

Study Abroad, Participation and Turn Taking: A Case Study

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1. Introduction

In the applied linguistic literature in North America, study abroad (SA) is defined as a learning environment in which students can attend formal classes and have opportunities to use L2 outside classroom, as opposed to formal learning at home (AH) or in intensive domestic immersion environments (IM) (e.g. Collentine and Freed, 2004; Block, 2007).

Over the past decade, the number of students studying abroad in non-English speaking countries has continued to increase. China recently became the fifth leading SA destination for US based college students (Open Doors, 2009). Such growth notwithstanding, there is a scarce of studies about sojourners' L2 learning experience in China (Duff et al., forthcoming). This longitudinal case study thus aims at understanding the sojourn experience in today's China, and its impact on language use.

2. Literature Review

2.1. SA and L2 Learning Outcomes

Looking beyond China, researchers have investigated linguistic outcomes of a sojourn overseas through a variety of research methods. Based on these studies, we can conclude: 1) Through pre and post program measurements, SA students gain in a range of linguistic areas, most notably in oral fluency and communicative areas, as well as in grammar, lexical development and possibly phonology (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Collentine, 2004; Dewey, 2008; Diaz-Campos, 2004; Freed, 1995; Ife, Vives & Meara, 2000; Milton & Meara, 1995; Towell et al., 1996; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004, Lafford, 1995; 2004). 2) In comparison with the AH group, SA students develop better ability in their oral performance management, including fluid speech (Freed, 1995; Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) and effective use of communicative strategies (Lafford, 1995; 2004). Sociolinguistics and pragmatics are also areas of improvements among SA students (Baron, 2006; Bataller, 2010; Regan, 1998; Regan, Howard, & Lemée, 2009). 3) However, within the areas that SA students make more gains, individual differences are often greater in the SA group than the AH group (e.g. DeKeyser, 1986). These differences can be related to academic, programmatic, and individual traits (Huebner, 1998). Some individual traits that correlate with the outcome variations include linguistic (e.g. onset L2 level; knowledge of other languages) (Brecht, Davidson & Ginsberg, 1995; Davidson, 2010; DeKeyser, 2010) and extra-linguistic factors (e.g. gender; personality) (Brecht et al., 1995; DeKeyser, 1991). 4) Despite the persistent assumption that the amount and frequency of contact that students have with native speakers (NS) will increase their language gains (e.g. Miller & Ginsberg, 1995), no direct or linear correlation between amount of L2 contact and improved fluency has been documented (Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004).

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These findings lead researchers to conclude that SA is a complex L2 learning experience and should not be treated as a “unitary variable” (Kinginger, 2008, p. 3). To further our knowledge of L2 learning during SA, researchers suggest incorporating systematic qualitative research methods (e.g. Rees & Klapper, 2008) as one way to dig deeper into *the nature of the interactions* and *the quality of the experiences* with respect to the language gains (Freed, Segalowitz & Dewey, 2004, p. 298).

2.2. *Interactions with NS*

Concurring with the increased individual differences observed in quantitative studies, qualitative case studies have also documented divergent learning outcomes within a cohort of sojourners (Isabelli-Garcia, 2006; Kinginger, 2008; Pellegrino, 2005; Wilkinson, 1998). Through employing qualitative methods (e.g. interviews and journals), these studies focus on SA participants’ experiences with native speakers (NS) over their time abroad. The findings suggest that students’ experiences may vary greatly, and this may affect students’ dispositions towards their L2 (Isabelli-Garcia, 1996; Wilkinson, 1998), their perceptions of self (Pellegrino, 2005; Jackson, 2008), and their interpretation of SA (e.g. a tourist event versus a learning opportunity) (Kinginger, 2008).

Other case studies have documented one single student’s sojourn experience (Bacon, 2002; Kinginger, 2004; Douglass, 2005; Talburt & Stewart, 1999). In these studies, the participants were often highly motivated learners at the beginning of SA. As they attempted to distance themselves from their English-speaking peers, these students also experienced initial exclusion from the host communities (Douglass, 2005; Kinginger, 2004), and some of them resisted certain gendered performance (Bacon, 2002; Talburt & Stewart, 1999). While some studies reported their participants becoming more critical of the local norms in the SA destination (Douglass, 2005; Talburt & Stewart, 1999), cases in other studies successfully gained access to the L2 communities and became more committed to the learning of L2 (Bacon, 2002; Kinginger, 2004).

To explain this phenomenon, researchers adopt Lave and Wenger’s (1991) *community of practice* (CoP) theory and suggest that SA is a typical learning situation described in CoP, i.e., newcomers (learners) participate in social activities with old timers (NS), and these newcomers need to negotiate legitimacy to participate in these activities (Block, 2007; Kinginger, 2009). However, while CoP postulates that knowledge and skills, including language, are byproducts of learners’ changing participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), many qualitative studies only described sojourners’ experiences of gaining access to the host communities without addressing how these experiences may impact their language learning (Kinginger, 2009, p.216). Therefore, to understand Chinese L2 learner’s SA experience and the L2 development, this study attempts to combine the analysis of the SA experience and students’ L2 use in conversations.

