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Accommodation Strategies in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

Lauretta O. Chinyeaka
Department of English Language and Literature
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
lo.chinyeaka@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

The paper examines accommodation strategies adopted by speakers in their interactions. Accommodation strategies in oral discourse are convergence and divergence. Speakers are said to be in convergence when they adapt to the communicative behaviours of their interlocutors and to be in divergence when verbal differences are emphasized. A person can induce another to judge him or her more favourably by reducing differences between the two done possibly to gain social approval. This is convergence behaviour. Conversely, if a person desired to be judged less favourably, the shift in behaviour will be away from the behaviour of the person or others. Using Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus,* the story of Kambili, a young girl of fifteen years growing up under a father who is an overzealous Catholic and stiff disciplinarian, this study identifies the accommodation strategies adopted by the characters and the motivations for the strategies. It also determines the impact(s) on the behaviour of the interlocutors. Six sample excerpts purposively selected from the text were used as data. Findings revealed that convergent and divergent strategies identified were mainly motivated by the situations and age of the addressee. More so, convergence strategy adopted by the characters promoted feelings of solidarity and strengthened the cordial relationship while divergence strategy provoked hostility and indicated dissociation from the negative behaviour of the addressees concerned. In conclusion, convergence accommodation strategy promotes cordiality and enhances social interactions.

Key words: accommodation, speech styles, speech style-shifts, power, convergence, divergence

Introduction

In social interactions, the speech of the speakers oftentimes tends to be similar to the speech pattern of the persons they are addressing or away from it. This process has been referred to as speech accommodation (Holmes, 245). It usually takes place when the speakers are well disposed towards the people they are addressing or what they stand to gain through the interaction. A speaker is thus said to converge to the speech of the addressee when the speech is similar or a situation where an individual may be ready to sacrifice something in order to gain social approval of some kind, for instance, shift in behaviour in order to become more like the interlocutor. Convergence behaviour is said to be up, if the approval sought is of higher social status or 'down' if with someone of lower social status (Wardhaugh, 113). It is divergent when it is away from the speech pattern of the person s/he is talking to.

According to Holmes (245), people accommodate in different ways. When in a party a person responds to and develops a topic raised by an addressee, the person is converging in the content of the speech. When people make simple the vocabulary and grammar they use in talking to children or foreigners 'they are said to be converging to the lesser linguistic proficiency of their addressees'. When a complex technical message gets translated for someone who is not familiar with the jargon speech accommodation is taking place. In multilingual countries like Singapore, India or Democratic Republic of Congo-Zaire (Nigeria inclusive) with many varieties to choose from, speakers accommodate to others by selecting the code or varieties they consider most comfortable to their addressees. In written prose like in ordinary face-to-face oral interactions, speech of people engaged in dialogue often is similar or they differ in pattern. When such accommodation processes are not observed as appropriate or if the purpose is misconstrued by the addressee, problems such as feelings of inferiority, rejection, contempt or avoidance may arise on the part of the interactant of lower social status while the one of higher status may display pride, arrogance, insult or prejudice. These may disrupt smooth social interactions and lead to breakdown in communication. In literary discourse, which is the

focus of this research, authors would always mirror these experiences in the characters, settings, plots and story lines since literature reflects real life. The major motivation for undertaking this research stems from the fact that quite a number of studies exist on accommodation. An example is 'syntax accommodation in social conversation' (Rehaine Boghrati, Joe Hoover, Katie M. Johnson, Justin Garten and Morteza Deghani (2016). This study is, therefore, a contribution to the debate on why interlocutors employ different accommodation strategies and their influence on social interactions. The study, therefore, seeks to examine accommodation strategies in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. It identifies the accommodation strategies adopted by the characters in the text and how they conform to the four social psychological theories that underlie accommodation, the motivation for the accommodation strategies and the impact(s) on the behaviour of the interlocutors.

