2016

Exploring Linguistic Challenges and Cultural Competency Development in a Small Multinational Corporation

Cindy J. Atchley
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Cindy Atchley

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Pascale Hardy, Committee Chairperson, Management Faculty
Dr. Patricia Fusch, Committee Member, Management Faculty
Dr. Judith Forbes, University Reviewer, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2016

Abstract

Exploring Linguistic Challenges and Cultural Competency Development

in a Small Multinational Corporation

by

Cindy Atchley

MA Applied Linguistics, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1998

MBA, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1996

BBA, University of Oklahoma, 1985

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

August 2016

Abstract

In 2016’s global business landscape, the increase in workers moving across borders to find employment accentuates the language and cultural challenges for both employees and organizations. Employees working in a multinational environment need to have an understanding of language and culture to handle the complex nature of professional work in a multinational corporation (MNC). The purpose of this study was to explore what communication competencies employees in a small MNC needed to communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace. A dialectic approach of intercultural communication was used to explore these needs in one small MNC located in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia using English as the corporate language. Data were collected from 9 employees of one data security firm using semistructured interviewing, the data was then coded into NVivo. Using interpretative phenomenology analysis, the themes of understanding, cultural sensitivity, pace, and fitting in emerged. Results of the study indicated a disconnect in the cultural mentality of Americanness versus Arabness in the business environment where societal factors and national identity reflected in how the employees think and act in the workplace. Lack of cultural knowledge in an MNC can impact the financial health of an organization in lost opportunities, reduced productivity, and long-term relationship damage with clients and partners. The results of this study could contribute to positive social change by providing small MNCs with the insight to enhance intercultural communication and intercultural awareness among employees in building a global workforce.

Abstract

Exploring Linguistic Challenges and Cultural Competency Development

in a Small Multinational Corporation

by

Cindy J. Atchley

MA Applied Linguistics, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1998

MBA, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1996

BBA, University of Oklahoma, 1985

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

August 2016

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Pascale Hardy for her mentorship and friendship throughout this journey. You have been inspirational in your encouragement. I would like to thank Dr. Patricia Fusch coming to my committee late in the game but who has been there to push me above and beyond and to achieve more. I appreciate your efforts and your commitment to my study.

I would like to thank Dr. Judie Forbes for your feedback as my URR. I would also like to thank Dr. Sandy Kolberg for helping me find Dr. Fusch when my first committee just wasn't working out. Thank you for your encouraging words. I would also like to thank Dr. Allyson Gee for giving me the idea for my dissertation after the first topic didn't work out.

Most of all I would like to acknowledge the commitment of my family, my daughter Amanda and grandson Caden, who for the last eight years put up with me working on this degree, taking time away from you both. Amanda you helped me through a whole range of emotions: complaining, crying, excitement, stress, anticipation, and laughter throughout this journey and I can never thank you enough for being there for me. I hope my journey has inspired both of you to never stop learning.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The focus of this study was to explore the lived experiences of a multicultural workforce in a data security firm in Saudi Arabia that uses English as an operating language with employees who speak English as a second or third language. Language and cultural challenges among the employees can create problems in decision making and comprehension of organizational communication and direction (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014).

Chapter 1 begins with an overview of the background of the study, the problem statement, statement of purpose, and the central research question for this study. Also included in this chapter is discussion of the conceptual framework, the nature of the study, and the researchers' assumptions and limitations. The chapter concludes with key terminology used and the significance of this research study to fill gaps in the areas of practice, theory, and positive social change.

Background of the Study

The international nature of business activities and the increase in workers moving across borders to work accentuated the need for greater language and cultural understanding for both those who migrate and the companies for which they work (Angouri, 2013). In a multinational corporation (MNC), encounters with multilingualism are a normal daily experience for employees in today's global workforce (Angour & Miglbauer, 2014). Employees negotiate language practices for work and social interactions as a daily routine (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014). The global workplace in 2016 is somewhat different than the work processes of the 1970s resulting from (a) economic globalization, (b) shifting demographic and migration patterns, and (c) the rapid pace of technology (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). Employees working in multinational and multicultural environments need to have an understanding of nations, languages, and culture as part of their skill sets in order to handle the complex nature of professional work and function effectively within a company (Ainsworth, 2013; Okoro, 2012). Being competent in professional communication is important to global business knowledge, and English is an integral element of business knowledge (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013).

Language diversity impacts organizational activities negatively in several ways: (a) unfamiliar vocabulary, (b) unusual accent, (c) slow speech rhythm, and (d) frequent grammatical mistakes. These often make it difficult for employees to understand communication encounters (Lauring & Klitmoller, 2015). It is stressful for employees to strive to effectively convey a message while speaking a language that is not a first language and has not been mastered (Du-Babcock, 2013; Lauring & Klitmoller, 2015). Competence in mastering communication in a work environment often involves these three concepts: (a) the use of appropriate business-related conventions and ideas, (b) the proper use of corresponding English terminology, and (c) applying appropriate communicative techniques (Palmer-Silveira, 2013). Conducting business with people from other cultures is challenging (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013). MNCs and companies doing business internationally need to take into account the language and cultural challenges that individual employees face in international situations and recognize language and cultural skills as a core skill that requires development (Ainsworth, 2013; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013).

In the workplace, language interactions operate in a microcosm of the larger society and culture in which a business operates (Nair-Venugopal, 2015). Levels of interactions between individuals and the way these individuals behave and act in the workplace is indicative of a company's culture (Nair-Venugopal, 2015). Culture in the workplace can be broken down by the levels of intercultural and interpersonal relations within the organization's overall corporate structure (Nair-Venugopal, 2015).

This study was explored to fill the gap in knowledge that addresses both language and culture in organizational communication from an employee's perspective. Research studies that deal directly with comprehensive language use and its effect on work group or employee outcomes are few (Lauring & Klitmoller, 2015). In this study, I explored the linguistic and cultural challenges employees faced at one multinational corporation with a multicultural workforce.