2.3. *Discursive Patterns of Interactions*

In order to understand students’ language learning through interacting with NS, SA researchers have looked at recordings of students’ conversations with NS during their sojourns overseas (Cook, 2006; Dings, 2007; DuFon, 2006; Iino, 2006; Ishita, 2009; Shively, 2008; Wilkinson, 2002). They drew upon discourse or conversation analysis methods and analyzed students’ language use with NS. Through analyzing elements such as turn taking, speech acts and topic management, researchers have focused on the interactional patterns between L2 learners and NS (Cook, 2006; DuFon, 2006; Iino, 2006; Wilkinson, 2002) and the development of these patterns over time (Dings, 2007; Ishita, 2009; Shively, 2008). Some observations suggest that students transfer classroom discursive practices to their informal interactions (Wilkinson, 2002), NS’s show caretaking acts (Iino, 2006), and students are viewed as foreigners in the host communities (Cook, 2006; DuFon, 2006).

In terms of the development of the patterns, Dings (2007), Shively (2008) and Ishita (2009) are three studies that investigated students’ trajectories over time. Shively (2008) analyzed seven students’ use of linguistic forms to request service in Spain over one semester (Shively, 2010). Dings (2007) and Ishita (2009) each investigated one participant’s use of linguistic and pragmatic resources in dyadic conversations with the same NS, i.e., *ne* for alignment in Japanese (Ishita, 2009), and turn selection and topic management in Spanish (Dings, 2007). These studies found that the SA students were able to

adopt more linguistic and interactional resources to achieve an increasing variety of functions over time.

However, with the exception of Shively (2008), many studies only looked at excerpts of conversations without sufficient description of the participants' SA experience. Given the complexity of SA and the differences among individuals, it becomes difficult to interpret the findings. In addition, the interactional patterns are socially and culturally embedded (Young, 2002). Since these observations came exclusively from Japanese, Spanish, and French L2 learners, to what extent the results can be applied to learners of other languages remains unknown. These questions motivated the current case study to investigate one sojourner's experience in China and their language use as well over the course of seven months. Turn taking became one of the foci of this study because it is not only related to learners' participation in CoP (e.g. Young, 2008), but also is ideal for a case study (Duff, 2008).

3. Research Questions

This study aims at documenting the dual process of a sojourner's experience with NS in China and his development of turn taking pattern in conversations. The research questions are:

1. How did the participant's experience of interacting with NS beyond classroom settings evolve over his sojourn?
2. How did his turn taking in dyadic conversations with the same NS change over his time in China?

4. Methodology

4.1. The Context: SA in Urban China

Most SA programs in China are located in cities. While SA students are often encouraged to interact with the local Chinese peers, young urban Chinese tend to view "nationality" as one of the most salient identities and differentiate people by their nationalities (Zhang & Kulich, 2008).

Additionally, the linguistic situation in China is notoriously complicated, with different varieties of Chinese and other ethnic languages being used. As China is an increasingly central participant in today's globalization, the linguistic situation becomes further complicated with increased use of English and varieties of non-standard Mandarin in urban China (Zhang, 2005; 2008).

4.2. The SA Program

The SA program the participant was enrolled in was a sheltered program catering exclusively to US based college students. It was located in a provincial capital city in eastern China and hosted by a national university that enrolled students from across China. The local residents typically spoke a southern variety of Mandarin (i.e., Lower Yangtze Mandarin), which was somewhat mutually comprehensible with standard Mandarin (*Putonghua*). Within the hosting university, *Putonghua* was the *lingua franca* as well as the official variety. English was a requirement for all of its undergraduate and graduate students.

There were two academic tracks in the SA program. The first was the intensive language track. Its curriculum included four hours of Mandarin instruction every weekday and one 15-minute one-on-one language tutorial each week. Students on this track were required to speak Chinese only from 8am to 4pm. The other track was the language and culture program, which offered courses taught in English as well as Mandarin instruction with no prerequisites for students' Chinese proficiencies. Students of both tracks took classes in the same building, and lived in the same dormitory.

4.3. The Participant: Bill¹

The participant, Bill, was a 20-year-old male Caucasian student from a liberal arts college in

¹ All place and person names are pseudonyms to protect the participant's confidentiality.

suburban Ohio. He studied abroad in China for the fall semester of 2009. Prior to that, he completed four semesters of Mandarin in his home college from 2007 to 2009, and nine weeks of domestic immersion (IM) in a northeastern American college (referred to as XX college below) in summer of 2009.

