

**SPEECH ACCOMMODATION OF NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS
IN ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRY: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF BAPSI
SIDWA'S NOVEL "THE CROW EATERS"**

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ABSTRACT

The role of communication within a culture is very vital. Culture is an important part of our thoughts; that's why we cannot separate ourselves from it. It is very necessary to understand culture and communication because both words are interconnected. In this paper, the researchers attempt to apply Giles's Communication accommodation theory to the situation where Jerbano, a non-native English speaker, tries to communicate with English speakers in London. The

researchers analyze communication among non-native English speakers (Jerbano) with English speakers in London based on textual analysis. Bapsi Sidwa portrays the Parsi mind, social behavior, value systems, and custom in this novel. In the end, she explains the communication accommodation of non-native English speakers in an English-speaking country. She presents a typical story of a Parsi family and their social setting in her fictional novel. The novel "The Crow Eaters" by Bapsi Sidwa represents intercultural communication between the Parsi community and native English speakers of London. Bapsi Sidwa is a good social observer. In the novel, she demonstrates the communication barriers between non-native English speakers with native English speakers. Jerbano, a character in the novel, visited London with her family, where she tries her level best to accommodate her English speaking with native speakers of English.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sumitha (2018) demonstrates that culture initiates the recurring pattern of behavior within a specified frame. The relationship between culture and communication is tightly interwoven and interlinked. A question arises in an individual's mind: do gender and social role interaction affect each other? The answer is yes. A group of siblings has common features, but they will still have differences, and all these differences help in intercultural communication. The upbringing of individuals shapes them, and that upbringing ultimately affects the individual worldview. Psychological aspects and behavior are also included in culture. For example, if a person grows up in a dominant male society where men speak and women are expected to remain silent, this is the effect of their culture. A person can be judged from the choice of words, nod, or glance in their communication. Communication by nature is cultural; every person judges another person according to their own cultural experiences. In childhood, babies learn to speak and give nonverbal messages to convey their thoughts to others. Our families and our childhood experiences influence our communication style. Once we begin to communicate with the world outside of our immediate community, we learn that other modes of communication are similar to ours. Suppose we believe that communication is a means of interaction. In that case, we should try to build our communication styles with others and challenge ourselves to build relations of high value.

A person's preferred style may be adapted according to the situation and respond to variable factors, such as context, personalities, responses, or even our frame of mind. Our goal is to be effective when sharing communication. The questions that always confuse us are, are we saying what we want to say? Does it make sense? Are they listening to the same thing that we say? Are people getting the same message what we convey? Do their responses indicate that we have a shared understanding of the words and the meaning behind them? The same is the case with other individuals; these questions need to be addressed if we truly want to be good communicators with new attitudes and skills.

In all contexts, people from all over the world speak together or write for each other. By taking a brief look around us, we all recognize people consciously or subconsciously speaking change the manner of their conversation. Some people, instead of converging their speech with others, show divergence. There are numerous examples, like doctors, when they show their supremacy and intelligence to patients. Some doctors use special words and don't try to make their conversation easier for patients. They use such complex medical terms to patients who have no idea about such terms. Some people try to converge their speech with others, like teachers.

Good teachers try to deliver their lectures in very simple words so that all students in the class pick them easily.

Researchers use Giles and Tanya's (2007) Communication Accommodation theory categories in a situation where there is a complication in intercultural communication studies and also when there is an increase in the number of migrations. Another reason for Using CAT strategies is that why people use them to make their communication easy? Because of these reasons, CAT got a lot of fame in the field of cross-cultural communication. Immigrant starts a completely new life when they enter a foreign country because they may encounter various issues that need to be addressed. The biggest problem many foreigners face in foreign countries is the language of the country they have visited or migrated to. Communication accommodation theory (CAT) is not a new theory; it is a very old phenomenon. It was first demonstrated as the speech accommodation theory (SAT). Giles investigated that talking to other people changes their accent to be more similar to their conversational partner. Giles and Smith, after six years, reported that apart from accent, there is also a deep impact on communicator speech rate, pronunciation, sentence structure, and pauses for effective communication. People try their best to accommodate their speech to others to gain favor in different matters.

Giles and Ogay (2007) demonstrated two reasons for adjustment of speech; social learning and imitation. Speech accommodation allows people to match their speech rate, pitch volume, and many more features of language to others to improve and make social interaction and conversation easier and understandable. With time, in this theory, alteration occurs, and speech changes to communication. Communication with brevity and clarity is very effective. It is a social tool to tempt others and make their impression positive or negative in different circumstances. People consciously or unconsciously try to line up their communication with each other. When a person communicates with older people, they try to raise their voice and slow their speech.

