k:ON – Kölner Online Journal für Lehrer*innenbildung, Sonderheft/Special Issue 6, 2026, 125–151
https://doi.org/10.18716/ojs/kON/2026.s6.6

Sebastian Windisch

The Linguistic Risk–Taking Initiative for Academic Short–Term Study Abroad

Abstract

This article outlines the implementation and evaluation of the Linguistic Risk-Taking (LRT) Initiative (Slavkov & Séror, 2019) for German learners on short-term academic excursions[1]. The initiative encourages students to step outside their linguistic comfort zones by engaging in small, authentic linguistic risks, referred to here as 'challenges'. These challenges are documented in an adapted version of the LRT passport, the *Studienreisepass* (*STRP*), which was piloted with A2-level learners from France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, and refined through an action research cycle. A mixed-methods research design combining questionnaires, *STRP* records, observations, and interviews was used to examine the influence of the *STRP* on learners' perceived language proficiency and Willingness to Communicate (WTC). The findings suggest that the *STRP* may foster both, particularly when embedded in a structured pedagogical framework, and that it is especially effective for learners with higher levels of autonomy and self-regulation.

Der Artikel beschreibt die Implementierung und Evaluation der *Linguistic Risk-Taking* (*LRT*) Initiative (Slavkov & Séror, 2019) für DaF-Lernende im Rahmen von Studienreisen im deutschsprachigen Ausland. Dabei setzt sich die Initiativte zum Ziel, Lernende dazu anzuregen, ihre sprachlichen Komfortzonen zu verlassen und im Zielland kleine authentische sprachliche Risiken, sogenannte *Challenges* eingehen. Diese werden im Studienreisepass (STRP) dokumentiert, der für Deutschlernende von Universitäten aus Frankreich, Spanien, Portugal und Italien auf dem GeRS-Niveau A2 entwickelt und im Rahmen eines Aktionsforschungszyklus weiter angepasst wurde. Mithilfe eines Mixed-Methods-Designs wurde untersucht, inwiefern der STRP die wahrgenommene Sprachkompetenz und die Kommunikationsbereitschaft der Lernenden unterstützt. Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass der STRP beide Bereiche fördern kann, insbesondere wenn die *LRT*-Initiative in einen strukturierten pädagogischen Rahmen eingebettet wird.

Keywords

linguistic risk-taking, German as a Second/Additional Language (Deutsch als Fremdsprache (DaF)), short-term study abroad, Willingness to Communicate (WTC), Gamification

Linguistic Risk-Taking (*LRT*), sprachliche Risikobereitschaft, Deutsch als Fremdsprache (DaF), Kurzzeit-Studienaufenthalte im Ausland, Kommunikationsbereitschaft (*WTC*), *Gamification*

[1] In German: *Studienreise*

1. Introduction

Short-term academic excursions abroad are a well-established format in European higher education, offering opportunities for language learning embedded in culturally situated interaction (Dalhaus, 2009, p. 267; Marques-Schäfer & Sant'Anna Bolacio Filho, 2020, p. 572). Typically lasting several days to one week, they are more flexible and cost-effective than semester-long programs such as Erasmus (Teichler, 2015, p. 16; Windisch & Vetter, 2024). They have been described as a form of language tourism, serving the dual purpose of promoting linguistic development in informal settings and facilitating cultural immersion (Iglesias, 2020). While longer-term study abroad programs have been extensively investigated with regard to linguistic development and social interaction (e.g., Mitchell et al., 2015), there is still a lack of systematic research on short-term mobility formats. Their limited duration often restricts sustained immersion and spontaneous interaction (Castañeda & Zirger, 2011, p. 545; Dewey et al., 2013a, p. 92).

A recurring challenge is students' tendency to remain within familiar peer groups, missing opportunities to engage in authentic interaction with target-language-speaking interlocutors beyond their study group. While interactions with international peers may foster intercultural awareness, they often take place in lingua francas and offer little opportunity for active use of the target language(s) of the country being visited. To address this, various pedagogical interventions have been developed to help learners access the target culture during their stay abroad—such as culture-related preparatory tasks (Cohen et al., 2002; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005, p. 255), reflective diary work (Plews & Misfeldt, 2018), and structured formats like tandem conversations or cultural mentoring (Vande Berg et al., 2009, p. 11).

In response to these challenges, the LRT initiative offers a structured approach to fostering target-language interaction in real-world settings. To counteract this tendency, the LRT initiative was developed as a pedagogical strategy to encourage learners to step beyond their linguistic comfort zones by engaging in authentic, real-world communication in the target language. Rooted in the concept of risk-taking in language learning (Beebe, 1983, p. 44), the LRT initiative promotes the idea that communicative development occurs when learners actively confront situations in which they may make mistakes, are misunderstood, or step outside rehearsed language use. The initiative translates this idea into a set of small, achievable tasks that require learners to initiate and sustain interactions in everyday situations.

Originally implemented in bilingual university contexts in Canada, the LRT initiative has since been adapted to a variety of educational settings, including second language classrooms, international mobility programs, and higher education contexts across Europe and North America (Slavkov & Séror, 2019, p. 265; Griffiths & Slavkov, 2021; Slavkov et al., 2022).

The present study introduces the *STRP*—a new version of the LRT passport tailored specifically for CEFR A2 learners of German participating in short academic excursions to Vienna in 2022 and 2023.

The following section outlines the theoretical foundations of the LRT initiative and explains how its core principles were adapted to the context of short-term study abroad through the development of the *STRP*.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Short-Term Academic Excursions and the "Inner Circle" Dynamic

While short-term academic excursions offer exposure to authentic language environments, studies have shown that their linguistic potential is often underutilized (Castañeda & Zirger, 2011, p. 546; Dewey et al., 2013a). Coleman's concentric circles framework (Coleman, 2013; 2015) helps explain this dynamic. It distinguishes between the inner circle (co-nationals), middle circle (other international students), and outer circle (local residents).[2] While the middle circle often includes international students and may support intercultural encounters, research suggests that communication within this circle tends to take place in lingua francas rather than the local target language (Coleman, 2013, p. 31), reducing opportunities for authentic language use (Fig. 1).

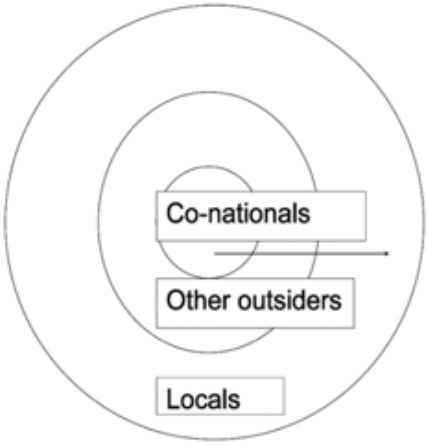


Fig. 1: Concentric circles representation of study abroad social networks (Coleman 2013, p. 31)

As shown in Fig. 1, Coleman's (2013, p. 31) model describes social networks during study abroad as concentric circles: learners primarily engage with co-nationals (inner circle),

[2] While many pedagogical models aim to facilitate learner access to the so-called *target culture*, this notion has been increasingly questioned in the context of multilingual and pluricultural settings. Rather than assuming a fixed cultural endpoint, recent work within the LRT framework emphasizes learner agency, situated practices, and the negotiation of meaning in diverse interactional contexts (Slavkov et al., 2022).

followed by other international students (middle circle), and only occasionally with so-called local residents (outer circle).

2.2 Linguistic Risk-Taking: From Concept to Pedagogical Model

The notion of risk-taking in language learning was introduced by Beebe (1983, p. 44), who emphasized that successful language learners are often those who take linguistic risks despite fear of making errors or limited proficiency. Although Beebe did not use the exact term *linguistic risk-taking*, her work laid the conceptual foundation for understanding risk-oriented behavior as a key characteristic of effective language learning. Building on this foundation, the specific term *linguistic risk-taking* was later coined and operationalized by Slavkov and colleagues (Slavkov & Séror, 2019, p. 258) as part of a pedagogical initiative developed at the University of Ottawa. The LRT initiative integrates this concept into a structured tool designed to promote authentic language use through real-world, communicative challenges. These tasks aim to foster learner autonomy, metacognitive reflection, and a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006, p. 6; Griffiths & Slavkov, 2021, pp. 130–132).

