Social Network and second language usage
An exploratory study of American students during a Study Abroad in France

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Summary

- Study abroad (SA) and sociolinguistic variables
- SA and social environment
- An exploratory study of American students during a SA in France
  - Follow-up study (7 learners)
  - Scaled-up questionnaire (128 subjects)

- Conclusions and perspectives
- Work in progress
SA and sociolinguistic variables

- The acquisition of native speaker variation speech patterns
  - Effect of context on this process
  - The role of input and interaction in the acquisition of patterns of variation
- The context of SA and the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence
  - Greater access and exposure to sociolinguistic markers in the target language community
  - More opportunities for the use of variation speech patterns
Social network and acquisition

- Social networks (Degenne & Forsé, 2004) and their influences on second language usage?
- Social integration to a community -> use of same phonological characteristics (Milroy, 1987)
  - Belonging to a particular social network: retention of linguistic patterns
- Recent studies have shown an impact of social network during SA
  - on the L2 pronunciation (Lybeck, 2002; Polat, 2007)
  - on the overall second language proficiency (Wiklund, 2002)
An exploratory study of American students during a SA in France

- Amount of time of second language use and social networks developed in the native community
- Usage and acquisition of two sociolinguistic variables
  - L2 learners tend to overuse the standard form of sociolinguistic variables (Mougeon et al, 2002)
  - Optional French liaison (ex: très [z] important, « very important »)
    -> 10% of optional liaison realisation by native speakers during informal conversation (Ahmad, 1993)
  - Variable deletion of ne (ex: je (ne) sais pas, « I don’t know »)
    -> 85.6% of ne deletion in native speech of speakers from 35 to 50 years old (Hansen & Malderez, 2004)
An exploratory study of American students during a SA in France
- Method -

Seven American students in Grenoble

SA of one year
Mean age : 21 years old
5 women and 2 men

Type of housing : French host family
Level of proficiency : B1/B2
Hours of French classes per week : 16 to 20 hours

- **Linguistic data**
  - Optional French liaison and deletion of *ne*
    - Two semi-directed interviews at two periods
      - Time 1 (T1) : December, Time 2 (T2): March.
    - Recordings :
      - T1 : one hour per learner (total 7 hours), T2 : same as T1
    - Total number of occurrences
      - Optional liaison : T1 : 688 occurrences et T2 : 481
      - Context of negation : T1 : 351 occurrences et T2 : 330
An exploratory study of American students during a SA in France

- Method -

- **Social data**: Daily logbook reporting every social contacts during one week:

  Exemple of a page of one student’s daily logbook:

  => **Quantitative data**
  - Time of exposure to French language
  - Names of every member of learners’ social networks
An exploratory study of American students during a SA in France
- Method -

- **Questionnaire** (based on the names written in the daily logbook)
  - Type of relationship (member of the host family, a friend, a colleague, a professor, etc.)
  - Overall frequency of interaction (never, once a month, several times in a month, once a week, several times in a week or almost everyday)
  - Type of activities and place of encounter
  - Length of time they have known each other
  - List of friends they have in common

- **Structure of social network**:
  - Size of the social network and number of ties
  - **Density** (number of real links between nodes divided by the number of possible links)

Social networks analysis: logiciel Ucinet (Borgatti et al, 1999)
Graphic representation of social networks: logiciel Netdraw (Borgatti et al, 1999) [http://www.analytictech.com/ucinet/].
An exploratory study of American students during a SA in France - Results -

• Question 1 : What type of sociability is developed by American students during a study abroad? And what is the amount of time of language use?

• Question 2 : How does the use of two sociolinguistic variables by learners change over time? Is there a link between the type of social network they developed and their use of these variables?
Question 1: What type of sociability is developed by American students during a study abroad? And what is the amount of time of second language use?

Question 2: How does the use of two sociolinguistic variables by learners change over time? Is there a link between the type of social network they developed and the use of these variables?

**Two trends of social network**

**Anglophone social networks**
- Less than 11 hours speaking French per week (5 learners)

**Anglophone and Francophone social networks**
- More than 20 hours speaking French per week (2 learners)

**Different typologies of social networks**

*Dense Anglophone* (2 learners)
*Composite Anglophone* (3 learners)
*Composite Anglophone and Francophone* (2 learners)

*(Bidart et al, 2011)*
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- Dense anglophone social network: Neil and Cristina
  - Neil example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neil</th>
<th>Cristina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of network</strong></td>
<td>Dense Anglophone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Density (Percentage and occurrences)</strong></td>
<td>33% (201/609)</td>
<td>32% (163/506)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of hours per week speaking French</strong></td>
<td>4h45min</td>
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• Composite Anglophone social network: Andrea, Shirley and April

