THE ACQUISITION OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIATION: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS OF CHINESE OVER A SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD SOJOURN

By
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THE ACQUISITION OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIATION: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY
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ABROAD SOJOURN

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This dissertation, with Chinese native-speaker data as the baseline, provides the first longitudinal study on the acquisition of the sociolinguistic variants DE by CSL (Chinese as a second language) learners over a short-term study abroad program. Different from traditional views of language learning, which focus primarily on formal linguistic accuracy, studies on sociolinguistic variation investigate learners’ acquisition of native-speaker sociolinguistic norms, the competence to understand and produce socially appropriate utterance. Though there have been a number of studies on learners of various languages, few have focused on Chinese, and to my knowledge, it remains unexplored as to what extent the short-term study abroad affects learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic variation.

The data consist of 40 audio-recorded sociolinguistic interviews, 52 story-telling tasks, pre- and post-test version of language contact profile, adapted mini-AMTB (Attitude/Motivation Test Battery) and WTC (Willingness to Communicate) scale. Two groups of participants were recruited: 12 native speakers and 14 CSL learners. Native speakers were interviewed once. CSL learners were interviewed twice, before and after
their study abroad, and they also completed all the questionnaires. 3117 tokens from CSL learners and 3759 tokens from native-speakers are submitted to multivariate analysis with GoldVarb 3.0. The factors analyzed include DE function, gender, formality, pre-study vs. post-study abroad, learners’ Chinese proficiency, attitude/motivation towards Chinese learning, willingness to communicate in Chinese.

Findings of the variationist analysis show that CSL learners use the same range of DE variants as native speakers. However, they differ somewhat from native speakers in the frequency of DE use. Learners’ use of DE variants, like native speakers, is also systematically constrained by multiple linguistic and extralinguistic factors. Although learners are found to use DE more in optional cases after their returning, a further analysis reveals that they actually are to move toward more native-like norms. This claim is further supported by the finding of no gender difference in learner data. Moreover, it is the learners with strong Chinese-communication willingness and positive attitude/motivation that are found to benefit from the study abroad program, as they make efforts to avail themselves opportunities to have regular prolonged conversations with native speakers.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Study abroad (SA) has been traditionally assumed to be one of the most effective means to learn a foreign language as well as to understand the foreign culture by policy makers, school administrators, students and their parents. Because learners are involved directly in culturally authentic contexts, with more intensive exposure to the target language (TL), it is believed that overseas study would accelerate TL acquisition. Every year, hundreds of thousands of students participate in a SA program, and the number continues to grow. In 2014-2015, according to the Open Doors 2016 data reported by the Institute of International Education (IIE), the number of U.S. college students who took part in the SA program reached 313415 – more than doubled over a 14-year period, and approximately 1 in 10 undergraduate students studies abroad before graduating (see http://www.iie.org/). In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), a large number of studies have revealed that immersion in the target culture has a positive influence on gains in the second language (L2), such as the incremental acquisition of vocabulary (Milton & Meara, 1995; Pérez-Leroux, 2002), improvement on listening or reading skills (Allen, 2002; Dewey, 2004; Kinginger, 2008); development of oral or written fluency (Dekeyser, 1990, 1991; Freed, 1995b; Lindseth, 2010; Milleret, 1990; O’Connor, 1988; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; etc.). However, these studies have primarily focused on learners’ growth in TL proficiency in terms of fluency and accuracy, such as the acquisition of categorical L2 features, in other words, non-variable features of a language. Relatively little is known about SA participants’ acquisition of variable features.
Types of Variability in L2 Speech

As noted by Mougeon, Rehner, and Nadasdi (2004), there are two kinds of variable production observable in L2 speech:

One is the acquisition of TL obligatory forms, known as Type 1 variation (Mougeon et al., 2004) or vertical continuum (Adamson & Regan, 1991). L2 learners vary between a target and a non-target form (error) or between more than one non-target forms to express a given notion which is conveyed in an invariant target form during their different language–development stages. The traditional focus of SLA research has been on L2 learners’ acquisition of Type 1 variation (e.g., Ellis, 1987; Gatbonton, 1978; Tarone, 1988), and in these studies, such alternation is a sign of learners’ incomplete mastery of the TL obligatory forms. For example, a young Japanese learner of English as a second language varied between native and non-native interrogative sentences in the past tense, such as “What did you do?; *What do you do?; Did you see the ghost?; “Do you saw these peppermint? ” (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p.254). The alternation indicates that the learner is in a transitional stage before the acquisition of the categorical native form, and the measure of success in relation to the developmental variability is the cessation of variation.

The other kind of variability is Type 2 variation (Mougeon et al., 2004) or horizontal continuum (Adamson & Regan, 1991), which refers to the use of forms where NSs demonstrate variation. The alternation between the usage of either variant depends on its appropriateness in a given social situation. Since one variant emerges as being more formal than the other one, and either one is grammatical, one big challenge for L2 learners is that they have to understand and choose the socially appropriate one in specific contexts. Failure to do so will then result in discrepancies
with NSs. One example is the verbal negation in French which is expressed by a pre-verbal negative particle *ne* and a post-verbal *pas* (e.g., *ne* + verb + *pas*, ‘not’), but in casual spoken French, NSs prefer to delete the pre-verbal particle *ne* (Mougeon et al., 2010, p.62). The usage/non-usage of *ne* is thus a Type 2 variation (sociolinguistic variation) that learners need to acquire, retaining *ne* all the time in casual speech would sound too formal or like classroom French (Dewaele, 2004). Therefore, in order to avoid the situation in which a learner's language use is structurally and grammatically correct, but socially inappropriate, it is of great importance for learners to develop their sociolinguistic competence. And in order to achieve high proficiency in L2 communication, in addition to acquiring Type 1 variation to produce accurate TL forms, it is relevant for learners to master Type 2 variation as well, so as to understand and produce linguistic expressions appropriately and consistently in accordance with different social contexts.

However, Type 2 variation is not as easy to acquire as the categorical L2 features because “whereas there exist numerous dictionaries and reference grammars to support the teaching of lexis and syntax, there are no such reference books to support the teaching of sociolinguistic variation” (Lyster, 1996, p. 167), and L2 learners may also not even be aware of the variation, since what they learn in formal classroom settings is the academic register of L2. It is not surprising that learners may have a tendency of overusing formal variants (Mougeon et al., 2010). In addition, the NS variable rules (linguistic and stylistic constrains on the use of variations), which is a subconscious knowledge for NSs, may be more difficult for L2 learners to notice and acquire. Measuring learners’ success in relation to Type 2 variation is thus more difficult
than that of Type 1, which includes “a) learners’ use of the same expressions as NS; b) their use of such expressions at levels of discursive frequency similar to those found in the speech of NS in the same situation; and c) the correlation of such uses with similar independent factors, both social (e.g., social class, sex and style) and linguistic (e.g., the surrounding lexical and syntactic context), affecting the uses by NS” (Rehner, 2002, p. 15-16).

**Research on Sociolinguistic Variation**

Research on Type 2 variation is a relatively new trend in sociolinguistic studies on second language acquisition (Bayley, 1996; Regan, 1996), which investigates L2 learners’ acquisition of NS sociolinguistic norms (i.e., sociolinguistic competence), and is broadly situated within the Labovian paradigm.

The concept of sociolinguistic competence is linked to the notion of communicative competence proposed by Hymes (1967, 1972). Reacting to Chomsky’s (1965) notion of linguistic competence, Hymes argued that, from a sociolinguistic perspective, language learners need to be able not only to know and use grammatical rules, but also need to understand cultural norms so as to create appropriate utterance in different social situations. In the 1980s, motivated by Hymes’ notion of communicative competence, Canale (1983) proposed the first comprehensive model of communicative competence based on the Canale and Swain (1980) model. Four areas of knowledge and skills constitute the model: linguistic competence (knowledge of grammatical principles, such as knowledge of vocabulary, sentence formation, etc.), sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of sociocultural rules on language use, such as the appropriate application of vocabulary, register and style in different social contexts), discourse competence (knowledge of how to combine utterance structures into different types of
texts) and strategic competence (knowledge of verbal and non-verbal strategies for the purpose of efficient communication). Subsequently, according to results in language testing study, similar to but more elaborate than that of Canale (1983) and Canale and Swain (1980), Bachman (1990) proposed another model of communicative language abilities, which comprised organizational knowledge (grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge) and pragmatic knowledge (lexical knowledge, functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge). And in each instance of the model, sociolinguistic competence has always been a major component. The development of language learners’ sociolinguistic competence — “the capacity to recognize and produce socially appropriate speech in context” (Lyster, 1994, p.263), like how and when to speak, to whom, how to style shift, use register and so on, has been a key issue and various sociolinguistic approaches, such as the variationist approach, have attracted a growing number of researchers in recent decades (Adamson, 1988; Barron, 2006; Bayley, 1994; Dewaele, 2004; Geeslin 2011; Howard, 2006; Li, 2010; Mougeon, Rehner, & Nadasdi, 2010; Nagy, Blondeau, & Auger, 2003; Regan, 1995; Sankoff, Thibault, Nagy, Blondeau, Fonolosa, & Gagnon, 1997; van Compernolle & Williams, 2009; etc.). One indispensable part of sociolinguistic competence, as noted by variationist researchers, is the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. That is, the ability to style-shift appropriately in different social situations is of great importance for L2 learners to develop a fully-fledged sociolinguistic competence.

The variationist approach was pioneered by Labov in the 1960s and 1970s, who linked linguistic variation to independent variables, such as speakers’ social characteristics, like age, gender, ethnicity, class, style, etc. (Labov, 1972). The basic
assumption of the approach is that the use of language variables is governed by “orderly heterogeneity” (Weinreich, Labov & Herzog, 1968, p. 100) or “normal heterogeneity” (Labov, 1982, p. 17), the alternation between variants by NSs is not random but highly systematic, and is influenced by a complex set of linguistic and extralinguistic factors. Dickerson (1974) adopted this approach to examine the phonological variability in the speech of Japanese learners of English, which is the first variationist study in SLA. She found that the phonetic quality of learners’ production of English /z/ (variants [z], [s], [dz], [Ø], [z]) is influenced by the linguistic context (the consonants and vowels adjacent to /z/) and amount of attention paid to the speech, learners produced variability in pronunciation in different stylistic environments – they produced higher percentage of target-like variants in situations where they paid more attention to their speech, such as word list reading and then dialogue reading, whereas in the situation in which they were less able to monitor their utterance, such as free speaking, these learners used fewer target-like variants. Following Dickerson, more and more studies have been conducted investigating interlanguage Type 2 variation, which, like variation in native language, is also systematically constrained by multiple linguistic and social factors (e.g., Bayley, 1994; Beebe, 1980; Mougeon & Rehner, 2001; Regan, 1996; Rehner, Mougeon, & Nadasdi, 2003; Sax, 2003; Schmidt, 1977; Tarone, 1985).

To date, various linguistic features with which NSs demonstrate variation have been chosen to investigate the degree of L2 learners’ sociolinguistic competence, like in French, such as the negative particle ne usage/non-usage, avoir vs. être as past auxiliaries, use of on vs. nous as first person plural subject pronouns (e.g., Dewaele, 2004; Rehner & Mougeon, 1999; Mougeon et al., 2010). Studies also have examined
the effect of multiple factors (i.e., linguistic and social independent variables) involved in the learning process. The what (sociolinguistic variables), how (to acquire sociolinguistic variation), and where (the context of learning, e.g., the regular classroom context, the immersion program, the study abroad sojourn) represent three of the most discussed research questions.

According to previous studies (e.g. Collentine & Freed, 2004; Mougeon et al., 2010; Regan, 1995, 1996), the learning context is an important variable in the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. This responds to what Hymes (1972) mentioned, “the key to understanding language in context is to start not with language but with context... [and then to] systematically relate the two” (as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004, p.153). In general, the primary contexts of learning available for most students to learn L2 include three types: the regular/at-home (AH) classrooms, the immersion classroom settings, and SA programs (Collentine & Freed, 2004).

Among the three, study abroad has been regarded as the most effective context for the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation, because learners can receive natural input from NSs and learn the vernacular register of the L2 during study abroad (Freed, 1995; Regan, Howard, & Lemée, 2009). In formal classroom settings, “the teachers were found to systematically avoid colloquial variants and to heavily favour formal variants in their speech” (Dewaele, 2004c, p. 313). And textbooks also present learners with hyper-formal, formal, and neutral variants (Mougeon et al., 2010), informal or colloquial variants as variable options are often not presented in textbooks and reference grammars (Etienne & Sax, 2006). Therefore, SA contexts offer L2 learners more opportunities to notice and acquire sociolinguistic variation, but to what extent learners
can benefit from oversea study experience also depends on various factors that will be presented later (see Chapter 2). For example, as observed by Isabelli-García (2004, p. 144-145), there are two crucial factors, one is the duration of abroad stay, “[i]t is recommended that a learner spend a minimum of four months in a study abroad program to benefit linguistically”; and the other is the personal factor, “[t]he study abroad context offers many opportunities to practice these skills but it is ultimately the learner’s decision to make the experiences a fruitful one”.

Since the research on L2 sociolinguistic competence is a relatively new trend in sociolinguistic studies on SLA, and for the specific focus on SA context, only a small number of studies has been carried out (e.g., Barron, 2006; Geeslin, García-Amaya, Hasler-Barker, Henriksen, & Killam, 2010; Regan, 1995; Sax, 2003) in comparison with the abundant literature documenting the effects of SA on the acquisition of non-variable L2 features. Moreover, most studies on L2 learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in either of the three learning contexts (AH classrooms, immersion classroom settings, and SA contexts) have focused on French (e.g., Dewaele, 2004; Dewaele & Regan, 2001; Howard, 2004, 2006; Lyster, 1994; Mougeon et al., 2010; Nagy et al., 2003; Regan, 1995, 1996; Rehner, Mougeon, & Nadasdi, 2003; Swain & Lapkin, 1990; etc.), and some have examined the learning of Spanish, English, German and Japanese (e.g., Barron, 2006; Billmyer, 1990; Geeslin et al., 2010; Huebner, 1995; Marriott, 1995). However, few have investigated the speech of Mandarin Chinese (hereafter Chinese) as a second language (CSL) learners. According to Li (2010), her study about the patterns of DE variants used by high-intermediate and advanced CSL learners is the first variationist study in CSL learning and use. As a result, studies on the
acquisition of sociolinguistic variation by CSL learners are worthy to further explore, specifically in the study abroad context.

**Grammatical Description of DE**

For the current study, the sociolinguistic variation under investigation is the particle DE, which is chosen based on two reasons. First, DE is the most widely used morphosyntactic particle in Chinese (Shi & Li, 2002). Second, it is characterized by multifunctional and optionality – it has multiple correspondences between two forms (DE presence and absence) and multiple functions, which cause great difficulties for CSL learners to acquire, and the misuse or overuse of DE indicates ungrammaticality or sometimes socially inappropriateness.

On the basis of relevant literature (Li & Thompson, 1981; Yip & Rimmington, 2004), Li (2010) summarized three major functions of DE: genitive marker, attributive marker, and nominalization marker. As noted by Geeslin (2011), current research on L2 variation has moved toward defining a token based on function, and examining the full range of forms that are used to fulfill a given function, so as to provide important details about the differences between L1 and L2 language. Therefore, the presence or absence of DE that fulfill the same function is regarded as one alternative form of the variable DE. The obligatory and prohibited use of DE is Type 1 variation, while the optional use of DE is the Type 2. As categorized by Li (2010), following are some examples of different functions of DE. DE in parentheses means that it is optional in that certain example, and the translation part is in square brackets.

As a genitive marker, DE indicates a possessive relationship between the modifier and the head noun/noun phrase (N/NP), a bit like the “”s” modifier in English:

(1-A)
As an attributive marker, the modifier can be a noun (N DE N/NP), an adjective (Adj. DE N/NP), a verb (V DE N/NP), a phrase (Phrase DE N/NP), or a relative clause (S' DE N/NP):

(1-B) noun

*xuexiao (de) shitang*

school (ATT) canteen

[school canteen]

(1-C) adjective

*hao (de) xiangfa*

good (ATT) idea

[good idea]

(1-D) verb

*zu de fangzi*

rent ATT house

[the house who rent]

(1-E) phrase

*dui tamen (de) yinxiang*

PREP they ATT impression

[the impression of them]

(1-F) relative clause
The third major function of DE is nominalization marker, and the context where DE occurs has no head N/NP, DE often attaches to verbs or adjectives:

\[(1\text{-}G)\]

\begin{align*}
\text{ni} & \quad \text{xiang} & \quad \text{chi} & \quad \text{de} \\
\text{you} & \quad \text{want} & \quad \text{eat} & \quad \text{NOM}
\end{align*}

[what you want to eat]

As shown by these examples, DE has multiple correspondences between two forms (presence/absence of DE) and multiple functions, and is optional under a wide range of circumstances. For example, in the verb-as-modifier category, the presence of DE is required so as to avoid the confusion of semantic relationship between the verb and the head N/NP. If DE is deleted in example (1-D), then the noun fangzi ‘house’ becomes the object of the verb zu ‘rent’, and the meaning of the phrase changes from ‘the house who rent’ to ‘rent a house’. However, still in the same category, there are also some examples in which DE can be optional, such as the phrase biaoda (de) fangshi ‘expression’ (biaoda ‘express’ is a verb, fangshi ‘way’ is the head noun). No matter whether DE is present or not, the meaning does not change at all. This may be explained by the four-syllable expression, a unique feature of Chinese, which is characterized with perfect rhythm, structural balance, and expressive conciseness (Lu, 1988). In such four-syllable expressions, the use of DE depends on different discursive contexts, such as whether or not the modifier is emphasized. The use of DE tends to
make emphasis on the modifier, while DE deletion tends to emphasize the head N/NP. Therefore, the multifunctionality and optionality make DE a very complex variable for L2 learners to acquire.

In addition to the three major functions where DE can be optional, there are two contexts where the presence of DE is obligatory/prohibited. In the case of conditional clauses, DE is always obligatory as in the construction of *dehua*.

\[(1\text{-H})\]
\[ruguo\; ni \; xiang \; lai \; dehua\]
\[if \; you \; want \; come \; CON\]
\[[if \; you \; want \; to \; come]\]

In contrast to the conditional clause, DE is prohibited in the case of lexicalized terms or phrases (Shi & Li, 2002). As shown in (1-I), DE is unnecessary between the modifier *youyong* ‘swim’ and the head noun *chi* ‘pool’, as the structure ‘modifier + noun’ is a fixed term for a kind of place.

\[(1\text{-I})\]
\[youyong \; chi\]
\[swim \; pool\]
\[[swimming \; pool]\]

As illustrated, whether or not a category is a DE prohibited/obligatory or optional context depends on how NSs use DE in that category. Li (2010) described how Chinese native speakers actually used DE, and also examined the effects of linguistic functions, gender, and formality on DE use. Findings of her study reveal that, contrary to prescriptive rules, NSs occasionally delete DE when it functions as a nominalization
marker and when it serves as an attributive marker with a relative phrase as the modifier in informal or fast speech. Moreover, NSs’ DE use is systematic and constrained by linguistic functions of DE, as well as social factors of formality. In sum, DE tends to be deleted more in informal speech by Chinese NSs, especially in the function context where DE is used as a genitive marker, an attributive marker with adj/noun-as-modifiers.

**Study Objectives and Research Questions**

This dissertation is a longitudinal study, which examines CSL learners’ acquisition of DE variants over a short-term sojourn abroad – a research area that has not yet been investigated in Chinese language learning. Although a minimum of four months of abroad stay is recommended for L2 learners (Isabelli-García, 2004), and considering the fact that sociolinguistic variation is difficult to acquire – the underuse of informal variants in classrooms and the lack of reference books on sociolinguistic variation teaching (even NSs may not be aware of the variable constraints), the acquisition of patterns of TL variation may thus need longer length of study abroad. Nowadays, SA programs that the majority of students enroll in are short-term (up to three months in this study). In other words, the short-term SA has been the most common program type in the United States. For example, in 2014-2015, approximately 65.3% of SA students took part in the short-term study abroad, while only 2.5% of the subjects devoted a full academic year to overseas study (Open Doors, 2016). The SA programs offered for CSL learners at the University of Florida (UF) are also short-term: students can choose to enroll in summer courses in Chengdu program (6 weeks, for learners at beginning level) or Beijing program (12 weeks, for learners at beginning/intermediate level) according to their Chinese proficiency. Therefore, whether
CSL learners can notice and acquire native patterns during a short-term study abroad to motivate the present study. As mentioned above, learners’ development in L2 depends on multiple factors, though the SA duration plays an important role, some researchers also found that L2 learners, with highly contact-intensive experience, could shift toward native-like norms over a short-term SA program (Geeslin et al., 2010).

This study, with Chinese native-speaker speech data as the baseline, will investigate the use of sociolinguistic variants DE (presence vs. absence of DE) by CSL learners at different proficiency levels over a short-term SA sojourn. Through sociolinguistic interviews and story-telling tasks, the patterns of variation in DE used by CSL learners and Chinese NSs will be captured and investigated further. Additional information such as learners’ language background, their attitudes and motivation toward Chinese learning and Chinese people, their willingness to communicate in Chinese, the exposure to Chinese outside classrooms and the degree of contact with NSs are collected through a series of questionnaires (See Chapter 3). In addition to the quantitative analysis (see Chapter 4), such as the VARBRUL analysis, which has been widely used in L2 sociolinguistic variation studies (e.g., Mougeon, Nadasdi, & Rehner, 2010; Regan, 1996; Sankoff, Tagliamonte, & Smith, 2005) to examine the relative effects of various factors on the realization of one variant or another, this study also adopts a qualitative analysis (see Chapter 5), which “allow[s] us to study individual performance closely” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p. 115). This section will explore in details five individual studies.

Through the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data extracted from interviews, story-telling tasks, and a series of questionnaires, the current study
describes and compares patterns of variation in DE use by CSL learners at two different
times – prior to and posterior to China. Specifically, the range of variants, the use
frequencies of variants, and the observance of linguistic and extralinguistic constraints
on variants in both learner and NS speech data will be presented and compared, so as
to analyze the degree of acquisition of DE variants by CSL learners. Moreover, through
the comparison of patterns of DE use by learners at different SA stages, whether or not
learners acquire or develop their sociolinguistic competence after participating in SA will
be examined. Results and findings will present the picture of how Chinese NSs actually
use DE in their speech, and how CSL learners perform in the use of sociolinguistic
variants DE before and after study abroad. It is thus hoped that this study will add
Chinese as an L2 to the broader picture of L2 variation studies, contribute to research
on the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation in the SA learning context, and shed light
on the pedagogic implications for CSL learners’ development of sociolinguistic
competence. This study addresses the following research questions:

1. Do the CSL learners acquire the native-like use of sociolinguistic variation in DE
   after participating in SA?
   i) What are the patterns of DE variation used by Chinese NSs?
   ii) What are the patterns of DE variation used by CSL learners prior and posterior to
       SA?
   iii) How do learners differ from NSs in their patterns of DE use?
   iv) Is there any change in the use of DE variants by learners over the summer SA
       program?

2. What influence do independent variables have on SA participants’ use of
   sociolinguistic variation?
   i) What linguistic factors play a role in the use of DE variants by CSL learners?
   ii) What extralinguistic factors play a role on learners’ optional DE use?
3. How learners benefit from the short-term SA, or what hinders their acquisition of sociolinguistic variation?

This dissertation is organized as follows: in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework for the study is discussed, and relevant research on L2 sociolinguistic competence is presented. The focus on Chapter 3 is on the study design: details the participants, background information of study abroad, data collection procedures, data coding principles, analytical approach and qualitative approach. In Chapter 4, collected data are presented, analyzed and interpreted according to the variationist analysis. In Chapter 5, five individual learner cases are presented and analyzed with qualitative approach. Finally, conclusions that include pedagogical implications, study contributions, research limitations, and further inquiry are drawn in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is dedicated to literature concerning the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. The theoretical framework for this study will be discussed in the first place. Given that research on L2 sociolinguistic competence is broadly situated within a Labovian tradition, variationist approach and its application in SLA will be discussed as well. Following sections will be devoted to studies on sociolinguistic gains in different learning contexts – SA programs, domestic immersion classrooms, and regular classroom settings. Specifically, the focus will be on the learning context of study abroad. Moreover, in order to have a more general idea about the effect of SA on learners’ development of L2 language proficiency, research on L2 gains will also be taken into consideration. Finally, research on sociolinguistic variation in Chinese will be reviewed and analyzed. Research concerns of this study will be developed through delving into these related L2 variation studies.

**Acquisition of the Target Language: Competing Models**

From a sociolinguistic point of view, to be competent in L2 requires the ability of a learner to understand and produce linguistic expressions appropriately in different contexts. However, it has been found that for L2 or foreign language learners, after years of learning “the orthoepic standard norm” (Valdman, 2003), they may still unable to produce socially appropriate speech in authentic situations, namely, they have difficulties in acquiring the full range of L2 speech patterns and varying between them. As reported by previous studies (Dewaele, 2001; Tarone & Swain, 1995), at first, learners may be monostylistic, and “stuck somewhere in the middle of the speech style continuum” (Dewaele, 2004, p.302). But gradually, with continued learning and frequent
interaction with NSs such as study abroad sojourns, learners can acquire and develop their sociolinguistic competence. Based on these findings, the input of sociolinguistic variation is of crucial importance, as “lack of access [to the vernacular language] makes it very difficult for L2 users to pick up the linguistic characteristics and variation patterns” (Dewaele, 2004c, p. 313).

According to the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), language learners will acquire language best when they are exposed to the sufficient quantity of “comprehensible input” (p. 2), which should be a little challenging, but still easy enough for learners to understand. Comprehensible input is necessary but not sufficient for language acquisition. Krashen termed this level of input “$i+1$” and learners’ existing level of knowledge “$i$”, “we move from $i$, our current level to $i+1$, the next level along the natural order, by understanding input containing $i+1$” (p. 2). Therefore, SLA occurs through the input of a very specific kind ($i+1$), and in Krashen’s view, the Input Hypothesis is central to all of acquisition.

Although the Input Hypothesis emphasizes the crucial importance of input, there are some difficulties with the concept. One is the lack of a clear definition of “comprehensible input”, as Krashen did not provide sufficient explanations about the values of “$i$” or “$i+1$”, the level of knowledge is thus difficult to define. Second is the issue of quantity. The Input Hypothesis states there should be sufficient comprehensible input, but as Gass and Selinker (2001, p. 310) argued, “what is sufficient quantity? How do we know whether the quantity is sufficient or not?”. The quantity can be “one token, two tokens, 777 tokens” or even more; in other words, the sufficient comprehensible input can embody any quantity. More important, the Input Hypothesis focuses solely on
the necessity of comprehensible input, but neglects any possible importance of output. Swain (1985) argued that, without minimizing the importance of input, opportunities for language learners to produce comprehensible output are also necessary in the process of second language acquisition. She made the conclusion based on studies she conducted in immersion classrooms in Canada. Swain found that even immersion students were provided with sufficient meaningful input, the expressive performance of these students was far weaker than that of the peer NSs of French, such as lower accuracy in pronunciation, less control of complex grammar.

Thus, Swain (1985) proposed a hypothesis comparable to Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, which is termed the Comprehensible Output (CO) Hypothesis: input alone is not sufficient for acquisition, the necessity of meaningful output equals to the importance of comprehensible input. The CO Hypothesis states that language learning occurs when a learner tries to transmit a message but fail, and by noticing the gap existed in his/her L2 knowledge, the learner may be able to modify his/her output and finally produces the correct form, during this process, the learner acquires something new (the correct form he/she produces) about the target language.

The comprehensible output, according to Swain (1985), refers to the need for a learner to be “pushed toward the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately” (p.249). Although Swain did not mention that comprehensible output is solely responsible for all or even most language acquisition, she claimed that the comprehensible output facilitates SLA, “sometimes, under some conditions, output facilitates second language learning in ways that are different form, or enhance, those of input” (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, p. 371). For
Swain (1985), constant practice and speaking aid the learner to be conscious of his/her production, when there is a communicative breakdown, learners would be pushed to modify their output and finally produce the correct forms.

However, Krashen (1994) argued that there is a basic problem with all output hypothesis as output is surprisingly rare, and comprehensible output is even severe. Even when language learners talk, they rarely make the kind of adjustments that the CO Hypothesis claims are useful and necessary for acquiring new TL forms. One example of scarcity of output is found in a study conducted by Ellis, Tanaka, and Yamazaki (1994). Researchers examined vocabulary acquisition among 79 and 127 high-school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Japan, and they found that of the 42 learners in the IM (interactionally modified) group in which the non-native students could interact with the native speakers, “only seven engaged in meaning negotiation. The others simply listened.” (p. 211).

Another problem with the CO Hypothesis is that pushing students to speak in TL and use structures they do not yet acquire may put them in an uncomfortable position, which may even raise language learners' negative affect and thus slow or impede their acquisition (Krashen, 1998). When asked which aspect of foreign language classes made them felt most anxious, students placed speaking in the foreign language at the top of the list (Young, 1990). And Loughrin-Sacco (1992) also reported that for beginning learners of French, “for nearly every student…speaking was the highest anxiety-causing activity” (p.93).

In general, there are theoretical grounds for believing that comprehensible output plays a positive role in language learning, although the results of studies have been
mixed. Some studies (e.g. Izumi, Bigelow, Fujiwara & Fearnw, 1999; Izumi & Bigelow, 2000) found output to be beneficial, while some did not (e.g. Morgan-Short & Bowden, 2006). “Output, then, as merely repetition may be less useful than output where learners are given opportunities to incorporate new forms into their production.” (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 329). Thus, negotiated interaction is also very important.

As a result, one effective language learning includes input (exposure to language), output (production of language), and interaction, which involves a number of components such as negotiation, recasts, and feedback. According to Gass and Selinker (2001, p. 330), “[T]hrough interaction, learners’ attention is drawn to some element(s) of language with the possible consequence that that element/those elements will be incorporated into a learner’s developing system.”

