

**Not just quantity but quality:
The link between domains of practice and development of phraseological sophistication
while abroad**

Studies have shown that phraseological competence during study abroad (SA) tends to develop very slowly (e.g., Edmonds & Gudmestad, 2021; Vandeweerd et al., 2022) and that even a large amount of target language (TL) input does not necessarily guarantee development (Arvidsson, 2019; Taguchi et al., 2013). This suggests that development is not a function of sheer quantity of TL exposure (cf. Ellis, 2003), but rather a question of the specific *domains of practice* that learners engage in while abroad (Taguchi & Collentine, 2018). For example, Zhou and Baffoe-Djan (2023) showed that SA participants who engaged in more informal spoken language contact demonstrated higher levels of productive knowledge of phrasal verbs.

In this study, we examine which TL-activities are most conducive to the acquisition of sophisticated phraseological units, defined as: “word combinations that are appropriate to the topic and style of writing rather than just general, everyday vocabulary” (Paquot, 2019, p. 125). In line with Taguchi and Collentine’s (2018) framework of *domains of practice*, we hypothesize that in order to develop phraseological sophistication, learners must engage in activities where sophisticated phraseological units are likely to be encountered.

Using data from the LANGSNAP corpus (Mitchell et al., 2017), we investigate which types of TL input best explain the increase in the phraseological sophistication (mean PMI of verb + direct object collocations) in argumentative essays written by L2 learners of French over a one-year period. Our findings show that quantity of TL exposure on its own is not a strong predictor of development. Rather, development seems to be related to the extent to which learners engaged in reading while abroad. These results shed more light on the development of phraseological sophistication and speak to the usefulness of triangulating survey and corpus linguistic data in the SA context (Granfeldt et al., 2023).

References

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