



Iglesias, M. (2017). Language travel supply: language tourism product composition. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 4(1). 1-17. <http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/135/145>

Received: 22.04.2016  
Received in revised form: 19.11.2016  
Accepted: 22.11.2016

## LANGUAGE TRAVEL SUPPLY: LANGUAGE TOURISM PRODUCT COMPOSITION

Montserrat Iglesias

EUHT CETT-UB, University of Barcelona

Montserrat.iglesias@cett.cat

Av. Can Marcet 36-38, Barcelona 08035, Spain

### **Biodata**

Senior Lecturer of English as a Foreign Language and Head of Studies at CETT Language School. My research focuses on oral competence in English for Specific Purposes and on language tourism. Co-author of an elementary English course for catering students

Copyright by Informascope. Material published and so copyrighted may not be published elsewhere without the written permission of IOJET.

## LANGUAGE TRAVEL SUPPLY: LANGUAGE TOURISM PRODUCT COMPOSITION

Montserrat Iglesias

[montserrat.iglesias@cett.cat](mailto:montserrat.iglesias@cett.cat)

### Abstract

A systematic review of literature up to date reflects great scholarly interest in the impacts of study abroad (SA) sojourns on foreign language learners' communicative competence. This paper provides an overview on gains in sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences drawing upon research carried out in this field, which in broad terms supports the belief that both types of competences are effectively developed in SA stays. This article also offers a detailed account of the main constituents of the language tourism product -the travel component and the language learning component- with a special focus on the educational input and the language learning complements included in the latter. Thus, a fundamental part of the language tourism market system will be depicted from a supply perspective. Following an exploratory approach, a literature review was conducted in order to identify existing and missing knowledge in the field of language travel supply, and key aspects were pinpointed and classified. The taxonomy and underpinning concepts resulting from the categorisation of those key features may be considered the starting point for future investigations on SA programmes. The model offered in this exploratory study aims at constituting the underlying conceptual framework for subsequent research on the role of different SA programme design characteristics within the language tourism experience.

*Keywords:* language tourism, study abroad, foreign language learning

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. The Language Travel Industry

The Association of Language Travel Organisations (ALTO) encompasses decision makers from different areas of the language tourism sector worldwide, such as educational agencies, international and domestic language schools, national associations and accreditation organisations, and auxiliary services providers. In 2015 Deloitte carried out a survey for ALTO among 59 intermediation agencies from 27 countries. Their report offers a representative general picture of the language travel sector.

The results showed that English courses were in high demand (34%), followed by French (19%), Spanish and German (15% each), Italian (6%), Chinese (5%), Russian (3%) and other languages. The most visited outbound destinations in terms of student weeks were the UK, the US, Canada and Ireland.

The net revenue was USD\$40.0 million and 31% of the agencies' net revenue derived from commission, while the gross value of services represented 69%. The commission income was mainly generated by adult users (61%).

As for the origins of bookings on a weighted average basis, 59% were made by agents' sales teams and 5% by sub agents, while 29% of the courses were booked through the internet and only 2% were direct bookings to schools. The most popular accommodation option for both juniors and adults was the host-family stay, followed by residential lodging.

When asked about the negative impacts on the agents' business activity some aspects were pinpointed, namely the increasing competition by schools, economic aspects in outbound markets and their government policies, restrictive visa conditions and currency exchange rates. Conversely, government support by means of scholarships and educational projects was perceived as affecting agency businesses rather positively.

When it comes to the students' profile, 39% were younger than 18, 36% were aged between 19 and 25, 20% between 26 and 45, and 5% were older than 45. Juniors' study abroad stays took an average 3.3 weeks and the average length of adults' stays was 4.2 weeks. Adult students were the main consumers, as 76% of student weeks were purchased by this segment in search for general language tuition, exam preparation, university pathway, specialised or executive language courses.

SA sojourners are supposed to benefit from their stays in many different ways. This article will focus on language learning outcomes in SA contexts, and then will move on to some SA programme design characteristics which may be conducive to effective foreign language acquisition and satisfactory SA experiences. To conclude, future lines of action will be presented.

## **1.2. Language Gains Deriving from Study Abroad Stays**

A systematic review of literature up to date reflects great scholarly interest in the impacts of SA sojourns on communicative competence, which according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is composed of linguistic competences - including lexical, grammatical and phonological knowledge and skills-, sociolinguistic competences -concerning the socio-cultural conditions of language use-, and pragmatic competences -related to the functional use of linguistic resources. Whereas some works reveal gains in general proficiency (Carroll, 1967; Churchill & DuFon, 2006; Coleman, 1998; Coleman et al., 1994; Freed, 1998; Ginsberg, 1992; Huebner, 1995; Liskin-Gasparro & Urdaneta, 1995; Rissel, 1995), most researchers have focused on specific aspects of communicative competence. A close look at the research outcomes produced in the last decades -excluding unpublished PhD dissertations and conference proceedings- reveals that while a number of authors have investigated sociolinguistic competences (Allen, Dristas & Mills, 2007; Bacon, 2002; Einbeck, 2002; Engle & Engle, 2004; Hashimoto, 1994; Iino, 2006; Jackson, 2008, 2011; Krzic, 1995; Marriott, 1993, 1995; Marriott & Enomoto, 1995; Mauranen, 1994; Watson, Siska & Wolfel, 2013), other authors have drawn their attention to gains in pragmatic competences (Campbell, 1996; Hassall, 2006; Kinginger & Belz, 2005; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004; Matsumura, 2001, 2003, 2007; McMeekin, 2006; Owen, 2002; Taguchi, 2011), and a few have researched both, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences (Barron, 2003, 2006, 2007; Cohen & Shively, 2007; DuFon, 2006; Paige, Cohen & Shively, 2004; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Siegal, 1995a, 1995b, 1996).

