

Objective

In the field of Second Language Acquisition, studies have shown that learners use more formal sociolinguistic variants than native speakers. Certain works in the framework of the Schemata theory argue that learners have incomplete schemata in the target language. In order to explore this hypothesis the present study examined the organization and judgment of sociolinguistic variants of French in language learners from two origins: English and Chinese native speakers. We carried out two experimental tasks: The sociolinguistic repetition task and a subjective reaction test.

Sociolinguistic Repetition Task

Methodology:

- 66 students: 24 English native speakers and 44 Chinese native speakers
- Sociolinguistic Repetition Task (1): 24 utterances, 12 sociolinguistically mixed utterances and 12 sociolinguistically homogeneous utterances
- Linguistic level: grammar, phonology, discourse

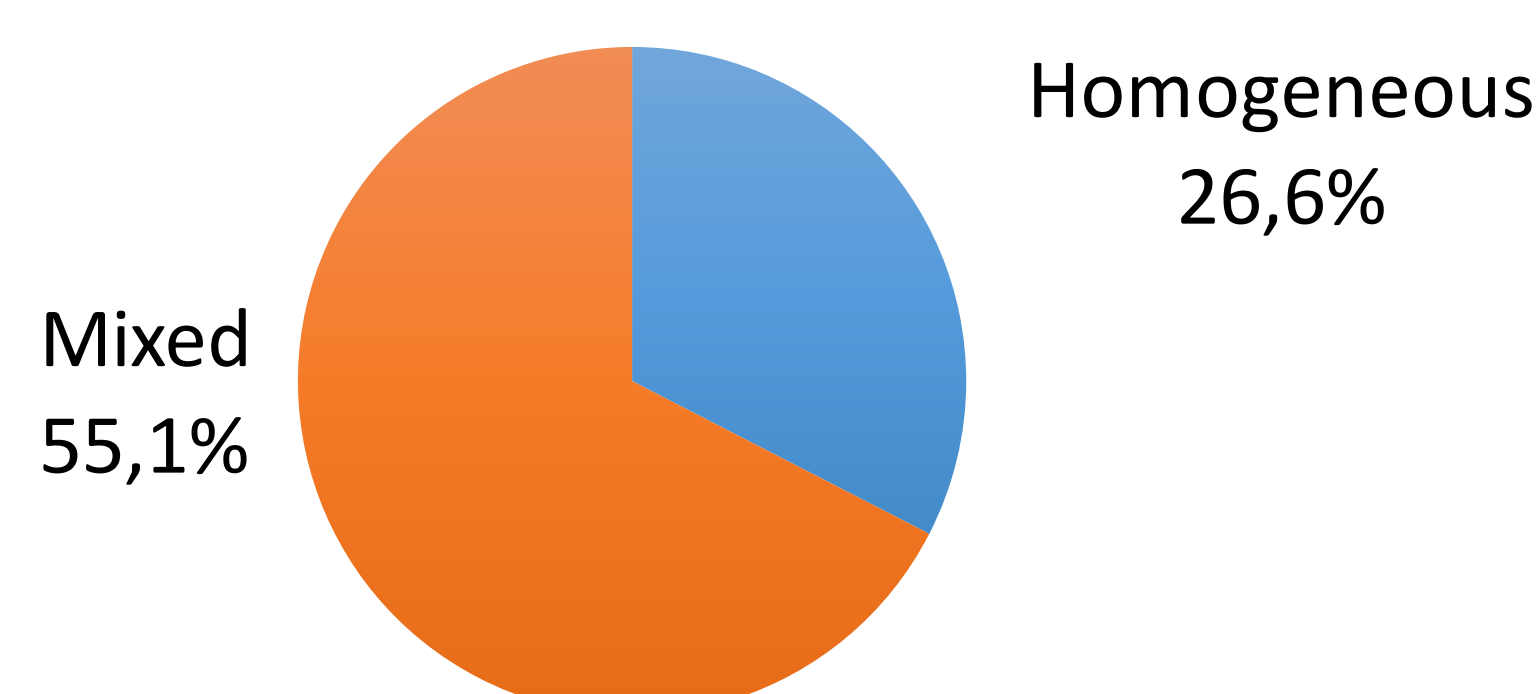
Example of Formal homogeneous : all the variants are standard	Nous ne connaissons même pas le président de cette association. (We did not even know the president of that association)
Example of Formal Mixed : all the variants are standard except one non standard variant	C'est un prix symbolique même si le gouvernement \emptyset veut pas parler de gratuité. (The cost is symbolic, although the government doesn't wanna refer to it being free)