At the heart of the initiative lies the LRT passport—a printed (and later digital) booklet containing a set of small, meaningful tasks, each framed as a first-person "I" statement (e.g., *"I asked someone for directions"*). These tasks are not formally evaluated but are intended to nudge learners toward low-stake, authentic interaction in the target language.

Originally implemented in bilingual university settings in Canada, the initiative has since been adapted to a variety of educational contexts. These include a version for German as a foreign language (Deutsch als Fremdsprache—DaF) learners in Vienna (Vetter & Cajka, 2019), and a version aimed at younger learners in schools across Europe, developed in the context of the European Day of Languages to promote multilingualism (Council of Europe & ECML, 2018). These adaptations demonstrate the initiative's conceptual flexibility and pedagogical relevance across different proficiency levels and institutional settings.

This study presents an adaptation of the LRT initiative for short-term academic excursions: the *STRP*. It was developed to help CEFR A2-level learners for DaF engage in real-life language use through manageable, context-based challenges that make the idea of risk-taking more accessible and practical.

2.3 Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

In this study, LRT is understood as the pedagogical framework and intervention (i.e., the *STRP*), whereas WTC constitutes the primary analytical construct. The construct of WTC refers to a learner's readiness to communicate, either by initiating or responding, when an opportunity to use the target language arises (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Originally developed for first language (L1) communication, the construct has been adapted for

second language (L2) contexts to describe the interplay of psychological, linguistic, and situational factors influencing learners' communication behavior. WTC is considered both trait-like and state-like, meaning it can be relatively stable or vary depending on the context (MacIntyre, 2013, p. 689). In study abroad contexts, WTC has been identified as a key factor in enabling authentic language use beyond the classroom, thus fostering communicative growth in socially and culturally immersive environments (Dewey et al., 2013a, 2013b).

In the present study, WTC was not operationalized through a single measure, but rather through the triangulation of (1) self-reported questionnaire data, (2) observational data, and (3) students' engagement with *STRP* tasks, which served as behavioral indicators of their willingness to communicate. Each *STRP* task represents a concrete communicative action formulated in the first person and aligned with the activities described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Students documented completed tasks by checking them off in their *STRP* booklets. The number and type of completed challenges illustrated learners' willingness to engage in L2 communication during the short-term excursion.

2.4 The LRT Passport and its Adaptations

The original LRT passport, developed at the University of Ottawa (Slavkov, 2018), featured 89 tasks framed as "I" statements across all four language skills. Learners assessed the perceived linguistic risk of each task individually on a 3-point scale, evaluating how challenging or anxiety-inducing the task felt in relation to their own language skills and confidence (Slavkov & Séror, 2019, p. 258).

In this article, communicative "risks" are understood as learner-selected, goal-oriented tasks in real-world settings. While this aligns with a TBLT perspective (Griffiths & Slavkov, 2021), the *STRP* uses the more accessible term *challenge* to reduce anxiety and foster engagement among A2 learners. The LRT initiative has already been piloted in the context of DaF in Vienna, where Cajka (2021) implemented and evaluated an adapted version of the passport for international students.

2.5 New LRT Passport Design

The *STRP* (Fig. 2) is a compact, pedagogically guided adaptation of the original LRT passport. It was developed by the author specifically for A2-level DaF learners on short-term academic excursions. The *STRP* was piloted during one-week programs in Vienna in 2022 and 2023, during which it was adapted to the sociolinguistic and logistical conditions of the setting.

The *STRP* contains 55 small, communicative tasks designed to foster linguistic risk-taking in authentic contexts. While the initiative originally referred to these tasks as "risks," the *STRP* itself uses the term "challenges" to better reflect their motivational and gamified nature. This terminological shift was made deliberately during the tool's

development to avoid the potentially negative connotations of 'risk' and to support a more positive, learner-centered approach. In this article, the term 'challenges' is used accordingly, aligning with the updated *STRP* terminology and its learner-centered rationale.

Each challenge is a first-person statement in the past tense (e.g., Ich habe ein Reisetagebuch geschrieben / I have written an entry in my travel journal) covering key areas of communicative competence (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020). Task types are marked with skill-based icons (e.g., speaking, listening, mediation) and align with CEFR descriptors to ensure level-appropriate scaffolding. These challenges encourage learners to interact with their environment by initiating service encounters, asking questions during guided tours, and navigating public spaces in German.

The booklet also provides space for reflections and links to learning tools (e.g., glossary, apps, media resources). As part of the iterative development cycle typical of action research—where tools are tested, evaluated, and refined based on learner feedback and observation—the 2022 version included an individual risk-rating scale inspired by the original LRT passport.

However, both observations and feedback showed that rating the perceived risk was too cognitively demanding for many A2 learners. For students already challenged by the task itself, assessing the risk afterward added unnecessary complexity. Many skipped the scale entirely or defaulted to the neutral option—patterns also observed in other LRT implementations (Rhéaume et al., 2021, p. 1224). These difficulties were also noted in earlier LRT implementations (Marshall, 2018, p. 44; Rhéaume et al., 2021, p. 1224), where students often avoided rating their perceived risk levels.

In response, the 2023 version introduced a simplified gamified system using fixed "Courage Points" and symbolic badges. Based on its communicative and cognitive demands, a point value was pre-assigned to each task, following a custom classification scheme derived from the CEFR. For example, interactional speaking or mediation tasks received more points than listening or reading activities. In line with this concept, students accumulated points by completing *STRP* challenges throughout the excursion. At the end of the week, the students themselves totaled their points and participated in a non-evaluative closing ceremony, during which symbolic badges (e.g., Starter, Expert) and small prizes were awarded by the instructors. This playful conclusion aimed to celebrate engagement rather than performance, reinforcing the initiative's low-pressure, learner-centered approach.

The *STRP* booklet itself is available via the official repository of the University of Vienna: https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/detail/o:2132474

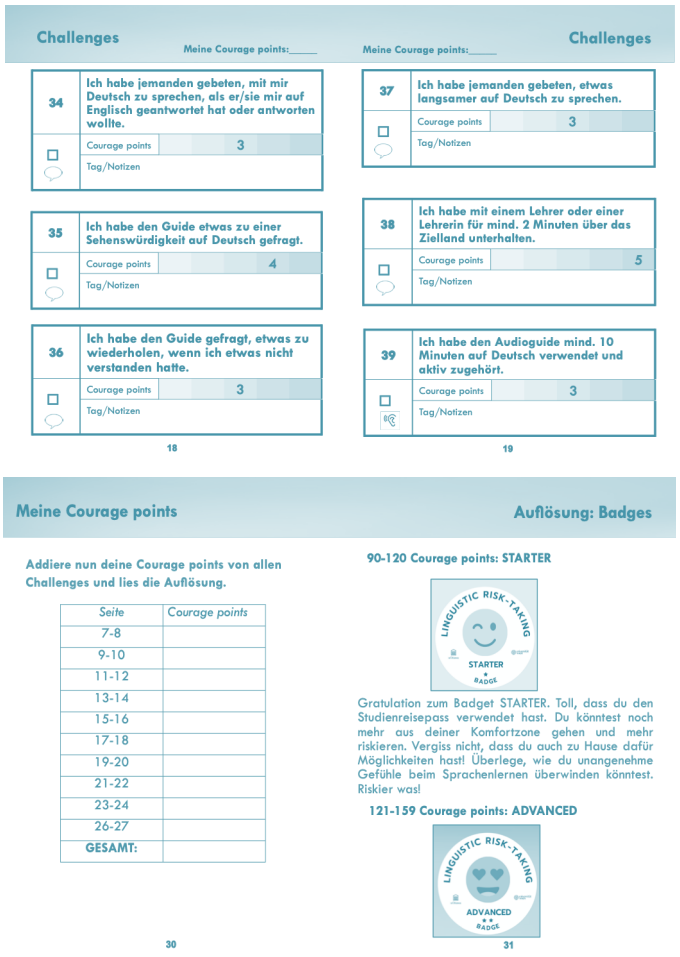


Fig. 2: *Studienreisepass* (*STRP*): Linguistic Risk-Taking for short-term stays in German as a Foreign Language (DaF) (Windisch, 2025b)

2.6 Institutional Framework: "Europas Jugend lernt Wien kennen" ("Europe's Youth Gets to Know Vienna"—a Mobility Program by the Austrian Ministry of Education)

The academic excursions were embedded in the "Europas Jugend lernt Wien kennen" program (BMBWF, 2024)—a mobility initiative coordinated by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and supported by the City of Vienna. It enables international student groups to participate in one-week educational visits to Vienna, focused on culture, history, and citizenship education.

