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ACCOMMODATION THEORY: SOME NEW DIRECTIONS[1]

Sociolinguistics has made great strides in informing us when, how and on which linguistic levels we modify our speech (Ervin-Tripp, 1969; Hymes, 1972). Little attention, however, has been paid to *why* we do this. The explanatory power of sociolinguistics in this respect has mainly been in terms of norms and rules. It is true that there are many explicit, and sometimes strong implicit, social norms which dictate how we should speak appropriately, particularly in bi- and multilingual settings (Herman, 1961). However, when this normative analysis appears to be the only one invoked, it gives the impression of a speaker as a kind of 'sociolinguistic automaton' (Giles, 1977a). What of people's moods, motives, feelings and loyalties, do not these more dynamic elements also shape our linguistic behaviour? It has been argued elsewhere that by high-lighting such factors and by making use of current social psychological knowledge, sociolinguistics may be given a new lease of life and directed towards a richer theoretical base (Giles and St Clair, in press). Therefore, by drawing upon social psychological theory, a conceptual framework has been derived called 'accommodation theory' which may be flexible enough ultimately to cope with speech diversity in a wide variety of verbal and sociocultural contexts (Giles, 1973a, 1977a, Giles and Powesland, 1975). It is a great pleasure to discuss these notions within the context of the present volume given that insightful aspects of Robert Le Page's work on language behaviour in multilingual communities may be regarded as an important forerunner of accommodation theory (Le Page, 1968).

A basic postulate of accommodation theory is that people are motivated to adjust their speech styles, or accommodate, as a means of expressing values, attitudes and intentions towards others. It is proposed that the extent to which individuals shift their speech styles toward or away from the speech styles of their interlocutors is a mechanism by which social approval or disapproval is communicated. A shift in speech style toward that of another is termed convergence and is considered often a reflection of social integration, whereas a shift away from the other's style of speech represents divergence and is considered often a tactic of social dissociation. Our aim in this chapter is not only to elaborate theoretically on the com-plexities of speech convergence and divergence published so far, but also to introduce a further concept into accommodation theory, that of speech *complementarity.*

CONVERGENCE

When two people meet each other for the first time there is a tendency for them to become more alike in their languages (Giles, Taylor and Bourhis, 1973), pronunciations (Giles, 1973a), speech rates (Webb, 1970), pause and utterance lengths (Jaffe and Feldstein, 1972),

vocal intensities (Natalé, 1975a), the intimacy of self-disclosures
(McAllister and Kiesler, 1975), non-verbal behaviours (von Raffler
Engel, 1980)   and so forth. In short, to converge (cf notions
of response matching, (Argyle, 1969) and congruence (Feldstein,
1972)). Indeed, many interpersonal speech shifts traditionally
viewed as rule-governed, for example, adult-to-child, young-to-old,
male-to-female, and speech to foreigners can be subsumed under an
accommodation rubric. Moreover, the vast literature on language
and dialect assimilation among immigrant groups into an alien
dominant culture can also be viewed in such a fashion (Fishman,
1966; Gilés and Bourhis, 1976). In all these cases, people may be
converging their speech to how they believe others in the situation
would best receive it. It is suggested that this phenomenon may
profitably be considered as a reflection (often non-conscious) of
a speaker's or a group's need for social integration or identifica-
tion with another (Le Page, 1968).[2] In similar vein, Lambert and
Gardner (1972) and Gardner (1979)   have pointed to the importance
of an integrative motive in the effective acquisition of another
group's language (cf Taylor, Meynard and Rheualt, 1977).

       Let us examine convergence more closely in the light of three
social psychological processes: similarity-support-attraction;
social exchange; and causal attribution (cf Giles, 1977a).

Similarity-support-attraction processes

       In its simplest form, similarity attraction theory proposes
that the more similar our attitudes and beliefs are to certain others,
the more likely it is that we will be attracted to them (Byrne, 1969;
Rokeach, Smith and Evans, 1960). Speech convergence is but one of
the many devices a person may adopt in order to become more similar
to, and hence likeable for, another. Specifically, it involves the
reduction of linguistic dissimilarities between two people in terms
of their languages, syntactic and paralinguistic features, etc.
Since increasing similarity between people with regard to such an
important parameter as communication is likely to increase attraction
as well as intelligibility (Triandis, 1960), speech convergence
perhaps reflects a speaker's desire for social approval.

       A theoretical extension of this position comes from the work
of Berger and Calabrese (1975). They have argued that when strangers
meet, their primary concern is one of reducing uncertainty about each
other. It is suggested that one of the goals of initial interactions
is to predict the likely behaviours of the others in the situation so
that appropriate modes of behaviour can be selected from the person's
repertoire. Less uncertainty in such a situation would lead to a
more fluid interaction and increased liking for one's interlocutor.
Since increasing similarity leads to greater perceived predictability,
speech convergence then should reduce uncertainty and facilitate
attraction further.

       It would perhaps be useful to raise a question as to what, more
specifically, interactants are trying to reduce uncertainty about?
A factor analytic study by Berger, Weber, Munley and Dixon (1977)
suggests that people may be looking for supportiveness in the behaviour
of another when deciding how attractive they might be for them in
formal as well as in informal role relationships (cf Duck, 1977).

The types of support found to be important in this respect include perceived understanding, loyalty, concern for the other's welfare and help in reaching goals. It can be argued that the perception of convergence from another not only increases similarities, intelligibility and predictability, but also perceived supportiveness in the sense that this speech shift may be viewed as an important communication concession. Thus, speech convergence, as summarized schematically in Figure 1, can lead to increased attractiveness in the eyes of the recipient by means of a number of overlapping, intervening processes, and arises when such positive social approval is desired from the recipient.

