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C

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 •There should be a clear definition of the research problem in a special paragraph entitled: (research problem) or (problem of research).

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D

- Consideration should be given to the design of the research, its final output, and the logical sequence of its ideas and paragraphs.
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Editor-in-chief

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A Quantitative Analysis of In-Group Responses on Converging and Diverging on Facebook

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Abstract

Billions of people use social networking sites, and they are an inseparable part of their daily lives. Along with the development of technology, new communication behaviours have been acquired. Facebook is the most prominent social network site around the globe nowadays. Users join these groups on Facebook to be with members that belong to the same city, have the same major or share the same interests and this presents the opportunity to start communicating through posting, commenting, and replying to comments, and may accommodate their communicative behaviours, converging to gain approval, attractiveness, and integration, or diverging to signify uniqueness. The purpose of this study is to examine the accommodation strategies between males and females in Mosuli social groups on Facebook, taking into consideration the various sociolinguistic variables that affect communication in CMC. A self-designed questionnaire as a data collection method has been used to gain more insights from users themselves. The study employed a quantitative method in its analysis. The data were analysed by using the communication accommodation theory, SPSS program and content analysis was employed as a tool to analyse the data since it is text-based. The results of the study reveal

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primarily that there are different motives to convergence and divergence in Mosuli social groups. The content of the post proved to be the dominant variable in accommodation in online communication since it provokes the Facebook user whether to converge or diverge.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, accommodation theory, language and social media, convergence, divergence

1.Introduction

Studies on communication accommodation theory has advanced quickly in the recent years. Communication is a basic part of human life. People always aspire to make themselves understood by others. Generally speaking, in all contexts, people consciously and unconsciously modify their manner of speaking and writing. In the resent years and with the development of technology, new ways of communication have been attained. Facebook is the most famous social networking site these days. It lay the ground for its users to communicate with people from different parts of the world and offer them many ways of interaction, beside eliminating embracement and insecure which is found in Face-to-Face communication. Consequently, people start to communicate and modify their manner of speaking, writing and commenting. These modifications are called communication accommodation strategies through which people adjust their communication behaviour and may make increase or reduce the social distance between themselves and others. Thus, Facebook users may converge to get approval, attractiveness and integration. Or may diverge to imply exceptionality.

This study is a sociolinguistics study that embraces a quantitative approach of analysis to discern the communication accommodation strategies specifically convergence, divergence, maintenance and over accommodation, that are adopted by Mosuli social media groups on Facebook. The researchers have created an account on Facebook solely in order to be part of these groups under study, to observe and collect the corpus data and to get clear understandings of how members of Mosul community act in addition to a self-designed questionnaire which is made to get more insights from members of these groups themselves.

The main objective of the current study is to identify the strategies of communication accommodation theory that are followed by users of

Mosuli social media groups on Facebook as part of CMC communication.

Based on the above objective, the following are the research questions of the study:

1)What are the communication accommodation strategies that are followed by people in Mosuli social groups on Facebook?

2)What are the variables that affect accommodation in CMC communication?

The main reason behind selecting this social networking site, in particular, is because it is very famous and used by the vast majority of people and such social groups are thriving these days. In addition, it is relatively easy to access and full of affordances. The language used is extraordinarily spontaneous and free as well as this SNS is exceedingly dynamic in nature.

This study is expected to be of value to learners and academic professors since it has filled a gap in linguistics in general and exclusively in sociolinguistics as it has examined a corpus of Mosul social media groups on Facebook. Likewise, this research fills the gap and provides insights into virtual communities.

2.Theoretical background
2.1. Accommodation Theory: inception and historical background

The term Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT henceforth) was first invented by Howard Giles in 1973. Giles detected during an interview that the language of the interviewee shifted from formal to informal directly after the interview was over. Sociolinguists believe that SAT started as a socio-psychological theory that suggests speakers adopt many linguistic strategies to get attraction and integration during their interaction with others. It then developed to be the Communication Accommodation Theory because the idea of communication is not only a matter of speech and exchanging information but also other communicative behaviour; the interpersonal and intergroup relationships are regulated by communication. For this reason, the prominent accommodation strategies of convergence and divergence, are prevailing in CAT nowadays. SAT aimed to illustrate the

motivations behind the modifications in people's speech style. Accommodation is deeply rooted in human social behaviour (Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, Gamon &Dumais, 2011). Humans are social beings, there is always need to interact with other people and to adapt to each other, to accommodate to each other in speech style, tone of the voice, texting and phone calls as well. Accordingly, in the last forty years, boundless studies have applied Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) which then developed relying on a number of theories until its development to CAT. Most recognizable theories are the following:

