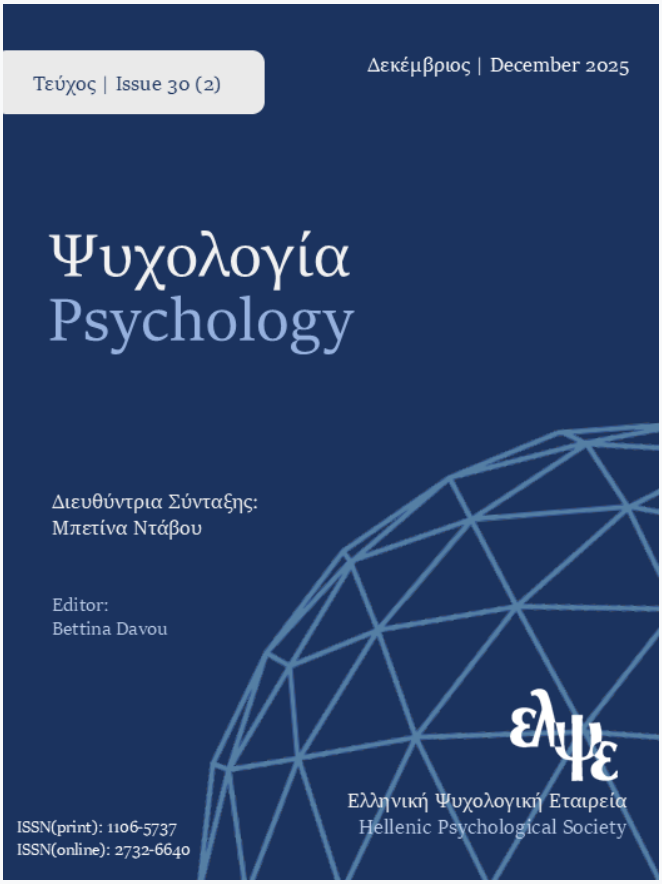
Psychology: the Journal of the Hellenic Psychological Society

Vol 30, No 2 (2025)

Special Section: Individuals, relationships and community in the digital era



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doi: 10.12681/psy_hps.43913

To cite this article:

Giles, H., & Gardikiotis, A. (2025). Communication Accommodation Theory: A theory in an evolving digital world. *Psychology: The Journal of the Hellenic Psychological Society*, *30*(2), 233–251. https://doi.org/10.12681/psy_hps.43913

ΨΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΑ | PSYCHOLOGY 30(2), 233-251

Ελληνική Ψυχολογική Εταιρεία
Hellenic Psychological Society

ΒΙΒΛΙΟΓΡΑΦΙΚΗ ΑΝΑΣΚΟΠΗΣΗ | REVIEW PAPER

Communication Accommodation Theory: A theory in an evolving digital world

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KEYWORDS

Communication
Accommodation Theory (CAT)
CAT Stages
CAT Principles
Computer-mediated accommodations
Human-machine accommodations

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on a major socio-psychological framework of communication, originally labeled Speech Accommodation Theory, that has, over its 50-year history, expanded its communicative boundaries and the social groups and contexts studied as well as into the digital age. First, the essence of the theory is outlined herein mainly in terms of some of its major Principles. Second, and in relation to the evolution of now-termed Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) over the decades, a tabulated overview of what constitutes its first six, benchmark Stages is provided. Third, we highlight a representative selection of studies emerging mostly in the latter half of 2023 and beyond, tabulating some their significant features. Fourth, CAT research in the digital age (Stage 7) is discussed in terms of analyzing recent studies, appearing during the same abovementioned period, exploring accommodative and nonaccommodative practices with and through technology; in this regard, it contributes to the investigations of computer-mediated and human-machine interactions. Throughout as well as in conclusion, we raise pertinent research questions that collectively constitute an engaging future research agenda.

"Conversations hold immense power. They help us form new connections and deepen existing ones.... And because of their inherent complexity, conversations have long remained *a mystery* to psychologists" (Abrams, 2023, p. 42; our italics). On this same page of the cited article, a scholar was quoted about conversation in that, "...it's the most ubiquitous social behavior that we do, yet we don't really know much about it". While Abrams (p. 47) points to compelling "new horizons for conversation science" (e.g.., Brooks, 2024; Templeton & Wheatley, 2023), we portend that, in contrast, after a 50-year history of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and research outlined below, we actually have known and continue to discover a significant amount about the attributed "mystery" by invoking this lens.

