feel I haven't learned as much as I could have."*

### Ill feelings

Refers to situations in which the learner harbors negative feelings toward people or situations. Examples include disliking family members, teachers, other social contacts, or situations. Participant S015 described her feelings toward her classmates:

*“...They will ask the same question once. The teacher will explain not once but three times, which is taking away from everyone else learning whatever we are supposed to be learning. Then they laugh and say that was funny, no it was not you idiot.”*

### Anger

Refers to feelings of irritation, resentment or rage. Examples include annoyance with situations or people. Participant S022 talked about her professor:

*“In lectura class I couldn’t string a sentence together for the life of me and our teacher seems so disappointed with me. I hate her disapproving looks... .”*

### Social isolation

Refers to feelings of being separated or excluded from social situations. Examples include the inability to join in social activities because of perception of inability to interact, or because of lack of opportunity or invitation by social contacts. Participant S027 wrote about her living situation:

*“Because my family lives so far away I don’t get much of a chance to try and get out into the market or stores and use my Spanish”*

### Fear of appearing stupid

Refers to apprehension because of inability to interact correctly with interlocutors. Examples include conversations in which the learner fears using Spanish incorrectly. Participant S024 described her feelings about what she had not yet learned:

*“I’ve found that my text book knowledge and U.S. accent makes me very hard to understand, even when saying the most basic things. This leads me to believe that the Spanish I have been taught in the classrooms throughout my Spanish career is not real Spanish, but a sort of contrived version to go with the ploy to make me sound as stupid and foreign as possible.”*

### Competition

Refers to negative comparison to other learners. Examples include desire to achieve the same level of ability as others and describing negative attitudes toward higher-achievers. Participant C010 described her feelings:

*“It takes me so much longer to learn than it does the other students. I feel that I speak okay, but by now it should be better. The other students know a lot of vocab. and they make less mistakes than I do”*

\* The specific examples presented here were excluded from the instructions given to the independent investigator so that he could make coding decisions based on general descriptions only.

## APPENDIX E

### CORRELATIONS

Fluency: Colorado: N = 14

|          | PCLASSRM           | NCLASSRM           | PSOCIAL            | NSOCIAL            | PHOME             | NHOME  |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------|
| TTLWRDS  | 0.72847<br>0.0031  | -0.71792<br>0.0038 | -0.30277<br>0.2927 | -0.21021<br>0.4707 | 0.17552<br>0.5484 | .<br>. |
| RATE     | 0.49673<br>0.0708  | -0.80067<br>0.0006 | 0.11868<br>0.6862  | -0.21105<br>0.4689 | 0.22686<br>0.4354 | .<br>. |
| TURN     | 0.22007<br>0.4496  | -0.30592<br>0.2875 | -0.11525<br>0.6948 | -0.24706<br>0.3945 | 0.46427<br>0.0944 | .<br>. |
| HESFREE  | -0.28087<br>0.3307 | 0.42735<br>0.1275  | -0.00674<br>0.9818 | -0.51397<br>0.0601 | 0.45358<br>0.1033 | .<br>. |
| FILLFREE | -0.01253<br>0.9661 | 0.08915<br>0.7618  | -0.11822<br>0.6873 | 0.13961<br>0.6341  | 0.11266<br>0.7014 | .<br>. |
| FLURUN   | -0.10959<br>0.7092 | 0.13251<br>0.6516  | -0.12838<br>0.6618 | -0.27359<br>0.3439 | 0.38207<br>0.1776 | .<br>. |

Fluency: Spain: N = 19

|          | PCLASSRM           | NCLASSRM           | PSOCIAL            | NSOCIAL            | PHOME              | NHOME             |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| TTLWRDS  | -0.13278<br>0.5879 | 0.25097<br>0.3000  | -0.35882<br>0.1314 | -0.39169<br>0.0972 | -0.00306<br>0.9901 | 0.56746<br>0.0113 |
| RATE     | -0.02835<br>0.9083 | 0.24491<br>0.3122  | -0.36599<br>0.1233 | -0.34090<br>0.1532 | -0.05908<br>0.8101 | 0.48268<br>0.0363 |
| TURN     | -0.28832<br>0.2313 | -0.19648<br>0.4201 | -0.04991<br>0.8392 | -0.13418<br>0.5839 | -0.04319<br>0.8607 | 0.78542<br>0.0001 |
| HESFREE  | 0.49544<br>0.0310  | -0.01532<br>0.9504 | -0.23560<br>0.3316 | -0.18116<br>0.4580 | 0.16268<br>0.5058  | 0.21479<br>0.3772 |
| FILLFREE | 0.02125<br>0.9312  | -0.15529<br>0.5256 | -0.06931<br>0.7780 | -0.50581<br>0.0271 | -0.11388<br>0.6425 | 0.02759<br>0.9107 |
| FLURUN   | -0.09520<br>0.6983 | -0.22228<br>0.3604 | -0.14455<br>0.5549 | -0.19428<br>0.4255 | 0.06708<br>0.7850  | 0.43883<br>0.0602 |