- Attribution Theory. (1958, Heider).
- Similarity / attraction theory (Byrne, 1971).
- Social Identity Theory. (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

Attribution theory is a psychological theory. The research of it began with the work of Fritz Heider in the early twentieth century in1958, then the theory has been further improved by Harold Kelley in 1967 and Bernard Weiner in 1974. This theory is based on the concept that during a communicative interaction, individuals are working with incomplete information. Specifically, an individual lacks information regarding others' communicative intentions and motives. (Gallois et al., 2005). Therefore, this theory assumes that people always try to infer why people do what they do. Also, people never stop explaining and evaluating events that they experience.

The second significant theory which SAT draws on is Attraction theory (1971) which refers to the tendency of people to like and get attracted to others who are similar- rather than dissimilar-to themselves in several important respects. The theory lays out a predictive framework for investigating how and why people are attracted to and influenced by others in their social interaction. There are numerous reasons why people crave to be together with others who embrace attitudes, personalities, social habits, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, physical qualities which are similar to their own.

The third theory is the social identity theory (SIT henceforth) which has been formulated by the social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. It suggests that people strive to sustain a positive social identity based on their membership in a group. It is a natural process

that every human will choose to associate with particular groups, for example, family group, sports teams, religion, ethnic and gender groups. Affiliation with a group of people create a sense of belonging, and a source of pride and self-esteem. It also gives people a sense of relating to the social world. Social identity theory guides individuals to categorize themselves and other major groups into "us" the in-group and "them" the out-group which affect their self-concept.

SAT has become a more interdisciplinary theory and developed to CAT. It expanded to different fields of knowledge not only language but also to psychology, social science which led to union of non-linguistic components such as body language, gestures, and paralinguistic features. Giles in 1987 coined the term Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT henceforth) which included linguistic adjustment as well as non-verbal features. According to Giles himself, SAT has progressed to CAT "in response to observing changes in my own and others' speech styles, together with the consequent effects of these changes" (Giles 2008, p.12). Thus, other features were added to SAT such as gestures, smiling, posture and other different communication behaviours. For example, Giles (1991) state that CAT echoed the needs of speakers or members of a group for integration, in consequence, similarity will increase attractions, predictability, and intelligibility. Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) is a theoretical cognitive approach which posits that whenever and wherever people interact with each other, they seek to adjust several elements, i.e., they tend to emphasize or minimize the social differences between themselves and their interlocutors. CAT is a framework of both intergroup and interpersonal communication.

2.2. Accommodation Strategies

There are four strategies of accommodation through an interaction namely: convergence, divergence, maintenance and over-accommodation.

2.2.1. Convergence

Convergence has been defined as "the strategy whereby individuals adapt to each other's communicative behaviours in terms of a wide range of linguistic, prosodic and nonverbal features including speech

rate, pause phenomena and utterance length, phonological varieties, smiling gaze and so on" (Giles et al.,1991, p.7).

Convergence is the most researched and studied principle of CAT(Giles,1973). Successful convergence is noted to have many useful effects and lead to cooperative and efficient communication. Converging to a common linguistic style and behaviour indicates solidarity and increase mutual understanding to get social approval and acceptance.

2.2.2. Divergence

Divergence refers to adjusting one's communicative behaviours to distinguish and distance oneself from others (Giles,2016). The motive behind divergence is the desire to feel distinct from one's interlocutors and reinforce group identity. The speaker wants to differentiate himself from a group of speakers or communication partners. An example from Giles and Coupland who described a study performed in a language laboratory about the use of accent divergence. People learning the Welsh language participated in a questionnaire related to second language acquisition. The interviewer asked them about their motive for learning Welsh and described it as "...dying language with a dismal future". The participants began to answer with a conspicuous Welsh accent and diverged from the interviewer more than before. The motive for this divergence is either defensive or offensive.