Increased
intelligibility

Increased
predictability

Increased
supportiveness

SPEAKER⟶Speech ⟶Increased ⟶RECEIVER⟶Increased
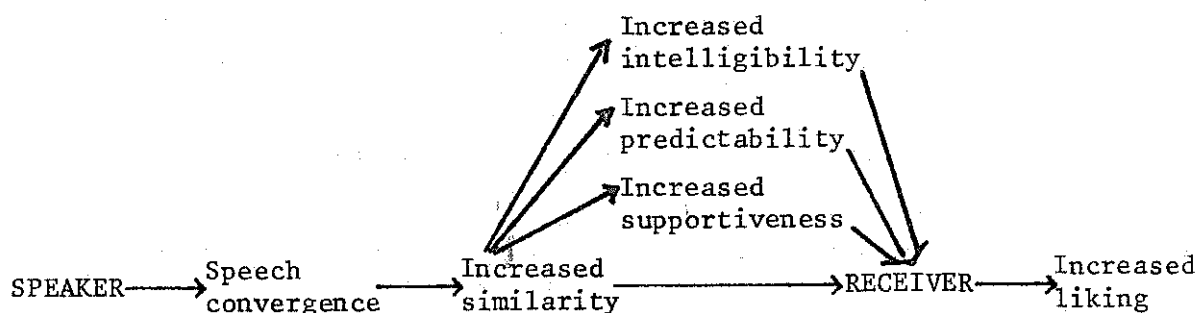convergence similarity liking

Figure 1. The similarity support attractiveness process

If one accepts the notion that people find approval from others satisfying it would not seem unreasonable to suppose that there may be a general tendency for people to converge their speech towards others in many situations. It follows then that the greater the speaker's need to be attractive to another and hence to display perceived support, the greater the magnitude of convergence there will be. Many factors could affect the intensity of such a need, including the probability of future interactions with the listener, the extent of his or her social power, recollections of previous convergences from that person, etc. Moreover, Natalé (1975a, 1975b) has found that speakers with high needs for social approval converge more to another's vocal intensity and pause length than those with low needs for social approval. Furthermore, it has been shown that the greater one's desire for others' approval, the more similar their voices will sound to one's own (Larsen, Martin and Giles, 1977). This cognition of a reduced linguistic barrier between oneself and another, termed 'perceptual convergence', no doubt facilitates the convergence process since the latter will appear a more attainable target towards which to converge (cf Summerfield, 1975). In a similar vein, Welkowitz and Feldstein (1969, 1970) have shown that the convergence of silence durations by dialogue participants appears to be related to the extent to which they mutually perceive their personalities to be similar.

Naturally enough, convergence will not occur if the speaker does not have the necessary repertoire to do this realistically. However, it is likely that speakers will have sufficient flexibility to converge towards another on at least one linguistic dimension or the other. What though would accommodation theory predict specifically with regard to *pronunciation* features when a Scotsman meets a

Welshman for the first time? It is hypothesized that both will modify their accents in their respective ethnic directions. In this way, speech shifts to their basilects will occur strengthening their common Celtic roots and differentiating themselves from English ancestry. If, on the other hand, their dialects were from the outset somewhat mutually unintelligible, convergence to the acrolect would occur where both would modify their speech in a standard (RP) direction. Convergence towards a given linguistic feature of the other will not occur either if that feature is considered socially undesirable or unattractive by the interactant. Examples of such undesirable features may be found in many so-called speech handicaps (eg, stutters and lisps), the use of obscene words or phrases, and the pronunciation patterns of deviantly-perceived social groups. However, it is suggested that when approval of another who possesses speech characteristics deemed unattractive is sought, these will be perceived as less potent, and convergence will occur along other linguistic dimensions not perceived in such a negatively-emotive fashion. Indeed, Larsen, Martin and Giles (1977) conducted a study where listeners were asked to evaluate a poem read by a speaker with an irritating lisp. It was found that the more they desired the speaker's approval the less was the reported magnitude of the speaker's lisp.

Social exchange processes

The similarity-support-attraction model tends to emphasize only the rewards attending a convergent act, that is, an increase in attraction and/or approval. However, it is likely that certain *costs* would be involved too, such as the increased effort made to converge, and a loss of perceived integrity and personal (and sometimes group) identity. Social exchange theory, again in its simplest form, states that prior to acting, we attempt to assess the rewards and costs of alternative modes of action (Homans, 1961). Therefore, if we have the choice of doing, or saying, A or B, we will tend to choose the alternative which maximizes the chances of a positive outcome and minimizes the chances of an unpleasant one. Engaging in convergent speech acts should then incur more potential rewards for the speaker than costs. For instance, the rewards involved in a Black patient converging towards the speech style of a White physician in the *private* confines of the latter's surgery, might well outweigh the transitory loss of ethnic identity (cf Shuy, 1977), whereas the social approval gleaned by a Black adolescent in converging towards a White teacher in the *public* context of a classroom might not, in this instance, repay the consequent costs of ridicule from his peers.

The notion of rewards attending the use of a certain speech style is problematic, but attempts have been made to specify what they might constitute in empirical terms. Moreover, it can be suggested that the specific rewards that may accrue from convergence may depend on the particular linguistic features involved (cf Taylor and Altman, 1975; Miller and Steinberg, 1975). Let us consider pronunciation, and imagine the context of a job interview in which a male applicant has less prestigious pronunciation patterns than his interviewer. One would predict that the prospective employee would shift his pronunciations more in the direction of the interviewer than vice versa, because of their relative needs for each

other's approval. Studies in many cultures have shown that the
more prestigious accent one possesses the more favourably one will
be perceived on certain evaluative dimensions (Giles and Powesland,
1975). This is particularly true in England where RP-accented
speakers are viewed as far more intelligent, self-confident,
industrious and determined than regional-accented speakers, even
by the latter themselves (Giles, 1971a). In addition, what one has
to say will often be considered more persuasive and of a better
quality, and also more likely to gain the cooperation of others than
had it been voiced in a less standardized accent (Giles, 1973b;
Powesland and Giles, 1975; Giles, Baker and Fielding, 1975; Bourhis
and Giles, 1976). The pervasive social influence can also be
gauged from the following illustration. In October 1976,
Jennifer Giles and I undertook an exploratory examination of the
speech used in television advertisements on our local commercial
station in the south-west of England (cf Courtney and Whipple,
1974; McArthur and Resko, 1975). Out of the hundred different
commercials randomly selected at peak viewing time in the evenings,
we found that 83% had principal characters and/or the 'voice
talkovers' as male RP-accented voices, and a further 6% female
RP-accented. In fact, non-RP accents were only heard at all in
15 commercials, and of these five were foreign. Hence in England,
the rewards for our applicant converging to the interviewer (a
shift termed *upward* convergence) would not only include being more
comprehensible to, and liked by the interviewer, but that what he
appeared to be, and what he actually said would be more favourably
looked and acted upon. Indeed, there is empirical evidence in a
number of cultural contexts which supports the notion that people
react favourably to those who converge towards them in terms of
language, dialect or pronunciation (Feldman, 1968; Harris and Baudin,
1973; Giles, Taylor and Bourhis, 1973; Simard, Taylor and Giles,
1976; Giles and Smith, 1979).

The rewards just suggested for accent convergence in England
have, however, been based on male data (cf Kramer, 1978). A
recent study investigating people's reactions to English female
accented speech suggests that there may be additional rewards for
women (Elyan, Smith, Giles and Bourhis, 1978). It was found
that not only are RP-accented women rated higher on competence
traits than their regional-accented counterparts as are men but
that, in addition, they are also perceived as less weak, more
independent, adventurous and feminine. In other words, upward
convergence for women may glean a greater array of evaluative
rewards than the same speech strategy adopted by a male. These
findings shed some light on the reasons why women in the United
States and Britain adopt more prestigious-sounding speech than men
(Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974).