Conceptual Framework

Speech Styles

Yule (257) describes speech style as a social feature of language use. Ezeifeka (136) asserts that they are linguistic options open to the speech community for particular events and activity types. She notes that "they include: varieties (High/Low, Standard/non-standard, dialects, register, choices, formal/informal/casual etc.) and speech events where they are appropriate – political, academic, folk literature, casual conversations; degrees of formality within one standard language." In language use, speakers usually adopt different styles of speaking. They can speak very formally or very informally depending on the circumstances. Wardhaugh (47) posits that ceremonial occasions usually require very formal speech; public lectures somewhat less formal, casual conversations between intimate persons on matters of little importance may be extremely informal and casual. According to him, the level of formality chosen may be related to a variety of factors such as the kind of occasion, the various social status, age and other differences that exist between the interlocutors; the particular task that is involved such as writing or speaking, the emotional involvement of one or more of the participants. Holmes asserts that "language varies according to who is using it" (239). She notes

that the addressees and the context influence our choices of code or variety be it language, dialect or style. A change from one speech style to the other by an individual, according to Yule (257), is referred to as style-shifting.

Motivation for Shifts in Speech Style

Speech style-shifts motivate accommodation. Shifts in speech style are motivated by a number of factors. Some of them are addressees: age of addressee, social background of addressee, social distance (Holmes, 240-244), speaker (Wardhaugh, 47), the situation (Hudson, 199), and speech event (Ezeifeka, 136).

Accommodation

Accommodation, according to Giles and Coupland, "at one level is to be seen as a multiply-organized and contextually complex set of alternatives, regularly available to communicators in face to face talk. (61). They note that "it can function to index and achieve solidarity with or dissociation from a conversational partner reciprocally and dynamically." At another level, according to them, "accommodation strategies can characterize wholesale realignments of patterns of code - or language selection, though again related to constellations of underlying beliefs, attitudes and socio-structural conditions." (61) It has to do with the way individuals and groups relate with one another. Hudson (223) sees it as "the desire to reduce differences in behaviour in order to stress solidarity" He stresses that accommodation is only applicable when there are contrasting alternatives - i.e. in situations when people with high solidarity need to be contrasted with people with low solidarity.

More so, accommodation, according to Wardhaugh (113), "is one way of explaining how individuals and groups may be seen to relate to each other. He observes that an individual can try to induce another to judge him or her more favourably by reducing the differences between the two. He further asserts that speakers sometimes attempt to accommodate to the expectations that others have of them when they speak, noting that they do this consciously and deliberately or be unaware of what they are doing. Similarly, Yule (258) defines speech accommodation as "our ability to

modify our speech style towards or away from the perceived style of the person(s) we are talking to." Holmes (245) observes that when people talk to each other, their speech often becomes similar. In other words, according to her, each person's speech converges towards the speech of the person they are talking to. This process she refers to as speech accommodation. She notes that it usually happens where the speakers like one another or where one speaker has a vested interest in pleasing the other or putting them at ease. According to her, converging towards the speech of another is usually seen as a polite speech strategy which means that the addressee's speech is acceptable and worth imitating. Using the same pronunciation and the same sort of vocabulary instances she gave which signal that you are on the same wavelength.

The power variable, according to Giles and Coupland (73), "is one that emerges often in accommodation literature and in ways that gives credence to the central predictions of the model." He observes that Hamers, using role-taking procedures in a bilingual industrial setting in Quebec has indicated greater convergence to the language of another who was an occupational superior than to one who was a subordinate. He noted that foremen converged more to managers than workers and those managers converged more to higher managers than to foremen. He notes also that Van den Berg studying code switching in commercial settings in Taiwan discovered that salespersons converged more to customers probably because the customers in those settings wield more economic powers. (qtd in Giles and Coupland ,73)

Accommodation theory involves two main processes: convergence and divergence. Convergence has been defined as "a strategy whereby individuals adapt to each other's communicative behaviour in terms of a wide range of linguistic/prosodic/non-vocal features including speech rate, pausal phenomena and utterance length, phonological variants, smiling, gaze and so on" (Giles and Coupland, 63). Yule avers that divergence is when a speech style is adopted to emphasize social distance between speakers. This, he points out, can be achieved by adopting forms that are distinctly different. Divergence, according to Giles and Coupland (65),"is the term conceived to refer to the way in which

speakers accentuate speech and non- verbal differences between themselves and others." They note that there is a hierarchy of divergent strategies available to speakers which ranges from indexical and symbolic dissociation (for example using in-group stereotyped pronunciation) through explicit propositional non-alignment (expressing disagreement or hostility) to physical distancing (ending or avoiding interaction)"(65). Like convergence, divergence according to LaFrance can be displayed in many forms, verbal and non- verbal. (qtd in Giles and Coupland,66).