The Interaction Hypothesis proposed by Long (1996) integrates and reconciles the Input Hypothesis and the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis. As mentioned above, the Input Hypothesis states that learners only need to be supplied with sufficient comprehensible input in language acquisition. The Comprehensible Output Hypothesis, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of constant practice and speaking to push learners to produce comprehensible output. The Interaction Hypothesis combines both “input” and “output” by stating that negotiated interaction that elicits negative feedback facilitates second language acquisition, interaction is not only a means for a learner to receive input, but also a way for the learner to practice what he/she learned.

Similarly to Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, the Interaction Hypothesis claims that comprehensible input is a necessary condition for SLA. Additionally, it claims that the effectiveness of comprehensible input can be greatly increased when negotiation takes
place. When there is a breakdown in communication, the high competent speaker (NS or NNS of higher L2-proficiency level) would use various strategies (such as slowing down speech, speaking more deliberately, paraphrases) and model the correct language form to make the conversion process. The learner would thus receive feedback on his/her output, and can have more time to process the received input if he/she stops to clarify the message, which results in a better understanding (Ellis, 1997, p. 47-48). Additionally, the interaction may serve as a way of focusing learners’ attention on the difference between his/her L2 and NS’s utterance or some element(s) of the TL that he/she is not yet aware, which can lead possibly the acquisition of new L2 forms (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 330).

However, Ellis (1997) pointed that interaction is not always positive, for example, if the NS use lengthy paraphrases or complex wording that far beyond learner’s current L2 knowledge, it can make the input more complicated for learners to acquire. But just as the Interaction Hypothesis states, although interaction is very important, it is not necessary for language acquisition, it just helps in certain conditions, “especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the Native Speaker or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways” (Long, 1996, p. 451-452). This hypothesis claims the necessity of comprehensible input and the way to increase the effectiveness of input, which is through negotiated interaction. There is no doubt that interaction makes learning opportunities available to learners, they can receive input and also practice what they learned, whether or not they make productive use of these opportunities can also depend on learners’ affective variables, their
“willingness to communicate” (Maclntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). L2 learners who have strong language-learning motivations and are willing to communicate will seek opportunities to communicate, and they generally do communicate in the L2 and develop their L2 proficiency thereafter. I will discuss the effect of learners’ affective variables on their acquisition of L2 variation when reviewing related studies in the following sections.

In sum, for L2 learners to acquire TL forms, in addition to supply learners with natural input, it is also important to provide learners with opportunities for practicing what they learned. According to the Interaction Hypothesis, one effective way to combine both input and output so as to promote L2 acquisition is through negotiated interaction with NS speakers or more competent interlocutors. For the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation, since it is infrequent in classrooms (Dewaele, 2004c; Freed, 1995; Mougeon et al., 2010; Regan et al., 2009), and the Interaction Hypothesis supports the use of natural interaction, it is assumed that communicating with NSs in an authentic environment, such as the study abroad environment, can facilitate L2 learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic variation.

**Variationist Sociolinguistics**

Research on L2 sociolinguistic competence, in general, is grounded in variationist sociolinguistics (Labov, 1972, 1994). As noted by Tagliamonte (2006, p. 5), “[V]ariationist sociolinguistics is mostly aptly described as the branch of linguistics which studies the foremost characteristics of language in balance with each other – linguistic structure and social structure; grammatical meaning and social meaning – those properties of language which require reference to both external (social) and internal (systemic) factors in their explanation”. 
The variationist approach to sociolinguistic began during the 1960s, and was pioneered by Labov’s work in Martha’s Vineyard, New York, and Philadelphia (Labov, 1963, 1966, 1972). Contrary to theories that use categorical rules to explain the underlying principles of language, the variationist approach claims that language varies systematically in accordance with a variety of social and linguistic factors. That is, “speakers’ choices between variable linguistic forms are systematically constrained by multiple linguistic and social factors that reflect underlying grammatical systems and that both reflect and partially constitute the social organization of the communities to which users of the language belong” (Bayley, 2002, p. 117). For example, in the study on English in New York City (1966), Labov found that the deletion of /r/ following vowels correlated not only with the linguistic environment and speakers’ social class, age, but also with the speaking tasks (i.e., the amount of attention paid to different styles). In comparison with formal style like when providing demographic information, speakers tended to delete /r/ more in casual style (i.e., telling stories) as they paid less attention to their speech, but concentrated on producing recollections rich in vernacular features.

Labov’s work thus linked linguistic variation to independent variables, following this approach, variationist researchers examine the probability and relative frequency of particular variants occurring in specific contexts. Variationist sociolinguistics was one of the first branches of linguistics to use quantitative approach for data analysis (e.g., Labov, 1963, 1966; Wolfram, 1969), and the most commonly used statistical method has been logistic regression since the 1970s (Cedergren & Sankoff, 1974; Sankoff & Labov, 1979). Different from early variationist studies that focus on simple relationships between the value of a linguistic variable and a social factor, studies with the adoption
of logistic regression allow for simultaneous analysis of a variety of linguistic and extralinguistic factors. For example, in the study of the variation of *ne* usage, through the logistic regression analysis, Ashby (1981) found that social factors of age, gender and social class all together influence the non-usage of the negative particle *ne* in French, with the young women in the lower middle class being more likely to drop *ne* in their speech.

Therefore, variable rules are studied by means of the logistic regression analysis, which can be performed through the VARBRUL (for DOS computers) and GoldVarb (for the Macintosh) program (see Chapter 3). The program calculates which factors included within each factor group have a statistically significant effect on the use of one particular variant, as well as the relative importance of factor groups (Rand & Sankoff, 1990). “VARBRUL has…proven to be a powerful analytic device for identifying significant linguistic, social, and interactional factors that differentiate or condition probabilities associated with linguistic variables” (Berdan, 1996, p. 209).

Given that L2 speech is highly variable, the variationist paradigm has expanded into the area of SLA. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Dickerson (1974) was among the first to use the variationist or Labovian approach to account for phonological variability in the English interlanguage of Japanese speakers. Based on results and findings of the study, she postulated that the interlanguage of L2 learners, like that of NSs, is also governed by variable rules. This new assumption has motivated the conduction of more studies on variation in interlanguage, and among which, L2 learners’ sociolinguistic competence has attracted the attention of an increasing number of researchers since the late 1980s (e.g., Bayley, 1994, 1996; Bayley & Preston, 1996; Dewaele, 2004; Li,
2010; Mougeon & Rehner, 2001; Mougeon et al., 2010; Regan, 1996; Rehner, Mougeon, & Nadasdi, 2003; Preston, 1989; Sax, 2003; Howard, Mougeon & Dewaele, 2013). This trend has been fueled not only by purely theoretical interests, as situating L2 research within a social context (Tarone, 1997), but also by practical concerns of researchers regarding the difficulty that instructed L2 learners encounter in developing their sociolinguistic competence (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995). As mentioned earlier, due to the paucity of authentic and informal language in classroom settings, even after years of learning, L2 learners may unable to produce socially appropriate speech in accordance with different social contexts as they may find themselves at a loss when being L2 users (Cook, 2002).

In summary, a central tenet of variationist sociolinguistics is that the variation occurred at all levels of language is not random but highly systematic, and is influenced by multiple independent variables (i.e., linguistic and social factors). Within the variationist paradigm, interlanguage variation, like variation in native language, is also systematically constrained. Considering that the learning context is an important factor in the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation, related studies done in three different learning contexts (SA learning contexts, domestic immersion classrooms, and regular classroom settings) will be reviewed in the following sections.

**Research on Study Abroad Learning Contexts**

In the field of SLA, study abroad is generally regarded as one of the best means of learning of a foreign language. To some extent, SA has been regarded as a cure-all for language learning or an effortless process of “easy learning” (DeKeyser, 2010, p. 89). Different from the classroom learning contexts, SA provides L2 learners with opportunities to interact daily with NSs in different situations. Based on the Interactional
Hypothesis, it is believed that frequent communication with NSs in an authentic environment helps facilitate L2 learners’ acquisition and development of sociolinguistic variation. As Dewaele (2004a) suggested, “only a prolonged and regular contact with [native speakers] of the [target language in noneducational settings] seems to have a noticeable effect on the learners’ sociolinguistic competence” (p. 314). Positive correlations have been found between the development of sociolinguistic competence and study abroad (e.g. Bataller, 2010; Regan, 1995; Regan, Howard, & Lemée, 2009).

Although there is no need to question the importance of meaningful interaction with NSs on learners’ development of L2 proficiency, there is not always a one-to-one relationship between intensive exposure to the authentic L2 speech contexts and the increased use of informal variants. Study abroad only makes learning opportunities available to learners, whether or not they make productive use of these opportunities can also depend on other variables. In other words, “time spent in a [target language] environment does not necessarily entail meaningful interactions with [native speakers]” (Rehner & Mougeon, 1999, p. 140). L2 learners may not always avail themselves of varied opportunities encountered in SA contexts. For example, they may be overwhelmed by the speech rate, the amount, and the complex sentence structure of the L2 that they are exposed to in an authentic social context, especially when the speech produced by their NS interlocutors are beyond their understanding and linguistic limitations. In addition, learners’ personality trait, their willingness to communicate in L2 and attitudes toward L2 learning, as well as their access to social networks, influence the outcomes of undertaking SA (e.g., Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004; Iino, 2006;
Kinginger, 2004; Polanyi, 1995; Siegal, 1995; Wilkinson, 1998). Thus, the effect of SA learning contexts on L2 learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic variation is complex.

Since the research on L2 sociolinguistic competence is a relatively new trend in sociolinguistic studies on SLA, studies that focus on L2 gains (e.g., the learning of the categorical L2 features, oral fluency, vocabulary, listening skills) will be reviewed and analyzed as well, so as to have a more general idea about the effect of SA on learners’ development of L2 language proficiency.

**L2 Gains During a Study Abroad**

It is believed that for language learners, the experience of residing in the TL country results in the learning of many aspects of the target language, so every year, hundreds of thousands of students participate in SA programs with the expectation that they will return home with greatly enhanced language skills.

Many previous studies did find the positive effect of study abroad on the learning of the TL. For example, Magnan (1986) found that the American students of French who had study abroad experience rated higher on the OPI (ACTFL/ILR Oral Proficiency Interview, a criterion measure for analyzing changes in oral proficiency for learners who had been abroad) than those who had not. In a similar study of 11 students who learned Portuguese, Milleret (1990) found that students who participated in the six-week summer SA program in Brazil generally improved their oral proficiency, from the Intermediate-Mid to the Intermediate-High on the ACTFL scale. In addition, Huebner (1995) noted that SA could accentuate individual differences, “the overseas experience seems to result in a much wider variety of performances and behaviors than does study at home” (p.191), the beginning level learners of Japanese who had SA experience in Japan out-gained AH learners on measures of oral proficiency and tested better in
listening and reading comprehension. According to Huebner, the better performance by the SA group was primarily because these learners had more opportunities to practice their listening and reading skill in the authentic L2 environment.

Moreover, Milton and Meara (1995) examined the vocabulary gains by 53 European exchange students (German, French, Spanish and Italian students) who spent at least six month in England, the result revealed that these students acquire vocabulary “five times faster than for those who took classes at home…and to be gaining vocabulary at a rate of over 2,500 words per year”. And in a study conducted by Freed (1995b), through comparing the perceived oral fluency between SA and AH groups, the researcher found that students in SA group speak both more and significantly faster than those who remained at home, as their speech contained fewer clusters of dysfluencies and longer streams of continuous speech.

Findings of these studies support the folk belief that the general linguistic advantages, such as the improvement of oral proficiency, fluency, listening comprehension, reading skills and increased vocabulary, can be derived from a study abroad. These studies, on the other hand, also seem to present a strong positive correlation between study abroad and L2 development. However, the SA context of learning may be unexpectedly complex. The extent to which a target language is acquired depends on a great number of variables, such as learners’ motivations and aptitude, the length of study abroad, learners’ L2 knowledge prior to SA, individual differences in learning styles and so on.

For instance, Dekeyser (2010) found that students with limited knowledge of grammar and vocabulary prior to SA did not just misuse forms in the wrong tense,
person, or number, but they also created non-existing forms. Even if corrections were provided, learners still rarely improved, primarily due to their lack of readily available knowledge. In return, the general low level of skill in both production and comprehension led students to a feeling of demoralization, and such negative affect may impede their TL acquisition. In such case, students without adequate basic knowledge of the TL structure may not benefit from study abroad.

In Allen’s study (2010), 6 participants of intermediate-level learners of French who participated in a six-week summer SA program in Nantes were recruited. Multiple data sources—before, during, and after the short-term SA were collected to investigate the evolution of the participants’ motivation in language-learning. Data consist of questionnaires, digitally-recorded semi-structured interviews, and learning blogs. The most comprehensive data source were participants’ learning blogs, completed twice weekly during SA, in which students recorded their entries on foreign language and cultural learning, and the blogs were written mostly in English. Data were coded through a qualitative analysis program, QSR NVIVO. Findings suggested that in broad terms, two orientations motivated participants to learn French, one primarily linguistic and one primarily pragmatic motive.

Participants with linguistic motives wanted to achieve ‘fluency’ or ‘proficiency’ of French in academic, professional, or personal ways, and they developed and enhanced more language-learning motivations and insisted on the continued study or using French personally through SA. On the other hand, participants who were pragmatic-motivated – learning French was for obtaining a minor for their future careers – did not enhance their language-learning motivation; they viewed SA as an accelerating means
of earning credits toward the French minor, as well as an opportunity to experience French culture. Additionally, for the most part, although linguistic goals were participants’ initial goals, with the program process, some participants abandoned this initial goal to travel-related goals more singularly. Only the participants who posited specific, real-life learning targets such as ‘holing at least 20- or 30-minute conversations’ in French benefited from successful linguistic interactions. As these students had strong willingness to communicate with NSs, they did seek opportunities to make productive use of study abroad.

Similarly, Isabelli-García (2006) analyzed diary entries and social network logs being conducted by 4 American students of Spanish (three male and one female) who enrolled in a three-month SA program in Argentina to explore how difference in language learning motivation and attitude toward the host culture affected social interaction. The result revealed that learners’ attitudes and motivation were interconnected and meanwhile, influenced the quality of their social networks. Positive thoughts and opinions toward their SA sojourn drove learners to build a social network with NSs, and with high language learning motivation, they developed the social network more extensively. Thus, learners received a large amount of comprehensible input in L2 as well as more practice opportunities. According to the author, “interaction with native speakers that took place in the social network fostered opportunities for negotiation, attention to gaps in feedback, and restructuring in the interlanguage” (p. 255), which finally enhanced learners’ linguistic accuracy and oral proficiency, and one learner was even “able to produce more advanced speech function” (p. 247). However, learners who had a negative attitude toward the host culture at the beginning of SA
sojourn, or who failed to create a social network and thus had negative attitude and low motivation, did not show “any development in producing more advanced speech acts” (p. 249) or improvement in the overall oral proficiency due to the limited practice with NSs.

Therefore, even language learners participated in the same study abroad program, their target language achievements may differ a lot, as participants with differing motives and attitudes result in their different participation in language learning and target language achievement through SA. As noted by Allen (2010, p. 46), “how one regulates and engages in language-learning activity during SA generates the context rather than the context generating learning”. Additionally, some previous studies found the short-term SA could enhance language learners’ motivation to continue L2/TL learning or travel abroad (e.g., Ingram, 2005; Kitao, 1993; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). Kitao (1993), for instance, found that for the 34 Japanese students who spent five weeks in the United States, they “perceived their English had improved, they had more motivation to study English, their image of the United States and of Americans was more positive, and they had more confidence in themselves” (p. 116). However, Dwyer (2004) reported that, compared with shorter (1-3 months) SA programs, the motivational and personal benefits of longer programs (3-12 months) improved more significantly, because longer SA programs have a significant and enduring impact on students in the areas of “continued language use, academic attainment measures, intercultural and personal development, and career choices” (p. 161). In Allen and Herron’s study (2003) on the linguistic and affective outcomes of summer SA, the researchers found that no change in the students’ motivation or attitudes related to their foreign language learning
or French culture after they returned from the six-week summer SA program in Paris. But these 25 learners of French were found to have significant improvements in both oral and listening skills after SA, and according to their self-evaluations, their confidence in French was also enhanced. The most improved quality was comprehensibility as students developed their ability to respond appropriately to the TL input, but the grammatical correctness of speech was found to be least improved.

As mentioned above, SA experience, in general, has a positive effect in improving language learners’ some language skills, such as the oral fluency, vocabulary, listening comprehension. But on the acquisition of categorical L2 features, most research showed that learners’ development of grammatical abilities does not seem to outpace that of the AH context. For example, by comparing the language skills of a SA (American students who spend one semester in Spain) and AH group, DeKeyser (1990, 1991) found that residing in the TL environment did not improve SA program participants’ overall grammatical abilities, although the SA group did benefit in fluency and vocabulary, there were no significant differences “between learning language in the classroom and picking it up abroad, or between grammar and oral proficiency.” (1991, p. 115).

In Lord’s (2009) case study, the written production of a Spanish learner was analyzed in detail to investigate her L2 development (written fluency and accuracy) during her entire senior year spent in Seville. This work was based on the case study methodology, as the researcher considered the importance of the “process rather than outcomes” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19), therefore, the number of errors made by the participant in her 27 weekly journal entries for a full academic year was examined.
Findings revealed that although the participant improved her accuracy over the year, there was no significant improvement found in her written fluency, and the participant actually wrote less and less complex sentences as the SA program went on. And surprisingly, even though the participant had a grammar class each semester, the error analysis showed that she had “no systematic or consistent gains in terms of specific grammatical and lexical accuracy” (p. 139). Moreover, given the common belief that SA experience can improve fluency, findings on this participant’s fluency development is so different from what has been found in previous studies (e.g., DeKeyser, 1990, 1991; Freed, 1995b). The author suggested that what previous studies found in terms of increased fluency during SA focused on oral measures, while this study investigated both fluency and accuracy in written measures. One explanation of the participant’s lack of improvement in her written fluency may due to her spending less time writing in her journals as she felt more comfortable in the SA environment and spent more time making friends.

Moreover, Collentine (2004) gauged SA learners’ acquisition of a variety of morphosyntactic features, and found that they did not improve their overall grammatical abilities. In contrast, the AH group made development on discrete grammatical features, for instance, learners in AH context increased the accuracy in subordinate conjunction selection over time. In one recent study conducted by Isabelli-García (2010), the researcher examined the impact of learning context on the acquisition rate for gender agreement in Spanish of intermediate English-speaking learners. Participants were recruited from a four-month semester SA and AH context, each group consisted of 12 learners of L2 Spanish. Data were collected through a 56-question grammaticality
judgment test and an individual variability questionnaire. The result revealed that there was no significant difference in language gains between learners in the two learning contexts, as both groups on gender-marked and non-gender-marked attributive and predicative adjectival categories showed a high rate of accuracy, which means the SA experience has minimal impact on learners’ grammatical acquisition rate.

A study abroad experience, in general, is of great value to learners’ SLA, enabling program participants to improve some general language skills, such as the improvement of oral proficiency, fluency, listening comprehension, reading skills and increased vocabulary (e.g., Dekeyser, 1991; Dewey, 2004; Freed, 1995b; Huebner, 1995; Kinginger, 2008; Magnan, 1986; Milleret, 1990; Milton & Meara, 1995; Pérez-Leroux, 2002; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). For example, learners can display a series of native-sounding attributes, such as speaking at a faster rate with dysfluent-sounding pauses. However, there is not always a positive correlation between study abroad and L2 development, as the development of L2 during study abroad depends on a great number of variables. SA program participants who are more willing to communicate will make productive use of the study abroad learning opportunities, individual differences thus exert important influence on the way learners manipulate the linguistic environment. The degree learners interact with NSs results in different quantity of input they would receive (e.g. Allen, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2006). Additionally, although the common belief suggests learners can benefit more from a longer SA programs, researchers also found that short SA programs, usually a well-planned, intensive summer program can facilitate learners L2 development. Finally, in general, learners’ development of grammatical abilities in SA context does not seem to outpace that of the
AH context, as learners in AH contexts are given explicit instruction and practices on grammars (e.g., Collentine, 2004; Dekeyser, 1991; Isabelli-García, 2010).

**Acquisition of Sociolinguistic Variation During a Study Abroad Stay**

Although there is no significant difference found on the acquisition of L2 categorical features between the SA and AH context, it is generally believed that to study abroad and get involved in the target culture can exert a major impact on the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, primarily because learners lack access to the natural L2 input in a classroom setting (e.g., Freed, 1995; Mougeon et al., 2010; Regan, Howard, and Lemée, 2009).

In the first place, as Young (1991) proposed, to acquire sociolinguistic competence, learners must first acquire developmental competence (the structural elements of a language). This is supported by Adamson (1988), as he found the style shifting – one indication of sociolinguistic competence – occurred when the learner already acquired basic grammatical elements. Thus, prior to the SA sojourn, the developmental competence in L2 is a prerequisite for learners to make productive use of the SA learning opportunities, in that case, learners should at least master basic grammatical knowledge prior to SA to ensure a minimum proficiency threshold is reached.

Many previous studies have found that, although learners may still deviate from NSs’ sociolinguistic norms in some way, in general, there is a positive correlation between SA experience and the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence. For example, in a study which investigated the development of sociolinguistic competence, Regan, Howard, and Lemée (2009) found that Irish advanced learners of French who had studied in France developed native-like ability, learners exhibited manipulation of certain
variable features, such as the *ne* usage/non-usage in negation, or choice of *nous* vs. *on* to index the first person plural.

Marriott (1995) investigated the acquisition of Japanese norms of politeness by 8 secondary-level Australian exchange students who stayed in Japan for one year. The study aimed to found out what aspects were acquired by these exchange students, whether or not the prior classroom formal study influenced learners’ acquisition of politeness in Japanese, and what factors contributed to the acquisition. All students were given an oral proficiency interview before the exchange, a short written task in Japanese, and an audio-taped interview after the exchange. A role-play situation was used as the basis for the quantitative analysis of students’ pre- and post-exchange performance. Results showed that previous classroom formal study did not have an impact on participants’ acquisition of politeness norms. These participants did acquire polite formulaic expressions after the one-year sojourn in Japan, which was primarily attributed to the type and amount of feedback they received. However, participants failed to learn addressee honorifics, thus, their performance still deviated from the expected politeness norm. That is, they still had some way to go before achieving a full understanding of sociolinguistic variation.

In a related study, Regan (1995) analyzed the acquisition of negation in French and the effect of a year abroad on L2 learners of French, so as to ascertain whether the SA experience made a difference to learners’ *ne* deletion rates. Six advanced learners were recruited, they attended regular classes in universities in France and they also spent time with their assigned host French families. Each student was interviewed twice, right before their left for France and after their return. The general finding was
that the one-year academic stay in France resulted in a dramatic change in learners’ acquisition of negation, consistent with NS usage, “the rates of *ne* deletion more than doubles after the year abroad” (p. 264). However, these participants learned that the omission of *ne* was a native-like thing but they did not learn the deletion rules in relation to NS style, and they tended to overgeneralize, for example, they deleted *ne* more in formal style.

Moreover, findings of Regan’s study (1995) demonstrated great individual variation among program participants. The amount of contact and interaction with native speakers plays a crucial role in learners’ acquisition of negation. For example, two participants changed from zero *ne*-deletion to a striking increase in *ne* deletion through the interaction with NSs during the year in France. Learners who were highly motivated and keen to make contact with NSs kept increasing their *ne* non-usage. While one learner, who did not have much contact with NSs during SA, actually decreased her rate of deletion. As concluded by the research, “contact with natives for advanced learners is necessary for the acquisition of a community dialect and sociolinguistic competence and ultimately integration into the native speech community” (p. 265). The degree of interaction with NSs results in different quantity of input learners could receive during SA, and learners develop their sociolinguistic competence when they have more natural L2 input.

Regan (2005) further analyzed the impact of SA sojourn when learners already returned and were away from the native speech community for one year. Five advanced learners of French who spent one year in France were interviewed at three different points over the course of three years: the first interview took place before going abroad,
the second one immediately after their return from SA, and the final one occurred after a further year of study back in Ireland. The variation pattern of *ne* usage/non-usage was examined. From the result, the omission of *ne* is very low before SA, but dramatically increased after students returned, and such non-usage rates was kept even after one year later. More interesting, two participants even slightly increased their rate of *ne* non-usage, that is, “they have grasped that deletion is a good and a native-like thing to do, and despite ‘formal’ input in the classroom, which did not favour deletion, they continue to favour the deletion of *ne*” (p. 205). Therefore, learners’ affective variables also plays important role in their development of sociolinguistic competence.

Sax (2003) also examined the *ne* usage/non-usage, participants were 35 American students at three different levels of French learning: second year university French (none of them had SA experience), forth year French (half had been abroad from several weeks to a year), and graduate students (all of them had SA experience from several weeks to four years). A VARBUL analysis showed that time abroad in France contributed to the *ne* deletion. Learners spending little or no time abroad rarely deleted *ne* in both formal and informal situations. The author found that the longer the time learners spent abroad, the more frequently they deleted *ne*. And the length of pre-university French study also influenced participants’ *ne* usage: those who received more than 5 years of instruction omitted *ne* less frequently than those with 3 to 4 years of previous formal study in French. In addition, learner level was also an important factor, as for the consonant /l/ (a phonological sociolinguistic variable in French which was also examined in the study), the forth-year and graduate students deleted /l/ much more
frequently than the second-year learners, and these more advanced learners displayed more stylistic variation.

As mentioned above, the length of SA impacts learners’ development of sociolinguistic competence as well. Longer stay in the target culture, such as one-year SA sojourn, may aid learners to move toward being more native-like in language norms. But long-term SA does not always guarantee L2 learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic competence. For example, Barron (2006) investigated the acquisition of address ‘you’ (du and sie) by 33 Irish advanced learners of German on study abroad over 10 months. Learners completed a free-response discourse completion test (FDCT) three times across the SA sojourn, in comparison with the data collected from the FDCT done by 34 NSs, the results showed that learners’ use of the terms of address remained “learner-like” (p. 85). Thus, the author argued that “the study abroad context did not represent a cure-all for eradicating all learner-specific features of address behavior” (p. 85). One main reason is that these program participants did not have enough access to meaningful interaction with NSs. Even spending a full year abroad, if SA learners spent their free time hanging out with other speakers of their L1, they may thus limited their access to NSs which was supposed to help them acquire sociolinguistic variation. Actually, it is quite typical for SA learners, especially those enrolling in short-term programs, not to seek opportunities to interact with NSs (Kinginger, 2008). Therefore, although “the sheer number of hours spent in the native-speaking environment provides a huge amount of comprehensible input for all students and a sizable amount of speaking practice” (DeKeyser, 1991), whether or not learners can benefit from the SA learning opportunities depends on whether they are willing to make an effort.
In addition, for short-term SA programs, it has been found that language learners may shift toward native-like norms as well. For example, Geeslin, García-Amaya, Hasler-Barker, Henriksen, and Killam (2010) conducted a pilot study to examine the development of Spanish direct object (DO) pronouns (lo(s)/la(s) or le(s)), which showed variation with particular geographic regions, by 33 English-speaking high school NNSs who enrolled in a seven-week summer SA program in León, Spain. Program participants lived with Spanish host families and were encouraged to contact with NSs as much as possible. “Although the amount of contact hours with the target language varies individually, the nature of this program requires students to use Spanish for many more hours daily than most study abroad program.” (p. 250). Thus, even this SA program was short; it offered students with highly contact-intensive experience.

The 33 NNSs (experimental group) were required to complete a background questionnaire, a level test at the beginning and end of their stay abroad, three different versions of written contextualized task (WCT) (week 1, week 4, week 7) during SA. Additionally, 24 university NSs (comparison group) were recruited and their data were used as the baseline, they completed the background questionnaire and Time 3 (week 7) WCT. This study examined the frequency of selection of le(s) and lo(s)/la(s) by NNSs over the SA program, the linguistic (include referent number, co-referentiality, referent gender, telicity, and subject animacy) and extralinguistic predictors (consist of other language, other experience, and improvement on level test) of the selection of the DO clitic forms at the three different points in time, and finally compared the results of the NNS group with NS group.
Results of NNSs’ two level tests showed that there was an average improvement, and these learners also showed a trend of moving toward native-like selection of *le(s)*. At Time 1, although the learners’ frequency of selection of *le(s)* was similar to that of the NS group, their predictors were quite different as there was only one factor, telicity, in common with NSs. That is, the way learners at Time 1 selecting *le(s)* was not consist with the NS norm. At Time 2, both the frequency and predictors differed between the two groups. But at Time 3, the NNS model became closer to the NS model – there was an increase in the frequency of selection of *le(s)* by the NS group as well as an increase in the number of common linguistic predictors (predictors of *le(s)* for NSs: referent gender, subject animacy, and telicity; for NNSs: co-referentiality, subject animacy, and telicity). Namely, these learners exhibited a shift toward the NS norms, became more native-like in terms of the predictors of the selection of *le(s)* across the SA sojourn. Therefore, with highly contact-intensive experience, despite the short duration, learners may acquire sociolinguistic variation regardless of the prescriptive rules.

In general, SA program affects the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in an important way. Interaction with NSs can supply learners with sufficient authentic and natural input in L2 that they have little access in classrooms, raise their attention to sociolinguistic variation, and provide opportunities for negotiation and practice. However, merely being surrounded by a rich context does not necessarily result in the acquisition, whether or not learners can benefit from SA sojourn may also depends on multiple factors, such as the amount and degree of contact with NSs, the length of study abroad, their language learning motivations and attitudes toward the host culture, their
L2 proficiency level prior to SA, etc. (e.g., Barron, 2006; Geeslin et al., 2010; Regan, 1995, 2005; Sax, 2003).

**Sociolinguistic Gains in Classroom Settings**

As mentioned earlier, in addition to SA programs, the primary contexts of learning available for most students to learn L2 also include the immersion classroom settings and the regular/AH classrooms (Collentine & Freed, 2004). As a comparison with the SA learning context, studies on L2 sociolinguistic competence conducted in the two classroom settings are thus reviewed in this section.