## Grammar

Colorado: N = 15

|          | PCLASSRM           | NCLASSRM           | PSOCIAL            | NSOCIAL            | PHOME              | NHOME  |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|
| COPULA   | -0.06775<br>0.8104 | -0.33214<br>0.2265 | 0.18318<br>0.5134  | -0.12059<br>0.6686 | 0.05234<br>0.8530  | .<br>. |
| PREPOSI  | 0.47225<br>0.0755  | -0.02072<br>0.9416 | -0.29141<br>0.2920 | 0.09430<br>0.7382  | -0.09827<br>0.7275 | .<br>. |
| PRONOUN  | -0.34423<br>0.2090 | 0.21764<br>0.4359  | -0.13045<br>0.6431 | -0.31842<br>0.2474 | 0.43788<br>0.1026  | .<br>. |
| CONJCOOR | 0.00420<br>0.9881  | 0.12114<br>0.6671  | -0.05515<br>0.8452 | 0.44795<br>0.0940  | 0.00877<br>0.9752  | .<br>. |
| SUBCONJ  | -0.57863<br>0.0238 | 0.18099<br>0.5186  | 0.26569<br>0.3385  | -0.00259<br>0.9927 | 0.47102<br>0.0764  | .<br>. |
| PRESVERB | -0.18334<br>0.5131 | 0.09410<br>0.7387  | -0.03874<br>0.8910 | 0.48127<br>0.0693  | -0.17850<br>0.5245 | .<br>. |
| PASTVERB | 0.13562<br>0.6299  | 0.22365<br>0.4230  | -0.38133<br>0.1608 | -0.12215<br>0.6645 | -0.17200<br>0.5399 | .<br>. |
| SUBJVERB | -0.09671<br>0.7317 | 0.20617<br>0.4610  | -0.05382<br>0.8489 | -0.30653<br>0.2665 | -0.03385<br>0.9047 | .<br>. |
| INDVERB  | -0.19623<br>0.4833 | -0.04856<br>0.8636 | 0.20766<br>0.4577  | 0.28404<br>0.3049  | -0.06344<br>0.8223 | .<br>. |
| PERSON   | -0.39570<br>0.1443 | 0.21351<br>0.4448  | 0.27929<br>0.3134  | -0.20160<br>0.4712 | -0.09667<br>0.7318 | .<br>. |
| PLURALDJ | 0.08596<br>0.7607  | -0.10316<br>0.7145 | 0.29089<br>0.2929  | -0.11773<br>0.6761 | -0.11503<br>0.6831 | .<br>. |
| PLURLPRO | 0.08445<br>0.7648  | -0.08931<br>0.7516 | 0.08712<br>0.7575  | 0.14600<br>0.6036  | -0.11997<br>0.6702 | .<br>. |
| PLURLVRB | 0.09094<br>0.7472  | 0.34658<br>0.2057  | -0.60242<br>0.0175 | 0.18773<br>0.5029  | -0.10737<br>0.7033 | .<br>. |
| FEMADJ   | 0.16402<br>0.5591  | -0.24378<br>0.3813 | 0.09478<br>0.7369  | 0.07880<br>0.7801  | -0.10694<br>0.7044 | .<br>. |
| FEMPRO   | 0.00340<br>0.9904  | -0.16569<br>0.5551 | 0.08311<br>0.7684  | -0.16567<br>0.5551 | 0.28120<br>0.3100  | .<br>. |
| COORCLSE | -0.33425<br>0.2234 | 0.12132<br>0.6667  | 0.42367<br>0.1156  | -0.18595<br>0.5070 | 0.22353<br>0.4232  | .<br>. |
| SUBORDCL | 0.14264<br>0.6121  | 0.09344<br>0.7405  | -0.08755<br>0.7564 | -0.17228<br>0.5392 | 0.13025<br>0.6436  | .<br>. |
| GRAMMAR  | -0.16918<br>0.5467 | 0.15675<br>0.5769  | -0.10118<br>0.7198 | -0.09001<br>0.7497 | 0.13863<br>0.6222  | .<br>. |