The program's structured itinerary—featuring guided city tours, museum visits, and thematic sessions—provided a stable framework for both research cycles (2022 and 2023) and facilitated the integration of the *STRP* as a pedagogical tool, which was introduced to students during the pre-departure phase in a 'preparatory class' by the accompanying instructors, who explained its purpose, structure, and use. Many *STRP* challenges were directly linked to typical program situations, such as asking questions during tours, interacting in restaurants, or reflecting on workshop topics. Embedding

the *STRP* in this structure encouraged learners to engage linguistically not only during scheduled activities but also in informal moments between them.

3. Methodology

3.1 Objectives

While the broader dissertation study (Windisch, 2025a) investigated the pedagogical potential of short-term academic excursions more generally, this paper focuses specifically on the implementation and evaluation of the Linguistic Risk-Taking Initiative (*STRP*) within that framework—following specific objectives:

1. To examine students' perceptions of their individual communicative competence and WTC during a short-term academic excursion in relation to the *STRP*.
2. To observe as a teacher's perspective in the field the extent to which the *STRP* influences students' WTC in German.
3. To identify communicative behaviors—as well as missed opportunities for interaction—associated with *STRP* use during the excursions.
4. To derive pedagogical recommendations for the further development and implementation of the LRT initiative and the *STRP* in short-term mobility programs.

3.2 Research Design

The study followed a mixed-methods action research design (Altrichter et al., 2018), implemented across two short-term excursions to Vienna in 2022 and 2023. Each cycle included a preparation, implementation, and reflection phase, allowing for iterative refinement of the *STRP* and its pedagogical implementation. Insights from the first cycle were used to revise and improve both the *STRP* and its pedagogical implementation in the second cycle. In total, 78 undergraduate students from Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France participated. All were enrolled in German language courses at their home universities and had reached CEFR A2 level at the time of the excursions. Prior to departure, students provided their informed consent and were assigned pseudonyms for pseudonymized data handling.

The research design employed methodological triangulation (Kuckartz, 2014), integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to capture learner perceptions alongside observable communicative behaviors.

3.3 Instruments and Data Collection

Five main tools were used for data collection (Fig. 3):

– *Pre- and post-trip questionnaires:* Questionnaires were administered approximately 2–3 days before and after each excursion to capture students' self-assessed communicative competence and WTC. Participants rated themselves on an 8-point

Likert scale based on simplified CEFR A2 descriptors, enabling them to reflect on their perceived communicative competence and WTC before and after the trip. Additional items included both closed and open-ended questions concerning students' experiences with the *STRP*—such as its perceived usefulness, implementation challenges, and suggestions for improvement. To ensure clarity and accessibility, the questionnaires were translated into the students' first languages (Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian) (cf. Caspari, 2016; Riemer, 2016, p. 159) (Appendix A: Selected Items from Pre/Post Questionnaire).

- *Participant observation* was conducted by the accompanying instructors (including the author) using a structured observation protocol and a research diary. Observations followed an "observer-as-participant" approach (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 208) and focused on communicative behavior, missed opportunities, and group dynamics. The observation protocol (provided in German in the appendix) allowed instructors to document both group-wide and individual learner interactions in shared situations (e.g., guided tours, meals). In addition, a reflective research diary captured pedagogical implementation details, informal learner reactions, and emergent themes from each day. Both instruments were used to generate qualitative data that informed the coding process and were included in the mixed-methods triangulation (see 3.4) (Appendix B: Observation Protocol).
- *STRP booklets*, completed by participants during the excursions, served as engagement records. Engagement with the *STRP* was assessed based on two indicators: (1) the number of completed tasks checked off in each student's booklet, and (2) additional contextual notes (e.g., date, location, or comments) added by participants. These annotations were interpreted as evidence of authentic task execution and were used to differentiate superficial from real engagement. Engagement was triangulated by cross-referencing *STRP* entries (Excel Data Sheet) with observational data (protocols) and interview narratives (transcriptions)
- *Problem-centered interviews* were conducted with selected students—based on voluntary interest, as well as differentiated responses in the pre-trip questionnaire, particularly regarding WTC and communicative competence—before, during, and after each excursion, following Witzel's (2000) approach. This method combines a focus on a specific issue (here: linguistic risk-taking and self-perceived proficiency) with flexibility and sensitivity to participants' perspectives. An interview guide structured the conversation while allowing room for spontaneous elaboration (Appendix C: Interview Guide). Interviews covered themes such as WTC, linguistic confidence, task engagement, and experiences with the *STRP* (cf. Trautmann, 2012; Misoch, 2019). In this article, selected excerpts from the interviews are used to illustrate individual learner experiences and triangulate findings from the questionnaires and observation data.

Since participants were A2-level learners of German, questionnaires and interviews were not conducted in German. To ensure accessibility and clarity, the written questionnaires were translated into the students' main languages (French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese) and administered via Microsoft Teams. Interviews were conducted primarily in Spanish, facilitated by the author's multilingual background, enabling participants to express themselves more fully and accurately.

In both research cycles, respondent validation with students was conducted to enhance credibility and ensure alignment with participants' perspectives. The results were presented in accessible language versions (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese), and students were invited to provide feedback on the findings. This process served as a communicative validation step and allowed for clarification, confirmation, or critical reflection on the researchers' interpretations. This approach is in line with the principles of action research, where participants are not only subjects of study but also actively involved in the research process. In this sense, the students were treated as co-constructors of knowledge, contributing to the interpretation and validation of the results.

Field Research	Phase	Intervention	Data Collection (Survey)
 Observation-log: Research-Diary-Protocols 	PRE	Preparatory session, consent form, anonimized code (students)	Questionnaires  Interviews (Case Study) 
	 WHILE 	LRT-passport use   Communicative interaction and language use	Completion rate, ratings, tagged risks in LRT-passport  Interviews (Case Study) 
	POST	Follow-up-session with students 	Questionnaires  Interviews (Case Study) 
Respondent validation with students		Presentation video of results 	Questionnaires 

Fig. 3: Overview of interventions and data collection phases

3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

Quantitative data from questionnaires and *STRP* records were processed using *Jamovi* (The Jamovi Project, 2022) and Excel. The analyses followed current methodological standards (Kerby, 2014; R Core Team, 2021). Normality assumptions were tested using the Shapiro–Wilk test, followed by paired samples t-tests or Wilcoxon signed-rank tests as appropriate. Cohen's *d* was calculated for effect sizes. Correlational analyses (Pearson's *r*) explored relationships between *STRP* completion rates and perceived learning gains[3].

Qualitative data from observation protocols, research diaries, and interview-transcriptions were analyzed using content-structuring qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019, p. 88) with a combination of deductive (based on the research objectives) and inductive coding, particularly regarding category formation, transparency, and iterative refinement. (Mayring, 2016, p. 114). The coding process was conducted in MAXQDA and focused on identifying recurring themes related to linguistic risk-taking, learner autonomy, and instructional scaffolding.

To analyze the qualitative interview material, a content-structuring qualitative content analysis was conducted following Kuckartz and Rädiker (2022). Analytical categories were developed both deductively—based on the study's key constructs (e.g., willingness to communicate, task engagement)—and inductively from the data using a multi-cycle coding process. Analytical categories were derived deductively from the study's key constructs (e.g., willingness to communicate and task engagement) and the structure of the problem-centered interview guide. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and questionnaire responses were triangulated to identify individual patterns. The case studies were developed by coding participant data according to these categories and interpreting them in relation to questionnaire results and observed behavior, ensuring alignment between data collection and analysis.

The notion of 'engaged learners' in this article is informed by observational data collected via a structured observation protocol. Indicators included the frequency and spontaneity of German-language use, the variety of communicative acts (e.g., asking questions, initiating conversations), and documented interactions involving the *STRP*. These patterns were cross-referenced with learners' *STRP* entries and interview reflections to interpret individual engagement profiles as both observable behavior and self-reported disposition. The study generated a substantial and heterogeneous dataset, the analysis of which proved highly demanding—particularly with regard to triangulating different sources. The aim was to avoid relying solely on self-reported data by incorporating observational material and interview insights to provide more objective perspectives. The author was solely responsible for processing and interpreting this volume of data, which represented a considerable workload. For the present article, only a limited

[3] Statistical consultation and support during the doctoral research project on which this article is based was provided by Dr. Michael Plöchl.

selection of interview excerpts and observation notes is included—specifically those that offered particularly relevant insights and supported the core findings of the quantitative analysis.

