

**Language Identity Exploration through my Study Abroad Poems:  
An introspective, critical account of my year abroad**

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**Abstract**

Through the critical analysis of my study abroad poems, this capstone project aims to explore how my language identity has changed during my year abroad in the UK. It consists of a poetry portfolio with 10 poems which depict my study abroad experience and daily encounters before, after, and during various stages of my sojourn. With references to poststructuralist notions of identities and other applied linguistic concepts, the analysis essay which follows explores how my language identity has changed by exploring the changes in my sociopragmatic competence, various facets of identities, and affiliation towards the English language. This study shows that my imagined, reflexive, projected, and recognised identities are challenged, repositioned, reconstructed, and eventually evolved during different stages of my year abroad. While I felt detached from the English language during the Culture Shock phase, the sojourn has changed me from having a fragile affection for the English language to developing a stronger and long-lasting language affiliation, resulting in a stronger English language identity. At the end of this project, suggestions are given for other study abroad students and intercultural sojourners based on the reflection of my sojourn.

## **Reflection**

This project was an exciting opportunity for me to engage in a deep and critical reflection of my year abroad, which is the highlight of my undergraduate study. Interested in both linguistic and literature, I really enjoy working on this project as it connects the literary writing techniques with the applied linguistic concepts which I have explored at university. It was absolutely enjoyable to write poems about my study abroad experience and experiment with creative forms of poetry. Through critically reflecting on my study abroad experience, I also discovered how enhancing my sociopragmatic competence in English during my year abroad has changed me as a person and altered my identity, which further helps me reflect on the experience of being an English major. I have not only become a more competent user of the English language, but also a critical English major with a global identity. It is also impressive to see that this capstone project has transformed me from a girl confused about her identity changes to one with a high degree of self-awareness. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Jackson for always encouraging me to reflect critically, particularly on my study abroad experience. The habit of reflection is lifelong. I

look forward to applying this skill to not only my intercultural journeys ahead, but also other aspects of my life, and continue to live a fruitful life as a reflective English major.