Motivations for Accommodation

Many factors give rise to accommodation. Wardhaugh (113) observes that a person can try to induce another to judge him or her more favourably by reducing differences between the two. He states that it could also be done to gain social approval of some kind. This is referred to as convergence behaviour. Alternatively, if one desires to be judged less favourably the shift in behaviour will be away from the behaviour of the person or others. This he referred to as divergence behaviour. He gives as an example one putting on airs and graces in order to deliberately disassociate oneself from peers. A desire to get on well with others and make them feel comfortable is another reason for accommodation offered by Holmes (244).

Bell (qtd in Wardhaugh, 113) notes that "one type of convergence behaviour is said to be motivated by how speakers often attempt to deal with listeners through audience design done by orienting their speech towards others through code choices." He states that speakers associate classes of topics or settings with classes of persons and so, they shift when talking on those topics or in those settings as if they are talking to addressees whom they associate with the topic or setting. Topics such as occupation or education, and settings such as office or school, according to him, cause shifts to a style suitable to address an employer or teacher. Intimate topics or a home-setting, he adds, also elicit speech appropriate for intimate addressees such as family or friends.

Theoretical Framework

This work is based on Accommodation Theory; a Sociolinguistic theory developed by Howard Giles in 1983. Accommodation Theory evolved from the Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) which demonstrates the value of psychological concepts in understanding the dynamics of speech (Agbedo, 72). The theory posits that when people interact, they adjust their speech, their vocal patterns and their gestures to accommodate to others. It is a theory that seeks to explain shifts in the style of speaking people make such as when a person changes his/her way of speaking to make it sound more or less like the speech of the person they are to talking to" (Richards and Schmidt, 5). It has to do with the way individuals and groups relate with one another. It explores the various reasons why individuals emphasise or minimise the social differences between themselves and their interlocutors through verbal and non-verbal communication. The theory is premised on the links that exist between language, context and identity. It also x-rays the inter-group and the interpersonal factors that lead to accommodation.

There are two main accommodation processes described in this theory: convergence and divergence. Convergence refers to the strategies through which individuals adapt to each other's communicative behaviours in order to reduce the social differences that exist between them. Convergent behaviour could be upward if you seek the approval of someone of higher status, or downward if the approval sought is of someone of lower status. Divergence refers to a process in which a speaker linguistically moves in the opposite direction in order to make his or her speech sound more unlike that of the person(s) being addressed.

Underlying this theory, according to Thanasoulas, an online source, are four social psychological theories that actually constitute it and account for people's tendency to converge towards or diverge away from the speech of others. These are similarity- attraction, social exchange, causal attribution and

Tajfel's theory of inter-group distinctiveness. Similarity-attraction theory has it that the more similar our attitudes and beliefs are to certain others; the more likely it is we will be attracted to them. Social exchange theory suggests that speakers and listeners share a common set of interpretative procedures which allow the speaker's intentions to be encoded by the speaker, and correctly interpreted by the listener. Causal attribution theory proposes that when we interact with others, we engage in an interpretative process, evaluating the individuals in terms of the possible motives that we attribute as the cause of their action.

The process of inter-group distinctiveness, as theorized(s) by Tajfel, who argues that when members of different groups are in contact, they compare themselves on dimensions which are important to them, such as personal attributes, abilities, material possessions. In this inter-group social comparisons, individuals seek to find ways in which they can make themselves positively distinct from the out-group in order to enhance their social groups, Divergence in speech style is often employed to maintain inter-group distinctiveness and differentiate the out-group, especially when group membership is a salient issue or the individual's identity and group membership is being threatened. The accommodation theory is very relevant to this research, because it seeks to exposit the dynamics of speech in social interactions.

Research Questions

1. What accommodation strategies were adopted by the characters and how do they conform to the four social psychological theories that underlie accommodation?
2. What are the motivations for the accommodation strategies adopted by the characters?
3. What are the impact(s) of the strategies on the behaviour of the interlocutors?