Born and raised in a working class family in the downtown area of a small city in North Carolina, Bill did not have any international travel experience prior to his sojourn in China. He received scholarships for both his IM and SA, without which he would have had difficulty affording these programs. His family held high expectations for his academic success. Bill also described himself as a competitive student with high demands for himself.

Bill was a highly motivated Mandarin L2 learner. Majoring in sociology, he was critical of many problems Western modernity had created. He became interested in learning Chinese because he hoped the Chinese language and culture would provide an alternative that would “help me think” (帮我想). Bill hoped himself to “become a Chinese” (变成一个中国人) through using the language while in China.

In the SA program, Bill was on the language intensive track. Bill opted for living with a Chinese roommate in the international students’ dormitory. His roommate was a graduate student from the hosting university, who (according to Bill) seemed more interested in practicing English with him than helping him to learn Chinese.

4.4. The Research Relationship

I met Bill while I was teaching at the IM program at XX college. During my time there, I announced the plan for a case study about Chinese L2 learners’ experience in different learning environments to the students who intended to study abroad. Three students of mine consented to participate. Only Bill completed all interviews and questionnaires. Thus he became the single case of this longitudinal study.

During the IM program, I attended extracurricular activities with the students routinely (hiking, swimming and social gatherings) in addition to living and dining with them. As a result, I had frequent and extended informal conversations with Bill in Mandarin. Over the course of this study, I encouraged him to use Mandarin with me and offered him linguistic assistance. Being an ESL speaker and a Chinese student studying abroad in the US, I also shared with him my own experience of language learning and being overseas. Through these activities, I was able to establish some rapport with Bill that was necessary to this qualitative inquiry (Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, & Richrdson, 1992). However, my role as a Chinese NS and a former language teacher may still have exerted some power over him. I also acknowledge that, due to my own identity of being a researcher and a language teacher, I could have been more attentive, facilitative and corrective in the conversations compared to other speakers of Mandarin that Bill may have encountered.

4.5. Data Collection

Data collection started in July 2009 (one month before Bill’s sojourn) and ended in January 2010 (one month after his return). During these seven months, I audio-recorded five conversations with Bill in Mandarin, respectively in July, September, October, November, and January. August and December were skipped because he needed to prepare for his trips to and from China.

The first conversation took place in a quiet room. The rest were conducted through Skype. The conversations included two parts: 1) semi-structured interviews about his interactions with NS, and 2) casual conversation between Bill and me (mostly about his experience of learning and using Mandarin). The first and last conversations were each approximately 60 minutes in length because they contained more questions in the semi-structured interview part. The rest three each lasted about 30 minutes. Since Bill and I already had frequent casual conversations on similar topics in Mandarin prior to the study, these audio recordings were simulative of Bill’s spontaneous conversations with me in informal settings.

In addition to interviews, Bill also kept a journal about his experience. He consistently wrote in

Chinese. However, he stopped journaling three weeks after his arrival in China. The entries he had written were included in the analysis. To compensate for his missing entries, we had one additional semi-structured interview in mid November. This interview was used exclusively for the analysis of his experience, and was not included in the discourse analysis of his turn taking.

Bill also completed fine tuned versions of the pre and post *Language Contact Profile* (LCP) (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004), a questionnaire about SA students' time spent on different speaking tasks. Some questions were adjusted to reflect Bill's experience in China. The LCP's were administered to him prior to his departure and at the end of his time in China.

5. Analysis

To understand Bill's experience with NS, his semi-structured interviews and journal entries were analyzed in a recursive and triangulated fashion, as suggested by previous literature on case study methodology (Creswell, 1998; Duff 2008; Maxwell, 2005; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). They were thematically coded using his own language, and were then triangulated with each other as well as with his LCP. In addition, to further ensure the validity, the descriptions were sent to the participant for a "member check" (Maxwell, 2005).

In the analysis of Bill's turn taking, a continuous five-minute sample was selected from the casual conversations each month, and was transcribed into text. When selecting these samples, the researcher avoided the beginning and final ten minutes of each conversation. In addition, the parts that contained unexpected interruptions (e.g. phone calls, Internet breakdowns) were also excluded.

The unit of analysis was Bill's turn selection, focusing on two aspects: 1) selection of the current turn (whether he was selected by the other speaker or self selected), and 2) next turn allocation (whether or not he allocated turns to the other speaker at the end of his turn) (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). Within next turn allocation, requests for comprehension checks and repairs were coded separately (as "repair") considering the nature of these conversations (L2 learner with a former teacher). Bill's turns were coded into four types with regard to the two aspects: a) other selected b) self selected c) turn allocations for repairs and d) other turn allocations. Total instances of each type in the transcriptions were calculated and the numbers were compared across each month's samples.

