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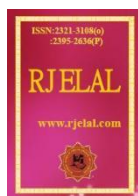
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PRAGMATIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONTEXTS: WHERE STUDY ABROAD RESEARCH WAS, IS AND WILL BE

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Abstract

With a steady increase of publications, L2 pragmatic development in the study abroad (SA) context has been developing well in recent years. This review synthesizes empirical studies based on it, aiming to outline the status quo and tendency of such studies. Specifically, I begin the review by illustrating the main SA study domains in pragmatics and how the SA learning environments are treated in three broad ways. The second part offers an overview of existing literature on both uninstructed and instructed pragmatic development in the SA setting and provides critical insights. I take a closer look at research with regard to how receptive and productive skills are gained by SA learners and the recent exploration of the way to provide effective pragmatic instructions. Findings across these studies are compared and explored for common patterns and inconsistencies that emerge among them. Part three covers research concerned with the impact of multiple major factors related to different pragmatic gains, including the macro-level linguistic input in SA, micro-level individual variations, and SA program features. The review illustrates a broad picture of current research addressing the pragmatic development in a SA context and also outlines possible future extensions of this topic in the end.

Keywords: second language pragmatics, study abroad, pragmatic instruction, factors

1. Introduction

Context plays a vital role in the second language (L2) learning. In recent years, a growing number of language learners involve themselves in language learning in a study abroad (SA) context, a context defined as one that “remains instructional, despite including features of naturalistic second language acquisition” (Coleman 4). A common assumption exists that SA has been examined extensively as a promising venue for learning a

second language. This trend also manifests itself in the area of L2 pragmatics, symbolized by a growing body of recent research investigating the effects of study abroad experience on the development of pragmatic competence.

The popularity of SA research is plausible due to the nature of pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence refers to “one’s knowledge of linguistics, social norms, and customs, as well as one’s ability to use these knowledge bases in a

socially constrained interaction" (Taguchi, 2015, 1). Acquiring this ability and knowledge is inclined to occur in SA where L2 learners have the opportunity to observe and practice contextually appropriate language usage, experience the real-life implications of language behavior, and be exposed to pragmatic variation and diversity in different situations. However, decades of studies on L2 learning in SA reveal that there are significant individual variations in L2 improvements after the SA experience: some students gain substantially, while others may only perceive minor or even no gains in their L2. The difference can be attributed to a number of variables, such as the amount and quality of contact with native speakers, duration of stay, living environment, the density of learner's social networks, and personal traits (e.g., gender, identity, attitude, proficiency). Furthermore, students do not always improve more than their counterparts who remain at home. Therefore, a limited but rising number of studies engaged in exploring the effects of pragmatic instruction on SA students who received before or during SA.

The current paper examines pragmatic development in a second language during a sojourn abroad. It has been organized in the following way. I first provide the background information, encompassing the research content of pragmatic competence as well as the current conceptualization of the SA context. I then turn to the previous studies of both uninstructed and instructed pragmatics in the SA context and the critical insights are followed. Next, I report the intricate factors associated with the learning outcomes. The remainder of this paper is the implications for future research based on the survey of the existing practice of pragmatics in SA, including my discussion of the areas in which the current literature is particularly limited and how I believe the field can expand the scope of research in four major directions.

2. Second Language Pragmatics and SA

2.1 Pragmatics in the SA context

By and large, research in pragmatics includes speech acts, indexical expressions, conversational structure, conversational implicature, presupposition, and politeness expressions.

However, not all of these facets are equally represented in SA research of pragmatics. The notion of pragmatic competence mainly concentrates on speech acts. For instance, how L2 learners employ a variety of modifiers and strategies to perform an apology appropriately. Other aspects of pragmatic ability that attract attention are conversational implicature, humor, pragmatic routines, style, address terms as well as interactional ability, such as turn-taking, topic change, and repair. Furthermore, the academic interests and study of the factors mediating students' learning gains have largely developed in two ways: quantitative research has regarded the factors (e.g. amount of input, length of residence, L2 proficiency) as independent variables which influence outcomes in SA; qualitative studies have focused on the factors such as intensity of contact, identities, attitude, social contact, and socialization about pragmatic norms.

