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1. Accommodation theory: Communication, context, and consequence

HOWARD GILES, NIKOLAS COUPLAND, AND JUSTINE COUPLAND

1.1. Introduction

When academic theorizing addresses everyday communication phenomena, there are losses as well as gains. Research may, selectively or otherwise, partially represent the full subtlety of contextualized interaction. Methodological constraints may impose their own selectivity, so that we tend to access the accessible and learn what is most readily learnable. The real-time nature of programmatic research will reflect epistemological shifts and disciplinary development. It is altogether likely that academic and lay versions of the phenomena themselves and their boundaries will not perfectly mirror each other at any one point.

On the other hand, research can discover regularities within communicative interchanges and identify, and perhaps even predict, contextual configurations that relate systematically to them. If it is amenable to methodological triangulation upon data and research questions, and if it incorporates within its own activities a mechanism for building cumulatively on empirical insights, communication research can begin to impose order on the uncertainty that interaction presents to us. More particularly, research that addresses the contexts as much as the behaviors of talk can tease out the ordering – motivational, strategic, behavioral, attributional, and evaluative – that interactants themselves impose upon their own communication experiences, and the ways in which the social practices of talk both are constrained by and themselves constrain goals, identities, and social structures.

In the case of “accommodation theory,” the focus of the present collection, we have a research program that has developed over more than a dozen years, undergoing many extensions and elaborations, as an account of contextual processes impinging on sociolinguistic code, style,

and strategy selections. Our primary goal in this introductory chapter is in fact to trace the growth of accommodation theory from its origins as a strictly sociopsychological model of speech-style modifications to its current status as an integrated, interdisciplinary statement of relational processes in communicative interaction. Indeed, in the view of some commentators, it may even be considered the predominant theory at the interface between language, communication, and social psychology (Bradac, Hopper, and Wiemann 1989; Messick and Mackie 1989).

At one level, accommodation is to be seen as a multiply organized and contextually complex set of alternatives, ubiquitously available to communicators in face-to-face talk. It can function to index and achieve solidarity with or dissociation from a conversational partner reciprocally and dynamically. At another level, accommodation strategies can characterize wholesale realignments of patterns of code or language selection, although again related to constellations of underlying beliefs, attitudes, and sociostructural conditions. A noteworthy, and perhaps unique, characteristic of accommodation is precisely this openness to micro and macro contextual communicative concerns within a single theoretical and interpretive frame.

But there is necessarily some slippage between lay and academic formulations, and, indeed, variation across academic treatments of "accommodation" and related concepts. For some, the notion of cooperativity in talk is the defining essence of all communicative acts (cf. Grice 1975; Heritage 1987). Similarly, "interactional synchrony" (e.g., Erickson and Schulz 1982; Jasnow et al. 1988) is held to be universal, even in early life (Lieberman 1967; Street 1983). Terms that overlap with those we shall introduce in this chapter (accommodation, convergence, divergence) have likewise surfaced in other academic arenas (see, e.g., Abrahamson 1966; Bormann 1985; Kincaid 1988; Piaget 1955; Thibaut and Kelley 1959). A variety of related constructs can also be identified (e.g., Bauer 1964; Chapple 1939; Durkheim 1964; Flavell et al. 1968; Krauss and Glucksberg 1969; Le Page 1968; Mead 1934; Peng, 1974; Sacks 1987), as well as many contemporaries who examine some overlapping interpersonal influences in communication under one or other of the following rubrics: "listener adaptedness," "person-centered or other-related/directed speech," taking the role/perspective of another (e.g., Applegate and Delia 1980; Burleson 1987; Graumann and Hermann 1988; Isaacs and Clark 1987; McCann and Higgins 1990), and positive politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987).

All of these approaches have made inroads into what "being accom-

modative" may constitute and implicate linguistically and interactionally, though the single theoretical frame offered in the accommodation model is necessary to integrate and indeed distinguish different traditions.¹ There are many ways of performing acts we could deem to be accommodative, many reasons for doing or not doing so, and a wide range of specifiable outcomes. Sometimes there are beneficial outcomes to one or the other participant in talk, or both; the effects of accommodation can be altogether unexceptional and routine or, on the other hand, critical. For instance, speakers' ability to adapt their messages to take account of listeners' characteristics can induce good health habits among patients in health care establishments (Kline and Ceropski 1984), peer acceptance (Burleson 1986), and willingness in sharing (Burleson and Fennelly 1981) in childhood. But again, a more qualitative perspective exploring degrees and modes of accommodation will, as we shall see, permit more differentiated, and ultimately more deeply explanatory, interpretations in particular social contexts.

It is in fact the *applied* perspective that predominates in the following chapters and in accommodation theory as a whole. As the title of the volume implies, we present accommodation theory here less as a theoretical edifice and more as a basis for sociolinguistic explanation. The book as a whole seeks to demonstrate how the core concepts and relationships invoked by accommodation theory are available for addressing altogether pragmatic concerns – in particular, understanding relational alternatives, development, difficulties, and outcomes in medical, clinical, and caring settings; strategic options in legal discourse; the alignment of radio broadcasters with their audiences; processes of second-language learning and of acculturation in an interethnic context; and language switching in organizational settings in a bilingual community. We will see that accommodative processes can, for example, facilitate or impede language learners' proficiency in a second language, as well as immigrants' acceptance by certain host communities; affect audience ratings and thereby the life of a program and its contributors' viability; influence job satisfaction and hence productivity; affect reactions to defendants in court and hence the nature of the judicial outcome; affect

¹A thorough critical comparison of past and contemporary theoretics is not yet available, although Street and Giles (1982) provide a critical comparison of some earlier models [namely, Webb's (1972) adaptation of the activation-level model, Natale's (1975a) communication model, and Cappella's (1981) adaptation of discrepancy arousal (see also Cappella and Greene 1982)]. Such a task is beyond the limits of the present chapter, and in any case, we would now construe other positions as holding, in the main, complementary accounts of some phenomena.

satisfaction with medical encounters and thereafter compliance with certain crucial regimens; and be an enabling or a detrimental force in allowing handicapped people to fulfill their communicative and life potentials. Although many subdisciplines of the language and communication sciences have, of course, paid sustained attention to these and similar social environments of talk, the accommodation model holds out the possibility of inferring underlying similarities in the relational options and tensions that render them researchable as key dimensions of our social lives.

In the primarily historical overview that follows in this chapter, it will be apparent that accommodation research has spanned several radically different methodological designs. Consistent with its sociopsychological origins and interests in motivational and evaluative trends, much of the earliest work was laboratory based and relatively insensitive to the descriptive linguistic dimensions of the varieties and speech styles it researched. In fact (see later), it was precisely to redress an insensitivity to social contextual variables in early (linguistically sophisticated) sociolinguistic research that the basic tenets of accommodation theory were developed. Today, however, we can point to an established history of fine-grained sociolinguistic and discourse analytic research explicitly within the model's limits, and the counterbalancing of experimentally controlled empirical efforts with observational studies in wide-ranging naturally occurring settings.

Our overview presents accommodation theory as a robust paradigm in the particular sense that it is, perhaps uniquely, able to attend to (1) social consequences (attitudinal, attributional, behavioral, and communicative), (2) ideological and macro-societal factors, (3) intergroup variables and processes, (4) discursive practices in naturalistic settings, and (5) individual life span and group-language shifts. As we shall see, the theory has attracted researchers from a wide range of disciplines and hence very broad levels of communicative and linguistic analysis, and has the potential for future application across a very wide range of media (see Bell, this volume), including writing [cf. the social and listener-oriented approaches of Fish (1980), Nystrand (1986), and Rafoth and Rubin (1987)], song (Prince, 1988; Trudgil 1983; Yaeger-Dror 1988), human-computer interaction (Leiser 1988), and doubtless many other media (e.g., telephonic, teleconferencing, electronic mail).

In the remainder of this chapter, then, we aim to update developments and ideas, as well as to lay out the parameters of "communication accommodation theory (CAT), "alluding to contributions made by au-

thors in this volume as appropriate. This is an important quest not only in its own right but because the background is fundamental to appreciating the content of the chapters that follow. A reading of the chapters relies on a shared review of CAT that is provided here. Hence, we will review the origins of CAT together with its fundamental strategies and important conceptual distinctions. Then we will examine the motives underlying convergence and divergence as well as their social consequences, discussing the complexities and caveats necessary for considering these when grounded in particular contexts. Next, we will introduce a recent sociolinguistic elaboration of the theory, considering its implications for the health context. Finally, we will conclude with a brief overview of the significance of the subsequent chapters, assembling, as they do for the first time in this volume, analyses of communication accommodation in an array of crucial applied settings.

1.2. Basic concepts and strategies

Convergence and divergence

The first publications concerning "speech accommodation theory (SAT)" emerged in 1973. Giles (1973) demonstrated the phenomenon of interpersonal accent convergence in an interview situation and introduced his "accent mobility" model in the context of a critique of some aspects of the Labovian (1966) paradigm (see also Bell 1984). It was argued that the presumed role of formality-informality of context and the criterion of "attention to speech" that was seminally associated with the prestigiousness of speech styles by Labov could be reinterpreted, at least in part, as having been mediated by interpersonal accommodation processes. For example, casual speech may have been produced not so much because of the informality of the context but perhaps because the interviewer (equally prone to sociolinguistic forces) had shifted to less standard speech forms when the interview was supposedly over (i.e., the tape recorder was supposedly turned off) and when he introduced certain topics (e.g., being close to death, nursery rhymes). In other words, the supposition was that context formality-informality determining the prestigiousness of phonological variants could be supplanted by an interpretation in terms of interpersonal influence – the interviewee's convergence with the interviewer. At that time, "context" was the *zeitgeist* of sociolinguistic theory, and we wished to redirect theoretical attention to more focused contextual dimensions, including language itself (Smith,

Giles, and Hewstone 1980), and to argue the primacy of receiver characteristics over other considerations (Giles and Powesland 1975). More recently, and more elegantly, Krauss (1987: 96) argued that

the addressee is a full participant in the formulation of the message – that is, the vehicle by which meaning is conveyed – and, indeed, may be regarded in a very real sense as the cause of the message. Without the addressee that particular message would not exist. But the message, in the concrete and particular form it takes, is as much attributable to the existence of the addressee as it is to the existence of the speaker.

This then was the legacy and blueprint for subsequent formulations addressing a wide variety of speech variables (Giles and Powesland 1975). To this end, Giles, Taylor, and Bourhis (1973) confirmed empirically some fundamental ideas inherent in what subsequently became labeled as SAT. In the bilingual context of Montreal at that time, they found that the more effort at convergence a speaker was perceived to have made (e.g., the more French that English Canadians used when sending a message to French Canadians), the more favorably that person was evaluated and the more listeners converged in return. Moreover, a plethora of convergent strategies was discovered even in what, for some, would be described as a socially sterile laboratory setting (see Bourhis, this volume, for further details). Since then, theoretical refinements have come in profusion (see Coupland and Giles 1988a for a catalog of these), particularly in the 1980s (namely Ball, Giles, and Hewstone 1985; Coupland et al. 1988; Gallois et al. 1988), and have intermeshed with significant empirical developments as well (e.g., Coupland and Giles 1988b; Giles 1984).

SAT focused in the pioneering years upon the social cognitive processes mediating individuals' perceptions of the environment and their speech styles as a foil to the omnipresent and determining role ascribed to norms in molding sociolinguistic behaviors. Its theoretical framework developed out of a wish, in those days, to demonstrate the value and potential of social psychological concepts and processes for understanding the dynamics of speech diversity in social settings. SAT therefore aimed to clarify the motivations underlying speech and intermeshed in it, as well as the constraints operating upon it and their social consequences. Specifically, it originated in order to elucidate the cognitive and affective processes underlying speech convergence and divergence, although other speech strategies (complementarity, over- and underaccommodation – see later) have more recently been recognized theoret-

Table 1. *Convergent features and selected source*

Features converged	Selected sources
Utterance length	Matarazzo et al. (1968)
Speech rate	Street (1983)
Information density	Aronsson et al. (1987)
Vocal intensity	Natale (1975a)
Pausing frequencies and lengths	Jaffe and Feldstein (1970)
Response latency	Cappella and Planalp (1981)
Self-disclosure	Ehrlich and Graeven (1971)
Jokes, expressing solidarity—opinions—orientations	Bales (1950)
Gesture	Mauer and Tindall (1983)
Head nodding and facial affect	Hale and Burgoon (1984)
Posture	Condon and Ogston (1967)

ically. As we shall see later in this chapter, SAT has been moving in a more interdisciplinary direction and the focus has broadened from exploring specific linguistic variables to encompass nonverbal (see von Raffler-Engel 1980; also Goodwin 1981; Grabowski-Gellert and Winterhoff-Spurk 1987) and discursive dimensions of social interaction; hence the wider notion of CAT (*communication accommodation theory*; Giles et al. 1987).