## Grammar

Spain: N = 22

|          | PCLASSRM           | NCLASSRM           | PSOCIAL            | NSOCIAL            | PHOME              | NHOME              |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| COPULA   | -0.10122<br>0.6540 | -0.17980<br>0.4233 | 0.17796<br>0.4282  | -0.17998<br>0.4228 | 0.11542<br>0.6090  | 0.17624<br>0.4327  |
| PREPOSI  | 0.01634<br>0.9425  | 0.03521<br>0.8764  | -0.22615<br>0.3115 | -0.31193<br>0.1576 | 0.33160<br>0.1317  | 0.39397<br>0.0696  |
| PRONOUN  | 0.22722<br>0.3092  | 0.13932<br>0.5363  | -0.18224<br>0.4170 | -0.25685<br>0.2485 | -0.04809<br>0.8317 | 0.21047<br>0.3471  |
| CONJCOOR | -0.07063<br>0.7548 | 0.12572<br>0.5772  | -0.30616<br>0.1658 | -0.41004<br>0.0581 | 0.30184<br>0.1722  | 0.21223<br>0.3430  |
| SUBCONJ  | -0.14229<br>0.5276 | 0.24070<br>0.2806  | -0.15711<br>0.4850 | -0.34718<br>0.1134 | 0.09713<br>0.6672  | 0.14967<br>0.5062  |
| PRESVERB | -0.05204<br>0.8181 | 0.08588<br>0.7039  | -0.23737<br>0.2875 | -0.38916<br>0.0734 | 0.32255<br>0.1432  | 0.20769<br>0.3537  |
| PASTVERB | -0.18721<br>0.4041 | -0.14541<br>0.5185 | 0.18741<br>0.4036  | -0.24367<br>0.2745 | -0.04249<br>0.8511 | 0.31979<br>0.1468  |
| SUBJVERB | 0.07018<br>0.7563  | 0.37197<br>0.0883  | -0.27771<br>0.2108 | -0.33780<br>0.1242 | 0.35511<br>0.1049  | -0.04606<br>0.8387 |
| INDVERB  | 0.02576<br>0.9094  | -0.00185<br>0.9935 | -0.05180<br>0.8189 | -0.23710<br>0.2881 | 0.11482<br>0.6109  | 0.09300<br>0.6806  |
| PERSON   | -0.13494<br>0.5494 | 0.14001<br>0.5343  | -0.17356<br>0.4399 | -0.33777<br>0.1242 | 0.27766<br>0.2109  | 0.16790<br>0.4551  |
| PLURALDJ | -0.03327<br>0.8832 | 0.20695<br>0.3555  | -0.24731<br>0.2672 | -0.38916<br>0.0734 | 0.07753<br>0.7316  | 0.33549<br>0.1269  |
| PLURLPRO | -0.17162<br>0.4451 | -0.25986<br>0.2428 | 0.26678<br>0.2301  | -0.22532<br>0.3134 | 0.45472<br>0.0335  | -0.05889<br>0.7946 |
| PLURLVRB | 0.09183<br>0.6844  | 0.15562<br>0.4892  | -0.23774<br>0.2867 | -0.24721<br>0.2674 | 0.23886<br>0.2844  | 0.15016<br>0.5048  |
| FEMADJ   | 0.13697<br>0.5433  | 0.33395<br>0.1288  | -0.47922<br>0.0240 | -0.44720<br>0.0369 | 0.31529<br>0.1529  | 0.02798<br>0.9016  |
| FEMPRO   | -0.47713<br>0.0247 | -0.10463<br>0.6431 | 0.21465<br>0.3374  | 0.07926<br>0.7259  | -0.11521<br>0.6097 | 0.42521<br>0.0485  |
| COORCLSE | -0.29894<br>0.1766 | 0.24613<br>0.2695  | -0.33240<br>0.1307 | -0.06402<br>0.7771 | -0.02996<br>0.8947 | 0.40362<br>0.0625  |
| SUBORDCL | 0.00289<br>0.9898  | -0.06225<br>0.7832 | 0.03883<br>0.8638  | -0.44319<br>0.0388 | 0.17001<br>0.4494  | 0.43071<br>0.0454  |
| GRAMMAR  | -0.12278<br>0.6061 | 0.16808<br>0.4787  | 0.08309<br>0.7276  | -0.31549<br>0.1754 | 0.01992<br>0.9336  | 0.20238<br>0.3922  |