2.2 Study abroad as a context for pragmatic learning

In a narrow sense, study abroad refers to a pre-planned, temporarily educational stay in a country in which the target language is spoken as the first language by the majority of the population. For example, a Chinese student of French engaged in a SA program in French. But in fact, SA students might not be those majoring in language, but instead students of wide majors. In addition, students may stay in a Lingua-Franca setting instead of a target language community context, so they finished their studies in a language that was not the first language of the majority of the community. In this sense, English as a Lingua-Franca context plays an increasingly vital role given the global status of English. Note that an increasing number of university courses are given in English in countries where English is not the first language of the population. Considering the growing student mobility in recent years, SA has become a productive field of research in L2 pragmatics. Therefore, SA has been studied from a range of perspectives on the basis of how SA is perceived and managed. Taguchi's (2016, 127) classification is adopted in the present study. In terms of different treatments of SA, she categorized the studies in three paths: (1) SA serves as a variable. (2) SA is the exposure to language

input, and (3) SA is the setting for situated pragmatic practice.

In the first case, SA is regarded as a categorical variable or a black box. Therefore, such studies are unconcerned with what actually happened during the SA period. The elements of SA like social interaction and cultural experiences are not the key points for researchers' inspection. In this regard, the research mainly focused on two ways. For one thing, studies explored the effects of SA by comparing the pragmatic performance between SA students and those at home. For another, learners are grouped based on different amounts of time students stayed abroad, so length of residence is regarded as a variable. In a word, whether SA or a certain amount of time at abroad is good for pragmatic development may be proven in those studies.

The second group of studies highlights the importance of exposure to pragmatic input in SA. They usually figured out the quantity of language interaction and how it affected pragmatic development. The findings revealed the improvement in the use of pragmatic markers, comprehension speed, and in L2 learners' choice of the appropriate suggestion strategies. By and large, it is shown that the intensity of L2 contact exerts a positive effect on students' pragmatic competence.

The third category of studies concentrates on types of social practice in the SA setting. SA provides a range of situations and L2 learners can communicate with other learners from different backgrounds or local members. More specifically, L2 learners could participate in service encounters, dormitory interactions, the university context, host family interactions, part-time jobs, and conversations with street vendors.

Aside from differences in how scholars conceptualize context in SA, a range of theories in second language acquisition and pragmatics have been employed in SA research. Cognitive-psychological theories regard the acquisition of L2 pragmatics as including intra-individual cognitive processes like input, noticing, proficiency, control of processing and memory. Socially oriented learning theories devoted to inter-individual learning

processes and were widely applied to make sense of pragmatic improvement in SA. Speech act theory is considered as a preponderance of research that studies a certain speech act in isolation. Politeness theory is another one of the most widely applied theories to analyze the impolite or polite speech act behaviors. Language socialization theory highlighted the importance of social contact in the process of acquisition. It posits that when novices step into a new communicative situation, they depend on more knowledgeable people to develop their competence in the cultural and linguistic practices of the community in SA.

3. Review of Pragmatic Studies in SA

3.1 Uninstructed pragmatic development in SA

Overall, the findings on uninstructed pragmatics development demonstrated that SA students could make progress from the early stages of SA but naturalistic learning moved slowly, and that students frequently did not pick up native speakers' norms by the end of the SA course. Both receptive and productive pragmatic skills have been documented in the literature to date, with the studies of the former much fewer than the latter.

3.1.1 SA research on receptive pragmatic skills

The abundance of studies on L2 pragmatic production accounts for a large proportion in developmental pragmatic research. Few studies have focused on how SA mediates L2 learners' development of receptive pragmatic ability (pragmatic perception and comprehension).

The studies of SA effects on L2 learners' receptive pragmatic skills have produced mixed results. For one thing, the findings embraced the role of SA in the comprehension of implicature and of indirect refusals and opinions, the perception of speech act appropriateness, and the recognition of routine formulae. Compared with speech acts and implicature, the apprehension of routine formulae is more susceptible to SA context. The exposure to the target language in a study abroad setting, which is characterized by elements such as the quantity and quality of social contact, the length of stay, and the frequency of participation in situations requiring the use of routine formulae, is likely to boost knowledge

of formulae. For another, findings showed that at-home counterparts might also achieve the same level as the SA learners did in the comprehension accuracy of implicature and in the perception of speech act appropriateness. Additionally, certain features of pragmatics acquisition could occur at a relatively early stage of SA, while some culture-specific or context-dependent aspects might need a longer time to acquire. Due to the different quantity and quality of exposure and the individual preferences in social contact and their motivation to learn L2, the rate and size of improvement may vary from person to person.