One could also imagine situations, such as an industrial
dispute in a small family-owned firm, where there might be a greater
need on the part of the employer to win his workers' social approval
than vice versa. In this case, the employer might be more prone
(within the realistic limits of his repertoire) to shift his accent
in the direction of his workers than they would to him (that is, to

converge downwardly). More generally, a shift of this nature is undertaken to reduce embarrassment between people of differing status and to prepare a common basis for the communication of ideas and feelings. Naturally, mutual convergence can occur where upward convergence from one person is complemented by downward convergence from the other - if they both desire social integration.

In the above examples of upward and downward convergence, the target persons accommodated to were always consistent in characteristics of social status and speech style. That is, the high status person (employer) possessed an RP accent while the lower status persons (workers) possessed lower prestige speech patterns (Powesland and Giles, 1975; Brandac, Courtright, Schmidt and Davies, 1976). What would happen, however, when inconsistencies arise between social and linguistic attributes as in a case where one would have to address a court judge who spoke with a distinct regional accent? What speech strategy, for example, would our applicant have employed in the job interview had the employer spoken with a less prestigious accent than he? Given the apparent norm that speakers standardize their speech in formal contexts (Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974), and the opposing tendency in this instance to converge in order to gain social approval, our applicant might have found himself in a strategic dilemma. Indeed, research suggests that such a discrepant stimulus person causes cognitive discomfort in others (Aboud, Clément and Taylor, 1974). It is predicted that accommodative pressures in such a situation would outweigh normative ones, and that a linguistically diluted form of convergence would emerge.

The rationale here is two-fold. First, it is our assumption that perceptions of contextual formality-informality are to a large extent based on interpersonal (and intergroup) dimensions anyway (Giles, 1973a; Wish and Kaplan, 1977). Although we might justifiably have preconceptions about how formal a context might be prior to being part of it, and what behaviours might be expected of us (Price and Bouffard, 1974), our definition of the situation ultimately depends much on the other interactant's behaviour (cf Schachter and Singer, 1962). Moreover, the more social power the interactant wields, the more likely it is that cues emanating from him will be used to define what is appropriate behaviour in the situation. Second, it appears that high status persons are considered more responsible for, and thought to have more control over, their behaviour (verbal presumably as well as physical) than low status others (Thibaut and Riecken, 1955; Jones and Aronson, 1973). Hence, it is likely that the possession of a low status accent is seen by others as a valued conscious choice on the part of its user to maintain a group identity or to achieve self-distinctiveness. This attribution is particularly likely, given that the stimulus person is not behaving in accord with social expectations (Walster, Aronson and Abrahams, 1966; Koeske and Crano, 1968); that is, a low prestige accent is not stereotypically associated with a person of high social standing. To summarize the argument, the mere use of a non-prestige speech style by a higher status other is likely to reduce the perceived formality of the situation, and also to afford the speaker with cues as to his preferred modes of identification. An intense desire for the other's social

approval in this instance suggests that our applicant would override contextual predispositions to standardize his speech, and instead would converge.

Another inconsistency between social status and speech style could be envisaged where an individual interacts in an informal setting with a lower status other who possesses a language variety having a higher prestige than his own (cf Aboud, Clément and Taylor, 1974; Giles and Bourhis, 1976). An example here would be a university lecturer from a humble background having a drink with his upper class students. In such a situation, a speaker might again face a dilemma; informal contexts suggest less standardized speech, yet accommodative pressures for approval would suggest a more standardized variety. It is hypothesized, as previously, that the latter pressures would outweigh the former, and a linguistically diluted form of convergence would emerge. The rationale is similar to the above case. The mere use of a prestige form of the language by a lower status other is likely to increase the perceived formality of the interpersonal situation, and also offers cues to the speaker as to his preferred modes of identification. A strong need for social approval in this instance would suggest that the speaker would override contextual predispositions towards casual speech patterns, and convergence in an acrolect direction would ensue. The magnitude of this convergence might even be substantial if the speaker himself is upwardly socially mobile in intent and finds the accent prestige discrepancy to be distasteful.

Obviously, empirical work needs to be undertaken to determine the validity of these propositions in both inconsistency paradigms and to investigate the linguistic features of consequent strategies employed. It is true that these inconsistent situations may be encountered infrequently, nevertheless a robust theory should attempt to cope with complex irregularities. In any case, the above analysis that a traditional, positive sociolinguistic relationship between the formality of context and pronunciation prestige is perhaps psychologically naive.

Causal attribution processes

Thus far, it has been argued that speech convergence from speakers is favourably perceived by its recipients. Implicit in our discussion, however, has been the notion that non-convergence from others is unfavourably perceived (Giles, Taylor and Bourhis, 1973). The rationale for this is that people may be inwardly aware of the positive function of convergence and so to decode a lack of it from a speaker means that he does not value the listener's approval. Such a state of affairs is, of course, deleterious to the listener's self-esteem and hence the speaker may feel derogated because of it. However, work to be briefly described below in a bilingual context, where the encoding and decoding of convergence and non-convergence is perhaps more under conscious control than situations hitherto discussed, suggests that the above perceptions of convergence and non-convergence are far too simplistic to operate under all conditions. An elaboration of accommodation theory by means of appealing to processes of causal attribution is felt necessary.

Research on causal attribution theory (Heider, 1958; Jones and Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1973) suggests that we interpret other people's behaviour and evaluate the persons themselves in terms of the motives and intentions that we attribute as the cause of their behaviour. For example, we do not just observe a man donating money to a charity and automatically evaluate him as kind and generous. We often consider, as best we can, his motives first. In this case, an attribution of a motive of personal gain for this act might lead us to temper our evaluative enthusiasm or even to assess him negatively as Machiavellian and untrustworthy. We might expect that such processes operate in our perception of language behaviour as well (cf Siebold, 1975). Indeed, implicit in our discussion of the perception of inconsistent others in the previous section was the notion of a 'search for causality'. That is, listeners would in all probability need to make sense of the unexpected speech input by attributing motives and intentions behind the apparent stimulus inconsistency. Therefore, different reasons attributed by a person for another's convergence, or even non-convergence, to him can seriously affect how the other is perceived and also the nature of the speech patterns which subsequently follow.

