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Promoting Speaking Proficiency through Motivation and Interaction: The Study Abroad and Classroom Learning Contexts

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Abstract
This study investigates how motivation and interaction shape the speaking proficiency of study abroad (SA) and classroom or at home (AH) language learners. The author administered a motivation questionnaire, language contact profile, and pretest and posttest simulated oral proficiency interview. The data reveal that SA and AH students had similar motivational profiles. As expected, SA participants used the target language outside of class more than their AH counterparts. Furthermore, SA students improved their speaking proficiency more than the AH group. Student motivation and interaction were identified as important factors in the development of speaking proficiency in both learning contexts. Results suggest a potential role for explicit instruction in language learning strategies and approaches that enhance students' motivation and interaction with the target language...
culture. Discussion focuses on how to use the positive features of the SA environment to enhance AH instruction.

Key words
Spanish, interaction, motivation, simulated oral proficiency interview, study abroad

Introduction
The effect of study abroad (SA) and classroom or at home (AH) contexts on second language learning is a topic of increasing interest in foreign language education (Collentine, 2004, 2009; Freed, 1995; Lafford, 2006; Lafford & Collentine, 2006). SA environments, for their part, seem to offer optimal conditions for second language acquisition by providing language learners with greater access to authentic input together with sustained and varied opportunities to use the target language with native speakers. SA learners tend to outperform their AH counterparts in speaking proficiency (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), pronunciation (Díaz-Campos, 2006), narrative and discursive abilities (Collentine, 2004), and discourse management strategies (Lafford, 1995, 2004). AH students, in contrast, seem to have an advantage in the development of discrete grammatical and lexical abilities (Collentine, 2004) as well as pragmatic competence (Rodríguez, 2001). With this in mind, the insights from SA research have the potential to improve AH classroom instruction.

To date, however, few studies have described how to use the positive features of the SA context to enhance AH language learning. The present study addresses this lacuna in the scholarship. It examines how motivation and interaction shape the speaking proficiency of SA and AH language learners. Results suggest a potential role for explicit instruction in language learning strategies and approaches that enhance students’ motivation and interaction with the target language culture.

Review of Literature
This review of the literature considers the connection between student motivation, interaction with the target language culture, and language learning in both SA and AH environments.

Study Abroad and At Home Contexts
The effect of context on second language learning continues to be an important area in second language acquisition research (Collentine, 2004, 2009; Freed, 1995; Lafford, 2006; Lafford & Collentine, 2006). Although notable exceptions exist (e.g., Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 1991; Rodríguez, 2001), comparative studies on the effect of context reveal an advantage for SA learners. Lafford (1995) found that SA learners possessed a wider range of discourse management strategies than an AH group. Elsewhere, Lafford (2004) compared the effect of SA and AH learning environments on the use of communication strategies, or conscious learner strategies for bridging a perceived gap due to a lack of second language knowledge, performance problems, or problems resulting from interaction with an interlocutor (p. 204). Lafford found that SA learners used fewer communication strategies than an AH group, attributing this to greater access to target language use with native speakers and to superior narrative and discursive abilities.

Collentine (2004) examined the grammatical and lexical abilities of SA and AH learners. He discovered that AH learners outperformed their SA counterparts with regard to the production of discrete grammatical and lexical items, while SA participants exhibited better narrative abilities. Collentine argued that interaction in the target language context provided the SA learners with more exposure to written and oral models of narrative structures than AH students. Díaz-Campos (2004, 2006) found that SA learners produced more target-like pronunciation than AH students after one semester. Further, he discovered that prior coursework and use of Spanish outside the classroom were important predictors of phonological gains. Isabelli (2007) found a positive
effect for SA on the development of the Spanish subjunctive in adverbial clauses. In comparing a group of advanced learners returning from an SA program with another group of advanced learners without previous SA experience, Isabelli discovered that those students with SA experience benefited more from explicit instruction of the subjunctive than those who had not participated in an SA program. As did Collentine (2004) and Lafford (1995, 2004), she identified access to significant amounts of authentic target language input as a possible reason for the superior performance of the SA participants.