Supplementary materials and datasets (e.g., the full *STRP* booklet, translated questionnaires, and coding structure) are archived in the institutional repository of the University of Vienna (PHAIDRA) for transparency and reproducibility (see Windisch, 2025, 2026a, 2026b).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

All participants gave their informed consent, and participation was voluntary and confidential. Pseudonyms were used throughout to protect participants' identities. The dual role of the author as both instructor and researcher was critically reflected upon in line with ethical standards for action research (Altrichter et al., 2018). Special attention was paid to power dynamics during interviews and observations. To address potential power dynamics in the dual role of instructor and researcher, several steps were taken to ensure ethical transparency and participant autonomy. Students received information and consent forms in their first languages (Spanish, Portuguese, or French), chose anonymized codes for data handling, and were assured that participation was voluntary and unrelated to grading[4].

In accordance with the participatory ethos of action research, students were explicitly informed about the nature and goals of the study—not merely as participants, but as active contributors to the exploration of their own linguistic development. This transparency aimed to reduce the potential influence of *social desirability bias*, a common methodological effect in language education research (Porst, 2014, p. 126). Instead, students were encouraged to see themselves as co-researchers, reflecting on their own communicative behaviors and learning processes.

As part of the action research framework, learners were not seen merely as subjects of research but as reflective contributors within the process (Altrichter et al., 2018). After each trip, preliminary findings were shared with participants through a short multilingual video summary. In line with the principles of communicative validation (*kommunikative Validierung*; Altrichter et al., 2018), participants were explicitly invited to comment on, question, or supplement the researchers' interpretations. This feedback was not merely collected as an add-on but actively integrated into the ongoing analysis to increase transparency and ensure contextual and pedagogical relevance. Communicative validation thus served as a dialogical quality assurance method within

[4] These measures included multilingual preparatory sessions, the use of simplified participant information, piloting of all instruments, and interviews conducted in participants' first languages. See Windisch (2025a) for details on research ethics and methodological preparation in line with Altrichter et al. (2018) and Porst (2014, p. 126) regarding social desirability bias.

the action research process, fostering shared understanding and reducing researcher bias.

4. Results

4.1 Communicative Competence

The analysis of the pre- and post-trip questionnaires showed statistically significant self-assessed gains in communicative competence, particularly in grammar (see example Tab. 1), vocabulary, and oral interaction—skills that were explicitly targeted by *STRP* tasks. These gains were especially noted by students who actively engaged with the *STRP*, both in self-reports and through instructor observation.[5]

Item: *"Despite some mistakes, I can form simple grammatical sentences correctly."*				
	t	*df*	*p*	*Cohen's d*
Cycle 1	2.40	35	.022	0.39
Cycle 2	2.52	41	.015	0.39

Tab. 1: Example of paired samples t-tests on students' self-assessed communicative competence (grammar, Cycles 1 and 2)[6]

The analysis of the pre- and post-trip questionnaires showed statistically significant self-assessed gains in communicative competence, particularly in grammar (see example Tab. 1), vocabulary, and oral interaction—skills explicitly targeted by *STRP* tasks. These improvements were especially noted among participants who actively engaged with the *STRP*, both in their questionnaire responses and in instructor observation. Based on interview and observation data, it can be assumed that these self-assessed improvements were at least partially linked to the use of the *STRP*. Learners who consistently reported using the *STRP* described structured language use in real-world contexts as a key factor in their perceived progress. These findings emerged from the content analysis of interview transcripts and observation notes, which were coded under categories such as *task engagement*, *perceived progress*, and *instructional scaffolding*.

The following case studies are based on a theory-guided content analysis of the interview transcripts in their original languages (Spanish and Portuguese), using categories derived from the interview guide and the core constructs of the study (e.g., WTC,

5 (Shapiro–Wilk: $W = 0.900$, $p = 0.001$). The effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.41$) suggests a small to moderate improvement, aligning with expected outcomes from a one-week A2-level immersion.

6 (Cycle 1: $t(35) = 2.40$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.39$; Cycle 2: $t(41) = 2.52$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.39$). In Cycle 1, a significant gain was also observed in oral interaction ($t(35) = 2.86$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.47$). In Cycle 2, additional improvements were found in coherence ($t(41) = 2.04$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.31$), vocabulary use ($t(41) = 2.63$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.41$), and in the combined category oral interaction & coherence ($t(41) = 2.67$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.41$). Other areas showed positive shifts, though they did not reach statistical significance.

linguistic confidence, and *STRP* engagement). M8M and L4C (pseudonyms for participants)—illustrate some examples. M8M, who had previously struggled with word order and verb placement in spoken German, stated in the post-trip interview that low-stakes tasks like ordering food or asking for directions helped them develop more automatic use of grammatical structures. Instructor field notes also confirmed their frequent engagement with *STRP* challenges in daily interactions. L4C, although already more confident at baseline, used the *STRP* to systematically reflect on vocabulary through journaling. This participant reported an increased ability to produce coherent sentences in both writing and speech.

By contrast, participants such as H1S and OZ7 (pseudonyms), who engaged minimally with the *STRP*, showed fewer or less specific improvements. H1S expressed a preference for spontaneous language use without having to "tick off" tasks, while OZ7 avoided many tasks due to low confidence and tended to revert to their first language in group situations. These contrasts suggest that the *STRP* was most effective when used deliberately and reflectively. Frequent, goal-oriented use of German in structured settings appears to have increased learners' communicative competence—and, in turn, their WTC.

L4C, by contrast, entered the program with a higher proficiency level (B2) and participated in the excursion for the second time. They also reported active use of the *STRP* but emphasized that their progress was most noticeable in written communication, reflecting their stated preference for written over spoken input due to a hearing issue. Despite this, they credited the *STRP* with providing a framework for applying vocabulary in real contexts and increasing their linguistic awareness. As a returning participant, they also noted that the overall experience—compared to the previous year—felt more accessible due to improved listening comprehension and familiarity with the setting. By contrast, H1S made only limited use of the *STRP* and attributed their linguistic progress primarily to informal interactions during the trip. Similarly, there is no indication that 0Z7 engaged with the *STRP* in a meaningful way; their reported improvements were minor and appeared to be influenced more by social experiences than by structured task completion.

4.2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

Self-reported WTC—understood here as learners' perceived ability and readiness to initiate communication in German—increased significantly across several measured domains, including "asking questions in group situations," "engaging in spontaneous conversations," and "ordering something." These gains were assessed via pre- and post-trip questionnaires in which participants rated their WTC in managing typical communication scenarios derived from or inspired by *STRP* tasks using an 8-point Likert scale. For example, the average rating for the item "I ask the teacher a question in German during group situations" increased from 4.6 to 6.3, with a paired samples t-test confirming the

statistical significance of this change (see Tab. 2 for selected results). While a standardized WTC scale was not used, the questionnaire items were conceptually based on the model by MacIntyre et al. (1998) and adapted both linguistically and didactically to suit CEFR A2-level learners of DaF (cf. Caspari, 2016, p.164). The items focused on typical communicative behaviors likely to occur during the excursion, reflecting real-world language use opportunities.

Item: *"In class or during the excursion, I ask a question aloud in German in front of the group."*				
	t	***df***	***p***	***Cohen's d***
Cycle 1	2.34	35	.025	0.39
Cycle 2	4.11	41	< .001	0.64

Tab. 2: Example of paired samples t-tests on students' self-assessed Willingness to Communicate (WTC) (asking questions in group situations, Cycles 1 and 2)[7]

Observational and interview data suggest that students were most willing to engage in low-risk, routine interactions—particularly with teachers or service staff who already used German with them—while more demanding communicative situations, such as initiating conversations with unfamiliar interlocutors or sustaining unstructured dialogues, continued to pose a challenge.