Simard, Taylor and Giles (1976) conducted an experiment with French Canadian students in Quebec who were prepared to receive a tape-recorded message from an English Canadian speaker. Half of the French Canadian listeners were converged to by the speaker (that is, he spoke in French) while the other half were not converged to (that is, he spoke in English). Overall, listeners reacted favourably to the speaker (and his message) when he converged towards them in French and rather negatively when he spoke to them in English. Besides the reasons already inherent in accommodation theory for predicting this result, Berger and Calabrese's (1975) model of initial encounters includes an attributional analysis of communicative behaviour which strengthens the theoretical assumptions. They state that when people communicate to others in a predictable fashion, this is attributed simply and with ease in a positive manner. On the other hand, when the manner of communication is rather unexpected, recipients find it difficult to attribute the intentions with any degree of confidence. Berger and Calabrese argue that this 'attribution problem' causes decoders cognitive discomfort which is reflected in a negative evaluation of the speaker. Given that people find satisfaction in being approved of by others, convergence may often be expected from speakers and as such is attributed with ease and positively. Non-convergence, however, may be regarded as more of an *unexpected* strategy and as such is liable to be an attributional problem for the recipient leading to a negative evaluation of the encoder.

However, although interpersonal convergence in bilingual settings is generally very favourably received, and non-convergence generally unfavourably received, the extent to which this holds true will be influenced by the *specific* attribution of the speaker's intent. In the Simard *et al* study, different groups of French Canadian listeners were given different reasons why the speaker converged or did not converge towards them and this had the effect of modifying their evaluations of him. For instance, it was found

that when listeners attributed the convergence as due to a desire
to break down cultural barriers, the shift was viewed very favourably.
Yet when this same speech shift was attributed instead to pressures
in the situation forcing the other to converge, his *true* intentions
could not be so readily assessed and positive feelings were somewhat
attenuated. Similarly, it was found that when non-convergence (the
use of English by the English Canadian) was attributed to situational
pressures demanding own-group language from the speaker, or to the
fact that he was not bilingual anyway, negative attitudes were not
so pronounced due to the extenuating circumstances as when his
language maintenance was attributed to a lack of effort on his part.
Simard *et al* argued that when there is no objective information as
to how to attribute another's non-convergence, recipients might be
more disposed towards considering that the speaker does not have the
necessary sociolinguistic skills rather than attributing it to a
lack of effort or interest in them. In this way, listeners can
avoid the debilitating cognition that their respect or approval is
not worthy of securing.

Thus, how we react to others who converge or do not converge
towards us can be influenced by our attributions of the intent
behind the speech act. The situation may become more complex in
contexts where one is interacting with a member of another group
which is in direct conflict with one's own. In cases of such
intergroup tension, where valid and reliable information is often
lacking about another's true intentions, attribution errors may
arise due to unfavourable stereotypes held of outgroup members
(Johnson, Feigenbaum and Weibey, 1964; Taylor and Jaggi, 1974).
For instance, we may be more ready to attribute speech convergence
by outgroup members to unknown pressures in the situation, or to
deviousness, than to acknowledge a sincere desire on their part to
reduce tension. In the same way, we may be more ready to attribute
their non-convergence to a lack of effort rather than consider the
possibility of their not possessing the necessary linguistic skills,
or that there were strong cultural pressures forcing them to use
their native speech style.

A real life example of this latter situation was provided by
an American friend who went to study in Montreal in the early 1970s.
On arrival in Quebec, his car bore licence plates from his home
State. When he drove to a petrol station to fill up, he was more
often than not greeted by attendants in French. Unfortunately, he
was monolingual and could not converge back in reply, and so spoke
in English. Extenuating circumstances for this non-convergence
were apparent from his licence plates, that is, he was considered
to be an American visitor, so the French Canadian attendants would
converge back to him in English, and he would be served. After a
few months, however, he was obliged by provincial legislation to
display Quebec licence plates. Thereafter, whenever he asked for
petrol from these same attendants - who, of course, could not recall
him - their response was of the order 'ne comprends pas, monsieur'
and he would experience great difficulty in acquiring petrol at all.
In this situation, the French Canadians could attribute no extenuating
circumstances for this apparent English Canadian (given the licence
plates) not to converge to them in a bilingual city that was
predominantly Francophone.

In this section, we have tended to discuss language convergence and non-convergence as if they were simply binary sociolinguistic choices speakers make depending upon their definition of the interactive context. The situation is, however, far more complex given that a speaker may converge on a variety of linguistic dimensions separately or in combination. Indeed, Giles, Taylor and Bourhis (1973) found in an analysis of speech in a bilingual context that an English Canadian speaker could converge towards a French Canadian listener in at least 14 different ways - even in the socially-sterile atmosphere of a laboratory setting. For example, some speakers would shift totally into French, others would use a mixture of both French and English, others would speak in English but would translate certain key words and concepts into French, while still others would remain totally in English but deliberately slow down their speech rate. The authors suggested that different types of convergence may be tentatively placed along a continuum of perceived effort where both speaker and listener might construe a given linguistic strategy as involving high, medium or low social concessions. This complex state of affairs leads us to pose a number of questions. For instance, are there any other individual difference or contextual factors which would affect the amount of convergence encoded? Are there some linguistic features of convergence evaluatively more effective than others? Are there optimal levels of convergence? Let us briefly consider each of these issues in turn.

Encoding convergence: individual difference and developmental variables

It is likely that a whole host of individual difference variables could affect the magnitude of convergence produced by a speaker besides the extent of his or her desire for social approval from the interlocutor. We will, however, discuss just a few examples here including the speaker's cognitive and perceptual styles. Witkin *et al* (1962) have shown that styles of approach to perceived surroundings differ among individuals and have described a style called 'field independence'; a highly analytic approach to perceived materials. This style in visual and auditory perception is indicated among individuals who can maintain attention to particular aspects of a perceived world no matter how confusing or 'embedding' are the surroundings; such people were also considered to perceive the self as distinct or more differentiated from the surrounding *social* relations. Wober (1967) comments that, 'they are likely to formulate their social contacts through the device of being able to take up several distinct roles, each of which can be switched into and out of at relevant times' (p 352). Support for the relationship between cognitive style and speech convergence has been found by Marcus, Welkowitz, Feldstein and Jaffe (1970) who showed that the convergence of silence durations in a dyad was more apparent, the more field independent the speakers.