The development of pragmatic competence in SA contexts has mainly been studied following ethnographic methods, i.e. analyzing routines, register, terms of address, and speech acts in learner journals, interviews, recorded conversations, etc. (Churchill & DuFon, 2006). In general, empirical evidence shows that SA sojourners' pragmatic competence is fostered, particularly with respect to their production skills, as they can benefit from social interaction with the local community more naturally than in a formal instruction setting at home. On the whole, SA students' usage of formulaic expressions is enhanced, but it has been found that they tend to overuse them, sometimes in inappropriate situations. Therefore, it has been concluded that their pragmatic acquisition hardly ever reaches a native-like level, and sometimes it even deviates from the target norm. Some studies revealed that the

participants were not fully aware of the target language pragmatic standards and could not produce accurate output either because it was not considered necessary or because it confronted the learners' personality or identity (Barron, 2003; DuFon, 2006; Siegal, 1995b). Likewise, sociolinguistic gains occasionally characterized by over-generalization and misuse have also been reported (Freed, 1998).

The interest in documenting significant individual variation in language related outcomes nowadays tends to take a qualitative approach going beyond simple correlations between student activity and measures of linguistic development. Current research has to consider factors like the role of communications technologies and social media in globalised societies, and needs to regard second language acquisition abroad as a dialogic phenomenon that takes place in intercultural contexts and has important subjective dimensions (Kinging, 2013). However, the social turn of SA research and the wealth of corpus-based research allowing for a better understanding of verbal interactions through conversation analysis contrast with the scarcity of longitudinal studies and the limitation of the populations studied, mainly English-speaking. Another area worth exploring is the correlation between different aspects of SA programmes and the success of language tourism experience.

### **1.3. A Conceptualisation of Language Tourism**

Language travel can be examined from different perspectives. While researchers have long been interested in the area of second language acquisition, the identification of SA sojourners as language tourists who make use of tourist services and engage not only in language learning tasks, but also in tourist activities, has not been extensively researched so far from an academic perspective despite the commercial significance of this niche within the global tourism industry; hence the need to conceptualise it. The research presented in this article is part of a comprehensive study which aims at defining this form of tourism, determining its variables and designing a conceptual model which, in turn, can be used as an underlying framework for subsequent investigations in various related areas.

Language tourism may be defined as “a tourist activity undertaken by those travellers (or educational tourists) taking a trip which includes at least an overnight stay in a destination outside their usual place of residence for less than a year and for whom language learning is a primary or secondary part of their trip” (Iglesias, 2014, p. 10). The main variables and a working model of the language tourism market system have already been identified (Iglesias, 2016).

The market system in which language travel experiences are generated cannot be understood without the complementary angles of the supply and the demand. While previous research has analysed consumer-related factors (Iglesias, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d), the spotlight will now turn to the supply, and more specifically, to a key constituent: the language tourism product.

## **2. Method**

In this article the language tourism supply will be examined following the model of educational tourism market system devised by Ritchie (2003), which has been adapted to the particular characteristics of this phenomenon. From a supply or product perspective, the model includes the nature of the primary educational tourism product (formed by the

combination of primary and secondary suppliers), the possible managing and marketing structures involved, and the resource base for this type of tourism activity.

Following Ritchie (2003), the fragmentation of the educational tourism sector due to the wide range of organisations involved in the provision, marketing and management of the educational tourism experience may be an obstacle for the stakeholders' operational development. This can limit the potential benefits for the target destinations, the tourism industry and the tourists. Therefore, it is particularly relevant to understand the complexities of this tourism activity through a systems-based approach.

As the language travel industry is quite immature and reliable data about how it works is scarce, an exploratory approach was adopted in this investigation. A literature review was carried out with the general objective of generating a starting point so that more extensive research on this phenomenon can be conducted in the future. The purpose was three-fold: to examine the current state of knowledge in the area of language tourism supply, to pinpoint relevant research in that area, and to detect gaps in knowledge. Key data was identified and processed by means of categorisation.

In order to gain a better understanding of what the language travel supply consists of from different perspectives a general overview will be provided in the next section, and then we will zoom in on the product composition from a learning angle to identify the educational input and the language learning complements. Each one of these two broad categories will be broken down into subcategories to create a taxonomy of aspects that need to be taken into account when analysing the language learning component.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

Three key elements must be highlighted in the configuration of the language tourism supply: the product composition, the marketing and management structures, and the destinations' environmental and social resource base.

The language tourism product comprises a language learning component and a travel component. The former may involve some sort of educational input supplemented by complements, whereas the latter may include transport, accommodation, catering and leisure arrangements.