Matsumura (167) is one of few studies examining whether the reduction of target language exposure after returning home impacts the SA students' developed pragmatic competence. It's a longitudinal study in which the researcher used a multiple-choice questionnaire six times to assess L2 learners' competence in giving advice. Results indicated that the benefits of SA helped learners maintain their pragmatic development even after returning to their homeland. Notably, students might continue to develop their pragmatic ability even at home by taking full advantage of opportunities to reflect on target social norms.

3.1.2 SA research on productive pragmatic skills

Studies of L2 pragmatics mostly focused on speech acts. Other pragmatic features such as pragmatic markers, interactional resources, speech style, pronouns of address, and humor have also been explored. In this sense, previous studies can be classified in terms of object of inquiry: speech acts and other aspects of pragmatics.

When I focus on the research regarding the request speech act in the SA setting, it reveals several developmental trends. First and foremost, target-like request strategies are more frequently used by L2 learners, which can manifest itself in the use of more direct requests in Spanish and Chinese host communities and more indirect requests in English-speaking contexts. But one exception is Ren's (137) study. Ren observed that L2 learners in China progressively employed conventionally indirect request strategies over time, which revealed the non-target-like change. Second, SA students

tend to favor the use of formulaic routines in requests as they studied longer in target communities. Informed by Language Socialization Theory, Shively (2011, 1818) investigated the US students' development of request speech act in Spanish service encounters. The findings indicated that students positively use more formulaic routines in requests. Third, some research found improved mitigation by using external and internal modification devices.

Other speech acts such as apologies, compliments and compliment responses, refusals, greeting responses, and offers have also been studied. For example, Warga and Schölmlberger (249) reported that French learners in German improved their pragmatic ability in apology in certain aspects (e.g., decreased use of excuses), but retained some inappropriate strategies such as frequent use of apologetic formulae. In a study on greeting responses, Ying and Ren (23) reported that compared with Chinese native speakers, advanced learners of Chinese produced non-target-like greeting responses, despite the fact that their greeting responses were accepted by two native speakers' evaluation.

Moving away from speech acts to other domains of pragmatic production, the studies, especially longitudinal studies, reported that SA had a lot of positive impacts over time and led to an increase in the use of pragmatic markers. For humor, Bell, Skalicky, and Salsbury (72) described how L2 learners acquired humor strategies by engaging in interpersonal conversation with locals there. Moreover, considering address forms, Hassall (33) researched on L2 Indonesian learners, some students, including those with lower proficiency level, became more adept at appropriately indexing social relationships by choosing specific address forms. However, several students finally overgeneralized a single form owing to the lack of specific knowledge.

The last decade has witnessed few but increasing studies exploring learners' development of interactional competence during the course of a sojourn abroad. There are diverse definitions of interactional competence which can be found in the

literature, but analyzing the definition or components in depth is beyond the scope of the present study. Here, it is sufficient to define interactional competence as the one to coordinate our behaviors in order to interact productively. The facilitative role of SA in the development of interactional competence is proved by previous studies. Dings (742) and Shively (2015, 95) analyzed Spanish conversations and found that learners' usage of speaker and listener assessments shifted over time and they also enhanced the syntactic and lexical complexity. SA students in some studies learned new linguistic resources to express agreement and acknowledgment. Dings (750) found that SA students enhanced their capacity to predict an interlocutor's turn and respond in a more appropriately way. Finally, Taguchi (2014, 529) reported that L2 Japanese learners used more incomplete sentences, an appropriate and accepted resource in Japanese dialogues, which showed their development of interactional competence.

3.2 Instructed pragmatics in SA

The effects of formal L2 instruction in SA have received comparatively little attention, with studies mostly concentrating on naturalistic after-school learning in SA. Nevertheless, the absence of pragmatic instructional study in SA tells that pragmatics is frequently underemphasized in the foreign language curriculum in comparison to other areas of L2 learning. Indeed, teaching pragmatics is difficult for both teachers and students because of a limited theoretical basis for developing the curriculum, the dearth of authentic input in teaching resources, and also a lack of reference materials for pragmatic instruction. At the same time, pragmatics instruction in SA has the potential to benefit the students. In this sense, the research focuses on two questions: (1) Is instruction effective in learning pragmatics in SA? (2) How can pragmatic instruction be delivered more effectively?

