

Situational constraints on the evaluative significance of speech accommodation: some Australian data¹

PETER BALL, HOWARD GILES, JANE L. BYRNE,
and PHILIP BERECHREE

Introduction

As mentioned in a number of papers in this special issue, speech-accommodation theory was formulated in order to take account of the social psychological parameters of interpersonal speech diversity. The theory is concerned with providing an understanding of the underlying motives and intentions behind various modifications in speech as well as the social consequences of their usage. Prime among these speech strategies are upward and downward convergences and upward and downward divergences, with the former and latter involving linguistic shifts toward and away from an interlocutor respectively. The qualifiers 'upward' and 'downward' refer to whether the shift implies a move in a societally valued direction or a more stigmatized one. Hence, an accent shift toward a more prestigious-sounding other would be labeled 'upward convergence', whereas an accentuation of one's broader accent in his or her presence would constitute 'downward divergence'. Speech-accommodation theory has two basic tenets, one concerned with production and the other with reception (see Thakerar et al. 1982; Street and Giles 1982; Beebe and Giles, this issue). First, speakers will shift their speech styles to where they believe others are if they desire their social approval and/or wish to make their messages more intelligible. Second, listeners will react favorably to converging speakers if the act is construed as integration but react unfavorably to diverging speakers if the act is construed as dis-sociation.

The theory emerged in the early 1970s not only because scant empirical and theoretical attention had been afforded the social evaluation of speech shifts, but more importantly, perhaps, because it developed as a reaction against the overly *normative* framework provided by most studies of speech diversity. In other words, norms and rules were invoked as prevalent explanations (although by no means the exclusive ones; see for example Blom and Gumperz 1972; Fishman 1972; Scotton and Ury 1977) for understanding these linguistic phenomena. While speech-accommodation theory has ob-

viously acknowledged the frequently crucial roles of social rules in dictating speech patterns (see for example Bourhis 1979), research has centered around the dynamics of situations where norms are ambiguous or nonexistent. Owing to this nonnormative focus even on the social-evaluational level (e.g. Bourhis et al. 1975; Doise et al. 1976; Giles and Smith 1979; Street 1982), insufficient attention has been directed at investigating the situational boundaries of accommodation theory. Although some empirical work has explored this issue (Simard et al. 1976; Bourhis and Genesee 1980; see Bourhis, this issue), there is a distinct need to determine more precisely when normative and accommodative processes assume relatively superior roles, and when and how they combine or interact together.

The present study is a modest exploration of the above notions on the reception side and is an attempt to clarify the social constraints operating on speech-accommodation processes with the ultimate aim of making the theory situationally more robust. The setting chosen for the experiment was a supposed job interview where implicit social norms require an applicant to sound standard-accented and formal (see Street, this issue). The context of Australia for the study, where incidentally speech-accommodation research has never previously been reported, was appropriate in the sense that accent varieties, as in other Anglophone speech communities (Edwards 1982) can be conceptualized as occupying positions along a pronunciation continuum with superimposed social value from 'refined' at the high-prestige to 'broad' at the low-prestige pole (Mitchell and Delbridge 1965; Eltis 1980). The job applicant was heard on tape speaking outside the interview as well as inside it with either a refined- or broad-accented Australian employer. The former for his part was heard adopting in various conditions of the experiment one or other of the following speech strategies: (a) *maintaining* either his broad or refined accent from outside to inside the interview irrespective of the accent of his prospective employer; (b) *converging* his accent toward that of his interviewer, that is, either adopting a broad accent outside the interview and converging toward the employer's refined accent (upward convergence), or adopting a refined accent outside the interview and converging toward the employer's broad accent (downward convergence); (c) *diverging* his accent away from that of the interviewer, that is, either adopting a broad accent outside the interview and diverging away from his broad-accented employer by using a refined accent, or adopting a refined accent outside the interview and diverging away from his refined-accented employer by using a broad accent.

Applying the rationale that speech accommodative processes assume less evaluative importance when strong normative forces are operating explicitly or even implicitly, the following hypotheses were advanced:

1. Any shift to a prestigious accent, whether it be upward convergence to

a refined-accented interviewer or upward divergence away from a broad-accented interviewer, would be favorably evaluated, particularly on traits of perceived competence in this formal context.