The development of speaking proficiency represents another important aspect of the SA research agenda (Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1993; Freed, 1990, 1995; Ginsburg & Miller, 2000; Hernández, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2006; Magnan, 1986; Magnan & Back, 2007; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). Freed (1990) examined the relationship between motivation, interaction, and the speaking proficiency of 40 students in a 6-week SA program in France. Participants completed a questionnaire to measure their attitudes and motivation toward French language studies. An oral proficiency interview (OPI) assessed speaking improvement. A language contact profile (LCP), diaries, and interviews gave the researcher an indication of students' contact with the French language outside of class. Freed did not discover a significant relationship between student motivation, interaction, and speaking performance. She concluded that the effect of student interaction on speaking proficiency might have been more evident in a one-semester SA program. In a comparison of the speaking proficiency of SA learners with students in an AH learning context, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) found that SA participants made greater gains in speaking proficiency on an OPI than their AH counterparts. Like Freed (1990), however, they found no relationship between student use of the target language outside of class and speaking improvement. Magnan and Back (2007) examined the relationship between social interaction and the speaking proficiency of 24 undergraduate students in a one-semester SA program in France. They administered an OPI, Can-Do self-assessment scale (Clark, 1981), a modified LCP, and pre- and postprogram questionnaires to SA participants in order to assess the role of student interaction in speaking improvement. The authors found that 12 out of the 24 SA students made significant improvement from the pretest to posttest OPI. Again, student interaction did not predict speaking gains. At the same time, however, the authors concluded that prior coursework in French was an important factor in the development of speaking proficiency.

Recent investigators have supplemented these quantitative studies with qualitative approaches (Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2008; O'Donnell, 2005). Isabelli-García (2006), for example, examined the relationship between attitudes, motivation, social interaction, and the speaking performance of four SA participants in Argentina. A pre- and posttest simulated oral proficiency interview (SOPI) assessed speaking improvement. Diaries, questionnaires, and social network logs produced an estimate of students' attitudes, motivation, and interaction with native speakers of Spanish. In contrast to previous studies (Freed, 1990; Magnan & Back, 2007; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), Isabelli-García identified a significant relationship between student interaction with the target language culture and speaking improvement. Furthermore, Isabelli-García identified student motivation as a significant predictor of interaction.

Motivation
Research on motivation continues to provide important insights into second language learning. Much of this research has addressed the role of integrative and instrumental motivation in shaping language achievement. Gardner and Lambert (1959) defined integrative motivation as an interest in language learning, positive attitudes toward the target language group and culture, and an interest in social interaction with native speakers of the target language. They identified instrumental motivation as an interest in learning the target language to attain a practical benefit, such as to enhance one's résumé in order to expand future employment opportunities. Within this framework, researchers have identified integrative motivation as a significant predictor of language achievement (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Clément, 2000; Ely, 1986; Gardner, 1985, 2000; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Hernández, 2006; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, Ramage, 1990). These authors argued
that language learners with high integrative motivation invest considerable time and effort in developing their second language proficiency. Furthermore, and this is of significant importance to the present investigation, students with high integrative motivation seem to seek out more opportunities to interact with native speakers.

Research Questions
The present study expands on the research of Hernández (2010). It examines the relationship between student motivation, interaction, and speaking proficiency in SA and AH learning contexts. Discussion focuses on how to use student motivation and interaction and the positive attributes of the SA environment to improve AH language learning.

1. Do SA and AH students demonstrate integrative and instrumental motivation to study Spanish as a second language?
2. To what extent do SA and AH students use the target language outside of the classroom?
3. Do SA students improve their speaking proficiency more than AH students?
4. Does motivation predict the amount of student interaction with the target language culture for learners in SA and AH contexts?
5. Does the amount of student interaction with the target language culture have a significant effect on speaking proficiency?

Methodology
The author used a pretest and posttest design to investigate the relationship between student motivation, interaction, and gains in speaking performance in SA and AH learning contexts during the spring semester of 2008.

Participants
Participants were 44 Spanish language learners in one of two contexts: SA or AH. The four criteria for participation included English as their first language, minimum of four semesters or equivalent of college Spanish, no prior SA experience, and no Spanish spoken at home (see Appendix A for participant information).