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>April</th>
<th>Andrea</th>
<th>Shirley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Type of network</strong></td>
<td>Composite Anglophone</td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Density (Pourcentage et occurrences)</strong></td>
<td>23% (221/930)</td>
<td>13% (126/930)</td>
<td>12% (134/1056)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of hours per week speaking French</strong></td>
<td>5h33min</td>
<td>5h10min</td>
<td>10h57min</td>
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• April example
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- Composite Anglophone and Francophone social network: Gary and Jenna

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jenna</th>
<th>Gary</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Type of network</td>
<td>Composite Anglophone and Francophone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density (Percentage and occurrences)</td>
<td>6% (87/1332)</td>
<td>12% (188/1560)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of hours per week speaking French</td>
<td>30h43min</td>
<td>23h03min</td>
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- Gary example
Complementary data: Online questionnaire

Addressed to American students who came to France for a SA (3 to 1 years ago)

Survey sample
- 128 respondents (average age 22 years old)
- Paris (84) / province (44)

Type of housing
- With native French speakers (70) / Without native French speakers (58)

Questions
- Number of hours speaking French per week
- Number of native French relationships
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- **Online questionnaire**

- Number of hours per week speaking French while abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of hours per week speaking French</th>
<th>0 to 4h30min</th>
<th>4h30min to 17h30min</th>
<th>17h30min to 25h</th>
<th>25h to 35h</th>
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<tr>
<td>% and occurrences</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(30/128)</td>
<td>(31/128)</td>
<td>(35/128)</td>
<td>(32/128)</td>
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- Number of native French relationships while abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of native French relationships</th>
<th>0 to 2</th>
<th>3 to 5</th>
<th>6 to 14</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>% and occurrences</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(43/125)</td>
<td>(51/125)</td>
<td>(31/125)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rate of realisation of optional liaison</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T1</strong></td>
<td>26% (24/91)</td>
<td>27% (35/129)</td>
<td>51% (41/80)</td>
<td>23% (13/57)</td>
<td>21% (15/70)</td>
<td>24% (40/167)</td>
<td>9% (8/94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T2</strong></td>
<td>36% (28/78)</td>
<td>27% (25/91)</td>
<td>24% (9/38)</td>
<td>27% (6/22)</td>
<td>13% (7/56)</td>
<td>16% (18/111)</td>
<td>6% (5/85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rate of retention of ne</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T1</strong></td>
<td>48% (15/31)</td>
<td>81% (48/59)</td>
<td>45% (23/51)</td>
<td>73% (22/30)</td>
<td>44% (12/27)</td>
<td>38% (38/100)</td>
<td>1.9% (1/53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T2</strong></td>
<td>64% (25/39)</td>
<td>80% (40/50)</td>
<td>29% (9/31)</td>
<td>41% (7/17)</td>
<td>47% (22/46)</td>
<td>35% (31/87)</td>
<td>1.7% (1/60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Conclusion of the exploratory study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of networks</th>
<th>Use of sociolinguistic variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dense Anglophone social networks</strong></td>
<td>Learners tend to increase or maintain high rate of retention of <em>ne</em> or of realisation of optional liaison [standard usage]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Density &gt; 30 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Amount of time speaking French from 4 to 7 hours per week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composite Anglophone social networks</strong></td>
<td>No regular pattern of use of sociolinguistic variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Density &lt; 20 %</td>
<td>Learners tend to maintain a high rate of retention of <em>ne</em> or of realisation of optional liaison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Amount of time speaking French from 5 to 10 hours per week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composite Anglophone and Francophone social networks</strong></td>
<td>Learners tend to decrease and reach a low rate of retention of <em>ne</em> or of realisation of optional liaison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Density &lt; 15 %</td>
<td>Rates approximate those of French native speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Amount of time speaking French from 20 to 30 hours per week</td>
<td>[non standard usage]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion of the exploratory study

- **Limitations:**
  - Only 7 subjects
  - Time lag between T1 and T2: 3 months
  - One time of observation of social networks

- **Additional factors:**
  - The evolution of social networks during SA?
  - The role of overall proficiency in second language on the development of social networks and on the use of sociolinguistic variables?
  - The development of awareness of sociolinguistic variables?
  - The evolution of learners’ attitudes towards the native community?
Work in progress

- **Social Network**
  - Exploration of social networks in the learners’ countries (before SA)
  - Development of social networks during SA (3 times of observation)

- **Longitudinal study** following students for the entire SA (10 months) - Three periods of observation (beginning of SA, middle and end).

- **Comparative study** of two different nationalities (United-States and China)

- **Sociolinguistic variables**
  - Judgement task
  - Repetition task
  - Semi-directed interviews

- **Oral second language development**
  - Story retelling task based on a short silent film of 5 minutes

- **Attitudes towards the native community**
  - Implicit Association Test (Greenwald et al, 1998)
  - Semi-directed interviews
References