Nonetheless, the structured design of the *STRP* appeared to support LRT, especially among the same student profile discussed in the previous chapter: learners who actively used the *STRP* and were perceived as motivated by instructors. *STRP* usage patterns, however, varied considerably. While over half of the students completed at least 50% of the 55 available tasks (see Fig. 4), some booklets showed signs of retrospective completion—for example, multiple tasks were checked off at once without accompanying contextual notes (e.g., date, place), or entire clusters of similar tasks were marked consecutively near the end of the week, suggesting post-hoc rather than real-time documentation.

On average, students checked off 57.5% of tasks, with a clear preference for low-threshold, time-efficient items such as ordering food or asking for repetition. In contrast, tasks requiring greater time investment—such as recording a short video, writing a travel diary, or reflecting in written form—were rarely attempted unless they were explicitly integrated into structured group activities. These higher-effort tasks were often perceived as too demanding within the limited timeframe of the excursion.

---

[7] In Tab. 2, *t* refers to the t-value of the paired samples t-test, which measures whether the difference in students' self-assessed WTC before and after the excursion was statistically significant. The *df* (degrees of freedom) corresponds to the number of participants included in the analysis minus one. The *p*-value indicates the probability that the observed difference occurred by chance; values below .05 are considered statistically significant. Cohen's *d* represents the effect size and provides information on the practical significance of the change: values around 0.2 indicate a small effect, 0.5 a medium effect, and 0.8 a large effect.

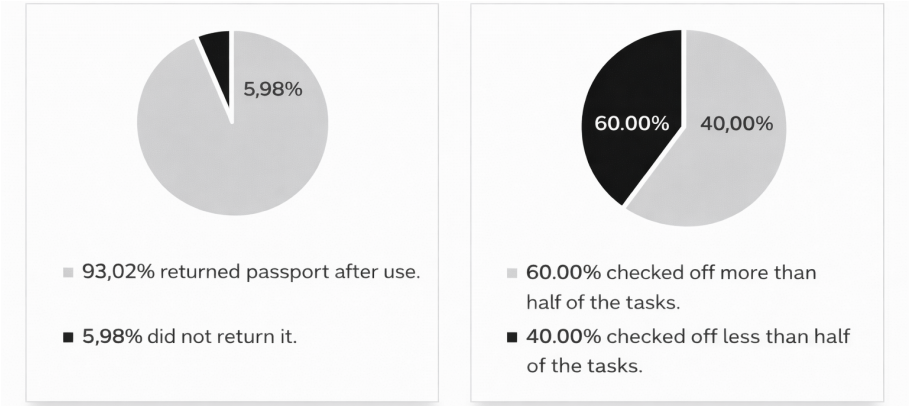


Fig. 4: Students' use of the *STRP* (Second journey)

Some learners engaged with the *STRP* even during informal moments such as meals or group outings. Instructors observed students discussing *STRP* tasks at breakfast or checking off items on the go—suggesting intrinsic motivation, especially when tasks were socially embedded. Case study narratives, based on interview data and analysis of individual *STRP* booklets, further illustrate this range of engagement and its relation to WTC:

- M8M used the *STRP* to set daily goals and practice specific challenges. They initially felt insecure when formulating questions in group settings but reported increased confidence by the end of the trip. A turning point came when they successfully asked a question during a guided tour. They attributed their progress to repeated real-life interactions and to the *STRP*'s role as a motivating and structuring tool.
- L4C, a returning participant with higher proficiency, completed almost 65% of the *STRP* and preferred written tasks such as keeping a travel diary in German. While describing themself as reserved, they reported increased willingness to speak in familiar, one-on-one situations (e.g., with teachers) and found the gamified badge system highly motivating.
- H1S used the *STRP* only sporadically and later expressed regret over their limited engagement. They focused on easy, low-risk tasks and often completed them retrospectively. Although they noted slight WTC gains in typical scenarios like ordering food, their overall communicative behavior remained cautious. They attributed this not to anxiety, but to a preference for informal, low-pressure interactions and difficulties with planning and structuring their learning independently.
- 0Z7, with relatively low proficiency, completed approximately 52% of the *STRP* and avoided more complex tasks. Nevertheless, they showed initiative in socially supported settings, such as a tandem exchange, and demonstrated a willingness to take linguistic risks when supported by the context.

The shift from a risk-rating scale (Cycle 1) to a gamified badge system (Cycle 2) improved usability for many learners—particularly those already inclined to participate. Interviews and observations confirmed that several students found the badges motivating and used them to set personal goals. However, *STRP* completion data showed no substantial increase in overall participation between the two cycles: students in Cycle 1 completed on average 31 out of 55 tasks (56.4%), while those in Cycle 2 completed 32 out of 55 tasks (58.2%). This minor difference was not statistically significant and suggests that while gamification supported motivation on an individual level, it did not consistently lead to broader or deeper engagement with the *STRP*. Triangulated findings thus indicate that gamification functioned more as a motivational enhancer than as a universal driver of increased participation in linguistic risk-taking.

Crucially, the *STRP* appeared most beneficial when pedagogically anchored. This became evident in a triangulated analysis: triangulated data from observation protocols, instructor diaries, and student interviews indicated that instructor reminders—such as setting daily goals or sending prompts via WhatsApp—played a key role in sustaining engagement. Students often cited these cues as motivational triggers, and field notes showed increased *STRP* activity following such pedagogical interventions—especially when challenges were discussed collectively or embedded into group routines like visits to museums. In the absence of such support, however, many students tended to neglect the tool. Interviews and open-ended questionnaire responses indicate that this was often due to the dense excursion schedule and limited free time. Several students noted that they simply forgot about the *STRP* unless reminded explicitly.

In summary, *STRP* engagement varied widely and appeared to depend on factors such as learner motivation, instructor involvement, program structure, and the communicative relevance of the tasks. While some students integrated the *STRP* into their daily routine, others used it more sporadically or minimally. These usage patterns were also reflected in the varying impact on learners' WTC. The data suggest that the *STRP* offered structured opportunities for language use, but its uptake and effectiveness were shaped by the surrounding pedagogical and situational conditions. A more detailed interpretation of these dynamics follows in the discussion.

5. Discussion

5.1 Communicative Competence Gains

Findings suggest that the *STRP* supported learners' development of communicative competence during the short-term academic excursion. This was especially the case for students who reported using the *STRP* actively or were perceived as engaged by instructors. These students rated themselves significantly higher in the statistical sense in several areas after the trip—particularly in statements such as *"I can formulate simple sentences grammatically correctly," "I can use newly learned words in conversation," "I can*

have short conversations about familiar topics," and *"I can connect short phrases and sentences."* These self-assessments, based on aligned items derived from CEFR descriptors, indicate an increase in perceived communicative competence. Interview and observation data suggest that frequent language use in meaningful situations—prompted by *STRP* tasks—helped learners to apply grammatical structures and vocabulary more effectively. This increased ability to use the target language in context appears to have contributed to greater ease in participating in everyday communication, which, in turn, may have supported their WTC.

Listening comprehension was rated as the most improved skill across the sample. This likely reflects the high number of guided tours and structured activities, which exposed students to authentic spoken German throughout the week.

However, some students reported that they found it difficult to stay engaged during longer receptive phases, such as museum tours. In contrast, they showed higher responsiveness in dialogic speaking situations (e.g., one-on-one interactions with teachers or locals), which offered more opportunities for authentic linguistic adjustment. This observation aligns with findings by Campbell (1996), who suggested that dialogic situations promote deeper processing of input, while learners are more likely to disengage in less interactive group settings.

A direct level gain in the sense of a full CEFR proficiency leap was neither expected nor measurable within the short timeframe of the excursion. Language proficiency in immersive, real-world contexts is difficult to quantify due to the influence of numerous sociocultural variables and individual learner trajectories (DeKeyser, 2014; Isabelli-García et al., 2018). Kinginger (2008) likewise emphasizes that language learning success during study abroad depends strongly on learners' prior experiences, motivation, and their ability to pursue consistent target language use in everyday contexts.

5.2 Structural Constraints and Challenges

In line with findings from other short-term mobility programs (e.g., Castañeda & Zirger, 2011; Marques-Schäfer & Sant'Anna Bolacio Filho, 2020) this study highlights key structural limitations. The dense itinerary left little time for spontaneous communication beyond structured contexts. As a result, most interactions were limited to predictable, low-risk scenarios such as ordering services. Moreover, student responses and interviews indicate that the *STRP* alone was not sufficient. Its potential was only realized when embedded in instructional routines, integrated into program activities, and supported by available time. Several students reported forgetting the *STRP* unless instructors reminded them—often due to cognitive overload and limited autonomy in scheduling.