In a series of studies on the learning of spoken French sociolinguistic variation, Mougeon, Nadasdi, and Rehner (2010) examined 15 sociolinguistic variables used by L1 speakers of Canadian French (FL1) and French immersion students, 9 grammatical variables (use of *on* vs. *nous* as first person plural subject pronouns, negative particle *ne* usage/non-usage, *avoir* vs. *être* as past auxiliaries, future verb forms in all person, first person singular periphrastic future, locutions of restriction, third person plural verb forms, expressions of consequence, location at /motion to one’s dwelling), 4 lexical variables and 2 phonological variables (the use/non-use of schwa and the variable non-use of the consonant /l/ in a variety of function words).

The research data were collected from a questionnaire survey and interviews. 41 subjects (Grade 9 and 12) for investigation of the acquisition of spoken French sociolinguistic variation were drawn from an entire population (N=322) of high-school students enrolled in French immersion program in the school district in the greater Toronto area, according to a questionnaire survey conducted by Mougeon and Nadasdi in 1996. Two sampling criteria were used to select the 41 speaker sample: 1) equal proportions from three levels of French-language competence (high, mid and low) as
judged by their teachers, 2) French is not used as a means of communication at home. Afterwards, each of the 41 students participated in a face-to-face, semi-directed interview conducted by the same native Francophone, the interview modules consisted of non-challenging, non-invasive questions about students’ daily activity.

The large-scale research program primarily aimed to compare learner patterns of variation and NS patterns as well as factors that affect speakers’ sociolinguistic variation, findings from studies based on Quebec native speaker corpora and Ontario spoken French were thus used as comparative norms. In addition, corpora of the French immersion teachers’ in-class speech and written materials for French Language Arts materials in immersion program were also analyzed. Linguistic and stylistic constraints and extralinguistic factors (e.g., sex, social class, contacts with FL1 speakers, and students’ L1) were taken into account to interpret the range and frequency of the variants used by the 41 French immersion students.

Findings of the research program revealed that, in comparison with FL1 speakers, immersion students over-used formal and hyper-formal variants but rarely used informal variants. For example, while NSs favored the non-usage of ne, these immersion students exhibited a different picture: their usage of ne far outweighed their non-usage (72% vs. 28%); which meant they still had a long way to go to be successful mastery of the target language. Moreover, based on the questionnaire survey and interview, Mougeon et al. (2010) noted that beyond the confines of the classroom setting, these immersion students lacked or did not seek opportunities to use French, they had marginal exposure to French either from the media or in the Francophone environment, and they also had limited their interpersonal uses of French both on and
off the school premises. Therefore, it seemed the only place for these language learners to acquire variable sociolinguistic features of French was in their classroom setting. However, through the analysis of the French immersion teachers’ in-class speech and written materials for French Language Arts materials, what students received were frequent use of formal and hyper-formal variants. Neither the classroom nor the French Arts materials provided students with suitable activities or feedback for them to develop their sociolinguistic competence, overall, teachers used many formal and hyper-formal variants while textbooks and accompanying exercise books over-used both of the two forms.

As a result, due to the lack of informal or colloquial variants input in pedagogical materials and classroom discourse, the immersion students’ use of sociolinguistic variants was not in line with FL1 norms. Just as van Compernolle and Williams (2009, pp.496) suggested, “less-than-clear (or absent) explanations of the sociostylistic values of linguistic variants in learner textbooks may be the resource of students’ lack of sociolinguistic competence”.

Since the low frequency of informal or colloquial variants in pedagogical materials and classroom discourse was the main reason to account for immersion students’ non-native-like use of sociolinguistic variation, and given the condition that these students had a marginal exposure to French outside the school and used their L2 mostly in the classroom, it’s anticipated that intensive FL1 input, such as frequent interaction with FL1 speakers, could have a beneficial effect. Mougeon et al. (2010) extended their research program, they used a three-way comparison of restricted/unrestricted speakers of Ontario French (restricted speakers used French
almost exclusively in a classroom setting, whereas the unrestricted students used French not only at school, but also at home and in the community on a regular basis) and same-aged French immersion students to examine their use of different variants. The result showed that both the Franco-Ontarian restricted and unrestricted students’ frequency of use of informal variants were markedly higher than that of the immersion students, which suggested that as the interaction with FL1 speakers increased, informal variants also increased.

The positive correlations between exposure to authentic L2 discourse (e.g., through French-language media, travel to Quebec) and the increased use of informal variants have also been found in many studies (e.g., Adamson & Regan, 1991; Sankoff et al., 1997). For example, Uritescu, Mougeon and Handouleh (2002) found that immersion students who had had opportunities of staying with a Francophone family exhibited significantly higher rates of schwa deletion than that of the remaining students. Therefore, supplying L2 speakers with natural input of informal variants is a necessary condition for them to acquire the sociolinguistic variation.

In immersion learning contexts, As Mougeon et al. (2010) suggested, the increased exposure to FL1 speakers in an educational input would bring L2 learners’ frequency of use of sociolinguistic variants more in line with L1 norms and broaden their range of variants as well. In addition, both teachers and teaching materials “need to ‘do a better job’ providing students with sociolinguistically-meaningful opportunities to become familiar with the different levels [of language] (…) via lessons, activities, or teacher feedback focusing on [sociolinguistic] variation” (Rehner & Mougeon, 2003). That is, in the classroom interaction, teachers can also use their instructions as a way of
focusing learners’ attention on a particular sociolinguistic variation and provide them with feedback and practice opportunities to facilitate students’ acquisition of such sociolinguistic variants. For example, Lyster (1994) used a functional-analytic teaching approach to improve the sociolinguistic competence of French immersion students at the Grade 8 level. In comparison with the control group which had received experiential instruction, the experimental group that had received seven weeks of instruction based on a combination of analytic strategies with the emphasize on accuracy, awareness of sociolinguistic variation through explicit instruction, and a communicative approach, significantly improved their ability in the appropriate use of the address pronoun vous in oral production and formal written, and increased their awareness of socio-stylistic differences in the L2. Therefore, through the explicit instruction on variable rules, learners can also develop their sociolinguistic competence in formal settings.

As in regular classroom contexts, some previous studies have found the usefulness of explicit instructions on learners’ development of sociolinguistic competence (e.g., Billmyer, 1990; van Compernolle & Williams 2011). Dewaele and Regan (2002) reported that language learners are often not sensitive to contexts, that is, they use formal variants in both formal and informal speech contexts. Thus, the authors argued that one effective way of arousing learners’ attention in the stylistic and social constrains on linguistic variants is via the explicit instruction.

Billmyer (1990) investigated the effect of instruction on the performance of compliments by two groups of adult Japanese female who learned English as L2 at the University of Pennsylvania. The experimental group received explicit instructions about the linguistic and sociolinguistic principles for making compliments among English NSs,
while the control group did not receive such supplemental instructions. Over a period of three months, based on the production of compliments and replies by the two groups during their weekly conversational meetings with native female speakers, the author found that the behavior of the experimental group is closer to that of NSs, as they made a greater number of compliments, a higher proportion of spontaneous compliments, and using more varied adjectival lexicon. The explicit instruction, which provide learners with detailed information on sociolinguistically-appropriate conventions about the use of compliments, is thus shown to help learners to communicate effectively and appropriately with NSs.

Moreover, according to van Compernolle and Williams (2011), explicit instruction given in an intervention can help language learners develop their sociolinguistic competence. Participants in this study were 47 intermediate-level US learners of French, aged from 18 to 26 years, and were divided into two groups—EI and NEI group. Multiple sources of data (diagnostic writing task, chat task, questionnaire) were collected over a 15-week period, and in the mid-semester there was an intervention which included a set of language analysis tasks, students were asked to formulate their own hypothesis about the *ne* usage/non-usage. For EI groups, learners received explicit explanation of how variation between *ne* presence and absence was related to the formality of the communicative context. In contrast, even exposed to the same authentic discourse, NEI group received no corrective feedback or explicit instruction. Findings suggested that students in EI group were more capable of recognizing the locus of variation and explaining its sociolinguistic meaning. Explicitly drawing learners’ attention to a particular variable is thus more effective than simply providing authentic discourse.
with little or no guidance, as learners can notice the variation they are not yet aware more quickly and practice more about what they just learned.

In sum, many previous studies have certainly show that language learners in classroom settings typically have few opportunities to develop their sociolinguistic competence due to the little access to nativelike variation through pedagogical materials and classroom discourse (e.g., Dewaele, 2004c; Etienne & Sax, 2006; Freed, 1995; Mougeon et al., 2010; Regan et al., 2009; van Compernolle & Williams, 2009). One efficient way to promote learners’ sociolinguistic gains in classroom contexts is to provide them with intensive authentic input in L2 and the explicit instruction, so as to raise learners’ awareness of variable rules and also give them opportunities to practice variation in communicative tasks.

**Research on Sociolinguistic Variation in Chinese**

Although there have been a number of studies on the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation by L2 learners of French, Spanish, English, Japanese, Germany (e.g., Barron, 2006; Billmyer, 1990; Dewaele, 2004; Geeslin et al., 2010; Howard, 2006; Huebner, 1995; Lyster, 1994; Marriott, 1995; Mougeon et al., 2010; Regan, 1995, 2005; Regan et al., 2009; Sax, 2003), few have investigated the speech of CSL learners. According to Li (2010), her study about the patterns of variation in high-intermediate and advanced CSL learners’ DE use is the first variationist study in CSL learning and use.

The morphosyntactic particle DE, which is the most widely used particle in Chinese, has been attracted attention of many researchers (e.g., Chang, 1994; Cheng, 1986; Chappell & Thompson, 1992; Ross, 1983; Shi & Li, 2002). However, studies on the use of DE by CSL learners are very limited. One systematic CSL study of DE was conducted by Zhang (2002, 2004), through distributional analysis, she examined the
acquisition of DE by learners at beginning level in two function contexts: when DE functions as a genitive marker, and as an attributive marker. But in her study, factors that might influence the use of DE were not explored, and the optionality feature of DE was not investigated as well. That is, Type 2 variation of DE (i.e., the sociolinguistic variation of DE) in interlanguage were not examined in previous studies. Additionally, how Chinese NSs actually use DE especially in casual speech was also rarely explored. Therefore, Li (2010) was among the first to use the variationist approach to account for the acquisition of DE variation by CSL learners, and in her study, all of the major linguistic functions of DE used by learners were investigated.

With Chinese NSs data as the baseline, Li (2010) investigated the sociolinguistic variation DE in the speech of CSL learners. Participants included 20 CSL learners (8 high-intermediate level and 12 advanced level learners), 12 Chinese NSs (6 females and 6 males) and four CSL instructors. Data were collected through multiple methods: background questionnaires, sociolinguistic interviews, participant observation, audiotaping of CSL instructors’ speech in classrooms, and the collection of instructional materials.

CSL learners were interviewed twice, with three-month interval, for the purpose of collecting and eliciting natural and spontaneous speech. In the first interview, most topic came out of the researcher’s prepared interview protocol; whereas in the second one, topics varied individually as these learners became more familiar with the researcher, and were willing to offer topics. Different from learner participants, NSs were interviewed only once, on topics that interested them the most. Recordings of NS speech were later transcribed, serving as the baseline for the analysis of learners’
Chinese language use through the comparison of patterns of DE variation. The speech of 4 instructors of four classes were audiotaped to enable an examination of the effect of teachers’ input on learners’ interlanguage use. The dependent variable of the study was presence/absence of DE. The independent variables coded for NS were DE function, gender and formality; for learners were DE function, gender, their L1 (English, Korean, Japanese and Russian), length of residence in China and L2 proficiency level.

The frequency analysis of CSL learner data revealed that CSL learners already acquired Type 1 variation as both learner and NS groups treated “the conditional clause marker environment as DE obligatory context and lexicalized terms as DE prohibited context” (p.389). However, on optional use of DE (i.e., Type 2 variation), these learners differed somewhat from NS norms. One noticeable difference was that the frequency of DE use by CSL learners was much higher than that of NSs, especially in DE disfavoring environments: DE functions as a genitive marker, an attributive marker with adj/noun-as-modifiers. Through a further comparison on the frequency of optional DE use among learner, NS, instructor and textbook data, it was found that learners’ pattern of DE use was similar to that of their instructors and textbooks. In other words, as noted by Li, learners’ overuse of DE in optional contexts was greatly influenced by the formal educational input they received in classroom settings. Thus, findings were in line with previous studies that revealed L2 learners’ overuse of formal variants, as well as the effect of formal educational input (e.g., Mougeon & Rehner, 2001; Mougeon et al., 2010).

Moreover, through the adoption of VARBRUL analysis, functions of DE, gender, length of residence, and proficiency level were found to play significant roles in CSL.
learners’ use of DE variants: higher L2 proficiency and longer stay in China (thus more interaction with NSs) promoted DE deletion, and females tended to use DE more frequently than males did. The length of residence in China of these learners differed a lot, from three months to four years, and only learners with four years of stay demonstrated significant difference in DE use. Different from previous studies on the critical point for the length and amount of exposure to the TL, which ranged from three weeks (Rehner & Mougeon, 1999) to one year (Regan, 1996), the critical point found in the study was much longer.

In summary, as the first variationist study in CSL learning and use, Li (2010) described how Chinese NSs actually used DE, and with their speech data as the baseline, she investigated the use of DE variants by CSL learners who had been in China for a period of time, and also examined effects of both linguistic (DE function) and extralinguistic factors on DE use. The educational input was found to exert strong influence on CSL learners’ use of sociolinguistic variants, as learners overused DE in optional contexts. However, higher L2 proficiency and longer residence in the TL environment, with more meaningful interaction with NSs, can promote the DE omission in casual speech, and help learners fully acquire the variable patterns of DE.

Summary

In this chapter, studies on L2 sociolinguistic competence in different learning contexts have been reviewed and analyzed. In comparison with the regular and immersion classroom settings in which learners lack access to the authentic and natural input (e.g., Freed, 1995; Mougeon et al., 2010; Regan et al., 2009), SA has been assumed as the most effective context for the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. According to the Interaction Hypothesis, sojourn abroad not only supplies learners with
intensive exposure to the L2, but also provides learners with opportunities to interact with NSs, it is believed that frequent communication with NSs in an authentic environment facilitates L2 learners’ acquisition and development of sociolinguistic variation. Positive outcomes of undertaking SA have been found in the development of general proficiency and sociolinguistic competence (e.g., Bataller, 2010; Dewey, 2004; Freed, 1995b; Kinginger, 2008; Milleret, 1990; Milton & Meara, 1995; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), however, a positive correlation does not always exist between SA and L2 development. Interlanguage variation, like variation in native language, is also systematically constrained by variable rules. Second language acquisition within a SA context of learning is unexpectedly complex (DeKeyser, 1991), whether or not learners make SA experiences a fruitful one depends on multiple factors, such as the length of study abroad, learners’ motivations and attitudes toward the host culture, willingness to communicate in L2, access to social network, L2 knowledge prior to SA, and personality trait (e.g., Barron, 2006; Freed et al., 2004; Geeslin et al., 2010; Iino, 2006; Kinginger, 2004; Regan, 1995, 2005; Sax, 2003; Wilkinson, 1998). Therefore, the effect of SA learning contexts on L2 learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic variation is complex.

Since Li’s study (2010) about the patterns of variants in DE use by CSL learners is the first variationist study in CSL learning and use, the present study intends to further explore this research area from a different perspective – the use of DE variants by CSL learners over a short-term study abroad, which, to my knowledge, has not yet been investigated. Though the critical point found in Li’s study is four years, and considered the multifunctionality and optionality of DE, a short-term SA sojourn seems insufficient for learners to acquire the variable usage of DE. However, as mentioned above, various
factors influence the outcomes of SA, such as learners’ affective variables (e.g., language learning motivation and attitudes). Moreover, research also found that with highly contact-intensive experience, learners could benefit from a short-term (seven weeks) SA as well (Geeslin et al., 2010). On the other hand, long-term SA does not guarantee meaningful interaction with NSs (Barron, 2006). Therefore, whether or not CSL learners develop native-like use of sociolinguistic variants DE from a short-term SA is worthy to explore.

For the present study, in addition to the three major functions (as a genitive marker, an attributive marker, a nominalization marker) where DE can be optional, contexts where DE is obligatory/prohibited will be examined as well, so as to test whether CSL learners have acquired Type 1 variation (i.e., developmental competence), which is a prerequisite for learners to make productive use of the SA learning opportunities (Adamson, 1988; Young, 1991). In other words, if CSL learners treat the obligatory/prohibited contexts as optional ones, their performance in the three major functions should be greatly doubted, as the DE omission in optional cases may due to incomplete mastery of basic grammar rather than some sociolinguistic knowledge. The variants under investigation is the presence/absence of DE that fulfill the same function, and the independent linguistic variable for both NSs and CSL learners is DE function. Detailed methodology will be presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the demographic information of participants and background information of study abroad will be presented. In the following sections, the data collection procedures, as well as data coding principles will be described. Finally, the analytical approach for the quantitative analysis and the qualitative approach will be discussed.

Participants

The participants of the present study include 12 Chinese native speakers and 14 CSL learners. Recordings of NS speech serve as the baseline to analyze the degree of acquisition of DE variable features by CSL learners.

The Chinese NSs, 6 males and 6 females, were recruited through my personal social network, friends and friends of my friends. NS participants satisfy the following two criteria: (1) they speak fluent Mandarin, and (2) they are similar in age and educational level to the CSL participants (age range from 22-25 years old, undergraduate or graduate students).

For the CSL participants, 14 learners, age range from 18-21 year-old, were recruited based on the three criteria: (1) they already complete a minimum of two semesters of college of Chinese, (2) they are not heritage speakers of Chinese, and (3) they do not have any prior study abroad experience. Among the 14 CSL learners, 9 were at the beginning level (2 males and 7 females), 4 were at the intermediate level (3 males and 1 female) and the rest one female student was at the advanced level. Although I tried to maintain a balance of genders and number of participants at different Chinese-proficiency levels, the maximum number of qualified SA participants that I
could recruit was fourteen. The demographic characteristics of these CSL participants are presented in Table 3-1. In order to keep the participants’ identities confidentially as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of UF required, pseudonyms are used to indicate different speakers.

**Background Information of Study Abroad**

As mentioned earlier, the SA programs offered for CSL learners at UF are short-term, and students of different Chinese proficiency can choose to enroll in summer courses in Chengdu program or Beijing program.

The Chengdu program, in collaboration with Southwestern University of Finance and Economics (SWUFE), offers a six-week refresher course to beginning learners. Specifically, as described by these CSL learner participants, courses that they enrolled in included Chinese Conversation and Sichuan History and Culture. The former was a four-hour class from Monday to Friday, and the latter consisted of four class periods covering four topics – Sichuan history, cooking, calligraphy, and traditional Chinese medicine, and each lasted about two hours. In addition, each learner was assigned a host family. Although students did not live with their host families, as they reported staying in an international student hall on SWUFE campus, they would be invited to family meals and social outings on weekends during the six-week sojourn abroad.

The Beijing program is offered in collaboration with Tsinghua University, and is open to beginning and intermediate learners. Over a twelve-week period of learning Chinese, students can earn a full year’s worth of intermediate or advanced Chinese language academic credit. Specifically, for beginners, courses that they took were Intermediate Chinese, and History and Culture of Beijing. The former was a three-hour language class from Monday to Friday, and the latter was a two-hour class on Tuesday.
and Thursday. For learners at the intermediate level, in addition to the same course related to Beijing history and culture, the language course that they enrolled in was Advanced Chinese, a three-hour class taking place every other weekday – Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Additionally, different from the host family program in Chengdu, learners in Beijing were matched with Chinese students as language partners during their twelve-week study abroad.

Finally, for the advanced learner in this study, the SA program that she participated in was a six-week Chinese training program in SWUFE, Chengdu. Courses that she took included Advanced Chinese Conversation, a three-hour class from Monday to Friday, and Sichuan History and Culture. Also, she reported visiting her host family parents every weekend throughout the six-week SA. Different from the UF in Chengdu program, this student noted that her classmates were very advanced, and were from many different countries, like Europe and other Asian countries.

**Data Collection**

The field work for data collection was conducted from March through October 2014. Multiple methods were adopted, including adapted pre- and post-test version of language contact profile (LCP), adapted mini Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), adapted Willingness to Communicate (WTC) scale, audio-recorded sociolinguistic interviews and story-telling tasks. Specifically, all these methods were used for collecting learner data, while for NS data, only the method of audio-recorded interview and story-telling was adopted.

All CSL learner and NS participants in the current study were first asked to sign a copy of informed consent form approved by the UF IRB (Appendix A). After getting all approval, all learner participants were then asked to respond to an adapted version of
LCP developed by Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz and Halter (2004a), so as to provide demographic information, language background, contact with Chinese NSs, length of study abroad, use of the language, and so one. The original LCP was written with regard to the acquisition of Spanish as a second language, it was modified to refer to the learning of Chinese in the present study. The questionnaire survey was written in English and participants were allowed to respond in English as well. There were two versions of the adapted LCP: a pretest version (Appendix B) was given at the first interview with learner participants, before their SA sojourn; a posttest version (Appendix C) was given at learners’ second interview, after their return from China. The pre-test version provided information of learners’ demographics, Chinese learning history, exposure to Mandarin Chinese outside the classroom, and so on. The post-test version primarily assessed the degree of learners’ use of Chinese as well as their contact with native speakers during the study abroad.

In addition, the 14 learner participants were asked to complete a pre- and a post-test version of adapted mini AMTB and WTC scale before and after their SA respectively, so as to measure their language learning motivation/attitudes as well as the willingness to communicate in Chinese at different SA stages. Both the pretest version (Appendix D) and the posttest one (Appendix E) use the same assessment items, the only difference lies on the description in the direction section in WTC scale. In the pretest version, learner participants were told “Below are 20 situations in which you might choose to communicate or not to communicate when study abroad.”, while in the posttest version, since it was conducted after SA, the description was modified as, “If you go to China again, below are 20 situations…”. A short version of AMTB developed
by Gardner (2001) was employed, and a few changes were made to adapt it for the study. The original one was written with regard to the attitudes/motivation toward French learning and French Canadians, it was thus modified to refer to Chinese learning and Chinese people. The original AMTB (Gardner, 1985) is made up of over 130 items, and for the purpose of reducing administration time without losing the basic conceptual structure of the original one, a mini-version that measures 11 variables (a 7-point rating scale for each single-item indicator) which can be grouped into five categories – integrativeness, attitudes toward learning situation, motivation, instrumental orientation and language anxiety – is adopted, and it has been found a successful instrument with predictive validity in several studies (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, etc.). The WTC scale from McCroskey (1992) was used in the study, with some modifications to make it suitable for CSL respondents. McCroskey employed the term “willingness to communicate” to describe the personality trait based on individual’s choice of initiating or avoiding communication when completely free to do so (1992, p.17), which is also an important affective variable in L2 use. But in L2 communication situations, different from L1 communication in which WTC is considered as a fixed personality trait, WTC is influenced by multiple factors such as perceived competence, language anxiety, social context and personality traits (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998), which will be further discussed in following chapters.

For the present study, the adapted mini-AMTB consists of 11 statements, each on a 7-point rating scale; the adapted WTC includes 20 types of situations, and learners need to assess the percentage of time they would choose to communicate in Chinese in
each context using a probability estimate scale between 0% (= never) and 100% (= always). For example, in the adapted mini-AMTB, for statement such as “If I were to rate my interest in Mandarin Chinese, I would say that it is”, learners need to rate on a 7-point scale from “very low” to “very high”. In the adapted WTC scale, for situation such as “talk with a stranger on the bus”, learners need to indicate the percentage of time, from 0% to 100%, they would choose to communicate in Chinese. The average score of each participant in the two questionnaires will be further analyzed to examine the impact of motivation/attitudes and WTC on learners’ acquisition of DE variants. However, considering that the self-report questionnaires are subjective and may not always elicit true response, the impact of motivation/attitudes and WTC thus needs to be carefully analyzed.

A sociolinguistic interview of between 45 minutes and an hour on average followed by a story-telling task was then conducted with each participant (CSL learners and native speakers of Chinese). The interview and story-telling were audio-recorded, and only Mandarin Chinese was allowed. However, considering learners’ Chinese proficiency level, the requirement of Chinese only was too difficult to insist on especially for beginning learners. Therefore, switching to English occurred within the sentence boundary or occurred as a short clause or simple sentence was allowed, such as switching to English for the word that beyond their Chinese vocabulary. On the other hand, if learners kept producing long sentences in English, they would be reminded of the language requirement. All learner participants were informed the condition of using English before recording their interviews. NSs were interviewed only once, and as mentioned above, CSL learners were interviewed twice – one before their leave for
China (in late March or April 2014) and one after their return (in September 2014). By comparing data collected at the stage of prior and posterior to SA for CSL learners with the baseline of NS speech, we can test whether or not learners enrolling in SA develop a native-like use of sociolinguistic variants DE in terms of range and frequency.

The sociolinguistic interview is the major method of collecting participants’ speech, which aims to elicit natural or vernacular output from interviewees. However, with the presence of the interviewer and the use of voice recorder, participants would inevitably monitor their speech and could not speak in the same way as they might when not being observed. This is known as the “observer’s paradox” (Labov, 1984, p. 30), which is always a concern in sociolinguistics. For example, the issue of interviewer effects is a difficult problem that may not get around, as interviewer’s gender, age, social class could influence the interviewee’s speech style (e.g., Bailey & Tillery, 1999; Schilling-Estes, 1998; Wertheim, 2006). As Montgomery (1998) mentioned, “both men and women are more sensitive to the face of women they are speaking with than to that of men. In other words, they are more polite” with women (p. 117).

Though the effect of “observer’s paradox” could not disappear, it can be diminished with careful planning. In this study, generally, I follow Labov’s (1984) principles and guidelines for sociolinguistic interviews. Narratives of personal experience are one of the primary means of mitigating the effects of observation and recording, when speakers are in the mode of storytelling in the interview, they pay less attention to their speech and tend to produce vivid recollections with rich vernacular features. Therefore, in order to encourage and lead participants to produce more
narratives, having topics/questions that interviewees are highly interested and thus have many stories to tell is of great importance.

I prepared an interview protocol (Appendix F) based on modules developed by Labov (1984) with some modifications. The module is a group of questions focusing on a particular topic, progressing from some general and impersonal questions to more specific and personal ones, and most modules begin and end with transitional questions. I started the interview in casual conversation, and modules covered topics with which participants were familiar and felt comfortable talking, such as family and friends, favorite things, travel experiences, campus life and so on. The topics were discussed in a natural way instead of the prepared order, and during the interview, I also reconstructed and modified the questions or brought up new questions through participants’ interests and concerns. In addition, topics that were initiated by participants, as Labov (1984) suggested, were also valuable examples of natural and casual speech. CSL learners were interviewed twice and the second one was carried out after their return from China, besides talking about their experiences of living abroad, these learners also offered some topics in which they were greatly interested. For example, Zhang was a member of the University of Florida Fencing Team, and she took part in a fencing competition one week before the second interview. Therefore, she was excited and talked a lot about the contest experience. Lan told me his experience of teaching English to high school students in China, and since it was his first time as a language teacher, he shared many interesting stories happened between him and his students.
Moreover, in order to create a relaxed and comfortable chatting atmosphere, interviews were conducted in the study room in a library at UF, a place all participants were familiar with and had easy access to. I used a small digital voice recorder, which was placed at the corner of the table in the room, to make the overall situation as natural as possible. The participants were also not informed of the specific purpose of the study, so as to collect less monitored speech. The title and the content they saw in the copies of consent were quite general, as participants were only told the primary purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of SA on the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation, but they had no idea which specific linguistic feature the study really focused on. During the whole interview process, for the purpose of collecting authentic language data, participants were never interrupted for clarification even if they said something unclear.

At the end of the interview, each participant was asked to complete a story-telling task, which consisted of cartoon-retelling and picture description. Since learner participants were interviewed twice, a pre- (Appendix G) and a post-test (Appendix H) version of story-telling task were adopted respectively. Although NSs were interviewed once, they were asked to complete both the pre- and post-test versions, as their speech data would be used as the baseline for the further analysis of learner data. Materials used for each version of task included a short cartoon episode (about six minutes) and three sets of pictures (each set includes four pictures). With the consideration of learners’ vocabulary range and proficiency level, the key words required for the story-telling were not beyond even beginning-learners’ vocabulary, and the two episodes (one for pretest, and one for posttest) were chosen from a Chinese cartoon series for
children, *Datou erzi xiaotou baba* “Big-head son and small-head father”, in which the dialogues were characterized by simple and short sentences. In the task, participants were asked to watch and retell the episode chosen by the interviewer. Afterwards, they were presented with three sets of pictures and were asked to tell a story based on each set. Therefore, in comparison with the sociolinguistic (conversation) interview, the story-telling task lacks natural communication, and participants’ attention is directed to the given materials and their speech. The data collected from story-telling tasks are considered more formal than that of interviews, the difference of DE variants usage in formal and informal speech can thus be further examined.

Table 3-2 summarizes the information about the data used for the quantitative and qualitative analysis in the present study.

**Data Coding**

**Transcription**

A complete transcription of the 40 interviews and 52 story-telling tasks (26 pretest and 26 posttest versions) was first made following the convention as Thibault and Vincent (1990) suggested, in that transcription should reflect exactly what the speakers actually said regardless of whether it follows the prescriptive grammar. That is, “errors”, if compared with the rules of the standard language, are also transcribed, and nothing is modified as written language. For example, the false start – sentence that is started but never completed – should not be edited but transcribed exactly as how it is produced, because it provides insights into the thinking process of a speaker. Interlocutor’s non-verbal communication such as laughter or some gestures they used are marked in brackets, because the body language also conveys information during the face-to-face communication. Recordings were transcribed precisely in Word
documents and according to Standard English and Chinese spelling (pinyin), and were double-checked by myself. Following are two excerpts of transcriptions from one of CSL learners (3-A) and one of NSs (3-B) respectively, I use pseudonyms to indicate different learner participants, use different numbers to indicate different NSs, and use “0” refers to the interviewer. The translation part is in square brackets:

(3-A)

Ni: Zai zhoumo, wo changchang qu… wo changchang gen wo pengyou qu fanguan, faguo fanguan, haiyou bowuguan. Zai Beijing, wo changchang chi faguo cai, < 0: Um-hum. > wo ye chi zhongguo cai. Keshi Beijing you hendo faguo cai fanguan, hen haochi. Youdeshihou, wo gen wo pengyou, zhongguo pengyou he meiguo pengyou qu jiuba. (laugh) Wo juede Beijing zui hao de jiuba shi maomaochong. < 0: En. > The Beijinger gei maomaochong zhe ge award, maomaochong de pijiu hen didao.