After this initial quantitative analysis, representative excerpts were further selected from the 5-minute samples and detailed microanalyses were conducted on these excerpts using discourse analysis methods with a focus on his turn selection (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Young, 2008).

6. Findings

6.1. *The Evolution of Bill's Experience*

In his LCPs, Bill reported less time speaking Chinese during his SA in China (13.5 hours per week) than his IM in US (24.5 hours per week). However, his interlocutors during IM were limited to the instructors and classmates, while in China he reported a variety of Chinese speaking encounters. His most frequent interlocutors in China were strangers and local friends, followed by service personnel and instructors.

These results were consistent with the experience reported in the journal entries and interviews. Below are the themes that emerged from each month's data.

6.1.1. *Before SA: "Teachers ask me questions."*

Bill's journal before SA frequently mentioned interactions with teachers, such as his conversations with them over meals and during office hours. He described "having teachers ask me questions" as an ideal way of practicing Chinese:

- [1] 我去老师的办公室小时。[...]现在我觉得比较好的方法是老师问我问题，我说话。
I go to teacher's office hours. [...] Now I feel a better way is to have teachers ask me questions, I talk. (Journal, 07/20/09)

Through these interactions, he established personal attachment to the instructors, and “to exceed their expectations” became part of his motivation to study the language:

- [2] 我要超越我的老师的希望，我要使他们感到自豪。我希望我能。
I will exceed my teachers' expectations, I will make them proud. I hope I can. (Journal, 07/05/09)

In summary, Bill's experience with NS in Mandarin before his sojourn was primarily with language teachers, and his relationship with the teachers in return motivated him to study the language.

6.1.2. September: “Hard to blend in.”

After Bill's arrival in China, he attempted to maintain his frequent interactions with the instructors. However, his teachers were only available two days a week outside class, and did not live with the students. Meanwhile, Bill's cohorts used English almost exclusively despite their language pledge. This further motivated Bill to interact with the local NS. However, being a Caucasian American, Bill found himself visibly marked and excluded from the local Chinese, and he could not “blend in”:

- [3] 我走路的时候，很多人看我。我去一个地方，我的服务比别人不一样[...]我不喜欢不能 blend in。
When I walk, many people look at me. I go to a place, my service was different than others [...] I don't like not being able to blend in. (Interview, 09/17/09)

Bill's limited knowledge about Chinese conversations beyond teacher student talk added difficulty to his interactions with other NS. Not knowing how to initiate conversations with strangers, Bill directly borrowed English discursive norms (i.e. greeting), only to find that it was not *a real Chinese custom*:

- [4] 我散步的时候我常常说“你好”我快发现了这是真的不是中国的习俗。我以为我可以让中国人接受我，真的难。
When I walk I often say “hello” I soon discovered this is not a real Chinese custom. I thought I could let the Chinese people accept me. Really hard. (Journal, 09/02/09)

When the local Chinese did talk to him, however, Bill found that in China, often times Chinese speakers only wanted to practice English with him, including his Chinese roommate:

- [5] 我跟很多中国人说的时候，他们说英文。
When I speak to many Chinese, they speak English. (Interview, 09/17/10)

6.1.3. October: “I look for people I can talk to.”

In October, Bill continued to distance himself from his cohorts because they “like speaking English”. He also reported some successful interactions with the local NS in Chinese. Instead of merely saying “hello” to strangers on the street, Bill learned to look for spaces where he could engage himself in social events with the locals, such as playing sports and going to the local restaurants without his cohorts:

- [6] 我常常走路，看人我可以跟他们说话。我去打篮球的地方，我打篮球，我跟那个人说话。我去饭馆的时候，有的时候我去我自己去。
I often walk, look for people I can talk to. I go to the basketball place, I play basketball, I talk to that person. When I go to restaurants, sometimes I go by myself. (Interview, 10/01/09)

These conversations shared a similar pattern: starting with NS' questions about Bill's experience as a foreigner in China, and followed by discussions about other topics:

- [7] 每次聊天，他们问我，你从哪儿来的，你在中国多久，你学什么。然后我们的讨论有别的题目。

Every conversation, they ask me, where are you from, how long are you going to be in China, what do you study. Then our discussions have other topics. (Interview, 10/01/09)

Bill also started a part-time English L2 teaching job at a local community college. Through teaching English, he discovered opportunities to speak Chinese with NS spontaneously:

- [8] 大多数的时间说中文让我很紧张。可是在这个英文课，说中文让我觉得最自然。

Most time speaking Chinese makes me nervous. But in this English class, speaking Chinese makes me feel most natural. (Interview, 10/01/09).

