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### **Rev. of The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context by Vera Regan, Martin Howard, and Isabelle Lemée**

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attention and comprehension in the Japanese foreign language classroom. The ninth chapter describes how the *toiwase* or “general inquiries” made by L2 users lack some of the formulaic sequences most often employed by native speakers, and suggests that such phrases be explicitly taught. Lastly, Ch. 10 is an ethnographic study of language minority education in Japan, which concludes that the traditional notions of “insiders” and “outsiders” are compromising the schooling of contemporary transnationals, such as Brazilian-Japanese, who are not easily characterized by either classification.

The last part examines language pedagogy. Ch. 11 reports an instructional study that encouraged learners to draw on their existing competences as language users; as a result they were able to perform a wider range of discourse functions during role-play assessments. In Ch. 12 the discussion turns to recently emerging CRITICAL approaches to teaching Japanese language and culture, wherein teaching is inevitably political in that it either supports or challenges relevant discourses. Thus, this research compendium is of particular interest to Japanese language educators, as well as sociolinguists and discourse analysts.

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VERA REGAN, MARTIN HOWARD, AND ISABELLE LEMÉE, *The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2009. Pp. x, 169. Pb. \$44.95.

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Study abroad has traditionally been regarded as a significant complement in second language acquisition (SLA). In the past decades, much research has been conducted into linguistic development during a period of residence in the L2 culture. The conclusions of previous research have sometimes been contradictory, perhaps because the empirical data was obtained from small groups of informants. Regan, Howard, and Lemée have revisited this topic with ambitious and well-defined aims—to assess the development of sociolinguistic competence in a large group of Irish university students placed in francophone countries. This book complements former research and, through a very meticulous empirical analysis, it sheds light on the issue of L2 sociolinguistic acquisition.

The book consists of ten chapters. In Chs. 1 and 2, the authors critique the previous research on study abroad and SLA. Their complete and readable synthesis

presents the state of the question: study abroad improves fluency and sociolinguistic and pragmatic awareness, and it increases lexical acquisition and the acquisition of oral and aural skills; by contrast, there is no clear evidence regarding grammatical gains. Ch. 3 gives an overview of this research investigation, providing details about the informants and explaining that the methods of data analysis are within the Variationist Paradigm. Ch. 5 reports on the acquisition of *ne* deletion, a feature of the French language that the informants acquired and used assiduously. Ch. 6 examines the variable use of *nous/on*. After their period of residence abroad, the informants' usage of *nous/on* alternation proved to be considerably below that of native speakers. Because *ne* deletion is an ancient feature of the French language and *nous/on* alteration is a relatively recent one, the authors suggest that "behaviour in L2 speech in relation to the old and new variables is different whatever the reasons" (93). Ch. 7 shows that, after their study abroad, the informants performed // deletion much more often than before, but still much less than native speakers. In Ch. 8, the authors consider the usage of future temporal references, and observe that the informants used the inflected future more often than the periphrastic future. Ch. 9 tackles the intriguing topic of gender in SLA. The data show that advanced learners become aware of gender patterns and reproduce them.

Finally, Ch. 10 recapitulates to offer the main conclusions drawn from this research: "after a year abroad, the L2 speakers approximate L1 variation speech patterns. This approximation is closer in relation to some variables than others, but in general, the speakers are using variation patterns which are significantly more similar to those of native speakers than before they went abroad and more than those of speakers who do not go abroad" (134). The authors prove convincingly that study abroad is advisable to improve L2 sociolinguistic competence.

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JAMES N. STANFORD AND DENNIS R. PRESTON (eds.), *Variation in indigenous minority languages*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2009. Pp. vii, 519. Hb. \$158.

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The aim of this volume is to present an anthology to fill "a significant lacuna in linguistics": quantitative variationist sociolinguistic research of indigenous minority languages. The geographic coverage is broad (each populated continent is represented), as is the linguistic coverage (phonetic, phonological, morphological,