CAT originated as a socio-psychological theory seeking to explain and predict when, how, and why individuals engage in interactional adjustments (as, for example, in talk, appearance, and demeanor) as well as recipients' inferences, attributions, and evaluations of, and responses to, them (e.g., Giles, 2016; Soliz et al., 2022). While CAT refers to these adjustments as "accommodations", we fully acknowledge that these are akin, and have equivalences with, other constructs in the literature, including language style matching, mimicry and imitation, conversation entrainment, interactive alignment, interpersonal adaptivity, linguistic alignment, reciprocity, emotional contagion, and synchrony. However, we contend that CAT may have some explanatory and interpretive virtues for understanding the conglomeration of these phenomena

https://doi.org/10.12681/psy_hps.43913

(see, for example, Xia, 2023) and, for our purposes herein, construe them under the accommodation rubric for conceptual convenience. That said, we are in no way advocating CAT *hegemony*. Indeed, we recognize that these "competing" constructs and the models allied to, mechanisms underlying, them likely have their own specific values and merits that are beyond the scope of this contribution to unpack, compare, and evaluate (see Gasiorek, 2016; also, Guydish, in press).

Furthermore, we do not forget that several theoretical frameworks have explored online communication from both interpersonal and intergroup levels of analysis, providing valuable insights. One prominent theory at the interpersonal level is Walther's Hyper-personal Communication Model (1996; Walther & Whitty, 2021) which suggests that people can develop satisfying online relationships—sometimes even more effectively than through face-to-face contact—by leveraging different features of online communication (e.g., verbal and non-verbal cues). These positive communication outcomes are largely attributed to the increased control users have over online exchanges and their ability to selectively self-present. Another influential theory, the Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE: Spears & Postmes, 2015), focuses on the social context of online communication. SIDE proposes that online features, such as anonymity, interact with users' social identities, leading the communication to be either more interpersonal or intergroup. When certain aspects of the communication context are closely related to users' social identities, a stronger intergroup interaction is activated. This interpersonal–intergroup dimension has been also central to CAT.

CAT was initially framed and conceived as an interpersonal theory of speech and later of nonverbal alignments including sign languages (Stamp, 2015), however, it now firmly addresses processes of *intergroup* accommodation (see Dragojevic & Giles, 2014; Palomares et al., 2016), even with respect to dress style. For instance, "attire permits people to move between or imitate social groups … [and]…manage their impressions via clothing (e.g., a counterfeit designer bag attesting to one's high status) or engage in social mobility by adopting the dress styles of a desired social group" (Gruber et al., 2023, p. 3). Thereafter, CAT evolved into, as commentators have generously described it, "one of the most influential behavioral theories of communication" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005, p. 147). Accordingly, CAT has been referenced in many dozens of journals across the social, clinical, and biological sciences that echoes Meyerhoff's (2023, p. 1) assertion that the theory "…has shown remarkable staying power"; for a visual display of its exponential growth, see Figure 1, displaying the increase in references to the theory since it's relabeling to CAT.

CAT contends that conversations are dynamic adaptive exchanges of language and communicative behaviors where participants can, by a variety of means, adjust their own speech and communicative characteristics to those being messaged. A compelling feature of the theory's history (see Giles, 2023) and, arguably, more so than other theories of communication alignment (see Barón-Birchenall, 2023; van de Pol et al., 2023), is that it has been studied over the decades across more and more cultural contexts, languages, social groups, applied settings, academic disciplines as well as within and between *non*-human species (see, for example, vocal accommodation among marmoset monkeys, Phaniraj et al., 2023) than its competing theories. In parallel, business settings, trade, and finance are now included under the CAT umbrella as is the communicative management of diverse health conditions, such as aphasia, dementia, Parkinson's Disease and autism. Furthermore, there has been an increase in interventions providing CAT training to improve communication across various professional settings, such as in second language education and diet therapy (for citations supporting claims in the foregoing, see Giles et al., 2023, Table 1).

Furthermore, Pitts and Harwood (2015, p. 89) argued for the value of framing CAT in terms of the notion of *communication accommodation competence* in being "…a developmental phenomenon built on the accumulation of accommodation resources and repertoires over the lifespan". More specifically, Zhang and

Pitts (2019, p. 202) claimed that "accommodative resources developed in *early childhood* [emphasis added] serve as building blocks for relational development and maintenance later in life".

Figure 1. *Publications Containing the Phrase "Communication Accommodation Theory" by Year Published, 1987–2023* (from Maguire, in press)