2. Any shift away from such prestigious speech norms, whether it be downward divergence from a refined-accented interviewer *or* downward convergence to a broad-accented interviewer, would be unfavorably evaluated, particularly on traits of perceived competence.

Although speech-accommodation processes were predicted to be of secondary importance, they were still felt to have some evaluative salience particularly on non-task-oriented traits of social attractiveness, benevolence, and solidarity (Lambert 1967; Brown et al. 1975; Ryan 1979), such that

3. Of the normative shifts, upward divergence would be perceived less favorably than upward convergence; and similarly for psychologically dissociative reasons among the counternormative shifts, downward divergence would be less favorably perceived than downward convergence.

Method

Subjects

160 matriculation college students aged between 16 and 18 years participated in the experiment and were divided into eight groups of 20 subjects (Ss).

Materials

These consisted of a folder containing details of the experiment, eight stimulus tapes, and a response questionnaire.

The folder, which every subject received, contained printed information about the interview situation in such a manner as to portray the candidate (C) both as searching desperately for a job and as a victim of the present unemployment crisis. The employer (E), on the other hand, was painted as being in no urgent rush to appoint a new person from among a large number of applicants he had to choose between. This information was intended to give the impression of the candidate as being strongly dependent on the employer for a job and as having a strong motive to curry favor during the interview. The folder also contained what purported to be photocopies of C's letter of application and his completed application form with a photo affixed. This procedure ensured that all Ss received the same information from which to make inferences about the candidate's social class and

educational level, thereby controlling for the influence of these factors in later judgements as well as making the whole affair utterly realistic for the participants.

The eight stimulus cassette tapes all consisted of a 20-second passage of the candidate's speech before his interview, a three-minute extract supposedly taken *during* an interview, with the candidate conversing with the prospective E, and a final 20-second passage of C's speech *after* this interview. The tapes were recorded by two male drama students proficient at producing authentic broad (B) and more refined (R) Australian accents. One played the role of E and the other that of C reading scripts prepared by the experimenters. The eight stimulus tapes were in fact compiled from two 'master' tapes which the E and the C made in both B and R accents. The preparation of the tapes involved C speaking his pre-, during-, and postinterview lines in first a B and then an R accent, leaving two seconds between each line of the interview script. On another tape, E read his lines through, with a two-second pause between each line, in first a B and then an R accent. From these two 'master' tapes the experimenters were able to compile the eight different stimulus tapes. Table 1 shows how these eight recordings combined all the speech strategies of no change (maintenance), convergence (upward and downward), and divergence (upward and downward) into a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial design for the experiment. The aforementioned pauses between lines allowed a realistic interview dialogue between E and C to be edited. The pre- and postinterview monologues were supposedly recordings of C's feelings about the interview, elicited of course before and after it.

Table 1. *Experimental design*

C	Broad		Refined	
	Broad	Refined	Broad	Refined
Before and after interview:				
During interview:				
E refined	no ¹ change	upward ² convergence	downward ³ divergence	no ⁴ change
E broad	no ⁵ change	upward ⁶ divergence	downward ⁷ convergence	no ⁸ change

The response questionnaire required Ss to place a tick on a seven-point rating scale for each of 44 bipolar scales. The first 28 of these (randomly assorted) measured the perceived personality of the candidate and were derived from previous research on speech style and social evaluation (Giles and Powesland 1975; Ryan and Giles 1982). Based on distinctions introduced by Lambert (1967), Ryan and Carranza (1975), and Brown et al. (1975), two broad categories of scales were adopted, viz. status/competence, and

