

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910814883403321
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Titolo	The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context [[electronic resource] /] / Vera Regan, Martin Howard, Isabelle Lemees
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Buffalo, : Multilingual Matters, 2009
ISBN	1-78892-072-4 1-282-13583-X 9786612135835 1-84769-158-7
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (179 p.)
Collana	Second language acquisition
Altri autori (Persone)	HowardMartin <1972-> Lemeelsabelle <1968->
Disciplina	401/.93
Soggetti	Second language acquisition Sociolinguistics Language and languages - Variation Foreign study French language - Study and teaching - Foreign speakers French language - Acquisition
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Acknowledgements -- Chapter 1. Second Language Acquisition and Linguistic Variation -- Chapter 2. Linguistic Outcomes and Study Abroad -- Chapter 3. Extralinguistic Factors Affecting L2 Development During Study Abroad -- Chapter 4. The Research Investigation: An Overview -- Chapter 5. The Acquisition of ne deletion by Irish-English speakers of French L2 during the Year Abroad -- Chapter 6. The Variable Use of Nous/On during the Year Abroad -- Chapter 7. The Acquisition of // Deletion in French by Irish Study Abroad Speakers -- Chapter 8. The Variable Use of Future Temporal Reference during the Year Abroad -- Chapter 9. The Role of Gender in the Acquisition of Sociolinguistic Competence in an L2 During the Year Abroad -- Chapter 10. Spending a Year Abroad: Do We Acquire Sociolinguistic Competence? -- References -- Index

Sommario/riassunto

This volume explores the relationship between 'study abroad' and the acquisition of 'sociolinguistic competence' - the ability to communicate in socially appropriate ways. The volume looks at language development and use during study abroad in France by examining patterns of variation in the speech of advanced L2 speakers. Within a variationist paradigm, fine-grained empirical analyses of speech illuminate choices the L2 speaker makes in relation to their new identity, gender patterns, closeness or distance maintained in the social context in which they find themselves. Using both cross-sectional and longitudinal data, four variable features of contemporary spoken French are analysed in a large population of advanced Irish-English speakers of French. This close-up picture provides empirical evidence by which to evaluate the wide-spread assumption that Study Abroad is highly beneficial for second language learning.