3.2.1 Is instruction effective in learning pragmatics in SA?

Numerous studies have examined the role of pragmatic instruction in facilitating the improvement of L2 pragmatic proficiency. Henery (316) has investigated how SA learners' receptive

pragmatic skills were developed through instruction. The findings indicated that L2 learners developed the awareness of many aspects of style in French, such as the phonological reduction, address terms, and understood how style indexed identity owing to the instruction of L2 pragmatics. As for productive skills, some researchers focused on pragmatic instruction which involved the pre-departure explicit intervention and assignments that students assumed while abroad. The evidence suggested that SA students gained a lot in their pragmatic performance.

But the research has mixed results regarding whether the instructional benefits can retain for a relatively long time. In terms of English writing skills, Alcón-Soler (70) found that pedagogical intervention played an immediate facilitative role in the usage of mitigation in e-mail requests, but the positive effects were not sustained over time. Similarly, Halenko and Jones (26) examined how pre-departure instruction affected SA students' ability to produce oral requests. The experimental group received the instruction, control group did not. Though the post-tests results revealed that pre-departure instruction had positive effects, the delayed post-tests showed no difference between the experimental and control groups. On the contrary, in Morris's (75) study, SA students retained their development of meal-ordering and direction-giving ability for one year after returning home. Notably, L2 learners received task-based instruction and had computer-assisted practice, communicative practice in the target community. The different conclusions of the above two studies may stem from the following two points: (1) The complexity of target pragmatic features is different. The former is the complex speech act (i.e., request), while the latter is the specific pragmatic expression (e.g. meal-ordering, greetings). So the two groups' memory burdens are different. (2) The instructional approaches are different. Halenko & Jones employed explicit instruction involving pragmatic awareness and communicative practice activities prior to the students' departure, while Morris used a task-based approach that incorporated computer-assisted practice and communicative practice with native speakers.

Therefore, the above two points may explain the conflicting findings of two studies in some way.

3.2.2 How can pragmatic instruction be delivered more effectively in the SA context?

Aside from the issue of teachability, multiple studies focused on how the instruction could better improve the learning of L2 pragmatics. Those studies tried to examine the effects of providing students with tutoring sessions, offering self-access resources on the Web, and integrating pragmatics in classroom instruction. Also, they explored the effects of different treatment methods. For example, Henery (316) focused on the effects of concept-based pragmatic instruction; Winke and Teng (389) described how the task-based tutorial program for SA students in China developed their cross-cultural awareness and pragmatic proficiency.

Shively (2010, 105) developed a comprehensive model for pragmatic instruction before, during, and after SA. During the pre-departure phase, L2 learners are required to develop their pragmatic awareness, and teachers are advised to get learners familiarized with some pragmatic norms in the target communities, and guide them to become independent data-gatherers of pragmatics. Once L2 learners are in SA, they are encouraged to exercise the pragmatic elements in naturalistic after-school interaction when the expert speakers are supposed to give feedback and assistance. In the last phase of the model, former SA learners are assisted to continue to improve and practice the pragmatic skills developed in SA.

3.3 Discussion

Taken together, the studies considering pragmatics development in SA reveal various views and inconsistent findings in the present research: (1) Both receptive and productive pragmatic skills have been studied, albeit the former has received far less attention than the latter. (2) A sizable portion of previous studies concentrated on the production of speech acts. But evidence revealed that certain pragmatic features were learned better in the host environment while others were not. Therefore, whether pragmatic targets are learned better in SA may also depend on their own structures. (3) L2

English makes up a substantial apportion, and other languages should be discussed more in the future.

With regard to instructed pragmatics studies in SA, it's not difficult to find that the first question has a relatively clear answer. Namely, pragmatic instruction is more effective than non-instruction. But as delivered above, pragmatic treatments can produce variant instructional effects, and how pragmatic instruction can be delivered more effectively in SA, i.e., the second question, has not yet been fully investigated. Few empirical studies have been conducted to compare various approaches and instructional activities. If any, researchers did not reach a consensus. Hence, more studies pointing to how to give full play to pragmatic instruction are expected to offer more definitive evidence. Furthermore, the question that how learners could store the acquired pragmatic knowledge for a longer period time also needs to be answered.