The marketing and management structures are responsible for planning, promoting, selling and providing the language tourism product. They can range from language education providers, to public administration institutions, to trade bodies or travel planners.

Last but not least, to analyse the environmental and social resource base at the target destinations the local culture and host community need to be examined, as well as their geographical context and their current situation concerning the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors that define them. Table 1 offers an overview of all these aspects.

Table 1. *Language tourism supply: the language tourism product.*

1. Product composition	1.1. Language learning component	1.1.1. Educational input
		1.1.2. Language learning complements
	1.2. Travel component	1.2.1. Transport
		1.2.2. Accommodation
1.2.3. Catering		
1.2.4. Leisure		
2. Marketing & management structures	2.1. Language education providers	
	2.2. Public administration institutions	
	2.3. Trade bodies	
	2.4. Travel planners	
3. Destination's environmental & social resource base	3.1. Local culture	
	3.2. Host community	
	3.3. Geographical context	
	3.4. Current situation (political, economic, social, technological, environmental & legal factors)	

Observing the language tourism product in more depth, it is obvious that full language learning experiences abroad lie on the services supplied by both the tourism industry and language education agents. Table 2 sums up the elements related to tourism stakeholders.

Table 2. *Language tourism product composition: the travel components.*

1. Accommodation	1.1. Types of lodging according to local regulations	1.2. Operation	1.2.1. Ownership	1.2.1.1. Privately owned	
				1.2.1.2. Not privately owned	
				1.2.2. Brand	1.2.2.1. Chain
					1.2.2.2. Independent
	1.1. Cost		1.3.1. Low cost		
			1.3.2. Standard rate		
			1.3.3. Luxury		
	1.2. Provision of services	1.4.1. Categories according to rating system			
		1.4.2. Autonomy	1.4.2.1. Self-catering		
			1.4.2.2. Serviced		
			1.4.3. Specialization	1.4.3.1. Mass	
				1.4.3.2. Targeted	
	1.5. Demographic microsegmentation		1.5.1. Age		
			1.5.2. Gender		
		1.5.3. Travel party			
1.6. Capacity		1.6.1. Small			
		1.6.2. Medium-sized			
		1.6.3. Large			
1.7. Location		1.7.1. Geographical	1.7.1.1. Urban		
			1.7.1.2. Natural area		
		1.7.2. Proximity	1.7.2.1. To educational/work setting		
			1.7.2.2. To destination's resources		
1.8. Interaction		1.8.1. Facilitated	1.8.1.1. Locals		
			1.8.1.2. Peers		
			1.8.1.3. Host family		
		1.8.2. Not facilitated			
2. Transport	2.1. Operation	2.1.1. Ownership	2.1.1.1. Privately operated		
			2.1.1.2. Not privately operated		

---

		2.1.2. Arrangement	2.1.2.1. Scheduled 2.1.2.2. Chartered 2.1.2.3. On demand
	2.2. Cost	2.2.1. Low cost 2.2.2. Standard rate 2.2.3. Luxury	
	2.3. Provision of services	2.3.1. Integration	2.3.1.1. Included 2.3.1.2. Not included
	2.4. Capacity	2.3.2. Categories according to rating system 2.4.1. Individuals 2.4.2. Groups	
	2.5. Local regulations	2.5.1. Regulated transport system 2.5.2. Liberalised system	
	2.6. Scope	2.6.1. To travel to the destination 2.6.2. In the destination	
	2.7. Means	2.7.1. Air 2.7.2. Water	2.7.2.1. Sea 2.7.2.2. River
		2.7.3. Land	2.7.3.1. Road 2.7.3.2. Rail
	2.8. Route	2.8.1. Direct 2.8.2. With stopovers	
	2.9. Connectivity	2.9.1. Point-to-point transit 2.9.2. Spoke-hub distribution network	
3. Catering	3.1. Board	3.1.1. All meals provided 3.1.2. Meals partially provided 3.1.3. Meals excluded	3.1.2.1. Half board 3.1.2.2. Bed and breakfast
	3.2. Consumption variables	3.2.1. Time 3.2.2. Gastronomic preferences 3.2.3. Cost 3.2.4. Setting 3.2.5. Demographic microsegmentation 3.2.6. Variety of offer 3.2.7. Health requirements 3.2.8. Socialization needs	
	3.3. Establishments	Same taxonomy as accommodation	
4. Leisure	4.1. Activities	4.1.1. Not related to language learning 4.1.2. Language learning complements	
	4.2. Consumption variables	4.2.1. Time 4.2.2. Recreation preferences 4.2.3. Cost 4.2.4. Setting 4.2.5. Demographic microsegmentation 4.2.6. Variety of offer 4.2.7. Physical features	
	4.3. Establishments	Same taxonomy as accommodation	

---

Let us focus hereinafter on the language learning component and the elements that integrate it, shown in Table 3. The categorisation of all its constituents will be presented in two separate subsections. The first will be concerned with the educational input, while the language learning complements will be dealt with in the second one.