social attractiveness/integrity. The first of these comprised upper class-lower class; intelligent-unintelligent; active-passive; ambitious-unambitious; confident-unsure; efficient-inefficient; industrious-unindustrious. The second included arrogant-not arrogant; mature-immature; sincere-insincere; honest-dishonest; dependable-not dependable; polite-impolite. Another ten scales were those considered particularly important when interviewing someone for a medium-status job (on Congalton's [1963] Australian Socio-economic Status Scale). These traits were obtained in a pilot study by sending out letters to Commonwealth Employment Service Officers and Vocational Guidance Counsellors all over Tasmania and asking them to list in order of importance those qualities they would look for in a candidate when interviewing for a medium-status job. From 40 replies, ten traits occurred with a frequency of occurrence of between 37.5 and 92.5% ($\bar{X} = 54.5\%$). These 'employment-relevant' scales were respectable-scruffy appearance; good-bad communication skills; high-low education; friendly-unfriendly; able-unable to work as part of a team; possesses-does not possess initiative; imaginative-unimaginative; responsible-irresponsible; stable-unstable personality; flexible-inflexible. The remaining five scales measuring perceived personality were included based on a pilot study of the aforementioned scales as well as intuition with regard to the aims of the investigation. They were rough-not rough; irritable-not irritable; frivolous-not frivolous; easily-not easily swayed; manipulative-unmanipulative.

The next four scales were scales purporting to measure job suitability (Kalin and Rayko 1980) and tapped to what extent listeners felt that the candidate wanted the job, was suitable for the job, might have got the job, and also (imagining he did get the job) his chances for future progress in it. A further set of scales asked listeners to rate the suitability of C for four other jobs which differ in status and amount of contact with the public. The four jobs were determined in another pilot study where 20 Ss were asked to rate 20 jobs for status (high-low) and amount of contact (much-little) on five-point scales. The four jobs ultimately selected after a 2×2 ANOVA with the repeated measures of status and contact ($F = 460.8$, $df. = 1,76$; $p < .0001$; $F = 103.92$; $p < .0001$, respectively) were school teacher (high status: 2.05; much contact: 3.85), shop assistant (low status: 4.6; much contact: 1.8), accountant to a business (high status: 2.05; little contact: 3.85), and cleaner (low status: 4.85; little contact: 4.65). From this same pilot study, the job for which the candidate was supposedly being interviewed was chosen, viz. government office clerk (medium status: 3.85; medium contact: 3.65).

Listeners' perceptions of C's speech during the job interview itself were also elicited by means of the scales fluent-hesitant; fast-slow; formal-informal; correct-incorrect grammar. Finally, the last set of scales was

designed as a check on the manipulations to ascertain whether or not Ss perceived the accents of both E and C as broad (B) or refined (R), and also to check if the shifts in accent by C were noticed as intended. Ss were therefore required to rate the accent of C before, during and after the interview (B-R) as well as the accent of E during the interview (B-R).

Procedure

A different tape was administered to each of the eight groups by the experimenter. Ss were told they were going to hear extracts of C's speech taken from before, during, and after his interview. Before hearing the tapes, Ss were required to read through all the information in the folder, which they were told they were being given in order to help them visualize better the interview situation they were about to hear. When all Ss had read the folder, the response questionnaires were distributed and Ss were asked to read carefully all the printed instructions on the first page of the booklet. The appropriate stimulus tape was then played through once, the experimenter pointing out the pre/during/post interview sections of the tape to the Ss. They were then instructed that they were going to get another chance to hear the tape through again and that while it was being rewound, they could look back at the information provided in their folder; they were allowed approximately 90 seconds for this. Ss were then requested to close their folders and listen to the tape for the second and final time and subsequently required to complete the response questionnaire. They were instructed that when they had completed all the rating scales they could, if they so wished, put any comments they had about the tape or experimental situation on the front of the booklet. An examination of their comments thereon together with free discussion with Ss after the experiment suggested that they had considered the exercise realistic, engaging, and thought-provoking.