Methodology

The accommodation strategies adopted by the characters in the text, and how they conform to the four social psychological theories that underlie accommodation are highlighted, the motivations for the accommodation strategies adopted by the

characters as well as the impact(s) of the strategies on the behavior of the interlocutors are identified. Six sample excerpts of the accommodation strategies are used as data.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Research Question 1
What accommodation strategies were adopted by the characters in the text and how do they conform to the four social psychological theories that underlie accommodation?

There is a display of convergence accommodation strategy by the characters in the text. This is seen in the interaction between Kambili and her classmate, Ezinne when they resumed classes after their holidays thus:

> "How was your holiday, Kambili?" Ezinne leaned over and asked.
> "Fine."
> "Did you travel abroad?"
> "No." I said. I didn't know what else to say but I wanted Ezinne to know that I appreciated that she was always nice to me even though I was awkward and tongue-tied. I wanted to say thank you for not laughing at me and calling me a backyard snub the way the rest of the girls did, but the words that came out were,
> "Did you travel?"
> Ezinne laughed. "Me? O di egwu. It's people like you and Gabriella and Chinwe who travel, people with rich parents. I just went to the village to visit my grandmother."
> "Oh," I said. (49)

Here, Ezinne is converging to Kambili in the vernacular, a code they both share and so she adapts to her linguistically. The theory of social exchange is also displayed here because they share a common set of interpretative procedures which enhance their communication.

Convergence accommodation strategy is again displayed in the interaction between Kambili's mother and Aunty Ifeoma, her

sister-in-law when the two were discussing Kambili's father's hostile attitude to his old heathen father in the former's bedroom thus:

> "You know Eugene did not get along with Ifediorah?" Aunty Ifeoma's whisper was back, fiercer, louder. Because Ifediorah told him to his face what he felt. Ifediorah was not afraid to tell the truth. But you know Eugene quarrels with the truths that he does not like. Our father is dying, do you hear me? Dying. He is an old man, how much longer does he have, gbo? Yet Eugene will not let him into his house, will not even greet him. Ojoka! Eugene has to stop doing God's job. God is big enough to do his own job. If God will judge our father for choosing to follow the way of our ancestors, then let God do the judging, not Eugene." (95-96)

Here, Aunty Ifeoma is converging to Kambili's mother in the vernacular, a code they both share. Wardhaugh's earlier assertion that 'intimate topics or a family setting elicit speech appropriate for intimate addressees - family or friend' is also applicable here. Aunty Ifeoma is related to Kambili's mother by marriage. Again, their relationship is cordial. Social exchange theory is also reflected here because they share a common set of interpretative procedures that enhance their communication.

Divergence accommodation strategy is also showcased in the interaction between Eugene Achike, Kambili's father and his sister Aunty Ifeoma when they were discussing the death and burial of their late father thus:

> "Eugene, our father has fallen asleep." Aunty Ifeoma said…
> "When?"
> "This morning. In his sleep. They took him to the mortuary just hours ago."
> "Did you call a priest to give him extreme unction?" he asked…
> "Ifeoma, did you call a priest?" Papa asked.

> "Is that all you can say, eh, Eugene? Have you nothing else to say, gbo? Our father has died! Has your head turned upside down? Will you not help me bury our father?"
> "I cannot participate in a pagan funeral, but we can discuss with the parish priest and arrange a Catholic funeral."
> Aunty Ifeoma got up and started to shout. Her voice was unsteady. "I will put my dead husband's grave up for sale, Eugene, before I give our father a Catholic funeral. Do you hear me? I said I will sell Ifediora's grave first! Was our father a Catholic? I ask you, Eugene, was he a catholic? Uchu gba gi!" Aunty Ifeoma snapped her fingers at Papa; she was throwing a curse at him… (186)

In the above interaction, Aunty Ifeoma is indignant at Eugene's proposal of a Catholic funeral for their heathen father and so she diverged in the content of her speech. She switches to a curse in the vernacular to express her repulsion at the idea. Causal attribution theory is again displayed here. Aunty Ifeoma evidently engaged in an interpretative process, evaluating Eugene in terms of the possible motive that she attributes as the cause of his action.