6.1.4. November: "I said a lot."

In November, Bill further isolated himself from his American peers, and engaged in more interactions with the locals. During his program's field trip to Lijiang, a tourist destination in southwest China, many of his peers hopped to bars while Bill walked around on the streets alone and eavesdropped the locals' conversations in Chinese:

- [9] 别的人去酒吧，可是我很喜欢只走路，做这做那。我听人。

Other people went to bars, but I like just walking, doing things. I listened to people. (Interview, 11/05/09)

Through such eavesdropping, Bill was able to gain contextual information and find opportunities to participate in the conversations on the street as a *Chinese-speaking foreigner*:

- [10] 一次这个谈恋爱的人，他们说，丽江有很多的外国人！我在他们旁边，开始说话。我说，对，为什么这么多的外国人？应该只有我！我不要看别的外国人。他们应该离开。我说很多。

Once this couple, they said, Lijiang has a lot of foreigners! I was next to them, started talking. I said, right, why so many foreigners? Should be just me! I don't want to see other foreigners. They should leave. I said a lot. (Interview, 11/05/09)

Bill also reported extended interactions in Mandarin with his Chinese roommate and other students in his dormitory. He had a three-hour long conversation with his roommate about a range of social issues in China and America, such as teen pregnancy, drug abuse, education, and dating:

- [11] 我开始说话的时候是7点钟，现在是十点，[...]我骗他，我告诉他我已经生了一个孩子。我们很多时间说，聊天我的孩子。还有，我们聊天抽大麻，如果他会不会来美国，er，去美国。我谈论uh，中国的数学，美国的数学，男人见女人的不同，为什么男人不可以喜欢女人给他们花。

When I started speaking it was 7 o'clock. Now it's 10. [...] I lied to him. I told him I already had a baby. We [*sic*: spent] much of the time saying, talking about my kid. Also, we talked about smoking marijuana, if he would come to the US, er, go to the US. I also discussed about uh, math in China, math in the US, differences of men meeting women, why men cannot like women giving them flowers. (Additional interview, 11/25/09)

6.1.5. After SA: “A foreigner interested in their language.”

In January’s interview, Bill summarized a phenomenon he observed from his interactions with the NS in China, i.e., the tendency of differentiating *waiyuoren* (foreigners) from the Chinese NS, and talking differently depending on the interlocutors’ national and racial identities.

- [12] 他们对中国人有一种的规则，可是对外国人有别的规则，这个可以改变。如果是一个白人，一个黑人，或者是一个日本人。
They have a type of rules for the Chinese, but other rules for foreigners. This may change, if it’s a white person, a black person, or a Japanese. (Interview, 01/25/10)

After his return to US, Bill sought for opportunities to interact with Chinese NS. He went to the Chinese grocery store in his hometown, and met with the international students from China in his college:

- [13] 在我的老家，我真的积极，找中国人。我去一个中国的超市，我跟中国人说话。
In my hometown, I really actively, look for Chinese. I went to a Chinese grocery store, I spoke with the Chinese. (Interview, 01/25/10)

- [14] 这个星期我也认识了很多一年级的中国人。十四五五个。
This week I also met many freshmen Chinese people. Fourteen or fifteen. (Interview, 01/25/10)

Using his knowledge about the “Chinese” way of interacting with people based on nationalities, he identified himself as “a foreigner interested in the Chinese language and culture”, and found people “willing” to help with his Chinese:

- [15] 他们觉得如果我可以讲中文，是很特别，是一部分她们的文化[...]一个外国人对她们的语言和她们的文化有那么多兴趣。[...]所以他们很愿意跟我练习中文。
They think if I can speak Chinese, it’s very special. It’s a part of their culture. [...] A foreigner has so many interests in their language and culture. [...] So they are very willing to practice Chinese with me. (Interview, 01/25/10)

6.2. The Trajectory of Bill’s Turn Taking

Bill’s turn taking pattern in the 5 minute conversation samples also developed over time (Table 1).

Table 1
Bill’s Turn-taking in Monthly 5-min Samples

	Current Turn Selection			Next Turn Allocation		
	Other	Self	Ratio	Repair	Non Rep	Ratio
July	7	6	1.17	9	0	-----
September	16	5	3.20	0	2	0.00
October	8	17	0.47	2	6	0.33
November	6	16	0.38	3	4	0.75
January	4	16	0.25	1	5	0.20

Note: “Other” = other selected; “Self” = self selected; “Repair” = Bill’s turn allocation for linguistic repairs; “Non Rep” = Bill’s turn allocation other than repairs.

As demonstrated in the table above, Bill’s initial turns were distributed almost equally between other selected and self selected, and all instances of his turn allocation fell under linguistic repairs. In September, his turns were mostly other selected, and he had very few instances of turn allocation. In October, Bill had more self selected turns than other selected ones, and more turn allocations for non

repair purposes than for repairs. This pattern remained in November and January. In addition, as the ratios indicate, the portion of Bill's self selected turns increased over time while other selected turns decreased. The portion of his turn allocations for purposes other than repairs, though fluctuating, also increased overall while those for repairs decreased.