"Convergence" has been defined as a strategy whereby individuals adapt to each other's communicative behaviors in terms of a wide range of linguistic-prosodic-nonverbal features including speech rate, pausal phenomena and utterance length, phonological variants, smiling, gaze, and so on [cf. the notions of "congruence," "synchrony," and "reciprocity" in the work of Feldstein (1972), Argyle (1969), and Webb (1972), respectively]. Table 1 provides a sample of studies showing how widespread convergence has been shown to be, although not all studies listed were conceived and interpreted explicitly in a CAT perspective. Most of these studies were laboratory-controlled investigations, but many studies have also emerged showing convergence in naturally occurring contexts (Ray and Webb 1966), such as the demonstration of John Dean's convergence of median word frequencies (a measure of formality) to his different Senate interrogators in the Watergate trials (Levin and Lin 1988) and Coupland's (1984) fine-grained phonological analysis of a travel agent's convergence to her many clients of varying socioeconomic status and education. Although most studies have been conducted in the West

and in English-language settings, convergence on temporal, phonological, or language-switching dimensions has been noted in many different languages, including Hungarian (Kontra and Gosy 1988), Frisian and Dutch (Gorter 1987; Ytsma 1988), Hebrew (Yaeger-Dror 1988), Taiwanese Mandarin (van den Berg 1986), Japanese (Welkowitz, Bond, and Feldstein 1984), Cantonese (Feldstein and Crown 1990), and Thai (Beebe 1981). Pertinently, Yum (1988) argues that East Asian communication is far more receiver centered than the more sender-oriented communications of the West, and Gudykunst, Yoon, and Nishida (1987) observe that members of collectivistic cultures (e.g., Japan and Korea) perceive their ingroup relationships to be more synchronized than those of individualistic societies (e.g., Australia and the United States). Hence future research may show more of the ubiquity of CAT phenomena and processes in the East (see, however, Bond 1985 for an implied cultural caveat) and perhaps elsewhere.

Although convergent communicative acts reduce interpersonal differences, interindividual variability in extent and frequency of convergence is, perhaps not surprisingly, also apparent, corresponding to sociodemographic variables such as age (Delia and Clark 1977; Garvey and BenDebba 1974; Welkowitz, Cariffe, and Feldstein 1976). (There is, however, some contradictory evidence in some of the relationships characterized later). Hence, it has been found that field dependents (individuals who found it difficult to disembed core perceptual features from their field) and those with strong interpersonal orientations converge on noncontent features of speech more than their opposite-trait partners [Welkowitz et al. (1972) and Murphy and Street (1987), respectively]; high self-monitors match the emotionality, intimacy, and content of their interactants' initial self-disclosure more than low self-monitors (Schaffer, Smith, and Tomarelli 1982); and extroverts as well as cognitively more complex communicators who are high on construct differentiation are more listener adaptive than introverts and low differentiators (Burleson 1984a; Hecht, Boster, and LaMer 1989; Kline in press). Obviously, other measures of cognitive and perceptual functioning, as well as those of social sensitivity [e.g., Paulhus and Martin's (1988) construct of functional flexibility], should provide positive relationships with convergence.

"Divergence" was the term used to refer to the way in which speakers accentuate speech and nonverbal differences between themselves and others. Bourhis and Giles (1977) designed an experiment to demonstrate the use of accent divergence among Welsh people in an interethnic con-

text (as well as the conditions that would facilitate its occurrence). The study was conducted in a language laboratory where people who placed a strong value on their national group membership and its language were learning the Welsh language (only about 26 percent of Welsh persons at that time, as now, could speak their national tongue). During one of their weekly sessions, Welsh people were asked to help in a survey concerned with second-language learning techniques. The questions in the survey were presented verbally 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 assumed to threaten their feeling of ethnic identity, and the informants broadened their Welsh accents in their replies, compared with their answers to a previously asked emotionally neutral question. In addition, some informants introduced Welsh words and phrases into their answers, and one Welsh woman did not reply for a while and then was heard to conjugate a less than socially acceptable verb gently into the microphone. Interestingly, even when asked a neutral question beforehand, the informants emphasized their Welsh group membership to the speaker in terms of the content of their replies (so-called content differentiation). Indeed, it may well be that there is a hierarchy of divergent strategies available to speakers ranging from indexical and symbolic dissociation to explicit propositional nonalignment to physical absence (e.g., emphasis of a few in-group stereotyped phonological features versus language switches, to abrasive humor, to verbal abuse and interactional dissolution; see also Segalowitz and Gatlinton 1977).

Language divergence was investigated by Bourhis et al. (1979). The study involved different groups of trilingual Flemish students (Flemish-English-French) being recorded in "neutral" and "ethnically threatening" encounters with a Francophone (Walloon) outgroup speaker. As in the previous 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, as an emotionally neutral compromise (cf. Scotton 1979) between maintaining rigid differentiation and acquiescing to pressures to converse by using the other's language. In this experiment, the speaker spoke to students in English, although revealing himself as a Walloon by means of distinctive Francophone pronunciation. 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. This cognitive dissociation was manifested behaviorally at a covert level by means of muttered or whispered disapproval while the Walloon was speaking (which was being tape-recorded, unknown to the informants) and at an overt level through divergent shifts to own-group language. However, this divergence occurred only under certain specific experimental conditions, and then for only 50 percent of the sample. It was found that these listeners diverged only when their own group membership and that of the speaker was emphasized by the investigator and when the speaker had been known from the outset to be hostile to Flemish ethnolinguistic goals. In a follow-up study, however, language divergence into Flemish did occur for nearly 100 percent 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 first setting, the ingroup initially replied to the outgroup threat in English – and then switched to Flemish. In the second (more threatening) setting, listeners replied in a directly divergent manner by an immediate shift to Flemish.

Linguistic divergence, like convergence, can take many forms, both verbal and nonverbal (LaFrance 1985). Scotton (1985) introduced the term "disaccommodation" to refer to those occasions when people switch registers in repeating something uttered by their partners – not in the sense of a "formulation" proffered as a comprehension check (Heritage and Watson (1980), but rather as a tactic to maintain integrity, distance, or identity when misunderstanding is not even conceivably an issue. For example, a young speaker might say, "Okay, mate, lets get it together at my place around 3:30 tomorrow," and receive the reply from a disdainful elder, "Fine, young man, we'll meet again, at 15:30, at your house tomorrow." Although keeping one's speech style and nonverbal behaviors congruent across situations may be construed as a communicative *nonevent* sociopsycholinguistically – and, indeed, there is a fair amount of stability in our speech and nonverbal patterns across many encounters (Cappella and Planalp 1981; Jaffe and Feldstein 1970; Patterson 1983) – Bourhis (1979) has pointed out how, in many interethnic contexts, "speech maintenance" is a valued (and possibly conscious and even effortful) act of maintaining one's group identity. Similarly at the level of personal identity, those individuals Hart, Carlson, and Eadie (1980) take to embody "Noble Selves" would be predicted to maintain their idiosyncratic speech and nonverbal characteristics across many situations. No-

Table 2. *Distinctions in characterizing convergence and divergence*

Upward versus downward
Full versus partial versus hyper-/crossover
Large versus moderate
Unimodal versus multimodal
Symmetrical versus asymmetrical
Subjective versus objective

ble Selves are those straightforward, spontaneous persons who see deviation from their assumed "real" selves as being against their principles and, thus, intolerable.

Some important distinctions

These basic convergent-divergent shifts are, of course, not as descriptively simple as they might at first appear. Table 2 outlines several of the principal distinctions that have been made at varying times in the accommodation literature; others will emerge later in the chapter.

Both convergence and divergence may be either upward or downward [see Giles and Powesland (1975) for schematizations of these in terms of accent shifts], where the former refers to a shift toward a consensually prestigious variety and the latter refers to modifications toward more stigmatized or less socially valued forms in context [e.g., nonstandard accent, low lexical diversity; see James (1989) for illustrations of native and nonnative speakers' use of these accommodative tactics in the language-learning context]. Adopting the prestigious dialect of an interviewer is an example of upward convergence, and shifting to street language in certain minority communities is an example of downward convergence (see Baugh 1983; Edwards 1986).

Convergence on some features of language does not mean that speakers will converge all available variables and levels, and (see Ferrara this volume) Giles et al. (1987) made the distinction between unimodal and multimodal convergent-divergent shifts, where the latter term, of course, implies shifting in several dimensions. Beyond this, we should not conceive of convergence and divergence as necessarily mutually exclusive phenomena, since SAT does acknowledge the possibility that convergence of some features will be matched by simultaneous divergence of

others. In this vein, Bilous and Krauss (1988), in their study of same- and mixed-sex interactions, showed that females converged to males on some dimensions (including total number of words uttered and interruptions) but diverged on others, such as laughter. Informal observations of bilingual switching in Montreal in the 1970s on occasion exemplified "mixed-accommodations" apparently motivated, such that French Canadian shoppers were known to address Anglophone store assistants in fluent English while requesting the services of a Francophone assistant instead; convergence was in code, but propositionally the message was one of dissociation.

The distinction between partial and full convergence has proved valuable for some methodological designs too (Street 1982). Thus, for example, a speaker initially exhibiting a rate of 50 words per minute can move to match exactly another speaker's rate of 100 words per minute (total) or can move to a rate of 75 words per minute (partial; and see the notion of "underaccommodation" later). In their study of lexical diversity accommodation, Bradac, Mulac, and House (1988) distinguish between full shifts (upward or downward) that are moderate or large (lexical diversity indexed shifts in this case of .92 to either .82 or .72, respectively).

Additionally, in any interaction, convergence and divergence can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. An example of mutual convergence can be found in an investigation by Mulac et al. (1988: 331), who reported that "in mixed-sex dyads, it appears that both genders adopted a linguistic style more like that of their out-group partner than they would have maintained with an in-group partner." Similarly, in Booth-Butterfield and Jordan's (1989) study of intra- and intercultural encounters between female students, blacks were rated as far more expressive in within-group encounters than whites when talking with their peers. However, blacks were rated as less expressive when conversing with whites than when talking with other black women, whereas whites became more communicatively expressive in mixed-racial than in same-racial encounters – both thereby converging, presumably, to outgroup norms.

An example of asymmetrical convergence can be found in White's (1989) study of American-Japanese interactions where convergence by one party was not reciprocated by the other. When speaking with other members of their culture, Japanese informants in this study produced far more backchannels of certain kinds (e.g., *mmhm*, *uh-huh*) than their American

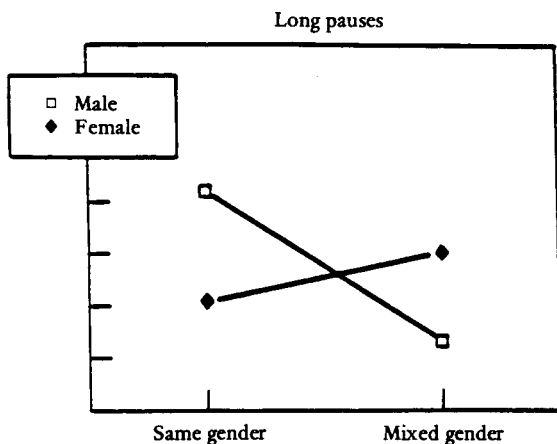


Figure 1. Frequency of long pauses by males and females in same- and mixed-gender dyads (from Bilous and Krauss, 1988, p. 188).

counterparts in within-culture situations. When it came to cross-cultural encounters, however, Americans used significantly more backchannels when speaking with Japanese (that is, they converged) who themselves did not significantly change but maintained their high level of backchanneling.

The possibility was raised (Giles 1971) that speakers can "overshoot" even in full convergence and "hyperconverge" [see Bradac et al. (1988) for social evaluations of hyperconvergence in lexical diversity]. Again, this can be accomplished asymmetrically (and see the later discussion of the notion of "overaccommodation") or symmetrically when both parties overshoot, with the latter being well illustrated by Bilous and Krauss (1988) in their analysis of (long) pauses in mixed-sex interactions (see Fig. 1); once again, presumably such hyperconvergences can be moderate or very large overshoots.

Relatedly, divergence of a sort may occur not only by simple dissociation away from the interlocutor toward an opposing reference group, but also by expressing sociolinguistically a greater identification with that other's reference group than others can display themselves. For example, when talking to an old school friend who is using a less prestigious code than you while chiding your apparent aloofness, you might adopt an even more basilectal code than he or she in order to show your greater identification with local values. Giles (1980) termed these strate-

gies "upward" and "downward *crossover* divergence," respectively, although they are, of course, achieved by initial (and often substantial) convergence.