SA Participants
The SA group consisted of 20 undergraduates from a large, private university in the United States who participated in a onesemester SA program in Spain, in the spring semester of 2008 (M = 19.80 years, SD = 0.83; 16 females and 4 males). Their prior language experience ranged from 2.5 to 7.5 years of formal instruction in Spanish at the secondary and postsecondary levels. SA participants were enrolled in four or five courses designed for foreign students. Students also had the option of taking at least one other course together with Spanish natives. Of the 20 students, 16 (80%) reported living with host families; four (20%) lived in apartments with roommates from the United States.

AH Participants
The AH group consisted of 24 undergraduates who had enrolled in at least one upper-division Spanish course at the home institution, in the spring semester of 2008 (M = 19.42 years, SD = 0.72; 19 females and 5 males). AH students' prior language experience ranged from 3.5 to 6.5 years of formal instruction in Spanish.

Instrumentation
Questionnaire
Students in both the SA and AH groups completed a questionnaire (see Appendix B) prior to the beginning of the spring semester of 2008. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Student Background Information and
Motivation Index (Ely, 1986; Gardner, 1985). The first part consisted of questions concerning students' academic background and previous Spanish. The second part contained two subscales: Integrative Motivation and Instrumental Motivation. Using a 4-point Likert-type scale, participants indicated the extent to which different reasons for studying Spanish were important to them.

**SOPI**

To assess gains in speaking performance, the author administered a SOPI to all participants as a pretest in the second week of December 2007. Students took the posttest at the end of the spring semester. The SOPI is a performance-based, tape-mediated test of speaking proficiency available from the Center for Applied Linguistics (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1995) and rated with the criteria in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 1999). The SOPI consisted of a warm-up section and 15 speaking tasks. The speech functions and ACTFL OPI levels of these tasks are presented in Table 1.

The researcher and a second rater scored the SOPI tapes using the Multimedia Rater Training Program (MRTP)-Spanish Version2 (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2006). The researcher rated the pretest and posttest SOPI tapes of all 44 participants. The second rater then scored a total of 20 of these tapes in order to establish interrater reliability. The raters agreed on 16 out of the 20 SOPI tapes. There were disagreements on four of the tapes. The raters reviewed these tapes and assigned them new scores. The percentage of absolute agreement was high (80%), and the correlation between the raters was also high (0.92).

**Language Contact Profile**

The author administered a modified LCP (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004) consisting of 10 items to all participants (see Appendix C) at the conclusion of the spring semester. Students self-reported the number of hours per week spent engaged in speaking, reading, writing, and listening activities in Spanish outside of class. The sum of these responses gave the researcher an estimate of students' use of the target language outside of the classroom.

**Data Analysis**

The author used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Inc. version 17.0) to examine the data from the pre- and posttest assessment measures. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to address the research questions. Statistical procedures included independent samples t tests, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), repeated-measures ANOVA, and regression analysis. The author used a significance level of 0.05 for all inferential statistics.

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

Do SA and AH students demonstrate integrative and instrumental motivation to study Spanish as a second language?

The author calculated SA and AH students' scores on the integrative and instrumental motivation subscales (see Appendix D for means and standard deviations of individual items). SA students' scores on the integrative motivation subscale (nine items; maximum score = 27) ranged from 21 to 27 (M = 24.25, SD = 2.05). Their scores on the instrumental motivation subscale (four items; maximum score = 12) ranged from 4 to 12 (M = 10.70, SD = 1.92). AH students' scores on the integrative motivation subscale ranged from 13 to 27 (M = 22.54, SD = 3.75), while their scores on the instrumental motivation scale ranged from 4 to 12 (M = 10.29, SD = 2.20). The author then performed independent samples t tests to determine if there were significant differences for the SA and AH groups with regard to integrative and instrumental motivation. The results of the t test for the integrative...
motivation subscale revealed no significant differences: $t(42) = -1.820, p = .076$. The $t$ test for the instrumental motivation subscale also revealed no significant differences: $t(42) = -0.649, p = .520$.

**Research Question 2**

To what extent do SA and AH students use the target language outside of the classroom?