2.2.3. Maintenance

Maintenance means the person preserve his or her original style, regardless of the accommodation behaviour of the interlocutor. It is a strategy whereby people stop altering their communicative behaviour in spite of the behaviour of other's. In other words, it means the normal level of communication without any changing for others. Maintenance is a strategy that can be considered similar to divergence. However, it is unlike divergence in that the individual does not place an emphasis on differences (Giles & Ogay, 2007). The reason for maintenance or as it is sometimes called underaccommodation is an attempt to reserve and affirm one's identity or independence. An example of maintenance that

happens in greetings is when one of the communicators does not know how to greet the other. Should they be greeted by a strong hand shake or by a kiss on the cheek? or when a doctor uses a calming tone and comfort way of talking to ease the anxiety of the patient.

2.2.4. Overaccommodation

Overaccommodation is the strategy of overdoing the accommodation adjustment of speech style, rate, or tone of the voice. Overaccommodation can be perceived as an extension of convergence when a communicator "overshoots the level of adjustment felt to be appropriate in a given situation" (Gasiorek & Giles, 2012, p.311). It is an artificial and exaggerated way of communicative behaviour. For example, using baby language with a five-year-old child or speaking so loudly with an aged person can be considered as over-accommodation.

3. Methodology
3.1. Population and sampling

In the current study, the population of the study is Mosuli speaking people that is, men and women, from different age which the researcher will make a random sample as a representative of the Mosuli society. Accordingly, in this study the participants who are selected are Mosuli Arabic speakers taking into considerations the gender variety.

4.1. Data collection method and analysis

A research method is an instrument employed to gather, measure, and analyse data associated with the issue under investigation. The data collection method in this research is a questionnaire. The data of the questionnaire have been analysed quantitatively by using SPSS program.

4.2. The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research tool consisting of a list of questions and inquiries utilized to obtain a large amount of data and information from respondents about an issue or a problem. In this current research, the researcher chose the questionnaire as a secondary data collection

method for collecting information because the research is about social networking groups and it is difficult to conduct interviews with all the members of these groups and also because of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. The questionnaire comprises 15 items published in the groups that discusses questions about communication and interaction within Mosuli social networking groups and how users think about convergence and divergence and how they accommodate their speech when commenting on any post and the extent to which gender affects a person's style and attitude while commenting and ultimately to know the motives behinds the persons' comments on any post.

5. The analysis of the questionnaire

In general, the age of those who responded to the questionnaire ranges between (18-35) because they are the most popular age of people that use the Facebook application. They are of both sexes, 61.9% are females and 38.1% are males. Thus, the number of females is higher which is good because generally females are shy to participate or very cautious.

In addition to this, the number of those of Mosul origin who speak the Mosuli dialect and who answered the questionnaire was approximately 60.2%, while the number of those who did not speak the Mosuli dialect was about 39.8%,

Item no.1 *Do you understand posts written in the Mosuli dialect?*
  In this question respondent have to choose between two answers either Yes or No. About 93.8% of the respondents' answers were Yes, while only 6.2% answered NO.

Item no.2 *there is a post in the Mosuli dialect, do you reply to it in the same dialect?*
There are approximately equal answers to this item. Almost 50.8% answered Yes that they answer in the same dialect for many reasons such as to get approval and increase mutual understanding, while 49.2% chose No. They don't answer in the same dialect because they don't have to and they like to keep their own dialect and never change it no matter what.
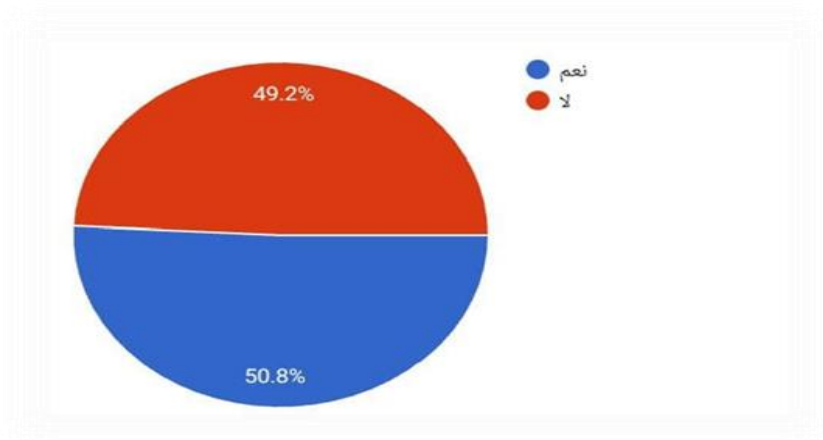
Item no.3 *if you comment on a Mosuli post or respond to a comment, do you consider this to be a convergence to the person's speech or an adaption of speech?*

