

The influence of studying abroad on word-production acquisition and intercultural growth of Indonesian EFL learner

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how an English Foreign Language learner who studies abroad acquires and develops her vocabularies according to the subjects' perspective. The concept of studying abroad in the target language country can lead to the improvement of the language as well as the individual intercultural growth and perspective. Numerous statistical studies on the importance of studies abroad (SA) have mainly identified language acquisition as a successful way. Students who also lived abroad are exposed by other cultural environment, and therefore offering them to experienced cultural differences. Through the interpretation of the interview results, the research reports the learner's word-knowledge development in the light of their studying abroad (SA) experience. One reason for anyone in learning foreign language is when they move out with their relatives in order to navigate with new worlds, new people, new cultures, and many other things of the country. This research shows that friends in the neighborhood and school contribute greatly to language development. The results showed that internal and external influences affected the English accomplishment of the participant. It turned out, the English proficiency influenced by intrinsic motivation, attitude, personality, cognitive style, and learning strategy. While the external influences of the participant were schooling, curriculum, motivation, and culture in her surroundings. The results show that motivation and anxiety are closely related to the English output.

Keywords: English Foreign Learner; Second Language Acquisition; Study Abroad; Vocabulary knowledge

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Introduction

Each human interacts with others through the use of a language. Language is a method of conveying ideas to people's minds and is used as a medium of communicating. Communication cannot be avoided by a human being who lives in a society, as they communicate and socialize with each other by using a language or even some languages. Language is the gateway to conversation. However, learning a foreign language is not always easy, particularly for those who learn a foreign language in Indonesia, for instance learning English in Indonesia. Indonesian learners of English would have a number of challenges, such as not getting enough exposure to the language feedback and not having enough reference to practice. English, thanks to its global position, greatly influences

global exchange, which includes multiple speakers originating from diverse cultures and speaking different native languages. This condition urges people to be able to use English in such a way that they can adjust to today's transparent age in which people can easily come and go from country to country.

Students, teachers and academicians all believe that studying abroad is one of the most beneficial and optimal ways of being fluent in a second language (Pellegrino, 1998). Learners who spend a great deal of time in the target language (TL) environment are exposed to frequent and intense time to engage with native speakers, achieving the communicative goals by increasing their linguistic and sociolinguistic abilities stronger. According to Pinar (2016), consequently learners will seek out chances to

apply second language outside of the classroom and engage with native to practice and communicate in real-life situations. Moreover, the experience of staying and living in the target language country may lead to the learning of the language especially on the dialect, style, and accuracy (Suryani, 2015). Various statistical studies have been undertaken to assess the value of a study abroad (SA) in terms of proficiency outcomes, essentially identifying a study abroad as a successful language acquisition.

Second Language Acquisition is concerned with the study of individuals and groups who have learned a language by learning their first language as young children and by learning the language. The additional language, excluding the first language, is referred to as the second language, although it may simply be the third, fourth or tenth language to be studied (Troike, 2012). In Indonesia, English is a foreign language and is primarily taught in schools or other classrooms, although English has a special and important role in Indonesia, English is now a subject at all levels of education, and English is now a compulsory subject. The idea of living or learning in the target language group is important for the development of linguistic skills and the understanding of its culture. The belief that learners will be regularly introduced to L2 and will gain real feedback more deeply than in a daily language class in their own societies is one reason why traveling abroad is seen as the best opportunity for language acquisition.

Most of the circumstances which someone wants to learn a foreign language is that they have to join their families in order to travel to other states. The new world, the new population, the new society and many other new aspects require them to be able to speak in a language that is understood by the citizens of the country. According to Lumbangaol and Mazali (2020) speaking is crucial skill that helps users to distribute their opinions, expressions, and feelings without being limited in culture, language, and country. This is in line with J and Fajar (2019), they stated that speaking is communication that must convey ideas and people need practice, experience, knowledge and sub skills to be able to fluently speak, particularly L2 learners. The fact that not able to speak in a native language that finds it challenging for them to relate to the

surroundings. As a result, parents certainly have a very critical part to play in leading their children and giving them a great opportunity to learn a foreign language. This is experienced by one Indonesian student. In brief, when someone travels, stays, or potentially lives for a variety of times in an English-speaking country, communication in English is inevitable.