It could be argued then that the more speakers are sensitive to cues in interpersonal situations, the more likely it is that they will converge (cf Taylor, Catford, Guiora and Lane, 1969; Welkowitz, Rothstein and Feldstein, 1973). In this sense, we would expect that since this emphatic capacity develops as the maturing child is more and more able to take account of listener characteristics (Piaget,

1955; Sunshine and Horowitz, 1968; Flavell *et al,* 1968; Krauss and Glucksberg, 1969), the potential for convergence will emerge concomitantly. This hypothesis is perhaps too simplistic as a study by Welkowitz, Cariffe and Feldstein (1976) suggests that different types of pause length convergences appear at different ages. Indeed, the facility to converge towards others with regard to certain linguistic features appears very early on in life (Giles and Powesland, 1975: 139-140; Dale, 1972: 278-279). Lieberman (1967), for instance, has observed children of about 12 months of age converging to the pitch patterns of their parents by lowering the fundamental frequency of their babbling in the presence of their father, and raising it with the mother. Nevertheless, Welkowitz, Cariffe and Feldstein (1975) showed that convergence of temporal aspects of speech is age-related. The developmental pattern of different forms of speech convergence is certainly an area worthy of study.

It is important to point out that while a desire for another's social approval is a prerequisite for convergence to take place, a sufficiently well-developed empathic capacity seems needed in order to facilitate the process.

Encoded convergence: contextual variables

It could be argued that when the purpose of an interaction for participants is more concerned with the development of affective interpersonal relations (a socio-emotional orientation) rather than with exchanging specific information and ideas (a task-related orientation), convergence will occur to a greater extent (cf Bales and Slater, 1955; Halliday, 1970). It is, however, difficult to categorize most social contexts dichotomously in this fashion. Nevertheless, the goals of various stages of an interaction often vacillate in one direction and then the other making it a useful distinction to explore linguistically (Fielding and Fraser, 1978). Moreover, besides the knowledge that convergence becomes greater each time members of a dyad meet (Lennard and Bernstein, 1960; Welkowitz and Feldstein, 1969), we have little idea of its role during the course of an encounter. It could be suggested that once members of a dyad have converged towards each other ultimately to their full potential, other linguistic strategies such as the use of humour and a more informal, verbal style (Fielding and Fraser, 1978) could be introduced to take its function of securing approval from the other (Giles, Bourhis, Gadfield, Davies and Davies, 1976). Another such strategy might be the introduction of *speech innovations* at the lexical, grammatical, phonological and non-verbal levels such as neologisms, peculiar intonation patterns etc, the meaning and use of which is apparent only to the interacting pair. The creation of such 'ingroup language' by one participant of a dyad may signal to the other that he considers a shared understanding has been achieved and that a rewarding relationship with its own unique characteristics may ensue. In this sense, families often adopt their own linguistic styles (Bossard, 1955; Read, 1962). Perhaps Berger's (1979) model of the development of interpersonal relationships can be utilized to crystallize these notions further (cf Clarke, 1975; Duck, 1977).

Decoding convergence: differential effectiveness of strategies

Although it is intuitively obvious that we can change several
aspects of our style of speech simultaneously, the explicit com-
parison of the effectiveness of a speaker's convergence on one set
of linguistic features with convergence at others has received only
scant attention empirically. Among the more obvious intralingual
convergences that could take place would be those of pronunciation,
speech rate and message content. That is, people can attempt to
make themselves more similar and intelligible to others by
attenuating their distinctive accents, slowing down their speech
rates, and by presenting the substance of their message in a manner
that would take account of their listener's familiarity with the
topic under discussion.

In a study by Giles and Smith (1979), a Canadian male tape-
recorded eight versions of the same short message on Canadian
education for an English audience in Britain. One of these, a non-
converging version, was a message where the speaker did not con-
verge towards the audience from a standard version supposedly
spoken to Canadians back home on any of the three speech variables
mentioned above. The remaining seven versions represented all
possible combinations of pronunciation, speech rate, and content
convergence - non-convergence. Although listeners appreciated
the speaker's convergence on all three linguistic levels, it was
found that they upgraded him in attractiveness more when he con-
verged in speech rate than either pronunciation or content.
Interestingly, a number of writers (see, for example, in Siegman
and Feldstein, 1978) have argued for the fundamental importance
of *temporal* aspects of conversational features in an interpretation
of dyadic encounters. However, we have gained only rudimentary
knowledge about what constitutes an effective convergent strategy
from the perspective of listeners, as it is undoubtedly the case
that the salience of a particular feature converged will depend on
the context. For instance, had the stimulus speaker in this study
represented an outgroup which had a low social and accent prestige,
or was in conflict with the listeners' own group, pronunciation
convergence might have been perceived as more of a concession to
the audience and had a correspondingly more positive effect, given
that this feature is often the marker of group membership (Bourhis,
Giles and Tajfel, 1973; Ryan and Carranza, 1977).

Decoding convergence: optimal levels

As discussed thus far, accommodation theory would suggest
that the more a speaker converged towards another the more positively
he would be evaluated by the latter. Therefore, a speaker who con-
verged on all three of the linguistic features mentioned above
should be more highly evaluated than one who converged on only one
or two of them. However, this ignores the possibility that large
increases in convergence may not be attributed to a positive intent
on behalf of the speaker, but seen instead as patronizing, condescending,
threatening or ingratiating (cf Jones and Jones, 1964). For instance,
one could imagine an American visitor in the presence of British
listeners, adopting what he considered to be a typically English mode

of self-presentation. If the convergent shifts were very marked, the audience might be disposed to think that the American considered them (from his accent) in terms of an outdated stereotype, and (from the content of his message) grossly ignorant about certain commonly-debated matters. Similarly, Fanon (1961) has talked of the patronizing speech Whites sometimes adopt with Blacks, making them feel that they have been considered childlike or even sub-human (cf Shuy, 1977; Lukens, 1979).

Another concern of the Giles and Smith (1979) study was to determine whether a speaker is most positively assessed when making the most convergence. It was found that in fact a non-linear relationship between convergence and attraction held. The most positively evaluated convergent strategy of the eight sampled by listeners was the combination of content plus speech rate convergences; the effect of adding pronunciation (to this *optimum*) was to attenuate the favourableness of listeners' perceptions of the speaker. According to listeners' ratings, they thought that the speaker had an uncomplimentary view of them when he converged on all three linguistic features. The addition of pronunciation (in *this* instance) shifts could have been seen as patronizing, ingratiating or as a caricature. Alternatively, or in combination, pronunciation shifts plus the other convergences (called 'over-accommodation') may have been seen as threatening. English listeners may have felt that they were losing their cultural distinctiveness as the Canadian adopted perhaps the most distinguishing linguistic attribute of their group membership - a 'British' accent (cf later section on Tajfel's theory). In this way, the speaker may have been perceived as stripping them of the veil of their group distinctiveness while, at the same time, displaying how easy it was to take account of their characteristics by content and speech rate convergences.