5.3 Role of Pedagogical Integration

The success of the *STRP* depended heavily on how it was introduced and supported by instructors. Teachers who actively embedded the passport into the daily program—for example, by assigning small daily goals or sending reminders via WhatsApp—helped sustain student engagement. These measures served not as instructions but rather as facilitative prompts that normalized the *STRP* as part of the study routine.

Learners like M8M and L4C benefitted from such structured environments, where the *STRP* was consistently referenced and framed as relevant. In contrast, students like H1S, who accepted less instructional support or relied more on informal approaches, engaged less and reported fewer perceived gains.

This highlights that the *STRP* should not be seen as a standalone intervention, but as a tool whose effectiveness depends on pedagogical mediation. Active teacher involvement was key to transforming the *STRP* from a checklist into a meaningful support for communicative engagement. The *STRP*'s role is not a standalone solution, but a facilitative structure that requires active mediation by teachers.

5.4 *STRP* Development Potential

While the transition from an abstract risk scale (2022) to a gamified points-and-badge system (2023) improved usability, it did not substantially increase task completion. Students still favored low-effort tasks unless higher-risk ones were embedded into group settings. To strengthen future versions of the *STRP*:

- Tasks should be tightly linked to planned program events.
- Pre-trip preparation (e.g., vocabulary training, simulations) should be expanded.
- Gamification could be made more interactive, including team elements.
- Reflective moments (e.g., group debriefs) should be built in.

Importantly, the *STRP* should continue to focus on engagement, not assessment.

5.5 Methodological Considerations

The mixed-methods design provided valuable insights but comes with limitations:

- The sample size (< 100) limits generalizability.
- Reliance on self-assessment may introduce bias.
- The absence of formal testing restricts objective language measurement.
- The short program duration may conflate short-term motivation with lasting progress.
- The researcher's dual role (teacher/researcher) may have influenced responses, despite safeguards.

Despite these limitations, the triangulated data offer strong indications of the impact of the *STRP* on short-term sojourn programs regarding learners' WTC, perceived language proficiency, and the pedagogical relevance of structured engagement tools.

5.6 Outlook and Recommendations

The *STRP* appeared to function as a motivating and adaptable tool—particularly when embedded in a supportive learning environment. Based on the findings of this study, the following considerations may support future implementations:

- Embed the *STRP* into the daily rhythm of the program,
- Provide clear instructions and orientation, both before and during the trip, to help students understand the purpose and use of the *STRP*.
- Include reflection and social sharing to reinforce motivation,
- Offer optional tandem or peer activities to risk firstly in structured learning sessions and to be prepared for higher-risk engagement in authentic situations.

The *STRP* works best as part of a guided learning culture—not as an isolated intervention. With thoughtful integration, it may significantly enhance the linguistic value of short-term study abroad experiences.

References

Altrichter, Herbert, Posch, Peter, & Spann, Harald (2018). *Lehrerinnen und Lehrer erforschen ihren Unterricht: Unterrichtsentwicklung und Unterrichtsevaluation durch Aktionsforschung*. UTB. https://doi.org/10.36198/9783838547541

Beebe, Leslie M. (1983). Risk-taking and the language learner. In Herbert W. Seliger & Michael H. Long (Eds.), *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition*. Newbury House, pp. 39–66.

Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung (BMBWF) (2024). *Europas Jugend lernt Wien kennen*. https://www.bmb.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/pwi/wien/europa_aktion.html

Cajka, Stefanie (2021). Die Linguistic Risk-Taking Initiative für Deutschlernende in einem österreichischen Universitätskontext [Master's thesis, Universität Wien].

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 language classroom*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 201–223.

Caspari, Daniela (Ed.). (2016). *Forschungsmethoden in der Fremdsprachendidaktik: Ein Handbuch*. Narr Francke Attempto Verlag.

Castañeda, Martha E., & Zirger, Megan L. (2011). Making the most of the "new" study abroad: Social capital and the short-term sojourn. *Foreign Language Annals, 44*(3), pp. 544–564. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2011.01146.x

Cohen, Andrew D., Paige, R. Michael, Shively, Rachel L., Emert, Holly A., & Hoff, Joseph G. (2002). *Maximizing study abroad: A students' guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use.* Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA).

Coleman, James A. (2013). Researching whole people and whole lives. In C. Kinginger (Ed.), *Social and Cultural Aspects of Language Learning in Study Abroad*. John Benjamins, pp. 17–44.

Coleman, James A. (2015). Social circles during residence abroad: What students do, and who with. In Rosmand Mitchell, Nicole Tracy-Ventura & Kevin McManus (Eds.), *Social interaction, identity and language learning during residence abroad* (Vol. 4). Lulu.com, pp. 33–52.

Council of Europe & European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). (2018). *European day of languages: Language challenges handbook*. ECML. https://edl.ecml.at/Portals/33/documents/language-challenge/EDL-language-challenge-handbook-DE.pdf

Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.

Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (companion volume with new descriptors). Ernst Klett Sprachen.

Dalhaus, Eva (2009). *Lernraum Sprachreise: Perspektiven für Kompetenzentwicklung*. Peter Lang.

DeKeyser, Robert M. (2014). Research on language development during study abroad: Methodological considerations and future perspectives. In Carmen Pérez-Vidal (Ed.), *Language acquisition in study abroad and formal instruction contexts*. John Benjamins, pp. 313–326.

Dewey, Dan P., Belnap, R. Kirk, & Hillstrom, Rebecca (2013a). Social network development, language use, and language acquisition during study abroad: Arabic language learners' perspectives. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 22*(1), pp. 84–110. https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v22i1.320

Dewey, Dan P., Ring, Spencer, Gardner, Daniel, & Belnap, R. Kirk (2013b). Social network formation and development during study abroad in the Middle East. *System, 41*(2), pp. 269–282. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.02.004

Dweck, Carol S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.

Griffiths, Ed, & Slavkov, Nikolay (2021). Linguistic risk-taking: A bridge between the classroom and the outside world. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 24*(2), pp. 127–158. https://doi.org/10.37213/cjal.2021.31308

Iglesias, Montserrat (2020). Language tourism and second language acquisition in informal learning contexts. In Mark Dressman & Randall W. Sadler (Eds.), *The handbook of informal language learning*. Wiley Blackwell, pp. 257–270.

Isabelli-García, Christina, Bown, Jennifer, Plews, John L., & Dewey, Dan P. (2018). Language learning and study abroad. *Language Teaching, 51*(4), pp. 439–484. https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144481800023X

Johnson, Burke, & Christensen, Larry (2012). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches.* SAGE.

Kerby, Dave S. (2014). The simple difference formula: An approach to teaching nonparametric correlation. *Comprehensive Psychology, 3*(1), pp. 2165–2228. https://doi.org/10.2466/11.IT.3.1

Kinginger, Celeste (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case histories of Americans in France. *The Modern Language Journal, 92*(1), pp. 1–124. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00821.x

Kuckartz, Udo (2014). *Mixed methods: Methodologie, Forschungsdesigns und Analyseverfahren.* Springer VS. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-93267-5

Kuckartz, Udo, & Rädiker, Stefan (2019). *Analyzing qualitative data with MAXQDA: Text, audio, and video*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-15671-8

Kuckartz, Udo, & Rädiker, Stefan (2022). *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung* (5. Aufl.). Beltz Juventa.

Lewis, Tammy L., & Niesenbaum, Richard A. (2005). Extending the stay: Using community-based research and service learning to enhance short-term study abroad. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 9*(3), pp. 251–264. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315305277682

MacIntyre, Peter D. (2013). Willingness to communicate (WTC). In P. Robinson (Eds.), *The Routledge encyclopedia of second language acquisition*. Routledge, pp. 688–691.

MacIntyre, Peter D., Clément, Richard, Dörnyei, Zoltán, & Noels, Kimberly A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal, 82*(4), pp. 545–562. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x

Marques-Schäfer, Gabriela, & Sant'Anna Bolacio Filho, Ebal (2020). Der Beitrag einer vom DAAD finanzierten Studienreise zur Ausbildung von angehenden DaF-Lehrenden. *Informationen Deutsch als Fremdsprache, 47* (5), pp. 570–593. https://doi.org/10.1515/infodaf-2020-0088

Marshall, S. (2018). The linguistic risk-taking initiative: An investigation into a new educational tool for fostering linguistic risk-taking amongst university-level language learners [Unpublished master's thesis]. Carleton University.