Therefore, what if the learners are exposed to the environment that uses English as a major communication language? One of the reasons why study abroad is considered to be one of the best is found on the elaborate study by Ginsberg and Miller (Ginsberg & Miller, 1995) have been undertaking In order to discover the ideas that students have about language and language learning, an in-depth analysis of the experiences of their time abroad (Ginsberg and Miller, 1995). During their time abroad, students felt that their communicative skills were improving. In addition, Dwyer (Dwyer, 2015) found that study abroad had a substantial effect on students in the fields of maintaining language use, academic success, intercultural and personal growth and career preferences. Most notably, the research indicates that the effect of learning abroad can be maintained for a span of up to 50 years (Dwyer, 2015).

In addition, Lennon said in his research that his students found that studying abroad helped them to interact and communicate with native speakers who gave students a native-speaking experience that was more colloquial than was possible in the classroom. Students have made major gains in speech and hearing (Lennon, 1989). More likely, learners are expected to get more opportunities to improve real-life communication in the classroom (Collentine and Freed, 2004). Segalowitz et al., (2004) also looked over on how 46 students, 26 who studied abroad in Spain and 20 in United States, developed their fluency, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. The results revealed learners who studied abroad developed their oral speaking skill.

However, in contrast to the above, comparative studies of Isabelli (2004) and Isabelli and Nishida (2005) have shown that studying in the natural environment has enabled students to develop more grammatical skills than in the domestic sense. Isabelli (2004) examined the acquisition of the null subject in a survey of thirty-one intermediate-level Spanish students who studied in Spain (omission of the

grammatical subject). Data research has shown that students studying abroad have significantly improved their comprehension and use of grammar. Furthermore, Kenne (2014) found out on her study that the circumstances, interactions, and experiences while abroad provided the learners with continuous communicative contact with the native speakers. The continuous communicative contact allowed the learners to be exposed in familiar and common words (Kenne, 2014).

However, only few pre-post studies have been used to measure the importance of the duration of the course, though there has been some evidence to support the significant impact of overseas programs or study abroad programs. Three prior studies have attempted to investigate this (Engle and Engle, 2003; Medina-López-Portillo, 2004; Paige et al., 2004), and these studies showed that the length of the course improve the language skills of the learners. Following their overseas experience and completion of learning activities in the place of destination, each program was specifically tailored to address the concerns of students who had a significant background in the non-English language of the country of destination (usually 2-3 years of language study). The length of time spent studying abroad varies from each student, with the shortest being seven weeks and the longest being one year.

The outcomes of the three studies were not the same. Based on Medina-López-Portillo, (2004) study, either a seven-weeks or a semester language program in Mexico raise the intercultural awareness and language skill learners. Paige et al., (2004), on the other hand, discovered that students who spent a semester in various French and Spanish-speaking countries displayed a significant improvement in the intercultural awareness and language development. While the figures provided by Engle and Engle (2003) do not address the statistic result, it mentions that students in a term program improved their intercultural skills, and students in the year-long curriculum improved even further, with their rate of progress improving in the second term. Thus, in order to investigate the problems that the participant learning English as the subject's third language, the writer formulates to find out on how does an EFL who studies abroad

acquire and produce her words as well as on, how does she produce a word in English language as her third language?

In the sense of language acquisition, the "second" language is the language learned in the mother tongue. Smith has described a second language as a term for any language acquired by a learner other than the first language, regardless of how that language is acquired (Smith, 1994). Ellis described the acquisition as a process of catching up with a language by the way and without deliberate effort. It happens naturally without explicit instructions and can be generalized in both the first and second languages (Ellis, 2013). According to Krashen, the process of learning the language is close, if not equal, to how children acquire their first language skills.

Language acquisition is an unconscious process; language learners are not actually aware of the fact that they are learning languages but are only aware of the idea that they are using language to communicate (Krashen, 2009). The product of vocabulary learning, of learned competence, is also subconscious. Moreover, we are not constantly aware of the rules of the languages we have studied. Instead, we have a sense of correctness. Whether there were grammatical sentences mistakes that feel wrong or even if we don't consciously know if the rule has broken. Other methods to explain acquisition include unconscious learning, casual learning, and natural learning. Acquisition is a "picking-up" language in non-technical language.