4. Influential factors related to pragmatic gains during SA

In theory, SA students immersed in the target community are considered to have a great advantage to acquire the observed pragmatic patterns, giving rise to the enhancement in pragmatic competence. Nevertheless, different or even conflict results in the existing studies suggested that SA is not a static or monolithic concept but a dynamic and all-round construct in which a variety of factors influencing learners' pragmatic development interact with each other. So a large number of studies constantly investigated individual differences. The factors accounting for such variation have been divided into three groups: (1) the macro-level linguistic input in SA, (2) micro-level individual variations, and (3) SA program features. Taking these factors into consideration helps explain the different degrees of progress and then the SA effects.

First, the amount and intensity of L2 input and interaction while abroad are unparalleled. In other words, SA students may engage in L2 exposure with greater quantity and quality. Matsumura (2003, 459) found that the advice-giving and usage in pragmatic routines of speech acts were greatly

influenced by social contact. Some previous studies indicated that the quantity of L2 interaction varied from learner to learner in SA and that the problems associated with pragmatics promoted the development of pragmatic ability. Researchers also found that quality of interaction played a more significant role than the quantity of contact. Those studies examined whom L2 learners spent their time with, how frequently, extensively, and closely they interacted, and in what settings they used L2. For example, Taguchi (2015, 5) investigated four SA students in Japan and highlighted the significance of contacts and also, more importantly, the close relationship in the target context. She indicated that intimate, and stable social relationships were conducive to pragmatic growth.

Nevertheless, the input that SA students obtain is not always optimal for pragmatic development. On the one hand, since the interactions with native speakers are asymmetric or target pragmatic features emerge seldom, students have few opportunities to acquire the features they need to learn. On the other hand, native speakers may also not tend to offer the input with target pragmatic elements to learners, but use teacher talk or foreigner talk. Furthermore, there are also cases in which L2 learners are not provided corrective feedback regarding pragmatics. The status of learners in the local culture can also increase or subtract the input received .

Micro-level learner features are other important factors modifying students' learning experience during SA, resulting in considerable individual variations, such as identity, L2 proficiency, social cultural adaptation, learner status, and subjectivity. For example, Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler (54) explored the effects of three individual differences, namely L2 proficiency, background culture, and attitude toward the target language culture, on the perception and production of pragmatic routines. They found the positive effects of students' background culture and their attitude towards the target language community, and a partial effect of L2 proficiency. The role of proficiency level plays in developing pragmatic ability has generated a lot of concerns in this field. Taguchi et al. (54) observed that learners' pragmatic

development accrued along with their increased proficiency, and changes in L2 proficiency explained 54.1 percent of the pragmatic development. Although most literature reported that learners who benefited from SA were at higher proficiency levels, probably because of processing constraints at lower proficiency levels, many researchers have reported that L2 learners with lower proficiency can also make great pragmatic progress in SA (Hassall 53), particularly when the target pragmatic characters are "formally simple, frequent in input, and high in perceptual salience" (Hassall 57).

SA program features such as length of residence, courses, and living situation can also influence the learning effects. The findings regarding the length of stay are inconsistent. Many studies reported the positive relationship between length of residence and SA students' pragmatic development, that is, the longer they stay abroad, the more progress they would make. But other studies found no relationship between them. Likewise, some studies observed positive outcomes from SA students who stayed abroad for only six to eight weeks. This finding may be explained by Taguchi's (2008, 33) study that learners had more contact hours earlier during SA. Other features of the SA program, such as living arrangements, have shown inconsistent findings, with no obvious advantage of homestay compared with other living situations.

Taken together, all of these factors have been proved to exert a vital but not exclusive influence on pragmatic development. It is not difficult to find that SA students' development in pragmatics is a dynamic and diverse process, which is shaped by the interplay among macro-level input, micro-level individual features, and SA program features. The amount and intensity of exposure depend on the extent to which and the way that L2 learners participate in the interaction and further the social networks. In turn, this factor is linked to how SA students show themselves and how they are perceived by local people as potential communicators, which demonstrates the individual characters at the micro level. At the same time, SA program features, which are connected to the factors such as whether SA students are accompanied by others from home universities,

instead of by themselves, and whether they live with host families or live in dormitories, also influence the quantity and quality of social contact. Therefore, more studies are necessary to conduct to explore the joint effects of those factors.

Aside from the factors mentioned above, there are still many other factors influencing SA students' pragmatic development, such as social networks and pragmatic features. Other aspects which have been ignored are also ready to be studied, which will be elaborated on in the next section.