Table 3. *Language tourism product composition: the language learning components.*

1. Educational input	1.1. Informal education			
	1.2. Formal education	1.2.1. Programme design	1.2.1.1. Standard	
			1.2.1.2. Tailor-made	
		1.2.2. Educational setting	1.2.2.1. First level	
			1.2.2.2. Second level	
			1.2.2.3. Third level	
			1.2.2.4. Language school	
			1.2.2.5. Teacher's home	
		1.2.3. Student-teacher ratio		
		1.2.4. Demographics	1.2.4.1. Age	
1.2.4.2. Gender				
1.2.4.3. Education				
1.2.4.4. Occupation				
1.2.4.5. Origins				
1.2.4.6. Travel party				
1.2.5. Course timing	1.2.5.1. Length of course			
	1.2.5.2. Period of tuition			
	1.2.5.3. Duration of sessions			
	1.2.5.4. Frequency of sessions			
1.2.6. Learning focus	1.2.6.1. Learning objectives			
	1.2.6.2. Language teaching approaches			
1.2.7. Classroom activities	1.2.7.1. Nature of tasks			
	1.2.7.2. Degree of complexity			
	1.2.7.3. Goals			
	1.2.7.4. Processes			
	1.2.7.5. Roles of students			
1.2.8. Resources	1.2.8.1. Materials			
	1.2.8.2. Media			
	1.2.8.3. Degree of digitalization			
1.2.9. Assessment	1.2.9.1. Focus			
	1.2.9.2. Methods			
	1.2.9.3. Periods			
	1.2.9.4. Agents			
1.2.10. Accreditation	1.2.10.1. Exam preparation			
	1.2.10.2. Certificate of achievement			
	1.2.10.3. Certificate of attendance			
	1.2.10.4. None			
2. Language learning complements	2.1. Complements not included			
	2.2. Language learning supplemented by complementary activities			
	2.3. Activity-led learning			

### **3.1. Educational Input**

Language learning is a fundamental concern for language tourists. Therefore, the educational input they receive during their trip is a determining aspect in their language tourism experience, as it may not only contribute to their linguistic acquisition, but also to the fulfilment of their expectations with respect to other related aspects, such as self-realisation. The implications on their perceived overall satisfaction have been discussed in Iglesias, 2015b.

Although the vast majority of language travellers have access to language learning input through formal education providers, not all language tourists may be interested in hiring the services of language teaching institutions or teachers. They may acquire the target foreign language autonomously, through immersion or sustained contact with members of the local community, by interacting systematically and receiving feedback from them in conversation exchanges, by using the wide range of online language learning resources, etc.

For most language travellers, though, the main sources for their educational input are supplied in formal education contexts, usually in SA programmes (for a detailed account of consumer behaviour see Iglesias, 2015d). Such programmes have a standard design, as they have been conceived, arranged and commercialised for a market segment (e.g. juniors, exam-takers, business people, etc.). However, nowadays more and more language travel providers need to face to the demands of both agents and students, and this sometimes includes a point of difference or adapting to specific needs in tailor-made programmes. They may have to cater for special customer targets, such as closed groups.

The demand for specialised programmes catering for particular interests is growing. Themed programmes may focus on Harry Potter or be based on a school project dealing with the castles of Northumberland, just to mention two examples of summer programmes in the UK (Norris, 2016).

At present language courses are on offer not only in language schools, but also in different educational settings, ranging from primary and secondary schools to universities. A recent trend is home tuition (Smith, 2015). The flexibility of home tuition language programmes, in which the student lives and learns in the teacher's home, is becoming increasingly attractive among clients with specific objectives or who want to make the maximum progress in the shortest possible time. Every course is designed for each individual student's needs, so stays can be shorter and adapted to their requirements. Home tuition is completely student-centred, since the dates of the course, its content, the style of delivery and the extra activities are tailor-made. The students benefit from complete immersion in the culture of the host country and the chance to increase their self-confidence by practising the target language at all times. For example, home tuition can focus on exam preparation, business communication, job interview skills or professional competences. They are also ideal for couples or for students who are planning study a degree in the host country, as an introduction to experience the local culture and academic systems.

Obviously a student-teacher ratio of one-to-one does not often yield the same results as those deriving from a more crowded class. A number of UK language schools currently offer mini-group classes (between two and four students) with enhanced interaction and learning dynamics. However, larger groups also allow for fruitful outcomes. In other words, class size alone does not guarantee successful language acquisition.

In this regard, demographic aspects such as age, gender, education, occupation, origins and travel party, may prove significant (for an extensive description see Iglesias 2015a). At present, customers are becoming used to taking part in summer programmes at an earlier age

and to travelling to farther destinations. For example, more and more European students are interested in North America instead of the traditional destinations, such as the UK or Malta. Generally speaking, the nationalities of sojourners taking part in summer language programmes depend on the provider's location (Norris, 2016).

Traditionally strong outbound destinations like Russia and Spain are currently suffering from the effects of the financial crisis. This involves a drop in the volume of students coming from these countries, particularly in relation to summer programmes, which are not regarded as priority expenditure in fragile family budgets.

As for course timing, the length of the course and the period of tuition play a major role, as well as the duration and the frequency of the sessions. The period of the year when SA programmes are more demanded may be somehow related to the participants' nationalities. Summer stays are particularly influenced by the different times when different countries have school holidays.