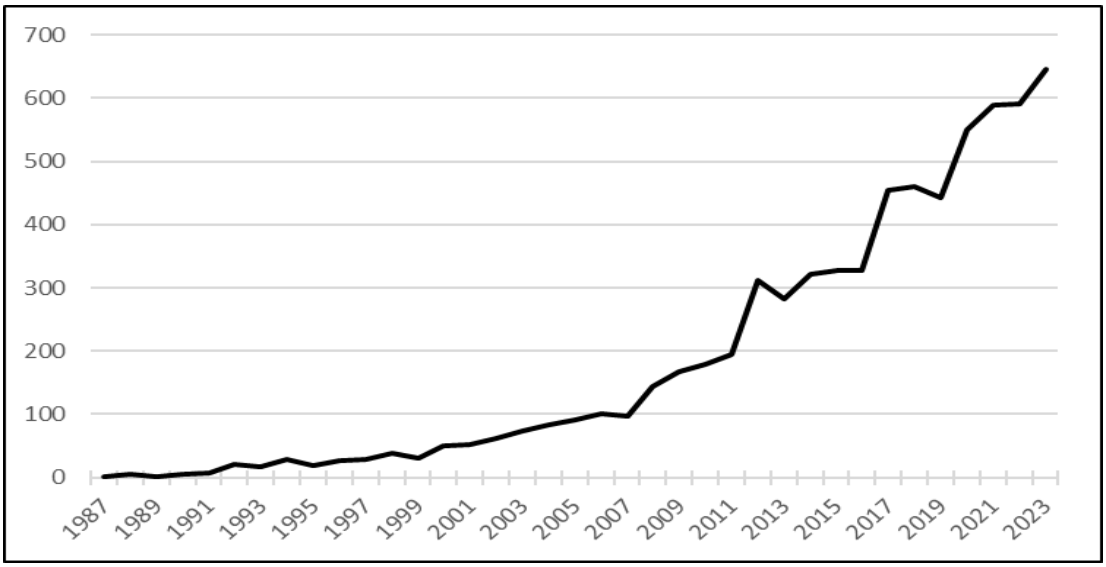

Table 1. *CAT Stages, Labels, and Features*

Stages	Labels for Stages (after Giles et al. 2023)	Communicative Foci
1	Addressee foci and convergence	Accommodating towards particular others and groups (e.g., those respected, admired, and of higher status/power)
2	Intergroup identities and social differentiation	Diverging, and by others means, to emphasize one's social identity
3	Subjective elements of accommodation	Accommodating to where others' are expected to be in voice and actions
4	Other forms of nonaccommodation with attributed inferences & outcomes	Under- and over- accommodating others sometimes reluctantly and sometimes even avoiding them
5	Attuning strategies	Accommodating to others' levels of knowledge and their conversational goals
6	Mediating mechanisms	Accommodating indirectly affecting social and communicative outcomes by triggering mediators (e.g., trust)

The aims of the current article – besides continually raising crucial research questions -are, chronologically, to:

(a) Outline the essence of the theory in terms of a selection of major CAT Principles (for the foundational versions, see for example, McGlone & Giles, 2011; Zhang & Pitts, 2019);

(b) Provide a brief overview of what constitutes the first six, benchmark Stages of CAT's evolution manifest in terms of a representative selection of studies emerging since Giles et al. (2023), including a tabulation of their significant features;
(c) Introduce the mainstay of this article, namely, the nature of CAT work in the digital age which constitutes Stage 7 of the theory with an analytic update of the most recent research on computer-mediated and human-machine communications accommodations with and through new technology.

Principles of CAT and their historical development in terms of Stages

The Principles

Currently, CAT rests on an array of (eleven) key Principles, including those selected below that are adapted from those presented by Dragojevic et al. (2016) and later refined by Giles et al. (2023). For the sake of parsimony, we feel the following five propositions are sufficient for purposes here:

(a) Communicators have expectancies about what constitutes appropriate and desirable accommodation in different contexts, with these being influenced by an array of interpersonal, intergroup, cultural, and sociohistorical dynamics;
(b) The nature of communication accommodation during an interaction – including the extent of it and the rate at which it is encoded - is a product of people's various motivations for, and abilities to, adjust to others;
(c) When communicators wish to reduce social distance during an interaction, they are more likely to engage in accommodative behaviors (e.g., speech convergence) that they believe will facilitate this outcome;
(d) When accommodations (including convergences) are well-calibrated, they produce various benefits, including decreased social distance, improved rapport, and increases in mutual understanding and satisfaction with others, as well as the converse when poorly calibrated;
(e) When seeking to increase social distance during an interaction, communicators are more likely to engage in nonaccommodative behaviors (e.g., divergence) that facilitate this outcome.

This is not the context here to suggest further refinements or elaborations of the full range of CAT Principles– although Bernhold (in press) has picked up the gauntlet in the family domain – but, as further research emerges in the socio-psychological literature, it will happen inevitably. For instance, Schwyck et al. (2024) argued and showed that when individuals know of, or infer that, their friends have major similarities in common, they will be positively disposed towards these third parties. Such social network connections should spill over into future CAT Principles in that, under these presumed circumstances, communicative accommodative moves would predictably follow and, even reciprocally so.

A substantive mode of quantitative work has confirmed many of the predictions arising from the above, and other, Principles (see Soliz & Bergquist, 2016) and, in tandem, qualitative work has embraced the theory in an array of qualitative methodologies, including those in naturalistic settings as "accommodation is…grounded in the accomplishment of actions as they unfold in interactions" (Gallois et al., 2016, p. 118). As such, accommodation has not only been studied across conversations by the same speakers (e.g., Gasiorek & Dragojevic, 2019), but longer-term accommodation has also been investigated with regard to communities' dialect and language shifts over periods of time (e.g., Trinh, 2022; Trudgill, 1986). Not unrelatedly, Burchfield et al. (2023) commented that "conversations are a miracle of convergence"!