On the other hand, when a mother talks to her kids, she uses easy vocabulary and simple sentences. The same communication adjustment is repeated with immigrants. Immigrants try to align their communication to the communication of the target society. Vice versa, target society speakers, try to accommodate their conversation to the immigrants.

To develop these skills, be aware of the similarities and differences in perception of formality of speech and language, rules, manners, body language, verbal and non-verbal cues, personal or physical space, social values, customs, humor, and privacy. Learning about another language or culture will enhance the ability to communicate with others. When encountering someone who does not share the specific home language or culture, they need to talk to people who have interacted with members of that culture or observe the similarities and differences with a respectful eye. In the novel "The Crow Eaters," the same situation happens when a Parsi Lahore family visits London. The novel begins with the protagonist of the novel Faredoon Junglewalla, who with his family migrated to Lahore. The whole novel is so humorous, especially in the end, where the family visits London. The funniest parts of the novel are where Jerbano tries to communicate with her English-speaking host Mary. Jerbano and Mary speak different languages and belong to different "cultures," but they try to understand their conversation.

1.2 ABOUT THE NOVELIST

Bapsi Sidwa is the writer of the novel "The Crow Eaters." She was born in the Gujarati Parsi family on August 11, 1936. She is a Pakistani American novelist. She lives in the United States. She wrote fascinating novels related to women's oppression, religion, cultural heredity, immigration, and the impact of postcolonialism on people's lives. She has written *Water*, *American Brat*, *The Crow Eaters*, *Cracking India*, *Ice Candy Man*, *City of Sin and Splendor*, *The Bride*, etc. She got the award of Sitara-i-Imtiaz in 1991.

1.3 ABOUT THE NOVEL

This novel is satirical fiction, in which Sidwa, in her mock-epic tone, makes fun of every character, especially the old lady named Jerbano. The protagonist of the novel is Fareed Junglewalla, nicknamed Freddy. He was the son-in-law of Jerbano. He migrated to Lahore with his pregnant wife, one daughter, and mother-in-law at a very young age. When he came to Lahore, he came on a wooden cart as a needy man. He started a business from a very low point and soon settled himself as a successful businessman. He was very happy with his life except for her mother-in-law Jerbano because Jerbano did everything to disturb and tease Freddy. Jerbano also teases her host "Mary" when she visits London for some time.

1.4.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Bapsi Sidwa, in her novels, raised her interest in issues related to immigration. She has seen the problems of immigrants because of this reason; she discusses those issues in her novels. "The Crow Eaters" is a fascinating novel written by Parsi writer Bapsi Sidwa. She discusses Parsi family customs and beliefs very clearly. She composes this novel in a humorous style, although it also deals with serious cultural and historical issues. A real twist occurred in the novel when the Parsi family in the novel visited London. Based on textual analysis, the researchers interpret the language of an old lady named Jerbano, who tries to communicate and accommodate her speech in the accent and style of native English speakers in London.

1.4.2 Problem Statement

When an individual moves to a place where there is a completely different culture and language in that situation, a person faces a lot of problems. Here, a question arises in an individual's mind that how a person will accommodate and adjust themselves according to the new circumstance. Among all problems, the language barrier is the most prominent issue. In this study, the researcher discusses the same circumstances and problems of linguistic barriers of a Parsi family when they moved toward London. The same was the case with the character Jerbano when she visited London.

1.4.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following objects:

1. To find out the impact of the cross-cultural environment on individuals' language.
2. To analyze that how non-native English speakers accommodate their speech to native English speakers?

1.4.4 Delimitation Of The Research

Bapsi Sidwa, in the novel "The Crow Eaters," discusses different issues related to culture, identity, ethnicity, moral values, etc. But in this study, the researcher focuses only on the intercultural communication between native or actual English speakers and non-native English speakers. The researcher discusses only the conversation among the character Jerbano with native English speakers. Researchers try to find out the linguistic gaps among them and find how Jerbano tries to accommodate her conversation according to native English speakers to convey her messages effectively.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Giles and Ogay (2007), Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) provides a wide-ranging framework to predict and explain many individuals' adjustments to create, maintain, or decrease the social distance in interaction. According to Giles and Ogay (2007), there are two types of convergence in CAT, upward convergence and downward convergence. In her novel "The crow eaters," Husain (2019) argued that Bapsi Sidwa in her novel "The crow eaters" tries to give answers to some questions by reviving a fictional story of Parsi people's beliefs and social system. She portrays the Parsi mind, social behavior, and customs in the novel.