Problem Statement

It is estimated that in 2013, international immigrants numbered 232 million on a worldwide basis, which is approximately 3% of the global population ("World Migration Report", 2015). As these immigrants move about, they need to work to make a living, which comes with cultural challenges including language use (Wells, 2013). The increased internationalization of business can make the management of languages in multinational corporations a growing concern for both employers and employees in order to make sure clear communication and comprehension is achieved by all (Lauring &

Klitmoller, 2015; Wells, 2013). The general problem is that encounters or interactions in an intercultural workplace are complex and often involve multiple identities simultaneously; employees working in these environments among various cultures are often stressed and challenged by the diversity and languages issues (Kim, 2015; Martin & Nakayama, 2015; Rozkwitalska, 2013). The phenomenon of business globalization and a global workforce raises the need for both employers and employees to know and understand the cultures in which coworkers' communication and ways to interact with each other (Cuypers, Ertug, & Hennart, 2014; Du-Babcock, 2013; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012). This phenomenon raises the need to link the micro level interaction to the employee peer to peer level in the workplace to intercultural communication concepts. The specific problem is that some MNC employees lack communication competency to communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore what communication competency MNC employees needed to communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace. I used the dialectical approach of intercultural communication to explore the cultural and linguistic competency of employees in a small multinational company. Nine employees at one small multinational data security firm located in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with an additional office in Jordan participated in semistructured interviews to share their lived experiences of communication competency in each culture. This research was important to positive social change by shedding light on global business organizations and subsidiaries that employ multicultural and multilingual individuals in the Middle East. The ability of employees to communicate effectively in multinational corporations gives these companies a competitive advantage in knowledge transfer (Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2012). This research is important in exploring ways to help companies address this issue.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of MNC employees who communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace?

Conceptual Framework

The dialectic approach is a new way of thinking about communication content and how it is used in multicultural environments shaped by cultural forces (Martin & Nakayama, 2013, 2015; Nakayama & Martin, 2014). A dialectic perspective is a way in which culture, communication, context, and power interconnect with and relate to intercultural communication interactions (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). A dialectic is a discourse between individuals holding different points of view on a subject or topic and can be traced back to Plato’s Socratic dialogues (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). The use of the dialectic approach in intercultural communications is a relatively new area of study and has become increasingly popular due to changing worldviews of researchers in a globalized workplace (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Martin and Nakayama (2013) posit a dialectic perspective that is based on three approaches to understanding and providing meaning to cultural and communication: (a) functionalist, (b) interpretive, and (c) critical to understand and give meaning to cultural and communication. These approaches are interconnected and contradictory (Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

Using the dialectical approach, I explored conventions about cultural identities of workers' intercultural competence focusing on individual characteristics, comprehension, and skill sets (Martin & Nakayama, 2013, 2015). A dialectical perspective explains the opportunities and limitations facing different people in the workplace by taking into consideration the larger societal issues framing the individual's competence that may lead to an ethnocentric bias. As such, the dialectical approach foregrounds the forces that challenge communicative encounters (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). Martin and Nakayama (2013) posited six similar dialectics that operate interdependently in intercultural interactions: (a) cultural-individual dialectic, (b) personal/social-contextual dialectic, (c) differences-similarities dialectic, (d) static-dynamic dialectic, (e) present-future/history-past dialectic, and (f) privilege-disadvantage dialectic. I explored these dialectics as they represented the new way to think about face-to-face interactions in intercultural settings.

No longer is the phenomenon of the 21st century to be one of mere acknowledging the salience of cultural diversity or cross-cultural value differences, but one of how best to comprehend the *interaction* of the individual and organizational communication, culture, and linguistic variables that often lead to a close and cooperative work atmosphere (Palthe, 2014). Employee trust with one another and with management is a key constructive outcome of effective international communication (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). A dialectical approach to communication can help a researcher better understand employee encounters and interactions within a larger social and cultural framework (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). I will provide an additional discussion of this framework in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The choice of the research approach relates to the research problem and purpose (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). A researcher can gain a meaningful understanding of a social phenomenon from the point of view of a participant using qualitative research to explore and discover useful description (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). In contrast, quantitative research is used to describe current conditions and investigate relationships using statistical data. (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). A third choice is a mixed methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative procedures (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The mixed method uses data collection methods from both qualitative and quantitative approaches including surveys, field observation, mapping, and demographic analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

In comparing the three methods in relation to my problem statement and the purpose of the study, it was clear that the qualitative tradition using a phenomenological design should be used. Phenomenologists focus not on *what* appears to be but *how* something appears in a common lived experience (Moustakas, 1994). I chose phenomenology as a design to understand the lived experiences of MNC employees who communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace.

Other qualitative methods were considered. A suitable method for this study is ethnography. This approach is to observe the daily communication of employees and take notes of the interactions and encounters (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). This approach was not feasible due to the nature of work, the geographical disbursement of the employees, and the time involved in this type of study. I also considered case study method to focus on the written communication of the organization involving employees. However, using written communication and then analyzing it would have been difficult due to privacy issues. The case method would lead to the thick, rich description and in-depth understanding of the problems of the employees. I did not choose grounded theory or narrative as qualitative approaches. The grounded theory approach is used to discover a new theory and that was not the aim of this study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The narrative approach is used more for story telling from the participants of the phenomena being studied (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). I wanted to explore the lived experiences of the participants, so I excluded the narrative approach.

I chose interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as the best method for this study. IPA has roots in phenomenology and is a qualitative research approach used to explore of how individuals think sensibly of their life experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Influenced by the philosopher, Edmund Husserl, IPA leads researchers to go *back to the things themselves* rather than categorizing experience in fixed frames (Smith et al., 2009). Smith, et al. (2009) indicated that the aim of the IPA approach is to focus on a person’s experiences and understandings of a particular phenomenon. IPA focuses on the perceptions and views of the participants, which orients the research towards the objects of interest (Smith et al., 2009). The objective of IPA research is for the researcher to gain a sensemaking perspective of the participant who is trying to make sense of his or her own experience, which is often called a double hermeneutics, or the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009).

Definitions

Acculturation: Acculturation arises from first hand contact with individuals from a different culture which have different behaviors and ways of acting (Leong, 2014).

Cultural awareness: Cultural awareness is the ability of an individual to understand the cultural differences between cultural groups and to facilitate interactions in intercultural communication (Baker, 2015).

Communication competence: Communication competence is an individual's capacity and ability to effectively communicate and understand meaning among language confines (Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2012).

Intercultural awareness: Intercultural awareness is an individual's understanding of how the role of cultural norms and frames of reference effect international communication in practice and context (Baker, 2015).

Intercultural communication competence: Intercultural communication competence is an individual's ability to evaluate and think critically of the individual's own cultural communication practices (Baker, 2015, p. 200).