Below are more detailed microanalyses of Bill's turn taking in the excerpts from the conversations between him (BL) and me (WD).

6.2.1. Before SA: Comprehension requests

The first excerpt is from July's interview, when Bill was still studying at the IM program. At this point in the conversation, he was describing other students' behaviors in his Chinese class:

Excerpt 1: Classmates in his home college (July, 07/19/2009, 10:00.00-15:00.00)

BL: ta (.) ta (.) ta yao hm (1.0) kan qilai uh wo:: kan qilai buhao, ta:: (.)
he, he, he wants to look, me to look bad, he,
ni zhidao wode yisi?
you know my meaning?

-> WD: hm

BL: ta:: shi yige (.) laoshi de::
he is a, teacher's...

-> WD: pet ((in English))

BL: dui
yes

BL: ta shi yige:: ta xiang ta zhidao::: eh (0.3) ta xiang ta shenme (0.3)
he is a he thinks he knows- he thinks he everything
 dou ta zhidao:: (.) **ni zhidao wode yisi?**
all he knows, you know my meaning?

-> WD: wo dongle.
I see.

BL: hm.

In this excerpt, Bill allocated three turns to me. The first two were of the same comprehension check question (*ni zhidao wo de yisi*, "you know my meaning"). Before both instances Bill was saying something and paused shortly (*ta::, zhidao::*). Then he lost his floor as he needed comprehension checks. The third time was when Bill stretched the last syllable of his sentence (*laoshi de::*) to signal that I should complete his turn for him. From this excerpt, one can conclude some characteristics of Bill's initial turn taking strategies, including frequent comprehension checks, and expectation of and reliance on the other speaker to complete his turns.

6.2.2. September: Question-answer pairs

The second excerpt is from Bill's interview in September. He was talking about his use of English in writing and how that helped his homesickness while he was in China.

Excerpt 2: Writing English stories (September, 09/17/2009, 10:00.00-15:00.00)

WD: ni:: ni xie (.) ni yong YINGwen xie ni de riji ma?
You, you write, you use English [to]write your journal?

-> BL: **bushi.**
No.

WD: oh (.) jiushi xie ni:: nide gushi?
Oh, just write you:: your stories?

-> BL: **dui.**
Yes.

(0.9)

WD: hao (.) hao (.) dui (.) hen nan (.) hen nan (.) zhende hen nan. dui.
okay okay yes very difficult very difficult, truly difficult. Yes.

(0.5)

WD: zai zhongguo xiguan ma?
in China [are you] used to?

-> BL: uh:: (0.7) you de xiguan (.) you de bu xiguan.
uh, some things [I am] used to, some things [I am] not used to.

WD: piru shuo?
for example?

As the arrows indicate, all of Bill's turns in excerpt 2 were other selected. He neither self nominated nor allocated turns to me. Most of the turn constructions were pairs consisting of my question and Bill's simple answers, such as *dui* ("yes") and *bushi* ("no"). In addition, there were two long pauses in this excerpt. Both times I nominated myself to fill the gap and resume the conversation.

6.2.3. October: Allocating turns to the other speaker.

Excerpt 3 is from the interview in October. Bill was describing two people he met in China and asking me whether or not I knew them because they attended XX college before.

Excerpt 3: New encounters in China. (October. 10/01/2009. 17:00.0-22:00.0)

BL: OH ni renshi [le yige::?
oh you knew a

WD: [ni shuo
you say

-> BL: ah suanle.
ah never mind.

WD: ni shuo, shenme?
you say what?

-> BL: uh suanle, wo wangle ta:: yige lou li (.) yige wu qian?
uh never mind, I forgot he:: one Lou Li, one Wu Qian?

BL: tamen:: (0.8) eh (0.4) hou- huozhe bushi (0.4) tamen:: qiannian::
they, after or not- they:: the year before
lai XX?
came to XX?

- > WD: (1.3) ((thinking))
- BL: or ((in English)) *qu mingde?*
went to XX?
- > WD: (2.7) ((thinking))
- BL: **suanle suanle.**
never mind never mind.
- > WD: *wo bu renshi.*
I don't know [them].
- BL: *hao.*
okay.
- WD: *hm (.) duibuqi.*
hm. sorry.
- BL: *suoyi nide yanjiu hao bu hao?*
so your research is going well?