In the northern hemisphere school-age students have very long holidays in the summer and wish to take advantage of them to take part in short-term SA stays, including language plus activities. The summer period is expanding and changing. In the past the most popular months were July and August, whereas nowadays June and July seem to be more successful, probably because the school period tends to start earlier in some countries. As for the southern hemisphere, in Australia and New Zealand summer programmes taking place in December and January have also experienced an increase. The target in these destinations includes a more Asian demographic (Norris, 2016).

Summer language programmes have always been a strong market or even the main business for language study operators, and this trend will probably continue. Nevertheless, students take shorter summer programmes, from two to four weeks, while they tend to stay abroad for longer periods the rest of the year, particularly if they enrol in language courses for academic purposes.

Contrary to what happens in year-round programmes, nationality mix is a concern in summer programmes, as opportunities for practising the target language wish to be maximised. Summer programme providers therefore need to face to the requirements from students of different cultural backgrounds, for example making an effort to develop a wider range of home stay accommodation alternatives. Operators are occasionally requested by parents to ensure that their child is the only one of their nationality in the school (Norris, 2016).

Whereas in the past those people who travelled abroad to learn English were interested in general English or exam preparation courses for an average period of six months, nowadays language study travellers have more specific aims, tend to be more results-driven and enrol in shorter courses, so language programmes have a more practical orientation (Smith, 2011).

The learning focus is another key feature with respect to the educational input (a thorough explanation is provided in Iglesias, 2015b). Following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), foreign language students may have different learning objectives: the development of the learner's general competences, the improvement of communicative language competences, the enhanced performance in language activities, the preparation to function in a specific domain, and the development of strategies or tasks in order to learn and use foreign languages as well as discover or experience foreign cultures.

As for language teaching approaches, according to Richards and Rodgers (2001), three possible views exist: the structural, the functional and the interactional. These perspectives underlie different language teaching methods, from current communicative methods (e.g. content-based, task-based, etc.) to principled eclecticism, where the method is fit to the learner.

With respect to classroom activities, tasks can be very varied in nature and they may be placed on a continuum from very simple to very complex, with different goals. The tasks that the students must undertake as language users differ from those aimed at focusing on the language learning process itself, and, in turn, development tasks may be distinguished from those specifically designed for testing purposes. The CEFR makes a distinction between 'real-life' tasks (based on the learners' needs) and pedagogic classroom tasks. Classroom tasks may involve a number of processes or language activities to different extents, since learners can engage in reception, production, interaction, and/or mediation. They can be rather passive or take an active part, and play several roles both in the tasks themselves and in task planning and management (Iglesias, 2015b).

In relation to resources, Iglesias (2015b) offers a detailed picture of materials, media and degree of digitalization. Pedagogic innovation is a relevant issue, particularly in the junior market, where contextualised dynamic, entertaining and varied learning activities that constitute a break from traditional school teaching are required. In this sense, the incorporation of new technologies is more and more valued, so many overseas language schools are now fitted with interactive whiteboards and Wi-Fi (Smith, 2011).

As far as assessment is concerned, following the CEFR the focus may be on the achievement of specific objectives versus proficiency, or on performance versus knowledge, and several methods can be used (see Iglesias 2015b for a comprehensive classification of methods). Regarding the period, assessment can be carried continuously throughout the course, and it may be an ongoing formative process of collecting learning evidence and providing the learners with feedback. Conversely, it can be carried out in fixed assessment points, at the beginning or at the end of the learning period, and it may sum up attainment at the end of the period with a grade. Concerning the agents in charge of evaluations, assessment may be objective or carried out subjectively by assessors, namely the own student (self assessment) or others, such as teachers or classmates (peer-assessment).

To finish with, accreditation may be a major concern for learners taking a language course abroad. Some may be especially interested in exam preparation, while others may only require a certificate of achievement or attendance, or they may simply not expect any sort of accreditation, for example in the case of home tuition.

Millions of international students around the world take language exams overseas each year in search of accreditation to access future higher education, employment or residential status, particularly in English speaking contexts with restrictive immigration policies requiring recognised evidence of English language skills for visa applications. This is the reason why the English exam testing sector is a growing segment of the study travel industry. English test preparation providers included in SA programmes cover a wide range of exams, from Toefl and Toeic to Ielts, but also the ones by Trinity College London or the Cambridge English suite, as well as very specialised tests for industrial or business purposes (Knott, 2015).

### 3.2. Language Learning Complements

As we have seen, the educational input is an essential component of the language tourism product, and depending on its nature it may be complemented by supplementary activities. Activities may also be integrated in an activity-led learning process and used as a vehicle for language acquisition. As a matter of fact, language learning complements are rarely excluded, particularly in formal education settings.

SA programmes that combine language learning and activities, especially in the summer, have always been a healthy niche in the global language learning industry, mainly for junior learners. Customers increasingly deviate from the traditional format, based on formal language tuition in the morning and excursions in the afternoon. This sector is changing, since students increasingly require different activities, destinations or approaches.

Activities can be a strong attraction and a fundamental ingredient in a programme's success. They are usually designed to introduce as many students to each other as possible, to get to know the local inhabitants and culture, or as a means for experiential learning.

Some of the traditional activities that are offered in combination with language learning consist of practicing sports, going on excursions or visiting tourist attractions. Alongside perennial favourites, such as football, golf, tennis and horse-riding, new options include yoga, cycling, ski and snowboarding, go-karting, wall-climbing, theatre, art, dance, volunteer work in the local community or seminars. A wider range of activities are being introduced, some of which reflect present worldwide trends. For instance, Silicon Valley tours are arranged in San Francisco for junior students (Norris, 2016).