Lingua franca: Lingua franca is a language system that is sought between two parties of different languages for common meaning (Jenkins & Leung, 2013).

Assumptions

Assumptions are defined as information that is accepted by the researcher to be true and valid and used to draw conclusions from the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). For this study, I had four assumptions. First, I assumed that information gathered in the interviews would be true and accurate information about the lived experiences of the participants. I relied on the interpretation of my interview questions to allow for an accurate exploration of the participant's daily work life dealing with communication and comprehension of culture. Second, I assumed the participants would understand the interview questions posed, both linguistically and culturally. If this was not the case, I rephrased the questions and added additional content or examples to explain the question in a manner that the participant could understand without losing the focus of the question. Third, I assumed that the company would allow me to ask relevant questions and gather information that was needed to analyze the research question for this study. The president of the company was eager to see the results of the study and allowed questions that dealt directly with cause and effect of the communication problems. I felt my proposed questions adhered to this assumption. Lastly, I assumed that due to the cultural nature of the geographical setting of Saudi Arabia, I would, as a female researcher, nonetheless be received as a professional and the information I collected would be open and honest. Since I was not in Saudi Arabia and the interviewees were working for a Western-based company who dealt with females in other aspects of their business, obtaining open and honest information was not be a problem.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are the boundaries the researcher puts on the scope of the research study in making the project manageable and meaningful (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The scope of this research study was to analyze the organizational communication issues and challenges in one company in Saudi Arabia. A delimitation of the study was the geographical location of Saudi Arabia. The participants for the study use English as a second or third language within the company. Cultural and linguistic ability play an important role in employee interaction within a company with a multicultural workforce (Kim, 2015; Martin & Nakayama, 2015; Rozkwitalska, 2013). The company chosen for this study has 18 employees in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the United States. Within the employee population in Saudi Arabia are employees from several Middle Eastern and Asian countries working together. The language of this company is English, which is a second or third language for most of all employees.

Using a dialectic approach of intercultural communication, I explored the cultural challenges and linguistic issues employees faced interacting with each other and clients in this company. Intercultural communication problems in a company can affect decision making and overall communication meaning (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Beckers & Bsat, 2014; Odrakiewicz & Zator-Peljan, 2012; Palthe, 2014). I considered the theories of cultural frame switching (van Oudenhoven & Benet-Martínez, 2015), the communication theory of identity (Hecht & Choi, 2012), and cocultural communication theory (Bell, Hopson, Weathers, & Ross, 2015) for this study; I did not feel these theories were comprehensive enough to cover linguistic issues and cultural challenges together. The dialectic approach allowed the researcher the opportunity to highlight competency issues by focusing on holistic and relational points of view (Martin, 2015).

Limitations

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) described limitations of a research study as potential weaknesses that are out of the control of the researcher. For this study, I foresaw three potential limitations. First, a limitation due to geographic distance and conducting the interviews over the internet using Skype, losing the feeling of intimacy and personalization of being in the same space with the participant. Another possible limitation could come from the small size of the company and the two-week time frame for the interviews which could have led to employees communicating with each other about the interview questions prior to and after the interviews. To my knowledge this did not happen. A third possible limitation could have been language comprehension on the part of both the interviewer and interviewee. I rephrased and explained the interview questions as needed to achieve meaning for the participant. However, I did notice as I was analyzing the data that the word conflict, as in the phrase *miscommunication conflict*, evoked several different meanings from the participants, something I did not notice during the interviews.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to fill the gap in the literature on communication competency in multicultural workplace encounters between employees with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This study filled this gap in two ways. First, I explored the connection between the organizational communication literature and international business research regarding language that increases the understanding of how workplace encounters between employees evolve. Second, I explored how employees in a multicultural workplace communicated with each other and what problems they had or think they had.

Significance to Practice

Workplace encounters or interactions are sometimes affected by the inability of employees to understand the appropriate communicative meaning and have the linguistic understanding needed to work successfully with colleagues from other cultures (Leong, 2014). The outcome of this study could assist businesses in bridging the communication gap among the cultures involved to enable employees in multinational and multicultural situations to adapt to cultural differences in the Arab region. The Arab region is a growing force in the international business world, and some Westerners often have limited knowledge of this culture and tend to homogenize Middle Eastern people, applying incorrect attributes to them (Suchan, 2014).

Communication is seen as culture-specific; therefore, organizations involved in international business can promote the development of employees' understandings of cultural beliefs, habits, ethics, and behaviors in order to conduct successful business interactions for the purpose of establishing relationships both within and out of the organization (Becker & Bsat, 2014). Employees working in a multinational corporation who develop his or her own intercultural communication competence and multicultural sensitivity are often more successful in having global mindsets in their interactions at work (Noma & Crossman, 2012).

Significance to Theory

Some research was conducted on effective communication and cultural skills at the managerial level (Odrakiewicz & Zator-Peljan, 2012; Rozkwitalska, 2013); therefore, this study could fill the gap of intercultural communication at the employee peer-to-peer level. This meaning would enable management to have an understanding of how employees interact in a multicultural environment and how management can best manage the culturally and linguistically diverse employee. I used a dialectical perspective to explore the lived experiences of MNC employees who communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace, thus filling a gap in this topic area.

Significance to Social Change

This research is important to positive social change by shedding light on global business organizations and subsidiaries that employ multicultural and multilingual individuals. MNCs with employees able to effectively transfer knowledge by communicating effectively in the workplace often have a competitive advantage in the global work landscape (Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2012). However, organizations need to understand that employees sometimes struggle with language comprehension in organizational communication and need to be aware of these challenges (Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2012). This research can help those organizations to understand the difficulties of employees and to set up training and assessment programs to aid comprehension in the workplace and to make better decisions for the organization. These changes can help businesses grow and prosper. This research is also important to understand the 232 million international immigrants, approximately 3% of the global population ("World Migration Report", 2015) who are moving around the world looking for work and needing to use a second or third language.