The final distinction in Table 2 arises from the work of Thakerar, Giles, and Cheshire (1982) and emphasizes CAT's truly sociopsychological core. There is, of course, much research pointing to the fact that our perception of speech styles is dependent on various social and cognitive biases (Street and Hopper 1982). In other words, sometimes stereotyped responses to social groups influence how speakers are apparently heard to sound, such that, for instance, black interlocutors may sound more nonstandard (Williams 1976). Again, speakers believed to be relatively competent are heard to be more standard-accented (Thakerar and Giles 1981) than they actually are. Hence, Thakerar et al. invoked the conceptual distinction between subjective and objective accommodation. The objective dimension refers to speakers' shifts in speech *independently measured* as moving toward (convergence) or away from (divergence) others, whereas the subjective dimension refers to speakers' *beliefs* regarding whether they or others are converging or diverging (see the discussion of Bell's New Zealand newscasters in this volume). Thakerar et al. found in a couple of studies that interlocutors shifted their speech styles (speech rate and segmental phonology, e.g., glottal stop in place of word-final /t/) toward where they believed their partners to be, irrespective of how they actually sounded. Hence, for instance, initially similar-sounding low- and high-status interactants were measured objectively as diverging from each other, although the low-status speaker was subjectively converging (toward the interlocutor's faster speech and more standard accent, stereotypically associated with a higher-status speaker) and the higher-status speaker was accomplishing precisely the converse (see also Zuengler this volume).

These processes may be responsible in part for the kinds of "behavioral confirmation" demonstrated by Snyder (1981). For instance, he showed that if males believed they were interacting with attractive (rather than unattractive) females over an intercom link, the latter sounded lively and outgoing (the known social stereotype of attractive women). Although no data on the sociolinguistics of behavioral confirmation apparently exist, it could well be that the males in this condition provided the vocal environment facilitating and even constructing these women's expressed affableness by converging to their presumed speech style in the first place; put another way, the women may have converged on objectively linguistic criteria to the males' stereotype-based conver-

Table 3. *Subjective and objective dimensions of speech accommodation*

		Subjective accommodation	
		Convergence	Divergence
<i>Objective accommodation</i>	Convergence	A	B
	Divergence	C	D

Source: After Thakerer et al. (1982).

gence. Interestingly, Cohen and Cooper (1986) described situations where sojourners in foreign climes actively converge over time toward the (often ill-conceived) convergent attempts of individuals from the host community toward them! Relatedly, Giles et al. (1987) argued that speakers not only converge to where they believe others to be, but also in some (as yet unspecified) conditions to where they believe others expect them to be. The notion of prototypicality (see later) is relevant here and in some role-relevant situations, people may gain kudos for "acting their age," using a professional line, and so forth. But we should be wary of considering prototypical sociolinguistic styles as unidimensional givens, as illustrated in Johnson's (1980) observation that physicians' adoption of "doctorspeak" not only involves highly specialized medical jargon but can also be intermeshed with very abstract, vague statements (which can increase patients' uncertainty levels about their medical status and consequently the physicians' social control). Finally here, speakers who might converge psychologically toward their interlocutors or audience may not have the sociolinguistic experience or repertoire to enable them to achieve their desired convergent effect, and they may compensate by converging linguistically and nonverbally along some alternative dimension. Seltig (1985) provided a compelling instance of this with respect to a radio interviewer with an Aachen dialect interviewing standard dialect German speakers with a Ruhr dialect audience. When the interviewer wished to dissociate from her expert interviewee and side with her local audience, the only linguistic resource available to her to signal this was to converge on her colloquial Aachen-like features.

But to return full circle, and as Table 3 indicates in Cells A and D, speakers' beliefs about where they are shifting are often enough in accord with objective sociolinguistic realities; in other words, they get it

right. However, even when speakers are actually "on target," misattributions can still be potentially rife, as in Cell C. Giles and Bourhis (1976) found evidence that black West Indian immigrants in a British city thought they were converging toward white local speech norms – actually the working-class variety of the neighborhood – and did in fact (as an evaluative phase of the study showed) sound indistinguishable from local whites. Yet, whites did not interpret blacks as sounding convergent, but rather dissociatively heard them as moving toward a speech style – the same nonstandard urban dialect – from which the whites were trying to rid themselves. In a very different cultural setting, Beebe (1981) found that Chinese Thai bilingual children used Chinese phonological features when being interviewed by an (objectively) standard Thai speaker who looked ethnically Chinese – another instance arguably of miscarried convergence that amounted to actual divergence. Similarly, some Singaporeans' and Australian immigrants' attempts – lexically, grammatically, and prosodically – to match "upwardly" the speech of native English speakers may miscarry; and in other cases, native English speakers mismanage their downward convergent attempts toward what they believe Singaporeans and aborigines sound like (Platt and Weber 1984).

From these examples (we have no empirical illustrations as yet of the kind of feasible mismatches implied in Cell B), it can be argued that accommodation is often cognitively mediated by our stereotypes of how socially categorized others will speak (Hewstone and Giles 1986). Moreover, foreigners' talk (see Zuengler this volume) and talk to young children (Greenbaum and Cooper 1988) can be construed as exemplars of this (see DePaulo and Coleman 1986). A gerontological demonstration of the same general phenomena (albeit not discussed in accommodation terms) is reported by Caporalet and associates (e.g., Caporalet 1981; Caporalet, Lukaszewski, and Culbertson 1983), who found that some nurses used baby talk to some groups of institutionalized elderly, irrespective of the latter's actual capabilities. In some cases, this was obviously mismatched, as elderly recipients who had functional autonomy resented, of course, the social meanings implied in the nature of the discourse and found it demeaning and irritating [see also Coupland, Giles, and Benn (1986) for a discussion of similar processes operating with the visually impaired]. The chapter in this volume by Hamilton vividly illustrates how such mismatched, stereotyped-based accommodation can create dysfunctional communicative environments for the handicapped, constraining successful adaptation. Returning to the Caporalet et al. (1983) study, it is significant, however, that other elderly recipients, whose competencies were far lower, found the baby talk strategy nurturant and

reacted to it favorably (see also Ryan and Cole 1990). Hence such linguistic devices can sometimes be "hits" in both senses of the term. Interestingly, we have data that show not only Cell C behavior (since divergence can be achieved through hyperconvergence, as discussed earlier) with respect to the socially mobile, cognitively active, noninstitutionalized elderly (Coupland et al. 1988), but also strategically different (but evaluatively equivalent) forms of it occurring. This overaccommodation to elderly communicators can, moreover, be witnessed even when *avoidance* of such tactics has been vigorously and normatively prescribed, for example, in the training regimes of home-care assistants (Atkinson and Coupland 1988).

Gallois and Callan (1988) developed the notion of stereotypically driven accommodation further by invoking Turner's (1987) notion of prototypicality. These scholars developed an index for measuring the extent to which Australians (including recent immigrants) accommodated the nonverbal prototype of what it was to be an Anglo-Australian. Indeed, they found that prototypicality indexes were much better predictors of raters' social evaluations of these individuals than their actual or even perceived behaviors. Interestingly, those who accommodated the prototype well received moderately favorable ratings on a solidarity factor (i.e., nonaggressive, good, kind, and friendly) by listener-judges, whereas those further away from the prototype were downgraded. That said, those who were different from the prototype but in a socially desirable manner (i.e., smiled and gazed more and had softer voices) were judged most positively. It is as if new members to a community get first-base support for their movement toward the group prototype as an indication of their willingness to adopt group attributes, but there is additional room for positive evaluation if the person can assume other societally valued speech habits. In sum, then, people use whatever resources are available to them in terms of accommodating to another (see Prince 1988), and the actual focus of such movements may not be the addressees' communicative styles themselves. We believe that prototypicality is likely to be just as important an issue in the process of (linguistic) self-stereotyping in the context of *divergent* acts as it is in convergent acts.

1.3. Accommodative motives and consequences

In this section, we discuss the basic motives that have been demonstrated or inferred to hold for convergence and (the lesser studied) divergence, and the complex ways they function psychologically.

Convergence and integration

CAT proposes that speech convergence reflects, in the unmarked case, a speakers' or a group's need (often unconscious) for social integration or identification with another. In the early days of its development, the theory relied heavily on notions of similarity attraction (Byrne 1971), which, in its simplest form, suggests that as one person becomes more similar to another, this increases the likelihood that the second will like the first. Thus, convergence through speech and nonverbal behaviors is one of the many strategies that may be adopted to become more similar to another, involving the reduction of linguistic dissimilarities. Thus, for example, Welkowitz and Feldstein (1969, 1970) reported that dyadic participants who perceived themselves to be similar in terms of attitudes and personality converged pause duration patterns more than those who perceived dissimilarities. Also, Welkowitz et al. (1972) found that dyadic participants who perceived themselves to be similar converged vocal intensity more than informants who were randomly paired. Hence, those who believed themselves to be similar coordinated and influenced one another's speech patterns and timing more than other dyads, presumably because perceived similarity induces a more positive orientation and a relatively high level of interpersonal certainty.

Increasing behavioral similarity along a dimension as salient as speech is likely to increase a speaker's attractiveness (Dabbs 1969; Feldstein and Welkowitz 1978), predictability and perceived supportiveness (Berger and Bradac 1982), intelligibility (Triandis 1960), and interpersonal involvement (LaFrance 1979) in the eyes of the recipient. Moreover, Buller and Aune (1988) found that slow- and fast-speaking informants who were addressed at their own rates of talking by a target male rated him as more "immediate" [i.e., as having nonverbal patterns indicative of closeness; see Weiner and Mehrabian (1968)] and as more intimate; they were also more likely to comply with his request for volunteered assistance than when appealed to by speakers with nonaccommodated rates. From these findings, then, although largely by inference from studies of adjudged effects, convergence may plausibly be considered a reflection of an individuals' desire for social approval: If people are cognizant of (and/or have experienced in the past) positive cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes from convergence, then this is sufficient grounds for us to consider that an approval motive may often trigger it (see Sunafrank 1986). In this way, Purcell (1984) observed that Hawaiian children's convergent shifts in prosodic and lexicogrammatical features de-

pended on the likeability of the particular peers present when talking together in small groups; and Putman and Street (1984) reported shifts in interviewees' speech rate and turn duration when intending to sound likeable to an interviewer.

As we noted earlier in the Montreal bilingual study, a variety of studies on impression formation have shown speech convergence (over speech maintenance) to have been positively evaluated (Bourhis, Giles, and Lambert 1975). Putman and Street (1984 and just cited) found that interviewees who converge toward their interviewers in terms of speech rate and response latency are reacted to favorably by the latter in terms of perceived social attractiveness. Other research too indicates that relative similarity in speech rates, response latencies, language, and accent are viewed more positively than relative dissimilarity on the dimensions of social attractiveness (Street, Brady, and Putman 1983), communicative effectiveness (Giles and Smith 1979), perceived warmth (Welkowitz and Kuc 1973), and cooperativeness (Feldman 1968; Harris and Baudin 1973). Furthermore, professional interviewers' perceptions of student interviewees' competence also has been shown to be positively related to the latter's convergence on speech rate and response latency (Street 1984), with Bradac et al. (1988) showing *downward* convergence in lexical diversity to be very favorably perceived (see, however, Bradac and Mulac 1984).

It appears to follow from this that the greater the speakers' need to gain another's social approval, the greater the degree of convergence there will be. Factors that influence the intensity of this particular need include the probability of future interactions with an unfamiliar other, an addressee's high social status, and interpersonal variability in the need for social approval itself. In the last respect, Natale (1975a,b) found that speakers scoring higher on a trait measure of need for social approval converged more to their partner's vocal intensity and pause length than speakers who scored lower. Furthermore, Larsen, Martin, and Giles (1977) showed that the greater one's desire for specified others' approval, the more similar overall their voices will sound subjectively to one's own (even if the latter contain a stigmatized speech feature such as a lisp). 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 toward which to converge (see Summerfield 1975).

The power variable is one that often emerges in the accommodation literatures and in ways that support the model's central predictions. Jo-

siane Hamers (pers. comm.), using role-taking procedures in a bilingual industrial setting in Quebec, has shown greater convergence to the language of another who was an occupational superior than to the language of one who was a subordinate; foremen converged more to managers than to workers, and managers converged more to higher managers than to foremen (see also Taylor, Simard, and Papineau 1978). Van den Berg (1985), studying code switching in commercial settings in Taiwan, found that salespersons converged more to customers than vice versa, as the customers in these settings hold more of the economic power (Cooper and Carpenter 1969). Interestingly, Cohen and Cooper (1986), drawing upon data in Thailand, showed that many tourists to the Third World do not expend the effort to acquire much, if any, competence in the language of the country visited, whereas locals in the service industries whose economic destiny is in many ways tied to tourism often become proficient in the foreigners' languages.

It is evident just from the previous studies that the mechanics of everyday interpersonal convergences in important social networks are the breeding ground for longer-term shifts in individual as well as group-level language usage (see Giles and Johnson 1987; Trudgill 1986). The potentially different trajectories of long-term accommodations in different situations are certainly worthy of longitudinal study, as are the different clusters of motives driving diverse accommodative acts. CAT has had much recourse to approval motives as the main trigger of convergence. However, it is clear from the last study cited that *instrumental* goals represent the antecedent conditions for convergence under some conditions more adequately than any motives of social approval, which in any case could be largely situationally irrelevant. Moreover, integration and approval are not necessarily coterminous, so future analyses of CAT processes need to reflect explicitly on the nesting of perceived task, identity, and relational goals (Argyle, Furnham, and Graham 1981; Clark and Delia 1979), both global and local (see also Scotton 1988).