The LCP consisted of 10 items representing the number of hours per week students participated in speaking, reading, writing, and listening activities outside of class. SA students had LCP scores ranging from 31.50 to 115.50 hours each week ($M = 60.68, SD = 24.98$). By contrast, the AH students' responses on the LCP yielded scores ranging from 3.5 to 49 hours each week ($M = 22.58, SD = 12.03$). The author performed an independent samples $t$ test to determine if these differences were significant. The $t$ test revealed that the difference in target language use outside the classroom was significant for SA and AH students: $t(42) = -6.242, p = .000$. This result indicated that the SA group participated in more Spanish language activities than the AH group.

The author then calculated the means and standard deviations of the individual items on the LCP for the SA group in order to further investigate the extent to which these students participated in speaking, reading, writing, and listening activities outside of class. As indicated in Table 2, speaking Spanish with native speakers (item 1, $M = 16.80, SD = 11.56$) was the highest ranked item on the LCP for the SA participants. Writing homework assignments in Spanish (item 9, $M = 9.09, SD = 5.58$), listening to Spanish music (item 8, $M = 7.53, SD = 4.40$), and listening to Spanish television and radio (item 6, $M = 6.99, SD = 4.65$) were the second, third, and fourth ranked items. The fifth, sixth, and seventh ranked items were reading e-mail and Web pages (item 5, $M = 4.38, SD = 2.98$), reading Spanish newspapers (item 2, $M = 3.85, SD = 1.99$), and reading novels in Spanish (item 3, $M = 3.65, SD = 2.93$). Listening to Spanish movies or videos (item 7, $M = 3.53, SD = 2.85$), writing e-mail in Spanish (item 10, $M = 3.30, SD = 2.66$), and reading Spanish language magazines (item 3, $M = 1.58, SD = 2.40$) were the lowest ranked items.

The author also calculated the means and standard deviations of the items on the LCP for the AH group. The highest ranked item for the AH students was writing homework assignments in Spanish (item 9, $M = 6.35, SD = 3.31$). The second, third, and fourth ranked items were listening to Spanish music (item 8, $M = 3.79, SD = 4.24$), reading novels in Spanish (item 3, $M = 3.50, SD = 5.36$), and speaking Spanish with native speakers (item 1, $M = 2.08, SD = 2.08$). Reading e-mail or the Internet in Spanish (item 5, $M = 1.90, SD = 2.06$), listening to Spanish television and radio (item 6, $M = 1.60, SD = 1.78$), and writing e-mail in Spanish (item 10, $M = 1.17, SD = 1.98$) were ranked fifth, sixth, and seventh. The lowest ranked items were reading newspapers in Spanish (item 2, $M = 0.88, SD = 1.55$), listening to Spanish movies or videos (item 7, $M = 0.88, SD = 1.55$), and reading Spanish language magazines (item 4, $M = 0.44, SD = 1.18$).

**Research Question 3**

Do SA students improve their speaking proficiency more than AH students?

The author assigned students' SOPI performances a rating on the ACTFL Proficiency Scale and then converted these ratings into numerical values: 3 novice low, 51, novice mid, 52, novice high, 53, intermediate low, 54, intermediate mid, 55, intermediate high, 56, advanced low, 57, advanced mid, 58, advanced high, 59, and superior 510.

Pretest SOPI scores for the SA and AH students ranged from intermediate low to intermediate high. Two out of the 20 SA students (10%) received a rating of intermediate low, 15 students (75%) a rating of intermediate mid, and 3 students (15%) a rating of intermediate high on the pretest SOPI. With regard to the AH group, 2 out of the 24 AH students (8%) received a rating of intermediate low, 17 students (71%) received a rating of intermediate mid, and 5 students (21%) were rated intermediate high on the pretest SOPI. The author then
performed a one-way ANOVA on the pretest SOPI data in order to determine if there were significant differences between the SA and AH group. The ANOVA revealed that there were no significant differences between the two groups on the pretest: (1,42) = 0.223, p = .639. The speaking proficiency of the SA and AH groups each was therefore considered comparable prior to the one-semester treatment period.