Diversification is gaining ground, and the social and cultural activities that may be undertaken in SA programmes have also grown. These may include Chinese martial arts, dumpling cooking, tea ceremonies, calligraphy and traditional paper folding in China (Norris, 2016).

There is also growing interest in including more academic content in summer programmes. Parents nowadays also look for programmes that are project-based or that offer a taster course encompassing lectures from university professors or visits to colleges so that young students can have an overview of the academic options they may have after leaving secondary school. Thus, teenagers can get English instruction in the morning and a more academic programme in the afternoon, for example, which may help them with their future career choice. The global economic downturn and the fact that parents wish to capitalise on their investment in SA stays may be the reasons underlying this current trend towards a career-focused summer programme.

Travelling summer schools and multi-centre language settings providing courses where students stay in different locations throughout their SA sojourn are also a growing trend and an innovative concept. Learners study the target language through immersion while touring several locations within the host country. This enables them to get to know a country as well as the local culture and the host community in its own environment. At the same time, the students receive formal language instruction from teachers who accompany them throughout the whole tour. They can get up to 200 hours language practice in just a fortnight and enjoy authentic experiences (Healy, 2015a).

The summer school's location may influence the design of the programme, based on the local features, not only in cultural terms, but also with respect to the natural resources available. SA sojourners have become more daring and as a complement to formal language

instruction they engage in adventure activities or extreme sports, such as skydiving, bungee jumping or mountain biking, for example in New Zealand (Norris, 2016).

Let us finish this section illustrating some activities on offer at different destinations. In Australia, SA sojourners can choose from English plus sports activities, e.g. surfing, tennis, golf, scuba-diving, skateboarding, kayaking, snorkelling and beach volleyball, but also yoga and music. Apparently, the Europeans love surfing, whilst the Japanese love yoga. South Americans and Europeans love football and all sports, and Koreans and Taiwanese are keen on experiencing a different culture and lifestyle (Deacon, 2015a).

For a more integrated experience, in Australian ‘English through’ programmes, students may have an English class where the teacher introduces the topics and themes for the week, for instance ‘street art’, and then complements the lesson with a trip to explore the artistic uniqueness of a particular local neighbourhood. At the end of the course, students are required to put together their own tour and act as a guide for other students. In this travelling classroom, where less structured activities are integrated into the language course, students take an active part in their language learning and feel less inhibited.

As a complement to English courses, an impressive array of activities is on offer in South Africa, such as safaris, whale-watching, sky-diving, surfing, shark cage diving, paragliding and quad biking, as well as volunteer programmes.

In Cape Town English can be acquired through experimental learning and courses with activities. Students leave the classroom three times a week and go on language excursions with a teacher and a qualified South African tour guide to meet a host, who is an artist, musician, storyteller or expert in a particular field (Healy, 2015b).

Spanish and cooking or flamenco, as well as gastronomic packages, such as Spanish or French plus wine tasting, a visit to a local vineyard, or a seminar with wine producers, are becoming very popular in Spain and France. In France, the students can also choose a French and cuisine course, or they can combine general French lessons in the mornings and additional specialised French lessons for fashion in the afternoons in order to gain insight into the history and business of fashion, as well as haute couture design and dressmaking. Alternatively, French plus cultural courses aim at students who are willing to improve their French language skills and discover the local culture by means of different activities, visits and trips (Deacon, 2015b).

#### **4. Conclusions**

The factors and considerations which have been reported in the previous section allow for a thorough account of the language learning component within the language tourism product. This groundwork can be a springboard for future investigations on SA programme planning, implementation and evaluation.

The limitations of this framework may lie in the fact that, of course, other classifications may be possible and that some subcategories may overlap, as they are interrelated and limits are blurred, for example when it comes to assessment and accreditation. On the other hand, categorisation may be endless, vague or obvious (for instance in terms of student-teacher ratio), which can derive in excessive fragmentation or overgeneralisation, so practicality has been a major concern.

Product composition can be fundamental for the success of language tourism experiences from the point of view of both the supply and the demand. The scope of this article has

mainly focused on language acquisition since this is a major objective for language travellers, even though the transformational possibilities for them may go beyond purely linguistic outcomes. Nevertheless, the travel component also plays an important role, and further research may put it in relation with consumer related aspects and find out how it affects different subsectors of the tourism industry.

Forthcoming lines of research can also lead to continue identifying other key variables and processes within the market system, analyzing its strengths and weaknesses, and detecting threats for development and opportunities for improvement. In addition, other studies may aim at obtaining indicators in terms of both inbound and outbound tourism, carrying out market segmentations for marketing purposes, exploring the impacts language travel experiences generate on the users and the host destinations. The range of research options is wide and should contribute to gaining in depth academic knowledge, which should be transferred and have practical implications for the development of the industry, the local communities and the benefit of language tourists.

