

Giles' Accommodation Theory in more detail

For each of the examples, the scenario of an RP speaker (eg the Queen) is meeting a regionally accented speaker (eg Peter Kay), possibly after a Royal Command Performance.

Convergence: 'moving towards'

Mutual Convergence: Both speakers like each other, so they move together. The Bolton Speaker becomes less regional while the RP speaker softens the edges of her RP. For example, the Queen has really enjoyed Peter Kay's show and he really likes the Queen.

Upward Convergence: The Bolton speaker becomes more RP-sounding, but the RP speaker remains static. For example: Peter Kay wants to impress the Queen but she is not amused

Downward Convergence: The RP Speaker softens accent but the Bolton speaker remains static. For example: The Queen tries to be friendly to Peter Kay but he is not impressed!

Divergence: 'moving away from'

Mutual Divergence: Both speakers move apart, reflecting mutual dislike. Both accents become noticeably stronger. For example: The Queen has been really offended by Peter Kay's show and Peter Kay really dislikes the Queen.

Upward Divergence: The RP speaker strengthens her accent in order to put extra distance between herself and the other speaker. The Lancashire speaker remains static. For example: The Queen wants to distance herself from Peter Kay but he is ambivalent.

Downward Divergence: The Lancashire speaker strengthens his accent in order to put extra distance between himself and the other speaker. The RP speaker remains static. For example: Peter Kay wants to distance himself from the Queen but the Queen is fairly happy to meet Peter Kay.

In pairs, suggest what might happen in the following scenarios:

1. The Electricians' Union has been threatening industrial action. Some union officials from Leeds hold talks with a government minister. The minister has been told to soft-pedal, and not antagonise the union representatives.
2. You go for a job interview and you are anxious to impress. Your interviewer has an RP accent.
3. You go for an interview, and you really dislike the interviewer. You get the feeling that she doesn't think much of you either. You decide the job is not for you.
4. You always felt your next-door neighbour was rather 'posh' and 'stand-offish' until recently when she invited you round for a cup of tea. She turned out to be much more down-to-earth than you thought. You both had a really good time, did lots of talking, and got on like a house on fire.
5. Your brother-in-law came to dinner at your house, and was clearly at great pains to point out that he thinks his family is better than yours. You have a Manchester accent; your brother-in-law comes from Surrey, and is RP-accented.
6. You feel that your teacher, who has an RP accent, needs shaking up a bit. You have a London accent, and you want him to know that you're 'streetwise' and you've 'been around'.