Results

Two analyses of the data deriving from the last four scales described in the previous Materials section allowed us a check on whether the Ss had in fact perceived C's and E's speech styles as intended. The first of these, which was a $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3$ ANOVA on Ss' retrospective assessments of C's accents on the tape included the experimental-condition factors, E's accent (B vs R), C's accent pre- and postinterview (B vs R), C's accent during the interview (B vs R), and the repeated-measures factor of C before, during, and after the interview. A significant interaction between the last three of these factors

($F = 13.57$, $df. = 2,456$; $p < .0001$) confirmed the success of our actors' speech strategies. The mean ratings of C's accent can be seen in Table 2. An inspection of these perceptions brings to light three interesting features. First, C was *perceived* as becoming slightly more refined even when he was maintaining his accent as either B or R throughout. Second, the B-R-B shifts were considered as less of a perceptual differentiation than their R-B-R counterparts, a finding which is arguably predictable given the greater psychological impact of the latter (Giles 1973). Third, the R accent is seen in a more polarized fashion when it is viewed in the context of a shift to, and especially a shift away from, it as compared to when viewed in maintenance sequences.

Table 2. *Perceptions of C's accents in the four experimental sequences**

Accent before and after	Accent during	Interview			Correspondence with cells numbered in Table 1
		pre-	during	post-	
B	B	1.60	2.05	1.80	1 and 5
	R	1.30	4.85	1.48	2 and 6
R	B	5.60	1.38	5.48	3 and 7
	R	3.68	4.50	3.60	4 and 8

*The higher the mean rating, the more refined the speech sample is perceived to be.

A $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ANOVA with the factors E's accent (B vs R), C's accent pre- and postinterview (B vs R), and C's accent during the interview (B vs R) was computed on Ss' judgements of E's accent in the study. Once again, the results confirm our actors' accent manipulations in that a main effect ($F = 32.61$, $df. = 1,151$; $p < .0001$) showed that E was perceived as adopting the accents he intended (\bar{X} for R = 6.13; \bar{X} for B = 2.56). Interestingly enough, however, the two other main effects emerged significantly, showing adaptation-level tendencies (Helson, 1959) such that E was viewed as more refined when C was B both outside ($F = 9.36$; $p < .003$) and inside ($F = 10.13$; $p < .002$) the interview.

Having confirmed that Ss in the situation perceived the speech strategies of both C and E as intended in our manipulation of the independent variables, our attention now turns to Ss' reactions to them psychologically. A Principal Factor with Iterations Factor Analysis simplified the 44 dependent measures to a smaller set of factors. Fifteen iterations were required before convergence was accomplished, producing 11 principal factors with a cut-off point of eigenvalue less than 1.0. These 11 factors were subsequently extracted and Varimax rotated, providing seven factors with eigenvalues greater

than 1.0 and accounting for 89.3% of the variance. The six major factors were interpreted in terms of the scales which they loaded most highly and appear below:

Factor 1. 'Competence' (44.3% variance)

Upper class, .79; intelligent, .70; mature, .64; respectable appearance, .64; good at communication skills, .63; not rough, .62; very likely to get job, .61; suitable as an accountant, .61; definitely suitable for the job, .59; speech grammatically correct during interview, .55; excellent chances for future progress, .53; efficient, .52; R accent during interview, .49; fluent and articulate during interview, .45; sense of responsibility, .44; suitable as secondary-school teacher, .44; possesses initiative, .41; not at all suitable as a cleaner, .41.

Factor 2. 'Dependability' (13.9% variance)

Honest, .70; sincere, .69; friendly, .56; not irritable, .54; active, .53; sense of responsibility, .44; able to work as part of a team, .43.

Factor 3. 'Speech-norm deviance' (13.9% variance)

Refined before interview, .95; refined after interview, .93; B during interview, .37; speech informal during interview, .33; not at all grammatically correct during interview, .26.

Factor 4. 'Eagerness' (6.5% variance)

Ambitious, .56; industrious, .54; possesses initiative, .46; wanted job, .43; imaginative, .43; chances of future progress good, .33; definitely suitable for job, .31; sense of responsibility, .29; highly educated, .28; flexible, .27.

Factor 5. 'Flippancy about job' (5.9% variance)

Frivolous, .52; did not want the job at all, .43; not at all suitable for job, .36; very unlikely to have got the job, .36; poor chances of future progress, .33; arrogant, .32; speech informal during interview, .28; not at all grammatically correct during interview, .28; self-confident, .26.

Factor 6. 'Poor fluency during interview' (4.7% variance)

Slow speech rate during interview, .74; bad at communication skills, .52; not at all fluent and articulate during the interview, .44; unsure, .42; not at all grammatically correct during the interview, .35; unimaginative, .34; employer accent refined, .33; does not possess initiative, .27; definitely suitable as a cleaner, .26; broad during the interview, .25.