Summary and Transition

In this chapter, I addressed the specifics of this study regarding the problem that some people lack communication competency to communicate in multicultural environments in the workplace. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to explore what communication competency is needed to communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace using a dialectical approach of intercultural communication. The significance of this study is to fill the gap in the literature on communication competency in multicultural workplace encounters between employees with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In Chapter 2, I discuss the supporting literature and conceptual framework for this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In 2013, international immigrants numbered 232 million on a worldwide basis, which was approximately 3% of the global population ("World Migration Report", 2015). As these immigrants move about, they need to work to make a living, and with that work comes cultural challenges including language use (Wells, 2013). As the global business environment is rapidly becoming interconnected and interdependent in order to sustain economic growth, the need to understand cultural differences in the workplace increases (Beckers & Bsat, 2014; Kim, 2015; Murmu, 2014; Noma & Crossman, 2012; Odrakiewicz & Zator-Peljan, 2012; Ristovska & Ristovska, 2014). Companies operating in this global environment often fail to recognize the need to understand cultural differences and find that challenges lie within two significant areas: intercultural skills incompetency and the failure to effectively communicate in a global work environment (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Beckers & Bsat, 2014; Odrakiewicz & Zator-Peljan, 2012).

The general problem is that encounters or interactions in an intercultural workplace are complex and often involve multiple identities simultaneously; employees working in these environments among various cultures are often stressed and challenged by the diversity and languages issues (Kim, 2015; Martin & Nakayama, 2015; Palthe, 2014; Rozkwitalska, 2013). The phenomenon of business globalization and a global workforce has raised the need for employees of all cultures to understand, interact and communicate with each other (Cuypers et al., 2014; Du-Babcock, 2013; Leong, 2014; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012). This phenomenon raises the need to link the micro-level interaction at the employee peer to peer level of the workplace to intercultural communication concepts and theories (Al-Rajhi, Bartlett, & Altman, 2013; Bell et al., 2015; Calza, Aliana, & Cannavale, 2013; Castaneda & Bateh, 2013; Dehghani, Khooshabeh, Huang, Nazarian, & Gratch, 2012; Horenczyk, Jasinskaja-Lahit, Sam, & Vedder, 2013). The specific problem is that some people lack communication competency to communicate in multicultural environments in the workplace.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore what communication competency MNC employees needed to communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace. The dialectical approach of intercultural communication was used to explore the cultural and linguistic competency of employees in a small multinational company. Topics that focused on examining these issues include: (a) an overview of globalization in business and society, (b) a discussion and research on English as the business *lingua franca*, (c) discourse on culture awareness in internal communication and organizations, (d) research on employee communication encounters, and (e) a discussion regarding communication in the Middle East as it relates to business and culture.

Literature Search Strategy

I performed a literature search using databases at both Walden University and the University of Illinois at Chicago where I have access. I used databases including ABI/INFORM Complete, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Communication and Mass Media Complete, Emerald Management, ProQuest Central, SAGE Premier, Google Scholar, and Dissertation and Theses. Keywords including but not limited to *linguistic challenges, cultural awareness, globalization, multinational* *corporations, multicultural organizations, Saudi Arabia culture, Middle East culture, communication, internal communication, intercultural communication, intercultural communication competence, global employees, international employees, English as a second language, business English, intercultural business communication, organizational communication, communication theory, workplace encounters, employee encounters, employee to employee interaction*, and combinations within these terms all yielded articles. I gave careful consideration to and examined the articles, and I eliminated studies that did not fit the criteria. I also searched specific academic journals looking for articles from years 2010 to 2015 that would be beneficial for this literature review. Those included but were not limited to *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Business Communication, International Journal of Cross Cultural Management, International Journal of Intercultural Relations, International Journal for Business Communication, Language, and Intercultural Communication*, and *Communication Theory*.

Additionally, I searched and examined conference websites for topics related to international business, HRM, business communication, and management functions. I also perused popular media and business and communication related magazines and trade journals as well as titles such as *Harvard Business Review* and INSEAD Knowledge. Also, as an instructor I have free access to textbooks from CourseStart.com and have downloaded many pertinent textbooks for background information on communication studies as well as global studies, multicultural management, and international business.

Conceptual Framework

As indicated in Chapter 1, this study used the dialectic perspective to examine how communication in multicultural environments shapes cultural forces in workplace interactions. Several contemporary theories have attempted to explain the links between culture and communication (Holliday, 2013; Koester & Lustig, 2015). These include Hofstede's (2001) dimensions of cultural variability and intergroup and intercultural theories of communication accommodation theory (Galvin & Braithwaite, 2014) and cocultural theory (Bell et al., 2015). Also, intercultural theories such as Ting-Toomey's identity negotiation theory (Hecht & Choi, 2012; Toomey, Dorjee, & Ting-Toomey, 2014) focusing on identity management negotiation and acculturation theories (Horenczyk et al., 2013, Leong, 2014) centering on adjustment. All of these theories are important in connecting culture and communication.

Koester and Lustig (2015) made the following distinctions when speaking of intercultural communication competence noting the misuse of *cross-cultural* and *intercultural* terminology. A *cross-cultural* study is where researchers study one concept or idea of intracultural experiences in two or more cultures; whereas *intercultural* study researchers look at interaction among people from two or more cultures (Koester & Lustig, 2015). Also, *competence* is a social judgment, an impression and not a behavior, and not something one does but something one is perceived to be (Koester & Lustig, 2015). Noting one's motivation, knowledge, and skill set can lead to a context specific impression that in turn leads to achieving the desired outcomes (Koester & Lustig, 2015, p.1).

To focus more closely and build on intercultural communication competence (ICC), Martin (2015) maintained that contemporary research efforts should be on a holistic and interpersonal view of ICC, moving on from reductionist models which are individually focused, thus reflecting on how the everyday person sees human behavior. In addition, Martin suggested a move from a focus on homogenized national culture groups to a view of culture as singular and reflective of one person. A cultural perspective such as this is needed to view culture as fluid with many identities and intercultural interactions, not as bounded and stable (Martin, 2015). Power relations are a part of all intercultural encounters and all encounters or interactions are part of the larger societal forces including the political and historical (Martin, 2015). The dialectic approach, based on Bakhtin's 1982 work, is born out of expectations of human nature and behavior to those of contemporary approaches that contribute to the understanding of culture and communication: (a) the social science or functionalist approach; (b) the interpretive approach; and (c) the critical approach all which contributes to the understanding of culture and communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2015).