SA students had posttest SOPI scores ranging from intermediate mid to advanced low. Six students (30%) received an intermediate mid, another six students (30%) received an intermediate high, and eight students (40%) received an advanced low rating on the ACTFL Proficiency Scale. AH students, by contrast, received posttest SOPI scores ranging from intermediate mid to intermediate high. A total of 15 students (62%) received a rating of intermediate mid and nine students (38%) an intermediate high.

Figure 1 demonstrates that 5 out of the 20 SA students made a gain of 12 on their pretest to posttest SOPI. A total of 11 students made a gain of 11. Four students did not improve on the SOPI. With regard to the AH group, 6 out of the 24 students made a gain of 11 on their pretest to posttest SOPI scores. A total of 18 AH students, however, did not experience a gain. A repeated-measures ANOVA with one between-group factor (treatment group) and one within-group factor (time of test) was then performed using a General Linear Model. The ANOVA yielded a significant interaction between group and time: F(1,42) = 57.571, p = .000. These results confirmed that the SA group made greater gains on the SOPI than the AH group after the one-semester treatment period.

Research Question 4

Does motivation predict amount of student interaction with the target language culture for learners in SA and AH contexts?

The author performed two simultaneous multiple regression analyses to determine the significant predictors of student interaction with the target language culture for SA and AH learners. Students' raw scores on the integrative motivation and instrumental motivation subscales were entered as the independent, predictor variables. LCP scores were entered as the dependent variable.

The first multiple regression model was significant: R² = 0.046, F(2,17) = 7.14, p = .006. The results of this regression analysis indicated that SA students with higher integrative motivation interacted more with the target language culture than students with lower integrative motivation. As shown in Table 3, integrative motivation (β = 0.667, t = 3.660, p = .002) was the significant predictor of student interaction, accounting for 45.56% of the variance of SA students' LCP scores. Instrumental motivation (β = -0.039, t = -0.213, p = .834) was not identified as a significant predictor of student interaction.

The second multiple regression model was also significant: R² = 0.28, F(2,21) = 4.11, p = .03. The results of the regression analysis indicated that AH students with higher integrative motivation also interacted more with the target language culture than students with lower integrative motivation. As indicated in Table 4, integrative motivation (β = 0.531, t = 2.839, p = .010) was the significant predictor of student interaction, accounting for 28.09% of the variance of AH students' LCP scores. Instrumental motivation (β = 0.002, t = 0.013, p = .990) was not identified as a significant predictor of student interaction.

Research Question 5

Does the amount of student interaction with the second language culture have a significant effect on speaking proficiency?

The author then conducted regression analyses in order to assess the impact of student interaction on speaking performance for SA and AH learners. Students' raw LCP scores were entered as the independent, predictor variable. Their SOPI gains were entered as the dependent variable. The prediction for SOPI gains is presented in Table 5.
The first regression model was again significant: $R^2 = 0.48$, $F(1,18) = 16.64$, $p = .001$. The LCP score was $\beta = 0.693$, $t = 4.080$, $p = .001$. SA students' amount of interaction with the target language culture was a significant predictor of their speaking improvement, accounting for 48% of the variance of pre- to posttest SOPI gains (see Table 6).

The second multiple regression model, however, was not significant: $R^2 = 0.007$, $F(1,22) = 0.148$, $p = .704$. AH students' amount of interaction with the target language culture was not a significant predictor of their SOPI gains.

Discussion

The results of the first research question revealed that SA and AH students were studying Spanish for both integrative and instrumental reasons. Examination of the means and standard deviations of the individual items on the integrative and instrumental motivation subscales determined that the SA and AH groups shared similar motivational profiles. Both groups reported an interest in speaking Spanish with native speakers in the United States and in other Spanish-speaking regions (integrative motivation) as one of the most important reasons for taking Spanish courses (see Appendix C). SA and AH students identified interest in using their Spanish for future travel (integrative motivation). Students also expressed an interest in the practical benefits and advantages of Spanish as a second language studied (instrumental motivation).