Hypothesis:

- Students living abroad in the country of the target language construct coherent sociolinguistic schemas of this language
- If the nature of the cultural schemas of the original language influences the representations of the target language then the sociolinguistic schemas should be different between English and Chinese native speakers

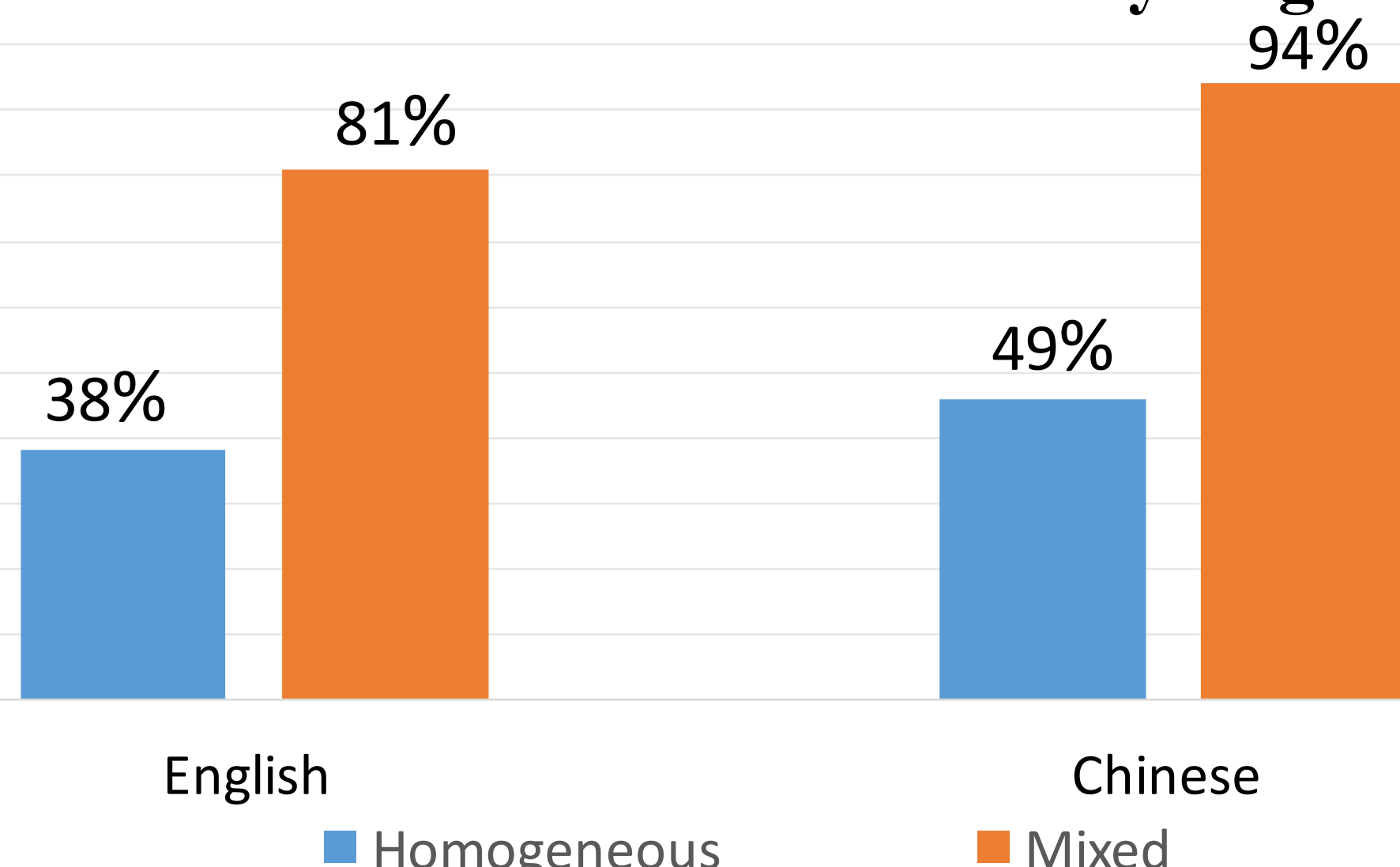
Results: The learners modify more mixed utterances than homogeneous utterances. They modify the target variant congruently with the rest of the utterance. The Chinese speakers modify more the utterances toward Standard.