Divergence accommodation strategy is showcased in the interaction involving Amaka, her brother Obiora and Kambili when they were discussing the recent development in the university when Aunty Ifeoma was a lecturer there:

> "They are telling Mom to shut up"
> Shut up if you do not want to lose your job
> because you can be fired fiam just like that."
> Amaka snapped her finger to show how fast
> Aunty Ifeoma could be fired.
> "They should fire her, eh, so we can go to America"
> "Mechie onu," Amaka said.
> "America?" I looked from Amaka to Obiora.
> Aunty Phillipa is asking Mom to come over. (218-219)

In the above interaction, Amaka is annoyed at her brother, Obiora's statement, so she diverged in the content of her speech by giving him a sharp rebuke in the vernacular. Causal attribution

theory is showcased here. Amaka rebukes Obiora because she has engaged in an interpretative process and has evaluated Obiora's possible motive for his speech.

Display of convergence and divergence accommodation strategies are differently seen in the interactions involving Aunty Ifeoma, her son, Obiora, and men from the Special Security Unit when they came to search her house following the university students' riot thus:

> "Who sent you here?" Aunty Ifeoma asked.
> "We are from Special Security Unit in Port Harcourt."
> Do you have any papers to show me? You cannot just walk into my house."
> "Look at this yeye woman oh!" I said we are from the Special Security unit!" The tribal marks curved even more on the man's face as he formed and pushed Aunty Ifeoma aside.
> "How you go just enter like dis? Wetin be dis?"
> Obiora said, rising, the fear in his eyes not quite shielded by the brazen manliness in his Pidgin English. "Obiora nodu ani," Aunty Ifeoma quietly said, and Obiora sat down quickly. (225)

In the interactions above, there are displays of divergence and also of convergence. Both the men from the Special Security Unit and Obiora display divergence in the content of their speech – to Aunty Ifeoma first and then Obiora to them. Aunty Ifeoma's address to Obiora is convergent. She speaks to him in the vernacular, a code they both share in order to privatise her to him. The theories of casual attributions and social exchange are showcased in the interactions. Casual attribution theory underlines the interaction between the Special Security men and Aunty Ifeoma and that between Obiora and the men. They all engaged in an interpretative process, evaluating the other in terms of possible motives they attribute as the cause of the other's action. Social exchange theory on the other hand accounts for Aunty Ifeoma's convergence to her son, Obiora. They share a common set of interpretative procedures

that allow the speaker's intention to be encoded by the speaker, and correctly interpreted by the listener.

Divergence accommodation strategy is also displayed in the interaction involving Aunty Ifeoma, her friend, Aunty Chiaku and Obiora, Aunty Ifeoma's son when Obiora made a rude remark to the conversation Aunty Ifeoma was having with her friend thus:

> Who will teach Amaka and Obiora in university?
> The educated ones leave, the ones with potentials to right the wrongs.
> They leave the weak behind. The tyrants continue to reign because the weak cannot resist. Do you not see that it is a cycle? Who will break that cycle?"
> "That is simply unrealistic pep-rally nonsense, Aunty Chiaku," Obiora said.
> I saw the tension fall from the sky and envelope us all.
> A child's cry upstairs interrupted the silence.
> Go into my room and wait for me, Obiora, Aunty Ifeoma said. Obiora stood up and left.
> He looked grave as if he had only just realized what he had done…
> Her friend left soon afterwards, Aunty Ifeoma stormed inside, nearly knocking a lamp over. I had a thud of slap and then she raised her voice. "I do not quarrel with your disagreeing with my friend. I quarrel with how you have disagreed. I do not raise disrespectful children in this house, do you hear me? You are not the only child who has skipped a class in school. I will not tolerate this rubbish from you! I na-anu? She lowered her voice then I heard the click of her bedroom door closing. (239-240)

]

Obiora in the above interaction diverged in the content of his speech to Aunty Chiaku. Aunty Ifeoma on her part diverged (in content) to Obiora in her rebuke in the vernacular, a code they shared. The theories of Causal Attribution and Social Exchange are portrayed in the interactions. Causal attribution underlines Obiora's remark to Aunty Chiaku. The theory of Social Exchange

explains the fact that they shared a common set of interpretative procedures which enhance their communication.

Research Question 2
What are the motivations for the accommodation strategies adopted by the characters?