[On the weekend, I often go…I often go to restaurants with my friends, French restaurants, and also museums. In Beijing, I often eat French food, < 0: Um-hum. > I also eat Chinese food. But there are a lot of French restaurants in Beijing, very tasty. Sometimes, I go to pubs with my friends, Chinese friends and American friends. (laugh) I think the best pub in Beijing is maomaochong. < 0: Hmm. > The Beijinger gave maomaochong this award, and the beer there is very authentic.]

(3-B)

NS 1: Wo zhende xiang bu qilai (laugh), wo juede yinggai shi hen putong. Wo guji jiu wo he wo nanpengyou liang jiu keneng zhu le ge shenme chi ba, yaobu jiu hotpot yaobu jiu…keneng jiu ziji zuo le yidian bijiao haochi de. < 0: En. > Ranhou jiu guo le, ranhou wanshang jiu gen jiaren liaotian.
[I really cannot recall (laugh), I think it’s just as usual, nothing special. I think I might cook something with my boyfriend, or made a hotpot or…we probably had a hearty meal together. < 0: Hmm.> And then we just celebrated the festival, and then chatted with our family that night.]

As seen from above excerpts, non-verb al communication such as laughter and pauses are included in the transcript, marked in brackets and indicated by an ellipsis (three spaced dots) respectively. In excerpt (3-A), every word of the false start “wo changchang qu… [I often go…]” is captured. Although the start seems to be grammatically correct in English, as the speaker tried to convey that she often went to restaurants with her friends, the sentence structure in Chinese is different. The prepositional phrase “with my friends” should be placed after the subject “I” or after the adverb “often” following the subject. Therefore, by recording the false start, we can understand the thinking process of the learner participant. She might subconsciously use her L1 knowledge to form the Chinese sentence; however, after producing the initial words, she realized the mistake and quickly reconstructed her sentence. As a result, transcriptions of recordings following the convention (Thaibault & Vincent, 1990) can provide precise data for quantitative analysis, as well as additional information for qualitative analysis.

The Dependent Variable

As mentioned earlier, DE is the most widely used morphosyntactic particle in Chinese, and the most salient feature of DE is its multifunctional and optionality. The optional use of DE is Type 2 variation, while the obligatory/prohibited use of DE is Type 1 variation. The purpose of including Type 1 variation for data analysis is to examine whether or not CSL learners have acquired the developmental competence, a
prerequisite for the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation (e.g., Adamson, 1988; Young, 1991). Following is an example of Type 1 variation from the learner dataset, DE is prohibited in the lexicalized term or phrase.

(3-C)

Wu: suoyi tamen, tamen zuo chuzuche qu gongyuan.
so they, they sit taxi(lexicalized term) go park

[So they, they took a taxi to the park.]

In this study, based on the three major functions of DE as summarized by Li (2010) – genitive marker, attributive marker, and nominalization marker, the presence or absence of DE that fulfill the same function is regarded as one variant of the variable DE. That is, the dependent variable coded is whether DE is present or not (use/nonuse of DE), the use of DE is coded as presence, while the nonuse of DE is coded as absence.

The Variable Context

Since the present study focuses on the DE variants, the variable contexts are thus circumscribed, exclude sentences in which the variant does not fulfill the functions under investigation, or contexts that are indeterminate, neutralized, etc. I followed the protocol of coding exclusion as suggested by Li (2010) with some modifications. The following examples illustrate the various types of exclusion:

First, proper nouns with modifiers are not coded, for example, place names, book titles, movie titles, dish names, etc.

(3-D)

heian qishi (a movie title)
dark knight
Second, in the case of repetitions with the same modifier and head N/NP but
more than one occurrence of DE, DE is coded only once.

(3-E)
Xiang: wo gen wo de, wo de tongwu qu kan dianying.
I with I GEN, I GEN roommate go watch movie
[I went to watch a movie with my, my roommate.]

In this example, with the same modifier “I” and head noun “roommate”, though
DE is mentioned twice, it is coded just once. However, if the occurrences of DE were
not consistent with the same modifier and head, in this study, DE is then coded
according to whether it has the direct followed head N/NP. Take the above sentence as
an example, if DE was only mentioned after the first modifier, and was absent during the
second mention where there is the head N/NP, DE would be coded as absence rather
presence. Because the repetition or reformation with the same modifier seems to give
speakers some time to decide whether or not DE is needed before the head:

wo gen wo de, wo tongwu qu kan dianying.
I with I GEN, I roommate go watch movie

Third, DE is not coded in false starts or error cases.

(3-F)
Wei: wo gen wo de jia, wo de jiaren, suoyi baba mama jie jie ...
I with I GEN home, I GEN family member, so father mother elder sister
[I, with my house, my family, so my father mother and elder sister…]
In this sentence, the first DE is not coded, but the second one is coded as presence. Because according to the following sentences, the speaker talked about one travelling experience with her family in China, what she wanted to convey is with her “family members” but not with “home”. Due to the one-character difference, jia and jiaren are completely two different words in Chinese. Though both of the two words can be translated as “family” in English, the former refers to a concrete “house” or an abstract concept of “family”, while the latter only means “family members”.

Fourth, with the presence of multiple modifiers and one head N/NP, DE is also not coded because the use of DE as well as its position may be influenced by many factors such as the order of modifiers and the linguistic nature of each modifier, which is beyond the research focus of the study. As in the following sentence, neither the first DE nor the second DE is coded.

(3-G)

Zhu: xuexi e fuxi wo de zhongwenke de shengci.
learn uh review I GEN Chinese class ATT new word

[Learn uh review the new words of my Chinese classes.]

Fifth, DE is not coded in expressions such as zhen de “really”, feichang de “very”, and tebie de “particularly” when they functions as an adverb. Because besides modifying the head N/NP, these expressions can be used to modify adjectives as well.

(3-H)

Gao: wo juede, wo juede qi zixingche, tebie de haowan.
I think, I think ride bike, particularly interesting

[I think, I think cycling is very fun.]
In the above sentence, DE does not function as an attributive marker since it does not have an N/NP as the head, instead, with the preceded adjective *tebie* “particular” or “special”, it functions as an adverb modifying the followed adjective *haowan* “interesting”, to indicate the degree of fun. Therefore, DE is not coded in such situations. And in contexts such as *tebie de zixingche* ‘special bike’, with the occurrence of head noun “bike”, DE is then coded as presence that functions as an attributive marker in the adjective-as-modifier category.

Sixth, DE is not coded in the expression *you (de) shihou* “sometimes”. As Li (2010, p.236) mentioned, “this expression without DE is somewhat idiomatic or lexicalized but has not reached the DE-prohibited end of the continuum”. Since the expression of *you (de) shihou* is used so often as it refers to “sometimes” instead of the surface meaning “have/there is time”, DE is not coded no matter the presence or absence.

(3-I)

Hua: *e, you de shihou, he meiguo pengyou; you shihou, he zhongguo pengyou.*

uh, have ATT time, with American friend; have time, with Chinese friend

[Uh, sometimes, with American friends; and sometimes, with Chinese friends.]

Seventh, DE is not coded in the structure of *shi…de*, in which DE is placed after a predicate verb and emphasizes the agent, time, manner or place. The *shi…de* construction is used to draw attention to particular information in a sentence, which is some kind of equivalent to the structure “It is…that…” in English.

(3-J)
Wang: keshi zai xuesheng sushe, shi yi ge ren ziji zhu de.

but PREP/in student dormitory, is one CL person oneself live DE

[But in the student dormitory, it is just me, myself that live there.]

Finally, DE is not coded in the conditional clause marked with de hua, in which DE is obligatory. Different from Li’s study (2010), there are a very small number of such conditional clause, especially in the learner data, and are thus not sufficient to be classified into a separate category for further analysis.

(3-K)

Lan: ni xiang bao xiongmao de hua, ni xuyao gei liang qian ren min bi.

you want hug panda CON, you need give two thousand RMB

[If you want to hug a panda, you need to pay two thousand yuan.]

**The Independent Variables: Linguistic Factors**

The linguistic independent variable coded for both NSs and CSL learners is DE function, the three major functions which consist of sub-functions – genitive, noun, adjective, verb, phrase, relative clause, nominalization and hen duo + (DE). Therefore, sentences in which DE is used, or could possibly be used (absent in the sentence) are identified and coded from the transcriptions. Following are some examples from the learner dataset:

(3-L) DE functions as a genitive marker

Na: wo de sushe e, henxiao, keshi wo xihuan.

I GEN dormitory uh, very small, but I like

[My dormitory is uh, very small, but I like it.]

(3-M) DE functions as an attributive marker, the DE marked constituent is a noun

Hua: wo bu zhidao, yiban lai shuo, wo bu qu Meiguo de jiuba.
I don't know, generally, I don't go to bars in America.

(3-N) the DE marked constituent is an adjective

Gao: keshi tamen you xin de feijichang, zhe ge feijichang bijiao da.

but they have new ATT airport, this an airport relatively big

[But there is a new airport, which is much bigger.]

(3-O) the DE marked constituent is a verb

Qiao: you yi tian, Zhang zhaol dia de yanjing.

have one day, Zhang look for lose ATT eyeglasses

[One day, Zhang looked for the lost eyeglasses.]

(3-P) the DE marked constituent is a phrase

Wang: wo dui Chengdu de yinxiang e hen hao.

I PREP/to Chengdu ATT impression uh very good

[I have a very good impression of Chengdu.]

(3-Q) the DE marked constituent is a relative clause

Zhang: zai shuo Jiazhou you Jiujinshan, wo zui xihuan de chengshi.

again speak California have San Francisco, I most like ATT city

[Besides, San Francisco is in California, which is the city I like most.]

(3-R) DE functions as a nominalization marker

Ou: tamen dadou bu xihuan chi la de.

they mostly no like eat spicy NOM

[Most of them don’t like spicy food.]
The structure of *hen duo + (DE)* is a frequent phenomenon especially in learner data, I thus treat it as a separate category for further more accurate analysis.

(3-S) *hen duo + (DE)*

Liang: *haiyou you hen duo motuoche, motuoche hen duo.* (laugh)

also have very many motorcycle, motorcycle very many

[And there are many motorcycles, a lot of motorcycles. (laugh)]

Lan: *zai Chengdu you hen duo de guji.*

At Chengdu have very many ATT historic sites

[There are many historic sites in Chengdu.]

**The Independent Variables: Extralinguistic Factors**

The extralinguistic independent variables coded for NSs are gender (female and male) and formality (formal and informal), while for CSL learners, besides factors of gender and formality, social variables include the different SA stages (prior vs. posterior to SA), learners’ willingness to communicate in Chinese, their attitude/motivation towards Chinese learning and Chinese people, their Chinese proficiency levels, and length of study abroad are also taken into consideration.

In sum, the speech data of NSs and learners were coded and double-checked on my own, and to ensure the reliability of the coding, a Chinese native speaker who specialized in the field of Chinese linguistics was invited to independently code ten-minute data extracted from each participant, which were later compared with my coding for the same sub-sample. Similar to what Sankoff and Blondeau (2013) did for the inter-coder reliability in their study on the *(r)* variable in French, in the present study, Chi-square was also carried out to verify whether codings between the researcher and the second coder were significant different. Results of the inter-coder agreement for each
sub-sample revealed that, with the p-value bigger than .05, coding difference between the two coders were significantly close enough. Moreover, any disagreements noticed during the coding were also resolved through discussion, and thus, no tokens were excluded. As a result, through transcribing and coding (Appendix I), 4489 tokens were extracted from the NS data, and 3841 tokens were from learner data for further quantitative analysis.

**Analytical Approach**

Since this study aims to figure out the patterns of DE use by both CSL learners and Chinese NSs, and also to examine the influence of multiple factors on the use of DE variants, so as to evaluate whether or not learners acquire NS norms. The variable rule approach, known as VARBRUL analysis, is thus employed. VARBRUL is a specialized application of logistic regression algorithm and is commonly used in variationist studies of L1 (Sankoff, Tagliamonte, & Smith, 2005) or L2 (Mougeon, Nadasdi, & Rehner, 2010; Regan, 1996;). VARBRUL is deliberately designed to examine the relative effects of various independent variables on the realization of one linguistic form or another, it provides not only frequency results but also factor weights and relative strength of each factor group, and one important feature is that it can test a number of different factors simultaneously and also handle interaction between them (Tagliamonte, 2006). Just as Young and Bayley (1996, p. 303) mentioned, the greatest strength of VARBRUL-type program is that it can “account for the multiple cross-cutting and intersecting factors that influence learners speech”, and therefore, “offer a rigorous and principled method for testing predictions that may derive from any comprehensive theory of interlanguage variation, as well as for testing existing claims in the literature”.

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For the present study, I use GoldVarb 3.0 for Windows (2007), a variable rule software program developed by Rand and Sankoff (1990), to analyze linguistic and social variables as mentioned above. The overall distribution of the two variants under investigation – the relative frequencies and percentages of the variant DE presence as well as DE absence, can be found in “marginal results” (Rand & Sankoff, 1990, p. 4) as produced by GoldVarb 3.0, factor weights are computed through the one-level analysis, with the probability of .5 as the baseline – above .5 indicates that the factor favors DE presence and below .5 disfavoring, and finally, the relative strength of factor groups is determined using the binomial step-up/step-down analysis.

Specifically, three lines of evidence can be inferred: 1) statistical significance, i.e., which factors are statistically significant at the p = .05 level; 2) relative strength of factors, i.e., which factor group is most significant, as indicated by largest range; and (3) the order of constraints, i.e., ranking (from more to less) of factors within a linguistic feature (Poplack & Tagliamonte, 2001, p. 92; Tagliamonte, 2002, p. 731),

**Qualitative Approach**

In addition to the quantitative analysis, this study also adopts the qualitative approach to gain a better understanding of learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic competence over the short-term SA. Interview transcripts and questionnaires (mini-AMTB, WTC scale, and LCP) are used as qualitative data to provide a general picture of what the experience abroad is like, and to further explore how learners benefit from SA, or what hinders their acquisition of sociolinguistic variation.

Information that we can gather from the interview transcripts may include learners’ pre-program expectations, their living abroad experiences, and their social
networks during the study abroad. Additionally, data provided by questionnaires can help us better understand the linguistic profile of CSL learners. For example, in the posttest LCP, learners’ self-reported data on a scale of frequency value provide very detailed information about their use of L1 and L2 in different situations, such as the time they spent on speaking Chinese to NSs, or the degree of exposure to Chinese media outside of class. Therefore, by combining information gathered from the interview transcripts and LCP, each individual’s degree of contact with Chinese NSs as well as efforts he/she made to improve Chinese can be identified. For example, learners’ self-reported linguistic interaction with NSs in the interview, as well as the time they reported communicating with NSs can give us an exact idea about the degree of contact with NSs, like whether or not they had regular prolonged conversations with Chinese people during SA.

In the study, for the sake of brevity, interview transcripts and questionnaires of two learner participants from each Chinese proficiency level are chosen as examples, and given that only one learner was at the advanced level, her qualitative data is also taken into consideration. Therefore, for the purpose of understanding the complex nature of SA, five individual examples are selected, which will be discussed in later chapter.

Summary

For the methodology part, 12 Chinese NSs and 14 CSL learners who satisfied the criteria were recruited. Multiple methods were adopted for data collection, among which, sociolinguistic interviews followed by story-telling tasks were the major methods of collecting learners’ and NSs’ speech. NSs were interviewed once, and their speech data were used as the baseline for the analysis of learners’ Chinese language use
through the comparison of patterns of DE variation. CSL learners were interviewed twice, before and after their sojourn abroad, and they were also asked to complete all questionnaires, including the pre- and post-test version of LCP, adapted mini-AMTB and WTC scale.

Following the convention by Thibault and Vincent (1990), a complete transcription of the 40 interviews and 52 story-telling tasks was made. The dependent variable coded is whether DE is present or not, the use of DE is coded as presence, while the nonuse of DE is coded as absence. A comprehensive view of DE use in the dimension of linguistic functions is provided, three major functions and optionality of DE are under investigation. Various linguistic and extralinguistic factors are taken into consideration, including DE function, gender, formality (interview vs. story-telling task), learners’ Chinese proficiency, prestudy vs. poststudy abroad, attitude/motivation and willingness to communicate in Chinese. After transcribing and coding, 4489 tokens were extracted from the NS data, and 3841 tokens were from learner data for further quantitative analysis.

For the purpose of exploring patterns of DE use by both CSL learners and Chinese NSs, as well as examining the influence of multiple factors on the use of DE variants, the variable rule approach, known as VARBRUL analysis, is employed for the quantitative analysis. Specifically, GoldVarb 3.0 for Windows (2007) is used for the present study, which will reveal the statistical contribution of each factor to the probability of DE use, as well as the relative importance of independent variables. In addition, the qualitative analysis, by selecting five CSL learners from different proficiency levels and analyzing information gathered from their interview transcripts
and questionnaires, will help us better understand learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic competence over the short-term study abroad. Results and findings will be discussed in the following chapters.

Table 3-1. Demographic characteristics of CSL learner participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonyms</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Native language</th>
<th>Length of abroad stay (weeks)</th>
<th>Chinese proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Na</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Peruvian</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiang</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qiao</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Malayalam</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liang</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lan</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ou</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhu</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gao</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hua</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wei</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-2. Overview of data for quantitative and qualitative analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data type</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Number/length per item</th>
<th>Amount of data collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest LCP</td>
<td>CSL learners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>14 questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest LCP</td>
<td>CSL learners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>14 questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre- and post-test AMTB</td>
<td>CSL learners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>28 questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre- and post-test WTC</td>
<td>CSL learners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>28 questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic interviews</td>
<td>CSL learners</td>
<td>28/45-60 min</td>
<td>25 hr (recorded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese NSs</td>
<td>12/45-60 min</td>
<td>10 hr (recorded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre- and post-test story-telling tasks</td>
<td>CSL learners</td>
<td>14/6-15min</td>
<td>150 min (recorded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese NSs</td>
<td>12/4-11min</td>
<td>90 min (recorded)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4
VARIATIONIST ANALYSIS OF THE VARIABLE DE

This chapter provides the results of a variationist analysis of the variable DE use by NS and CSL learner participants, with the goal of investigating the degree of learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic competence over a short-term summer SA sojourn. A frequency analysis and VARBRUL analysis are conducted to examine interview and story-telling data from NS and CSL learner participants, with the aim of answering the research questions as introduced in Chapter 1. The first major question is to test whether or not CSL learners acquire the native-like use of sociolinguistic variation in DE after participating in SA. To answer this question, four sub-questions are formulated in terms of the range of variants, the use frequencies of variants, and the observance of linguistic and extralinguistic constraints on DE variants in both NS and learner speech data. The second major research question is to investigate the influence of independent variables on SA participants’ use of sociolinguistic variation. For this question, the statistical contribution as well as the relative importance of both linguistic and extralinguistic factors will be examined.

Since the Chinese NS data is served as the baseline for CSL learner data analysis, I first report NS results and then CSL learner results. Table 4-1 shows the overview of the number of tokens. The number of tokens for Chinese NSs is 4489, among which, 3667 tokens are extracted from the interview, and 822 tokens are from story-telling tasks. For CSL learners, the total number of tokens is 3841, among which, 1506 tokens are from the pre-SA stage (1249 from interview, 257 from story-telling), and 2335 tokens are from the post-SA stage (2035 from interview, 300 from story-telling).
Native Speaker Results of DE Variation

Frequency analysis of NS data (Table 4-2) shows that NSs never use DE in the lexicalized term, which is a DE prohibited environment, and they treat all of the other functions as DE optional contexts. According to previous research on Chinese grammar or linguistics (e.g., Li & Thompson, 1981; Shi & Li, 2002; Yip & Rimmington, 2004), under the attributive category, DE is always required to be present in the relative clause as modifier contexts. For nominalization marker environments, DE is almost always required. However, results of the present study suggest, especially in informal or casual speech, that DE can sometimes be deleted in the clause-as-modifier and nominalizing conditions. The findings conform with Li’s study (2010), in which Chinese NSs were also found to occasionally omit DE from the two categories. Therefore, how NSs actually use DE variation is somewhat different from prescriptive norms of Chinese language use.

Through the VARBRUL analysis of 3759 optional DE tokens extracted from the interviews and story-telling tasks, three lines of evidence can be inferred, including statistical significance, relative strength of factors, and the order of constraints (Poplack & Tagliamonte, 2001, p. 92; Tagliamonte, 2002, p. 731). The results are presented in Table 4-3. Numbers for factor weights, with the probability bigger than .5, are interpreted as favoring DE presence under investigation, while a probability smaller than .5 indicates disfavoring DE presence, and numbers around .5 are neutral. In other words, the higher the number, the greater the contribution of that factor to the use of DE. Additionally, numbers in square brackets means it is found not to be significant.

Table 4-3 shows that NSs’ DE use is constrained by linguistic functions of DE and formality. Based on the factor weights, the order of constraints for DE function is:
The general pattern of DE function constrains that influence NSs’ DE use in optional cases is illustrated in Figure 4-1. NSs are found to favor DE presence in the case of DE as an attributive marker, and the DE marked constituent is a verb, a relative clause modifier, a phrase; as well as when DE functions as a nominalization marker. For the rest functions, adjective/noun modifiers, genitive marker and the construction of *hen duo* + (DE) are categorized as DE disfavoring environments.

In addition, DE tends to be used significantly more in formal contexts (story-telling tasks) than in informal contexts (interviews). This finding is further demonstrated in the results, reported in Table 4-4, of a comparison between interview and story-telling data, as with NSs, the informal situation favors DE deletion.

In order to create a more parsimonious model, based on a linguistic or social justification, factors that have insignificant differences can be combined (Young & Bayley, 1996, p.279). Therefore, adjective-, and noun-as-modifier are combined into one factor based on the reasoning that they are both under the attributive category and can be parts of an NP. However, the constraint hierarchy on optional DE use in the dimension of formality seems to be inconsistent. Ranking of factor categories in informal speech still persist the hierarchy as mentioned above: Verb (.85) > Relative Clause (.81) > Phrase (.77) > Nominalization (.74) > Adjective/Noun (.32) > Genitive (.21) > *hen duo* + (DE) (.04). However, the hierarchy in formal speech is a little different: Nominalization (.96) > Relative Clause (.93) > Verb (.85) > Phrase (.73) > Adjective/Noun (.32) > Genitive (.27) > *hen duo* + (DE) (.05). The relatively high probabilities of the
nominalization and relative clause categories are interpreted as highly favoring DE presence in formal situations. A close review of the story-telling dataset in the frequency analysis (Table 4-2) shows that there is 1 DE omission out of 37 (2.7%) clause-modifier contexts and out of 60 (1.7%) nominalization marker respectively. Considering the one-DE deletion may be caused by speakers’ rapid speech rates, it’s highly likely that NSs treat the two categories as DE obligatory environments in formal situations. However, due to the low number of tokens, it is not that plausible to make such a generalization. For the present study, one reasonable claim is, in formal speech, that NSs use DE almost all the time in the nominalization marker and clause-as-modifier contexts.

As to the effect of the social factor gender, the general patterns that many researchers (e.g., Adamson & Regan, 1991; Major, 2004) have described are that females are more sensitive to formal or standard language forms and thus use them more than males do. For the Chinese particle DE, as Chang (1994) suggested, in optional cases, the presence of DE between an adjective and the head noun/noun phrase would make the speech phonologically and syntactically “heavier” than the construction without DE. And according to the results of the formality effect on DE use reported in Li’s work (2010) as well as findings of the present study, with DE presence in optional cases, the resulted output does sound more formal. Although the use of DE in optional cases indicates a formal form, there is no strong evidence to demonstrate that the use of DE is also an index for gender. In Li’s study (2010), Chinese females and males were found to use DE significant differently only in two conditions – the genitive marker and when DE constructions are followed by a demonstrative pronoun/number + classifier phrase, therefore, “DE is not a gender-salient marker” (p. 395) as females do
not use DE significantly more frequently than male speakers in all functions. For the present study, the multivariate result shows that gender dose not contribute to DE omission in optional contexts, and results of t-test (P>.05), which is conducted to compare whether females and males differ in DE use under each function, further affirm that there is no significant difference in optional DE use between female and male speakers. As a result, NSs of the study convey no gender difference in any function of DE, which is a little different from what Li (2010) found in her study. The effect of the “observer’s paradox” (Labov, 1984, p. 30) – whether or not the researcher is overtly present as an observer, to some extent, may explain why such difference exists. In Li’s study (2010), interviewees are college students while the interviewer is an university professor, with the difference in their age and social status, no matter how relaxing the interview atmosphere, college students may still monitor their speech and use more formal and polite forms. Among these interviewees, females may tend to adhere relatively more to prescriptive norms than males, and thus use DE more in some DE functions. In contrast, interviewees and interviewer of the present study are all students and also are friends to each other, with the equal interlocutor status as well as the familiarity, the role of the interviewer as an observer is mitigated, interviewees could feel more comfortable talking and thus produce less monitored speech.

In sum, contrary to prescriptive rules, NSs occasionally delete DE in relative clause as a modifier and nominalization marker environments in informal or fast speech, but almost always use DE in the two categories in formal situations. The lexicalized term is a context where DE is prohibited, while the rest functions are treated as DE optional cases. Multivariate analysis of optional DE tokens indicates that the linguistic
functions of DE and the social factor of formality are significant, DE tends to be deleted more in informal conversation than in formal speech. Now that we have a baseline for the usage of DE by native speaker, the following section provides the results of the variationist analysis for the CSL learners.

**Preliminary Analysis on Learner Data**

Given that one of the major research questions is to test whether or not CSL learners acquire the native-like use of DE variants after participating in SA, in this section, tokens from the pre-SA and post-SA stage are combined, so as to examine how learners performed at different SA stages. Other factors under investigation include functions of DE, learners’ willingness to communicate in Chinese, their attitude/motivation towards Chinese learning and Chinese people, Chinese proficiency, gender, and formality.

Frequency analysis of learner data (Table 4-5) shows that CSL learners, like Chinese NSs, also treat the lexicalized term as DE prohibited context. That is, CSL learners have already acquired Type 1 variation (the obligatory forms). Considering that the prerequisite for learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic variation is that they should have acquired the developmental competence (e.g., Adamson, 1988; Young, 1991), the finding of learners’ performance on Type 1 variation indicates that these learners already have mastered basic knowledge. However, whether or not the basic knowledge is adequate for them to develop their sociolinguistic competence remains uncertain. Because the particle DE is a very complex variable, it has multiple correspondence between two forms and multiple functions, which causes great difficulties for CSL learners. Therefore, what we can infer from these learners’ acquisition of Type 1
variation is that they should at least have mastered some basic knowledge to help themselves notice and learn the variability of DE.

For Type 2 variation, which refers to the optional use of DE in the present study, Table 4-5 reveals that, as compared with the frequency of DE use by NSs (Table 4-2), CSL learners use the same range of DE variants. However, their overall rate of DE use is higher than that of NSs, especially in DE disfavoring environments by NSs — genitive marker.

In the interview dataset, regardless of the prescriptive claims, learners treat all the rest functions as DE optional environments; while in story-telling tasks, they use DE in nominalization and relative clause marker environments almost all the time and treat the rest functions as DE optional cases. Although it seems that learners always use DE in the nominalization and clause-as-modifier contexts with the rate of 100 percent of DE presence, the total number of tokens in the two categories is too small (4 nominalization markers and 30 relative clause markers) to achieve a strong claim. Therefore, a plausible generalization is that, in formal situations, DE tends to be almost always required in the nominalization and relative clause markers. For the remaining of the analysis, the two categories are still regarded as DE optional cases, as it’s not reasonable to define them as DE obligatory environments in formal speech without sufficient number of tokens. In addition, by comparing story-telling data with conversation data, there is a general increase in the rates of DE use (except the verb and adjective categories) in formal speech, and such effect of formality on learners’ DE use has also been demonstrated in the multivariate analysis (Table 4-6).
Table 4-6 presents results of the VARBRUL analysis on the data from learners’ interviews and story-telling tasks. In order to make sure the order of the factor weights in the factor group that reaches statistical significance match the order of the factor rates, several factors that belong to the same factor group are combined into one, as shown in the table. Linguistic functions of DE, social factors of learners’ willingness to communicate in Chinese, attitude/motivation, Chinese proficiency level, study abroad, formality and gender achieve statistical significance (p<.05). The general patterns emerge from this analysis:

1. The ranking of constraints for DE function is: Relative Clause (.94) > Verb (.87) > Genitive (.70) > Phrase (.60) > Nominalization (.55) > Adjective (.30) > Noun (.24) > hen duo + (DE) (.11). The general pattern of DE function constrains that affect learners’ DE use is illustrated in Figure 4-2, relative clause-, verb-, and phrase-as-modifier, genitive marker and nominalization marker are treated as DE favoring environments.

2. Learners with strong willingness to communicate, which is indicated by the percentage of times he/she would choose to communicate in Chinese, tend to use DE more than learners with low willingness.

3. Positive attitude/motivation towards Chinese speakers and Chinese learning promotes DE deletion, that is, learners whose average self-reported points are 5 and 6 (out of 7-point grading scale, slightly positive and moderately positive respectively) are more likely to omit DE than those with self-reported point 4 (neutral attitude/motivation).

4. More proficient learners tend to use DE more, as learners at intermediate and advanced levels are more likely to use DE than those at the beginning level.

5. After a short sojourn (6 or 12 weeks) in China, it seems learners do not move toward nativelike performance as they tend to use DE more frequently than they do prior to SA. However, do learners really deviate from native-like norms after participating the summer SA program? The SA learning context will be discussed in the following section by further comparing and analyzing learners’ use of DE variants before and after their SA.