To put these three assumptions in perspective, Martin and Nakayama (2015) posited the social science or functionalist approaches that comes from the psychology discipline are used to identify cultural variations, which in turn recognizes cultural differences in many aspects of communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). However, this does not consider the context of the communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). The interpretive approach, which has roots in anthropology and sociolinguistics, emphasizes communication and culture but does not indicate cultural differences (Martin

& Nakayama, 2015). Martin and Nakayama noted that power relationships in intercultural communication are often seen in the attitudes of economic and political forces of culture and communication, which approximates the critical approach of the dialectic perspective. Using aspects of these three assumptions, the dialectic approach underlines the processual, relational, contradictory nature of intercultural communication (Martin, 2015; Martin & Nakayama, 2015; Nakayama & Martin, 2014).

The processual nature of intercultural communication shows that cultures change over time as do individuals, and communication patterns are identified as dynamic (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). The dialectic perspective also emphasizes the *relational* aspect of intercultural communication, which relates to communication in a holistic nature rather than in isolation (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). The third characteristic of the dialectic approach involves contradictory ideas simultaneously using dichotomous thinking, or opposites, such as good and evil, air and water (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). In this contradictory nature of intercultural encounters, individuals can be both commutatively competent and not competent at the same time, such as not being competent in work ethic but being competent in English language skills (Nakayama & Martin, 2014). As noted in Chapter 1, the dialectic perspective of intercultural communication has six such dichotomies: (a) cultural-individual dialectic, (b) personal/social-contextual dialectic, (c) differences-similarities dialectic, (d) static-dynamic dialectic, (e) present-future/history-past dialectic, and (f) privilege-disadvantage dialectic (Nakayama & Martin, 2014).

The dialectic approach is seen in current research studies (King, 2012; Leon, Halbesleben, & Paustian-Underhadl, 2015; Lopes, 2013). King (2012) used a dialectical sociocultural framework to analyze complex human interaction based in the science education classroom. Lopes (2013) studied positive behaviors in organizations using the tensions of situation and trait/state factors characterizing traits of positive behaviors in employees using the dialectic approach. Leon et al. (2015) synthesized conflicting views of burnout and engagement in employees using the dialectic perspective. Leon et al. viewed dialectical theory as the idea of paired opposites or contradictions that are crucial to growth and change within individuals and provide a new way of thinking about burnout and engagement.

Dialectics emphasizes the contradictions in a relationship and the outcomes inherent between two constructs in a relationship that, in pairs, are seen as interdependent and opposing (Leon et al., 2015). Contradictions are everywhere in life, which drives change and refers to the pairing and interaction of two opposing constructs (Leon et al., 2015). The dialectic approach is just one way to study intercultural communications, which offer viewpoints of cultural and communication issues in opposing directions but always in processual, relational, and holistic ways (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). This study benefited from the dialectic approach by examining the lived experiences of employees with various cultural backgrounds and communication skills. I feel the role of individual skill sets including the contextual constraints of improving intercultural relations and recognizing the connectedness of humans in workplace dialogue adds important information to the current gap in the literature.

Literature Review

Globalization in Business and Society

The global business environment is rapidly becoming interconnected and interdependent (Beckers & Bsat, 2014; Kim, 2015; Murmu, 2014; Noma & Crossman, 2012; Odrakiewicz & Zator-Peljan, 2012; Plakhotnik, Rocco, Collins, & Landorf, 2015; Ristovska & Ristovska, 2014; Welch & Welch, 2015). Employers' today who want to grow economically in a global environment need to realize cultural differences is good for sustaining this growth (Odrakiewicz & Zator-Peljan, 2012; Palthe, 2014).

In multinational workplace locations, employees need to work together, learn from each other, and cope with demanding assignments as part of their everyday routines (Angouri & Miglbauer 2014; Welch & Welch, 2015). Lack of effective intercultural communication skills are seen as ineffective decision-making and problem-solving skills and are costly to organizations (Angouri & Miglbauer 2014). Recruitment and selection of employees are strategically important to a corporation (Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2012). Having a qualified workforce is key to having a competitive advantage for a company especially in the international arena (Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2012). Knowledge transfer in global companies is dependent on the firm's capacity and ability to create new ideas and to incorporate these ideas into the organization's processes (Welch & Welch, 2015).

Noma and Crossman (2012) posited intercultural communication errors can be costly to corporations. If cultural and communication issues are managed poorly, this could result in a loss of business in terms of financial partnerships and alliances (Noma & Crossman, 2012). Noma and Crossman went on to indicate, organizations do acknowledge the value of developing cultural expertise, however, organizations indicate that most managers and employees have only a rudimentary knowledge or stereotypical view of cultural issues which is further complicated in multinational companies.

Current technology has made global business transactions as easy as logging on to a computer or smartphone (Axson, 2012). A person can communicate with anyone in the world over the internet on Skype or watch the latest video from any culture on YouTube (Abrudan, 2012). Globalization is a social process in which the geographical boundaries of cultural arrangements *recede* where people and society are aware of this regression (Lebedko, 2014). Many differences exist in internationalization and globalization (Kim, 2015; Murmu, 2014; Noma & Crossman, 2012; Ristovska & Ristovska, 2014). Internationalization is relating to companies that want to expand the scope of their business activities and globalization as a *macro trend*, intensifying economic relations between countries (Ristovska & Ristovska, 2014). Globalization sometimes leads to a homogenization of country borders where companies are free to transact business in any market they wish; as companies become international a learning curve must take place (Palthe, 2014; Ristovska & Ristovska, 2014). Not only do companies need to learn about foreign operations and new ways of conducting business, they must also learn about new ways to manage and train employees who are often working in a second or third language and a culture that is unfamiliar (Kim, 2015; Murmu, 2014; Noma & Crossman, 2012).

Many companies who want to conduct business in other parts of the world do so by opening a subsidiary in another country (Plakhotnik et al., 2015; Rozkwitalska, 2013; Welch & Welch, 2015). Multinational corporations (MNCs) are expected to operate and manage relationships with employees and stakeholders by understanding the cultural barriers that exist and navigate cross cultural relationships (Palthe, 2014; Rozkwitalska, 2013; Welch & Welch, 2015). With the globalization of business comes a need for a shared language in which to conduct business transactions (Du-Babcock, 2013). That language is often English (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012; Nickerson & Camiciottoli, 2013; Rozkwitalska, 2013; Selmeir & Oh, 2012; Welch & Welch, 2015). Often MNCs are looking for candidates that have both technical expertise and language skills of the corporate language (Welch & Welch, 2015). When a candidate cannot be found with both, the MNC will hire the candidate with the technical expertise and put the new hire in language training, indicating that language skills can be taught (Welch & Welch, 2015).