Much of the literature on long- and mid-term language and dialect acculturation can also be interpreted in convergence terms whereby immigrants may seek the economic advantages and social rewards (although there are clearly also costs) that linguistic assimilation sometimes brings. In other words, group accommodation here may often be asymmetrical and unilateral toward the power source. Hence, Wolfram (1973) reported that in New York City, where both Puerto Ricans and blacks agree that the latter hold more power and prestige, Puerto Ricans adopted the dialect of blacks far more often than vice versa. Stanback and Pearce

(1981) contended that blacks adapt communicatively to whites more than the converse due to the socioeconomic muscle of whites in the United States. Moving to the gender context, Mulac et al. (1987) found that women but not men converged toward their partners' gaze in mixed-sex dyadic acquaintanceship settings (see Bradac, O'Donnell, and Tardy (1984). The foregoing notwithstanding, Genesee and Bourhis (1988) made a telling point about the role of sociostructural conditions mediating accommodative evaluations (see also Stieblich 1986). In their study contrasting bilingual shifts in Montreal with Quebec City, they showed that convergent shifts toward a less prestigious minority group can sometimes bring considerable social accolades.

We see at least four set of interrelated caveats to the overriding social benefits that are claimed to accrue from convergence (and what will later be extended to attuning strategies). These relate to multiple meanings and social costs; social and societal norms; causal attributions and intentions; and optimal levels.

Caveats

Multiple meanings and social costs. In the same way that interactions usually have multiple goals (O'Keefe 1988; Tracy 1991; Tracy and Coupland 1990), language behaviors often have multiple social meanings for hearers (Ryan and Giles 1982). For instance, in some settings, use of the standard dialect is associated with high status and competence, yet, at the same time, low trustworthiness and friendliness (Ryan and Giles 1982). Following social exchange principles (Chadwick-Jones 1976), convergence may entail rewards as well as costs. As we have seen, rewards may include gains in listeners' approval and cooperativeness, with specific rewards being dependent on the particular speech and nonverbal features being converged in specific situations [see, e.g., Giles and Smith (1979), where speech rate convergence was evaluatively appreciated by audiences more than accent or even content convergences; see the later discussion]. Potential costs, on the other hand, may include possible loss of personal and social identity (see Turner 1987) and expended effort, the last especially so if the accommodations in context are widespread, not reciprocated, and long-term.

An illustration of the multiple meanings of convergence was demonstrated by Bourhis, Giles, and Lambert (1975). Six groups of Welsh respondents were told that a Welsh athlete had recently been placed sev-

enth in a Commonwealth Games diving competition and that they were to hear him in two consecutive radio interviews, purportedly taped after the competition. In one of these, the athlete's interviewer was a standard English speaker; in the other, the interviewer had a mild Welsh accent. With the latter interviewer, the athlete too consistently employed a mild Welsh accent, but with the standard interviewer his speech style varied from condition to condition. In one condition he maintained his Welsh accent, in another he modified it toward that of the interviewer (i.e., more standard and less Welsh-like), and in yet another he diverged away from the interviewer toward broad Welsh. The order of the interviews was counterbalanced, and the different texts were matched for duration, information content, vocabulary, and grammar. It was found that the athlete was perceived as more intelligent when he shifted to the standard than when he did not shift at all, and more intelligent in the latter case than when he broadened his Welsh accent. That said, convergence also involved a decrease in perceived trustworthiness and kindheartedness relative to the no-shift condition. The divergent shift to broad Welsh (although associated with diminished intelligence) resulted in the athlete's being rated as more trustworthy and kindhearted than in the other conditions [see Bourhis et al. (1975) for a near replication in the Francophone setting of Quebec].

Social norms. Genesee and Bourhis (1982, 1988) have shown how situational norms may well override accommodative tendencies at certain sequential junctures during an interaction. For instance, they found that the act of salesmen converging to customers does not necessarily result in positive evaluations because of the established situational norm that "the customer is always right." That said, we should acknowledge the additional or confounding attributed motive of ingratiation in the context of this particular norm, which makes us somewhat wary of its (as well as perhaps other norms') autonomy and purity. Further complexities abound and, as such, underscore the need for research on the relationships between the management of social identities and the dilemmas of appropriately sequencing interpersonal accommodations in context. Having converged toward each other, interlocutors may feel less socially constrained and may thereby feel free to adopt the speech patterns of their own choosing. Alternatively, some persons may feel the need to establish their own identities through talk at the outset and then may feel more comfortable about adopting accommodative behavior. In addition, what can be parsimoniously interpreted as accommo-

dation may in actuality be an artifact on occasion. For instance, an interviewee who sounded more like his or her prestigious interviewer may not have so shifted strategically in the latter's direction sociolinguistically. Rather, the interviewee may simply have been attempting a so-called assertive self-presentation (Tedeschi, Lindsfold, and Rosenfeld (1985) via language, thereby portraying a competent persona (Coup-land, 1984). Put another way, whatever speech patterns the interviewer may have encoded at the time would have had little impact on the interviewer's face intents (see Ball et al. 1984); any "addressee focus" here (see the generalized model in Fig. 4 later) would have been very limited. As Gallois and Callan (this volume) articulate and illustrate, the area of conversational rules and social norms in relation to CAT (as well as their sociopsycholinguistic reality; see McKirnan and Hamayan 1984) requires further empirical exploration.

Causal attributions, awareness, and intentions. Attributional principles suggest that very often we evaluate behavior directed toward us in the light of the motives that we assume gave rise to it (Heider 1958). This analysis has been applied to linguistic and communicative behaviors as well (e.g., Detweiler 1986; Hewstone 1983) in sociopsychologically oriented research, and paradigmatically so in the work of Grice (1971) and Brown and Levinson (1987). It has been proposed that a perceiver takes into account three factors when attributing motives to an act: the other's ability, effort, and external pressures impelling the person to act in a particular way. Simard, Taylor, and Giles (1976) examined the implications of attribution principles for the evaluation of convergence and nonconvergence. They found that listeners in an interethnic laboratory task who attributed another's convergence toward them as a desire to break down cultural barriers perceived this act very favorably. When this same shift was attributed externally to situational pressures forcing the speaker to converge, then the act was perceived less favorably. Similarly, when a nonconvergent act was attributed externally to situational pressures, the negative reactions were not as pronounced as when the maintenance of speech was attributed internally to the speaker's lack of effort (see Giles 1980).

The discussion thus far has linked accommodative acts implicitly to strategic communication (see Cody and McLaughlin 1989) and intentions. In this respect, Giles et al. (1973) suggested that different forms of convergence (e.g., complete language shifts, slowing of the speech rate) may be placed along a continuum of perceived effort whereby both

speaker and listener might construe a given linguistic strategy as involving high, medium, or low social concessions. Indeed, it was suggested that apologizing for a lack of ability to converge toward another language may be emotionally more "giving" than simply switching to the other's language. Needless to say, the relationship between perceptions of accommodation and attending social consequences is one in which misattribution is rife, as sometimes partners' perceptions of each others' behaviors are decidedly at odds. For instance, Canadian patients report converging to medical language when interacting with their physicians, who in turn self-report moving more to everyday language with them (Bourhis, Roth, and MacQueen 1988). Unfortunately, neither side acknowledges perceiving such moves from the other, with nurses acting as linguistic brokers (see also Cohen and Cooper 1986) by functioning as intermediaries and claiming to converge to both parties.

Adopting a self-regulation perspective (Gilbert, Krull, and Pelham 1988) would lead us to predict that when convergence is deliberate and mindful, encoders of it will be less able to process accurately the intentions of their accommodating or nonaccommodating partners. This will be so because regulating certain personal behaviors (e.g., bilingual convergence when nonfluent in a second language, feigning involvement, deceiving another, creative accounting) can be so cognitively involving that insufficient resources are left for detailed decoding processing, to the extent that the listeners' responses are more likely to be taken at face value. It should be noted, however, that seemingly purposive designs are not necessarily either enacted or evaluated with full awareness; indeed, even accommodative bilingual and dialectal code switching can occur without the sender's knowledge or memory of it. Berger and Roloff (1980) suggest that much communication is produced and received at low levels of awareness, and that in many instances speech accommodation may be scripted behavior (see Schank and Abelson 1977). Factors such as a discrepancy between expectations and what is encountered, or encountering a novel situation (Langer 1978), may, however, intervene and bring speech and nonverbal behaviors to a state of greater awareness. Certainly, evidence attests to the fact that certain accommodated features are more consciously self-perceived under some conditions than others. In Street's (1982) study, subjects were unaware of response latency and speech rate convergence but were highly aware of divergence of these behaviors, whereas in Bradac et al.'s (1988) study, decoders were more accurate with respect to perceiving downward (than upward) accommodative movements in lexical diversity. Interestingly,

and in complete contrast, Bourhis et al. (1975) found a distinct tendency for listeners to claim that they perceived interviewees' upward shift in accent, with prestigious-sounding interviewers even though maintenance was actually in evidence, an effect due perhaps to the social expectation that convergence here would virtually be a conversational rule [see Higgins's (1980) "communication game" theory]. In other words, awareness is not commensurate with perceptual accuracy.

It seems then that a speaker's goals may be more or less overtly represented and that speech adjustments cannot uniformly be taken as indicative of wholly intentional orientations. An interesting study with regard to both scripted and overtly intentionalized behavior is Bourhis's (1983) study in Quebec. The results of this social survey showed that speakers can be consciously aware of convergence and divergence in language switches on occasion, as well as the probable reasons for them (Taylor and Royer 1980). Thus, for example, English Canadians reported being more likely to converge to French in Montreal today than in the past, and they also reported that French Canadians were less likely to converge to them in English today than in the past. The converse was true for the French Canadians' reports. However, in a follow-up set of field studies designed to test how these reports matched actual accommodative behavior, Bourhis (1984) found little overlap. French Canadians were more likely than English Canadians to reciprocate convergence in intergroup encounters, and English Canadians were more likely than French Canadians to maintain their own language. Bourhis suggested that in spite of sociopolitical changes favoring the ethnolinguistic ideals of French Canadians in Montreal, English Canadians are still in the habit of maintaining English when interacting with French Canadians, and French Canadians are still in the habit of converging to English with English Canadians. That is, it may be that, contrary to their avowed intentions, old habits for intergroup communication die hard.

Optimal levels. As discussed thus far, CAT suggests that full convergences would be more positively evaluated than partial convergences. This was the empirical concern of a study by Giles and Smith (1979), who intuited that such a linear relationship would not hold (Jones and Jones 1964). They presented eight versions of a taped message to an English audience. The taped voice was that of a Canadian exhibiting various combinations of convergence-nonconvergence on three linguistic dimensions (pronunciation, speech rate, and message content) in a factorial design. Listeners appreciated convergence on each level sepa-

rately but found that convergence on all three levels was perceived negatively as patronizing; content plus speech rate convergences was the interpersonally effective optimum. Although recipients may find non-convergence a blow to their esteem, as it implicitly indicates that the speaker finds them unworthy of seeking their approval, it could well be that recipients of multimodal accommodation feel extremely uncomfortable with those who can demonstrate that their own idiolectal features are so easily matched. Hence, and in the same way that listeners have ranges of acceptable or preferred linguistic and nonverbal behaviors (Argyle and Dean 1965; Cappella and Greene 1982; Street 1982), Giles (1980) contended 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 (see Sherif, Sherif, and Nebergall 1965).

Besides optimal magnitudes of convergence, Giles and Smith (1979) speculated that there might also be optimal *rates* of convergence (and divergence). Aronson and Linder's (1965) gain-loss theory of attraction proposed that we like more those people whose respect we are acquiring rather than those whose admiration we already possess. It could be, then, that convergence is more effective when it takes place slowly enough so that the change is perceived by degrees rather than all at once (see Altman and Taylor 1973). The latter might be costly to speakers, making them vulnerable to the inference that their respect was transparent and secure from the outset. Interestingly, there are data showing that unfamiliar others converge toward each other gradually across subsequent occasions (Lennard and Bernstein 1960; Welkowitz and Feldstein 1969; see also Ferrara this volume), thereby appearing to conserve some convergent acts as bargaining tools or "aces in the hole," as gain-loss theory would predict. In this way, the structure and process of mutual convergences can be quite negotiative and can be precursors to communicative innovations at the lexical, grammatical, prosodic, and nonverbal levels (see Bell, Buerkel-Rothfuss, and Gore 1987; Hymes 1972; Knapp 1984). The meanings of these mutual convergences are very likely relationally unique and serve to enhance shared couple (Giles and Fitzpatrick 1984) and family identities (Bossard 1955; Read 1962), as well as emergent small-group identities (Gregory 1986). Gain-loss theory also claims that individuals will most dislike someone else *not* when they have never been shown respect by that person but when it appears that the other's respect is gradually being eroded. In accommodation terms, then, disapproval would be levied against those who diverge sequentially away

rather than against those who diverged fully on the initial meeting. Interestingly, the frequent use of what Ragan and Hopper (1984) called the "suspension of the let-it-pass rule" (e.g., "I don't know what you mean") with longstanding intimates – be it contrived strategically or not – can be interpreted as a significant diverging set of acts that ultimately signals lack of intersubjectivity and can, if used often enough, be one of the precursors of (as well as an excuse for) relational dissolution.