It can be argued that listeners may have a *tolerance* for certain amounts of convergence, and hence a move beyond a certain threshold (which may vary situationally) may be negatively perceived by them (cf Read, 1964; Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall, 1965; Karam, 1976). Moreover, it might be interesting to explore notions of what we might call 'linguistic equilibria'. Argyle and Dean (1965) showed that in face-to-face interactions an equilibrium of non-verbal behaviours was apparent in initial encounters. For instance, when people are in very close proximity a minimal amount of eye contact is tolerated. However, as the spatial distance between interactants is increased, so too is their eye contact. Argyle and Dean argue that in some cultures the level of intimacy must be controlled in first encounters and that too much of it can be detrimental to the smooth running of an interaction. Sociolinguistically, too, speakers may attempt to attain an equilibrium of linguistic features in their convergence, the intensity of one being balanced by the lack of strength of others. In further research, it would be interesting to determine whether optimal levels of convergence in different social situations (eg between sex and intergenerational encounters) have the same linguistic features in common. It is our guess that they will not and furthermore that the underlying reasons for the negative attribution towards over-accommodation might be different.

Besides optimal magnitudes of convergence, Giles and Smith speculated that there might also be optimal *rates* of convergence. Aronson's (1972) 'gain-loss' theory of attraction proposes that we like more those people whose respect we are acquiring rather than those whose admiration we already possess. It could then be suggested that convergence is more effective when it takes place slowly enough so that the change is perceived by degrees, rather than all at once (cf Altman and Taylor, 1973). The latter strategy might be costly for the speaker making him vulnerable to the inference that his respect was transparent and secure from the outset. As may be recalled from earlier discussion, people naturally converge more to each other on subsequent occasions, appearing to conserve convergent acts for use as bargaining tools or 'aces-in-the-hole', as gain-loss theory would predict. In this sense, Giles and Smith proposed that speech convergence might possess a 'negotiative' character. However, our perspective of optimal convergence has been rather static in the sense that the decoding of over-accommodation has been discussed without reference to the recipient's subsequent *action*. For instance, would the latter reply in such a manner as to induce the other to relocate his convergence more optimally?

DIVERGENCE

Thus far, we have considered convergence as an active process while non-convergence has assumed a more passive, subordinate role considered only from the perspective of the decoder. This latter orientation is unfounded particularly given that non-convergence, or speech maintenance (Bourhis, 1977), can be used by ethnic groups as a symbolic tactic for maintaining their identity and cultural distinctiveness. This was exemplified a little while ago when, for the first time, the Arab nations issued their oil communiqué to the world not in English but in Arabic instead. Likewise one witnesses the efforts of many ethnic minorities throughout the world attempting to maintain their own dialects as an expression of cultural pride such as the Québécois, Welsh, Basques and Catalans (Fishman, 1966; Giles, 1977b). Moreover, it may well be that under certain conditions people not only want to maintain their own speech style, but wish to *emphasise* it in interaction with others. In such cases, speakers want to accentuate the difference between themselves and others (Wolff, 1959; Tajfel and Wilkes, 1963; Lambert and Lambert, 1972) perhaps because of the others' outgroup membership, undesirable attitudes, habits or appearance. This process of social dissociation has been termed 'speech divergence' (Giles, 1973a),and is the opposite of convergence in that it involves speakers modifying their speech away from their interlocutors and increasing the communicative distance between them (Peng, 1974). In many situations the recipient of divergence is likely to react negatively to this tactic, although sympathetic confederates of the diverging speaker might find it laudable on some dimensions (Bourhis, Giles and Lambert, 1975; Doise, Sinclair and Bourhis, 1976; Bourhis, 1977). If both participants of a dyad are similarly dissociatively motivated then they may be symmetrical in their efforts towards progressive divergence to an optimally effective level (Giles and Smith, 1979). It can be argued, however, that divergence may be an infrequent speech modification because of the common tendency people have in attempting to

avoid, or at least to minimize, interactions with those with whom they desire little affiliation; in this way the need for frequent divergence is reduced.

It is worthwhile pointing out that divergence may occur not only by simple dissociation away from the interlocutor towards an opposing reference group, but also by expressing sociolinguistically a greater identification with that other's reference group than the other can display himself (Giles, 1971b; Kelly, 1975). For example, when talking to a shop assistant who is using a higher prestige language variety than one's own in a seemingly aloof manner, one might adopt an even more prestigious speech style than he in order to display one's greater qualifications to appeal in this direction anyway. Similarly, when talking to an old school-friend who is using a lower prestige code than you while chiding your apparent aloofness, one might adopt a more basilect code than even he in order to show one's greater identification with local values. These strategies may be called upward and downward *cross-over* divergence respectively.

Giles and Powesland (1975) argue that both speech convergence and divergence may be seen as representing strategies of conformity and identification. Speech convergence is a strategy of identification with the speech patterns of an individual internal to the social interaction, whereas speech divergence may be regarded as a strategy of identification with regard to the linguistic norms of some reference group *external* to the immediate situation. To the extent that divergent strategies are adopted probably more often in dyads where the participants derive from different social or ethnic backgrounds, the incorporation of ideas from Tajfel's theory of inter-group relations and social change provides an appropriate context within which to consider divergent shifts more generally (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, 1977).

Tajfel's theory of intergroup processes

Tajfel (1974) has suggested that when members of a group interact with members of another, they compare themselves on dimensions which are important to them, such as personal attributes, abilities, material possessions and so forth. He suggests that these 'intergroup social comparisons' will lead individuals to search for, or even to create, dimensions on which they may be seen to be positively distinct from a relevant outgroup. The perception of such a positive distinctiveness by the ingroup will contribute to their feelings of an adequate social identity. In other words, people experience satisfaction in the knowledge that they belong to groups which enjoy some superiority over others. Given that speech style is for many people an important subjective dimension of, and objective clue to, social and particularly ethnic group membership (Taylor, Bassili and Aboud, 1973; Giles, Taylor, Lambert and Albert, 1976; Fishman, 1977), it has been proposed that in certain intergroup encounters, individuals might search for a positively-valued distinctiveness from an outgroup member on linguistic dimensions they value highly; a process termed 'psycholinguistic distinctiveness' (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, 1977). A study by

Parkin (1977) can be used to demonstrate this at a putative level. He found that members of adolescent societies and gangs in Nairobi felt a need to make themselves distinct from each other by a *claimed* use of English and Swahili respectively, even though their language behaviour appeared objectively very similar. However, perhaps the example *par excellence* of psycholinguistic distinctiveness at an objective behavioural level, is speech divergence. By diverging and emphasizing their own social or ethnic accent, dialect or language, members of an ingroup would accentuate the differences between themselves and the outgroup on a salient and valued dimension of their group identity.

