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INTEGRATED CO-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES

Abstract:

Communication accommodation theory (CAT) describes the ways that people adjust their behavior while interacting with others, whether that is to gain approval or influence perception. CAT summarizes three adaption strategies: convergence, maintenance, and divergence. Convergence is used when we are seeking to connect with someone and gain their approval and divergence is used when we are trying to distance ourselves from others, seeking to maintain our social identity and voice.

Co-cultural theory (CT) explores the communication strategies that non-dominant group members use when interacting within dominant society. CT proposes three preferred outcomes in co-cultural communication process: assimilation, accommodation, or separation. Assimilation means individuals attempt to “fit in” the dominant group while accommodation means individuals participate in the activities of the dominant group without losing their cultural identity. Separation means that the non-dominant individual resists interactions with the dominant groups.

Both CAT and CT are widely applied to the studies of the lived experiences and the communicative interactions employed by members with different cultural backgrounds. The accommodation strategies obtained from the empirical studies using different theories are identical or similar in many ways. However, there are few attempts from scholars to integrate the existing CAT and CT accommodation strategies into a comprehensive and heuristic whole.

The aim of this paper, based on a thorough review of the existing CAT and CT literature, is to identify and integrate the relevant accommodation strategies adopted by co-cultural members. The integrated co-cultural communication accommodation strategies will provide a practical theoretical framework for the future researches on the non-dominant group members with different cultural backgrounds in their communication accommodation process.

Keywords:

Communication Accommodation Theory; Co-cultural Theory; Co-cultural Communication Accommodation Strategies