The second approach to gain proficiency in a second language is through language learning. Trudgill describes that language is not only a clear means of transmitting knowledge about any other issue, but also a very essential means of creating and sustaining relationships with others (Trudgill, 2004). In this situation, language is not used for conversation, but rather for developing a connection with other people in our social life. From now on, we will use the term "learning" to refer to the experience of a second language, to know the rules, to be aware of them, and to be able to talk about them.

Vocabulary is one of the most critical facets of language learning, although most students do face certain challenges. The concern remains that many children do not have access to linguistically rich environments that facilitate

the production of vocabulary. This is particularly true of our most disadvantaged children living in poverty. Many surveys have pointed out that the biggest challenge for students is lack of vocabulary. English vocabulary is complex, with three major facets related to form, sense and usage, as well as layers of meaning related to the origins of individual words.

Word knowledge is an integral component of communicative competence and is necessary for second-language development and understanding (Coady and Huckin, 1997). What does it entail to know a word like that? A person awareness of vocabulary is such a big scale which includes knowledge of grammar, syntax, various meanings, the ways in which the term may be used, the extent of which it is used, morphological and syntactic properties, and how the word interacts with other words. Vocabulary is one of the most critical aspects of effective and substantive conversation in both the mother tongue and the target language. Hunt and Beglar say, "The heart of language learning and usage is the lexicon." Approximately 20,000-word families are known to the educated native English speaker at the age of 20 (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). Most words, both from native speakers and second-language learners, are learned by means of multiple references to a word in diverse ways such as hearing, listening and conversation.

The belief that it is important to live or study in the destination language country in order to gain linguistic knowledge and understand its target language. The presumption that students

will be continuously exposed to L2 and will obtain real feedback more deeply than in a normal language course in their country is one reason why traveling abroad is seen as the best context for language learning. In addition, learners are expected to have more chances to use L2 outside the classroom and to engage with native speakers, to bring what they have learned into practice and to develop communication skills in real-life communicative circumstances (Collentine and Freed, 2004). It is also a common procedure to advise learners to enhance their language experience with the natural experience as there are many diverse settings with the native (Isabelli-García, 2017).

Therefore, the present study will demonstrate and provide evidence from personal interviews of a learner who had similar invaluable experiences after studying abroad. The subject's perception and subject's acquisition of English during this study abroad will be the two focus of the research. Students, who undergo changes while studying abroad, could have affected their second language acquisition even only a little. Since subjects' own interpretations of their language and learning experience are studied in this form of qualitative research, it can be more difficult to make broad generalizations. However, this type of descriptive study allows for a distinct, deeper insights analysis. It enables one to comprehend language learning with a focus on personal development and the participant's reaction to the event. This emphasizes the importance of learning more about each individual's perspective and how they interpret it.

Research Method

The research was a qualitative approach, primarily by the use of a case study. Following this method, it was agreed to record the word output of the learner in order to collect the data. The aim of this study was not to find a conclusive conclusion, but to discover specific issues in order to provide some insight into similar future studies. The methodology used is a descriptive method.

The data was collected by in-depth interview and documentation such as audio recordings. The subject of the study was a 21-year-old woman, an active first-year student of PSB Academy Singapore. The setting of the

study was conducted in the woman's circumstances and her friends. The interviews in this study were divided into two. The first, the researchers interview A which was given to the student's herself and interview B which given to her parents and close friend. The topics asked to the participant were the learners' perceptions on her own ability on English language, the way she acquires English language, the strategies of the participant in learning English words, and the perception of studying abroad in her acquisition. These are the questions of the interview, for some responses she was instructed to use a rating

scale from 1-5, with 1 being the worst, and 5 being the best.

Table 1
Interview Questions

No	Questions
1	Where did you study in another country?
2	How long did you study in another country?
3	How many English lessons did you take before leaving?
4	How secure did you feel about speaking the language, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely unsure and 5 being completely certain?
5	What was your living situation like when you were away from home?
6	Outside of your home and classroom, how much did you talk to native speakers?
7	What were your objectives prior to moving abroad?
8	On a scale of 1 to 5, how motivated were you to learn English?
9	How were your lessons when you were studying abroad?
10	On a scale of 1 to 5, do you think you've learned a lot from your lessons?
11	What was the most difficult aspect of making contact with people from other countries?
12	What did you feel unprepared to do when you were away from home?
13	What were some of the most common communication blunders you made while traveling?
14	Did you have any difficulties with vocabulary? What are some examples?
15	Did you have any difficulties with pronunciation?
16	What are the examples of any difficulties with pronunciation have you had?
17	Did you develop language knowledge of the area you were studying? The Examples of this?
18	How did you listen and understand while you were talking to native speakers?