Factor 7. 'Determination' (4.4% variance)

Manipulative, .55; formal speech during the interview, .47; inflexible, .41; polite, .32; ambitious, .29; wanted job very much, .27.

Factor scores were calculated for each of the seven factors and these data were subjected to $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ANOVAs with the factors of E's accent (B vs R), C's accent pre- and postinterview (B vs R) and C's accent during the interview (B vs R); Tukey tests were applied to the interactive data wherever appropriate. Let us describe the significant findings emerging from these analyses factor by factor.

Regarding the first factor, which accounted for almost half the total variance, two main effects arose such that C was perceived to be significantly more 'competent' when he adopted an R accent both inside the interview situation ($F = 54.88$, $df. = 1,146$; $p < .0001$) and outside it ($F = 22.14$; $p < .0001$) than when he adopted a B accent. Two interaction effects emerged on the second factor between E's accent and C's accent outside the interview ($F = 5.62$, $df. = 1,146$; $p < .02$) and between C's accent inside and outside the interview ($F = 5.30$; $p < .02$). More specifically, it was found that the B-accented C outside the interview was seen as least 'dependable' if E was also B-sounding, and most 'dependable' if E had an R accent ($p < .01$). Perhaps more importantly, C was seen as 'dependable' if he retained the same accent inside the interview as outside it, whereas he was considered *least* dependable when he shifted in the B-R-B fashion. The third factor appears also to be related to accent shifts and was labeled 'speech-norm deviance'. Although three main effects emerged such that E ($F = 4.22$; $p < .04$) and C inside ($F = 73.49$; $p < .0001$) and outside ($F = 282.23$; $p < .0001$) the interview were considered more 'deviant' when they spoke with a B rather than an R accent, the interaction between the last two variables is perhaps most telling ($F = 24.25$; $p < .0001$). Here, the C who shifts from R outside the interview to B within it is perceived to be the most 'deviant' and significantly more so than he who maintained his B accent throughout ($p < .01$), with the B-R-B shift being regarded as least 'deviant'.

The last four factors, despite the fact that they only account for 21.5% of the variance in total, also produced interesting trends. Regarding the fourth factor, while an R accent during the interview was considered by Ss to indicate greater 'eagerness' on the part of C than when he adopted a B guise ($F = 5.08$; $p < .03$), an examination of the interaction between E's accent and C's accent during the interview ($F = 3.57$; $p < .061$) revealed that the B-accented C with a B-accented E was perceived as less 'eager' than an R-accented C with an R-accented E ($p < .01$). Furthermore, an examination of the interaction between C's accent inside and outside the interview ($F = 3.42$; $p < .07$) showed that the C who shifted R-B-R was seen as significantly

less eager than he who had maintained his R accent throughout ($p < .01$). Regarding the fifth factor, while applicants were viewed as more 'flippant' with an R- than a B-accented E ($F = 6.81$; $p < .01$) and when they themselves spoke B during the interview than R ($F = 8.23$; $p < .001$), an examination of the nonsignificant interaction between these two variables showed that the relationship is of some importance. Most 'flippant about the job' was considered to be the B-accented C with an R-accented E during the interview, and least 'flippant' was considered to be the R-accented C with a B-accented E ($p < .01$). Two main effects emerged for the sixth factor such that C sounded more 'disfluent' when confronting the R- rather than the B-accented E ($F = 27.25$; $p < .0001$) and similarly when C himself spoke with a B rather than an R accent ($F = 10.93$; $p < .001$) during the interview. An examination of the nonsignificant interaction between these two variables, however, once again produced an interesting trend in that C was viewed as especially 'disfluent' when he adopted B with an R-accented E and least disfluent when he adopted an R accent with a B-accented E ($p < .01$). Finally, with regard to the seventh factor, C was perceived to be more 'determined' when he spoke with an R rather than a B accent during the interview ($F = 5.28$; $p < .05$).