Purple Hibiscus
Excerpt 1

> … ‘’Did you travel?”
> Ezinne laughed. Me? O di egwu. It’s people like you and Gabriella and Chinwe who travel, people with rich parents. ‘’ I just went to the village to visit my grandmother.’’… (49)

The motivation for the accommodation strategy in the above excerpt was influenced by the situation. The interlocutors share the same linguistic background that is characterised by code-mixing or code- switching English and the vernacular.

Excerpt 2

> …Our father is dying, do you hear me?
> Dying. He is an old man, how much longer does he have, gbo?
> Yet Eugene will not let him into his house; will not even greet him. O joka!
> Eugene has to stop doing God’s job… (95-96)

The accommodation strategy in the excerpt above was motivated by the situation by the fact that Aunty Ifeoma and Kambili’s mother share the same multilingual linguistic background characterised by code-mixing and code switching English and the vernacular (Igbo). Furthermore, by virtue of their relationship, Wardhaugh’s (2010) assertion that “intimate topics or a home setting elicit speech appropriate for intimate addressees_ family or friends” again is applicable here.

Excerpt 3

"Will you not help me bury our father?"
"I cannot participate in a pagan burial, but we can discuss with the parish priest and arrange a Catholic funeral.''
"…Was our father a Catholic? I ask you, Eugene, was he a catholic? Uchu gba gi!"Aunty Ifeoma snapped her fingers at Papa; she was throwing a curse at him… (186)

The accommodation strategy in the above excerpt was motivated by the situation. Being siblings, Wardhaugh's assertion that intimate topics or a home setting elicit speech appropriate for intimate addressees – family or friends is readily applicable here. Again, the social reality of multilingualism/bilingualism in Nigeria is also a factor. Aunty Ifeoma may have out of habit code-switched to the vernacular to release a curse on her brother in a show of indignation.

Excerpt 4

"They are telling Mom to shut up"
Shut up if you do not want to lose your job
because you can be fired fiam just like that."
Amaka snapped her finger to show how fast
Aunty Ifeoma could be fired… (218-219)

The accommodation strategy in the above excerpt was motivated by the situation and also age of the addressee. The home setting elicits appropriate speech from such interaction, so Amaka telling Obiora to shut up was due to the fact that she is older than him.

Excerpt 5

"Who sent you here?" Aunty Ifeoma asked.
"We are from the Special Security Unit in Port Harcourt.''
… Look at this yeye woman oh! I said we are men from the State Security Unit!
"…How you go just come enter like dis? Wetin be dis?" Obiorah said, rising….
"Obiorah, nodu ani,'' Aunty Ifeoma quietly said, and Obiorah sat down quickly. (225)

The divergence accommodation strategy by the men from the Special Security Unit to Aunty Ifeoma, Obiorah's mother and Obiora to the men, was motivated by the situation (linguistic). Nigerian Pidgin is a lingua franca in our multilingual nation, Nigeria, so it is a common code to everyone especially those residing in the cities. Obiorah, therefore, uses it to address the security men who are apprehending his mother. Power variable is also at play here. The men from the State Security Unit, by their divergence strategy seen in their address to Aunty Ifeoma, were wielding their superior social status. The divergence accommodation strategy showcased in Aunty Ifeoma's speech directed to her son in the vernacular is possibly meant to be a private instruction to her son because of the speech situation. The security men from all indications do not understand the language.

Excerpt 6

> Who will teach Amaka and Obiora in university?
> The educated ones leave, the ones with potentials to right the wrongs.
> They leave the weak behind. The tyrants continue to reign because the weak cannot resist. Do you not see that it is a cycle? Who will break that cycle?"
> "That is simply unrealistic pep-rally nonsense, Aunty Chiaku," Obiora said… (239-240)

The motivation for the accommodation strategy is the situation. The home setting as observed by Wardhaugh (2010) elicits speech appropriate for such intimate addressees. This explains her mixed code in reprimanding her son, Obinna.

Research Question 3

What are the impact(s) of the strategies on the behaviour of the interlocutors?

Excerpt 1

> "How was your holiday, Kambili?" Ezinne leaned over and asked. (49)

The convergence strategy adopted by Ezinne sets Kambili at ease and achieves solidarity between them.