6. Learners favor DE use in formal contexts (story-telling tasks) than in informal contexts (interviews).

7. Females tend to use DE more than males.
From above, both CSL learners and NSs are sensitive to the factor formality, as they tend to use DE frequently more in formal contexts than in informal speech. This finding supports the claims of earlier researchers (e.g., Lyster, 1996; Sax, 2003) that the social factor of formality may exert an influence on the use of linguistic features that have the characteristic of optionality. It would have been interesting to investigate the difference in learners’ patterns of DE use as well as effects of independent variables in the dimension of formality through a comparison of the interview and story-telling datasets. However, due to the small number of tokens in some subcategories of DE functions in the story-telling data, a separate analysis of formal speech would become problematic. Therefore, only the optional DE use in the interview data is further examined, and the results are reported in Table 4-7.

As Table 4-7 presents, linguistic functions of DE, learners’ willingness to communicate, attitude/motivation, Chinese proficiency level, study abroad and gender are significant. The results are consistent with the general patterns of DE use as shown in Table 4-6, as well as the ranking of constraints. The function of DE emerges as the most influential independent variable (range = 82), while the gender is still the least influential factor group (range = 9). Different from NSs, gender plays a significant role in learners’ optional DE use, but the factor weight difference between female (.54) and males (.45) is not very robust. In fact, for these age range from 18-21 year-old learners, their willingness to communicate in Chinese and attitude/motivation towards Chinese learning play more significant roles than the rest extralinguistic factors.

According to the factor weights of the two independent variables, relatively low willingness for Chinese-communication and positive attitude/motivation promote DE
deletion in optional cases, that is, learners who are less willing to communicate and who have more positive attitude/motivation are more toward nativelike performance on the use of DE variants. However, the results are somewhat counterintuitive, it was expected that stronger willingness to communicate in Chinese would lead to more DE deletion in optional cases, as these learners are more willing to seek opportunities to interact with Chinese NSs, and thus should have more exposure to the vernacular language and have more practice opportunities, which are beneficial for their development of sociolinguistic competence. For the present study, one possible explanation to the counterintuitive finding is that learners who reported having strong communication willingness may use DE more frequently to make sure they are on the safe side of accuracy, as they want to express themselves clearly when talking with NSs, and thus may omit DE only when they are sure about not making any mistakes.

Another counterintuitive finding is the inverse relationship between L2 proficiency and DE deletion. According to previous studies (e.g., Bayley, 1996; Polio, 1995; Sax, 2003), learners with higher proficiency level produce more target-like forms than those with less proficiency. For the present study, it is the learners at beginning levels tend to delete DE significantly more frequently (native-like performance) than do intermediate/advanced learners. However, a close reexamination of the beginning-learner tokens of DE variants reveals that their lower rate of DE use is probably due to an incomplete grasp of Chinese grammar prior to their study abroad sojourn, which will be discussed in the following section.

From above, we can see that CSL learners have acquired Type 1 variation as they never use DE in lexicalized terms, and they treat all of the other functions as DE
optional environments especially in informal situations. Through VARBRUL analysis, both linguistic and extralinguistic factors under test are found to play significant roles in the use of DE variants. Since the main focus of the study is to investigate whether or not learners acquire the native-like use of DE variants over a short-term SA, the preliminary multivariate result shows that learners use DE even more frequently after staying in China for 6 or 12 weeks, that is, their performance on optional DE use seems to deviate more from native-like norms after the SA program. However, considering learners’ DE omission in optional contexts is influenced by multiple factors, a further analysis on the optional DE use for learners in their different stages – before and after SA – is thus conducted, as presented in the following section.

**Discussion on CSL Learners’ Use of DE Variants**

For variation in DE use, one interesting phenomenon is that, contrary to the prescriptive claims, both of the two groups of speakers sometimes omit DE in relative clause as a modifier and nominalization marker contexts in informal situations. In formal speech, they seem to insist on the prescriptive rules as they almost always use DE in the two categories, but this generalization requires larger number of tokens to support. In general, learners use the same range of DE variants as do those of Chinese NSs. However, they differ somewhat from NSs in the frequency of DE use: learners’ overall rate of DE use is higher than that of NSs, especially in the case of DE as a genitive marker and in the construction of *hen duo* + (DE). The rates of DE presence by NSs in the genitive marker and *hen duo* + (DE) are 32.1% and 6.1% respectively, while the rates of DE use by learners are 82% and 25.1% respectively. Therefore, reasons to account for learners’ overuse of DE in optional cases are suggested in the following sub-section.
Possible Explanations to Learners’ Overuse of DE

As to DE as a genitive marker, NSs strongly favor DE absence (Figure 4-1), whereas learners strongly favor DE presence (Figure 4-2). The finding of learners’ more formal sounding speech, I suggest, may be influenced by CSL classroom instruction and teaching materials.

According to a series of studies on the learning of spoken French sociolinguistic variation (Mougeon & Rehner, 2001; Mougeon, Nadasdi & Rehner, 2010), researchers find that NSs’ patterns of sociolinguistic variation are different from those of language teachers and pedagogical materials, and immersion students’ patterns closely resemble to those of their teachers and textbooks. The Chinese particle DE is usually introduced rather early as a genitive marker, and both NSs and CSL learners use this function frequently as demonstrated by the bigger number of tokens in whatever contexts, formal or informal (Table 4-2 and Table 4-5). However, different from NSs who learn and use the language in an authentic environment, the main exposure to Chinese for learners is the educational input they receive in classrooms, where teachers deliberately speak formally. Moreover, language teachers are “professionals of language” (Sankoff, Cedergren, Kemp, Thaibault & Vincent, 1989, p. 108), and they are thus more sensitive to the standard language norms. Therefore, the educational input may strongly influence learners’ use of DE variants, especially for the early learnt grammar. Even learners sense the difference between what they are taught in class and what Chinese NSs produce in the daily interaction during their abroad stay, for these beginning and intermediate speakers, they may still adopt the formal variants more, not only with the consideration of to be on the safe side of accuracy, but also may due to their habitual use developed from classrooms.
Similar to the construction of *hen duo + (DE)*, though it belongs to the case of phrase-as-modifier under the attributive category, which is a later introduced grammar, the frequent occurrence of this construction in the learners’ data (Table 4-5) indicates the phenomenon is frequent in classrooms, and the formal input that these learners receive might contribute to their overuse of the formal variant of the construction (with DE presence). As Li (2010) reported in her study, CSL learners’ pattern of DE variants, especially those who have longer length of residence in China, closely resemble that of their teachers. For example, the rate of DE presence by learners who have been in China for four years in the genitive marker is very close to that of teachers, which is much higher than that of NSs. However, even learners follow their teachers’ and textbooks’ pattern on the use of DE variants, the longer they stay in China, the more likely they are to move toward nativelike performance in informal speech.

Therefore, the educational input, to some extent, may explain learners’ general overuse of DE in the optional cases, especially for the early learnt grammar and the frequently used construction in classrooms.

**The Learning Context of Study Abroad**

Since one main research focus of the present study is on the SA learning context, based on the multivariate analysis, (Table 4-6 and Table 4-7), the above .5 factor weight in the post-SA is interpreted as learners use DE more frequently than they do prior to SA, which seems to be a deviation from native-like norms. However, a further analysis reveals that, even learners use DE more after the returning, they actually are to move toward a more native-like performance on the optional DE use.

Figure 4-3 depicts the distribution of DE use according to its linguistic functions by NSs and learners in two stages – pre- and post-SA program. The figure shows that,
except the genitive marker and *hen duo + (DE)*, in comparison with the pre-SA line, the
trend of frequency of DE use by learners in post-SA is more similar to that of NSs. To
ensure the reliability of the finding, a model, named Absolute Deviation, is introduced to
estimate the bias between the line of frequency of DE use by learners in one stage (pre-
or post-SA) and that of NSs. The absolute deviation of one DE function of the learner
dataset is the absolute difference between that element (e.g., the rate of DE use in the
nominalization marker by learners in pre-SA) and a given point (e.g., the rate of DE use
in the nominalization marker by NSs). The total absolute deviation can then be used to
assess the difference between two lines (pre-SA learners vs. NSs, post-SA learners vs.
NSs), and smaller number indicates the tested line is closer to that of NSs. Below is the
formula, where \( F \) stands for the frequency percentage of DE use:

\[
\text{Total Absolute Deviation} = \sum_{F} |F - F_{NS}|
\]

The total absolute deviation for learners in post-SA is 30.8, whereas for learners
in pre-SA is 47.3. The smaller number of post-SA demonstrates that the post-SA line is
closer to the NS line, in other words, the pattern of DE use by learners in post-SA
parallels that of NSs.

Although the frequency of DE presence in post-SA is higher than that of pre-SA,
caution is needed to make a general claim about the effect of study abroad on optional
DE use. The lower rate of DE use by learners in pre-SA, I suggest, may be probably
due to an incomplete mastery of Chinese grammar rather than some knowledge of
sociolinguistic variation. For example, according to the prescriptive grammar, DE is
almost always required when it functions as a nominalization marker. Though NSs don’t
strictly follow the rule as they occasionally omit DE especially in informal situations, the
nominalization marker is still a DE favoring context, the rate of DE presence by NSs is 81.2%. However, the rate of DE use by learners in pre-SA is 57.4%, which is much lower than that of NSs, and also differs a lot from what the grammar prescribes. If the relatively low rate was caused by pre-SA learners’ knowledge of sociolinguistic variation, even as their overgeneralization on optional DE use in the nominalization environment, it would be expected that these learners should also use much less DE in the DE disfavoring environment – genitive marker. Therefore, due to the incomplete grasp of some linguistic functions of DE that are later introduced in classrooms, learners without adequate basic knowledge may produce “ungrammatical” forms (DE deletion), which happen to be the “correct” sociolinguistic forms. However, such lower rates of DE use do not follow NS sociolinguistic norms, but rather a random deletion of DE, and the resulted pattern presents a deviation to that of NSs.

Moreover, by comparing the pattern of DE use by learners at different proficiency levels in the pre-SA stage (Figure 4-4), it is found that beginning learners are the group that shows an incomplete mastery of grammar and is responsible for the general lower frequency of DE use by CSL learners as well. Though beginning learners in pre-SA omit DE more frequently than that of intermediate/advanced learners, such lower frequency is attributed to their incomplete mastery and misuse of some later introduced grammars, as illustrated by the much lower rates of DE presence in the phrase-as-modifier and nominalization marker environments. Intermediate/advanced learners, by contrast, exhibit a more native-like pattern of DE use, with a total absolute deviation 55.8, which is much smaller than that of 127.1 for beginning learners. In addition, the big number of tokens with relatively low frequency of DE presence produced by beginning learners –
636 tokens out of a total 1241 in pre-SA, to some extent, influence the general trend of frequency of optional DE use by CSL learners, which in return, results a less native-like performance on the variation in DE use as mentioned above. Within the group of beginning learners, the comparison of their patterns of DE use between their prior and post to the SA program indicates that the short sojourn abroad does bring learners’ trend of frequency of DE use more in line with NS norms. As Figure 4-4 depicts, after returning from China, beginning learners not only increase the rates of DE use under each function, but also exhibit more native-like patterns of sociolinguistic variation in DE use (total absolute deviation = 39.6).

Above all, changes do take place on the use of DE variants by CSL learners over the summer SA program, as learners are to move toward more native-like norms. A frequency analysis (Table 4-8) and a multivariate analysis (Table 4-9) for the post-SA dataset are thus conducted, so as to investigate learners’ patterns of DE use as well as effects of different factors on their optional DE use. Given that CSL learners reported participating in different SA programs, the length of study abroad (6 week vs. 12 weeks) is also taken into consideration. On the other hand, although the analysis for the pre-SA dataset can help us better understand how the same students compare at different SA stages, given that the learners, especially the beginning learners, may not completely master some later-introduced linguistic functions of DE prior to SA, pre-SA dataset is thus not further analyzed here.

**Patterns of Variation in DE Use by SA Participants**

With NS data (Table 4-2) as the baseline, frequency analysis of the post-SA dataset (Table 4-8) shows that the SA participants use the same range of DE variants as do those of Chinese NSs. Specifically, except the lexicalized term which is a DE
prohibited environment, learners treat all the rest functions as DE optional cases especially in informal situations. In the story-telling data, learners seem to follow the prescriptive rules as they always use DE in relative clause as a modifier and nominalization marker contexts. However, given that the total number of tokens in the two categories is too small (4 nominalization markers and 19 relative clause markers), no strong claim can be made here. As mentioned earlier, the two categories are still regarded as DE optional environments.

In addition, although it has been demonstrated that learners are to move toward more native-like norms after their return from China, it should be noted that they still differ from NSs in the frequency of optional DE use as their discursive frequency of DE use is found to be higher, especially in the DE disfavoring context by NSs – genitive marker. That is, for a full mastery of the variable usage of the participle DE, these learners still have a long way to go.

Table 4-9 presents results of the multivariate analysis on the post-SA data. Learners’ use of DE variants is not random but systematically constrained by multiple linguistic and extralinguistic factors. The general patterns emerge from this analysis:

1. Relative clause-, verb-, and phrase-as-modifier, genitive marker and nominalization marker are treated as DE favoring environments, while the construction of *hen duo* + (DE), adjective- and noun-as-modifier are categorized as DE disfavoring contexts. The general pattern of DE function constrains that influence learners’ DE use is illustrated in Figure 4-5.


3. Intermediate/advanced learners tend to use DE more than those at the beginning level.

4. The longer the learners stay in China, the more likely they are to delete DE in optional cases.
5. Factor groups of formality and gender do not play significant roles in the use of DE variants by these SA participants.

**Influence of Independent Variables on SA Participants’ Use of DE Variation**

As shown in Table 4-9, linguistic functions of DE, learners' willingness to communicate, attitude/motivation, Chinese proficiency and the length of SA are found to be statistically significant, while formality and gender do not contribute to DE deletion in optional cases. In the following sub-sections, each factor group is further discussed.

**Linguistic functions of DE**

The function of DE emerges as the most influential independent variable (range = 82). Based on the factor weights, the order of constraints for DE function is: Relative Clause (.95) > Verb (.86) > Genitive (.73) > Phrase (.58) > Nominalization (.56) > Adjective (.28) > Noun (.20) > *hen duo* + (DE) (.13). Given that the probability bigger than .5 is interpreted as favoring DE presence, as mentioned above, relative clause-, verb-, and phrase-as-modifier, genitive marker and nominalization marker are treated as DE favoring environments. As compared with the constraint hierarchy of NS data: Verb (.86) > Relative Clause (.83) > Phrase (.78) > Nominalization (.75) > Adjective (.36) > Noun (.30) > Genitive (.22) > *hen duo* + (DE) (.04), the difference between SA participants’ and NSs’ DE use lies in their frequency of optional DE use, especially for the genitive marker – NSs treat it as a DE disfavoring environment, while learners treat it as a DE favoring environment.

The finding of learners’ overall higher rate of DE use is in line with previous studies that reveal L2 learners tend to overuse TL forms in optional environments (e.g., Li, 2010; Mougeon & Rehner, 2001; Mougeon et al., 2010). In this study, the interpretation of learners’ overuse of DE in some functions could be undertaken from
two potential perspectives. First, learners may use DE more frequently in an attempt to land on the safe side of accuracy and clarity. Second, formal classroom instruction and teaching materials might contribute to learners’ more formal sounding speech as well. Therefore, although both learners’ and NSs’ optional DE use is constrained by the same linguistic factor of DE functions, these learners still need more time to further develop their sociolinguistic competence.

**Learners’ communication willingness and attitude/motivation**

From Table 4-9, among all the extralinguistic factors, learners’ Chinese-communication willingness is found to be the most influential (range = 45), followed by the factor of learners’ attitude/motivation (range = 36). According to the factor weights of the two independent variables, neutral/weak willingness to communicate in Chinese, and positive attitude/motivation towards Chinese speakers and Chinese learning promote DE deletion. In other words, learners who are less willing to communicate and who have more positive attitude/motivation tend to omit DE more in optional cases. However, the results are somewhat counterintuitive, it was expected that both the two independent variables should positively influence the deletion of DE. As in a study of the effects of motivation and willingness to communicate on L2 communication frequency by Japanese ESL students (Hashimoto, 2002), the author found that “students who have greater motivation for language learning and who are more willing to communicate report using the language more frequently in the classroom” (p.56).

In this study, although the correlation between learners’ attitude/motivation and DE deletion in optional cases is positive, their willingness for Chinese communication is found to negatively influences the omission of DE. As mentioned earlier, one possible explanation is that learners who are more willing to communicate may use the formal
variants that they are taught in classrooms more frequently to make sure of making no mistakes when talking with NSs. Because the accuracy and clarity of TL use is one big concern for most language learners, and considering the fact that these learners only learnt Chinese for one or two years prior to SA, when staying in an authentic and natural Chinese-speaking environment, for those who had strong communication willingness and thus were more willing to interact with NSs, they would use the form about which they feel certain of accurate usage. That is, for the purpose of expressing themselves clearly, these learners may delete DE only when they are quite sure of making no mistakes.

With NS data as the baseline, a further comparison of frequency of DE use by CSL learners with different communication willingness (Figure 4-6) shows that the trend of frequency of DE use by learners with strong willingness is closer to that of NSs. In other words, although learners who reported having positive willingness for Chinese communication tend to use DE more in optional cases, their use of DE variants exhibits a more native-like performance than that of learners with neutral/weak willingness. Additionally, since out of the total 1876 tokens, 71.6% (1344 tokens) are associated with learners’ self-reported strong willingness, and the communication willingness is demonstrated to be the most influential extralinguistic factor, to a degree, the overall higher rates of DE use but more native-like norms by learners in post-SA can be explained (Figure 4-3).

Moreover, it also needs to note that, in this study, learners who self-reported with strong communication willingness are also found to have positive attitude/motivation, while learners with positive attitude/motivation do not always have strong
communication willingness. Given that positive attitude/motivation promotes DE deletion, and strong willingness promotes a more native-like performance on optional DE use, it is the learners with strong communication willingness and positive attitude/motivation that are found to move toward more native-like norms after participating in the SA program.

**Chinese proficiency**

Proficiency level is found to be significant in these SA participants’ optional DE use, however, with an inverse relationship between proficiency and DE deletion – more proficient learners tend to use DE more in optional cases. This finding is different from previous studies (e.g., Bayley, 1996; Li, 2010; Polio, 1995; Sax, 2003) that found higher proficiency promotes the use of more target-like forms. However, it should be noted that, as mentioned by Howard, Mougeon, and Dewaele (2013), most of the research on sociolinguistic variation has focused on advanced L2 learners, with the consideration of “sociolinguistic variation only emerges following stability in the learner’s grammatical development” (p. 342). For example, in Li’s study (2010) on the use of DE variants by CSL learners, the learner participants that she recruited were all rather advanced, and the result shows that advanced learners tend to omit DE more than higher-intermediate learners do.

In the present study, most of the learner participants were at the beginning level, some at the intermediate level, and only one learner was at the advanced level. That is, different from existing studies that generally focus on advanced learners, this study mainly focuses on less advanced learners. Explanation to the inverse relationship between proficiency and DE deletion, I suggest, may be influenced by the educational input. Different from the beginning learners who may not fully master all linguistic
functions of DE prior to SA, these higher proficiency learners receive more formal input of DE variation in classroom settings, and they may thus use more formal forms in an attempt to land on the safe side of accuracy.

**Length of study abroad**

Length of study abroad is another factor that reaches significance. As shown in Table 4-9, although the factor weight difference between 6 weeks (.55) and 12 weeks (.46) is not very robust, it is still an independent variable that plays a significant role on learners’ optional DE use. Specifically, learners who stay in China for twelve weeks tend to delete DE more than those with six weeks of study abroad. That is, the longer the learners stay in China, the more likely they are to omit DE in optional cases.

In this study, length of study abroad indicates not only the amount of time in the TL environment, but also the amount of interactions with Chinese NSs. Sufficient natural TL input in casual speech as well as various practice opportunities with NSs are of great importance for learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic competence. The finding of positive impact of length of study abroad on learners’ use of sociolinguistic variant DE echoes those of previous studies (e.g., Regan, 1996; Rehner & Mougeon, 1999; Sax, 2003), which identified the significant influence of the length of residence in the TL environment and interaction with NSs on L2 learners’ use of sociolinguistic variation. Even for a short duration, just as what Geeslin et al. (2010) found in their study, with intensive contact experience with TL NSs, learners may shift toward native-like norms. Longer stay in China and thus more interaction with NSs can help the acquisition of sociolinguistic variants of DE.
**Factor groups of formality and gender**

The results reported in Table 4-9 reveal that the factor groups of formality and gender do not contribute to DE deletion in optional cases, which are different from previous findings as shown in Table 4-6.

As mentioned earlier, based on the NS baseline, it is found that DE use is correlated with formality – formal speech favors DE use while informal situation favors DE deletion. For the dataset in the post-SA where both beginning and intermediate/advanced learners exhibit more native-like patterns of DE use, the formality is found not to be statistically significant at the .05 level. However, the rate of DE use in the story-telling (82.9%) is still higher than that in the interview (66.5%), and there is a tendency for the story-telling (factor weight .57) to prefer DE use more than the interview (factor weight .49).

On the other hand, for gender effect, with the factor weight around .5 for both female and male speakers, it further affirms that no gender difference exists in DE use by learners in the post-SA stage, which actually supports the claim that CSL learners, after returning from China, are to move toward being more native-like in the use of DE variants. Because no strong evidence can demonstrate that DE use is an index for gender, though the use of DE makes the speech sound more formal, and based on the general pattern that females are more attuned to formal and standard speech style (e.g., Adamson & Regan, 1991; Major, 2004), it might be expected that the use of DE could be a gender-salient marker as females tend to use DE frequently more than males. However, findings of the present study reveal that there is no gender difference in optional DE use by NSs, they differ DE usage choices according to whether the situation is formal or informal as well as the linguistic functions of DE.
A further comparison of the effect of gender on learners’ patterns of DE use reveals that such gender difference exists only in the pre-SA stage, females, with factor weight .59, are interpreted as favoring DE use than males (.38). This result is in some way expected because prior to SA, learners’ main exposure to Chinese is the educational input, and they may consider the speech style used in classrooms as more standard. Since the classroom setting is a formal situation which favors DE presence, and females are more sensitive to the formal forms than male learners, a feminine preference of more DE use thus emerges. While for learners in the post-SA stage, besides the classroom settings, they have been surrounded by rich contexts and interaction with NSs can supply them with sufficient natural input in L2. Learners may then notice there is no different gender speech styles that NSs adopt, and thus change their DE usage choices.

Finally, according to Andersen’s (1984) One-to-One Principle, the more complex the mapping relationship between form and meaning/function of a TL feature, the more time L2 learners need to spend to fully acquire its variable use. The Chinese morphosyntactic particle DE is thus a very complex variable, it has multiple correspondences between two forms (DE presence and absence) and multiple functions. Li (2010) found that 4 years of residence in China is the time required for a significant improvement of learners’ acquisition of DE variants, but it needs to mention that 9 out of 20 CSL learners in her study have no experience of prior Chinese learning, while the rest participants have several months to years of Chinese learning before they reside and learn in China. And for the present study, 12 weeks of abroad stay is found to have a significantly positive impact on learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic variants
of DE. Such short sojourn abroad helps learners who have one or two years of Chinese learning shift toward native-like norms, but not a full mastery of variants DE as well.

Summary

In this chapter, the results of the present study show that CSL learners use the same range of DE variations as NSs – the lexicalized term is treated as a DE prohibited environment, while all of the other functions, even for nominalization marker and clause-as-modifier contexts, are treated as DE optional contexts especially in informal speech. However, learners’ frequency of DE use, in general, is higher than that of NSs, especially for the genitive marker which is a DE disfavoring context for NSs but a DE favoring environment for learners. Learners’ overuse of DE in some functions may probably due to the influence of educational input that they receive in the formal classroom settings.

Moreover, after participating in the short summer SA program, though the frequency of DE use is higher than that of their prior use to SA, leaners do move toward native-like performance as their length of stay in China increase. Beginning learners’ incomplete mastery of some linguistic functions of DE, to some extent, may explain the relative lower rates of optional DE use as well as their less native-like patterns in the pre-SA stage. In addition, the finding of no gender difference in post-SA data further lends support to the claim that the short sojourn abroad does bring leaners’ patterns of optional DE use more in line with NS norms. Though formality is found not to contribute to DE deletion, the tendency in which informal speech favors DE use more than formal speech still exists.
In sum, CSL learners’ use of optional DE is highly complex but systematic and constrained by multiple linguistic and extralinguistic factors, but for a full mastery of the variable usage of the particle DE, they still have a long way to go.

In the following chapter, since learners’ willingness to communicate in Chinese and attitude/motivation towards Chinese learning play more significant roles on the variation in DE use than the rest extralinguistic factors, five individual learner cases will then be presented and discussed, and qualitative analysis will be adopted to further explore how learners benefit from such a short sojourn abroad.

Table 4-1. Overview of tokens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Story-telling</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese NSs</td>
<td>3667</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>4489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSL learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-SA</td>
<td>1249</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>1506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-SA</td>
<td>2035</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-2. Frequency analysis of NS data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions of DE</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Story-telling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of tokens</td>
<td>% with DE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative clause</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominalization</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>79.9</td>
</tr>
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<td>Adjective</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>hen duo</em>+(DE)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexicalized term</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-3. Multivariate analysis of the contribution of factors to the probability of DE use by Chinese NSs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor groups</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Factor weight</th>
<th>% with DE</th>
<th>No. of tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functions of DE</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relative clause</td>
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<td>87.2</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nominalization</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>587</td>
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<td>Genitive</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>919</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hen duo + (DE)</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>115</td>
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<td>Formality</td>
<td>Story-telling</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>558</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview</td>
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<td>56.7</td>
<td>3201</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>[.50]</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>1874</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>[.50]</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>1885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>3759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-4. DE use in interviews vs. story-telling tasks by NSs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions of DE</th>
<th>Factor weight</th>
<th>% with DE</th>
<th>Factor weight</th>
<th>% with DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative clause</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>97.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominalization</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective/Noun</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hen duo+(DE)</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-5. Frequency analysis of CSL learner data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions of DE</th>
<th>No. of tokens</th>
<th>% with DE</th>
<th>No. of tokens</th>
<th>% with DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relative clause</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>89.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>165</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominalization</td>
<td>165</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
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<td>54.4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hen duo+(DE)</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexicalized term</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>136</td>
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Table 4-6. Multivariate analysis of the contribution of factors to the probability of DE use by CSL learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor groups</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Factor weight</th>
<th>% with DE</th>
<th>No. of tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Functions of DE</td>
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<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nominalization</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>hen duo</em> + (DE)</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to communicate in Chinese</td>
<td>Strong (55-77% and 78-99%)</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral (45-54%)</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>867</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Weak (1-22% and 23-44%)</td>
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<td>Range</td>
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<td>69.9</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive (slightly and moderately positive)</td>
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<td>63.7</td>
<td>2801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese proficiency</td>
<td>Intermediate/Advanced level</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>1362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning level</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Abroad</td>
<td>Post-SA</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>1876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-SA</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>1241</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Range</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Story-telling</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>2696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>58.2</td>
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<td>Range</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
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### Table 4-7. Optional cases of DE by CSL learners in informal speech

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Factor groups</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Factor weight</th>
<th>% with DE</th>
<th>No. of tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functions of DE</td>
<td>Relative clause</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nominalization</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hen duo + (DE)</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to</td>
<td>Strong (55-77% and 78-</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>1710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communicate in</td>
<td>99%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Neutral (45-54%)</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>736</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak (1-22% and 23-44%)</td>
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<td>48.4</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude/Motivation</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive (slightly and</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>2436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moderately positive)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese proficiency</td>
<td>Intermediate/Advanced</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>1217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>level</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>1479</td>
</tr>
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<td>Study Abroad</td>
<td>Post-SA</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>1624</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Pre-SA</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>55.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.54</td>
<td>66.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>1162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2696</td>
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### Table 4-8. Frequency analysis of CSL learners in post-SA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Functions of DE</th>
<th>Interview No. of tokens</th>
<th>% with DE</th>
<th>No. of tokens</th>
<th>Story-telling % with DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Relative clause</td>
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<td>97.7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Verb</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>93.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>128</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>87.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nominalization</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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<td>Adjective</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hen duo+(DE)</td>
<td>240</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>41.2</td>
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<td>Lexicalized term</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
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</tr>
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Table 4-9. Multivariate analysis of the contribution of factors to the probability of DE use by CSL learners in post-SA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor groups</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Factor weight</th>
<th>% with DE</th>
<th>No. of tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functions of DE</td>
<td>Relative clause</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nominalization</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>122</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Adjective</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Noun</td>
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<td>43.3</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>hen duo + (DE)</em></td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to communicate in Chinese</td>
<td>Strong (55-77% and 78-99%)</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>1344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral (45-54%)</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak (1-22% and 23-44%)</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude/Motivation</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive (slightly and moderately positive)</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>1663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese proficiency</td>
<td>Intermediate/Advanced level</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning level</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>1119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of SA</td>
<td>6 Weeks</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 Weeks</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Story-telling</td>
<td>[.57]</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>[.49]</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>1624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>[.50]</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>[.50]</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>1876</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4-1. Optional cases: DE function effect (Chinese NSs). V = verb; R = relative clause; P = phrase; N = nominalization; A = adjective; O = noun; G = genitive; Q = hen duo + (DE).

Figure 4-2. Optional cases: DE function effect (CSL learners). R = relative clause; V = verb; G = genitive; P = phrase; N = nominalization; A = adjective; O = noun; Q = hen duo + (DE).
Figure 4-3. Frequency of DE use (CSL learners before SA, CSL learners after SA, and Chinese NSs). V = verb; R = relative clause; P = phrase; N = nominalization; A = adjective; O = noun; G = genitive; Q = *hen duo* + (DE).