Modification of utterances for all students

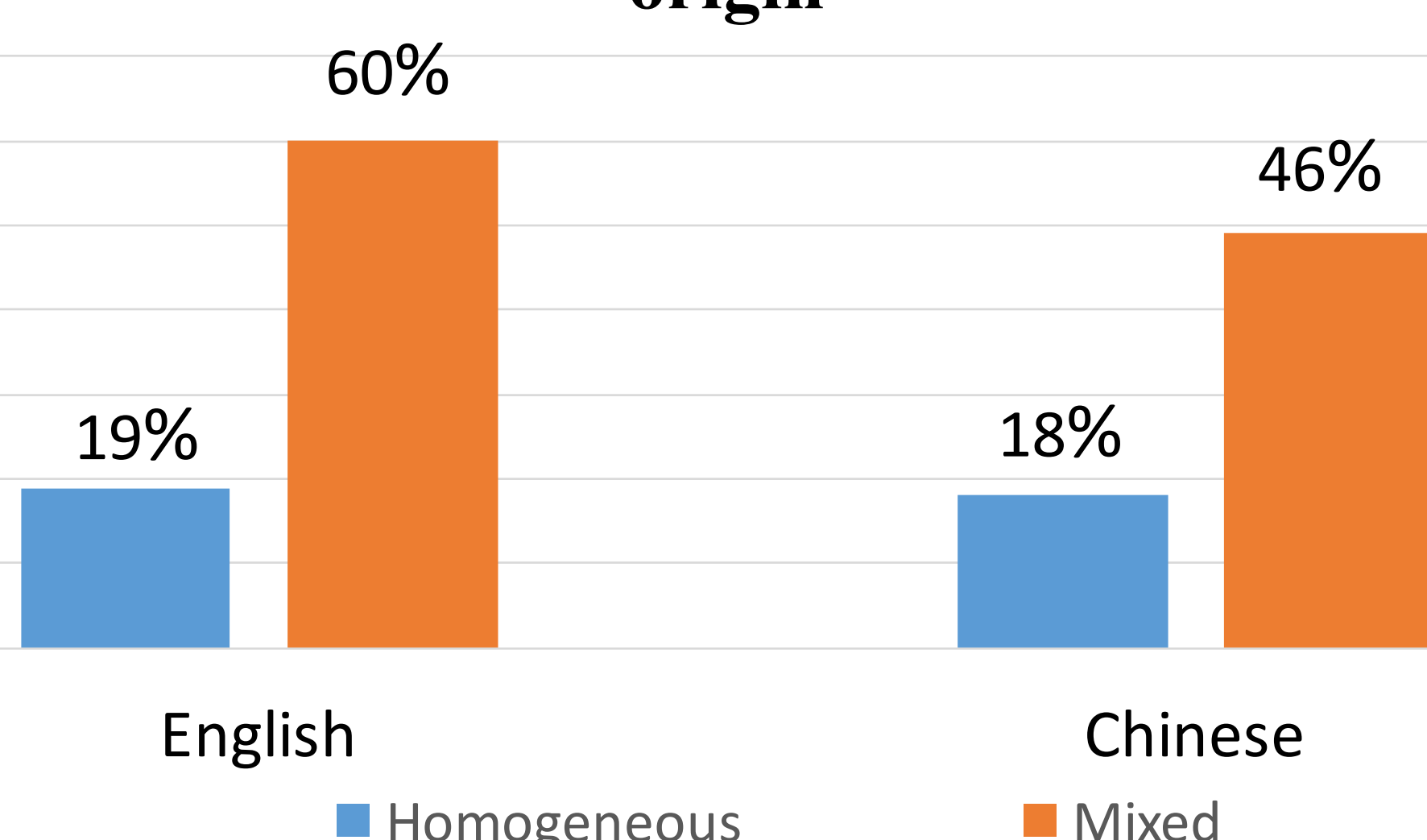


$F(1,17)= 59.733, p<0,0001$

Modifications toward Standard by origin



Modifications toward Non Standard by origin



$F(1,32)= 4,113, p<0,05$

Subjective Reaction Task

Methodology:

- 81 students: 40 English native speakers, 41 Chinese native speakers and 88 French native speakers
- Judgment task (2) of 12 utterances: 6 Formal Homogeneous and 6 Informal Homogeneous according to **7 categories, ranging from "very" (1) to "not at all" (6)**