Mayring, Philipp (2016*). Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung: Eine Anleitung zu qualitativem Denken* (6th ed.). Beltz.

Misoch, Sabina (2019). *Qualitative Interviews* (2nd ed.). De Gruyter.

Mitchell, Rosamond, McManus, Kevin, & Tracy-Ventura, Nicole (2015). Placement type and language learning during residence abroad. In Rosamond Mitchell, Nicole Tracy-Ventura, & Kevin McManus (Eds.), *Social interaction, identity and language learning during residence abroad* (Vol. 4). Lulu.com, pp. 115–138.

Plews, John L., & Misfeldt, Kim (Eds.). (2018). *Second Language Study Abroad: Programming, Pedagogy, and Participant Engagement*. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77134-2.

Porst, Rolf (2014). *Fragebogen: Ein Arbeitsbuch* (4th ed.). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-02118-4

R Core Team. (2021). R: *A language and environment for statistical computing* [Computer software]. Version 4.1. Retrieved from https://cran.r-project.org.

Rhéaume, Martine, Slavkov, Nikolay, & Séror, Jérémie (2021). Linguistic risk-taking in second language learning: The case of French at a Canadian bilingual institution. *Foreign Language Annals, 54*(4), pp. 1214–1237. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12561

Riemer, Claudia (2016). Befragung. In Daniela Caspari, Friederike Klippel, Michael K. Legutke, & Karen Schramm (Eds.), *Forschungsmethoden in der Fremdsprachendidaktik: Ein Handbuch*. Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, pp. 155–172. https://doi.org/10.24053/9783823394327

Slavkov, Nikolay (2018). *Linguistic risk-taking passport. University of Ottawa*. https://ccerbal.uottawa.ca/linguistic-risk/

Slavkov, Nikolay, & Séror, Jérémie (2019). The development of the linguistic risk-taking initiative at the University of Ottawa. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 75*(3), pp. 254–272. https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.2018-0202

Slavkov, Nikolay, Melo-Pfeifer, Silvia, & Kerschhofer-Puhalo, Nadja (Eds.). (2022). *The changing face of the "native speaker": Perspectives from multilingualism and globalization*. De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501512353

Teichler, Ulrich (2015). The Impact of Temporary Study Abroad. In Rosamond Mitchell, Nicole Tracy-Ventura, & Kevin McManus (Eds.), *Social interaction, identity and language learning during residence abroad* (Vol. 4). Lulu.com, pp. 15–32.

The Jamovi project. (2022). *Jamovi* (Version 2.3) [Computer software]. https://www.jamovi.org

Trautmann, Matthias (2012). Führen und Auswerten qualitativer Interviews. In S. Doff (Ed.), *Fremdsprachenunterricht empirisch erforschen*. Narr Verlag, pp. 218–231.

Vande Berg, Michael, Connor-Linton, Jeffery, & Paige, R. Michael (2009). The Georgetown Consortium Project: Interventions for student learning abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 18* (1), pp. 1–75. https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v18i1.251

Vetter, Eva, & Cajka, Stefanie (2019). *Die Linguistic Risk-Taking Initiative für Deutschlernende in einem österreichischen Universitätskontext*. Universität Wien. https://lehrerinnenbildung.univie.ac.at/arbeitsbereiche/sprachlehr-und-lernforschung/forschung/laufende-projekte/linguistic-risk-taking/

Windisch, Sebastian, & Vetter, Eva (2024). Prendre des risques pour communiquer: Le voyage d'études. *Langue Française, 224*(4), pp. 17–35. http://www.revues.armand-colin.com/lettres-langues/langue-francaise/langue-francaise-no224-42024/prendre-risques-communiquer-voyage-detudes

Windisch, Sebastian (2025a). *Die Studienreise: Förderung der kommunikativen Kompetenz von Sprachlernenden* [Doctoral dissertation, Universität Wien]. https://doi.org/10.25365/thesis.78636

Windisch, Sebastian (2025b). *Academic Short-Term Abroad Pass / Linguistic Risk-Taking Pass. Research-based task catalogue for promoting authentic language use during academic short-term abroad programmes*. University of Vienna.
German: https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/o:2132474
Spanish: https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/o:2132475
Galician: https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/o:2132476
Italian: https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/o:2132477
French: https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/o:2132478 [18.12.2025]

Windisch, Sebastian (2026a). *Qualitative research dataset: Short-term study abroad and communicative competence in learners of German as a foreign language. MAXQDA project files and coding structure for two research cycles* (Vienna study trips 2022–2023) [Datensatz]. Universität Wien. https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/o:2194988

Windisch, Sebastian (2026b). *Supplementäre Forschungsdaten und Materialien zur Monographie „Die Studienreise: Förderung der kommunikativen Kompetenz von DaF-Lernenden“* [Supplementärer Materialband]. Universität Wien. https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/o:2194989

Witzel, Andreas (2000). Das problemzentrierte Interview. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung, 1*(1), Article 22. http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1132/251

About the Author

Sebastian Windisch teaches German as a Foreign Language (DaF), Spanish, and French at secondary schools (AHS/BHS) in Austria and has teaching experience in Spain and Austria. His research focuses on language development in study abroad contexts.
Email: sebastian.windisch@gmx.at

Appendix A: Selected Items from Pre/Post Questionnaire

Excerpt from the Spanish version of the pre/post questionnaire, sent to students from Santiago de Compostela and Salamanca via MS Forms. Shown here is a sample section (Section 3: Linguistic Competence) completed before and after the excursion to Vienna.

Sección 3: Competencia lingüística.

Algo que ya conoces. A continuación, se presenta de nuevo una pequeña lista de las descripciones simplificadas de competencias dentro del Marco Europeo de Referencia. Evalúa otra vez tus competencias lingüísticos en una escala entre
1 (= no estoy de acuerdo) y 8 (= estoy muy de acuerdo).

Después del viaje de estudios, mi autoevaluación es la siguiente:

27. ***Tengo suficiente vocabulario para expresar necesidades comunicativas básicas y desenvolverme en actividades que comprenden situaciones y temas conocidos.***
Recuerda la escala entre 1 (= no estoy de acuerdo) y 8 (= estoy muy de acuerdo).
*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

28. ***Aunque cometo errores (por ejemplo, confundo tiempos verbales), en general, la comunicación con la otra persona es fluida.***
Recuerdala escala entre 1 (= no estoy de acuerdo) y 8 (= estoy muy de acuerdo).
*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

29. ***Mi pronunciación es bastante clara y comprensible, aunque a veces mi interlocutor/a me pida que repita ciertas palabras porque no me ha entendido.***
Recuerda la escala entre 1 (= no estoy de acuerdo) y 8 (= estoy muy de acuerdo).
*