Figure 4-4. Frequency of DE use (Beginning learners before SA, Beginning learners after SA, Intermediate/advanced learners before SA, and Chinese NSs). V = verb; R = relative clause; P = phrase; N = nominalization; A = adjective; O = noun; G = genitive; Q = *hen duo* + (DE).
Figure 4-5. Optional cases: DE function effect (CSL learners in post-SA). R = relative clause; V = verb; G = genitive; P = phrase; N = nominalization; A = adjective; O = noun; Q = hen duo + (DE).

Figure 4-6. Frequency of DE use (CSL learners with strong WTC, CSL learners with neutral or weak WTC, and Chinese NSs). V = verb; R = relative clause; P = phrase; N = nominalization; A = adjective; O = noun; G = genitive; Q = hen duo + (DE).
CHAPTER 5
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the qualitative data – transcripts of interviews and questionnaires – provides a general picture of what the experience abroad is like. In Chapter 4, distribution analysis presents a picture of how much and how often the DE variants occur in CSL learner and Chinese NS data, and the multivariate analysis with GoldVarb 3.0 reveals the statistical contribution of each factor to the probability of DE use, as well as the relative importance of independent variables. Although the rates of DE use in the post-SA stage is higher than that of pre-SA, learners are to move toward being more native-like in the use of DE variants after returning from China. For factors that influence their acquisition of sociolinguistic variation, willingness to communicate in Chinese and attitude/motivation towards Chinese speakers and Chinese learning are found to play more important roles that the rest extralinguistic factors. Therefore, given that the majority of learners are self-reported with strong willingness and positive attitude/motivation (9 out of 14 SA participants, as reported in the posttest WTC scale and AMTB), and these learners do exhibit a more native-like performance on optional DE use (see Chapter 4), how they benefit from such a short-term SA sojourn will be investigated in this chapter.

Considering that L2 communication willingness and attitude/motivation are not fixed personality traits, learners may change their willingness to communicate and attitude/motivation during the study abroad. For example, when being immersed in the authentic social contexts, failure in building a social network with NSs could result in a feeling of demoralization for learners who originally had strong communication willingness. Therefore, the self-reported points on the posttest version of AMTB and
WTC scale, as compared with that of the pretest ones, can better reflect learners’ affect when being abroad. And as mentioned above, when referring to learners who are self-reported with strong willingness and positive attitude/motivation during abroad stay, it is the posttest questionnaire, rather than the pretest version, that should be looked at.

For the sake of brevity, interview transcripts and questionnaires of two individuals from each L2 proficiency level (beginning and intermediate levels) are chosen as examples, and since there is only one learner at the advanced level, the qualitative data of this participant is also taken into consideration. The five learners featured below are examples of how willingness to communicate in Chinese and attitude/motivation towards Chinese learning play a role in CSL learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. Therefore, in addition to selecting learners with strong communication willingness and positive attitude/motivation, the learner with lower self-reported points in the two aspects will also be included, so as to have a comparison of how learners with different willingness and attitude/motivation performed during a short-term study abroad.

Since DE use is not an index for gender, there is no need to consider the gender balance when choosing subjects. Following are the five individual cases, pseudonyms are used to keep their identities confidentially.

**Ni’s Attitude/Motivation and Willingness to Communicate**

Ni participated in a twelve-week SA program in Beijing, and the course that she enrolled in was Intermediate Chinese, which was a three-hour course from Monday to Friday. In addition to the Chinese class, she enrolled in a course related to Beijing history and culture, a two-hour course on Tuesday and Thursday. Ni’s overall disposition during the study abroad was positive, as was measured by the posttest version of mini-AMTB and WTC scale. In comparison with her self-reported points in the
pretest version, though she maintained a strong willingness to communicate in Chinese in both the pre- and post-test WTC scale, her attitude/motivation was changed from moderately positive (average point 6, out of 7-point grading scale, in the pre-SA) to slightly positive (average point 5, in the post-SA). Based on the second interview with Ni, such change may be due to her concern on the air quality in Beijing, and an unpleasant travel experience. Following are two excerpts of transcripts from her interview, "0" refers to the interviewer, and the translation part is in square brackets:

(5-A)

Ni: Keshi wo xihuan Shanghai, yinwei Shanghai you henduo waiguoren. Shanghai shi international cheng. < 0: Um-hum. > Shanghai you henduo e fanguan. Shanghai, zai Shanghai, kongqi hen hao. (laugh) < 0: (laugh) >. E Beijing, zhege kongqi, air? < 0: En. > Zhege kongqi bu hao, wo changchagn shengbing. Wo bu xihuan Beijing de kongqi.

[But I like Shanghai, because there’re a lot of foreigners in Shanghai. Shanghai is an international city. < 0: Um-hum. > There’re uh many restaurants in Shanghai. Shanghai, in Shanghai, the air is good. (laugh) < 0: (laugh) >. Uh Beijing, the air, air? < 0: Hmm. > The air is bad, I often got sick. I don’t like the air in Beijing.]

(5-B)

Ni: Shanghai bi Xian hao, Xian bijiao bu hao. Yinwei zai Xian, Terra-Cotta Warriors hen hao, hen youyisi. Keshi women e, mei qu biede, ye youyisi de defang. < 0: Um-hum. > Women zhi kan guanguangke de xian, wo xiang kan qita de difang. Women de daoyou bu hao. Ta bu xihuan ta de gongzuo, ta mei you enthusiasm. (laugh) Women de Shanghai daoyou, tebie hao.
[Shanghai is better than Xian, Xian is not that good. Because in Xian, Terra-Cotta Warriors are amazing, very interesting. But we uh, didn’t go to other interesting places. < 0: Um-hum. > We only saw the tourist lines, I wanted to visit other places. Our tourist guide was bad. He didn’t like his job, and he had no enthusiasm. (laugh) Our tourist guide in Shanghai, is pretty awesome.]

As seen in the above excerpts, Ni complained about the air pollution in Beijing, as well as the unpleasant journey to Xian – the oldest of the four great ancient capitals in China. During the study abroad, as lead by the instructor, learners enrolling in the UF Beijing program had opportunities to visit Shanghai and Xian on two weekends respectively. As for Ni, though she didn’t enjoy the stay in Xian, she had a pretty good impression of Shanghai, even she only stayed there for less than three days. In addition to the reason that she preferred to stay in a modern and lively city, how the tourist guide treated them also greatly influenced her attitude towards the city. Although Ni expressed her dislikes and disappointment concerning some aspects of the sojourn abroad, her overall attitude/motivation was still positive. Specifically, as rated in the posttest mini-AMTB, she highly favored her Chinese course, instructors, members of Chinese language community, and also had very strong motivation in learning Chinese. When she returned from China, the requirement of foreign language learning had been accomplished, but she continued the Chinese learning to advanced level. During the second interview, Ni talked about her travel plan to China with her parents next summer, and one reason of taking the advanced Chinese was to be a qualified translator for her parents then. Therefore, Ni’s language-learning motivation was developed and enhanced by her interest in Chinese, and she wanted to achieve fluency
or proficiency in personal but not in professional ways. Because when being asked the importance of learning Chinese for employment, she gave a very low point in the posttest AMTB.

Ni’s performance in the two sociolinguistic interviews differed a lot as there was an obvious improvement in her L2. In the first interview, she avoided elaboration wherever possible linguistic difficulties could arise, and thus her response was brief and consisted of simple and short sentences, the number of tokens extracted from the interview was 31 (lowest of all learners in the pre-SA stage). Ni reported feeling very nervous (1 out of 7-point) when speaking Chinese in the pretest AMTB, but such high anxiety was reduced a little as she rated herself as slightly nervous (3 out of 7-point) in the posttest version, she produced longer response as well as elaboration of her abroad experiences during the second interview. Given that the time of conducting the two sociolinguistic interviews were almost the same, the number of tokens extracted from the second interview reached 102, more than three times the amount of tokens from the first one. In addition to the Chinese course Ni enrolled in during the study abroad, the improvement could be attributed to her overall positive attitude/motivation and strong willingness to communicate as she sought various opportunities to practice her Chinese.

During her first month in Beijing, Ni lived in a student dormitory with an Italian girl, who had learnt Chinese for years and could speak Chinese well. Ni reported chatting with her roommate in both English and Chinese, and her roommate helped her a lot in speaking Chinese. During the following two months, her roommate went back to Italy for summer vacation, and Ni lived alone in the room. But she always availed herself
opportunities to meet new people, and according to Ni, she made many new Chinese friends during the short sojourn abroad. For example, Ni made a friend of a Chinese undergraduate who worked part time in a coffee shop near the university where she learnt Chinese. She frequently had dinner and spent time exploring the city with the new friend, and they also practiced Chinese and English during the free time. Meanwhile, Ni visited her old Chinese friend, as evidenced in (5-C). Yan was her classmate in one history course at UF, and was also a friend who helped Ni practice Chinese before her study abroad.

(5-C)

Ni: Wo you hen duo de zhongguo pengyou. Wo gen wo pengyou Yan, qu e hen duo difang. Yan de fumu zhu zai Beijing, suoyi Yan zhidao Beijing hen duo di fang, hen you yisi.

[I have many Chinese friends. I visited uh many places with my friend Yan. Yan’s parents lived in Beijing, so Yan knew a lot of interesting places in Beijing.]

Ni reported that she hung out equally with UF in Beijing students and Chinese people in the posttest LCP. On weekends, she often went out to restaurants, museums, and sometimes pubs with friends. In addition to English, they used Chinese for communication. Moreover, she developed her social network with NSs more extensive, not only with university students, but also with people from other social classes. Twice a week, after the class of Beijing History and Culture, Ni always went to a hand-made jewelry shop operated by some former prostitutes, and volunteered to help them make jewelry, as seen in the part of the description of her typical day (5-D). Since these females could not speak English at all, the Chinese-only communication means, to
some degree, also improved Ni’s L2 as she reported getting better at understanding these NSs – though she felt overwhelmed when they spoke at their normal pace during the initial interaction, when her interlocutors slower their speech rate, she gradually got used to it and had prolonged conversation with these people.

(5-D)

Ni: Ruguo zhe ge tian, zhe tian shi xingqi er huo xingqi si, wo hai qu Beijing lishi he wenhua ke. Xiake yihou, wo qu e shoushi dian. < 0: En. > Shoushi dian laoban shi xiaojie, e tamen yiqian shi xiaojie. Wo gen xiaojie liaotian, gen tamen zuo shoushi. Tamen mai zhe ge shoushi, hen duo waiguo ren hui mai. Suoyi xiaojie keyi qu xuexiao, keyi e xue yingwen, xue diannao.

[If that a day, that day is Tuesday or Thursday, I also go to the class of Beijing History and Culture. After the class, I go to uh a jewelry shop. < 0: Hmm. > The shop owners are some prostitutes, uh they used to be prostitutes. I chat with the former prostitutes, and made jewelry with them. They sell the jewelry, and many foreigners will buy. Therefore, these former prostitutes can go to school, can uh take courses on English and computer.]

As reported in the posttest LCP, Ni insisted on spending about one hour per day speaking Chinese to native or fluent speakers of Chinese, and spent one to two hours per day trying to catch other people’s conversations in Chinese outside of class. However, her exposure to Chinese media outside classrooms, similar to that of prior to SA, was reported marginal – she did not spend time reading Chinese newspapers, Chinese language magazines, and novels in Chinese or watching Chinese language television, movies or videos, and only listened to Chinese songs and read e-mail or
internet web pages in Chinese on rare occasions. In her second interview, she reported her difficulty reading Chinese language magazines as the number of words she had to look up was large. More importantly, as mentioned above, Ni devoted most of her leisure time to building social network with NSs, which was already a big challenge for her, and thus could not have energy to learn and benefit from the intensive Chinese media outside of class.

Although the twelve-week Beijing program was short, Ni made efforts to practice Chinese whenever she could, developed her L2 proficiency and had more confidence when speaking Chinese. With positive attitude/motivation and strong willingness to communicate, Ni always sought opportunities with NSs in which she practiced her speaking and listening. According to the Interaction Hypothesis, negotiated interaction with NS speakers is an effective way to promote L2 acquisition, as it not only supplies learners with natural input, but also provides them with practice opportunities. Given that the sociolinguistic variation is infrequent in classrooms (e.g., Freed, 1995; Mougeon et al., 2010; Regan et al., 2009), and the Interaction Hypothesis supports the use of natural interaction, communicating with NSs in an authentic environment can thus facilitate learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. As in Ni’s case, she made efforts to avail herself opportunities to have regular conversations with NSs, the sufficient natural L2 input as well as various practice opportunities are of great importance for her acquisition of sociolinguistic competence.

**Lan’s Attitude/Motivation and Willingness to Communicate**

Lan, like Ni, was also a CSL learner at the beginning level. The SA program that he enrolled in was UF in Chengdu, a six-week sojourn abroad. Courses that Lan took included Chinese Conversation and Sichuan History and Culture. The former was a
four-hour class from Monday to Friday, and the latter consisted of four class periods covering four topics – history, cooking, calligraphy, and traditional Chinese medicine, and each lasted about two hours. After the completion of the study, Lan extended his stay in China for six more weeks as he had a teaching job in English and also did some travelling. Therefore, the length of his abroad stay was twelve weeks, and he made SA experiences a fruitful one as well.

Overall, Lan maintained a moderately positive attitude/motivation towards Chinese learning and Chinese speakers, as reported in the pretest and posttest mini-AMTB. His willingness to communicate in Chinese, on the other hand, was found to grow from slightly weak to strong over the twelve weeks in China, the percentage of times Lan reported that he would choose to communicate was 41.8% and 64.5% in the pretest and posttest respectively.

In Chengdu, Lan lived in a student dormitory with one of his classmates, with whom he reported speaking English. During the first week, he reported that he always hung out with his classmates and did not make friends with Chinese people. By the end of the first week, Lan started to socialize with Chinese NSs outside classrooms – a host family comprised of a couple and a three-year-old child. Each student in Chengdu program was assigned a host family, though students did not live with their host families, usually once a week, they would be invited to family meals and social outings. Lan visited his host family almost every weekend throughout the six-week study, and reported chatting with them in both Chinese and English. Lan was keen on Chinese culture and history, during the first interview, he mentioned that he liked watching Chinese historical TV shows, such as Romance of Three Kingdoms, and enjoyed
learning the real history behind the drama through searching online. The host mother, according to Lan, had a crucial interest in Chinese history and always had many interesting history stories to tell, which made their meal time very fun. Due to the common interest, Lan reported enjoying his time with the host family, and sometimes they would visit historic sites in Chengdu together. The good relationship with his host family was thus an important step for Lan in establishment of social networks with native speakers of Chinese.

Following the initial weeks, he expanded the circle of friends, which included Chinese people. As Lan wrote in the posttest LCP, besides remaining in the circle of friends with his classmates, he also sometimes hung out with his Chinese friends. Through seeking more opportunities to communicate with Chinese people, Lan gradually overcame his anxiety in speaking Chinese, which was important to the change of his communication willingness. In the pretest AMTB, he reported that he felt slightly nervous (3 out of 7-point) when speaking Chinese, and such anxiety decreased in the posttest version as he found himself slightly calm (5 out of 7-point).

Moreover, Lan further developed the social network with Chinese NSs when he got the opportunity of teaching English to high school students. Near the midpoint of Chengdu program, Lan decided to do some student teaching as he wanted to support himself financially as well as gain work experience. When Lan told his Chinese instructor that he was looking for an English teaching position, she contacted her co-workers and found an opening for him – a summer course (one hour and a half a day, about two months) held for high school students, located in the same university where Lan learnt Chinese. Lan showed enthusiasm in teaching, and expressed his love to the
job, as mentioned in the second interview, “Wo diyici zuo laoshi, wo juede awesome, I loved it. [It’s my first time being a teacher, I think it’s awesome, I loved it.]”. According to him, there were fifty students in his class, and he tried his best to make sure all students were learning. Lan mentioned that he spent about two hours per day preparing the lesson, and played different roles in and out of class with these students – he was not only their English teacher, but also their friends. As seen in (5-E), Lan enjoyed hanging out with his students as he could learn many interesting stories in Chinese history, just like when stayed with his host family.

(5-E)

Lan: Wo gen wo xuesheng qu bowuguan, women qu e kan hen gulao de dongxi, hen you yisi. Sichuang you hen chang de lishi. Yiqian shi shuguo. Zhongguoren tamen yiban, tamen yiban zhidaohenduo de lishi, suoyi wo de xuesheng tamen gaosu wo henduo lishi gushi.

[I went to museums with my students, we saw uh historic things, very interesting. Sichuan has a long history, it used to be named as Shu state. Chinese people they usually, they usually know a lot about history, so my students told me many history stories.]

This teaching experience also promoted his motivation toward Chinese learning, when being asked how important it was for him to learn Chinese for employment, in comparison with the neutral point (4 out of 7-point grading scale) to the same question that he reported in the pretest AMTB, Lan rated a slightly positive point (5 out of 7-point) in the posttest version. In addition, he recounted a travelling experience in Taiwan after the completion of his teaching work, he visited his friend – a south-African person who
worked as an English teacher in Taipei, and stayed there for eight days. Lan expressed his positive feelings towards the city and people, and when being asked the most unforgettable thing, he didn’t give an answer on food, place, or an event like most interviewees reported in their interviews. According to him, it was his friend, and friends of his friend. As evidenced in (5-F), he was highly impressed by these English speakers as they could speak Chinese so well, and defined them as “awesome people”.

(5-F)

Lan: Wo Taibei de pengyou, tamen dou shi hen ku de ren, awesome people.
Tamen dou hen youqu, tamen ai zhongwen, danshi tamen dou shi westerners, feichang you yisi. You liang ge pengyou, tamen de hanyu perfect. Hai you yi ge, xianzai ta zai xue riyu, < 0: En. > ta shuo deyu, yingyu, zhongwen.

[My friends in Taipei, they are very cool people, awesome people. They are very fun, they love Chinese, but they are all westerners, very interesting. Two friends, their Chinese are perfect. And another friend, he is learning Japanese, < 0: Hmm. > he can speak Germany, English, and Chinese.]

The comment Lan made on his friends in Taipei reflected his desire of achieving proficiency in Chinese, so as to be an awesome person as well. Additionally, Lan exhibited his interest in differences existed in Chinese languages, the difference between Mandarin Chinese and Sichuan dialect, and between different forms of Mandarin. For example, he reported noticing the tone difference between Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese Mandarin, as well as the phonetic variation of retroflex consonants. He found that when pronouncing the character “zha [fry]” (Second tone, middle rising, in Mandarin Chinese), Taiwanese pronounced it with a Fourth tone (high
falling) and not a full retroflex sound for the initial consonant “zh”. The retroflex sounds – zh, ch, sh – in Mandarin Chinese tend to merge with the alveolar series (z, c, s) in Taiwanese Mandarin, and thus Taiwanese, though they can produce the full retroflex sound, usually produce some kind of half retroflex.

(5-G)

Lan: Wo qu e ShiDa yeshi, shi yi ge Taibei de yeshi, you zha jipai, feichang haochi. Danshi zai Taiwan, tamen bu shuo zha ji, tamen shuo zha ji, zha jipai.

[I went to uh ShiDa night market, which was a night market in Taipei. The fried chicken cutlet there was very delicious. But in Taiwan, they don’t say fried (Mandarin Chinese, Second tone) chicken, they say fried (Taiwanese Mandarin, Fourth tone) chick, fried (Fourth tone) chicken cutlet.]

Lan’s sensitivity to Chinese languages was beneficial for his awareness of socio-stylistic difference in the L2, his social networks with native speakers of Chinese provided him opportunities to notice the difference between linguistic forms used in causal speech and formal settings (e.g., classrooms). In the posttest LCP, Lan reported insisting on speaking to native or fluent speakers of Chinese about one hour a day, and listened to Chinese outside of class more than five hours a day. Because besides communicating with NSs and listening to other people’s conversations in Chinese, Lan also spent time being exposed to Chinese media. Prior to the Chengdu program, the amount of time that he spent on watching Chinese language television and movies or videos was half/half, as noted in the pretest LCP. He also reported reading Internet web pages in Chinese occasionally as he wanted to understand how Chinese people reacted to certain issues, through looking at posts that Chinese people made, he also
learnt the sentence structure and expanded his vocabulary. During the sojourn abroad, Lan maintained these “habits”, but spent less time because he also tended to socialize with Chinese NSs. The L2 input that Lan received from Chinese media and the interaction with NSs are thus crucial for his acquisition of sociolinguistic variables.

In sum, Lan had insisted on making efforts to improve his L2, even on his travels, he kept observing and learning from speech produced by native speakers of Chinese. With positive attitude/motivation and gradually growing communication willingness developed from the interaction with his host family, Lan benefited not only from the exposure to Chinese media outside of class, but also from the linguistic interaction with NSs.

**Gao’s Attitude/Motivation and Willingness to Communicate**

Gao was a CSL learner at the intermediate level, participated in UF in Beijing program and stayed there for twelve weeks. Courses that he enrolled in were Advanced Chinese and History and Culture of Beijing, the former was a three-hour language class which took place every other weekday – Monday, Wednesday and Friday, while the latter was a two-hour course on Tuesday and Thursday. Gao reported that he did not feel too much pressure of Chinese learning as he only had two or three hours of class per weekday. Therefore, he had plenty of free time to explore the city and meet with new people, which made his sojourn abroad very fun.

Gao had a positive attitude towards his experiences in Beijing, he expressed his satisfaction to the Chinese course, instructors, the living arrangements (a private room in the international student dormitory), as well as the travels in Shanghai and Xian on two weekends. In addition to his positive attitude, he had high motivation to learn Chinese as revealed in his desire to work in China. In the pretest and posttest mini-
AMTB, he rated the importance of learning Chinese for employment as moderately high (6 out of 7-point). Although he did not decide the specific job that he would look for, he had made up his mind to achieve proficiency in Chinese to be qualified for possible working abroad opportunities in the future, as evidenced in the excerpt (5-H) from his second interview.

(5-H)

Gao: Wo zui xihuan zhongguo, I hope, wo xiang qu zhongguo gongzuo. Wo bu zhidao zai zhongguo wo keyi zuo shenme gongzuo, wo bu yao zuo yingwen laoshi. I don’t think I want to do that, but perhaps yige…wo xiang yihou keyi qu zhongguo gongzuo, suoyi wo dei lianxi zhongwen.

[I like China most, I hope, I want to work in China. I don’t know what kind of job I can do in China, I don’t want to be an English teacher. I don’t think I want to do that, but perhaps a… I hope I can work in China in the future, so I have to practice my Chinese.]

During the twelve weeks in China, Gao had a moderately positive attitude/motivation (6 out of 7-point) towards Chinese learning, and also had a strong Chinese-communication willingness as reported in his posttest AMTB and WTC scale. In comparison with the points that he rated in the pretest version, Gao maintained his attitude/motivation, but greatly enhanced his willingness – the percentage of times that he would choose to communicate in Chinese was raised from 51% to 87.8%. That is, his SA experiences influenced his willingness to communicate in Chinese, and the change in his communication willingness in return, affected the quality of his study abroad.
In his first interview, Gao mentioned that he wanted to make good use of the coming sojourn abroad, and would practice speaking Chinese as much as possible, like he said, “Zhe ge xiatian, wo hui lianxi shuo zhongwen, hen duo hen duo hen duo. Yinwei wo bu xiang shuo yingwen, zai zhongguo, wo xiang zhi shuo zhongwen. [This summer, I will practice speaking Chinese, a lot a lot a lot of practice. Because I don’t want to speak English, I want to speak only Chinese when in China.]”. However, he also expressed his concern for his Chinese proficiency, as seen in (5-I). Therefore, given that L2 learners’ willingness to communicate is affected by various factors such as perceived competence, language anxiety, social context and personality traits (e.g., Baker & Macintyre, 2000; Macintyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998), it was not surprising that, even with positive attitude and high motivation of Chinese learning, Gao did not report a strong willingness in the pretest questionnaire.

(5-I)

Gao: Wo zhi xue le liang nian zhongwen, suoyi probably, yaoshi wo zai xue yi nian, liang nian, wo hui zhidao more, zhidao geng duo. Keshi xianzai, zhongwen tai nan le. You de shihou, wo juede wo de zhongwen buhao, bu hao.

[I just have learnt Chinese for two years, so probably if I could learn it for one more year, or two more years, I will know more, know more. However, Chinese is still difficult for me right now. Sometimes, I think my Chinese is not good, not good.]

Although Gao gave a neutral point for his Chinese-communication willingness, he did posit a specific learning target of practicing speaking Chinese as much as possible prior to the SA program. In order to shorten the adaption time to a new foreign context, and have more time and energy to fulfill the learning target, Gao reported that he did
some online search about Beijing, and also learnt experience from students who had participated in the same program before. For example, he noted that, unlike his friends, he already knew how to use the subway system on the first day when they arrived in Beijing.

(5-J)

Gao: Wo juede zuo Beijing de ditie, hen rongyi. Wo de pengyou bu zhidao zenme zuo, keshi wo mei wenti. Di yi tian, zai Beijing, yinwei wo zai Youtube kan le shipin, < 0: En. > zhidao zenme zuo ditie. Suoyi dao Beijing de shihou, wo keyi yong tamen de, wo zhidao zenme zuo.

[I think it’s very easy to take subway in Beijing. My friends didn’t know how to ride, but I’m fine. Like the first day, in Beijing, because I had watched the video on Youtube, < 0: Hmm. > I knew how to ride the subway. Therefore, when arrived in Beijing, I could use their transportation, I know what to do.]

During the initial weeks, Gao had adapted quickly to the new environment. Every weekday after class, he often took bus or subway to explore the city, which, according to him, did not simply refer to visiting places, but also opportunities to practice his Chinese. He went to many museums, parks, restaurants and shopping centers, alone or with friends. Like local people, he knew the best place for different shopping needs, and reported several successful bargains with salespeople. For example, he used Chinese to negotiate lower price for a suit, and eventually paid less than half of the original cost. As seen in the excerpt (5-K), he shared his experience of price negotiation with his classmates, and encouraged those who were afraid to speak Chinese to overcome their anxiety when engaging in a Chinese conversation. Because he had thought his oral
Chinese was not very good, but found it was understandable to NSs. As he mentioned, one should not avoid the opportunity to communicate with NSs if he/she wanted to improve the oral Chinese. Gao’s quick adaption to the new environment, and his successful interaction with NSs, such as the price negotiation, are important for the enhancement to his Chinese-communication willingness.

(5-K)


[My friends asked me, ‘Why you could pay a lower price?’. I told them that was because I spoke Chinese. Once the salesperson know you speak Chinese, they will offer you a bit lower price. Because they think it’s very interesting, ‘Ah, you can speak Chinese, a foreigner speak Chinese.’ (laugh). However, some of my friends got nervous when speaking Chinese. Because they think their Chinese was not good. I said, ‘My Chinese is also not that good, but if you want to speak Chinese very well, you have to practice it a lot.’.]

Moreover, Gao’s goal of improving Chinese was greatly reflected in his circle of friends in Beijing. In the university where he learnt Chinese, there were many international students from the United States, Europe, and other Asian countries.
However, Gao reported that, besides some European students and his classmates from UF, he did not hang out with other Americans, as he said, “Women bu xiang renshi bie de meiguoren, yinwei women yijing you hengduo meiguo pengyou. [We didn’t want to know other Americans, because we already had many American friends]”. Instead, he made friends with Chinese people actively, and also stayed in contact with them through exchanging text or voice messages in Chinese on WeChat (one of the most popular Chinese social networking application). His social network with native speakers of Chinese appeared to include not only the people that he met on campus (e.g., his Chinese teachers, university students), but also friends that he made in social outings, as evidenced in the following excerpt.

(5-L)


[In Beijing, at first, I went to bars with my classmates. < 0: Hmm. > Then more and more, I had more and more new friends, many Chinese people, and also Europeans. New friends would take me to new places, new bars, so I could meet more people…One day, we went to a bar, in Wudaokou, where there were many college students. I was looking for seats, and some Chinese people talked to me, ‘Oh, you are a
foreigner. Are you American? Be with us.’. I said, ‘Yes, I am an American.’. They (were surprised), ‘Ah, you can speak Chinese?’ (laugh). We then chatted, danced, and so on, very fun."

Therefore, during the twelve-week study abroad, Gao expanded his circle of friends, built and maintained social network with Chinese people. Through regular linguistic interactions with Chinese friends, one interesting change in his L2 production was the use of some popular slangs in China nowadays, such as the term “tuhao [nouveau riche]” – an internet slang and has gone viral due to a joke on the Chinese social platform Weibo. When commented on the difference between bars in Wudaokou and Sanlitun, Gao humored the reason of higher cost in Sanlitun bar street was that there were a lot of “tuhao”, and thus everything was expensive. By listening to his Chinese friends, he noticed and learnt these funny terms, and was able to use them appropriately during his second interview. The use of slangs, to some extent, made his speech sound more like a native.

In comparison with other CSL learners in this study, Gao’s willingness to communicate in Chinese during the SA was the highest (87.8%), and he also reported spending the most time to improve his Chinese speaking ability. As noted in the posttest LCP, he insisted on speaking Chinese to native or fluent speakers of Chinese two to three hours per day. Additionally, he avoided speaking much English with his classmates and thus spent one to two hours per day speaking Chinese to them. Since he devoted daily three to five hours for the practice of his oral Chinese, and considering that his means of improving Chinese was to communicate with NSs as much as
possible, Gao, like Ni, almost did not spend time on the exposure to Chinese media outside of class – he only watched Chinese language television on rare occasions.

In sum, Gao represents the SA success as he made efforts to benefit from prolonged linguistic interactions with Chinese people. He was a highly motivated learner, and stayed persistent on the learning target of practicing Chinese as much as possible throughout the SA. Since his expectation was to be competent in Chinese as he wanted to incorporate Chinese in his future career, after the completion of the study abroad, he continued his Chinese learning to advanced and professional level.

**Hua’s Attitude/Motivation and Willingness to Communicate**

Hua, like Gao, was also a learner at the intermediate level, and participated in the same SA program. As were measured by the pretest and posttest mini-AMTB and WTC scale, he remained his neutral attitude/motivation (4 out of 7-point) towards Chinese learning and weak willingness to communicate in Chinese throughout the duration of the twelve-week stay in China. Specifically, the percentage of times that he would choose to communicate in Chinese was found to be the lowest among all learners, with 13.7% and 38% in the pretest and posttest version respectively.