In the excerpt above, Bill allocated three turns to me by asking me questions. His questions were no longer aimed at comprehension checks or linguistic assistance. Instead, he utilized his social experience to construct his first turn (*ni renshi le yige*, “did you know a”) and initiated a new topic. However, Bill did not complete the question in this turn and lost his floor. He regained his turn after being nominated by me (*ni shuo*, “you say”), and then started describing the encounters. After I closed the topic (*duibuqi*, “sorry”), Bill self nominated and used the immediate context (the interview and my research) to construct another turn with a question. In so doing, he allocated another turn to me and initiated a new topic. In addition, when I paused after his questions and left gaps in the excerpt, Bill nominated himself to fill the gap (*suanle*, “never mind”).

6.2.4. November: Frequent self-nominations.

Excerpt 4 is from November’s conversation, in which Bill and I were talking about how he was adjusting to his life in China.

Excerpt 4: Eating in China. (November, 11/05/2009, 10:00.0-15:00.0)

- WD: *henduo meiguoren daole zhongguo dou kaishi chi maidanglao.*
many Americans came to China [they] all started eating McDonald's.
- BL: *DUI. haiyou biede qiguai de shi:: zai meiguo wo zhende bu xihuan tang (.)*
right. and another strange thing, in America I really don't like sugar,
wo ZHENDE bu xihuan (.) uh:: wo zai:: wanfan de shihou
I really don't like [it]. I am at dinner time
ruguo you dessert ((in English))
if there is dessert
- WD: *uh huh*
- BL: *uh wo shuo wo buyao:: gei wo gengduo [ROU::*
uh I say I don't want give me more meat

- WD: [(laugh)]
- BL: gei wo gengduo PASTA ((in English))
give me more pasta
- WD: dui
right
- BL: keshi zai zhongguo (.) wo chi:: wo chi henduo de tang (.)
but in China, I eat I eat lots of sugar,
wo bu zhidao weishenme.
I don't know why.

In this excerpt, all of Bill's four turns were self-nominated. My first turn was a statement and does not explicitly allocate the next turn. Bill self-nominated to speak and showed alignment with me (*dui*, "yes"). He then expanded his turn with his own experience, making it a long turn with no pauses longer than 0.4 seconds. He ended this expansive turn by pausing briefly after he switched to English (*dessert*). In another similar turn he also ended after an English word (*pasta*). However, instead of using confirmation check questions, Bill only allowed time for me to respond briefly and resumed his turns immediately.

6.2.5. January: Extended and complete turns.

Excerpt 5 is from the conversation in January, approximately one month after his return to the United States. He was explaining to me how listening Chinese spoken with a Japanese accent helped him learn Chinese pronunciation.

Excerpt 5: Chinese L2 learners of Japanese. (January, 01/25/2010, 17:00.0-22:00.0)

- BL: **suoyi wo gaosu ni** (.) wo juede wo gaosu ni wo you yige henhao de::
so I tell you, I think I told you I have a very good
riben de pengyou? PENG:YOU:: ((correcting the tone))
Japanese friend? Friend.
- > WD: uh huh
- BL: wo gen (.) wo juede neige (.) zhende dui wo de:: eh:: eh:: tingli
I and, I think that really for my listening
you haochu, yinwei (0.5) wo juede zhege (0.8) wo (1.4) wode:: um shuofa
was helpful, because I think this I my:: speaking
eh meiyou huai (.) keshi wo juede riben de fayin (.) zhende hen qiang.
didn't turn bad but I think Japanese pronunciation was really strong
- WD: ((thinking)) (0.5) hmm::
- BL: tamen shuo zhongwen de shihou (.) zhege liangge:: ((gesturing tones))
when they speak Chinese these two
tamen eh:: (0.3) zai (.) liang eh:: er nianji haiyou yi nianji (.)
they when in, two the second year and the first year,
tamen de zhongwen- wo zhende keyi ting (.) tamen de [riwen].
their Chinese, I really could hear, their Japanese.
- WD: [dui.
right

BL: RI:WEN:: ((correcting the tones))
JAPANESE

As shown in Excerpt 5, Bill dominated the conversation with three extensive turns. He comfortably claimed the first turn (*suoyi wo gaosu ni*, “so I tell you”), and used his experience of learning Chinese in China to nominate the topic (listening to accented Mandarin). After he gave the statement about the accent of some Chinese L2 learners from Japan, Bill paused for my turn to respond. He soon resumed his turn when my response was vague (*hmm::*) and elaborated on his statement. Moreover, he corrected himself twice on his tones without losing the floor. Compared with previous excerpts, Bill engaged himself in a variety of turn movements with ease in this conversation, including self selection, nominating the other speaker, extending his turn. He completed all his turns without losing the floor.

7. Conclusion and Discussion

As the findings show, Bill’s prior interactions with Chinese NS were limited to his language teachers. Upon his arrival in China, he felt it was hard to blend in. Motivated to learn the language and restricted by his financial status, Bill distanced himself from his cohorts and looked for opportunities to use Chinese through participating in social events with NS. He then became able to have extended conversations with his Chinese roommate in Mandarin, and learned how to join in strangers’ conversations as a *waiyuoren* (“foreigner”) interested in Chinese. After his return, he continued to socialize himself into different Chinese-speaking communities in the US.