Kumari (2018) reported that Bapsi Sidwa provides a deep perception of the Parsi faith and the tolerance of other faiths and their cultural values, giving readers a quick view of the Parsi community's true traditions that have yet to be known by the world. Powers (2000) suggested that "The Crow Eaters" (1980) is about Bapsi Sidwa's ethnic community. It is a humorous novel about various generations of the Parsi community in Lahore. Singh (2012) argued that Sidwa is keen to elevate the status of women in society as a whole, which can only happen when someone recognizes in the novel the portrayal of female characters like Putli, Rodabai, and Tanya. Sidwa succeeds in discussing the issues that women need to understand and overcome to strengthen their position in social development and become strong enough to live an independent and full of confidence life.

Davi (2017) argued that Bapsi Sidwa's study focuses on the Parsi community; that's why she tries to present a map of Parsi changing identity. She touched the hidden corner of her remote community in the novel. The main stress of Parsi people is their culture and identity. They don't like to disclose Parsi culture, and they try their best to keep up their culture from other major external effects that surround them. Jamil and Ahmad (2021) state that the novel interprets the different forms of oppression to distinguish the linguistic choices of female suffrage. Chowdhury demonstrates the basic philosophy and inherent ideas of Parsi people, and their worldviews are based on continuously changing circumstances. Their unique views give way to literature that will search for a steady base and a concrete identity. The constant change in their nature gives them a unique position from where they voice for their hyphenated existence.

Singh (2016) argued that Bapsi Sidwa is a postcolonial feminist novelist. In her novels, she gives a voice for female rights by creating strong feminist characters. She portrays the nature of women that they do not want to get burdened psychologically and mentally from irrational and extra cultural norms. They do not want to lose their cultural identity at the same time. Bapsi Sidwa claims that one can't judge that individual without even knowing a unique background in its totality. She further argued that when one exceeds the belief in the superiority of one's ethnic group and starts celebrating historical and socio-cultural differences honestly that proper understanding develops.

Sharma (2013) demonstrates that Bapsi Sidwa calls herself a Parsi woman of Pakistan, although she spends her half-life in the United States. Bapsi Sidwa, in her four famous novels, *The Crow Eaters*, *The Pakistani Bride*, *Ice-Candy-Man*, and *An American Brat*, demonstrates her views about the life of a Parsi, Punjabi, Pakistani and American woman, respectively. All the work of Bapsi Sidwa has glimpses of her autobiography. She picks up some interesting and strange elements from her own life based on which she writes novels. Because of such realistic touch of life, her fiction got a lot of fame. Bapsi Sidwa's fiction, articles, and reviews were published in the most prestigious newspapers and magazines. Bapsi Sidwa has a vast choice of writing. Her writing style has given way to different reactions of readers. One cannot call her to work just comic, and she also touches very serious themes of life like; women's oppression, postcolonialism, migration, minority community, Parsi customs, etc. Treatment of different subject matter makes her work more fascinating.

In their research, Jamil and Ahmed (2021) critically analyze the novel "The Crow Eaters" issues in light of Critical Discourse Analysis. The purpose of their research was to reveal unbalanced relations in the "The Crow eaters." The novel reported that Sidwa reported women's oppression, whether in physical oppression, sexual oppression, or psychological and financial oppression. Because of such oppression, women's linguistic choices are completely changing and different from men's. They uncovered unequal power relations, oppression, and its diverse forms in Bapsi Sidwa's novel *The Crow Eaters* in the light of Critical Discourse Analysis. The chief argument of their study is that women are oppressed physically, sexually, psychologically, and financially. These all sorts of women's oppression are because of the patriarchal or male dominant society. Singh (2015) argued that Sidwa indicates Patriarchal culture and norms for perpetuating violence against women; she does not hold masculinity in a dark light in general.

Different studies have been conducted on this novel "The Crow Eaters" from many perspectives, whether women's oppression, impacts of immigration, postcolonialism, etc. However, the uniqueness of this study is that researchers investigated this novel from a completely different perspective which is a textual analysis of the novel in the light of Giles and Ogay's (2007) Communication accommodation theory. Researchers in this study focused on the language of non-native English speakers in English-speaking country.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of the present study is qualitative textual analysis. It is essential to analyze the text to the point of cultural criticism and other disciplines that focus on the text or try to understand the cultural text in its way. The text has no common meaning; it is intertwined with ongoing cultural and social practices. According to Belsey (2013), textual analysis as a research method involves a close encounter with the work itself, examining the details without bringing to them more presuppositions than we can help (Pg: 160). Textual analysis was applied, which, in line with the study's theoretical framework, helped analyze a large amount of textual material in the novel. The text was then coded and analyzed, while analysis led to the results of the study. Researchers did a textual analysis of the novel based on Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). It provides a comprehensive framework for creating, maintaining, or bridging gaps in individuals' communicative interactions and maintains or decreases social distance in interaction. It inquires into different manners or directions based on which a person accommodates their speech according to the new circumstances. Giles and Ogay (2007) reported that CAT has resolved issues of mutual interaction up to some extent and addresses interpersonal communication issues.