Vocabulary

Colorado N = 15

|          | PCLASSRM           | NCLASSRM           | PSOCIAL            | NSOCIAL            | PHOME              | NHOME  |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|
| ADJDIFF  | -0.52037<br>0.0467 | 0.08069<br>0.7750  | 0.33411<br>0.2236  | 0.30894<br>0.2625  | 0.16533<br>0.5560  | .<br>. |
| ADVDDIFF | -0.20403<br>0.4658 | -0.11190<br>0.6913 | 0.14817<br>0.5982  | -0.17505<br>0.5326 | 0.35217<br>0.1980  | .<br>. |
| CONJDIFF | -0.43807<br>0.1024 | 0.36989<br>0.1748  | 0.29663<br>0.2830  | -0.15433<br>0.5829 | -0.13540<br>0.6304 | .<br>. |
| NOUNDIFF | 0.34849<br>0.2030  | -0.06509<br>0.8177 | -0.29547<br>0.2850 | 0.01076<br>0.9696  | -0.47649<br>0.0725 | .<br>. |
| PREPDIFF | 0.05747<br>0.8388  | 0.24019<br>0.3885  | -0.14178<br>0.6142 | 0.20596<br>0.4615  | -0.15565<br>0.5796 | .<br>. |
| PRODIFF  | -0.14889<br>0.5964 | 0.12029<br>0.6694  | 0.13417<br>0.6336  | -0.27761<br>0.3165 | 0.24917<br>0.3705  | .<br>. |
| VERBDIFF | 0.22459<br>0.4210  | 0.11305<br>0.6883  | -0.17243<br>0.5389 | -0.35010<br>0.2008 | 0.23670<br>0.3957  | .<br>. |
| VOCAB    | 0.41938<br>0.1197  | -0.30023<br>0.2769 | -0.30373<br>0.2711 | -0.23839<br>0.3922 | -0.19096<br>0.4954 | .<br>. |

Vocabulary

Spain N = 21

|          | PCLASSRM           | NCLASSRM           | PSOCIAL            | NSOCIAL            | PHOME              | NHOME              |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| ADJDIFF  | -0.09900<br>0.6694 | 0.25841<br>0.2580  | -0.15004<br>0.5162 | 0.09575<br>0.6797  | -0.04299<br>0.8532 | -0.37597<br>0.0930 |
| ADVDDIFF | -0.06561<br>0.7775 | 0.35948<br>0.1095  | -0.14481<br>0.5311 | 0.11347<br>0.6243  | 0.03551<br>0.8786  | -0.26133<br>0.2525 |
| CONJDIFF | -0.11240<br>0.6276 | 0.38359<br>0.0861  | -0.37971<br>0.0896 | -0.13245<br>0.5671 | 0.24151<br>0.2916  | -0.06269<br>0.7872 |
| NOUNDIFF | 0.00254<br>0.9913  | -0.54568<br>0.0105 | 0.48076<br>0.0274  | 0.01108<br>0.9620  | -0.09550<br>0.6805 | -0.18013<br>0.4346 |
| PREPDIFF | 0.04278<br>0.8539  | 0.22224<br>0.3329  | -0.06859<br>0.7677 | -0.13681<br>0.5543 | -0.29777<br>0.1899 | 0.05357<br>0.8176  |
| PRODIFF  | 0.19038<br>0.4085  | -0.20831<br>0.3649 | 0.03663<br>0.8748  | 0.08343<br>0.7192  | 0.16099<br>0.4857  | -0.11084<br>0.6324 |
| VERBDIFF | 0.11131<br>0.6310  | -0.03619<br>0.8763 | -0.07919<br>0.7329 | -0.07772<br>0.7377 | 0.09803<br>0.6725  | 0.28140<br>0.2166  |
| VOCAB    | 0.05730<br>0.8104  | 0.09892<br>0.6782  | -0.19452<br>0.4112 | -0.24881<br>0.2901 | -0.09283<br>0.6971 | 0.34264<br>0.1392  |

Pronunciation

Colorado: N = 15

|        | PCLASSRM           | NCLASSRM          | PSOCIAL           | NSOCIAL           | PHOME             | NHOME  |
|--------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
| PRONUN | -0.30569<br>0.2678 | 0.02922<br>0.9177 | 0.44019<br>0.1006 | 0.00594<br>0.9832 | 0.53512<br>0.0398 | .<br>. |