Discussion

Street and Hopper (1982) have reviewed the evidence suggesting that the perception of vocal characteristics of speakers can be markedly affected by psychological characteristics (e.g. stereotypes, motives) inherent in particular kinds of observers. The present data also support this contention to the extent that Ss' likely normative *expectations* that C would adhere to the social pressures of sounding more refined inside rather than outside the interview were apparently so strong that the applicant was perceived as more refined in accent even when he actually maintained it throughout the experiment. Perhaps more interesting is that, in addition to psychological biases operating in the perception of speech, Table 2 showed that speakers' voices were perceptually biased depending on the sociolinguistic *contexts* in which they occurred. For instance, E's accent was perceived differently depending on whether C was either broad or refined, and Ss' perceptions of the extent of the latter's accent shifts themselves were variously influenced by where the applicant was coming from and moving to linguistically. Whether these perceptual biases carried over in any meaningful way to influence the evaluative traits is of course a moot point as, for example, C was viewed as more 'norm deviant', 'flippant about the job', and 'disfluent' when interviewed by an R- rather than a B-accented E. Yet the shifts portrayed were realistic analogues of everyday linguistic behaviors such that they should not cause us

undue concern. Nonetheless, future research (both empirical and theoretical) could be fruitfully applied to exploring further the relationships and interactions between perceptual and evaluative processes in the reception of messages.

The fact that seven clearly definable factors emerged from the principal components analysis of Ss' ratings arguably demonstrates that listeners were highly involved in the task at hand and were evaluatively sensitive. Indeed, previous language-attitude research usually reveals no more than two factors (e.g. Williams 1976), and some situations can invoke only one evaluative dimension from Ss (Edwards 1979). Nevertheless, our first two factors ('competence' and 'dependability') accord well with the two major ones typically found in previous studies of the social evaluation of speech styles, with the former accounting understandably for far more variance than the latter factor in this particular situation; interestingly in this respect, the other five remaining factors were task-related to the extent that they were linguistically or occupationally oriented.

Strong support appears to have emerged for the first two hypotheses of this study and far less so for the third. Regarding hypothesis 1, the main finding appeared to be whether or not C had adopted an R accent during the interview. If he had, he was upgraded more in terms of perceived 'competence', 'eagerness', and 'determination' than if he had not. In addition, C was perceived as more 'disfluent' and 'flippant about the job' if he adopted a B rather than an R accent. Such findings emerged largely irrespective of whether the applicant had arrived at his R-accent via upward convergence to an R-accented E or via upward divergence from a B-accented E. Indeed, there was little evaluative distinction made by Ss between these two speech strategies, but what there was tended to favor upward divergent over upward convergent speakers, thereby disconfirming the former portion of hypothesis 3; speakers of the former strategy were seen as least 'disfluent' and most 'eager' overall. In other words, adherence to the implicit sociolinguistic norms for an interview was the valued event, and conceptualizations of accent shifts in terms of interpersonal accommodation appeared to have little judgemental significance, at least in terms of the evaluative traits adopted in this study. At the same time, however, the applicant's B-R-B shift was not accorded universal favor as is perhaps also apparent in terms of the tinge of 'machivellianism' surrounding the 'determination' factor. More specifically, shifts to R in the interview from B outside it were construed by Ss as involving the *least* 'dependable' speakers. It could well be that despite the normative pressures conceded by observers of the interaction as acting on speakers, this speech shift could, at one and the same time, be attributed more negatively to a potential ingratiation motive (see Jones 1964) on the part of the speech conformer. Nevertheless, C was upgraded in 'competence' overall when he

spoke R irrespective of whether it was inside or outside the interview context. The social rewards accruing from such R maintenance in this setting are no surprise owing to the institutionalized status of refined accents in Australia. Interestingly, there appeared to be very little value (except perhaps in terms of a moderate attribution of 'dependability'), at least in terms of the evaluative scales adopted herein, in maintaining one's B accent (cf. Bourhis 1979).