Therefore, different from the three learners above-mentioned who had positive attitude/motivation and strong communication willingness, Hua represented a group of SA participants who appeared not to make productive use of the abroad learning opportunities.

Hua’s pre-program expectation was to improve his Chinese through immersing himself into a Chinese language and culture environment, like he said in the first interview, “Wo jue de qu zhongguo dui wo de zhongwen you hao chu. [I think staying in China is good for my Chinese]”. As rated in the pretest AMTB, he had a slightly high
desire to learn Chinese, however, he also noted that he did not work hard, and always felt very nervous when speaking Chinese. He expressed his anxiety in the first interview as well, “Wo jude shuo zhongwen tai nan le, e wo shuohua de shihou, wo changchang hen jinzhang. [I think speaking Chinese is really very hard, uh when I speak Chinese, I often feel very nervous.]”. Consequently, Hua reported that he would highly avoid communication in Chinese, and gave a very low point for his communication willingness in the pretest WTC scale.

During the study abroad, although his willingness to communicate in Chinese was enhanced – the percentage of times that he would choose to communicate was raised from 13.7% to 38%, it was still in the range of weak willingness. Hua reported that, outside of the classroom, he was willing to initiate communication with NSs only when Chinese was needed, like talking with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant, or when he could get some benefits by speaking Chinese, like negotiating lower price with a salesperson. For example, during his second interview, he recounted his shopping experiences in Beijing, as seen in the following excerpt (5-M), and noted the necessity of speaking Chinese for successful bargains.

(5-M)

Hua: Wo gen pengyou men, women, women changchang qu e mai dongxi, zai…wo wang le shangdian de mingzi, duibuqi. < 0: Mei guan xi. > Women mai le hen duo dongxi. Na de shouhuoyuan gaosu women jiaqian, you know, hen gui hen gui. Danshi tamen gei zhongguoren butong de jiaqian, bijiao pianyi de jiaqian.  
[I, with friends, we, we often went uh shopping, in…I forgot the name of the mall, I’m sorry. < 0: That’s okay. > We bought a lot of things. The price that salespeople there
told us was, you know, very expensive. But they gave a different price to Chinese people, much lower price.]

0: *Na ni hui kan jia ma?*

[So did you negotiate the price?]

Hua: *Dui a, di yi ci e wo buxiang shuo zhongwen, yinwei wo hen jinzhang. Suoyi tamne bu jiangjia. Danshi houlai, wo shuo zhongwen, suoyi you dazhe. Wo mai le yi ge hen hao de, hen hao de e hen gaodang de xizhuang, jiushi…chabuduo liu bai kuai, feichang hao de zhiliang,* < 0: *Wa. > suoyi wo hen gaoxing. Yi kaishi, na ge shouhuoyuan shuo yi qian wu bai kuai, danshi wo gaosu ta, ‘Ni yijing gei wo pengyou bijiao pianyi de jiaqian, suoyi ni ye gei wo na ge jiaqian.’.*

[Yes, for the first time uh I did not want to speak Chinese, because I’m very nervous. Therefore, they didn’t lower the price. After the first shopping, I spoke Chinese, so I got discounts. I bought a very good, very good uh high quality suites, just…about six hundred yuan (CNY), very good quality, < 0: *Wow. > so I’m very happy. At first, the salesperson asked for one thousand and five hundred yuan, but I told him, ‘You already offered my friend a much lower price, so you should also give me the same one.’. ]

In the posttest WTC scale, “talk with a salesperson in a store” was the situation in which Hua was most likely to use Chinese for communication (80%), while for the same situation in the pretest version, he reported the percentage of times that he would choose to talk in Chinese was only 20%. The experience of price negotiation in Chinese, to some extent, influenced his willingness to engage in short conversations with Chinese people. However, since Hua’s initiation of communication was not caused by the purpose of practicing Chinese, his interaction with Chinese people was limited as
He did not appear to have any prolonged conversation in Chinese. In the second interview, he reported that he did not make new friends when stayed in Beijing, “E, yiban lai shuo, wo bu jiao xin pengyou, yinwei wo hen, hen jinzhang, e haixiu, wo hen haixiu. [Uh, generally, I don’t make new friends, because I’m very, very nervous, uh shy, I’m a very shy person.]”. He also reported that he did not overcome his high anxiety in speaking Chinese, and noted that his Chinese was still not good, “For example, it took me far too long to think about saying things, so eventually I broke down and used English.”. Therefore, due to his personality trait, as well as his high L2 speaking anxiety, Hua noted that he preferred to stay alone during the free time when in China, as seen in (5-N) from the posttest LCP. Hua was not a very outgoing or social person, though he remained in the circle of friends with his classmates, he only hung out with them a few times throughout the twelve weeks in Beijing. Outside of class, the only Chinese person that he had regular interaction with was his language exchange partner. For students who participated in this Beijing program, each of them was assigned a language partner. However, he reported that, though they had regular prolonged conversation, the language that they used to communicate was almost only English.

(5-N)

“I spent most of my time alone. I did occasionally hang out with my American friends, and we spoke English. I would hang out with my language exchange partner, maybe 2 hours a week, and we usually spoke English, as I was very afraid to attempt speaking Mandarin.”

Therefore, Hua had a limited social network with Chinese people and few opportunities for extended discourse. Specifically, his social network appeared to
include only his language partner and the instructor of the Chinese class that he took. He reported on his difficulty using Chinese only in the Advanced Chinese class and expressed his dislike to the instructor, “Wo bu xihuan zhongwenke laoshi, yinwei ta changchang shuo wo gen tongxue men dou hen lan. Zai shuo wo shuo cuo de shihou, ta jiu ‘E?’ It’s really a confused look, ta rang wo hen jiong. [I don’t like the instructor of my Chinese class, because she often said we were lazy. And when I made mistakes in speaking Chinese, she would ‘Uh?’ . It’s really a confused look, which made me feel embarrassed.]”. Thus, Hua had little linguistic interaction with his Chinese instructor outside of class, as evidenced in the posttest LCP.

Although Hua reported feeling nervous in the Chinese class, compared with that in the pretest AMTB, his anxiety has decreased a little bit, from very nervous to moderately nervous. One possible explanation, as he rated in the posttest AMTB, was that he worked harder at learning Chinese when stayed in Beijing (his self-reported point in a 7-point rating scale in the posttest AMTB was 5, while in the pretest, it was 3). He reported that he had plenty of free time after class, and according to the description of his typical day in the second interview, besides visiting historical locations, he spent much time learning Chinese.

Moreover, in comparison with his approximately zero exposure to Chinese media prior to the SA, Hua reported watching Chinese language television or Chinese movies or videos about one to two hours a day outside of class, and listened to Chinese songs and read e-mail or internet web pages in Chinese on rare occasions. The amount of time that he spent on the exposure to Chinese media was more than that to English media, as he reported spending only one to two hours per day, two days per week
watching movies, television, or reading magazines in English. Hua’s increased 
exposure to Chinese media, to some extent, reflected his increased desire to learn 
Chinese, from slightly high (5 out of 7-point in the pretest AMTB) to moderately high 
(point 6, as noted in the posttest AMTB). However, considering that Hua had few 
communication opportunities with NSs to practice what he learnt from the exposure to 
Chinese media, according to the Interaction Hypothesis, input alone could not promote 
his acquisition of sociolinguistic variation.

What can be gleaned from Hua’s experience is that his high L2 speaking anxiety 
and weak communication willingness hindered him from including Chinese people in his 
social network. When stayed in China, he avoided opportunities to have prolonged 
conversation with Chinese NSs. Although he spent much time learning Chinese, and also 
had some exposure to Chinese media, he lacked Chinese conversational interaction to 
develop his sociolinguistic competence.

Wei’s Attitude/Motivation and Willingness to Communicate

Wei was the only CSL learner at the advanced level, participated in a six-week 
Chinese training program in Chengdu. Courses that she took included Advanced 
Chinese Conversation and Sichuan History and Culture. The former was a three-hour 
class from Monday to Friday, and the latter consisted of four class periods, and each 
lasted about two hours. Different from the UF in Chengdu program which was for 
beginners, the program that she enrolled in was for advanced learners, and her 
classmates were from many different countries, like Europe and other Asian countries.

Overall, as measured by mini-AMTB and WTC scale, Wei maintained a 
moderately positive attitude/motivation towards Chinese learning and Chinese people, 
and also had a strong Chinese-communication willingness throughout the SA. Like Gao,
she had a very high motivation to learn Chinese as she planned to work in China in the near future, as mentioned in the second interview, “Mingnian sanyue, wo xiang zai qu zhongguo, yinwei wo xiang zai na jiao yingwen. [Next March, I want to go to China again, because I want to teach English there].” Also, she reported her pre-program expectation was to improve her spoken Chinese. In the first interview, she expressed her L2 speaking anxiety, which was mainly caused by her listening ability. As noted in the pretest LCP, for a 4-point rating scale from “poor” to “native/nativelike” on individual’s language ability, she rated her listening ability as between “poor” and “good”. Therefore, prior to the SA, she had made a clear learning target, as her goal was to develop her listening and speaking skills during the sojourn abroad.

(5-O)

Wei: Wo shuo zhongwen de shihou hui hen jinzhang, yinwei wo juede wo de listening bu tai hao. Zhe ge xiatian, wo hui qu Chengdu xue zhongwen. Wo juede wo hui shuo, wo hui lianxi shuo hen duo hen duo zhongwen, yinwei wo xiang xue hao zhong wen.

[I would be nervous when I speak Chinese, because I think my listen...listening is not very good. This summer, I will learn Chinese in Chengdu. I think I will speak, I will practice speaking Chinese a lot, because I want to learn Chinese well.]

In Chengdu, Wei lived in a student dormitory with an American who had learnt Chinese for one year, and reported chatting with her in both English and Chinese. Also, she made friends with two students who participated in UF in Chengdu program. Wei maintained in the circle of friends with her roommate and the two UF students, and reported hanging out with them during the free time. In their social activities, Wei
reported that she avoided speaking English as much as she could, and used both English and Chinese for communication, as seen in (5-P).

(5-P)

Wei: Women yiqi qu le hen duo de, e historical...lishi guji, birushuo Du Fu caotang shenme de. Hai you Tianfuguangchang, hai you e hen duo bie de difang. Wo gen pengyou men ye changchang qu jiuba. Yinwei women zai xue zhongwen, women xiang shuo duo, duo shuo zhongwen, suoyi chu le shuo yingwen, women shuo, women ye shuo zhongwen.

[We together went to many, uh historical...historical sites, such as Du Fu Cottage, and so on. And also Tianfu Square, and uh many other places. I also often went to bars with my friends. Because we were learning Chinese, we want to more speak, speak more Chinese, besides speaking English, we spoke, we also spoke Chinese.]

Throughout the SA, although Wei did not expand her circle of friends, like including Chinese people, she sought opportunities actively to communicate with NSs. As noted in the posttest LCP, she reported talking to everyone that she met, and was willing to initiate a conversation in Chinese with these strangers. According to her, she insisted on speaking to native or fluent speakers of Chinese one to two hours a day, and spent more than five hours per day trying to catch other people’s conversation in Chinese outside of class. Additionally, she reported having regular prolonged conversation with her host family. Every weekend throughout the six-week SA, Wei visited her host family parents, and reported chatting with them in Chinese for more than five hours a day.
Moreover, in comparison with other CSL learners in this study, Wei reported spending the most time on the exposure to Chinese media outside of class. She reported spending a lot of time on listening to Chinese outside of class. Specifically, she spent two to three hours per day listening to Chinese television and movies/videos respectively, and also spent one to two hours per day listening to Chinese songs. Additionally, she reported reading e-mail or internet web pages in Chinese about one to two hours a day. According to Wei, the exposure to Chinese media is a “habit” that she developed in U.S. contexts. As in the English-domain environment, Chinese media like the internet webpage and movies or videos became the major source for her Chinese learning outside the class.

In sum, with positive attitude/motivation and strong communication willingness, as well as clear learning target, Wei made efforts to avail herself opportunities to improve her Chinese during the six-week study abroad. She sought opportunities with NSs whenever she could speak Chinese, and also maintained a regular interaction with her host family. For the purpose of improving her listening ability, she spent much time learning from the Chinese television and movies/videos, as well as other people’s conversation in Chinese. After her return from SA, Wei reported that her confidence in spoken Chinese has increased, and also overcame her L2 speaking anxiety, “Zai zhongguo de shihou, wo de confidence zeng jia le (laugh). Suoyi xianzai, wo shuo zhongwen de shihou, wo bu jinzhang le. [When in China, my confidence increased (laugh). So currently, when I speak Chinese, I would not feel nervous.]”. Therefore, she did make good use of her sojourn abroad, the sufficient number of natural L2 input and
frequent interaction with NSs are also beneficial to her development of sociolinguistic competence.

**Summary**

In this chapter, the qualitative analysis is employed for the purpose of understanding the complex nature of SA better. For the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, whether or not learners can benefit from the short-term SA program greatly depends on whether they are willing to make an effort.

For the present study, multiple factors have been demonstrated to influence learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. Among all the extralinguistic factors, Chinese-communication willingness and attitude/motivation are found to play more significant roles. As represented by the individual case of Ni, Lan, Gao and Wei, who belong to the group of learners with strong willingness to communicate in Chinese and positive attitude/motivation towards Chinese learning, they were more willing to seek opportunities to interact with NSs, and thus had more exposure to the vernacular language and had more practice opportunities. The intensive exposure to the L2 as well as the frequent communication with NSs in an authentic environment, according to the Interaction Hypothesis, are necessary conditions for the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. On the other hand, like Hua’s example, learners with weak or neutral communication willingness limited their access to NSs, and even they may have exposure to Chinese media, input alone could not promote their acquisition of sociolinguistic competence. Therefore, learners’ communication willingness as well as their attitudes/motivation greatly influence the degree of contact with Chinese NSs, which results in different practice opportunities and quantity of input learners could receive during SA.
In addition, the data show that learners’ continued communication willingness was influenced by their success, or lack thereof, in incorporating themselves into social network with NSs. As mentioned earlier, both communication willingness and attitude/motivation are not fixed personality traits. In this study, learners who self-reported with strong communication willingness were also found to have positive attitude/motivation, while the reversed relationship could not be guaranteed. As in Lan’s example, prior to the SA, he reported having moderately positive attitude/motivation, but his communication willingness was rated as slightly weak, which was mainly caused by his L2 anxiety. During abroad stay, the good relationship with host family became an important step for him in building social network with more NSs, and his communication willingness was also gradually enhanced. Although the program like host family or conversation partner may not work for every L2 leaner, as happened with Hua, it at least provides learners with opportunities to interact with NSs, especially for those who had neutral/weak communication willingness and enrolled in a short-term SA. This, as a pedagogical suggestion, will be noted in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS

In this last chapter, the main research findings of the study are presented in the first section, followed by a series of pedagogical implications. In the following sections, a summary of contributions to the field of sociolinguistic variation is discussed, as well as limitations of the study. Finally, recommendations for future work are suggested as a closure for this dissertation.

Research Findings

This dissertation, with 12 Chinese native-speaker speech data baseline, investigates the use of sociolinguistic variants DE by 14 CSL learners over a short-term (6 weeks or 12 weeks) study abroad. Multiple methods were adopted for data collection, including adapted pre- and post-test version of LCP, adapted mini AMTB, adapted WTC scale, audio-recorded sociolinguistic interviews and story-telling tasks. Native speakers were interviewed once. CSL learners were interviewed twice, before and after their sojourn abroad, and they also completed all the questionnaires. Through transcribing and coding, 4489 tokens were extracted from the NS speech data, and 3841 tokens were from learner data for the quantitative analysis. Interview transcripts and data provided by questionnaires were collected for the qualitative analysis.

As introduced in Chapter 1, three major research questions are addressed. Question 1: Do the CSL learners acquire the native-like use of sociolinguistic variation in DE after participating in SA? To answer this question, four sub-questions are formulated, describing and comparing the patterns of DE variation used by NSs and learners at different SA stages. Specifically, the range of variants, the use frequencies
of variants, and the observance of linguistic and extralinguistic constraints on DE variants in both NS and learner speech data are captured and investigated.

As reported in Chapter 4, NS participants never use DE in the lexicalized term, and they treat the rest functions under investigation as DE optional contexts. Additionally, they do not adopt different gender speech styles, but differ DE usage choices according to DE functions and the formality of the situation. Specifically, NSs favor DE presence in the case of DE as an attributive marker, and the DE marked constituent is a verb, a relative clause modifier, a phrase; as well as when DE functions as a nominalization marker. Also, they favor DE use in formal contexts than in informal situations.

Based on NS results of DE variation, there are two interesting findings that need to be noted. One is the range of DE variants used by NSs. Contrary to Chinese prescriptive rules, NS participants are found to occasionally delete DE in relative clause as a modifier and nominalization marker contexts in informal or fast speech. This finding conforms with Li’s study (2010), in which NSs were also found to occasionally omit DE from the two categories. Therefore, how native speakers actually use DE variation is somewhat different from prescriptive norms of Chinese language use. The other is the effect of the social factor gender on NSs’ optional DE use. Different from the general pattern that females are more attuned to formal and standard speech style (e.g., Adamson & Regan, 1991; Major, 2004), NSs of the study convey no gender difference in any function of DE. That is, in the Chinese language, DE is not a gender-salient marker.
For learner data, a multivariate analysis, by combining tokens from the pre-SA and post-SA stages, was first conducted to examine how learners performed at different SA stages. The result shows that learners use DE more frequently than they do prior to SA, which seems to be a deviation from native-like norms. However, through a further analysis on the distribution of DE use according to its linguistic functions by NSs and learners at different stages, the trend of frequency of DE use in the post-SA is demonstrated to be more similar to that of NSs. That is, learners actually are to move toward a more native-like performance on the optional DE use after their returning. The relative lower rate of DE use in the pre-SA stage, through a close reexamination of the data, is attributed to beginning-level learners’ incomplete mastery and misuse of some later introduced DE functions. Therefore, changes do take place on learners’ use of DE variants over the summer SA program. Although learners tend to use DE more after participating in SA, they are to move toward more native-like norms.

Considering that tokens that beginning learners produced prior to SA may not be totally caused by their knowledge of sociolinguistic variation, the pre-SA dataset is not further analyzed in this study. With the baseline for the usage of DE, the frequency analysis of the post-SA dataset reveals that learners use the same range of DE variants, but differ somewhat from NSs in the frequency of optional DE use as their discursive frequency of DE use is found to be higher. In addition, like NSs, multivariate analysis of DE tokens in the post-SA shows that learners’ optional DE use is not random but also systematically constrained by multiple linguistic and extralinguistic factors. Specifically, linguistic functions of DE, learners’ willingness to communicate in Chinese, attitude/motivation, Chinese proficiency and the length of SA are found to be
statistically significant. Although the factor formality is found not to contribute to DE omission in optional cases, the tendency in which informal speech favors DE use more than formal speech still exists in learner data. Additionally, given that DE use is not an index for gender, the finding of no gender difference in the post-SA stage further lends support to the claim – learners are to move toward being more native-like norms in the use of DE variants over the SA.

As a result, through the comparison of learners’ use of DE variants at different SA stages, and the analysis of the patterns of DE variation in the post-SA, the answer to the first major research question is affirmative. The short-term SA does bring learners’ patterns of DE use more in line with NS norms.

Question 2: What influence do independent variables have on SA participants’ use of sociolinguistic variation? To answer this question, the effects of both linguistic and extralinguistic factors are taken into consideration.

For these learners who participated in the summer SA program in China, as mentioned above, multiple linguistic and extralinguistic factors influence their use of DE variation. The linguistic function of DE is the most influential factor. Learner participants favor DE presence in the case of DE as an attributive marker, and the DE marked constituent is a relative clause modifier, a verb, a phrase; as well as when DE functions as a genitive marker and a nominalization marker. As compared with the constraint hierarchy of NS data, one obvious difference between SA participants’ and NSs’ DE use is the genitive marker – NSs treat it as a DE disfavoring environment, while learners treat it as a DE favoring context. Overall, learners’ frequency of optional DE use is higher than that of NSs, which means these learners still need more time to further
develop their sociolinguistic competence. The interpretation of learners’ overuse of DE in some functions could be undertaken from two potential perspectives. First, learners tend to use the formal variants that they are taught in classrooms more frequently in an attempt to be on the safe side of accuracy and clarity. Secondly, formal classroom instruction and teaching materials may contribute to learners’ more formal sounding speech as well.

The extralinguistic factors that play significant roles in learners’ use of DE variants include learners’ Chinese-communication willingness, their attitude/motivation towards Chinese learning and Chinese people, their Chinese proficiency and the length of SA. Among all these factors, learners’ communication willingness is found to be the most influential, followed by the factor of learners’ attitude/motivation. As noted in Chapter 4, positive attitude/motivation promotes DE deletion, and strong willingness promotes a more native-like performance on optional DE use. Therefore, considering the claim that the SA program does bring learners’ optional DE use more in line with NS norms, it should be noted that it is the learners with strong Chinese-communication willingness and positive attitude/motivation that benefit from the short-term study abroad. In addition, given that not all learners developed their sociolinguistic competence after participating in SA, how different learners performed during the short sojourn abroad is also investigated in this study.

Question 3: How learners benefit from the short-term SA, or what hinders their acquisition of sociolinguistic variation? To answer this question, the qualitative approach is adopted. Interview transcripts and questionnaires of five learner participants from different Chinese proficiency levels are chosen as examples.
As discussed in Chapter 5, for the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, whether or not learners can benefit from the short-term SA greatly depends on whether they are willing to make an effort. Learners with strong communication willingness and positive attitude/motivation reported having and maintaining regular conversations with NSs during their stay in China. That is, these learners were more willing to seek opportunities to interact with NSs. According to the Interaction Hypothesis, the sufficient number of authentic and natural L2 input as well as various practice opportunities are of great importance for learners’ acquisition or development of sociolinguistic competence. On the other hand, learners with weak or neutral communication willingness limited their access to NSs, and even they increased their exposure to Chinese through the local media, input alone could not promote their acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. Therefore, learners’ communication willingness and attitudes/motivation greatly influence the degree of contact with Chinese NSs, which results in different outcomes of undertaking SA.

In sum, based on the research findings as mentioned above, the short-term SA program does bring learners’ performance on optional DE use more in line with native-speaker norms. Specifically, it is the learners with strong Chinese-communication willingness and positive attitude/motivation that are found to benefit from the SA. On the other hand, considering learners’ overall higher rate of DE use in optional cases, it should also be noted that these learners still have a long way to go to fully master the variable usage of the morphosyntactic particle DE.
Pedagogical Implications

Given that the learning environments for SA participants include both the formal classroom setting and the target culture, suggestions for helping learners develop their sociolinguistic competence, according to the two contexts, are proposed in this section.

As noted in Chapter 4, for the finding of CSL learners’ general overuse of DE in optional cases, one possible explanation is that the formal input that learners have received in classrooms may strongly influence their use of DE variants. The significant impact of educational input on L2 learners’ use of sociolinguistic variants has been identified in previous studies such as Mougeon et al. (2010) and Li (2010). In formal classroom settings, L2 learners are found to follow their teachers’ and textbooks’ pattern of sociolinguistic variation, and thus tend to overuse the formal variants in their speech. Therefore, as proposed by Mougeon and his associates (2001, 2010), this study supports the claim of rethinking teaching pedagogy in classrooms, as both teachers and instructional materials need to provide learners with sociolinguistically-meaningful opportunities to be familiar with the variable linguistic features.

Including sociolinguistic variation into L2 teaching is thus necessary to help learners develop their sociolinguistic competence. To accomplish the task, what teachers need to do first is to be aware of NSs’ use of sociolinguistic variants as documented in different studies. Then teachers can use explicit instructions or design materials as a way to focus learners’ attention to a particular sociolinguistic variable, lead them to make a comparison between or among variants, and provide them with feedback and practice opportunities. However, considering the difference of the complexity of L2 forms, as well as learners’ L2 proficiency level, the formal teaching of sociolinguistic variation needs careful planning. For example, according to Andersen’s
One-to-One Principle (1984), the Chinese particle DE is a very complex variable, and it will take a very long time for learners to fully acquire its variable use. Therefore, teaching all of the functions and optionality of DE to learners at beginning level is not feasible, since it will only result in their deep confusion. Instead, what we can do is to choose and teach functions that have been introduced early in classrooms, such as the genitive marker. By doing this, the complexity of DE variation is decreased for beginning learners. With the explicit instruction of how variation between DE presence and absence is related to the formality of the communicative context, learners would be aware of the sociolinguistically-appropriate forms, and then develop the ability to make choices.

In addition, for the short-term SA program, twelve weeks of sojourn abroad is found to have a significantly positive impact on learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic variants of DE. That is, the longer the learners stay in China and the more interactions they have with NSs, the more likely they are to move toward a more native-like performance on optional DE use. Considering the positive impact of length of study abroad on CSL learners’ use of DE variants, a longer SA program is thus recommended for learners with adequate basic knowledge to develop their sociolinguistic competence. Moreover, this study also reports that it is the learners with strong Chinese-communication willingness and positive attitude/motivation that benefit from the short-term study abroad. As described in Chapter 5, these learners are more willing to seek opportunities to have prolonged linguistic interactions with NSs. The degree of contact with NSs results in different practice opportunities and quantity of input learners can receive, which influences the outcomes of SA. Since not all learners enrolled in SA
programs have positive dispositions, for those who have weak or neutral communication willingness and avoid opportunities to communicate with NSs, regular interaction with host family or conversation partners is thus a necessary complement to their SA program. A good relationship with host family or social outing with conversation partners can provide these learners with relaxing and authentic situations to use Chinese, as well as opportunities for starting the establishment of social networks with NSs.

**Contributions of the Present Study**

For the research centered on L2 sociolinguistic competence, the current study has several strengths that are worth highlighting in what follows.

In the first place, given the scarcity of work on sociolinguistic variation in the interlanguage in Chinese (Li, 2010, 2014), this dissertation provides the first longitudinal study on the use of DE variants by CSL learners over a six-week or twelve-week summer SA program. It complements the relatively small literature documenting L2 learners’ acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in the SA learning context (e.g., Barron, 2006; Geeslin et al., 2010; Regan, 1995) by adding Chinese as an L2 to the research field. The empirical results of learners’ performance on optional DE use at different SA stages further build on our existing knowledge of variability in the interlanguage, as well as L2 learning and use. Also, the corpus of the study may provide a basis and resource for further related studies.

In addition, this study helps us better understand the sociolinguistic patterns of variation for native speakers of Chinese. As mentioned in Chapter 2, how Chinese NSs actually use DE, especially in informal speech, is rarely explored, and according to Li (2010), she is among the first to use variationist methods to provide “a comprehensive view of DE use in the dimension of linguistic functions”, and her study is “only a start to
examine the social factors on DE use” (p. 248). Therefore, results of NS data in this study, besides serving as the baseline, also contribute to our knowledge about language variation in Chinese. For example, the finding of no gender difference lends support to the claim that DE is not an index for gender (Li, 2010). Different from the general pattern on gender and stylistic speech differences (e.g., Adamson & Regan, 1991; Major, 2004), the effects of social factors on DE use by Chinese NSs thus present a different picture, as females are found not to use the formal form (DE presence) more than males.

Finally, this work also sheds light on the pedagogical implications for CSL learners’ development of sociolinguistic competence. Considering the lack of informal or colloquial variants input in teaching materials and classroom discourse, the study emphasizes the necessity of including sociolinguistic variation into L2 teaching, and also suggests strategies that teachers may employ to accomplish the task. Additionally, suggestions for SA participants are proposed, for the purpose of providing them with more opportunities to interact with NSs.

**Limitations of the Present Study**

Although the best efforts have been made to design the method, code the tokens, analyze the data and interpret the results and findings, limitations of the study still exist. Following are some limitations that have to be pointed out.

The first limitation is the imbalance in the number of learner participants at different Chinese-proficiency levels. As noted in Chapter 3, learners who satisfied the recruitment criteria and were also willing to participate in the study were not distributed evenly according to their proficiency levels, as the majority (nine participants) were at the beginning level, four were at the intermediate level, and only one was at the
advanced level. However, it is generally recommended to have a minimum of five or six speakers per cell (Meyerhoff, Schleef, & Mackenzie, 2015). However, due to the low number of participants at advanced as well as intermediate levels, the present study could not investigate the effect of each proficiency level on DE use. Instead, combining intermediate and advanced learners into one group provided a general comparison between beginners and higher proficiency learners (intermediate/advanced level). To better understand the factor of Chinese proficiency on DE use, more research with a higher number of learner participants needs to be done.

The second limitation of the present study is the lack of analysis of educational factors, which include teachers’ speech and pedagogical materials, in order to understand how DE was taught in the textbooks, especially in terms of pragmatic variation. As reported by a series of studies on the learning of spoken French sociolinguistic variation (e.g., Mougeon & Rehner, 2001; Mougeon et al., 2010), immersion students were found to follow their teachers’ and instructional materials’ pattern of sociolinguistic variation, as they over-used formal and hyper-formal variants but rarely used informal variants. For the learning of Chinese, Li (2010) also reported that the pattern of DE use by CSL learners resembled that of their teachers. Therefore, taking educational factors into consideration could better explain learners’ use of sociolinguistic variants. However, due to the lack of access to teachers’ speech and textbooks during the period of studying abroad, educational factors were not included for data analysis in this study. For this reason, when interpreting learners’ overuse of DE in some functions, we may only argue that such overuse might be highly influenced by educational factors, as the finding is similar to those of previous studies. However,
without data from the teachers’ speech or the instructional materials, no strong claim can be made here.

The third limitation is the lack of analysis of the individual learner behavior regarding the variable DE. As noted in Chapter 5, for the purpose of understanding the complex nature of SA, five learner participants from different Chinese proficiency levels were selected. Through the qualitative analysis of their interview transcripts and questionnaires, we have provided a clear idea of how learners with different communication willingness and attitude/motivation performed during their SA. However, for each learner, since the number of tokens in some DE function was found to be less than five, how each individual performed in the use of DE variants prior and posterior to SA remains unknown. Therefore, due to the insufficient tokens in individual learner data, the quantitative analysis on the individual DE use could not be conducted.