CAT Stages pre-digitally

As argued by Zhang and Pitts (2019, p. 194) and evident from Table 1:

> "The literature seems to strongly support a six-stage conceptual map in the development of CAT and its satellite models. The presented … [stages below]…are each distinct, yet clearly interrelated as they are forms the theory takes. These stages also overlap, and as such are engaged concurrently by scholars."

Giles et al. (2023, p. 4) further emphasized that the Stages "…should be not construed as mutually-exclusive nor that the research that adds to each Stage was conducted in any kind of serial and well-punctuated timeline" (as evident in Table1). With these caveats in mind, the Stages are briefly introduced in tabulated form for convenience next and, for the most part, developed before the digital age took on momentum.

Giles et al. (2023, see Table 1, p. 3) catalogued, in tabulated form, a sample of CAT studies (2021-2023) with respect to the languages in which accommodation can take place (e.g., Bulgarian), within language features accommodated (e.g., honorifics), CAT language strategies (e.g., nonaccommodation), social and institutional contexts (e.g., law enforcement), health conditions (e.g., depression), individual differences within samples (e.g., attachment styles), training programs (e.g., rapport-building), and journals of origin (e.g., *American Journal of Literature Studies*). In addition, features of the 9 empirical studies that followed in the Giles (2023) Special Issue itself were also displayed in Table 2 and included their relationships to the CAT Stages.

Since submitting that commemorative CAT journal special issue in May 2023 (Giles, 2023), even in this short period of time to date, dozens of further studies have emerged that can be encapsulated under the accommodation rubric. Whether they are explicitly CAT-driven or interpretive studies or not, for example, those focused on synchrony (Bradshaw et al., 2023) and entrainment (Paletz et al., 2023), they - like those manifest in the Tables of Giles et al. (2023) - are predominantly and empirically supportive of the CAT Principles highlighted above. To provide a flavor of the most recent studies representing CAT Stages 1-6, Table 2 represents a dozen studies (and beyond those cited in Giles et al. (2023), with some of their unique features. After this, we move to CAT in the digital age - Stage 7 – focusing, again, on accommodation studies appearing after May 2023.

As the above summary Table demonstrates, CAT continues to be studied with an increasingly diverse number of nations, languages and speech communities (e.g., Gulf pidgin, Javanese varieties, and Polish), sociolinguistic and communicative features (e.g., creaky voice, numerals, and expressed values), social groups and intergroup settings (e.g., transgender people, mothers and daughters, and musicians), and with respect to a diversity of methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, and translations). Interestingly also, we see CAT being coupled or integrated with other theoretical traditions, such as future pool (Alshammari, 2022) and willingness to communicate in a second language (Wu et al., 2023, see also Ypsilandis, 2023) models as well as relevance theory (Najjar, 2023); see also, Ouanlee (2023) with respect CAT and cognitive load. It is also evident that while studies of convergence and Stage 1 predominate the CAT theater, many do so by mining foci in later CAT Stages, including Stage 7 to which we turn to next.

CAT in the digital age: Stage 7

Soliz and Berquist (2016) noted that before 2000, only 4% of CAT works focused on computer-mediated communication (CMC), with Fox et al. (2007, p. 395) encouraging "…further research on asynchronous and synchronous CMC…to gain a better understanding of when, how, and why accommodation occurs online" (see Buzzanell et al., 1996). By 2015, 25% of CAT research was CMC, and work of that ilk has burgeoned since that time. This movement empowered Giles et al. (2023) to introduce the advent of a seventh Stage to the theory

in terms of so-called accommodation *through technology* and complementing this with work on human communication *with technology* in the guise of digital interlocutors, or machines (see Fortunati & Edwards, 2022). Overall, some 30 Stage 7 studies were examined that not only led Giles et al. (2023, p. 10) to revise and expand the Principles of CAT to eleven propositions, but also raised interesting questions, such as "…*why* do we accommodate to machines? Because we *like* them? Because we *identify* with them as members of the same social group? Do we want to *appear favorable* to them? Are we *afraid* of them?