Cross cultural relationship models are sometimes used to examine cross-cultural interactions in MNCs, where relationships are affected by national cultures within multinational organizations of employees, managers, vendors, partners, and alliances (Rozkwitalska, 2013). Cultural barriers are anything that hindered cross cultural interactions; which are interactions that hamper the goals of the business operating effectively in a foreign cultural setting (Rozkwitalska, 2013). The cross cultural relationship model analyses ten types of cross-cultural interactions: (a) multicultural and face-to-face virtual meetings; (b) business trips aboard; (c) interactions in multicultural teams, including virtual ones; (d) office contacts with the MNCs which focused on e-mail, fax, internet; (e) official duties carried out under the MNCs procedures; (f) subordinate-superior relationships, where one side is from a different national culture; (g) multicultural training; (h) office contacts with the MNCs external stakeholders; (i) participation in international career management training; and (j) cross cultural negotiations (Rozkwitalska, 2013, pp. 68-69).

Outcomes of the ten cross cultural interactions often indicated that cultural barriers exist within the subsidiaries in which impediments are found in cultural distances barriers, organizational barriers, and barriers cause by individuals (Rozkwitalska, 2013). Cultural distances of an individual's national culture often cause problems; however, they are not usually frequent or severe (Rozkwitalska, 2013). The cross cultural relationship model sometimes note that barriers exist in a leadership style or the approach to the delegation of authority and decision making, the frequency of communication flow, and the attitudes toward women (Rozkwitalska, 2013). Barriers also exist in the scope of formalization, verbal and nonverbal behavior and feedback, and interpersonal relationships (Rozkwitalska, 2013). Using a cross cultural relationship model and focusing on interactions between various nationalities working together with cultural and language differences can be effective in finding differences in culture and communication in MNCs (Rozkwitalska, 2013). Several researchers recommend a simplified version of English or International English as a company language for employee interaction (Jenkins & Leung, 2013; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012; Nickerson & Camiciottoli, 2013; Rozkwitalska, 2013; Selmeir & Oh, 2012)

English as Business Lingua Franca

As international business becomes more complex and is the *norm* in everyday transactions, a singular language to conduct business around the world is essential

(Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012; Nickerson & Camiciottoli, 2013; Selmeir & Oh, 2012; Welch & Welch, 2015). In today's global business environment, the use of the English language is not perceived as a foreign language, but rather used as an international language (Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, & Karhunen, 2015; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012; Nickerson & Camiciottoli, 2013; Welch & Welch, 2015). English has become the common language to use as a means of communication between non-native English speakers (NNS) and NNS and native English speakers (Nickerson & Camiciottoli, 2013; Selmeir & Oh, 2012). English is now the *lingua franca* of business communication today (Jenkins & Leung, 2013; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012) and known as English as Business Lingua France (BELF).

Kankaanranta and Planken (2010) noted that BELF is a type of communication code used as a way of conducting business specifically which separates it from English as a foreign language or English as a *lingua franca* and everyday use. Baker (2015) had an opposing point of view and indicated that as English is a *lingua franca* in many cases it is not a culturally neutral language as suggested. Communication is constructed and embedded in social situations and is specific to speakers with a purpose that is not neutral (Baker, 2015). Thus, using English can present challenges both linguistically and culturally when interactions are between NNS (Du-Babcock, 2013). The dominance of English as a BELF has been adopted by multinational corporations and organizations as their official corporate language or preferred working language as opposed to their home country languages (Du-Babcock, 2013; Kankaanranta, et al., 2015; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012; Nickerson & Camiciottoli, 2013; Rozkwitalska, 2013).

Language enables individuals and companies to communicate, negotiate, transact, and trade (Selmeir & Oh, 2012). For example, a language's power can result in lower transactions costs in trade and Foreign Direct Investment (Selmeir & Oh, 2012). The capacity to lower transactions cost reflect a need for a similar language and understanding of those individual's working in international business (Selmeir & Oh, 2012). Workers who know or use similar languages have a better understanding of the costs of doing business and negotiation practices (Selmeir & Oh, 2012). This language power can be understood by: (a) the close distance makes learning the target language easier, (b) words and grammatical patterns might be recognized in the one language of speakers of similar languages, and (c) it develops a *lingua franca* (Selmeir & Oh, 2012). Thus, language ability and understanding is equated with both trade and FDI and is an important determinant of modern international business activities (Selmeir & Oh, 2012).

It is important to note the perceptions of business professionals operating internationally when considering a single corporate language for an MNC (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). The use of English or BELF is often evaluated using employees whose work involves regular contact and communication with speakers whose mother tongue is different than their own by evaluating their beliefs about certain statements involving their knowledge and use of English at work (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). For example, a four quadrant graph representing *Importance* on the vertical axis and *Present Competence* on the horizontal axis is used to measure the respondent's English vocabulary of grammatically correct language, and knowledge of English vocabulary is one way of considering a single corporate language (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010).

Measurements in the use of English in communicative situations include: (a) English language competence required at work such as grammar and pronunciation; (b) characteristics of a person's communication with native speakers (NS) or non-native speakers (NNS); and (c) if the communication is internal to the company or external to the company (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). Five companies in Europe were studied from the industries in the technology, transportation, and logistics sectors comprising of 31 native languages from 20 different countries (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). Data included frameworks of: (a) work English using *questioning* sentences, (b) English communication characteristics measuring the variances among speakers; and (c) *success* in BEFL communication; which focuses on the individual and situational factors contributing to *success* and individual strategies one uses to heighten BELF communication of successful outcomes (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010, p. 386). Findings indicated that at least 70% of the English communication characterized by the respondents took place between non-native speakers and is categorized as BEFL (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). A point of note, most participants indicated they did not feel their communication with native speakers was as successful as with non-native speakers; in fact, they felt more comfortable speaking as a non-native speaker to a non-native speaker where pronunciation was not an essential element (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010).

Challenges NNS face when speaking with an NS often include respondents feeling that NS tried to get the *upper hand* in communication situations (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). These challenges are divided into three groups: (a) lack of competence in using English that included low knowledge of speech idioms, style, and measure of vocabulary; (b) the fast pace of speech by NS; and (c) not being able to comprehend some regional accents, for example, from the U.K. or U.S. (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010, p. 389). Research has shown that more and more companies are using English as a business *lingua franca* and the challenges that both NS and NNS had with working in second language were plentiful (Du-Babcock, 2013; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012; Nickerson & Camiciottoli, 2013; Rozkwitalska, 2013; Selmeir & Oh, 2012).