Excerpt 2

"You know Eugene did not get along with Ifediorah" Aunty Ifeoma's whisper was back, fiercer, louder… (95-96)

The convergence strategy adopted by Aunty Ifeoma serves to strengthen the cordial relationship she has with Kambili's mother much as the topic of their discussion is not a pleasant one.

Excerpt 3

"Ifeoma, did you call a priest?" Papa asked… (186)

The divergence accommodation strategy adopted by Aunty Ifeoma based on the topic of their discussion served to achieve dissociation from the behaviour of Eugene Achike, her brother which she denounced by throwing a curse at him.

Excerpt 4

"They are telling mom to shut up." Amaka said… (218-219)

The divergence accommodation strategy evident in the content of Amaka's speech to her younger brother, Obiora relates her displeasure towards him and so serves as a reprimand to him.

Excerpt 5

"Who sent you here?" Aunty Amaka asked… (225)

The divergence accommodation strategy displayed by the men from the Special Security Service Unit provoked hostility in Obiora causing him to rise up in defense of his mother while the convergence strategy adopted by his mother towards him made for solidarity with him and calmed him down.

Excerpt 6

"Who will teach Amaka and Obiora in the university?"… (239-240)

The divergence strategy displayed in his remark brought about a feeling of displeasure to Aunty Chiaku which incurred his mother's anger. His mother's divergence strategy towards him

seen in her rebuke in the vernacular helped to drive home her annoyance.

Discussion

In the first excerpt from Research Question 1, the accommodation strategy displayed by the speaker is convergence. This is seen in the interaction between Kambili and her classmate, Ezinne when they resumed classes after their holidays. Here, Ezinne is converging to Kambili in the vernacular, a code they both share, so she adapts to her linguistically. The theory of social exchange is also displayed here because they share a common set of interpretative procedures which enhance their communication. The motivation for the accommodation strategy was influenced by the situation. The interlocutors share the same linguistic background that is characterised by code-mixing or code-switching English and the vernacular. The convergence strategy adopted by Ezinne sets Kambili at ease and achieves solidarity between them.

In the second excerpt, the accommodation strategy displayed is still convergence as seen in the interaction between Kambili's mother and Aunty Ifeoma, her sister-in-law when the two were discussing Kambili's father's hostile attitude to his old heathen father in the former's bedroom.

Here, Aunty Ifeoma is converging to Kambili's mother in the vernacular, a code they both share. Wardhaugh's earlier assertion that 'intimate topics or a family setting elicit speech appropriate for intimate addressees - family or friend' is also applicable here. Aunty Ifeoma is related to Kambili's mother by marriage. Again, their relationship is cordial. Social exchange theory is also reflected here, because they share a common set of interpretative procedures that enhance their communication. The accommodation strategy was motivated by the situation due to the fact that Aunty Ifeoma and Kambili's mother share the same multilingual linguistic background characterised by code-mixing and code switching English and the vernacular (Igbo). Furthermore, by virtue of their relationship, Wardhaugh's (2010) assertion that "intimate topics or a home setting elicit speech appropriate for intimate addressees -a family or friends" again is applicable here. The convergence strategy adopted by Aunty Ifeoma serves to strengthen the cordial relationship she has with Kambili's mother much as the topic of their discussion is not a pleasant one.

In the third excerpt, the accommodation strategy deployed is divergence as showcased in the interaction between Eugene Achike, Kambili's father and his sister Aunty Ifeoma when they were discussing the death and burial of their late father. Aunty Ifeoma is indignant at Eugene's proposal of a Catholic funeral for their heathen father, so she diverged in the content of her speech. She switches to a curse in the vernacular to express her repulsion at the idea. Causal attribution theory is again displayed here. Aunty Ifeoma evidently engages in an interpretative process, evaluating Eugene in terms of the possible motive that she attributes as the cause of his action. The accommodation strategy was motivated by the situation. Being siblings, Wardhaugh's assertion that intimate topics or a home setting elicit speech appropriate for intimate addressees – family or friends is readily applicable here. Again, the social reality of multilingualism or bilingualism in Nigeria is also a factor. Aunty Ifeoma may have, out of habit, code-switched to the vernacular to release a curse on her brother in a show of indignation.
The divergence accommodation strategy adopted by Aunty Ifeoma based on the topic of their discussion served to achieve dissociation from the behaviour of Eugene Achike, her brother, which she denounced by throwing a curse at him.