Divergence and intergroup processes

Giles and Powesland (1975) argued that both speech convergence and divergence may be seen as representing strategies of conformity and identification. Convergence is a strategy of identification with the communication patterns of an individual internal to the interaction, whereas divergence is a strategy of identification with linguistic communicative norms of some reference group external to the immediate situation. To the extent that divergent strategies are probably adopted more often in dyads where the participants derive from different social backgrounds, the incorporation of ideas from Tajfel's theory of intergroup relations and social change (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979) provides an appropriate context in which to consider divergent shifts more generally (Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor 1977).

Tajfel (1974) has suggested that when members of one group interact with members of another, they compare themselves on dimensions that are important to them, such as personal attributes, abilities, material possessions, and so forth. He suggested that these "intergroup social comparisons" 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 contributes to individuals' feeling of an adequate social identity, which enhances their feeling of self-worth. In other words, people experience satisfaction in the knowledge that they belong to a group that enjoys some superiority over others. Given that speech style is for many people an important subjective dimension of, and objective cue to, social and particularly ethnic group membership (Fishman 1977; Taylor, Bassili, and Aboud 1973; although see Giles and Franklyn-Stokes 1989 for a discussion of the complexities herein), it has been proposed that in certain encounters, individuals might search for a positively valued distinctiveness from an outgroup member on communicative dimensions they value highly – a process formerly termed "psycholinguistic distinctiveness"

(Giles et al. 1977) but now more broadly labeled "group communicative distinctiveness." This process would operate in intergroup (rather than interindividual) encounters where participants construe themselves in terms of, and hence communicate in accord with, their social category memberships rather than engage each other in terms of their idiosyncratic moods, temperaments, and personalities (Giles and Hewstone 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Hence, interlocutors will not only stereotype and depersonalize their interlocutor(s) but also will take on the communicative patterns believed to be prototypical of their group (see Gallois and Callan 1988). From this perspective, a dyadic encounter could well be acted and/or described as intergroup, and it is our belief that many situations classified as interpersonal are actually of this nature (see Gallois et al. 1988; Gudykunst 1986; Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey 1990).

In sum, then, divergence can be a tactic of intergroup distinctiveness of individuals in search of a positive social identity and is well exemplified in the studies reported earlier by Bourhis and others (Bourhis and Giles 1977; Bourhis et al. 1979). By diverging and by emphasizing one's own social (and sometimes idiosyncratic) communicative style, members of an ingroup accentuate the differences between themselves and the outgroup members present (Ros and Giles 1979) on a salient and valued dimension of their group identity. Taylor and Royer (1980) found in Quebec that French Canadian students who expected in due course to meet personally an Anglophone speaker they heard on an audiotape anticipated speaking more French with a target who completely agreed than with one who disagreed with their ethnolinguistic ideals. Furthermore, their anticipated divergence was accentuated after they had discussed together their probable language strategies toward the target. This "linguistic polarization" (see Myers and Lamm 1976) was attributed explicitly by the French Canadians themselves on postexperimental questionnaires to their feeling of ingroup belongingness and the need to assert their ethnic identity.

A number of other studies of impression formation have shown that maintenance of divergence is often seen by its recipients as insulting, impolite, or downright hostile (Deprez and Persoons 1984; Sandilands and Fleury 1979), that is, unless it is attributed situationally to extenuating circumstances (Simard, Taylor, and Giles, 1976) and/or to adherence to valued norms (Ball et al. 1984; Bradac 1990). Such negative reactions make perfect evaluative and attributional sense in light of the social implications of the absence of convergence discussed earlier. Although some social situations value divergent over convergent speech patterns in cer-

tain competitive contexts, as shown in Switzerland by Doise, Sinclair, and Bourhis (1976), social norms in many other kinds of situations (see Genesee and Bourhis 1988) make divergent patterns costly. As an example, Gorter (1987) discusses the general norm of convergence in Dutch society where two bilingual Frisian speakers may converse together in Dutch. And so in the context of Wales, it was found that situations had to be very intergroup in nature for bilingual Welsh persons to even anticipate diverging into Welsh with an English person (Giles and Johnson 1986). Indeed, the latter had to threaten directly core elements of the Welsh persons' ethnic identity to which they were strongly committed. Hence, the dimensions of intergroup salience, the nature of communicative norms, and the degree of commitment to social identification are all crucial interacting variables, not only in determining whether or not divergence occurs but also the form it takes.

One of the factors associated with the degree of social identification communicators have with one or another of their social group memberships has been termed "perceived vitality" (see, e.g., Giles, Rosenthal, and Young 1985; Sachdev et al. 1990). This global concept refers to the extent to which members of a social group consider certain sociostructural factors to be operating in their favor or not. Hence, a group that considered itself to have relatively low vitality (e.g., many immigrant minority groups) vis-à-vis a relevant outgroup (e.g., the host community) might well, for example, construe itself to be low in status factors (economic, political, and social), demography (defined territory, absolute numbers, emigrating members), and institutional support for its language in many everyday contexts (e.g., school, media, government), and cultural institutions. Giles and Johnson (1987), again in Wales, found that the degree of anticipated divergence from a culturally threatening English person by the use of Welsh words, phrases, and the language itself was an interactive function of the Welsh persons' degrees of cultural identification and perceived ingroup vitality. More specifically, when Welsh persons strongly identified with their group, a low sense of ingroup vitality was associated with divergent code switching. However, when Welsh persons only moderately identified with their group, a high level of ingroup vitality was required for divergence to be envisaged. In the first case, it was as though decreasing vitality was perceived to be mobilizing to those already committed to the group, and communicative distinctiveness emerged as a compensating consequence to the threatened identity; but equally, those committed but feeling that their group had enough "going for it" were secure enough not to feel the need to

dissociate face-to-face. On the other hand, those not entirely committed to the group (and who in any case have other valued social group memberships on which to call) needed to feel that the group had sufficient sociostructural strength for it be worthwhile investing an effort, and being seen to so do, in thereafter being the butt of derisory feelings from the diverged recipients.

Invoking constructs such as vitality grounds CAT as a model that recognizes the role of macrofactors – not always available for analysis in the ongoing situation but nonetheless part of the historical, sociopolitical backdrop – in molding the communicative dynamics of the situated here and now.² A number of intergroup factors have been posited as being theoretically linked to the extent of divergence operating (Giles and Jonnson 1981, 1987). These include the *perceived hardness-softness* of the group boundaries – for example, whether or not an ingroup language defies acquisition by outsiders (see Giles, 1979; Hall and Gudykunst 1986; Hildebrandt and Giles 1984; Huffines 1986); the *perceived legitimacy-illegitimacy* of the prevailing intergroup hierarchy (e.g., the extent to which low power groups believe their social position is just and fair or not; see Turner and Brown 1978), and the extent of the communicator's *multiple group memberships* (see Gudykunst 1988 for an empirically grounded consideration of these variables in terms of uncertainty reduction theory). Obviously, age is an important variable here. We know from language attitude studies that even three-year olds are surprisingly sophisticated about some of the social meanings of group membership (Day 1982), and bilingual convergence in intergroup settings has been shown at six years of age (Aboud 1976). That said, more complete knowledge of Western sociostructural norms relating to language usage is usually acquired slowly throughout childhood and adolescence (see Genesee 1984).

In formulating and revising the intergroup model of second-language learning (Giles and Byrne 1982; Garrett, Giles, and Coupland 1989; see also Hall; and Gudykunst 1986), we have suggested that the same factors leading individuals to diverge in an intergroup encounter also contribute to many immigrant minorities' resistance to acquiring a host language with anything resembling native proficiency. In different contexts, of course, these factors are also enabling forces contributing to ingroup

²Indeed, CAT can quite easily be extended to account for a more transactional perspective in which others' communications in temporally and spatially distant contexts may have unforeseen and profound implications for our accommodative behaviors elsewhere [see Bronfenbrenner's (1979) analysis of contexts, as well as Fisher and Todd (1986)].

members' motivation to acquire their ethnic group's tongue, which they may never have been taught (Giles, Garrett, and Coupland 1988). Furthermore, and in line with Trudgill's (1986) theory that interpersonal accommodative forces are an integral element in long-term language and dialect shifts, we have argued that intergroup processes, along the lines discussed earlier, are part of the psychological climate of long-term language maintenance and survival (Giles, Leets, and Coupland 1990). Interestingly, Yaeger-Dror (1988), in an Israeli study, reported data showing that an increasing accentuation of ethnic speech markers in the recorded Hebrew singing of certain Arab-speaking Jews maps directly the increased ingroup vitality of this group over the same period.

Intergroup divergence can be appreciated by those overhearing it when they belong to the same ingroup as a speaker who is linguistically dissociating from an outgroup member. In a very interesting unpublished study using the Prisoner's Dilemma Game (see Eiser 1975), Bourhis (1977) had Anglo-Welsh listeners rate a dialogue sequence involving two Welsh-accented suspects who were supposedly being interrogated by a standard-accented English policeman on audiotape. The same two Welsh-accented actors played the role of two suspects in different guises by either converging to the received pronunciation (RP) accent of the English policeman or by diverging and accentuating their Welsh accent in English. Although the content of the interviews was kept the same across the different experimental conditions, Anglo-Welsh listeners' evaluations of the suspects differed depending on which accent strategy was adopted. Results showed that the suspects were rated more favorably on social attractiveness traits and were considered more nationalistic when they diverged away from rather than converged toward the (English) policeman. (However, and in line with the previous section on multiple meanings of accommodation, these suspects were rated unfavorably on competence-related scales.) Moreover they were rated as less guilty and as worthy of a milder sentence when they diverged than when they converged during the interrogation. Taken in the intergroup setting of the day, these findings suggest that listeners were ready to punish the suspects for having betrayed ingroup solidarity (by converging) and to reward them for upholding their Welsh identity and integrity (by diverging) even in this threatening encounter.

We are not claiming that all divergences are intergroup in nature. Certainly, divergence to another communicative form may signal individual disdain regarding another's dress, mannerisms, habits, language style, and so forth. For example, when Putman and Street (1984) required in-

interviewees to act out being dislikable in an interview setting, they were found, predictably, to diverge in noncontent speech features away from their interviewers. Indeed, sometimes it is virtually impossible to disentangle the intergroup from the inter-individual dimension, as in Selvig's (1985) analysis of a German radio program (see earlier), where an interviewer diverged from purported experts as a signal of identification with other views, including those of the interactive audience. To add one further complexity here, we would like to attend to Giles and Wiemann's (1987) notion that people construe encounters not only in terms of their individual and group identities but also in terms of their relational and/or couple identities. Indeed, it is possible to conceive of a romantic heterosexual relationship, for instance, as on some occasions being simultaneously high on all three dimensions: that is, "I'm me, but I'm a feminist, although I am us." Hence, when it suits desired needs, an individual could diverge from another by adopting couple talk (Giles and Fitzpatrick 1984), even with his or her partner not present, perhaps through proliferating couple disclosures and invoking a privately constructed code. Further contemplation about couple divergence opens up a plethora of complexities and situational caveats, the exciting exploration of which would be better suited to a relational discussion elsewhere.

1.4 Further distinctions

Thus far, we have considered divergence as a dissociative communicative tactic. In this section, we consider further complexities, such as the notion that some divergent acts can occur for seemingly convergent motives and even some convergent acts accomplished toward divergent ends (as noted in the section on "Some Important Distinctions"). In this way, we introduce the distinction between psychological and communicative accommodation, as well as the need to consider the function of accommodative strategies.

Psychological versus linguistic accommodation

Thakerar et al. (1982) defined psychological convergence and divergence as "individuals' beliefs that they are integrating with and differentiating from others respectively, while [objective] linguistic convergence and divergence can be defined as individuals' speech shifts towards and away from others respectively" (p. 222). Accepting now the need to invoke

communicative levels other than speech, very often psychological and communicative accommodations will be perfectly isomorphic. Psychological convergence attending communicative divergence may be vividly evident in role-discrepant situations where dissimilarities are not only acceptable but even expected (Grush, Clore, and Costin 1975). For instance, a sociolinguistically sensitive interviewee is hardly likely to be evaluated favorably if he or she assumes communicatively the directive, interrogative language and nonverbal controlling stances of the interviewer; complementarity on certain levels, then, is expected by both parties (Matarazzo and Weins 1972; Putman and Street 1984).