19	What did you feel the most changed you had during your time abroad?
20	What did you take away from your study abroad trip, and how would you describe your overall impression of it?
21	What, if anything, do you know from your travels that you wouldn't have known in a university language class?
22	Can you travel internationally again? If so, how can you go about doing it differently?

Data Analysis

Later based on the above questions, the researchers followed the Miles et al., (2014) data processing model. The data analysis of the Miles and Huberman model took the following steps: 1) The researchers collected the data needed to complete the study. 2) The researchers minimized the data which has been obtained by summarizing and selecting particular items. 3) In order to view the data, the researchers may use the summary to explain the whole content of the data. (4) Finally, the researchers validated data analysis by concluding the findings of the report.

The participant of this study was a 22-year-old woman, the only child in the household, born of an Indonesian mother from Tanjung Pinang and a Chinese foster-father from Singapore. Her similar look and higher posture than the Asian women made the subject quite blend in with her friends in Singapore. She is a friendly and polite girl, she always tries to be humble to everyone she encounters, even though she does not know them.

She grew up with her grandmother and her uncle in Tanjung Pinang since she was born until elementary school. When she graduated from her elementary school, her mom decided to bring her to Singapore to continue study. She took an English course for a year in her hometown before officially moved to Singapore. In 2008, she moved to Singapore and continued studying at an Indonesian School in Singapore until senior high school. Her mom always told her to talk to the bus driver to improve her English and don't be scared if she makes any mistake. Since then, she always tried to talk to the bus driver or other passengers to improve her English. Of course, it was hard for

her to communicate with local people, but she doesn't have any choice but to speak.

After graduating from Junior College, she had difficulty to enter Singapore Local Polytechnics due to her status and her results. She got rejected by 5 Polytechnics. Since 2014 to 2018, she had been working part time at a private institution in Singapore as an admin staff. In that period of time, she did a lot of things from searching for school, looking for a better job, until dating with a local man. The

subject said that he supports her dream to continue study. In 2018, after all the struggles she faced, she finally entered PSB Academy taking Diploma Business Administration (Accounting and Finance). She has taken more than 8 classes this semester and also an English class. She doesn't find any difficulty in communicating with her friends and lecturer. Now, she is selected as a student for Students Ambassadors in her campus and doing many volunteering.

Results and Discussion

This research would demonstrate the real communicative engagement and personal development that students have encountered whilst abroad. It would then relate how these changes have an effect on the student language learning process. This research represented the student's memory of the language learning process. The researchers contrasted the impressions of the subject in the present to incidents that have taken place in the past as they contribute to an unresolved phase. Before studying abroad, students relied on their own experience to explain what had been learned abroad.

Many questions were asked about her understanding of English from the viewpoint of the previous beginner, EFL learner in Singapore. Knowing the understanding of students is important because it is one of the main factors of learning. According to Lindsay & Norman, interpretation is the mechanism by which species perceive and arrange the sensation of giving birth to useful knowledge in the universe (Pickens, 2005).

As she was asked about her understanding of English, she said, *"I tried my best to learn English, but I also got better in Malay."* As an EFL learner living in Singapore, she has to adjust to the world where she lives on a regular basis. For her, studying the Malay language is better than learning the English language. However, since most of her peers use English, she is often more likely to learn English than Malay. This condition allowed her to speak three languages, Indonesian, English and Malay. When asked why she was studying English, she replied that she was learning English to communicate with people who did not speak her language. In other words, conversation and understanding were the key factors for her learning English.

She knew that if she had learned English, she could live well in Singapore.