While the short time since writing these questions is not long enough to answer them authoritatively or convincingly, sufficient investigations *have* emerged that warrant their collective attention and critique. Let us first turn our focus on accommodation *through* technology. As above, there is ample research in previous Stages showing how people employ various forms of accommodative tactics in computer-mediated communication (for a review, see Giles et al., 2023). This trend continues in Stage 7 as well: research in asynchronous textual communication in social media shows the convergence of users to the (perceived) norms that each time govern the communication context. For example, Reddit users accommodate their political talk (by self-censoring) depending on the presence of moderators who may remove hostile and unacceptable comments (Gibson, 2019). In a similar vein, Zhang et al. (2023) found that users evaluated more favorably an outgroup member who was positively evaluated by other ingroup members on Facebook, complying in this way to an ingroup norm created by the responses of fellow ingroup members. Another example concerns college students' use of AI writing tools to improve their written communication. Candilas et al., (2024) in a qualitative study found that these tools provided personalized suggestions by adapting to users' writing styles, resulting in positive communication outcomes.

Moreover, another empirical trend explores the interaction between communication situations and forms of accommodation revealing a plethora of convergence phenomena in:

(a) flirting behavior in online chatrooms (Marko, 2022, see also Wagner et al., 2022),
(b) linguistic styles in social media (Zhang et al., 2023),
(c) language preferences in Twitter (Ince, 2024),
(d) textisms (Adams & Miles, 2023),
(e) the use of emojis in an online forum during the pandemic of Covid-19 (Yu et al., 2023),
(f) expressing emotions of varied intensity on different social media platforms (Caspi & Etgar, 2023),
(g) the topics users discuss in Reddit depending on the specific audience (Sepahpour-Fard et al., 2023),
(h) intergenerational communication on Facebook messenger and Whatsapp (Hilte et al., 2021) and via social mediator robots (Noguchi et al., 2023),
(i) Indian Call Centers that use accent-neutral voice in order to converge with their diverse clients (Srinivasan, 2023).

Research has also examined accommodation in the context of global virtual teams of multinational private companies pointing to positive evaluations and perceptions of the accommodative interactants (Presbitero, 2021). Relatedly, firms that employ accommodative feedback to users' comments elicit more frequent and more positive interaction from users respectively (Liu et al., 2022). While accommodation generally leads to positive communication outcomes, there are occasions that interactants may just stop converging (in an online context, Brinberg & Ram, 2021) revealing ceiling effects, or may face negative effects, such as in excessive accommodation (i.e., overaccommodation, Stein, 2023).

Table 2. *A Representative Selection of CAT works situated in Stages 1-6 (and appearing since May 2023)*

Articles	**Languages Dialects &/or Region or Nation**	**Within Language Features and Issues**	**Social & Conversational Contexts**	**Methods & CAT Stages**
Alshammari, 2022	Gulf Pidgin Arabic in Saudi Arabia	Word of Cardinal Numerals & Nouns	Foreign workers & native Arabic speakers	Photo elicitation interviews: Stage 1.
Wade et al., 2023	Southern American English, USA	Acoustic cues	Outgroup speakers outside the South and ingroupers Inside It.	Dialect-label manipulation task: Stages 2, 3, & 6.
Maina, 2023	Kenya	Music genres	Musicians in Nairobi	In-depth interviews: Stage 1.
White et al., 2023	Australian English	Creaky voice	Same-sex teenagers' conversations	Automated vocal analyses of naturalistic data: Stage 1.
Wahyuningtyas et al., 2023	Javanese varieties	Communication style & values	Mother-daughter marriage preparations	In-depth interviews & observations: Stage 1
Heinz & Kłokowska, 2023	Poland & Canada	Expressed motives for accommodation	Transgender & cisgender people	In-depth interviews: Stages 1, 2, & 4
Wu et al., 2023	Cantonese in China and Hong Kong	Reported frequency of accommodative encounters	Mainland Chinese acculturation with Hong Kong residents	Survey: Stages 1, 2, & 4
Najjar, 2023	Arabic	Syntax	Translation of literary texts	Translations: Stages 1, 2, & 3
Xia, 2024	Mandarin	Prosodics	Task-related gendered conversations with young peers	Stage 1
Mohamadzade, 2023	Iran	Perceptions of intergenerational accommodation & nonaccommodation	Elders' optimism and life satisfaction	Survey: Stages 1, 2 & 6
Omori et al., 2023	Japanese	Intergenerational accommodation (respectful) & nonaccommodation (avoidance) with young and middle-aged	Variables affecting life satisfaction	Self-perceptions survey: Stages 1, 2 & 6
Petrou & Dragojevic, 2023	German	Immigrant reports of under-accommodation *from native host speakers*	Semi-structured interviews with non-native speakers	Self-perceptions: Stages 1, 2, & 4