Bourhis and Giles (1977) designed an experiment to demonstrate the use of *accent* divergence among Welsh people in an interethnic context, and to investigate the conditions which would facilitate its occurrence. The study was conducted in a language laboratory where people who valued their national group membership and its language highly were learning the Welsh language; only 26% of Welshmen can speak their national tongue. During one of their weekly sessions, Welshmen were asked to help in a survey concerned with second language learning techniques. The questions in the survey were verbally presented to them in English in their individual booths by a very English-sounding speaker who at one point arrogantly challenged their reasons for learning what he called 'a dying language with a dismal future'. Such a question was perceived by them to threaten their feelings of ethnic identity, and the informants broadened their Welsh accents in their replies as compared with their answers to a previously-asked, emotionally-neutral question. In addition, some informants introduced Welsh words and phrases in their answers, while one woman did not reply for a while and then was heard to conjugate Welsh verbs very gently into the microphone. Interestingly, even when asked a neutral question beforehand, informants emphasized their Welsh group membership to the English speaker in terms of the content of what they said to him in their replies (termed 'content differentiation'), demonstrating that psycholinguistic distinctiveness can occur in many different forms.

The notion of nominal-verbal styles may also be useful in this last respect. Fielding and Fraser (1978) have argued that formal speech is characterized by a nominal style which contains long sentences with low structural diversity, many articles, prepositions, adjectives and nouns and is subjectively viewed as impersonal, pedestrian and monotonous. Informal speech, on the other hand, is characterized by a verbal style which contains shorter sentences with a rich structural diversity, many pronouns, adverbs and verbs and is viewed as personal and vivid. The authors claim that the nominal style 'is a consequence of, and marks the speaker's dislike of her listener, and indicates her wish to distance herself'. We may speculate that accent divergence may also be accompanied by an increase in the grammatical indices of a nominal style. Moreover, it may well be that there is a hierarchy of strategies of psycholinguistic distinctiveness, some being more symbolic of social dissociation than others. Perhaps both from the perspectives of ingroup encoder and outgroup decoder, putative, a few pronunciation and content differentiations may be considered as increasingly more

intense, but nevertheless instances of low level psycholinguistic distinctiveness. On the other hand, various forms of accent and dialect (including nominal-verbal style) divergence may be considered instances of stronger social dissociation. Verbal abuse, the maintenance of or switch to another language in the face of an outgroup speaker, may be among the most potent forms of psycholinguistic distinctiveness given their extremely overt, dissociative characters (cf Lukens, 1979).

This notion of *language* divergence was investigated in Belgium by Bourhis, Giles, Leyens and Tajfel (1979). Their study involved different groups of trilingual Flemish students (Flemish-French-English) being recorded in 'neutral' and 'ethnically threatening' encounters with a Walloon (Francophone) outgroup speaker. As in the Bourhis and Giles study, the context of the interaction was a language laboratory, where participants were attending classes to improve their English skills. Many Flemish and Francophone students converse together in English, it being an emotionally neutral compromise between maintaining rigid linguistic distinctiveness, and acquiescing to pressures to converge using the other's language. In this experiment, the speaker spoke to the students in English although indicating himself as a Walloon by means of distinctive Francophone phonological realizations in that language. It was found that when the speaker demeaned the Flemish in his ethnically threatening question, listeners rated him as sounding more Francophone (a process termed *perceptual* divergence), and themselves as feeling more Flemish, than when a neutral question was asked. This cognitive dissociation was manifest behaviourally at a covert level by means of muttered or whispered disapproval while the Walloon was speaking (tape-recorded unknowingly to the informants), and at an overt level through divergent shifts to own-group language (Flemish). However, this divergence only occurred under certain specific, experimental conditions, and then for only 50% of the sample. It was found that only when their own group membership and that of the speaker's was emphasized by the investigator (ie, when intergroup categorization was made salient), and when the speaker had been known from the outset to be antithetical to Flemish ethnolinguistic goals, did language divergence emerge. In a follow-up study, however, language divergence into Flemish did occur for nearly 100% of the informants under these same conditions, but only when the Walloon speaker himself diverged into French in his threatening question.

Interestingly, the form of the language divergence in the first of these Belgian studies differed from that in the second. It was found that, in the former, the ingroup replied to the outgroup threat first in English and then switched into Flemish. In the latter (more threatening situation), listeners replied in a directly divergent manner by a complete shift into Flemish. Language divergence then, like language convergence (Giles, Taylor and Bourhis, 1973), can take on many forms and may, of course, be influenced by a number of factors not discussed here, including the perceived legitimacy-illegitimacy of the intergroup status positions for ingroup members (Turner and Brown, 1979).

Speech style divergence can, therefore, be used as a tactic to maximize differences between groups on a valued dimension in the search for a positive distinctiveness. The dynamic flux of relationships between dominant and subordinate groups, where one strives to assume distinctiveness over the other, undoubtedly is reflected in their speech behaviour and, as such, might be a potentially important dimension to explore for an understanding of linguistic change (cf Peng, 1976; Littlewood, 1977; Ros and Giles, 1979). It is important to stress, however, that psycholinguistic distinctiveness *vis à vis* a competing outgroup does not in itself mean that a group has achieved a satisfactory social identity; this might be particularly true in situations where economic and power disparities still exist between in- and outgroup. This is a case where direct group competition may be the only way eventually to restore a group's social identity (cf Turner, 1975; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, 1977).

CONVERGENCE, DIVERGENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY

We have pointed out that convergence (and also divergence) can be manifest on more than one dimension simultaneously, and that listeners can identify levels of these (Giles, 1973a; Giles and Smith, 1979; Bourhis and Giles, 1977). This raises the possibility that a speaker might, with a mind to being intentionally ambiguous, attempt to converge with regard to one linguistic feature (speech rate for example), while not converging, or even diverging on another (eg pronunciation). An example of this can be found in Montréal where on occasions French Canadian shoppers have been known to address Anglophone store assistants in fluent English, while requesting the services of a Francophone assistant instead. This is an instance of convergence in terms of linguistic form, but psychologically the message content is, of course, one of social dissociation and divergence. The effect might be even more subtle than intimated here if one considers (as do Bourhis and Giles, 1977) that shifts in speech style can occur on two dimensions simultaneously - one for the benefit of the outgroup and another (not even perceived by the outgroup) for the benefit of members of the ingroup present as a covert expression of solidarity and defiance. Holt (1973) provides us with an example of this phenomenon, namely 'linguistic inversion', engaged in by Black slaves in the United States in the last century. The meaning of many phrases and words (eg 'nigger') when said to a White meant something quite different and even positive among the ingroup than the outgroup would ever have taken it for. In fact, Blacks often engaged in what would seem to Whites to be overtly convergent phrases that for other Blacks in the situation would indicate covert divergence.