A complementary relationship obtains when one participant is acknowledged to have a subordinate role to the other (Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson 1967). There are many examples of a status or power discrepancy in a dyad, including employer–employee, teacher–pupil, veteran–novice, and so forth. However, not all relationships can be classified in such power terms, and talk in many stable, intimate relationships veers in a status-equivalent and then in a status-unequal 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. Indeed, we would argue that complementarity increases mutual predictability (Berger and Bradac 1982), as proposed earlier in this chapter with respect to convergence. Miller and Steinberg (1975: 235) commented:

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 communication transactions. Their consistently one-down behavior 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.

Classic examples of speech complementarity may occur when two young people are out on a date. Even though laboratory problem-related tasks have shown mutual convergences by males and females in situations where gender identity was probably lacking in salience (Mulac et al. 1987, 1988) – and, arguably, male divergence in the direction of masculine-sounding voices when it was (Hogg 1985) – males and females with initial romantic inclinations are likely to diverge toward prototypically strong and soft communicative patterns, respectively, in many communities where traditional sex-role ideologies abound. Montepare

and Vega (1988) found that women sounded more "feminine" (e.g., higher and more variable pitch) when talking to an intimate as opposed to an unknown male other by telephone. We would take this to be an instance of complementarity rather than descriptive divergence as the authors themselves described it. This does not, however preclude the possibility of convergence occurring simultaneously on other linguistic dimensions. For instance, a woman may adopt a soft voice and certain paralinguistic and prosodic features with an eligible bachelor lawyer, yet may wish to gain his attraction, approval, and respect not only by fulfilling her feminine role requirements but also by converging to his more prestigious dialect. As noted earlier, Bilous and Krauss (1988) showed that women converged toward men's utterance length, interruptions, and pausing but diverged on backchannels and laughter. Notwithstanding the different forms and functions of laughing, they could be instances of speech complementarity, signaling as they do traditionally role-related involvement and functioning as compliments to the entertainment value of male discourse. Again, it is likely that there are optimal levels of speech complementarity, with Miller and Steinberg (1975: 239-40) providing an illustration:

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, then, is often accompanied by speech complementarity of other linguistic features. Naturally, the optimal degree and rate of convergence, together with the optimal balance of complementarity is difficult to encode from situation to situation. Relatedly, Goffman's (1967) view of a speaker was that of a juggler and synthesizer, an accommodator and appeaser, who achieved one goal while apparently playing out another. Seen in this light, and also by Tracy (1990) in her analysis of the encoding of multiple aspects of face, it is no wonder that interpersonal communication is often fraught with difficulties and misunderstandings. Street (this volume) provides a compelling analysis of doctor-patient relationships in which he argues that a fine meshing of physician convergence and complementarity is essential for patient satisfaction and compliance with health regimens.

The other "incongruent" combination remaining is psychological divergence allied to linguistic convergence, as for instance in the recipro-

cation of both verbal abuse (Mosher, Mortimer, and Grebel 1968) and interruptive behavior (Argyle and Kendon 1967), referred to by Giles and Powesland (1975) as "negative response matching." Drawing once again on observational experience from Montreal in the 1970s, many English Canadian students reported effortful instances of accommodating to presumed French Canadians in what was to them nonfluent French, and then being replied to, and often interrupted by, fast, fluent English by French Canadians in what was interpreted as a prosodically denigrating manner. Woolard (1989: 69) has reported similar patterns in Catalonia, where the linguistic etiquette of an "accommodation norm" is that "Catalan should be spoken only between Catalans." Hence, Castilian individuals who accommodate Catalan speakers with their language will be responded to in Castilian. Similarly, Miller (1982) has claimed that a common strategy adopted by Japanese to show their displeasure to a Caucasian who is speaking Japanese is to adopt a foreign talk register or refuse to carry on a conversation in Japanese and instead diverge in the direction of English. Such patterns of response have been shown experimentally to be highly favored by the Japanese (especially women) even in response to highly proficient Japanese-speaking Westerners, although the reasons for it are self-presentationally complex and not as divergent as perhaps Miller assumed (Ross and Shortreed 1990). Somewhat similarly, and highlighting the implicit variability in this process, Ellingsworth (1988: 265) has reported:

In sojourns in Latin America and Southeast Asia, the author's use of inelegant but workable host-country language or expressions often was countered with requests to proceed in English, even when the host's competence in it was severely limited. Some people perceived the visitor's initiative as a pejorative reflection on their English ability; still others appeared pleased at the effort, but indicated that they preferred to practice their English.

Other instances of linguistic convergence and psychological divergence are available in the mimicking sphere (see, however, Bavelas et al. 1988). Up to this point, CAT has, perhaps naively, focused mainly on accommodations occurring only when speakers have the repertoire to accomplish this. However, this restriction may have turned out to be theoretically limiting given the relationship between accent mimicry, everyday humor, and media humor. However, Coupland (1985) has shown in a case study how a Cardiff disk jockey frequently shifted pronunciation in a consciously mimicked but nonetheless comfortable convergent manner across a whole range of British and American dialects

Table 4. *Some linguistic and psychological parameters of accommodation*

	Linguistic			
	Convergence		Divergence	
	Objective	Subjective	Objective	Subjective
<i>Psychological</i>				
Convergence	A	B	C	D
Divergence	E	F	G	H

in seeming solidarity with particular listeners, singers, and figureheads. Nevertheless, mimicking can often be accomplished with divergent aims, as shown in Basso's (1979) study, where Amerindians mocked whites by mimicking their communicative behavior. Such negative mocking, but with more critical intent, has been observed by Kathryn Sheils (pers. comm.) among Jamaican schoolteachers (who usually adopt a standardized form in the classroom) converging and mimicking their pupils' creolized forms when the latter are deemed disruptive, inattentive, or lacking in academic effort. Indeed, the sender's motives and recipient's attributions of mimicking and mocking are an intriguing dynamic that, if interpersonally incongruent, can lead to acute misunderstandings.

The conceptual picture becomes even more complex when we distinguish between objective and subjective levels. Following Thakerar et al. (1982), we have then the following $2 \times 2 \times 2$ design where logically eight combinations of communicative and psychological accommodations emerge from Table 4. These are A + B, C + B, A + D, C + D, G + H, E + H, G + F, and E + F. Note here that A + B was our original "pure" convergence, G + H was our original "pure" divergence, C + D encapsulates our notion of communicative complementarity (see also later), and E + F shows our examples of on-target convergence with divergent intent. Although it is possible to contrive would-be illustrations of the remaining combinations (which doubtless actually occur), as well as to introduce additional dimensions, such as partners' perceptions, attributions, and evaluations of these sender-focused tactics, we will note only B + C (given that hyperconvergence can be taken as a case of divergence), which captures conceptually the notion of hyperconverging to such an extent that the act is seen as derisory (e.g., baby talk to the functionally competent elderly).

Cognitive organization versus identity maintenance functions

Thus far, convergence and divergence have been treated essentially as affective phenomena. Thakerar et al. (1982), however, suggested that such shifts may function psychologically for two main reasons: cognitive organization and identity maintenance (Giles, Scherer, and Taylor 1979; see also Brown 1977). The cognitive organization function involves communicative features used by interlocutors to organize events into meaningful social categories, thereby allowing a complex social situation to be reduced to manageable proportions. In this way, speakers may organize their outputs to take into account the requirements of their listeners (Applegate and Delia 1980; Blakar 1985; Higgins 1980), and listeners may select from this and organize it according to the cognitive structures most easily available for comprehension (Brown and Dell 1987; Mangold and Pobel 1988). As mentioned earlier, increased intelligibility is a valued by-product of convergent acts and may on occasion be the principal motive for accommodating (see later). Indeed, Greenbaum and Cooper (1988) have argued that baby talk, which undoubtedly fulfills a cognitive organization function in providing simplified input, could usefully be considered in CAT terms (see also Zuengler this volume). Similarly, Pierson and Bond (1982: 136), investigating American-Cantonese bilingual interviews, reported:

During the interview itself, Cantonese bilinguals broke up their speech units with filled pauses more when working in Cantonese with Americans. They also slowed down their speed of speaking Cantonese by 8.4%, even though this reduction was not statistically significant. Both changes functioned to assist the interviewer in decoding their meaning by giving him more time.

On other occasions, interlocutors may wish to communicate in a manner that will allow them to present themselves most favorably, and listeners may, in turn, wish to select creatively from among the multiple messages coming their way in a manner that maintains or even enhances their own self- or group esteem. Thus the identity maintenance function of communication serves to fulfill the emotional needs of participants as they attend to speech markers and nonverbal features that positively reinforce their egos and fail to process any information that may have a negative effect on their images (see Snyder and Swann 1978). As Fig. 2 suggests, these two dimensions may be considered orthogonal, allowing for the likelihood that virtually every social episode has a modicum of both functions, and often multiple other goals as well

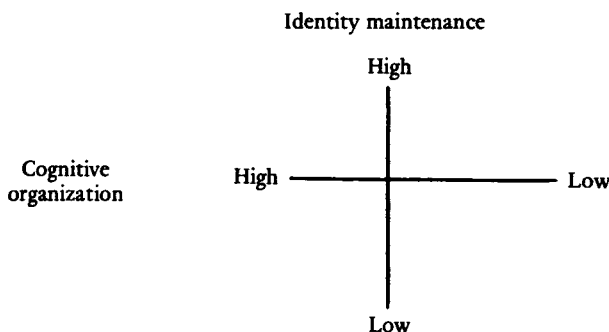


Figure 2. Accommodative functions according to two-dimensional space.

(O'Keefe 1988). In other words, those whose approval we desire may come to be those with whom we wish to, or want to be seen to wish to, establish clarity. Relatedly – and some British migrants to certain areas in the United States may identify with this example – interlocutors may desire speedy and effective service interactions and accordingly converge, not in any sense to gain approval but as a tactic to reduce their cultural distinctiveness and so avoid the routinized (often well-disposed) metalinguistic commenting that nonconvergence would predictably elicit. In addition, such convergence would circumvent the predictable request for repetition that would ensue by recipients who anticipate hearing their local dialect.

In the Thakerar et al. studies outlined earlier, it was suggested that the low-status speakers were converging toward where they *believed* the standard speakers to be as an act of identity maintenance; that is, they wished to be seen as more competent than they had been believed to be thus far. The high-status speakers converged, it was argued, toward where they believed the low-status speakers to be as an act of cognitive organization in order to assist the latter's comprehension and grasp of the situation. Hence, the same accommodative acts may emerge to fulfill different and complex functions. That said, we should be alert to the fact that locating speakers' goals and accommodative acts, as in Fig. 2, is a conceptual convenience that does little justice to the frequent occasions when convergence and divergence are collaborative acts somewhat unsuited to individualistic schematic depictions. Nevertheless, we believe the distinction modeled by Gallois et al. (1988) of (stable) preinteractional versus (jointly constructed) interactional goals, the former sometimes assuming irrelevance in light of the emergent latter, is a use-

ful way of breaching the seemingly irreconcilable objectivist and subjectivist traditions in social and communicative studies (see Burrell and Morgan 1979; Gudykunst and Nishida 1989; Tracy and Coupland 1990).

Divergence too may function not only to express attitudes but also to give order and meaning to the interaction and to provide a mutually understood basis for communication, that is, to fulfill a cognitive organizational function. For example, the accentuation of accent, as well as content differentiation in certain contexts or other forms of divergence, may serve to indicate that interlocutors are not members of the host community or familiar with the current situation in which they find themselves. This self-handicapping tactic (Weary and Arkin 1981) thereby increases the probability that norms inadvertently broken can be attributed externally and that a greater latitude of acceptance will be made available for the speaker; divergence here has some real social utility (Ellen Ryan pers. comm.), perhaps particularly in intercultural environments. This divergence, moreover, acts as a form of self-disclosure to indicate that certain spheres of knowledge and behavior may not be shared and that intersubjectivity, as a consequence, is at a premium (see also Rommetveit 1979).

In other situations, speech divergence may be employed to bring another's behavior to an acceptable level or to facilitate the coordination of speech patterns. Two studies have indicated that sometimes interactants (e.g., therapists and adults) may diverge in the amount of talking they do in order to encourage their partners (i.e., clients and children) to talk more (Matarazzo et al. 1968; Street, Street, and Van Kleeck 1983). Anecdotaly, it is not uncommon for people to slow their speech rate when speaking with extremely fast-talking and or excited others in order to "cool them down" to a more comfortable communicative and cognitive level [see Cappella (1981) and Hale and Burgoon (1984) with respect to proximity and body orientations, respectively, in terms of the notion of "compensation"]. In a different theoretical context, Ickes et al. (1982) showed that when males were expecting to talk via intercom to a "cold" rather than a "warm" interlocutor, they sounded far more warm in the former than in the latter condition, presumably to enhance the projected warmth of their partners.

