

Development of Interactional Competence: Listener Responses of Long-Term Stay Abroad Chinese L1 Speakers in Australian Universities

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Abstract : The current study investigates the change of listener responses in social conversations of the second language (L2) speakers who are staying abroad with Chinese L1 speakers in Australian universities and how their long-term stay abroad impacted their design for L2 recipient actions. There is a limited amount of empirical work on L2 English listener response acquisition, particularly regarding the influence of long-term stay abroad in English-speaking countries. Little is known whether the development of L2 listener responses and the improvement of interactional competence is affected by the prolonged residency in the target L2 country. Forty-eight participants were recruited, and they participated in the designed speaking task through Computer-Mediated Communication. Results showed that long-term stay abroad Chinese L1 speakers demonstrated an English-like pattern of listener responses in communication. Long-term stay abroad experience had a significant impact on L2 English listener responses production and organization in social conversation. Long-term stay abroad L1 Chinese speakers had an active and productive response in listenership than their non-stay abroad counterparts in terms of frequency and placement in producing listener responses. However, the L2 English listener response production only occurred to be partial in response tokens, such as backchannels and reactive expressions, also in resumptive openers' employment. This study shows that L2 English listener responses could be acquired during a long-term stay abroad in English-speaking countries but showed partial acquisition in collaborative finishes production. In addition, the most prominent finding was that Chinese L1 speakers changed their overall listener responses pattern from L1 Chinese to L2 English. The study reveals specific interactional changes in English L2 listener responses acquisition. It generates pedagogical implications for cross-cultural communication and L2 pragmatics acquisition during a long-term stay abroad.

Keywords : listener responses, stay abroad, interactional competence, L2 pragmatics acquisition

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