5. An eye to future research

Existing research has yielded rich findings about the pragmatic competency of SA learners. But the connection between pragmatic development and SA experience in the literature still remains shaky, which needs more in-depth analysis of the construct of SA and its link with students and the configuration of pragmatic ability. The review of the existing studies has identified some topics for future investigation: (1) more influential factors, (2) data collection methods, (3) investigation in the Lingua-Franca environment, and (4) attrition after returning from the SA programs.

The first area that can be expanded upon in future study is to explore more variables influencing learning outcomes in SA. Two potential factors which received much attention recently are social networks and levels of stress. A social network is a group of people who are linked to one another through personal ties or common interests. Milroy (3) was the first one to adopt the notion of social networks into sociolinguistic research. Recent literature indicated that social network dispersion, the number of social groups in a person's relationship network, was the effective indicator of L2 development. Social network analysis could be used to interpret the SA pragmatic practice. Study Abroad Social Interaction Questionnaire serves as a tool to record L2 learners' social networks. It asks L2 learners to identify the density of contacts, the intimacy between interlocutors, and the types of groups they belong to. When it comes to levels of stress in this area, the study of Dewey, Belnap, and Steffen (23) served as the starting point. In their

study, levels of stress were measured by (hair or saliva) cortisol levels, and moreover, they also advocated for a mixed-methods approach to measuring stress, including both biodata and self-reports on stress. Those measures can be employed to examine the possible effects of stress on the development of pragmatic competence, which may be an understudied but important potential next frontier.

Various data collection tools are needed in future studies. Elicited data are more often collected than natural data in the existing studies. Written or oral discourse completion tasks, role play, and comprehension questionnaires have long been used to elicit data in the present pragmatic study and will continue to be useful ways to collect vast amounts of data. But the authenticity of the data has long been criticized and future research is supposed to collect authentic data whenever possible. In this sense, corpus linguistics provides greater scope for the study of pragmatic competence. A corpus is designed to collect authentic data of specific genres or registers, rather than to elicit a particular feature like speech acts. Based on L2 corpus pragmatics, multiple studies compared learners' language use with native speakers. However, the use of corpus in pragmatics are limited and scholars have identified two reasons accounting for it. First, the pragmatic features that can be studied with corpus is limited. Discourse markers and pragmatic routines are the most frequent target features in corpus studies. Second, due to the nature of form-function non-equivalence (the same form might have distinct meanings in different situations), identifying the speech act is difficult. In addition, a new context for sampling naturally-occurring data is social media or social software, such as WeChat, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Researchers could study how L2 learners use language in computer-mediated settings.

Intercultural pragmatics and Lingua-Franca communication are also promising research fields in SA research. In most existing studies, target language interaction occurred between L2 learners and native speakers or local people. But considering globalization, the target language is more frequently used among multilingual or multicultural speakers. Taguchi (2015, 1) focused on a Chinese student's

interactional competence in L2 Japanese. She found that the student made impressive progress during a semester's abroad living, and that this pragmatic development was due in a large part to her regular participation in the self-organized multicultural discussion in which most students came from various cultural backgrounds. This group of SA students frequently gathered and discussed the recent hot topic in their common language, Japanese. Each student has the opportunity to express their ideas from the perspective of their own culture. The findings showed the beneficial function of multilingual interaction for L2 pragmatic development, and that the target language use can not only occur in the native speaker community, but also in intercultural communication among SA students. Therefore, future studies in Lingua-Franca will enable us to move to a new understanding of the SA context—the SA program is the space for multicultural interaction.

Few previous studies focused on the issue that whether their L2 gains can be maintained, and whether or when the attrition occurred after learners return from SA programs. Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker's (1) study followed a pre-post test research design, and the results showed that short-term SA students sustained high levels of complimenting competence four months after returning home. Matsumura (2007, 188) reached a similar conclusion. Future research can add delayed post-test or conduct particular studies to examine the long-term effects of SA.

6. Conclusion

The study of L2 learners' pragmatic development in the SA context is of great value for exploring the mysteries of human language use and for the development of study abroad policies and program arrangements. The present paper reviews the research status of L2 learners' pragmatic development in the SA context in terms of uninstructed pragmatic development, the effectiveness of instructional interventions, and the influencing factors. The existing literature reveals that learners could develop their pragmatic competence through living in the target language countries, but the outcomes are mediated by the

interplay of various factors. Future research could expand the studies from four perspectives: more influential factors, data collection methods, intercultural pragmatics and Lingua-Franca communication, and attrition research after returning from SA programs.

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