Nearly 68.8% of respondents chooses no they don't consider it as accommodation and they are just interacting and socialize with each other. While 31.2% of respondents chooses YES, they do consider it as convergence and a kind of cooperation and to erase the differences.
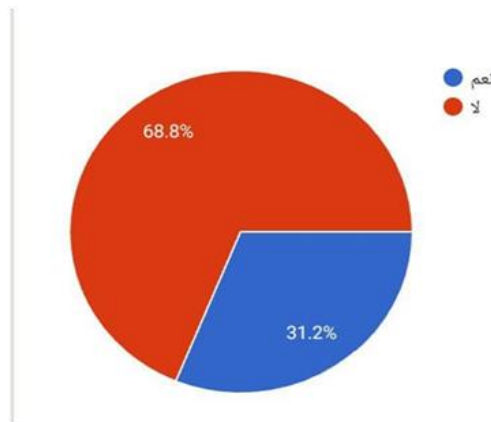
Item no.4 *why do you consider it as a convergence?*
This item is an open-ended question, which is very beneficial to the study because it makes respondents express their ideas by their own words. Nearly 58.4% of respondents answered that they consider it as accommodation and a modification of speech for many reasons. Most respondents believe that correspondence of dialects helps to get people closer to each other, encourage them to keep on talking and it is nice while speaking or commenting to adopt the speaker's same dialect because it reflects respect, appreciation and intimacy. In addition, it is most obliging to learn a new dialect as it helps to integrate and strengthen the relationships between individuals and helps to bring them together, exchange ideas and culture which breaks the barrier of racism among members of the same group and enhance the spirit of cooperation and unity. Some other respondents consider it as convergence and adaptation of speech for the purpose of mutual understanding between the commentators and to show esteem, appreciation and to never feel alienated, but rather to feel that they belong to the same culture and have the same way of thinking.

Item no.5 *if you comment on a post or reply to a comment but in a different dialect, do you consider this a divergence or lack of adaption of speech?*
Almost 89.2% answered no that they don't consider it as divergence because everyone is free to speak by his own dialect and no need to change their dialect for any reason. Only 10.8% answered yes that they see it as divergence because there is not any kind of accommodating

Item no.6 *why do you consider it as a divergence?*
Approximately 37.6% of the respondents answered that they do not consider it as divergence or adaption of speech and that the prominent purpose of the comment is for social interaction regardless of the person's dialect and what matters is the attitude when commenting to give for example an advice, opinion, awareness or any exchange of information. 4% of the respondents who answered that they do consider it as a divergence, prefer to hold on by their own dialects and think that everyone must stick to his dialects, cherish it and speak in the dialect that he used to speak and never change it for any reason. In addition, some respondents assert that people must feel proud by their dialect and to move away from changor accommodation because this will lead to the extinction of the Mosuli dialect for the sake of kindness and approval. Other respondents believed that accommodation is fake and artificial, and it is not necessary to comment in the same dialect, as it is possible to comment and communicate in any dialect and eventually what matters is the content of the comment.
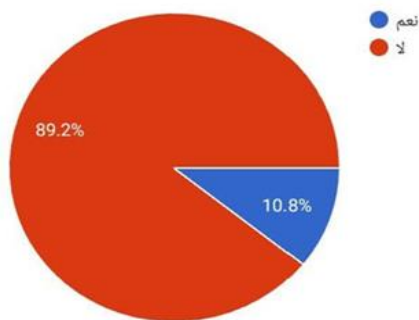
6. Findings

As for the results of questionnaire, they show that 68.8% of the respondents do not consider commenting to be a convergence: it is just a matter of interaction and socializing with people. While 31.2% answered that they do consider it as a convergence for a matter of cooperation, mutual understanding, and to never feel alienated and to show belonging to the same culture.

There are many variables that can affect accommodation and the norms of convergence and divergence in CMC communication namely dialect, gender and content. As for dialect 93.8% of respondents answered that they understand posts written in Mosuli dialect and 50% answered they comment in the same dialect for corporation, unity and mutual understanding but 40% said that they don't have to comment using the same dialect and they must keep their own dialect and never change it.