In simple words, an individual represents their own culture through communication. An individual speaks just as an individual and as someone who represents their community and culture. Through communication, one can judge whether a particular person is a doctor, an engineer, a businessman, a layman, etc.

Researchers in this study tried to do textual analysis of the novel and apply Giles and Ogay's (2007) communication accommodation theory. This topic is going to find out those new aspects of the writing of Bapsi Sidwa, which would prove out to be a big achievement in the field of cross-cultural communication.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

According to Communication Accommodation theory, sometimes a person can converge or shows a similarity of speech to their communicative partner to meet multiple conversational needs and at the same time diverges on others. Some characters in the novel "The Crow Eaters" face the same situation when they visit Lahore to London. They try to accommodate their speech according to the changed circumstances. Sometimes they converge their speech to the English speakers to make their message understandable. Sometimes they diverge from native speakers because of the unawareness of the specific rules and values.

Fareedoon Junglewala, the protagonist of the novel "The Crow Eaters," has a friend in London named Mr. Allen. Junglewala, with his wife Putli and mother-in-law Jerbano, visited London, they stayed at Mr. Allen's home. The hosts were extremely hospitable, and the guests were also very happy except Jerbano. Poor Mrs. Allen, in her household activities, received unpleasant scorn from Jerbano. Every time she stepped into Mrs. Allen's kitchen, and Mrs. Allen's heart sank. Jerbano, in her broken English, tries to communicate with Mrs. Allen 'Here, May-ree. You wash little little?' May-ree, tea!' After the breakfast tray was lapped up, 'Finish! Take away!' Jerbano shouts if a rare sun is out. 'May-ree, sun, sun! I out.' (Pg 124). From this sort of conversation, Jerbano tries to converge her speech with Mrs. Allen. Jerbano's pronunciation reflects her difference among native English speakers because traces of her mother tongue (Paarsi) is set up in it.

According to Giles and Ogay (2007), there are two types of convergence in CAT, upward convergence and downward convergence (Pg: 295). In upward convergence, people at low positions try to converge their speech according to high-status people. In downward convergence, the elite class of highly educated people tries to accommodate their speech according to low-status people. In the novel "The Crow Eaters," Jerbano exercised convergence upward. Jerbano, in her English conversation, mostly exercised her nuanced understanding of English monosyllables and based on which she tries to communicate with native English speakers. Jerbano's use of English is different from the normal English structure of native English speakers, which shows that native language L1 (Paarsi) strongly influences Jerbano's second language (English) L2. At the time, when she left England, she was able to speak small sentences of English. Jerbano always demands new things from Mrs. Allen. One day Jerbano said to Mrs. Allen, 'Why you not make curry today?' (Pg.194). In this question, Jerbano uses loan words. According to Flemman (2011), loan words are inserting words borrowed from one language into another language. In the above sentence, the word "curry" is not English, but Jerbano used it in her conversation. Then she said to Mary, 'Why you not cut onion proper?' 'Why you not rinse O.K.? I not drink with soap!' 'No chilli? I no digest!' (Pg.194). Jerbano

conveys her message to Mrs. Allen from such monosyllabic conversation, which is another speech blunder that Jerbano committed most frequently. 'no chilli, no digest. With such nouns and verbs, she could not use "cannot" correctly, but she tries her level best to make her speech understandable. Jerbano interferes in the Kitchen matters of Mrs. Allen and taunts her host on her dressing. Sometimes her remarks on Mrs. Allen's dressing were extremely conservative. Such remarks show divergence with other people like, 'Why you not wear nice long gown? Silly frock. It shows you got a terrible leg.' 'Shame, shame, shame! You wearing such a small knicker!' tut-tutted Jerbano. 'Why you not have bath! Water bite you?' 'You sit, you drink tea-cup every two, two minutes. Mind, demon of laziness make your bottom fat.' (Pg.195). Some untranslated words like tut-tutted are also there in Jerbano's speech, but she tries to make her speech understandable in the context. On one occasion, Jerbano said to Mrs. Allen, 'Why you got no breast?' by patting Mary's flat chest (Pg: 195). 'Not good. To make her conversation understandable to Mary, Jerbano sometimes speaks formally and sometimes in an informal manner.