She was also able, but not fluent, to speak Malay and Mandarin. Because of the importance of English to her, she told the writer that even when she's not living in Singapore, she will still study English. *"In this era, uh, you know English as the international language is very essential to be mastered. Even in small things at our daily life, English is the language that was used right? Um, such as the language in our daily-use products, it uses English in it."* Much like many learners of English generally perceive the fact that English is a foreign language, the subject often saw it as the primary justification for learning English. The topic also replied that the reason she learned English was to talk to her parents, to the world, and also to her new friend.

In studying abroad, she offered details that she was very happy and fortunate to be in this kind of environment where she could interact with local people. By integrating into the entire experience of the language, the participant underwent personal changes which, in turn, affected the acquisition of the language. She found that whilst studying overseas, she was able to understand the language as something more flexible and engaging. *"I am very fortunate to be able to live in Singapore, and surround myself with people that use English in daily life."*

Every learner of a foreign language has a learning preference to learn a language. This session was to see how to interpret the subject's understanding of the language, and then to be able to speak English. This is an important feature of this analysis since, as is well known, learning technique is one of the main factors in mastering a foreign language.

This question was answered by informing the writer that she had learnt from her peers, parents, education and workplace. Here the researchers discovered that the subject only learned English by engaging with her peers and learning English at school, as she always applies English in school. Despite her great desire to master English, the participant did not feel enough to learn from her peers, school and workplace. Most of the English language or vocabularies she has already learned from her students, lecturers, classmates and a few words from her parents.

The subject said, —someone who teaches me English is teacher and friends. In line with the subject, the participant's claimed that she had not obtained a new English word at home because her mother had spoken it in mixed languages, such as Indonesia, Malay or Mandarin with her relatives. Meanwhile, her lecturers at campus always use English in class. She also said that she acknowledges certain materials faster in the English class better than her classmates because she is an engaged and participatory pupil. This has proven that the subject is a driven EFL learner. Her intense needs for the acquisition of English may be one of the factors that inspired her.

When reflecting about her time abroad, she spoke about two distinct forms of experiences that influenced her language learning experience. The first form noticed by the student was the contact of the classroom while abroad. This research served to explain what she had gained overseas, but there was no examination of the difference between the classrooms. Their presence in the classroom, however, was the second mode of encounter that affected the learning of the second language by the participants.

The contact with the English language they had encountered was in a radically different style from the prior encounter, which had originally occurred exclusively in the classroom of the home institution. Their real-life experiences have allowed them to experience language first-hand and to fully realize that English is not something set in stone, but something that is continually changing. She spoke about the out-of-school exposure, *"I realized you couldn't stop learning."*

From the studies presented above, including those concerning the development of language skills, we may observe the positive effects of

study abroad on fluency and pronunciation, regardless of the period of the stay (e.g., Díaz-Campos, 2006; Freed, So, and Lazar, 2003). In the sense of the issue, provided that the study abroad is taking place in Singapore, it naturally also acquires the other majority language that is Mandarin. She also unwittingly absorbed the local dialect, Singaporean English. The results revealed that the English achievement of the subject was affected by internal and external influences. The internal influences influencing her English were among others, inner drive and mindset. According to Henter (2014), these factors are included in the affective variables in the learning of foreign languages.

This study found that the correlations suggest that optimism and anxiety are closely related to English success out of the affective variables. The participant can also spoke in four languages, namely Indonesian, English, Malay and Mandarin. This means that she is a multilingual person. This gives her some of the benefits. Multilingualism cannot only help the participant cross connectivity barriers, but it can also lead to more recognition among people of different backgrounds. This mutual appreciation for people of diverse cultural and social origins will build harmony within the world that has the potential to contribute to a healthier society. Multilingualism is the ability of human speakers or a group of speakers to communicate successfully in three or more languages.

We can observe from the studies presented above—particularly those concerning the development of language skills—the positive effects of study abroad on fluency and pronunciation, regardless of the duration of the stay (e.g., Diaz-Campos 2006; Freed, So, and Lazar, 2003). The subject can speak in four languages, namely Indonesian language, English language, Malay language, and Mandarin language. It means that the subject is a multilingual person. This brings her some advantages. Multilingualism cannot only help the subject to bridge gaps in communication, but it can also lead to more respect among people of different backgrounds. This shared respect for others of different cultural and social backgrounds can create cohesion within the world that has the potential to result in a better society. Multilingualism is the ability of an individual speaker or a community of speakers

to communicate effectively in three or more languages.