The fourth limitation is the self-report questionnaires for data collection. Each learner participant was asked to respond to a pre- and a post-test version of LCP (adapted from Freed et al., 2004a), mini AMTB (adapted from Gardner, 2001) and WTC scale (adapted from McCroskey, 1992) before and after the study abroad respectively. With the help of these questionnaires, we have a more exact idea about learners’ use of L1 and L2 in different situations during their study abroad, and also a measure of individual’s L2 learning motivation/attitudes as well as their willingness to communicate in Chinese at different SA stage. However, we are also aware of the limitations that these questionnaires can present: if we consider that the self-report information is subjective, we may ask ourselves to what extent each response reflects reality. That is, self-report questionnaires may not always elicit accurate responses regarding linguistic
behavior. Factors such as participants’ understanding or interpretation of questions, or their introspective abilities may influence their responses. Additionally, the post-test questionnaires were not distributed right at the end of the summer SA program, but at the beginning of the fall semester. Given that the response accuracy also depends on participants’ abilities to recall, the several-week lapse may thus cause a problem, especially for the posttest LCP in which learners need to report their use of L1 and L2 on a scale of frequency values.

Therefore, as a suggestion for future studies, an exhaustive follow-up survey on the use of L1 and L2 during the study abroad as well as weekly diary entries may be taken into consideration, so as to better understand the linguistic profile of L2 learners. We may gather information about the expectations of each learner participant at his/her arrival, about the living abroad experiences in the middle of the program, and about the future perspectives towards L2 learning at the end of the sojourn abroad. Additionally, we may request learners to keep weekly diary entries in their L1, in which they can record their thoughts and impressions of the foreign culture, report positive or negative events, and make comments on their L2 progress. Different from the sociolinguistic interviews conducted in learners’ L2, without limited linguistic capabilities, the diary entries can provide more details about the study abroad experiences. Meanwhile, when analyzing learners’ self-report data, we can have more information to rely on. For example, whether or not learners’ self-report data match their behaviors as recorded in the diary entries could lend evidence for the data validity. If learners were exactly as they rated themselves with positive L2 learning motives and strong communication
willingness, they would have also reported efforts that they made to improve L2 in the diary entries.

**Recommendations for Future Work**

In addition to the suggestions arising from the limitations, based on the gains from this work, recommendations for future studies in the research area of CSL learning and use are also discussed.

The present study examines CSL learners' acquisition of DE variants over a short-term study abroad. To further investigate the SA impact, making a comparison with other learning contexts is recommended. That is, a control group consisting of learners at the same proficiency level but learning Chinese in AH classrooms may be included for future work. What we have learned from this study is that learners are to move toward a more native-like performance after the summer SA program, however, comparing with other learning environments, whether the short-term sojourn abroad could make a big difference on learners' optional DE use remains unknown. Moreover, if learners in AH contexts were provided with explicit instructions on the use of DE variants, to what extent the instructions influence the effects of SA and AH contexts is worth exploring as well.

Additionally, this study reveals that learners' use of DE variants, just like NSs, is systematically constrained by a complex set of linguistic and extralinguistic factors. The extralinguistic factors under investigation include learners' willingness to communicate in Chinese, attitude/motivation, Chinese proficiency, length of study abroad, gender and formality. For further research, other extralinguistic factors that have been examined in previous studies on L2 gains and sociolinguistic gains merit investigation, such as personality trait (e.g., Dewaele, 1999), access to social network (e.g., Isabelli-García,
2006), interlocutor ethnicity (e.g., Bayley, 1994), social class of the participants (Mougeon et al., 2010), and learners’ L1 (e.g., Li, 2010).

Finally, studies of additional Chinese linguistic variable features are necessary to broaden our knowledge of variability in both native language and interlanguage. For example, subjects in Chinese have three forms of expression: full NP, overt pronoun, and null/zero pronoun (Li & Thompson, 1981). Specifically, when a referent is introduced for the first time, the subject is expressed as a full NP, and the subsequent mentions of that referent may be overt or null pronoun. In other words, when the subject pronoun is coreferential with the subject in the clause immediately preceding it, either the presence or absence of this subject pronoun is allowed. The alternation between overt and null pronouns in the subject position is thus a sociolinguistic variable. Although the pro-drop has been widely studied in many variation studies of Spanish (e.g., Bayley & Pease-Alvarez, 1996; Cameron & Ferrán, 2004; Geeslin & Gudmestad, 2011), few have been done in Chinese language (except Jia & Bayley, 2002; Li, 2012). Therefore, the examination of more sociolinguistic variables, such as the subject pronominal expression or the aspect marker LE, would contribute to a better understanding of the variable patterns in the Chinese language used as a L1 or a L2.
APPENDIX A
UFIRB #2014-U-221-INFORMED CONSENT

Protocol Title
The acquisition of sociolinguistic variation: Effects of a short-term study-abroad sojourn on second language learners of Chinese?

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study
The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of a short-term study-abroad (SA) sojourn on the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation by Chinese as a second language (CSL) learners. Effects of linguistic and extralinguistic factors on participants’ use of variation patterns will be examined.

What you will be asked to do in the study
You will be asked to complete a pretest version of the language contact profile (LCP), attitude/motivation test battery (AMTB) and willingness to communicate (WTC) scale (for CSL learners before their summer SA sojourn), to participate in an audio-recorded interview and a story-telling task (the speech data of CSL learners enrolling in the summer SA program will be collected twice, at two different times: before and after the SA sojourn, and the story-telling task has a pre and a post version), and to respond to a posttest version of the LCP, AMTB and WTC scale (for CSL learners after their return from China). The semi-directed interview will cover different topics related to your general experience, your language practices and your language attitudes. In the story-telling task, you will be asked to tell stories about three sets of pictures (each set consists of four pictures) and a Chinese cartoon (about six minutes) you are presented with. The questionnaire will be written in English and you are allowed to respond in English as well, but for the interview and the story-telling task, only Mandarin is allowed.

Time required
The interview and the story-telling task will take approximately 1 hour. The length of the questionnaire survey will be determined by the participant.

Risks and Benefits
There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study.

Compensation
There will be no compensation to you for participating in the study.

Confidentiality
Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file in my supervisor’s office. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report.

Voluntary participation
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

**Right to withdraw from the study**
You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the study**
Yanmin Bao, Ph.D Student, Department of Linguistics, phone 352-871-7673.
Dr. Hélène Blondeau, Ph.D Anthropology, Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, phone 352-273-3766

**Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study**
UFIRB Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; ph 392-0433.

**Agreement**
I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.
Participant: ___________________________ Date: ________________
Principal Investigator: ___________________________ Date: ________________
APPENDIX B
PRETEST VERSION OF THE LANGUAGE CONTACT PROFILE

Note: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. Your name will not be used in any report.

Part 1: Background Information

1. Last name ______________________  First name ______________________

2. Date of birth (mm/dd/yy) ______________________

3. Gender ______________________

4. Country of birth ______________________

5. Native Language ______________________

6. What language(s) do you speak at home? ______________________
   If more than one, with whom do you speak each of these languages?
   ____________________________________________________________

7. Have you ever been to a Chinese-speaking region for the purpose of studying Chinese?
   Circle one: Yes / No
   If yes, when? ______________________  Where? ______________________
   For how long? ___1 semester or less ___2 semesters ___more than 2 semesters

8. Other than the experience mentioned in Question 7, have you ever lived in a situation where you were exposed to a language other than your native language (e.g., by living in a multilingual community; visiting a community for purpose of study abroad or work; exposure through family members, etc.)?
   Circle one: Yes / No
   If Yes, please give details below. If more than three, list others on back of this page.

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<tr>
<th>Experience 1</th>
<th>Experience 2</th>
<th>Experience 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country/region</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
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<td>From when to when</td>
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9. In the boxes below, rate your language ability in each of the languages that you know. Use the following ratings:
   0) Poor, 1) Good, 2) Very good, 3) Native/nativelike.
   How many years (if any) have you studied this language in a formal school setting?
10. How long have you been learning Chinese in university/college?
   a. One semester
   b. Two semesters
   c. Three to four semesters
   d. Five to six semesters
   e. More than six semesters

11. Have you studied Chinese in school in the past at each of the levels listed below? If yes, for how long?
   a. Elementary school:  __ No  __ Yes
       __ less than 1 year __ 1-2 years __ more than 2 years
   b. Junior high (middle) school:  __ No __ Yes
       __ less than 1 year __ 1-2 years __ more than 2 years
   c. Senior high school:  __ No __ Yes
       __ less than 1 year __ 1-2 years __ more than 2 years
   d. Other (Please specify)  __ No __ Yes
       __ less than 1 year __ 1-2 years __ more than 2 years

12. What year are you in school? (circle one)
    Freshman    Sophomore    Junior    Senior    Graduate student    Other

13. What is your major? ______________________________________________________

Part 2: All of the Questions That Follow Refer to Your Use of Chinese, Not Your Native Language, Unless the Question Says Otherwise

14. On average, how often did you communicate with native or fluent speakers of Chinese in Chinese in the year prior to the start of this semester?
   0) never  1) almost never  2) occasionally  3) half/half
   4) often  5) almost always  6) always

15. Use this scale provided to rate the following statements.
   0) never  1) almost never  2) occasionally  3) half/half
   4) often  5) almost always  6) always
   Prior to this semester, I tried to speak Chinese to:
   ___ a. my instructor in class
   ___ b. classmates in class
   ___ c. my instructor outside of class
   ___ d. classmates outside of class
   ___ e. friends who are native or fluent speakers of Chinese
   ___ f. strangers whom I thought could speak Chinese
17. Do you have Chinese language partner(s)? ________________________________

If yes, how often do you meet to practice Chinese? _________________________

And how long each practice takes? ________________________________

18. For each of the items below, choose the response that corresponds to the amount of time you estimate you spent on average doing each activity in Chinese prior to this semester.

a. listening to Chinese radio
   - 0) never
   - 1) almost never
   - 2) occasionally
   - 3) half/half
   - 4) often
   - 5) almost always
   - 6) always

b. reading Chinese newspapers
   - 0) never
   - 1) almost never
   - 2) occasionally
   - 3) half/half
   - 4) often
   - 5) almost always
   - 6) always

c. reading book in Chinese
   - 0) never
   - 1) almost never
   - 2) occasionally
   - 3) half/half
   - 4) often
   - 5) almost always
   - 6) always

d. listening to songs in Chinese
   - 0) never
   - 1) almost never
   - 2) occasionally
   - 3) half/half
   - 4) often
   - 5) almost always
   - 6) always

e. reading Chinese language magazines
   - 0) never
   - 1) almost never
   - 2) occasionally
   - 3) half/half
   - 4) often
   - 5) almost always
   - 6) always

f. watching Chinese language television
   - 0) never
   - 1) almost never
   - 2) occasionally
   - 3) half/half
   - 4) often
   - 5) almost always
   - 6) always

g. watching movies or videos in Chinese
   - 0) never
   - 1) almost never
   - 2) occasionally
   - 3) half/half
   - 4) often
   - 5) almost always
   - 6) always

h. reading Internet web pages in Chinese
   - 0) never
   - 1) almost never
   - 2) occasionally
   - 3) half/half
   - 4) often
   - 5) almost always
   - 6) always

19. List any other activities that you commonly did using Chinese prior to this semester.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
20. Please list all the Chinese courses you are taking this semester. This includes Chinese language courses as well as content area courses taught in the Chinese language.

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<th>Course name</th>
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<th>Brief description</th>
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APPENDIX C
POSTTEST VERSION OF THE LANGUAGE CONTACT PROFILE

Note: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. Your name will not be used in any report.

1. Name____________________________

2. Please indicate the Chinese language courses you are taking this fall semester:
   
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<th>Course name</th>
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3. Which Study Abroad program did you participate in?_____________________

4. Which situation best describes your living arrangements in China during this summer?
   a. _____ I lived in the home of a Chinese-speaking family.
      i. List the members of the family (e.g., mother, father, one 19-year-old daughter/son).
      ii. Did they speak English?
      iii. Were there other nonnative speakers of Chinese living with your host family? Circle one: Yes / No
   b. _____ I lived in the student dormitory.
      i. _____ I had a private room.
      ii. _____ I had a roommate who was a native or fluent Chinese speaker.
      iii. _____ I lived with others who are NOT native or fluent Chinese speakers.
   c. _____ I lived alone in a room or an apartment.
   d. _____ I lived in a room or an apartment with native or fluent Chinese speaker(s).
   e. _____ I lived in a room or an apartment with others who are NOT native or fluent Chinese speaker(s).
   f. _____ Other. Please specify: ______________________________

5. Who did you hang out with during the free time when stay in China (i.e., classmates, native Chinese speakers)? And what language(s) did you use to communicate?

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

6. Did you visit any other parts of China during abroad stay? If yes, where did you go?

   ______________________________________________________
7. Length of stay in China? ____________________________

For the following items, please specify:

1) **How many days per week you typically used Chinese** in the situation indicated, and
2) **on average how many hours per day** you did so.

Circle the appropriate numbers.

8. On average, how much time did you spend speaking, in Chinese, outside of class with native or fluent Chinese speakers during this semester?

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9. During abroad stay, outside of class, I tried to speak Chinese to:

a. my instructor

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b. friends who are native or fluent Chinese speakers

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c. classmates

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d. strangers whom I thought could speak Chinese

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e. a host family, Chinese roommate, or other Chinese speakers in the dormitory

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f. service personnel

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g. other; specify:

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10. How often did you use Chinese outside the classroom for each of the following purposes?

a. to clarify classroom-related work

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b. to obtain directions or information (e.g., “What time is the bus to...?”)

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c. for superficial or brief exchange (e.g., greetings, ordering in a restaurant) with my host family, Chinese roommate, or acquaintances in a Chinese-speaking dormitory
1. How much time did you spend doing the following activities each week?
   a. Extended conversations with my host family, Chinese roommate, friends, or acquaintances in a Chinese-speaking dormitory, native speakers of English with whom I speak Chinese.
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day
   d. extended conversations with my host family, Chinese roommate, friends, or acquaintances in a Chinese-speaking dormitory, native speakers of English with whom I speak Chinese.
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day

11. Typically, how much time did you spend doing the following activities?
   a. How often did you try deliberately to use things you were taught in the classroom (grammar, vocabulary, expressions) with native or fluent speakers of Chinese outside the classroom?
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day
   b. How often did you take things you learned outside of the classroom (grammar, vocabulary, expressions) back to class for question or discussion?
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day

12. How much time did you spend doing the following each week?
   a. Speaking a language other than English or Chinese to speakers of that language (e.g., Spanish with a Spanish-speaking friend)
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day
   b. Speaking Chinese to native or fluent speakers of Chinese
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day
   c. Speaking English to native or fluent speakers of Chinese
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day
   d. Speaking Chinese to nonnative speakers of Chinese (i.e., classmates)
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day
   e. Speaking English to nonnative speaker of Chinese (i.e., classmates)
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day

13. How much time did you spend doing each of the following activities outside of class?
   a. Overall, in reading in Chinese outside of class
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day
   b. Reading Chinese newspapers outside of class
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day
   c. Reading novels in Chinese outside of class
      1) ........................0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  day(s) per week
      2) ........................0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  more than 5  hour(s) per day
14. On average, how much time did you spend speaking in English outside of class during abroad stay?

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15. How often did you do the following activities in English during the semester in China?

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a. reading newspapers, magazines, or novels or watching movies, television, or videos
1) ..........................0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 day(s) per week  
2) ..........................0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5 hour(s) per day  
b. reading e-mail or internet web pages in English
1) ..........................0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 day(s) per week  
2) ..........................0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5 hour(s) per day  
c. writing e-mail in English
1) ..........................0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 day(s) per week  
2) ..........................0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5 hour(s) per day  
d. writing personal notes and letters in English
1) ..........................0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 day(s) per week  
2) ..........................0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5 hour(s) per day
APPENDIX D
PRETEST VERSION OF AMTB & WTC

**Note**: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. Your name will not be used in any report.

**mini-AMTB**

**DIRECTIONS**: Please indicate your opinion after each statement by checking the point that best describes the extent to which you believe the statement applies to you.

1. If I were to rate my feelings about learning Chinese in order to interact with members of this language community, I would say it is:
   - Weak
   - Strong
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. If I were to rate my interest in Chinese, I would say that it is:
   - Very Low
   - Very High
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. If I were to rate my attitude toward members of Chinese language community, I would say that it is:
   - Unfavorable
   - Favorable
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. If I were to rate my attitude toward my Chinese instructor, I would say that it is:
   - Unfavorable
   - Favorable
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. If I were to rate my attitude toward my Chinese course, I would say that it is:
   - Unfavorable
   - Favorable
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. If I were to rate how hard I work at learning Chinese, I would characterize it as:
   - Very Little
   - Very Much
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. If I were to rate my desire to learn Chinese, I would say that it is:
   - Very Low
   - Very High
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. If I were to rate my attitude toward learning Chinese, I would say that it is:
   - Unfavorable
   - Favorable
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. If I were to rate how important it is for me to learn Chinese for employment, I would say that it is:

Very Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High

10. If I were to rate my anxiety in my Chinese class, I would rate myself as:

Very Nervous 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Calm

11. If I were to rate my anxiety when speaking Chinese, I would rate myself as:

Very Nervous 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Calm

WTC scale

DIRECTIONS: Below are 20 situations in which you might choose to communicate or not to communicate when study abroad. Please presume that you have completely free choice to initiate or avoid communication. Please indicate in the space at the left the percentage of times you would choose to communicate in Chinese in each type of situation. 0 % = never, 100 % = always

_____ 1. Talk with a stranger in an elevator.
_____ 2. Talk with a stranger on the bus.
_____ 3. Speak in public to a group (about 30 people) of strangers.
_____ 4. Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.
_____ 5. Talk with a salesperson in a store.
_____ 6. Talk in a large meeting (about 10 people) of friends.
_____ 7. Talk with a janitor/resident manager.
_____ 8. Talk in a small group (about 5 people) of strangers.
_____ 9. Talk with a friend while standing in line.
_____ 10. Talk with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant.
_____ 11. Talk in a large meeting (about 10 people) of acquaintances.
_____ 12. Talk with a stranger while standing in line.
_____ 13. Talk with a shop clerk.
_____ 14. Speak in public to a group (about 30 people) of friends.
_____ 15. Talk in a small group (about 5 people) of acquaintances.
_____ 16. Talk with a stranger on the road or street.
17. Talk in a large meeting (about 10 people) of strangers.
18. Talk with a librarian.
19. Talk in a small group (about 5 people) of friends.
20. Speak in public to a group (about 30 people) of acquaintances
APPENDIX E
POSTTEST VERSION OF AMTB & WTC

Note: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. Your name will not be used in any report.

mini-AMTB

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your opinion after each statement by checking the point that best describes the extent to which you believe the statement applies to you.

1. If I were to rate my feelings about learning Chinese in order to interact with members of this language community, I would say it is:
   Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 → Strong 7

2. If I were to rate my interest in Chinese, I would say that it is:
   Very Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 → Very High 7

3. If I were to rate my attitude toward members of Chinese language community, I would say that it is:
   Unfavorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 → Favorable 7

4. If I were to rate my attitude toward my Chinese instructor, I would say that it is:
   Unfavorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 → Favorable 7

5. If I were to rate my attitude toward my Chinese course, I would say that it is:
   Unfavorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 → Favorable 7

6. If I were to rate how hard I work at learning Chinese, I would characterize it as:
   Very Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 → Very Much 7

7. If I were to rate my desire to learn Chinese, I would say that it is:
   Very Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 → Very High 7

8. If I were to rate my attitude toward learning Chinese, I would say that it is:
   Unfavorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 → Favorable 7
9. If I were to rate how important it is for me to learn Chinese for employment, I would say that it is:

| Very Low | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very High |

10. If I were to rate my anxiety in my Chinese class, I would rate myself as:

| Very Nervous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very Calm |

11. If I were to rate my anxiety when speaking Chinese, I would rate myself as:

| Very Nervous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very Calm |

WTC scale

**DIRECTIONS:** If you **go to China again**, below are 20 situations in which you might choose to communicate or not to communicate. Please presume that you **have completely free choice to initiate or avoid communication**. Please indicate in the space at the left the **percentage of times** you would choose to **communicate in Chinese** in each type of situation.  

0 % = never, 100 % = always

_____ 1. Talk with a stranger in an elevator.

_____ 2. Talk with a stranger on the bus.

_____ 3. Speak in public to a group (about 30 people) of strangers.

_____ 4. Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.

_____ 5. Talk with a salesperson in a store.

_____ 6. Talk in a large meeting (about 10 people) of friends.

_____ 7. Talk with a janitor/resident manager.

_____ 8. Talk in a small group (about 5 people) of strangers.

_____ 9. Talk with a friend while standing in line.

_____ 10. Talk with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant.

_____ 11. Talk in a large meeting (about 10 people) of acquaintances.

_____ 12. Talk with a stranger while standing in line.

_____ 13. Talk with a shop clerk.

_____ 14. Speak in public to a group (about 30 people) of friends.

_____ 15. Talk in a small group (about 5 people) of acquaintances.

_____ 16. Talk with a stranger on the road or street.
17. Talk in a large meeting (about 10 people) of strangers.
18. Talk with a librarian.
19. Talk in a small group (about 5 people) of friends.
20. Speak in public to a group (about 30 people) of acquaintances.
APPENDIX F
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Note: This interview has been designed to elicit free conversation, and in order to get the natural flow of the conversation, the order of modules can vary. The personal information of each interviewee will be erased after the data collection. This approximately one-hour interview will be conducted in Mandarin; the translation part is in square brackets.

Module 1: Demographics and background information

_Nihao, ni de mingzi shi…_
[Let's see, your name is…]

_Ni jinnian duo da le? Na yi nian sheng de?_
[How old are you? What year were you born?]

_Ni shi nali ren?_
[Where are you from?]

Module 2: Family and friends

_Ni jia you ji kou ren? Tamen shi shui?_
[How many people are there in your family? Who are they?]

_Ni baba de gongzuo shi shenme? Ni mama ne? Ni de gege/jiejie/didi/meimei ne?_
[What job does your father do? How about your mother? And your brother/sister?]

_Ni gongzuo ma? Ni zuo shenme?_
[Are you working? What's your (part-time) job?]

_Zai na gongzuo?_
[Where do you do your part-time?]

_Ni meitian yao gongzuo jige xiaoshi?_
[How many hours you need to work everyday?]

_Ni changchang gen ni de jiaren zuo shenme?_
[What activities do you often do with your family?]

_Nimen shi zenme guo xinnian/shengdanjie de? You shenme you yisi de shi ma?_
[How did you celebrate the New Year/Christmas? Anything interesting happened?]

_Keyi genwo shuo yixia ni zuihao de pengyou ma?_
[Can you tell me about your best friend?]

_Ta zhangde shenme yang?_
[What does he/she look like?]

_Nimen renshi duo jiu le?_
[How long have you know each other?]

_Ni you kong de shihou xihuan zuo shenme? Ta ne?_
[What do you like to do in your leisure time? How about him/her?]

_Nimen zai yiqi de shihou, changchang zuo shenme?_
[What do you usually do together with your friends?]

_Nimen shange zhoumo zuole shenme?_
[What did you do last weekend?]
Ni you zhongguo pengyou ma?
[Do you have any good Chinese friends?]
   Keyi shuo yixia ma?
   [Can you tell me about them?]
   Ni gen tamen lianxi shuo zhongwen ma?
   [Do you practice speaking Chinese with them?]
      Nimen zai na lianxi? Zenme lianxi?
      [Where do you meet? How do you practice Chinese?]

Module 3: Favorite things
Ni xihuan kan dianying ma?
[Do you like watching movies?]
   Ni zui xihuan de dianying shi shenme?
   [What is your favorite movie?]
   Zhege dianying jiang le shenme?
   [What is the movie about?]

Ni zui xihuan de shu/ge shi shenme?
[Can you tell about your favorite book/song?]

Ni xihuan zhongguo cai ma?
[Do you like Chinese food?]
   Ni zui xihuan chi shenme?
   [What is your favorite food?]
   Ni hui zuo zhongguo cai ma? Shi shenme?
   [Can you cook Chinese food? What can you cook?]
   Gainesville de zhongguo cai zenme yang?
   [How about the Chinese food in Gainesville?]
   Ni zui xihuan na yi jia fanguan?
   [Your favorite restaurant here?]
   Li zher yuan ma? zenme zou?
   [Is it far from here? Could you tell me how can I get there?]

Module 4: Travel experiences
Ni xihuan lvyou ma?
[Do you like traveling?]
   Ni zui xihuan de defang shi na? Weishenme?
   [What is your favorite place? Why?]
   Ruguo ni you henduo qian, ni xiang qu na? Weishenme?
   [Where do you want to go if you had a lot of money? Why?]
   Ni jinnian qu guo nali?
   [Where have you been this year?]
      Ni shi gen shui yiqi qu de?
      [With whom did you go?]
      Nimen shi shenme shihou qu de?
      [When did you go?]
Nimen shi zenme qu de?
[How did you go?]
Ni keyi shuo yixia ni juede youyisi de shi ma?
[Can you tell me any interesting thing during you recent travelling?]

Ni quguo zhongguo ma? Ni quguo nali?
[Have you ever been to China? Which city did you go?]
Ni zai na dai le duojiu?
[How long have you been there?]
Ni juede zhongguo he meiguo you shenme buyiyang?
[What do you find different between China and America?]
Zai zhongguo de shihou, ni changchang yigeren chuqu haishi gen pengyou yi qi chuqu?
[When you were in China, did you often go out alone or with your friends?]
Ni milu guo ma? Ni zenmeban?
[Did you get lost? What did you do then?]
Zai zhongguo de shihou, ni juede zui nan de shi shi shenme?
[What is the most difficult thing you think when in China?]
Ni jiangle da xiongmao ma?
[Have you ever seen a Panda?]
Wo tingshuo ruguo ni hua 100 meiyuan, ni jiu keyi bao xiongmao pai zhang zhaopian. Ni zuo le ma? Weishenme?
[I heard if you spent 100 dollars, you can hug the Panda and take a picture. Did you do that? Why/why not?]

Module 5: Campus life
Ni lai UF ji nian le?
[How long have you been here at UF?]
Ni zui xihuan xuexiao nali? Weishenme?
[Where’s your favorite spot on campus? Why?]
Ni xiake yihou zuo shenme?
[What sorts of things do you do after class?]
Ni keyi shuo yixia ni zuotian zuole shenme ma?
[What is a typical day like, like what you did yesterday (in detail)?]

Ni xihuan zuo shenme yundong? Meitian dou zuo ma?
[What exercises do you like to do? Do you do it every day?]

Ni xihuan kan ganlanqiu ma?
[Are you a big fan of football?]
Ni xihuan zajia haishi qu qiuchang kan qiu? He shui yiqi kan?
[Do you prefer to watch football on TV or at the stadium? With whom?]
Gator ying/shu le de shihou, ni hui zuo shenme?
[What are the things you normally do when Gator win/loose?]

Module 6: Languages
Ni neng shuo ji zhong yuyan?
[How many languages can you speak?]
   Ni xuele duo chang shijian de zhongwen?
   [How long have you been learning Chinese?]
   Ni weishenme hui xue zhong wen?
   [Why did you become interested in learning Chinese?]
   Ni juede zhongwen nan ma? Weishenme?
   [Do you think Chinese difficult? Why/why not?]

CLOSING OF THE INTERVIEW
Chinese Cartoon http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xgu8t845rY

Tell a story:
Do more sports and drink enough water.
Chinese Cartoon https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0JjSNkLsH4&app=desktop

Tell a story:
APPENDIX I
CODING SHEET

FG1: The use/non-use of DE
   u = DE is present
   x = DE is absent

FG 2: DE function (optional cases of DE)
   g = genitive marker
   n = nominalization marker
   a = adjective
   o = noun
   v = verb
   p = phrase
   r = relative clause

FG 3: Study Abroad
   s = pre-study abroad
   t = post-study abroad

FG 4: Gender
   f = female
   m = male

FG 5: Chinese Proficiency
   b = beginning level
   i = intermediate / advanced level

FG 6: Attitude/Motivation Test Battery
   1 = very low/little/unfavorable/weak/nervous
   2 = moderately low/little/unfavorable/weak/nervous
   3 = slightly low/little/unfavorable/weak/nervous
   4 = neutral
   5 = slightly high/much/favorable/strong/calm
   6 = moderately high/much/favorable/strong/calm
   7 = very high/much/favorable/strong/calm

FG 7: Willingness to communicate in Chinese
   A = never 0%
   B = almost never 1-22%
   C = occasionally 23-44%
   D = half / half 45-54%
   E = often 55-77%
   F = almost always 78-99%
   G = always 100%
LIST OF REFERENCES


language acquisition and linguistic variation (pp. 177-201). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Yanmin Bao is a native of Zhoushan, China. She received her B.A. in English from Harbin Normal University in 2009. During her four-year undergraduate studies, she was awarded First Class Scholarship every year. In addition, she was awarded Triple-A Outstanding Student and was named the Best Athlete in 2006; in the same year, she was elected vice-president of the students union. In 2007, she was awarded Excellent Student Cadre.

Yanmin entered the graduate program in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Florida (UF) in 2009. She received her M.A. in Linguistics in the fall of 2011. The focus of her thesis was on instructors’ Mandarin-English codeswitching behaviors in Chinese classes in an American university setting. After completion of her M.A. program, Yanmin continued her graduate study in Linguistics at UF. Her research interests lie in the field of sociolinguistics, particularly in language variation, and she was also interested in second language acquisition. During her doctoral program, she presented her studies at professional conferences, as in LAVIS IV & SECOL 82, 2015 ACTFL/CLTA conference, and NWAV 45, and she also received various travel grants from the Department of Linguistics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Graduate Student Council at UF. Additionally, she accelerated her teaching experience not only as a teaching assistant for Beginning Chinese and Intermediate Chinese in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at UF, but also as an adjunct professor of Chinese at Santa Fe College. Yanmin received her Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Florida in 2017. In the fall of 2017, she began a position as an adjunct lecturer of Chinese at the University of Florida.