Welch and Welch (2015) contend that imposing a corporate language is not a *panacea* but, instead causes more challenges in a MNC by shifts in language barriers. While a corporate language is often thought of as a way to ensure the facilitation of internal communication, reporting, and knowledge sharing, a corporate language can also reinforce the attitude that language is just a mechanical issue where translation services can be used (Welch & Welch, 2015).

Du-Babcock (2013) describes BELF as a starting point of a communication code where in its own right is not English in a traditional sense of the language, noting that it is work specific and highly contextualized (p. 101). Du-Babcock examined communication behaviors of two groups of business professionals; Hong Kong Chinese/Japanese and Swedish/Finnish. The aim of the Du-Babcock’s study was to explore English language proficiency in intercultural business situations focusing on communication behaviors to distinguish the similarities and differences in the two cultural groups.

Second language proficiency rates relate to communication effectiveness and that individuals with lower second language proficiency contribute fewer ideas by simplifying language and avoided topics that were difficult to explain (Du-Babcock, 2013, p. 106). Replicating a study of Helsinki BEFL data which examined decision making discussions using a second language on Swedish and Finish business professionals by scholars and researchers at Aalto University, Du-Babcock examined Japanese and Hong Kong business professionals in five simulated intercultural business meetings. Communication behaviors analyzed included: (a) number of speaking turns taken by each; (b) total length of speaking time per individual; and (c) the number of words spoken by each. Patterns of behavior analyzed in the communication processes included: (a) socializing and small talk, (b) use of backchannels, and (c) floor management (Du-Babcock, 2013, p. 112).

Du-Babcock found that communication behaviors of different cultures result in strategies to change content in order to better understand the message such as turn-taking by the proficiency of the second-language. The better the proficiency rates in an individual the more active in a communication encounter a person will be (Du-Babcock, 2013). The Du-Babcock study indicated the Chinese and Japanese groups, central to the relationship of language proficiency and turn taking, did not engage in communication interactions as much as the Western and European groups due to their lower English proficiency rates. Data showed a direct relation of proficiency levels and turns taken, words spoken, and speaking time showing six relationships, each involving two variables (Du-Babcock, 2013).

As suggested by Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2012) the relationship between language use and the learning and meaning of culture is tightly interwoven. As demonstrated in this section, English has become the business *lingua franca* and is finding a greater audience as internal communication in many international companies (Du-Babcock, 2013; Jenkins & Leung, 2013; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012).

Cultural Awareness in Internal Communication and Organizations

As businesses expand internationally and engage in business transactions, intercultural communication has surfaced as a challenge to companies which requires critical thought and analysis (Beckers & Bast, 2014). Companies struggle to identify and standardized their communication methods due to various cultural identities and expectations within organizations (Beckers & Bast, 2014, Cuypers et al., 2014; Hynes, 2012; Jenkins & Leung, 2013; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012). Effective communication can equate with the success of a firm within a market (Hill, 2014). Hill (2014) noted a common factor that contributed to failure for companies in the international arena is the inability to adapt to foreign *cultural aspects* of a market.

The body of knowledge attributed to internal communication can be categorized into four main groups: (a) workplace communication focusing on employee communication skills, (b) management communication focusing on a manager's ability and skill to communicate, (c) corporate communication acting as formal communication, and (d) organizational communication, addressing the philosophical and theoretically oriented issues (Verčič, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2012). The exchange of information in the workplace between employees and teams is internal communication used to construct understanding (Verčič et al., 2012). From the perspective of an international organization, internal communication is sometimes used to examine language within the organization which takes place across cultures and national borders (Beckers & Bast, 2014, Cuypers et al., 2014; Jenkins & Leung, 2013; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012). Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2012) offers a multilingual approach for corporate language strategy from the perspective of intercultural internal communication, Intercultural communication can be viewed as a sociocultural process to demonstrate a cultural dimension within communication (Baker, 2015).

Multilingual strategy. A multilingual corporate language strategy involves the use of two or more languages used for corporate communication across all offices or subsidiaries of an MNC (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012; Welch & Welch, 2015). This strategy is used when companies have many locations and in different parts of the work where one language is not dominant (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012; Welch & Welch, 2015). A study by Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2012) focused on a non-governmental organization (NGO) headquartered (HQ) in the United Kingdom (UK) which operates in 70 countries and has four corporate languages: English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. The focus of the study was to find out which language the employees used. The data collection took place in three regions: (a) Latin American and Caribbean; (b) West Africa; and (c) South America. Data collection techniques included employee interviews and focus groups and a language use in communication survey (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012). Findings indicated despite having four official corporate languages not all four were used in everyday work situations simultaneously (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012).

In situations where companies use the multilingual strategy it is often the case where the mother tongue of person writing the communique is used (Cuypers et al., 2014). Often access to speakers of the other corporate languages are not on hand to translate the information into all declared corporate languages (Cuypers et al., 2014; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012). In addition, when translated the information sometimes lacked comprehension or the correct meaning (Cuypers et al., 2014). If an employee received an e-mail or communique that was not in a language he or she spoke, they often ignore the e-mail and would not be privy to the information (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012).

Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2012) stated employees felt confused and unequal when using multilingual strategies and this reflected negatively on their work. Not having clear guidelines for when, how, and why multiple corporate languages are to be used can present challenges with internal communication (Cuypers et al., 2014; Welch & Welch, 2015).

Cultural diversity. Cultural diversity in an organization results from the uniqueness of each employee such as background, personality, work style, language, accent, among other traits (Kim, 2015; Murmu, 2014). Culture is based on the knowledge, beliefs, customs, religion, language, and any habits acquired from being part of a group; each of these factors can represent potential problems for organizations (Murmu, 2014; Noma & Crossman, 2012; Odrakiewicz & Zator-Peljan, 2012). However, many benefits also exist for an organization having a culturally diverse workforce (Noma & Crossman, 2012; Odrakiewicz & Zator-Peljan, 2012). Organizations can tap into the many talents that employees from different backgrounds, perspectives, skills, and abilities an employee can bring to the company adding to the cultural diversity of the organization (Murmu, 2014). Ladegaard and Jenks (2015) posited the death of cultural diversity can be on the horizon if the world continues to move toward global interconnectedness and *sameness*.