Circumstances and experiences abroad are creating a special learning environment. This learning environment requires constant exposure and participation in the target language. True communicative practice helps students create associations and memories within a language that enables them to develop a language of their own. The researchers can say that not only did participant learn language learning through exposure on their own, but also the listening and actual communicative experiences helped them learn that English is more than what is depicted in schooling. More specifically, genuine communicative communication has helped students build meaningful connections with individuals. When participants interacted and formed relationships, they underwent internal changes. This personal growth and trust have allowed learners to cultivate a personal, deep, life-changing interest in language. They were within the language themselves, and they were able to identify themselves within the target language as an entity. A crucial characteristic of their future language learning is this new contact and understanding of oneself within a language.

When learners study languages abroad, their learning experience is turned into one that does not shut down. As the student continues to understand the fluidity of the language, he or she can continue to generate more complex and random ideas, a hallmark of higher proficiency. The communicative atmosphere of study abroad helps students develop their language skills. Continuous communication in a wide variety of contexts has enabled students to learn the target language on an ongoing basis. These findings show that students understood how complex, unpredictable and volatile the language could be. Their lives have taken place in the language while abroad. Their lives were almost as variable as language, thus allowing interactions and relationships that could not be re-created to live in a communicative

atmosphere with language. This takes learning to a different level, but it also helps to build a language self that has more consequences for the acquisition of language. It is in the uncertainty and unpredictable immersion experience that one will develop personally.

Moreover, according to Marijuan and Sanz (2018), the length of the formal study during the study abroad time in the target language country has a critical role in the process of the language acquisition. In addition, the more intensive the target language exposure abroad tends to benefit more than in a home county situation (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018). Regardless of the amount of time spent overseas, the types of classes taken, or the degree of proficiency at which they began; the idea of actively communicating with the native speakers as well as regularly engaging in the interaction is main goal to achieve the acquisition (Kenne, 2014). In a way promoting the SLA, successful blending with the new environment is also essential in order to level up their language with meaningful interactions.

In the subject's context, as the study abroad setting is in Singapore, she is naturally also acquiring the other majority language which is Mandarin. She also unconsciously acquired the local accent, which is Singaporean English. The findings showed that the subject's English achievement was influenced by internal and external factors. The internal factors affecting her English were, among others, intrinsic motivation and attitude. These factors, according to Henter (2014, p. 374) are included in affective variables in foreign language learning. He revealed that the correlations show that out of the affective factors, motivation and anxiety are strongly linked to English performance. In addition, Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, and Brown (2013) statement that mention study abroad program tend to develop not only skills on the language side but also increase personal independence, supported the research (Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, and Brown, 2013).

Conclusion

From the findings mentioned above, it can be seen that neighbourhood and school friends are contributing a great deal to learning and developing language skills. Since she gets

encouragement and guidance from her lecturers and peers in school and her job. Schools and employers are the place where she will learn the English skills, she has without risk

of being mistaken. And when she discovers a mistake and encounters challenges in English, her teachers will be able to help. As we have studied, the mother tongue of the participant is Indonesian, and since she lives in an area that has not been used by Indonesians, she is very eager to learn English to interact with her peers in the school environment and in the workplace.

Moreover, the willingness of the participant to learn English is very high making her English more important than the Indonesian language. She studies English through self-teaching and private lessons before joining the world of education in Singapore and creates the English language by still using the English language as she speaks to someone other than her relatives. Based on the results it can be concluded that the participant, as an Indonesian EFL learner, had a positive experience of English language

learning. This perception had a positive impact on her English skills. Some internal influences affected her English abilities, such as inner inspiration, temperament, disposition, cognitive style, and learning technique. The external influences of the subject's learning in English were teaching, curricula, extrinsic inspiration and society of its surroundings.

In relation to word development, the subject had obtained all classes of English word of differing degrees and amounts. Any of the vocabulary she learned from the top to the bottom were noun, phrase, adjective, pronoun, adverb, conjuncture, and interjection. Given the participant's huge obstacles, not just the problems of acquiring a foreign language, but also the hurdles to adaptation to a new society in Indonesia, her multilingualism has had a positive influence on her English abilities, both technically and actually.

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