1.5. Discourse attuning

The essential structure of the accommodation model, as we have introduced it in the foregoing discussion, is shown schematically in Fig. 3.

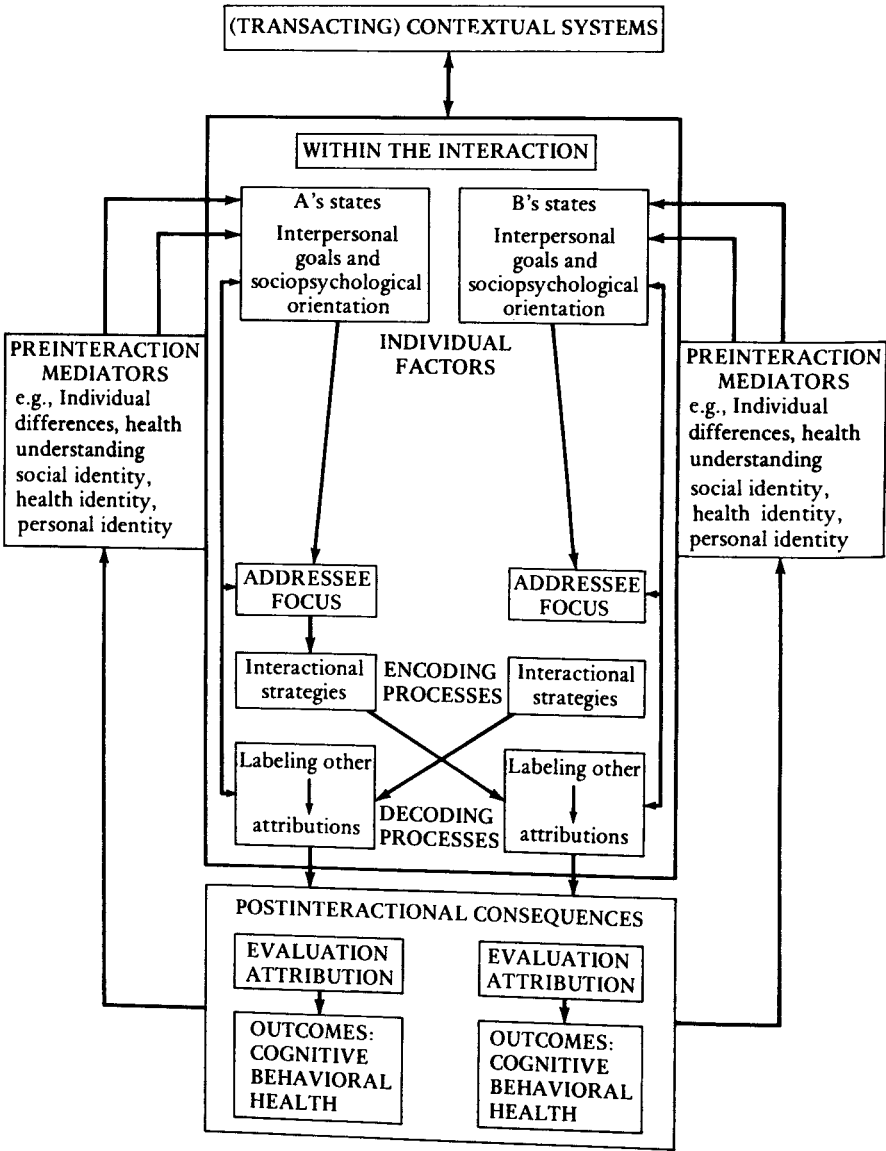


Figure 3. An accommodation model of communication, health, and aging.

Here CAT processes are linked explicitly to social support, health concerns, and health outcomes – an area to which we turn shortly. For the moment, however, we note that the *addressee focus* in the previous discussion has centered on the other's communicative patterns, or, rather, on perceptions or expectations of the other's communicative performance. From this perspective, convergence, divergence, and complementarity as we have discussed them may be labeled "approximation strategies." Coupland et al. (1988) elaborated CAT so as to include a broader range of addressee foci, and hence *attuning* strategies, than the approximation ones, and so to open the door to the reconceptualizing of accommodation in terms of discursive and sequential acts. One alternative addressee focus involves attending to the other's interpretive competence, which we often assess through his or her social category memberships (by such cues as accent, lexical diversity, skin color, and so forth) and the inferences we derive from these (Clark and Marshall 1981). Sometimes, as with the generic elderly, such competences are stereotyped negatively as an impaired ability to understand (Ryan and Cole 1990). This then leads to a set of *interpretability* strategies that can be used to modify the complexity of speech (e.g., by decreasing the diversity of vocabulary or simplifying the syntax), increase clarity (by changing pitch, loudness, and/or tempo by incorporating repetition, clarification checks, explicit boundary devices, and so on), and/or influence the selection of conversational topics (by staying in areas that are familiar, safe, and unthreatening for the other; see Hamilton this volume).

Two other addressee foci involve attending to the addressee's conversational needs and role relationships that lead to sets of *discourse management* and *control strategies*, respectively. The first of these is to be seen as a highly diverse set of discursive options whereby a speaker may facilitate a partner's contribution to ongoing talk, for example by offering turns, eliciting disclosable information, repairing problematical sequences, and generally working to redress positive or negative face threats to a recipient (Brown and Levinson 1987; Penman 1990). Alternatively, attuned discourse management involves supportive reciprocity strategies (Coupland et al. 1990) whereby a speaker's contribution can be endorsed and accredited through backchanneling or more explicit approbatory moves. Control strategies likewise embody degrees of attuning, reflecting the disposition of role options in talk, as for example when a young speaker may suppress her own disclosure and offer "the floor" to an elderly partner (Coupland et al. 1988).

The explanatory value of this more propositionally and functionally based specification of CAT is only now beginning to be demonstrated, with the chapters (in this volume) by Ferrara, Hamilton, and Linell being important instances. The *theoretical* necessity for this expanded perspective is, however, already clear. Accommodative or attuned talk is frequently achieved strategically when behavior matching, participant to participant, is either not the evaluatively salient criterion or is highly inappropriate. One interesting case emerges from the conversation analysis literature on troubles telling (Jefferson 1980, 1984a,b). Although "laughing together is a valued occurrence which can be the product of methodic, coordinate activities" (Jefferson 1984b: 348), the established pattern in troubles telling is that "the troubles-teller laughs, and the troubles-recipient declines to laugh by talking to the prior utterance and thus by talking to the trouble" (ibid.: 350). So, laughter by teller and recipient enter quite polarized strategies and evaluative frames during troubles talk vis-à-vis the "laughability" of circumstances from one or another perspective. A possible objective similarity between teller's and recipient's behavior – laughter – is here not in itself the interpersonally meaningful concern; rather, it is the contextual and sequential organization of laughter, and its highly attuned *absence*, that signify.

More generally, psychological and subjective convergence along these dimensions (i.e., approximation, interpretability, discourse, and control strategies) – a phenomenon we have termed "high attuning" – can then attenuate sociolinguistic distance, bring the other person psychologically closer, and enhance conversational effectiveness and smoothness; in other words, it can fulfill both cognitive organization and identity maintenance functions. Of course, the converse can occur by means of *contra*-attuning. The exposition of Coupland et al. (1988) outlines further possibilities of *under*- and *overattuning* when interactional strategies deemed appropriate by one or the other party (e.g., an elderly recipient) are perceived to have been under- or overplayed. Thus, for example, "overattuning" (or overaccommodation; see Hamilton and Linell this volume) can be specified to characterize demeaning or patronizing talk – often well intentioned in its own terms – when excessive concern is paid to vocal clarity or amplitude, message simplification, or repetition (see Caporael 1981), as well as "over-accounting" when excuses, justifications, and apologies proliferate when recipients do not feel they are really warranted. Similarly, Fanon (1961) has discussed the patronizing speech whites sometimes adopt with blacks, making them feel that they are considered childlike or even subhuman. Alternatively, excessively

authoritarian and dismissive styles may, for example, be characterized as underattuned (or underaccommodative) along the dimensions of control and discourse management, respectively. Moving toward a life span perspective on accommodation, recent data show that in intergenerational encounters the elderly are perceived – as a consequence, for instance, of generating many painful self-disclosures – by the young as underaccommodating the young's communicative position and identity (Coupland et al. 1991). Although there are many ways to construe such seemingly egocentric disclosures in functionally valuable ways for the elderly (see Coupland et al. 1988), there are nonetheless data to suggest that the elderly's linguistic habits change in later life as a proposed consequence of their grounded lack of interest in matters of social prestige – for instance, increased use by immigrants of an ethnic tongue not much utilized for many years (Clyne 1977).

Interpretive competences are, of course, more dynamic than discussed thus far and can change according to topic change. In other words, and particularly with unfamiliar others, we constantly need to assess – and reassess – the amount of shared knowledge we have on particular issues, events, and people as these are sequentially focused upon during the course of a conversation; sometimes this is necessary not simply to accommodate their lack of expertise but, more strategically, to ensure that our own discourse does not appear naive or ill-fated given our addressees' competences, dispositions, and evaluative tendencies. Commenting on research on (mainly referential) perspective taking, Krauss and Fussell (1988) have outlined the kinds of appraisals (and social comparisons) individuals need to make if they are, in our terms, to estimate their partner's interpretive competences. These are the extent to which interlocutors share the same (1) background knowledge on topic-relevant areas and affective orientations to these; (2) situational definitions, goals, plans, and task orientations; (3) definition of the relationship (e.g., intimacy); and (4) physical context (e.g., norms of appropriate behaviors). Processing such social data is often achieved swiftly and in a conversationally implicit manner, as reported by Anderson and Garrod (1987). They observed misunderstanding occurring between pairs of speakers cooperating to solve a problem involving the movement of pieces in a maze graphically displayed. Even so, as the dialogue continued, the speakers gradually began to adopt the same terms to describe and refer to items in the maze without any discussion of this strategy or any apparent need for it. Similarly, Isaacs and Clark (1987) found that subjects in their experiment swiftly appraised whether or not their interlocutors

were experts on New York City without any apparent explicit indication and often within their first exchange of utterances. That said, it is a *collaborative* and dynamic venture that requires that individuals negotiate what is conversationally necessary to ensure that ongoing interpretive competences are optimal (Clark and Schaefer 1987). Indeed, Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs (1986) claim that conversationalists take for granted this process and use their so-called principle of mutual responsibility. This is described thus: "The participants in a conversation try to establish, roughly by the initiation of each new contribution, the mutual belief that the listeners have understood what the speaker meant in the last utterance to a criterion sufficient for current purposes" (33). Schober and Clark (1989) argue that a significant portion of this collaborative process is rather *opportunistic* – termed "grounding" – to the extent that participants in novel communicative contexts try out various referential (and presumably affective as well) shortcuts that are either accepted by the other(s) that are acted upon or else rejected and alternatives negotiated instead (see also Clark and Schaefer 1989).

Attuning to others' interpretive competences would seem essential when we wish to persuade them, attempt to regulate their behavior, or induce them to comply with a request. The extensive work of Delia and his associates (e.g., O'Keefe and Delia 1985) has examined the kinds of listener-adapted messages respondents claim they would utilize to persuade [and to comfort; see Burleson (1985)] another in an imaginary situation. The strategies reported as indicative of cognitively complex individuals give us guidelines as to the interpretability strategies accommodating persuaders might adopt in regulative disputes. Based on this research tradition, and specifically the work of Clark (1984) and Kline (in press), sophisticated social influencers would attempt to use language so as to coordinate their recipients' beliefs and actions with their own. More specifically, this attuning process would include the following strategies: (1) expressing mutually held values; (2) outlining the problem and arguing so as to induce the other to reflect on it in a way that is presumed to be different from the perspective originally held by the other; (3) and creating a resolution that is appealing to the other, does not damage, and even promotes his or her positive identity and face needs. It is interesting that this constructivist school of listener-adaptive communication and the cognitivist, referential school of perspective taking rarely cite each other and would doubtless profit from each others' insights; in addition, they rarely make recourse to CAT formulations. Obviously, the time is ripe for theoretical as well as empirical

rapprochments; the recently elaborated format of CAT allows cross-fertilizations to occur to mutual benefit in understanding the negotiative character of interpersonal, small group, and intergroup relations and communication.