According to Giles and Ogay (2007), patronizing speech in its intense form is called "baby talk." It is usually negatively stereotyped because it is based on expectations about the communicative style of older people who are weak, unattractive, dumb, and useless in Western societies (Pg: 301). The same "baby talk" is the case with Jerbano. Once Jerbano visited a nearby shopping mall, she was nearly escaped from hitting a bus. In her extreme anger, she called the traffic police and said; why you not take bus number! You only decoration?' The traffic police officer bent towards the little old lady to hear what she was trying to say. 'Why you wear fancy uniform? Why you wear gold button and belt? For decoration?' People gathered around Jerbano and traffic police. She said, 'You want decoration on road?'

Jerbano asked the people around her, 'I bring flower-vase from my house and I bring little china statues.' She turned to the bobby. 'You not flowervase, you not china statue. You policeman! Why for you not take bus number? Why? I nearly dead!' Suddenly she gave the astonished bobby a shove. 'Go catch bus. Go. Go. I pull out driver's tongue! I poke his eye! Go!' (Pg: 201). The interrogative style of Jerbano is up to some extent similar to native English speakers, but she asks questions in bits, not in a completely structured interrogative style.

Jerbano, with his son-in-law and daughter, stayed in a hotel, but the washrooms were so far away at that hotel. She brings some water to her room and tries to shower on her terrace to solve her problem. People living below Jerbano's room roared when the water went below there. A man shouted, 'Come on, what's going on up here? You washing clothes or something?' Jerbano, in reply, said, 'You not poke your nose into me mister, I not poke my nose into you!' She gives an honest enough answer, but the Englishman was not content. 'You want to know?' she asked with anger 'I tell you! I wash my bottom. I no dry-clean like you dirty Englishmen. I wash my bottom!' (Pg: 204). Jerbano faces a lot of problems while communicating with native English people. She tries her level best to do effective communication and accommodate her speech with the native speakers. From her monosyllabic and broken English, some native speakers try to understand her broken monosyllabic English. During her conversation, she makes an effort to slow down her speech because she's not a fast and fluent speaker like English speakers. She uses more body gestures, easy vocabulary, and simple short sentences to make her conversation understandable.

5 CONCLUSION

According to Flemban (2011), language and identity are inseparable: they influence and construct each other. Giles and Ogay (2007) demonstrated that ethnolinguistic vitality could be understood and measured using three types of factors: status, demography, and institutional support. They investigated that addressees consider at least three factors in mind while interacting with others' person. The three factors are; the other's language ability, their effort or what they stated, and external pressure that forces the speaker to act in a certain way. Therefore, if a speaker like Jerbano does not know about the basic communication skills and who deviates easily from any interruption in communication, so that person inappropriate conversation must be begged off; in their Communication Accommodation theory, Giles and Ogay (2007) argued that it is usually anticipated that people of lower status try to converge their communication to high-status people. It is called upward convergence. For example, most interviewees try to speak in a bombastic manner to impress the interviewers to prove that they are the only deserving employee for this seat.

In contrast with upward convergence, there is downward convergence. A higher-status individual like teachers or trainers converges their speech using simple layman language to make the student understand, called downward convergence. According to Giles and Ogay (2007), the satellite model of CAT, the intergroup model of second language acquisition, analyses the socio-psychological variables. This model follows the attitude of subordinate group members to learn the language of dominant groups.

Convergence is a type of adjustment in CAT used for ease and showing more similarities among communicators (Pg 295). The London environment is completely new for Jerbano, but she tries to accommodate her communication with the native English speakers of London. Divergence stresses the differences and increases the differences among the conversational partners (Pg: 295). Those who show divergence want to be differentiated from others. Those people try to impress others, the way Jerbano tries her level best to impress Mary from her traditional dresses and to cook and shows disliking for Mary getup, cooking, etc. Increasing social distance is a reason for divergence. Another occasion where Jerbano testifies divergence is her taking a bath on the terrace of her room in London at a hotel. In Communication accommodation theory, convergence evokes a positive response, whereas divergence evokes a negative response. In the novel "The Crow Eaters," Jerbano tries to accommodate her speech according to the changed circumstances. She fulfills all qualities of both convergence and divergence of Communication Accommodation theory.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCHERS

Researchers apply communication accommodation theory to cover up Speech Accommodation of non-native English Speakers in English-speaking country. Based on textual analysis, the researcher analyzes the English speech of a character Jerbano in Bapsi Sidwa's novel "The Crow Eaters." Future researchers are recommended to research other cross-culture experiences like; multiculturalism, cultural heredity, identity, customs, and ethnicity in the same novel.

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