## References

- Allen, H. W., Dristas, V., & Mills, N. (2007). Cultural learning outcomes and summer study abroad. In M. Mantero (Ed.), *Identity and second language learning: Culture, inquiry, and dialogic activity in educational contexts* (pp. 189-215). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Bacon, S. M. (2002). Learning the rules: Language development and cultural adjustment during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35 (6), 637-646.
- Barron, A. (2003). *Acquisition in interlanguage pragmatics: Learning how to do things with words in a study abroad context*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Barron, A. (2006). Learning to Say "You" in German: The Acquisition of Sociolinguistic Competence in a Study Abroad Context. In M. A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 59-88). Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Barron, A. (2007). "Ah no honestly we're okay:" Learning to upgrade in a study abroad context. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 4 (2), 129-166.
- Campbell, C. (1996). Socializing with the teachers and prior language learning experience: A diary study. In K. M. Bailey & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Voices from the classroom* (pp. 201-223). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Carroll, J.B. (1967). Foreign language proficiency levels attained by language majors near graduation from college. *Foreign Language Annals*, 1, 131-151.
- Churchill, E., & DuFon, M. A. (2006). Evolving threads in study abroad research. In E. Churchill & M. A. DuFon (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 1-27). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Cohen, A.D., & Shively, R.L. (2007). Acquisition of requests and apologies in Spanish and French: Impact of study abroad and strategy-building intervention. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91 (2), 189-212.
- Coleman, J. (1998). Language Learning and Study Abroad: The European perspective. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 4, 167-203.
- Coleman, J., R. Grotjahn, C. Klein-Braley, & U. Raatz. (1994). The European language proficiency survey: a comparative investigation of foreign language learners in schools and universities in several European countries. *Language Testing Update*, 16, 49-55.
- Council for Cultural Co-operation, (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf)
- Deacon, G. (2015a). Activities in Australia. *Study Travel Magazine*, 243. Retrieved from <http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltn/ltmbackissues/jan15web/jan15spotlight.html>
- Deacon, G. (2015b). Language and culture in France. *Study Travel Magazine*, 244. Retrieved from <http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltn/ltmbackissues/feb15web/feb15spotlight.html>
- Deloitte. (2015). *The ALTO Deloitte Language Travel Industry Survey 2015*. Retrieved from [http://passthrough.fw-notify.net/download/962681/http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.altonet.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/00\\_The\\_ALTO\\_-\\_Deloitte\\_2015\\_.pdf](http://passthrough.fw-notify.net/download/962681/http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.altonet.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/00_The_ALTO_-_Deloitte_2015_.pdf)
- DuFon, M.A. (2006). The socialization of taste during study abroad in Indonesia. In M.A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 91-119). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Einbeck, K. (2002). Using literature to promote cultural fluency in study abroad programs. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*, 35, 59-67.

- Engle, L., & Engle, J. (2004). Assessing language acquisition and intercultural sensitivity development in relation to study abroad program design. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 219-236.
- Freed, B. F. (1998). An overview of issues and research in language learning in a study abroad setting. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 4, 31-60.
- Ginsberg, R. (1992). *Language gains during study abroad: An analysis of the ACTR data*. National Foreign Language Center Working Papers. Washington, D.C.: National Foreign Language Center.
- Hashimoto, H. (1994). Language acquisition of an exchange student within the homestay environment. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 4 (4), 209-224.
- Hassall, T. (2006). Learning to Take Leave in Social Conversations: A Diary Study. In M. A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 31-58). Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Healy, E. (2015a). Languages on the go. *Study Travel Magazine*, 252. Retrieved from <http://www.hothousemedia.com/lm/ltmbackissues/oct15web/oct15spotlight1.html>
- Healy, E. (2015b). Activities in South Africa. *Study Travel Magazine*, 253. Retrieved from <http://www.hothousemedia.com/lm/ltmbackissues/nov15web/nov15spotlight1.html>
- Huebner, T. (1995). The Effects of Overseas Language Programs: Report on a Case Study of an Intensive Japanese Course. In B. F. Freed (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 171-193). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Iglesias, M. (2014). The transformational impacts of the language tourism experience. *Proceedings of The European Conference on Language Learning 2014*. Brighton, The International Academic Forum. Retrieved from <http://iafor.org/issn-2188-112x-the-european-conference-on-language-learning-2014-official-conference-proceedings/>
- Iglesias, M. (2015a). Second Language Acquisition and the Language Tourism Experience. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 178, 139-145. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042815019631>
- Iglesias, M. (2015b). Language Travel Demand: New Insights into Language Tourists' Perceptions. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199, 149-156. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042815045024>
- Iglesias, M. (2015c). Linguistic Development and Motivation in Language Tourism. *Proceedings of LILA 15: Linguistics and Language Conference*. Istanbul, Eastern Mediterranean Academic Research Centre.
- Iglesias, M. (2015d). Travel behaviour in international student language tourism. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Tourism (ICOT 2015)*. London, International Association for Tourism Policy. Retrieved from [http://iatour.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ICOT2015\\_CONFERENCE\\_PROCEEDINGS.pdf](http://iatour.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ICOT2015_CONFERENCE_PROCEEDINGS.pdf)
- Iglesias, M. (2016). The Language Tourism Market System: Conceptualising Language Tourism. *International Journal of Scientific Management and Tourism*, 2(1), 25-40. Retrieved from <http://www.ijosmt.com/index.php/ijosmt/article/view/69/79>
- Iino, M. (2006). Norms of interaction in a Japanese homestay setting: Toward a two-way flow of linguistic and cultural resources. In M. A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 151-173). Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Jackson, J. (2008). *Language, identity, and study abroad: Sociocultural perspectives*. Oakville, CT: Equinox.
- Jackson, J. (2011). Host language proficiency, intercultural sensitivity, and study abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 21, 167-188.