His experience with NS seemed correspondent to his turn taking patterns over time (Table 2).

Table 2

Themes of Bill’s Experience in Each Month and the Corresponding Turn-taking Patterns.

	Theme	Turn-taking Pattern
July	“Teachers ask me questions”.	Frequent comprehension checks.
September	“Hard to blend in”.	Question-answer pairs.
October	“I look for people to talk to”.	Allocating turns to the other speaker.
November	“I said a lot”.	Frequent self-nomination.
January	“A foreigner interested in Chinese”	Extended and complete turns.

When his interactions were limited to language teachers, Bill’s turn taking patterns were characteristic of a L2 learner’s in the classroom setting, with frequent comprehension checks and reliance upon the other speaker to allocate turns. While he started to find opportunities to interact with NS and participate in the host communities, Bill also began to allocate turns to the other speaker and frequently nominated himself in conversation. With his continued participation in social activities with Chinese NS after his return, Bill also engaged himself in a variety of turn taking in the conversation, including self-nomination, allocating turns to the other speaker, and producing extensive and complete turns.

Bill’s experience was somewhat similar to other sojourners documented in previous SA literature (Bacon, 2002; Douglass; 2005; Kinginger; 2004; 2008). They all distanced themselves from English-speaking cohorts and experienced difficulty finding opportunities to interact with NS. Indeed, as newcomers to the community, SA students often feel a sense of *ambivalence*, i.e., “feeling a part and apart” (Block, p. 864). Meanwhile, in a country where the ESL population (Graddol, 2006) and use of English (Zhang, 2006) both increase, and “nationality” is commonly perceived as a salient identity among the urban youth (Zhang & Kulich, 2008), Bill’s trajectory of participation in the host communities was unique. He gained access to certain communities through participating in social events with Chinese NS (such as teaching English), and became a legitimate participant in conversations as a *waiyuoren* (“foreigner”).

The changes in Bill’s turn taking are consistent with the Spanish L2 learner’s development reported by Dings (2007). His experience is also comparable with other sojourners’ language development documented in longitudinal studies (Kinger, 2008; Shively, 2008; Ishita, 2009). These

studies combined suggest that, with the unique *variety*, rather than amount or frequency, of social encounters overseas sojourners may have, SA allows motivated learners to expand their repertoire of linguistic and pragmatic resources for speech acts (Shively, 2008, Kinginger, 2008, Ishita, 2009) and turn taking in conversations (Dings, 2007; this study) to perform a multitude of social roles in conversations beyond classroom settings.

That said, the correspondence between Bill's experience with NS and his turn taking in conversations is not coincidental. At the beginning, his identity as a student framed his conversations, and his frequent comprehension checks and reliance on the other speaker's turn allocation in return limited his interactions with NS. Later during his sojourn, Bill frequently nominated himself and selected the other speaker. Meanwhile his identities also evolved beyond being a student. With his participation in social interactions, Bill identified himself as a *waiguoren* to strangers and an American interested in Chinese to his friends. This correspondence concurs with Kinginger's remarks in her review of SA research (2009) that L2 learning during SA is a process in which students "gradually come to inhabit specific roles and relationships and to exhibit increasing expertise" (p.156). One of the methodological implications of this study, therefore, is in the analysis of the dual process of Bill's changing relationship with the NS and his language learning. The correspondence between the two processes suggest the need for further investigations on L2 learning as a byproduct of the larger process of becoming a person in the society (Kinging, 2009; Wang, 2010).

However, it is very possible that the changes in Bill's turn taking in these dyadic conversations may be a combined result of his changing CoP status, the evolving relationship between him and his interlocutor during these seven months, as well as his growing confidence in his Mandarin. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine to what extent Bill's CoP status alone contributed to the changes in his turn taking. The evolving relationship between Bill and me may also not be representative of those he had with other Mandarin speakers. Future studies should analyze students' interactions with different social encounters, and incorporate other measurements to determine the contribution of students' L2 proficiencies.

8. Appendix

8.1. Transcription Conventions

(0.5)	elapsed time in tenths of seconds
(.)	dot in parenthesis marks pauses shorter than 0.4 second
CAP	upper case marks increased volume of voice
?	raised intonation
.	full stop marks falling intonation
(())	double parenthesis contain transcriber's comments
:	prolongation of immediately prior sound
::	long prolongation of immediately prior sound
:::	very long prolongation of immediately prior sound
->	arrow marks direction of turns towards the speaker
<i>italic</i>	English translation of the original text
[left bracket marks overlapping turns
[...]	a section of the transcript has been omitted

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