The second research question investigated the extent to which SA and AH students used Spanish outside the classroom through participation in speaking, writing, reading, and listening activities. As expected, the LCP indicated that SA learners used the Spanish language outside of class much more than AH learners. SA students reported spending an average of 60.68 hours per week in Spanish language activities. AH learners, in contrast, reported participating in Spanish language activities for an average of 22.58 hours per week.

The third research question compared the speaking performance of SA and AH students after the semester-long treatment period. A repeated-measures ANOVA revealed that the SA students made greater gains on the SOPI in comparison to the AH students. A total of 16 out of the 20 students in the SA group made a gain of at least 11 on the ACTFL Proficiency Scale. Four SA students did not demonstrate pre- to post-program speaking improvement. By contrast, 6 of the 24 AH students made a SOPI gain of 11, whereas 18 students did not improve their SOPI scores. These findings, together with the fact that none of the AH students attained an Advanced rating on the posttest SOPI, suggest that the AH environment did not support the development of advanced language competence (e.g., describing and narrating in the major time frames, comparing and contrasting, using circumlocution). The results, however, are consistent with Segalowitz and Freed (2004), who also found that SA students made greater gains in speaking proficiency than AH students. A total of 12 out of their 22 SA participants made a gain of 11 on their pre- to posttest OPI, whereas 5 out of their 18 AH students made a gain of 11.

The fourth research question examined the relationship between student motivation and interaction with the target language culture. Simultaneous multiple regression analyses identified integrative motivation as a significant predictor of student interaction. The results indicated that SA and AH students with higher integrative motivation had more contact with the Spanish language outside of class than those students with lower integrative motivation. These results expand the findings of previous studies on the importance of integrative motivation in second language learning (Dörnyei & Clément, 2000; Gardner, 1985, 2000; Hernández, 2006; Isabelli-García, 2006; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

The results of the fifth research question indicated that student interaction with the target language culture had a significant impact on speaking performance for the SA participants. Regression analysis found a significant relationship between these students' participation in speaking, reading, writing, and listening activities in
Spanish outside of class and their speaking improvement. The five SA students who made a SOPI gain of 12 reported spending an average of 92.30 hours per week in Spanish language activities outside of class. The 11 students who made a gain of 11 reported participating in Spanish language activities for an average of 52.36 hours per week, and the four students who did not demonstrate a SOPI gain had an average of 43.75 hours per week. Student interaction with the target language culture did not have a significant effect, however, on the speaking performance of AH students. The six AH students who had a SOPI gain of 11 reported participating in Spanish language activities for an average of 24.25 hours per week, whereas the 18 students who did not improve their SOPI scores reported 22.03 hours per week of language use. These results suggest that the AH learning environment did not provide students with sufficient access to authentic language use in communicative contexts in order to foster significant second language acquisition growth (Batstone, 2002; Collentine & Freed, 2004; Magnan, 1986; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Swain, 1985, 1995, 2000). The most striking, although anticipated, contrast between the SA and AH learning environment was found in the average number of hours per week students reported to have spoken with native speakers (LCP item 1). SA students reported speaking Spanish with native speakers for an average of 16.80 hours per week. AH students, by contrast, reported an average of 2.08 hours per week.

Implications

This study provides empirical evidence of a positive relationship between student motivation, interaction with the target language culture, and the development of speaking proficiency in both SA and AH learning contexts. Results suggest a role for explicit instruction in strategies and approaches that enhance students' motivation and interaction with the target culture. The author offers instructors three recommendations that support students in advancing their speaking proficiency within the AH context.

First, AH instructors should integrate explicit instruction in strategies for developing advanced language competence (García, Hernández, & Davis-Wiley, 2008). Hernández (2008, in press) and de la Fuente (2009), for example, argue that classroom learners often do not use appropriate discourse management strategies (e.g., use of discourse markers to provide organization, cohesion, and coherence to narratives) even after several semesters of exposure to target language input. Research suggests that explicit instruction would be an effective approach to help these learners to develop a conscious awareness of these as well as other target language norms (de la Fuente, 2009; Hernández, 2008; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Rose, 2005). In addition, instructors might provide AH learners with models of appropriate target language use in order to demonstrate how native speakers use their pragmatic and sociolinguistic knowledge to perform the advanced and superior speaking functions described in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 1999). Speaking activities could then provide students with focused practice on using specific language functions (e.g., narrating an event in the past tense, explaining a process, giving advice, supporting an opinion, speaking to persuade someone).