Regarding commenting in different dialect, 89.2% of people don't consider it as divergence because the most important thing is interaction whatever the person's dialect is. But only 4% of respondents consider answering in different dialect is divergence because they prefer to Speak their own dialect and never change it because if they change their dialect, they believe it will disappear and die.

With respect to gender, 83.9% of the respondents said that they don't care about the gender when they comment or the gender of the writer of the post. But only 16.1% said that they do care about gender because it gives them an idea of how they are going to comment. Also, 70% said that they interact with both males and females without any difference or prejudice.

As for the content, it appeared through the analysis that it is the strongest and most important factor in online communication, and this is the contribution of this study, especially in the absence of nonverbal and Para verbal cues such as voice, pitch and facial expressions.

7. Conclusion

1)Content of the posts is the strongest and most effective factor in accommodation in online communication. The content provokes the user of Facebook to comment, converge or diverge, by way of illustration females diverge to posts such as polygamy and marriage because they do not agree to such ideas, but converge to posts about cooking and food because such content attract them greatly.

2)Gender is also an effective factor; males mostly accommodate to females. In addition, males post more than females in view of the fact that they are the owners and administrators of the social groups on

Facebook whereas females comment more than males because through Facebook they can express their opinions and ideas freely and without any constrictions which is the contrary of face-to-face communication.
3)Regarding dialect, it is a weak factor since most of the users of Facebook in Mosuli groups do not care about the dialect of the commenters, they concentrate on the interaction itself.
4)Concerning convergence and dialect, the majority of the commenters do converge regardless of dialect because they seek interaction above all while the minority commenters refuse to converge because they believe if they do converge and change their dialect, the dialect will die and disappear.

8. Limits and Recommendations

This study is limited to the investigation of accommodation strategies; namely convergence and divergence, among Mosuli social groups on Facebook. The study is limited to examine only the three groups under study. Likewise, other groups could be taken into consideration. Furthermore, the study is limited to examining contexts only, that is images, videos and emoticons have been excluded but those could be used to build and search a bigger corpus to give more insights into how users of Facebook communicate and accommodate to exhibit solidarity.

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تحليل كمي للردود في المجموعات في التقارب والتباعد في فيسبوك

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المستخلص

يستخدم مليارات الأشخاص مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي ، وهو جزء لا يتجزأ من حياتهم اليومية جنبا إلى جنب مع تطور التكنولوجيا ، تم اكتساب سلوكيات اتصال جديدة. الفيسبوك هو أبرز مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية حول العالم في الوقت الحاضر. ينضم المستعملون إلى هذه المجموعات على Facebook ليكونوا مع أعضاء ينتمون إلى المدينة نفسها ، أو لديهم التخصص نفسه أو يتشاركون الاهتمامات نفسها ، وهذا يوفر فرصة لبدء التواصل من خلال النشر والتعليق والرد على التعليقات ، وقد يستوعب سلوكياتهم التواصلية ، تتقارب للحصول على الموافقة ، والجاذبية ، والتكامل ، أو تتباعد للدلالة على التفرد. الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة استراتيجيات التكييف بين الذكور والإناث في مجموعات الموصل الاجتماعية على Facebook، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار المتغيرات الاجتماعية اللغوية المختلفة التي تؤثر في التواصل في CMC. تم استعمال استبيان مصمم ذاتيًا كطريقة لجمع البيانات لاكتساب المزيد من الأفكار من المستعملين أنفسهم. استعملت الدراسة المنهج الكمي في تحليلها. تم تحليل البيانات باستعمال نظرية ملاءمة الاتصالات ، وتم استخدام برنامج SPSS وتحليل المحتوى كأداة لتحليل البيانات لأنها تستند إلى النص. تظهر نتائج الدراسة بالدرجة الأولى أن هناك دوافعاً مختلفة للتقارب والتباعد في فئات المجتمع الموصلي. ثبت أن محتوى المنشور هو المتغير السائد في التكيف في الاتصال عبر الإنترنت لأنه يثير مستعمل Facebook سواء كان متقاربًا أو متشعبًا..

الكلمات المفتاحية: علم اللغة الاجتماعي, اللغة ووسائل التواصل الاجتماعي, التقارب والتباعد اللغوي

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