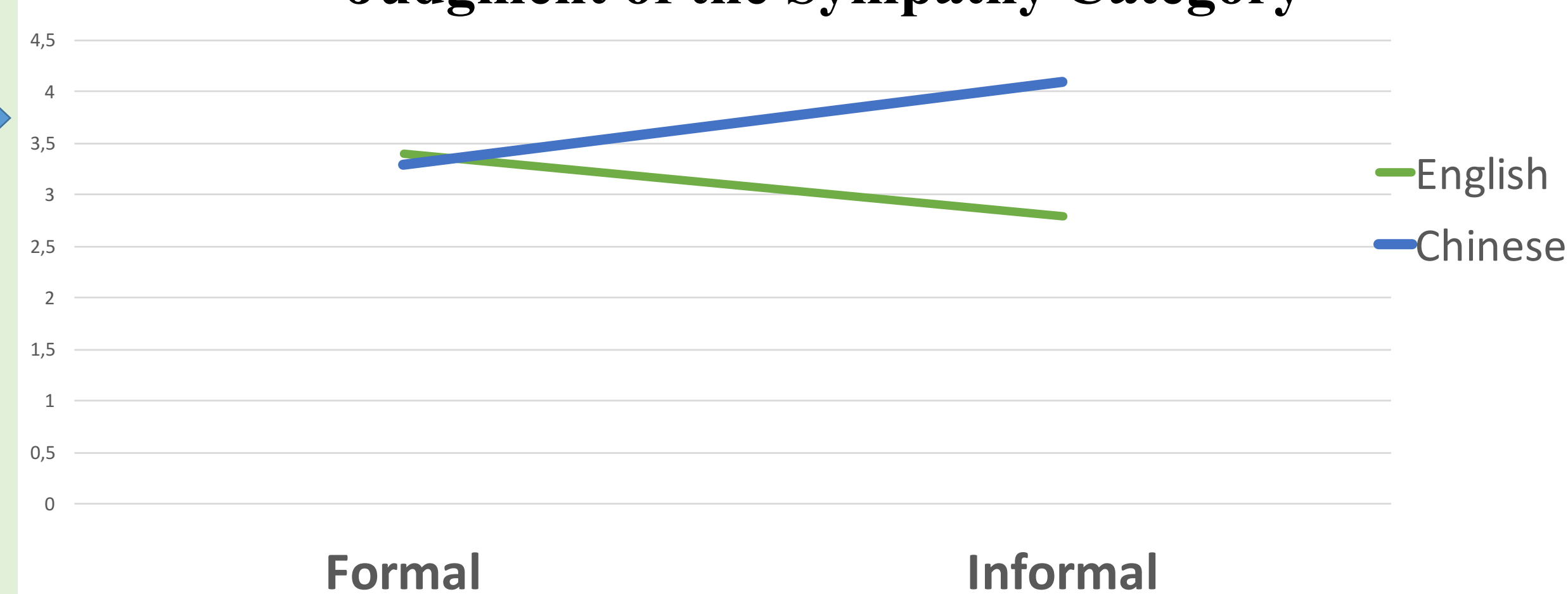
Hypothesis:

- Students of foreign languages represent the standard and non-standard varieties of the target language differently from the native ones.
- Learners from different cultures represent the standard and non-standard varieties of the target language differently.
- Learners studying in the country of the target language have a judgment similar to that of natives on social categories related to standard and non-standard varieties of this language

Results: The learners have more difficulty than natives to explain their judgment. Some judgments vary with learner's origin.

	Formal utterance			Informal utterance		
	English	Chinese	French	English	Chinese	French
Femininity	2,7	3,1	2,8	3	3	3,9
Slow speech	2,6	2,6	2,75	4,2	3,6	4,9
Shy	4,1	3,7	3,3	4,9	4,5	4,7
Accented	4,4	5,4	4,9	3,7	4,7	4,7
Educated	2,2	2,6	2,1	3,42	3,9	4
Intelligent	2,5	3,3	3,8	3,3	3,7	3,5
Sympathetic	3,4	3,3	3,1	2,8	4,1	3,5

Judgment of the Sympathy Category



Conclusion

The results show that learners modify more often the mixed utterances than the homogeneous utterance during the Sociolinguistic Repetition task. This result suggest that the learners of a second language built schemata of the sociolinguistic varieties of French in the sense that they put together variants of the same indexical orientation. However, the Chinese speakers modify the utterances more toward the Standard in comparison with English speakers. They seem to have built stronger standard schemas. Regarding the Subjective Reaction task, while the Chinese speakers judge as "less sympathetic" the informal utterance, the English speakers judge them as "more sympathetic". These results suggests that the difference between the two groups come from the influence of the cultural schemata from each origin. In this sense, the native culture could influence the social meaning associated with the sociolinguistic varieties.

References

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- Campbell-Kibler, K. (2008). I'll be the judge of that: Diversity in social perceptions of (ING). *Language in Society*, 37(5), 637-659.