The second, related recommendation is that instructors create a task-based, interactive classroom environment (Doughty & Long, 2003) that supports authentic language use. Rather than adhere to the traditional classroom discourse patterns identified by Donato and Brooks (2004), instructors should restructure classroom discussions to provide students with appropriate opportunities to use advanced and superior-level speaking functions. Both undergraduate language and literature courses should establish the development of advanced language competence as one of their explicit language objectives. Instructors should make the expectations for advanced-level speaking performance clear to their students and work with them to attain this goal (Donato & Brooks, 2004). SA instructors, working in collaboration with their AH counterparts, can further address the development of speaking proficiency through pre-departure, in-program, and post-SA sessions that foster student reflection on language learning (Kinginger, 2008; Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2006).
The third recommendation centers on student motivation to interact with the target language culture and how this contributes to the development of speaking proficiency. AH and SA instructors should incorporate tasks and activities that target students’ integrative and instrumental motivation. The integration of authentic target language media throughout the undergraduate curriculum can foster integrative and instrumental aspects of students' motivation, and provide language learners with meaningful opportunities to use the target language in a wide range of communicative contexts. The use of guest speakers in the classroom offers AH learners a further avenue for interacting with native speakers and stimulates further motivation. AH instructors can also promote student use of the target language through interview activities with native or near-native speakers. Project-based research tasks and interview activities encourage student interaction with native speakers and thus contribute to advancing their speaking proficiency. The use of service learning and structured internship programs in AH contexts also gives students access to native speakers and allows them to connect their language learning to personal, professional, and educational interests (Caldwell, 2007; Hellebrandt & Varona, 1999) as envisioned in the National Standards (2006).

In order to further enhance student motivation and interaction with the target culture, instructors should use social networking sites to connect AH students to second language speakers and other second language learners. Coffey and Banhidi (2007), for example, discussed a program in which students participate in a virtual exchange program with native speakers in Colombia and other Spanish-speaking countries through the social software program Skype (http://www.skype.com). In addition, Zeiss and Isabelli-García (2005) demonstrated how the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) could enhance the cultural awareness of AH students preparing for a future SA experience. Instructors might also use synchronous and asynchronous CMC to create virtual language exchanges between AH students and SA participants from the same institution. AH students, for example, might interview their SA counterparts regarding specific aspects of the target language culture.

Conclusion

The present study suggests that student motivation and interaction are important factors in shaping the development of speaking proficiency in both AH and SA contexts. Results suggest a role for explicit instruction in language learning strategies and approaches that enhance AH students' integrative motivation and interaction with the target language culture.

At the same time, future research comparing AH and SA language learning is needed. With regard to the present study, one might question whether or not the selfreported LCP scores were an accurate estimate of students' use of the target language outside of class, given that this information was collected at the end of the semester. One might also question the extent to which the motivation questionnaire was an accurate representation of students’ motivation for Spanish language studies. Researchers might therefore consider supplementing quantitative studies with qualitative approaches. The use of diaries and interviews (e.g., Kinginger, 2008) as well as think-aloud and retrospective protocols could assist investigators in better assessing the relationship between student motivation, interaction with the target language culture, and learning outcomes. Future research should also examine classroom conditions in both AH and SA environments (Lafford, 2006). Further studies (e.g., Cohen & Shively, 2007) must assess the role of explicit instruction designed to enhance AH and SA students’ use of communicative strategies. By expanding the research agenda in these areas, foreign language educators will be able to improve AH and SA learning.

Notes

2. Although the SOPI does not use certified testers as does the ACTFL OPI, SOPI raters are able to receive extensive training through the MRTP. Furthermore, Stansfield and Keynon (1992) reported high correlations between the OPI and the SOPI.

3. The numerical values assigned for this analysis assume that the ACTFL scale represents a quasi-interval scale with equal intervals between proficiency levels.

4. SA participants also were asked to describe their living arrangement in Spain.

References