- Kinginger, C. (2013). Introduction. In C. Kinginger (Ed.), *Social and Cultural Aspects of Language Learning in Study Abroad* (pp. 3-16). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Kinginger, C., & Belz, J. (2005). Sociocultural Perspectives on Pragmatic Development in Foreign Language Learning: Case Studies from Telecollaboration and Study Abroad. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 2 (4), 369-421.
- Kinginger, C., & Farrell, K. (2004). Assessing development of meta-pragmatic awareness in study abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 19-42.
- Knott, M. (2015). Examining English. *Study Travel Magazine*, 246. Retrieved from <http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltn/ltnbackissues/apr15web/apr15specreport.html>
- Krzic, G. (1995). A study of Japanese and American intercultural relations and learning. In National Foreign Language Resource Center (Ohio State University), *Study abroad: Research on learning language and culture in context* (pp. 85-108). Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, National Foreign Language Resource Center.
- Liskin-Gasparro, J. E., & Urdaneta, L. (1995). A semester abroad for second-year Spanish students: Exploring the effects of linguistic and cultural immersion. In National Foreign Language Resource Center (Ohio State University), *Study abroad: Research on learning language and culture in context* (pp. 138-160). Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, National Foreign Language Resource Center.
- Marriott, H. E. (1993). Acquiring sociolinguistic competence: Australian secondary students in Japan. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 4 (4), 167-192.
- Marriott, H. E. (1995). The Acquisition of Politeness Patterns by Exchange Students in Japan. In B. F. Freed (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 197-224). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Marriott, H., & Enomoto, S. (1995). Secondary exchanges with Japan: exploring students' experiences and gains. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics Series S*, 12, 64-82.
- Matsumura, S. (2001). Learning the Rules for Offering Advice: A Quantitative Approach to Second Language Socialization. *Language Learning*, 51 (4), 635-679.
- Matsumura, S. (2003). Modelling the Relationships among Interlanguage Pragmatic Development, L2 Proficiency, and Exposure to L2. *Applied Linguistics*, 24 (4), 465-491.
- Matsumura, S. (2007). Exploring the aftereffects of study abroad on interlanguage pragmatic development. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 4 (2), 167-192.
- Mauranen, A. (1994). Two discourse worlds: Study genres in Britain and Finland. *Finlance*, 13, 1-40.
- McMeekin, A. (2006). Negotiation in a Japanese study abroad setting. In M. A. DuFon & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp. 177-202). Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Norris, B. (2016). Here comes summer. *Study Travel Magazine*, 257. Retrieved from <http://www.studytravel.network/magazine/online/march2016>
- Owen, J. (2002). Interlanguage pragmatics in Russian: A study of the effects of study abroad and proficiency levels on request strategies. Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A. *The Humanities and Social Sciences*, 62, 4145-4146.
- Paige, R. M., Cohen, A. D., & Shively, R. L. (2004). Assessing the impact of a strategies-based curriculum on language and culture learning abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 253-276.
- Reynolds-Case, A. (2013). The value of short-term study abroad: An increase in students' cultural and pragmatic competency. *Foreign Language Annals*, 46 (2), 311-322.

- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667305>
- Rissel, D. (1995). Learning by doing: outcomes of an overseas summer project for teachers. In National Foreign Language Resource Center (Ohio State University), *Study abroad: Research on learning language and culture in context* (pp. 161- 182). Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, National Foreign Language Resource Center.
- Ritchie, B. W., Carr, N., & Cooper, C. (Eds.). (2003). *Managing Educational Tourism*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Siegal, M. (1995a). A perspective on individual differences in the acquisition of sociolinguistic competency in Japanese as a second language and study abroad in Japan. In National Foreign Language Resource Center (Ohio State University), *Study abroad: Research on learning language and culture in context* (pp. 183-216). Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, National Foreign Language Resource Center.
- Siegal, M. (1995b). Individual Differences and Study Abroad: Women Learning Japanese in Japan. In B. F. Freed (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 225-243). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Siegal, M. (1996). The role of learner subjectivity in second language sociolinguistic competency: Western women learning Japanese. *Applied Linguistics*, 17, 356-382.
- Smith, J. V. (2011). Changing student profile. *Study Travel Magazine*, 200. Retrieved from <http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltn/ltmbackissues/jun11web/jun11specreport.htm>
- Smith, J. V. (2015). Especially for you-home tuition programmes. *Study Travel Magazine*, 252. Retrieved from <http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltn/ltmbackissues/oct15web/oct15dir.html>
- Taguchi, N. (2011). The effect of proficiency and study-abroad experience on pragmatic comprehension. *Language Learning*, 61, 909-939.
- Watson, J. R., Siska, P., & Wolfel, R. L. (2013). Assessing gains in language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and regional awareness during study abroad: A preliminary study. *Foreign Language Annals*, 46 (1), 62-79.