Second, when considering communication *with* the technology, research has already showed that humans often accommodate to its human-like features, albeit in complex ways (Offrede et al., 2023; Zellou et al., 2021); for example, humans converge vocally to text-to-speech voices produced by devices of varying embodiments of the human form (Cohn et al., 2023), or lexically when interacting with robots that exhibit gaze aversion behaviors—characteristic of human gaze patterns—compared to robots that maintain constant eye contact (Kejriwal et al., 2024). Of course, speech accommodation on the part of the machine is desirable for humans in HMI (Human Machine Interaction): users tend to prefer personal assistants that adapt to their speed, gender and usage preferences leading to more positive interaction experience (Xie et al., 2023). Furthermore, elderly folk want, in their interaction with voice user interface (voice robots), the latter to accommodate their speech rate (Li et al., 2023) and children with (and without) autism spectrum disorder tend to show greater phonetic accommodation to robots which were perceived as more attractive (Hong et al., 2023). For the role of stereotypes and their consequent attributions of credibility with respect to the particular accent (e.g., American- versus British-English) of a Voice-AI assistant, see Pycha and Zellou (2024). Even the compatibility between robots' and users' personalities is important. Staffa et al., (2024) showed that the experience of human-robot interaction was enhanced by the perceived matching of their personality characteristics. Accommodation in HMI can even facilitate pro-environmental behavior. Majid et al. (2024) showed that chatbots that employ personalized communication styles are more positively perceived by users contributing to enhanced pro-environmental behavioral intention. Accommodation may take other forms as well: Twitter users converge on the topics and language that Serbian mass media use in their tweets (Bojic, 2023) and humans even adapt to exoskeleton (wearable) robots by drawing analogies with known prior experiences and anthromorphizing the exoskeleton (Wilkenfeld et al., 2023). Finally, convergence with robots seem to depend on people's prior biases and perceptions. Leshner and Johnson (2024) found that the degree to which men would like to form friendships with robots ('robofriendships') or engage sexually with them ('robosexuality') depend on their acceptance of social hierarchies and gender inequality.

The discussion regarding accommodation with the technology has entered new territories with the advent of AI and this is where our attention now turns (see also, Riordan & Kreuz, in press).

Human and artificial intelligence interaction: accommodation either way?

The introduction of AI in our lives has put some very interesting and challenging questions to communication theory in general (Natale, 2020) and to CAT (Giles et al., in press). We will first discuss how CAT can contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges that AI puts in communication and then, how theorizing about AI could challenge and enrich CAT.

Accommodative communication processes are integral to AI functioning.

CAT, we argue, can be instrumental to the understanding of the new AI communication era and built into AI technology. The process of the machine adapting to the characteristics and needs of the individual is an essentially accommodative process, with often positive results. For example, AI conversers (e.g., virtual assistants, smart speakers, see Sundar & Lee, 2022) can provide availability and connection to humans eliciting trust and disclosure from them *without*, however, the (sometimes contextually-nuanced problematics attending) intimacy characterizing human-to-human relationships (Brandtzager et al., 2022).

Endacott and Leonardi (2022) also underline the positive effects of such convergence in the case of the AI as a co-author. The more an AI technology complements and edits human messages according to sender's desired self-presentation, the less human wants to intervene in the process. An important moderator on the various outcomes of convergence concerns the perceptions of agency underlying the accommodative

processes: is accommodation overt and transparent, and how is it realized? Is it happening through a personalization process, which is based on covert technological decisions, not explicit to the human (i.e., machines adapt to user characteristics without the users know that such accommodation is taking place), or a customization process, which is based on human decisions (i.e., users select machine features that best adapt to their needs and preferences, Sundar, 2020)? While the latter positions agency with the human, this may create suspicion and undermine perceptions of human agency. Sundar and Marathe (2010) propose that the perceptions about these two accommodative processes depend on humans' digital literacy and motivation; users with high literacy prefer customization, while those with low literacy prefer personalization. Such differences point to issues of power differentials that may play part in HMI. Power is related to the balance of agency between human and machines. For some, AI degrades and devalues humans that once stood in its place, thus threatening social processes, such as democracy (e.g., Reeves, 2016), while others see AI as expressing the biases of their developers performed in their use (Noble, 2018).

While AI accommodation does have positive outcomes in the interaction with humans, CAT stresses that accommodation can be also *un*successful, thereby leading to potential negative outcomes. Convergence may fail, and AI technology may lead to perceptions of non-accommodation, such as over- or under-accommodation. Overaccommodation happens when the interactant is perceived to exceed the desired level of convergence (Gasiorek, 2016) and may take the form of slower speech rate, simplified vocabulary etc. Overaccommodation has been found to depend on the perceived motives of interactant's adjustment (e.g., to help vs. harm). Underaccommodation, on the other hand, happens when adjustments fall under the desired level of convergence (Dragojevic et al., 2016). Edwards et al. (2023) found that overaccommodation exhibited by social robots was perceived as more accommodative than underaccommodation and that led, respectively, to more positive evaluations of the robots. These findings point to the advantage of overaccommodation as this may imply an effort from the part of the technology to adjust to the human interactant, even though, not in an optimal way; for a discussion of optimal levels of convergence, see Giles & Smith (1979).

