

**Paper for the conference “Residence Abroad and Language Learning: Where Are We Now?”**

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## **Language Practices and Intercultural Experiences of Transnational Mobile Students**

By the late '90 migrant transnationalism brought to the fore a new theoretical approach which tackles the connectedness of individuals experiencing types of mobility and migration over time and space. To be ‘here and there’ at the same time represents the paramount feature of many current transnational configurations. Student mobility resembles transnational features in terms of regular contacts, communication, and language exchange across borders, traveling between home and host country, transnational practices as remittances or exchange of ideas, cultural and political connections.

Foreign language acquisition and intercultural experiences have been mentioned as positive outcomes of their mobility together with the motivation for further learning and language teaching to peers at home. Research questions for this exploratory paper pertain to the long-term impact of these transnational configurations on students’ settlement or circulation, changing sense of belonging resulting from intercultural encounters and language development originating from further life experiences and outcomes.

Data in the present study includes the transnational experiences of different cohorts: 1) French mobile L2 students, 2) Catalan/Spanish, English L2 students, and 3) Turkish, English L2 students. Their experiences were examined upon their return to their home countries and 3-5 years following their re-entry in order to further explore the concept of “transnationalism in SA”. That is, whether their sojourns were simply an experience that started and ended after a few months, or whether it was “a new chapter” that still has an impact in their present lives. Results in this exploratory study point out to the life changing nature of SA experiences which not only shape the present personalities of students, but also their future selves and decisions. The adopted research approach is also interesting for other locations in the world in view of established patterns of transnational migration/mobility between for instance, countries of the ASEAN region and beyond, like Philippines, Thailand and Japan.