As the results were mostly main effects due to B and R usage during the interview by C, confirmation of hypothesis 2 also follows as the converse of the above. That is, R-B-R-shifting speakers were seen as less 'competent', 'eager', and 'determined' but more 'flippant about the job' and 'disfluent' than their accent-normative counterparts. Moreover, the counternormative shifts appeared to have such a perceptual and evaluative impact that they provided an independent factor in the principal components analysis – 'speech-norm deviance' – accounting for nearly 14% of the variance. Once again, whether this speech-norm deviance was conceptualized in terms of C's downward convergence to a B-accented E or as downward divergence away from an R-accented E, it was still viewed negatively. Indeed, spontaneous comments emitted by Ss who had heard such shifts underlined the fact that they were felt to be of little pragmatic value to the speakers concerned. Nevertheless, some comfort was afforded hypothesis 3 to the extent that downward divergence was the most severely sanctioned speech strategy of all and a speaker of it considered the most 'norm deviant', 'flippant about the job' and 'disfluent'.

Clearly, the present study has shown that speech-accommodation processes are relegated in evaluative importance when strong speech norms are operative and as such necessitate more explicit reference to the existence of situational constraints operating within the propositional format of speech-accommodation theory (cf. Thakerar et al. 1982). A very preliminary examination of the emerging findings from the present investigation induced Street and Giles (1982) to revise the first proposition of speech-accommodation theory, which was production-oriented to this end (see also Beebe and Giles, this issue). However, more detailed contemplation of the results underlines the need to reconsider the *reception*-oriented propositions as well. Propositions 3 and 6 should now be revised (cf. Street and Giles 1982; Beebe and Giles, this issue) respectively as follows;

3. Speech convergence will be *positively* evaluated by recipients when the resultant behavior is (a) perceived as such psychologically; (b) perceived to be at an optimal sociolinguistic distance from them; and (c) attributed internally with positive intent; but *negatively* evaluated when prevailing situational norms define the convergent act as a violation of them.

6. Speech maintenance and divergence will be *negatively* evaluated by recipients when the acts are perceived as psychologically diverging, but

favorably reacted to by observers of the encounter who define either (a) the interaction in intergroup terms and share a common, positively valued group membership with the speaker, or (b) the divergent act as a valued adherence to prevailing situational norms.

Throughout this study we have assumed the existence of implied sociolinguistic norms during the supposed job interview. It would be interesting to determine whether such norms would have had such subjective reality for observers (as indeed they did appear to have, based on Ss' spontaneous questionnaire comments) had the applicant-employer dependency relationship in our study been reversed. In other words, had E been construed as more or less desperate to hire a good candidate quickly but C known already to have received a number of highly attractive job offers, it would be our guess that under these circumstances the sociolinguistic norms would have been less prominent and hypothesis 3 in particular would have procured more support. Obviously, then, in future studies, whether they be production- or reception-oriented, much work needs to be done on *empirically* establishing the existence of sociolinguistic norms for a wide range of speech behaviors and their relative perceived importance, as well as their specific contents (McKirnan and Hamayan 1980; Sigman 1980; Cappella and Greene 1982). Ultimately, such essential groundwork will lead us to determine more precisely *when* speech-accommodation processes have more or less significance for speakers and for hearers.

*Department of Psychology
University of Tasmania*

Notes

1. We are grateful to the University of Tasmania Special Grants Research Fund for supporting the research reported in this paper and to Rick Street for his comments on an earlier draft of it.

References

- Blom, J. P., and Gumperz, J. J. (1972). Social meaning in linguistic structures: code switching in Norway. In *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, J. J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (eds.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Bourhis, R. Y. (1979). Language in ethnic interaction: a social psychological approach. In *Language and Ethnic Relations*, H. Giles and B. Saint-Jacques (eds.), 117-141. Oxford: Pergamon.
- , and Genesee, F. (1980). Evaluative reactions to code-switching strategies in Montreal.