We assume that an important factor affecting humans' evaluation of AI nonaccommodation tactics are people's prior expectations, stereotypes, and heuristics about machines. Do they perceive them as automata, cold and competent - or warm and benevolent agents (as in Edwards et al., 2023)? However, although there is research showing the importance of those stereotypes in HMI (e.g., Perugia et al., 2023), the content of stereotypes should be (and is) modified following changes in the AI technology that acquires more and more human-like characteristics and affordances - and research should explore and consider these changes. Another dimension which can be relevant and worth exploring is the dynamic nature of human machine interaction as it progresses in time. Do evaluations of the technology change, when, for example, machines progressively adjust their accommodation to more desired levels, or when they just do not?

AI challenges communication theory as well as CAT.

The introduction of AI into the field of communication has instigated some challenging questions about the nature of the communication process itself (Natale, 2020). Is the medium (technology) no longer only the channel of communication, but also the source? And what does this mean for the humans interacting with machines? The attempt to provide answers to such questions has sparked theoretical discussion within the field of communication theory (Gunkel, 2012; Guzman, 2018; Guzman & Lewis, 2020) and provided some challenges to CAT theorizing by redefining the identities that become relevant and salient in the new communicative context. New understandings need to focus on the new position humans assume that transcend the interpersonal or intergroup dimensions. The human-technology dimension acquires an importance of its own in a new communication interaction that calls for an interactant/communicative

identity. Consequent questions that should be explored are, how humans define themselves within HMI interaction, and what is the cognitive and evaluative aspect of this new communicative identity? This identity may consist of the knowledge that humans interact with a communicator that have a mind of their own and are, thus, perceived as agentic.

Such cognitions may be accompanied with evaluations and perceived psychological distance that will be context-dependent: time (how long the interaction is taking place), prior beliefs (e.g., expectations), characteristics of the situation (e.g., synergistic), and accommodation will all interactively produce various identity configurations. For example, a long-term interaction with machines showing effective accommodative tactics to humans in a synergistic context (e.g., personal assistants) may create an interactant identity ('myself and my assistant', similar to an interpersonal identity). The development of such identity can be related with the motivation of humans to seek meaningful interaction with the machines based on a growth-oriented approach of anthropomorphism. Dang and Liu (2024) found that humans, motivated by a genuine interest in social interaction with robots, perceived them to have more human-like characteristics leading to more positive evaluations of the robots. However, prior negative stereotypes about the nature of machines (e.g., they are cold and full of their developers' bias, Perugia et al., 2023) or unequal power dynamics (e.g., perceptions of AI as threatening social processes, e.g., Reeves, 2016) could result to very different outcomes and greater psychological distance. Moreover, if humans experience similar relationships with various technologies (such as assistants, social robots etc.) a more collective understanding can be developed, putting us humans in one group and the machines in another. Interestingly, the human vs. AI context can reduce prejudice and discrimination towards other outgroups by activating a 'panhumanist' (an inclusive of all humans) identity (see Jackson et al., 2020). Social thinking about machines can be also activated by perceptions of AI as moral agents. To the degree that the consequences of technology's actions fall in the moral domain (e.g., decisions that harm or benefit social processes, such as hiring), it will be evaluated in relation to the salient human norms and values (see Bonnefon et al., 2024). Finally, we can also wander about the performative nature of communication with machines and its outcomes. Does the performance of oneself during HMI lead to any kind of social rewards (deriving perhaps from the accommodating machine) affecting thus self-perception (Walther & Witty, 2020)?

Conclusively, the answer to our previous questions about HMI (Giles et al., 2023), 'are we afraid of them' or 'do we want to appear favorable to them'? will be 'it depends', on the characteristics of communication context, humans' prior beliefs, mutual accommodative practices and salient identities. Accommodation *with* and *by* technology in HMI can be better understood around emergent identities rather than whether interactants are mindful or not about their expectations while they interact with machines (Fortunati & Edwards, 2022; Nass et al., 1993; see also, Pycha & Zellou, 2024). The theorizing about the new communication paradigm after the emergence of AI can substantially benefit by putting at the center of the discussion the concept of identity and its constituent process of accommodation.

Concluding comments

Obviously, there are many diverse and rich directions future CAT-oriented work can take in any of its Stages (see Giles et al., in press). This is especially the case with the inevitable expansion of technological advances that will emerge in the digital age and the explosion and allied debates about AI (see Riordan & Kreuz, in press). One of the frontrunners for a future research agenda is the biological and neuroscience underpinnings of accommodation through and with technology. The inherent generic value of such directions has already promoted our understanding of processes underlying both interpersonal (e.g., Floyd & Afifi, 2012) and

intergroup communication (e.g., Collins et al., 2023) as well as communication accommodation more specifically (see Denes & Phillon, 2019; Dhillon et al., in press; Palomares et al., 2016). In this latter regard, progress has been made by Davidesco et al. (2022) with respect to exploring inter-brain synchrony, by Speer et al. (2024) with respect to the neurocognitive dynamics underlying convergence and divergence, and by Tsoi et al.'s (2022) critique of neuro-studies analyzing social interaction more generally; for the notion of inter-brain coupling, see Dikker et al. (2022).