In contrast, however, simultaneous shifts away from and towards the other in a dyad can occur in ways that can be regarded as totally integrative for both participants. Let us introduce a distinction between symmetrical and complementary relationships (Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson, 1967). Symmetry in a relationship refers to an egalitarian situation obtaining in a dyad when both participants consider themselves equal in all relevant respects. A complementary relationship obtains when one participant is acknowledged to hold

a subordinate role to the other's one-up position. Many examples of this can be given where a status or power discrepancy exists in a dyad, including doctor-patient, employer-employee, teacher-pupil interactions as well as a traditional male-female situation. However, not all relationships can be classified in these categorical terms and often stable relationships (eg husband and wife) veer in a symmetrical and then in a complementary direction depending on the nature of the topic discussed or the situation involved. It is important to emphasize that complementary relationships do not abound without the consensus of the participants involved, and that complementarity increases mutual predictability as argued speech convergence would earlier (Berger and Calabrese, 1975). Miller and Steinberg (1975: 235) argue that

> Many people do indeed seem to choose to be one-down
> in their relationships with others; they consistently
> adopt subservient, deferential or even totally
> dependent positions. In doing so, they are able to
> achieve some measure of certainty in their communica-
> tion transactions. Their consistently one-down behaviour
> tends to elicit predictably one-up kinds of responses
> from their companions. In this sense, any role is
> preferable to a variable one, or to no role at all.

The acceptance of this role differentiation by the interlocutors will, of course, be manifest behaviourally. Someone entering an interaction where they accept a subordinate role will signal this by modifying their speech patterns in a complementary way to that of the other. Such speech shifts shall be called instances of 'speech complementarity' and can be regarded as divergence in a simple descriptive linguistic sense, yet psychologically involve acceptance of the situation rather than dissociation. Classic examples of speech complementarity might be when two young people are out on a date. Each accentuate their respective masculine and feminine qualities by means of linguistic as well as non-linguistic strategies. This does not, however, preclude the possibility of convergence simul- taneously occurring on other linguistic dimensions. For instance, a woman may adopt a soft voice and certain paralinguistic and intonational features with an eligible bachelor lawyer, yet may wish to gain his attraction, approval and respect by not only ful- filling her feminine role requirements, but also by converging to his higher prestige dialect. Let us also recall our previous example of a job applicant being interviewed by his prospective employer. Although the former is likely to be perceived favourably because of his convergent strategies, had he failed simultaneously to maintain his inferior role position by means of other verbal and non-verbal cues, his overall performance may have been evaluated very poorly.

Future work will determine whether certain standard linguistic features are used as vehicles for speech complementarity, whereas certain others are consistently adopted for convergence strategies trans-situationally. Again, it is likely that there are optimal levels of speech complementarity. Miller and Steinberg (1975: 239-240) provide an illustration of this:

> When the scene shifts to social activities with the
> husband's professional associates, the wife assumes the
> submissive one-down position .... He, in turn, refrains
> from exploiting the situation: he does not become unduly
> dominant or unreasonable in his demands for he knows that
> at a certain point his wife will be forced to defect from
> her one-down position.

Speech convergence is then often accompanied by speech complementa-
rity of other linguistic features. Naturally, the optimal degree
and rate of convergence, together with the optimal balance of the
appropriate amount of complementarity, is, of course, difficult to
encode from situation to situation. As Goffman (1967) says, 'the
image that emerges of the individual is that of juggler and synthe-
sizer, an accommodator and appeaser, who fulfils one function while
he is apparently engaged in another'. Seen in this light, it is no
wonder that the effectiveness of interpersonal communication is often
wrought with difficulties and misunderstandings. Moreover, it is
possible that atypical uses of speech accommodative strategies by
speakers could in certain instances contribute to the attribution
of their psychological disorder and mental ill-health by others.

CONCLUSION

Accommodation theory is then concerned with explaining some
of the processes underlying convergence, divergence and complementa-
rity. It is, of course, still a theory in development and cannot
explain all interpersonal speech shifts in all verbal and cultural
contexts. Even in the case of approval-seeking, the theory presents
some difficulties in its applications to some real life situations.
Hymes (pers. commun.) has provided an example of this by citing a
case of an English-speaking European addressing an East African
official. In order to converge, the European begins speaking in
Swahili. According to the theory, this should show a desire for
solidarity and should gain the official's approval. In this con-
text, however, such convergence would probably be interpreted by
the official as condescension and as implying that the European
thought him incapable of understanding English. It would, therefore,
be regarded as insulting. Hymes suggests that the appropriate tactic
would be for the European to use English first, allowing the official
to demonstrate his linguistic competence by replying in that language,
and then to continue in Swahili. However, further empirical explora-
tions within the framework of accommodation theory may allow us to
make more precise statements about when convergence, divergence and
complementarity are operative, what factors influence the extent of
their occurrence, what their optimally-effective levels might be,
and what the role of awareness is in these processes from both the
perspective of encoder and decoder. This chapter has been concerned
with expanding some of the empirical and theoretical limits of the
theory.

Of all its shortcomings, perhaps the theory's greatest is
its lack of linguistic sophistication and input. We have little
knowledge about the specific linguistic features speakers converge
towards when they wish another's approval (Beebe, 1976), when they

diverge away from another in order to dissociate (Segalowitz and Gatbonton, 1977), or when they complement another so as to reinforce an expected role differentiation. Moreover, although convergence, divergence and complementarity may be universal phenomena, their most salient linguistic manifestations may vary cross-culturally. Indeed, Scherer (1974, 1979) has evidence suggesting that the voice qualities which differentiate speakers from amongst each other in the United States, are not the same as those in Germany, and that vocal features of a speaker considered to be socially influential in the two countries also differ. However, this limitation of the theory to a socio-bias may arguably be *legitimate* given that most previous sociolinguistic formulations have been loaded more in a linguistic direction (Smith, Giles and Hewstone, 1980). Accommodation theory admittedly grew out of a desire to demonstrate the value and potential of social psychological phenomena and theory for increasing our understanding of the dynamics of language in a social context; it is hoped that this chapter has been persuasive in this respect. Nevertheless, as argued elsewhere, if the language sciences in general, and sociolinguistics in particular, are going to develop a methodology and complete theory of speech behaviour, it is going to have to be a multidisciplinary one. Robert Le Page has always argued for such an eclectic orientation and it is high time that it was more generally attempted. Accommodation theory, which is receptive to the introduction of greater linguistic specifications, may provide a useful means for doing this.

FOOTNOTES

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2.   Cf Argyle, 1969, Matarazzo, 1973, Jaffe and Feldstein, 1972, Welkowitz and Kuc, 1973, and Natalé, 1975a for somewhat similar explanations of this phenomenon.

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134

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