- In *Language: Social Psychological Perspectives*, H. Giles, W. P. Robinson, and P. M. Smith (eds.), 335-343. Oxford: Pergamon.
- , Giles, H., and Lambert, W. E. (1975). Social consequences of accommodating one's speech style: a cross-national investigation. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 6, 55-72.
- Brown, B., Strong, W. J., and Rencher, A. C. (1975). Acoustic determinants of perceptions of personality from speech. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 6, 11-32.
- Cappella, J. N., and Greene, J. O. (1982). A discrepancy-arousal explanation of mutual influence in expressive behavior for adult and infant-adult interaction. *Communication Monographs* 49, 89-114.
- Congalton, A. A. (1963). *Occupations in Australia*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Doise, W., Sinclair, A., and Bourhis, R. Y. (1976). Evaluation of accent convergence and divergence in cooperative and competitive intergroup situations. *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 15, 247-252.
- Edwards, J. R. (1979). Judgements and confidence reactions to disadvantaged speech. In *Language and Social Psychology*, H. Giles and R. N. St. Clair (eds.), 22-44. Oxford: Blackwell.
- (1982). Language attitudes and their implications among English speakers. In *Attitudes Towards Language Variation: Social and Applied Contexts*, E. B. Ryan and H. Giles (eds.), 20-33. London: Edward Arnold.
- Eltis, K. (1980). Pupils' speech style and teacher reaction: implications from some Australian data. *English in Australia* 51, 27-33.
- Fishman, J. A. (1972). *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
- Giles, H. (1973). Accent mobility: a model and some data. *Anthropological Linguistics* 15, 87-105.
- , and Powesland, P. F. (1975). *Speech Style and Social Evaluation*. London: Academic Press.
- , and Smith, P. M. (1979). Accommodation theory: Optimal levels of convergence. In *Language and Social Psychology*, H. Giles and R. N. St. Clair (eds.), 45-65. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Helson, H. (1959). The theory of adaptation level. In *Readings in Perception*, D. C. Beardslee and M. Wertheimer (eds.), 335-352. Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand.
- Jones, E. E. (1964). *Ingratiation: A Social Psychological Analysis*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Kalin, R., and Rayko, D. (1980). The social significance of speech in the job interview. In *The Social and Psychological Contexts of Language*, R. N. St. Clair and H. Giles (eds.), 39-50. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum.
- Lambert, W. E. (1967). A social psychology of bilingualism. *Journal of Social Issues* 23, 91-109.
- McKirnan, D. J., and Hamayan, E. V. (1980). Language norms and perceptions of ethnolinguistic group diversity. In *Language: Social Psychological Perspectives*, H. Giles, W. P. Robinson, and P. M. Smith (eds.), 161-169. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Mitchell, A. G., and Delbridge, A. (1965). *The Pronunciation of English in Australia*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.
- Ryan, E. B. (1979). Why do low-prestige language varieties persist? In *Language and Social Psychology*, H. Giles and R. N. St. Clair (eds.), 145-157. Oxford: Blackwell.

- , and Carranza, M. A. (1975). Evaluative reactions towards speakers of Standard English and Mexican American accented English. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 31, 855-863.
- , and Giles, H. (eds.) (1982). *Attitudes Towards Language Variation: Social and Applied Contexts*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Scotton, C. M., and Ury, W. (1977). Bilingual strategies: the social functions of code-switching. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 13, 5-20.
- Sigman, S. J. (1980). On communication rules from a social perspective. *Human Communication Research* 7, 37-51.
- Simard, L., Taylor, D. M., and Giles, H. (1976). Attribution processes and interpersonal accommodation in a bilingual setting. *Language and Speech* 19, 374-384.
- Street, R. L., Jr. (1982). Evaluation of noncontent speech accommodation. *Language and Communication* 2, 13-31.
- , and Giles, H. (1982). Speech accommodation theory: a social cognitive approach to language and speech behavior. In *Social Cognition and Communication*, M. Roloff and C. Berger (eds.). Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage.
- , and Hopper, R. (1982). A model of speech style evaluation. In *Attitudes Towards Language Variation: Social and Applied Contexts*, E. B. Ryan and H. Giles (eds.), 175-188. London: Edward Arnold.
- Thakerar, J. N., Giles, H., and Cheshire, J. (1982). Psychological and linguistic parameters of speech accommodation. In *Advances in the Social Psychology of Language*, C. Fraser and K. R. Scherer (eds.), 205-255. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, F. (1976). *Explorations of the Linguistic Attitudes of Teachers*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