For us, further relational work, cross-culturally designed, is needed on the relative weights and interactive roles of brain activities, endocrinological and other excitations underlying accommodative phenomena (e.g., under- and overaccommodations, reluctant accommodation, and discourse management strategies) in face-to-face as well as via an array of mediated communication domains. As importantly, attention ought to be directed to how the role of these accommodative-nonaccommodative phenomena, in turn, shape physiological and neurological processes themselves.

Another avenue for future research could explore the field of Machine-Machine Interaction (MMI), examining, for example, whether and how technologies (e.g., robots) exhibit accommodative behaviors when interacting with one another (Mansouri & Taylor, 2024). This line of inquiry opens up intriguing questions about potential identity dynamics (e.g., can robots, either now or in the future, develop self-reflection or even consciousness?) and normative processes (e.g., can robots establish shared interaction norms?), both of which could drive accommodative behaviors in such interactions. These complex and thought provoking topics, however, lie beyond the scope of the present article to explore in detail.

Finally, in the context of this Journal, and while there are a myriad of folk and popularistic websites on communication styles in modern and ancient Greece, we have yet to locate studies invoking CAT in the Greek language; although, interestingly, its relevance is manifest in Van Tilbogh's (2019) analysis of interactions in the 2016 movie, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. We hope that our article might inspire ground-breaking and novel studies in this locale.

Acknowledgements

The authors appreciate the time and effort invested by the anonymous reviewers and Editors in providing thoughtful feedback which has elevated the final product.

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ΨΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΑ | PSYCHOLOGY 30(2), 233-251

Ελληνική Ψυχολογική Εταιρεία
Hellenic Psychological Society

ΒΙΒΛΙΟΓΡΑΦΙΚΗ ΑΝΑΣΚΟΠΗΣΗ | REVIEW PAPER

Θεωρία Επικοινωνιακής Προσαρμογής: Μια θεωρία σε έναν μεταβαλλόμενο ψηφιακό κόσμο

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KEYWORDS IN GREEK

Θεωρία Επικοινωνιακής Προσαρμογής (CAT)
Στάδια της CAT
Αρχές της CAT
Προσαρμογές αλληλεπίδρασης μέσω υπολογιστή
Προσαρμογές αλληλεπίδρασης ανθρώπου-μηχανής

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ABSTRACT IN GREEK

Η παρούσα εργασία επικεντρώνεται σε ένα σημαντικό κοινωνικοψυχολογικό θεωρητικό πλαίσιο μελέτης της επικοινωνίας, το οποίο αρχικά ονομάστηκε Θεωρία Προσαρμογής στον Λόγο (Speech Accommodation Theory), και το οποίο, κατά τη διάρκεια της 50χρονης ιστορίας του, έχει επεκτείνει τα φαινόμενα επικοινωνίας, τις κοινωνικές ομάδες, και τα πλαίσια που μελετά, και στην ψηφιακή εποχή. Αρχικά, περιγράφεται ο πυρήνας της θεωρίας κυρίως σχετικά με τις σημαντικότερες Αρχές της. Δεύτερον, και σε σχέση με την εξέλιξη της αποκαλούμενης πλέον Θεωρίας Επικοινωνιακής Προσαρμογής (CAT, Communication Accommodation Theory) κατά τη διάρκεια των τελευταίων δεκαετιών, παρουσιάζεται μια επισκόπηση των έξι πρώτων Σταδίων της. Τρίτον, παρουσιάζουμε ένα αντιπροσωπευτικό σύνολο μελετών που έχουν δημοσιευτεί κυρίως στο δεύτερο μισό του 2023, επισημαίνοντας ορισμένα σημαντικά χαρακτηριστικά τους. Τέταρτον, η έρευνα της CAT στην ψηφιακή εποχή (Στάδιο 7) συζητείται στα πλαίσια πρόσφατων μελετών και διερευνώνται οι προσαρμοστικές και μη προσαρμοστικές επικοινωνιακές πρακτικές *με* (with) και *μέσω* (through) της τεχνολογίας – συμβάλλοντας στην κατανόηση της διαμεσολαβημένης μέσω υπολογιστή αλληλεπίδρασης καθώς και της αλληλεπίδρασης ανθρώπου-μηχανής. Τέλος, θέτουμε συναφή ερευνητικά ερωτήματα που στο σύνολο τους συνιστούν μια χρήσιμη μελλοντική ερευνητική ατζέντα.

https://doi.org/10.12681/psy_hps.43913

Ψυχολογία: Το περιοδικό της Ελληνικής Ψυχολογικής Εταιρείας
https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/psychology