Pronunciation

Spain: N = 19

|        | PCLASSRM           | NCLASSRM           | PSOCIAL           | NSOCIAL           | PHOME             | NHOME             |
|--------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| PRONUN | -0.18663<br>0.4442 | -0.18751<br>0.4421 | 0.24996<br>0.3020 | 0.23335<br>0.3363 | 0.37449<br>0.1142 | 0.06874<br>0.7798 |

Communicative strategies

Colorado: N = 15

|          | PCLASSRM           | NCLASSRM           | PSOCIAL            | NSOCIAL            | PHOME              | NHOME  |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|
| TTLCOMM  | -0.10999<br>0.6964 | -0.03931<br>0.8894 | 0.06696<br>0.8126  | 0.04863<br>0.8634  | -0.05924<br>0.8339 | .<br>. |
| L1STRAT  | 0.03292<br>0.9073  | 0.05688<br>0.8404  | -0.27155<br>0.3276 | 0.07953<br>0.7781  | -0.35588<br>0.1930 | .<br>. |
| L2STRAT  | -0.15230<br>0.5879 | -0.07185<br>0.7991 | 0.18985<br>0.4980  | 0.03100<br>0.9127  | 0.06226<br>0.8255  | .<br>. |
| DIRSTRAT | -0.07980<br>0.7774 | 0.09300<br>0.7417  | -0.14325<br>0.6105 | -0.08744<br>0.7567 | -0.18589<br>0.5071 | .<br>. |
| INDSTRAT | -0.11359<br>0.6869 | -0.26500<br>0.3398 | 0.42341<br>0.1158  | 0.27684<br>0.3179  | 0.20274<br>0.4686  | .<br>. |
| RSRCDFIC | -0.05294<br>0.8514 | 0.24623<br>0.3763  | -0.27403<br>0.3230 | -0.02819<br>0.9206 | -0.29642<br>0.2834 | .<br>. |
| SLFRPAIR | -0.33737<br>0.2188 | -0.18960<br>0.4985 | 0.45130<br>0.0913  | -0.03608<br>0.8984 | 0.29608<br>0.2839  | .<br>. |
| OTHPERFM | 0.28677<br>0.3001  | -0.27275<br>0.3253 | -0.00737<br>0.9792 | 0.26450<br>0.3408  | -0.12005<br>0.6700 | .<br>. |

Communicative strategies  
 Spain: N = 22

|          | PCLASSRM           | NCLASSRM          | PSOCIAL            | NSOCIAL            | PHOME              | NHOME              |
|----------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| TTLCOMM  | 0.24859<br>0.2772  | 0.26637<br>0.2431 | -0.37273<br>0.0961 | 0.01350<br>0.9537  | 0.04665<br>0.8409  | 0.20114<br>0.3820  |
| L1STRAT  | 0.00895<br>0.9693  | 0.28697<br>0.2072 | -0.13334<br>0.5645 | -0.00155<br>0.9947 | -0.16825<br>0.4660 | 0.26135<br>0.2525  |
| L2STRAT  | 0.28075<br>0.2177  | 0.20194<br>0.3800 | -0.37819<br>0.0909 | 0.01597<br>0.9452  | 0.11327<br>0.6249  | 0.13656<br>0.5550  |
| DIRSTRAT | 0.06120<br>0.7922  | 0.26139<br>0.2524 | -0.39854<br>0.0735 | 0.06183<br>0.7901  | 0.18693<br>0.4171  | 0.21603<br>0.3470  |
| INDSTRAT | 0.40453<br>0.0689  | 0.20321<br>0.3770 | -0.24579<br>0.2828 | -0.04683<br>0.8402 | -0.13040<br>0.5732 | 0.13152<br>0.5699  |
| RSRCDFIC | -0.04506<br>0.8462 | 0.26961<br>0.2372 | -0.20905<br>0.3631 | 0.11727<br>0.6127  | -0.18412<br>0.4243 | 0.32789<br>0.1468  |
| SLFRPAIR | 0.36052<br>0.1084  | 0.14783<br>0.5225 | 0.21514<br>0.3490  | 0.35747<br>0.1116  | -0.43092<br>0.0511 | 0.12715<br>0.5828  |
| OTHPERFM | 0.13722<br>.5531   | 0.25230<br>0.2699 | -0.04207<br>0.8563 | 0.24626<br>0.2819  | -0.03117<br>0.8933 | -0.12260<br>0.5965 |



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