1.6. Attuning and health care

In the course of our CAT work in gerontology, it became clear to us that accommodative discourse and dilemmas were intricately related to psychological well-being as well as physical health (see, e.g., Coupland et al. 1988; Giles and Coupland 1991). Moreover, we have adduced that socially supportive activities so conducive to life satisfaction for many people are necessarily grounded in accommodative discourse. Figure 3 offers a generalized template for construing communication, health, and aging dimensions in these terms. The area of social support is a *zeitgeist* in the health care literatures, albeit not without controversy (e.g., Gansster and Victor 1988). The general notion here is that being provided with informational, social, and emotional support can be a prevailing resource as well as a ready-made buffer against specific stresses and illnesses (e.g., Cohen and Syme 1985). Although there are many complexities and caveats to this in the literature, it is claimed that those who believe they can access supportive networks, as well as the feeling that they contribute reciprocally to them, have greater psychological and physical well-being than those who do not consider such resources to be available to them (Heller, Swindle, and Dusenbury, 1986; Ingersoll-Dayton and Antonucci 1988). It has been argued recently (Giles, Williams, and Coupland 1990) that CAT can be important to health in the sense that high attuning may be a core component of many supportive encounters, not only productively but also receptively in terms of active listening (see McGregor and White 1990). Indeed, feeling supported may be a function, to a greater or lesser extent, of the degree of attuning one receives, and so those who are known or perceived to possess high attuning skills (Burleson 1984b) may be preferentially sought out as supporters (see also Albrecht and Adelman 1984).

Nevertheless, high attuning and supportiveness are not intrinsically positive correlates, and attuning may not always be a sufficient criterion for support. Giles, Williams, and Coupland (1990), then, distinguish not only between attuning and support (high and low on each) but also, as shown in Table 5, between positive and negative *long-term* outcomes. There may be occasions when encounters designed to be supportive are

Table 5. *A three-dimensional model of the interrelationships among attuning, support, and health outcomes*

	Support			
	High		Low	
	Attuning			
	High	Low	High	Low
Long-term health outcomes				
Positive	A	B	C	D
Negative	E	F	G	H

discursively managed by supporters employing low attuning strategies (e.g., Cell B in Table 5). Supporters, for example, may challenge recipients' assumptions and identities, predictably through interruptions, repeated clarification requests, subverting discourse, and generally contra-attuning in pursuit of positive support. In this vein, it is worthwhile noting that Arntson and Droge (1987) have shown, by observing epileptic support groups, that positive self-images, healthier attitudes, and healthier life styles are fostered when the group discourages indulgent "victim narratives." This is not to argue that support is a property of a single interaction itself – although it can be – as low support from any one localized interaction can be instrumental in the design of long-term support programs. Moreover, high attuning can in fact comprise nonsupportive behavior (Cell G in Table 5) where familial security, empathy, and understanding shown (with perhaps the best of motives) can encourage dependence, use of a sick role, and so forth (Rook and Pietromonaco 1987). In this way, recipients' negatively valenced perceptions can be validated that may not boost their own psychosocial resourcefulness and capacity to adapt (e.g., Eggert 1987; Kobasa and Puccetti 1983), for instance, to some conditions of aging and ill health.

Lehman, Ellard, and Wortman (1986) point to some supposedly empathic comments made by supporters in a bereavement context (e.g., *I know exactly how you feel*) that can actually be evaluated by the recipient, in terms of CAT, as exceedingly underaccommodative. Thus it is suggested that failed support attempts, rather than reflecting misunderstandings or upsets, may be related to intense anxiety of supporters caused

by extreme sensitivity to the listener's vulnerability and heightened awareness that a negative outcome may result from saying the wrong thing (see also Dunkel-Schetter and Wortman 1982). In Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, support providers may be anxious about the possibility of intruding upon their recipients' *negative face* – their valued privacies and identities. Space precludes attention to each cell in Table 5, but a couple of further exemplars can be aired. First, we conceptualize the feasibility of high social support and high attuning leading to poor health outcomes in the long term, as, for instance, when two close friends depend on each other to promote their mutual alcohol or drug abuse (Cell E). Second, contra-attuning and low (or ultimately withdrawn) support could in some circumstances (e.g., airing interpersonal grievances in the context of a loving relationship) eventuate in significant cognitive reappraisals and positive health outcomes (Cell D).

1.7. Epilogue

CAT has, then, developed extensively since its inception. We now consider that accommodative processes can, over the long term, affect even issues of life and death. For instance, an aging person who is the recipient of over-attuning across different contexts and different interactional partners (among the array of agist social representations freely available in many societies) is likely to induce many people to feel that others believe him to have lost his competence. And in a very short time, given that many Western societies socialize us (and even our having colluded in the past with respect to others) into accepting the links between aging, ill health, and incompetence, we are susceptible to accepting others' definition of us in the same terms. As a consequence, we are then prone to the linguistic self-categorization (Turner 1987) introduced earlier and take on the attributes we prototypically associate with being elderly. In short, we constrain our own possibilities and life spans (Giles and Coupland 1991).

As we noted at the outset, it is in this same generally *applied* spirit that the following chapters have been compiled. In them, accommodation theory is invoked to model sometimes very small-scale, local interactional happenings, sometimes wholesale shifts of alignment between social groups. In *all* cases, the authors invoke key components of the accommodation framework, in the social and particularly institutional contexts that bound their chapters, to explore the complex interrelations of communication strategies and styles, the multiple social and psycho-

logical dimensions that contextualize them, and their social implications.

Chapters 2 and 3 show how accommodation concepts can explain adaptive processes in radio broadcasting (Bell) and courtroom (Linell) settings. The dislocation of speaker and audience in mass communication, Bell argues, limits the interpersonal dynamic of local convergence and divergence. On the other hand, broadcaster styles are no less strategically accommodative, since mismatches between broadcasters and their audiences carry heavy penalties. Bell thus shows, using Labov's sociolinguistic variable methodology, New Zealand newscasters' speech being designed to match audience characteristics, but also reflecting the prescriptions of corporate styles.

Linell's courtroom data, on the other hand, demonstrate how face-to-face talk needs to be characterized as "a multilayered and multimodal phenomenon" whereby accommodation processes, even in the same sequence of talk, can similarly show different and even contradictory trends. Patterns emerge, however, showing, for example, that legal professionals do attune their discourse to defendants' characteristics, and that judges and lawyers do modify their styles of talk – more or less interrogative, more or less conversational – in relation to the severity of the offenders' offense. Linell's chapter makes thus an important contribution to our understanding of language and interaction as factors relevant to, indeed as the achievement of, judicial outcomes.

The chapters by Street, Hamilton, and Ferrara show CAT at work in medical, caring, and clinical domains respectively. Street gives us an authoritative, critical review of communication research in doctor-patient consultations and a reinterpretation in terms of the accommodation framework. Given that the relevant literatures show some important inconsistencies, the chapter works toward a clear statement of priorities for future research. Suggesting that particular configurations of accommodation and nonaccommodation can severely impair practitioner-patient relations, and hence potentially health-care delivery and acceptance, Street concludes that more theoretically integrated, relational, and process-focused research is urgently needed.

Hamilton's analysis of interaction between normal and mentally disabled speakers, and in particular her longitudinal case study of her own interaction with Elsie, an Alzheimer's disease patient, is therefore a timely contribution. In these often problematic exchanges, Hamilton outlines the functioning of accommodation strategies, for example to buoy up social interaction or forestall interactional difficulties. More generally,

CAT can clarify the constraints on role-taking abilities that characterize several disability syndromes.

Ferrara's chapter, based on data from psychotherapeutic encounters, highlights methodological alternatives for CAT, showing the wide range of accommodative phenomena available for quantification. Her data show progressive, real-time convergence at syntactic, morphosyntactic, and phonological levels – primarily by lower-status clients to therapists. These findings are then set against analyses of discursive attuning variables – collaborative, echoing, and mirroring moves – that have specific salience as means of achieving rapport, and therefore, by implication, potentially successful intervention, during therapy.

The book's final three chapters deal, in various ways, with multilingual and interethnic concerns. In the second-language learning area, Zuengler again emphasizes the paucity of integrated theory and assesses what CAT can offer as a theory of second-language sociolinguistic variation. Accommodation, for example, provides appropriate conceptual apparatus for the (re)interpretation of Ferguson's notion of "foreigner talk" in a contextually richer and more differentiated manner. Once again, here we see the potential for CAT to model more or less problematical intergroup and interpersonal orientations, and the positive and negative potential consequences for language learning itself.

Gallois and Callan discuss situations where immigrants are expected to accommodate host communicative norms. They point out that an analysis of subjective norms in terms of their content, range, and clarity is crucial to understanding when accommodative acts are situationally appropriate or inappropriate. In an interesting study on the multiethnic context of Australia, these authors examine what males and females construe as acceptable and unacceptable verbal and nonverbal behaviors in response to compliments and criticism from Anglos and Italians of different statuses. Finding highly interpretable, yet complex, patterns of response that are dependent on subjects' sex, target ethnicity, and status, as well as whether the response was to a compliment or a criticism, Gallois and Callan make some telling points regarding the need to develop CAT further so as to take into account norm-following and norm-violating situations – particularly as they relate to perceived threats to personal and group identities. Putting into practice these empirical and theoretical ideas as inputs into intercultural training programs would likely enhance their efficacy significantly.

Bourhis argues for the value of CAT in providing a fuller understand-

ing of formal and informal channels of organizational communication and in four theoretical traditions in this area of inquiry. For example, he points to the fact that accommodation has great potential for exploring the constituents of a so-called open organizational climate that is believed to be important for job satisfaction and effective performance. While highlighting the lack of attention to bilinguality in organizational research and theory, Bourhis describes a large-scale Canadian study on bilingual civil servants in New Brunswick. There he shows how Francophone employees converge more to the first language of their coworkers than do their Anglophone counterparts. Moreover, he shows how this phenomenon is a function of the employees' level of bilinguality, as well as the organizational status of the potential accommodative target; and importantly, by means of his innovative "linguistic work environment" indexes, he shows the ethnic and language background of employees' immediate occupational networks. Like the other authors, Bourhis cogently opens up exciting new areas for the viability of CAT in crucial – and hitherto unexplored – applied domains.

These chapters, which often introduce new data, richly demonstrate CAT in action as a resource for applied sociolinguistics. Still, we are, of course, not blind to the further issues and exciting challenges that lie ahead. An important prospectus for us has already been introduced (Section 1.5) in terms of building real links with cognitivist and constructivist traditions so as to effect a clear understanding of the collaborative aspects of talk and the manner in which relationships, identities, situations, and their goals are negotiated and emerge through talk. Relatedly, future research needs to address, explicitly, sequential concerns, in line with our earlier observation that addressee foci (as specified in Fig. 3) are themselves interactionally *variable*, rarely holding for the duration of an entire episode of talk. In this connection, participants' own involvement in forms of protocol analysis, to chart the contingent nature of accommodation strategies in relation to prior conversational moves, may contribute new insights. By these means, more qualitative and interpretive designs should allow us to refine claims and findings relating to accommodation across groups or situations and temper the idealization implicit in the somewhat mechanistic conceptualizations of accommodative options as specified in the model's early life.

As discursive concerns come more to the fore in social psychological theory and analysis generally (see Potter and Wetherell 1987), there will indeed be value in reexamining quantitative research – for example, the accent-based studies of convergence and divergence with which speech

accommodation theory began – *in relation to* the functional organization of talk (see the modest beginnings of such an approach in Coupland 1988). For example, Maynard (1988) has argued that there are clear limits to the kinds of sociolinguistic markers that are amenable to quantitative, contrastive analysis and that have relatively stable social significance independent of their local positioning in rhetorical structures. A way to begin, then, is to focus on the “interaction order” as the locus for interpersonal accommodation, and then to explore the specific contribution of indexical sociolinguistic variables, such as segmental phonology, rate, or information density, to locally grounded accommodative moves. [This prescription is in fact very similar to that of Hymes (1977) for “socially constituted linguistics” generally.]

We began this chapter by placing accommodation theory among other traditions of research concerned with adaptive interpersonal processes in language and communication. Another task for the future is to impose further conceptual and taxonomic order on the range of sociolinguistic processes that may be implicated in interpersonal attuning. One intriguing area of overlap will be with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) specification of “positive politeness” strategies, construed as diverse moves to claim common ground with an interlocutor, portraying interactants as cooperators generally fulfilling interlocutors’ wants. Although these authors discuss such strategies exclusively in terms of moves made to redress face threats, their strategic currency is presumably broader, fulfilling face *promotion* and *maintenance* goals (see Penman 1990). They would appear to fall well in the context of traditionally invoked accommodative motives (to gain approval and increase communication efficiency). Correspondingly, CAT seems well suited to supplying the contextual elaboration that Brown and Levinson themselves suggest (in the introduction to their 1987 volume) their framework requires, and that has apparently limited its predictive power to date.

Theoretical models, perhaps particularly those seeking to capture generalizations about communication and relational processes, are unlikely to achieve stasis. As this chapter has amply demonstrated, CAT has seen major shifts of emphasis and, we would argue, has incorporated their new insights into its explanatory compass. Further changes (along the lines sketched earlier or otherwise) will doubtless follow. However, the rationale for the present volume is that a sociolinguistics that incorporates and articulates social psychological premises in its considerations of the practices and contexts of talk – and this fusion is the essence of the accommodation perspective – is already delivering insight into

the routine and exceptional relational experiences that comprise our social lives.

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