In the fourth excerpt, the accommodation strategy displayed is divergence as portrayed in the interaction involving Amaka, her brother Obiora and Kambili when they were discussing the recent development in the university when Aunty Ifeoma was a lecturer there. Here, Amaka is annoyed at her brother, Obiora's statement, so she diverged in the content of her speech by giving him a sharp rebuke in the vernacular. Causal attribution theory is showcased here. Amaka rebukes Obiora because she has engaged in an interpretative process and has evaluated Obiora's possible motive for his speech. The accommodation strategy was motivated by the situation and also age of the addressee. The home setting elicits appropriate speech from such interactant, so Amaka telling Obiora to shut up was due to the fact that she is older than him. The divergence accommodation strategy evident in the content of

Amaka's speech to her younger brother, Obiora, relates her displeasure towards him, so serves as a reprimand to him.

In the fifth excerpt, the display of convergence and divergence accommodation strategies are differently seen in the interactions involving Aunty Ifeoma, her son, Obiora, and men from the Special Security Unit when they came to search her house as a result of the university students' riot. In the interactions, there are displays of divergence and also of convergence. Both the men from the Special Security Unit and Obiora display divergence in the content of their speech –to Aunty Ifeoma first and then Obiora to them. Aunty Ifeoma's address to Obiora is convergent. She speaks to him in the vernacular, a code they both share in order to privatise her speech to him. The theories of casual attributions and social exchange are showcased in the interactions. Causal attribution theory underlines the interaction between the Special Security men and Aunty Ifeoma and that between Obiora and the men. They all engaged in an interpretative process, evaluating the other in terms of possible motives they attribute as the cause of the other's action. Social exchange theory on the other hand accounts for Aunty Ifeoma's convergence to her son, Obiora. They share a common set of interpretative procedures that allow the speaker's intention to be encoded by the speaker, and correctly interpreted by the listener. The divergence accommodation strategy by the men from the Special Security Unit to Aunty Ifeoma, Obiorah's mother and Obiorah to the men, was motivated by the situation (linguistic). Nigerian Pidgin is a lingua franca in our multilingual nation; Nigeria, so it is a common code to everyone especially those residing in the cities. Obiorah, therefore, uses it to address the security men who are apprehending his mother. Again, the divergence strategy adopted by the men from the Special Security Unit is a show of power. They used it to wield their superior social status. The convergence accommodation strategy showcased in Aunty Ifeoma's speech directed to her son in the vernacular is possibly meant to be a private instruction to her son because of the

speech situation. The security men from all indications do not understand the language. The divergence accommodation strategy displayed by the men from the Special Security Service Unit provoked hostility in Obiora causing him to rise up in defense of his mother while the convergence strategy adopted by his mother towards him made for solidarity with him and helped to calm him down.

In the sixth excerpt, divergence and convergence accommodation strategies are also displayed in the interaction involving Aunty Ifeoma, her friend, Aunty Chiaku and Obiorah, Aunty Ifeoma's son, when Obiorah made a rude remark to the conversation Aunty Ifeoma was having with her friend. The motivation for the accommodation strategy is the situation. Obiora is angry with Aunty Chiaku in what he sensed to be a move on her part to dissuade his mother from continuing with her proposal to travel out of the country. On the other hand, the home setting, as observed by Wardhaugh (2010), elicits speech appropriate for such intimate addressees. This explains her code-mix in reprimanding her son, Obinna. The divergence strategy displayed in his remark brought about a feeling of displeasure to Aunty Chiaku which incurred his mother's anger. His mother's divergence strategy (in content) towards him seen in her rebuke in the vernacular helped to drive home her annoyance.

In conclusion, the accommodation strategies displayed by the characters are convergence and divergence. The motivations for the accommodation strategies variously are the situations and age of the addressee. The convergence strategy adopted by the characters on the one hand engendered feelings of solidarity and helped to strengthen the cordial relationship among them while the divergence strategy provoked hostility and also indicated dissociation from the negative attitude of the addressees concerned.

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