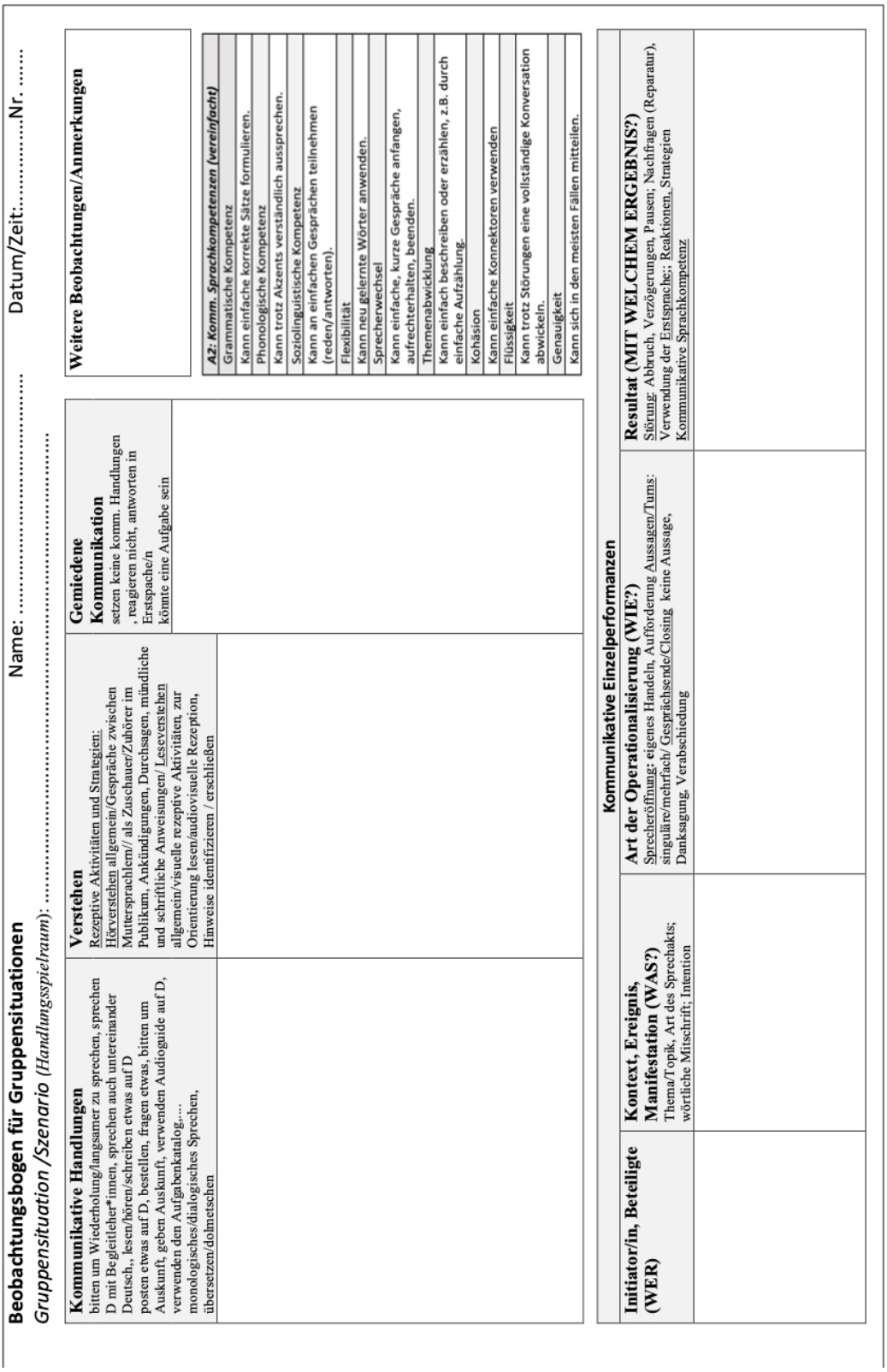
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

30. ***Sé participar en conversaciones sencillas, es decir, hablar con alguien y responder. Por ejemplo: de dónde soy, qué estoy haciendo, qué hice ayer.*** *Recuerda la escala entre 1 (= no estoy de acuerdo) y 8 (= estoy muy de acuerdo).* *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Appendix B (Observation Protocol – original, German)

This is the original observation protocol (in German) used by instructors during the excursions to document communicative behavior in group situations.



Beobachtungsbogen für Gruppensituationen Name: ..... Datum/Zeit:.....Nr. .....

Gruppensituation /Szenario (Handlungsspielraum): .....

Kommunikative Handlungen bitten um Wiederholung/langsamer zu sprechen, sprechen D mit Begleiteher*innen, sprechen auch untereinander Deutsch,, lesen/hören/schreiben etwas auf D posten etwas auf D, bestellen, fragen etwas, bitten um Auskunft, geben Auskunft, verwenden Audioguide auf D, verwenden den Aufgabenkatalog,... monologisches/dialogisches Sprechen, übersetzen/dolmetschen	**Verstehen** Rezeptive Aktivitäten und Strategien: Hörverstehen allgemein/Gespräche zwischen Muttersprachlern// als Zuschauer/Zuhörer im Publikum, Ankündigungen, Durchsagen, mündliche und schriftliche Anweisungen/ Leseverstehen allgemein/visuelle rezeptive Aktivitäten, zur Orientierung lesen/audiovisuelle Rezeption, Hinweise identifizieren / erschließen	**Gemiedene Kommunikation** setzen keine komm. Handlungen , reagieren nicht, antworten in Erstspache/n könnte eine Aufgabe sein

Weitere Beobachtungen/Anmerkungen

A2: Komm. Sprachkompetenzen (vereinfacht)
Grammatische Kompetenz
Kann einfache korrekte Sätze formulieren.
Phonologische Kompetenz
Kann trotz Akzents verständlich aussprechen.
Soziolinguistische Kompetenz
Kann an einfachen Gesprächen teilnehmen (reden/antworten).
Flexibilität
Kann neu gelernte Wörter anwenden.
Sprecherwechsel
Kann einfache, kurze Gespräche anfangen, aufrechterhalten, beenden.
Themenabwicklung
Kann einfach beschreiben oder erzählen, z.B. durch einfache Aufzählung.
Kohäsion
Kann einfache Konnektoren verwenden
Flüssigkeit
Kann trotz Störungen eine vollständige Konversation abwickeln.
Genauigkeit
Kann sich in den meisten Fällen mitteilen.

Kommunikative Einzelperformanzen

Initiator/in, Beteiligte (WER)	**Kontext, Ereignis, Manifestation (WAS?)** Thema/Topik, Art des Sprechakts; wörtliche Mitschrift; Intention	**Art der Operationalisierung (WIE?)** Sprecheröffnung: eigenes Handeln, Aufforderung Aussagen/Turns: singuläre/mehrfach/ Gesprächsende/Closing keine Aussage, Danksagung, Verabschiedung	**Resultat (MIT WELCHEM ERGEBNIS?)** Störung: Abbruch, Verzögerungen, Pausen; Nachfragen (Reparatur), Verwendung der Erstsprache;; Reaktionen, Strategien Kommunikative Sprachkompetenz

Appendix C. Excerpt from Interview Guide (original, German)

Excerpt from the pre-trip problem-centered interview guide, adapted to students' language level and conducted in their first language (e.g., Spanish).

Nr. Interview: _____

PROBLEMZENTRIERTES INTERVIEW (DAVOR)

Code zur Anonymisierung: _____

Sprachniveau des/der Studierenden: _____

Datum: _____
Beginn des Interviews: _____
Ende des Interviews: _____
Geschlecht: _____
Alter: _____

Begrüßung und Information
Ich habe nun schon über mein Forschungsvorhaben in der Vorbereitungsstunde zur Studienreise berichtet. Ich möchte gern über die Studienreise und das Sprechverhalten forschen. Außerdem möchte ich gerne die didaktische Planung einer Studienreise verbessern. *Danke, dass du dich freiwillig zusätzlich zur Befragung mit Fragebogen für insgesamt 3 Interviews zur Verfügung stellst. Ich werde dich also heute, einmal während und einmal nach dem Aufenthalt interviewen.* *Das Interview wird hier mit dem Handy aufgezeichnet.* *Du weißt, es gibt keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten, sondern es geht um deine Einschätzung und Wahrnehmung.Das Interview wird anonymisiert durch deinen Code (siehe oben)* *Du kannst eine nachträgliche Löschung des Interviews beantragen, sofern du das willst.* *Du kannst mich während des Intervies gerne unterbrechen und mir z.B. eine Frage stellen.* *Ich beginne jetzt mit dem Interview und bitte dich um deine Erlaubnis, mit der Aufnahme zu beginnen.*

Einstieg und Kommunikationsbereitschaft
• Erzähle über deine Erfahrung beim Deutschlernen. • ***In welchem Sprachkurs bist du gerade ? (Niveau):*** _____ • **WARUM hast du im Fragebogen unter Punkt 1. „Wie wahrscheinlich ist es, dass du in folgenden Situationen Deutsch sprichst?" wie folgt angekreuzt?** **1 Wie wahrscheinlich ist es, dass du in den folgenden Situationen Deutsch sprichst?** **A.** *Ich werde hier in der Stadt auf Deutsch angesprochen und ich soll in einfachen Worten den Weg erklären, nehme dabei vielleicht auf einen Plan oder auf eine Karte Bezug.* 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **B.** *Ich führe ein spontanes Gespräch mit eine*m deutschen Erasmus-Studierenden, eine kurze Konversation darüber, wer ich bin, woher ich komme.* 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **C.** *Ich bitte im Sprachkurs den Lehrenden, das Gesagte zu wiederholen, wenn ich etwas nicht verstanden habe.* 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7