Employee Communication Encounters

The effectiveness of internal communication can contribute to positive internal relationships between peer to peer employees and employees and managers (Conrad, 2014; Nathan, 2015; Ruck & Welch, 2012; Welch, 2013; Welch & Welch, 2015). Internal communication can promote awareness of opportunities and threats within an organization and encourage an understanding of job duties (Conrad, 2014). However, companies may not take the initiative to make certain all internal communication is clear and effective, and issues and challenges may exist (Conrad, 2014; Nathan, 2015; Welch & Welch, 2015). Conrad states communication is the *lifeblood of an organization* which stimulates productivity and interaction within a company. Communication can benefit an organization by making sure employees have a clear understanding of the job and that employees understand the cultural implications of peers knowing that meaning can often be interpreted differently within a culture (Nathan, 2015). Selmer and Lauring (2015) argue for negotiating the understanding of cultural differences in a socially organized local setting without which, culture and communication styles can be seen as obstacles to communication management. Nathan (2015) indicates culture is often seen as holistic, bounded, or static, but contends culture does change in time, shifting several identities. This raises the notion that national identities are not preset and remain unfixed (Nathan, 2015).

Language issues. Language issues in the intercultural workplace can make it difficult for one party to understand the positions of the other parties in order to come to a mutual outcome (Nathan, 2015; Selmer & Lauring, 2015; Zagefka, Binder, Brown, & Hancock, 2013). A sustained exchange of ideas when both parties understand the situation differently can manifest into feelings of suspicion and mistrust and affect the working relationships of employees (Selmer & Lauring, 2015). Three issues related to language use and ability in the multicultural work environment are: (a) language form; (b) semantics; and (c) polite language (Chen, Geluykens, & Choi, 2006; Cuypers et al., 2014). Language form is characterized by the way a speaker says something as reflected in word choice and tone (Chen et al., 2006). English is the native language of many countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, however each has its own pronunciation of different words and accents associated with the speaker (Cuypers et al., 2014). The use of certain English words can make an English speaker sound more direct or even rude to some cultures (Cuypers et al., 2014).

The use of modal verbs such as *could* or *would* have a direct impact on the nature of a directive (Cuypers et al., 2014). Semantics is how a word is used in context, and this is difficult for second language learners to understand that words often have multiple meanings in a language (Chen et al., 2006). If an employee learned British English and the word for a transportation vehicle that can carry a load is a *lorry*, that same vehicle in American English is a *truck* (Selmer & Lauring, 2015). Chen et al. posed many examples of the use of polite language in the workplace. *Could you please shut the door* or *SHUT THE DOOR* can be said and heard in many ways in the tone and reflection of the speaker from a shout to a whisper (Chen et al., 2006). Most importantly polite language depends on the social factors such as social expectations, power relationships, and in some cultures, gender (Sifianou, 2012). Misuse or misunderstanding of any of these three issues can derail a workplace environment and employee encounters, suggesting that companies facilitate adequate cultural and language training and understanding on the job (Cuypers et al., 2014).

Cultural frame switching. In the multicultural workplace, employees sometimes engage the concept of cultural frame switching (Dehghani et al., 2012; Schwartz et al., 2014; van Oudenhoven & Benet-Martínez, 2015). Frame switching happens when a person in a multicultural environment uses different cognitive and behavior frames to switch to different cultural identities (van Oudenhoven & Benet-Martínez, 2015). One may represent his or her own cultural identity and the other a more global multicultural identity (Dehghani et al., 2012; Schwartz et al., 2014; van Oudenhoven & Benet-Martinez, 2015). The degree and ability to which a person can do this depends on one's own intercultural competence and how strongly he or she value one's own cultural heritage in the workplace versus the value to maintain relations with other groups (Schwartz et al., 2014). The increasing number of immigrant workers in the global business environment and the changing cultural patterns of the workplace has led researchers to come up with a way to determine which intercultural competencies are needed in multinational companies (Schwartz et al., 2014). Emotional stability and extraversion are sad to lead to a smooth cultural transition (Van Oudenhoven & Benet-Martinez, 2015). Specific personality factors to identify with are: (a) empathy, (b) respect, (c) interest in local culture, (d) flexibility, (e) tolerance, (f) technical skill, (g) open-mindedness, (h) self-confidence, (i) sociability, (j) positive self-image, and (k) initiative (Van Oudenhoven & Benet-Martinez, 2015).

A method used to examine intercultural competencies is the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ). The MPQ measures intercultural competencies by indicating personality traits on a 5-point Likert scale (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, & Fietzer, 2013). The questionnaire uses the Big Five personality dimensions of: (a) extroversion, (b) agreeableness, (c) neuroticism, (d) conscientiousness, and (e) openness to predict adjustment success in intercultural situations (Van der Zee et al., 2013). In the MPQ, high score of the five dimensions are seen as indicators of successful transition in intercultural environment versus monocultural environments (Van der Zee et al., 2013).

Cultural dimensions. Hofstede's (2001) seminal work of cultural dimensions has led recent scholars to theorize just how relevant the research still is (Hoffman & Shipper, 2012; Taras, Steel, & Kirkman, 2012). Hofstede believed that management theories were not universal but influenced by culture, and developed cultural dimensions to prove this point. Hofstede's original model of culture consisted of four cultural dimensions: (a) power Distance, the relationship between a person's perceived power in a society against (in)equality that is accepted; (b) individualism, the degree to which personal interest are more individualist or group identified in a society; (c) masculinity, the degree to which society accepts more masculine behaviors versus feminine values in a culture; and (d) uncertainty avoidance, the degree of acceptance by societies of ambiguities in situations (Hoffman & Shipper, 2012; Hofstede, 2001; Toomey et al., 2014). Hofstede later added the dimension of long/short term orientation (Hofstede, 2001). Taras et al. (2012) indicated Hofstede's definition of culture most used in cross-cultural research is the *collective programming of the mind* between members of a group (p. 330). Through globalization and the movement of the workforce that cultures are changing and new and homogenizing cultural practices can be seen (Ladegaard & Jenks, 2015: Nathan, 2015: Taras et al., 2012).

Language tensions. Language tensions and language types are often used to distinguish language and cultural competence in intercultural business environments (Nair-Venugopal, 2015). Nair-Venugopal indicated that language directly mediates every transaction in business, and in intercultural situations it is the link to intercultural communication competence (ICC). Manara (2013) believed that tensions between prescribed and authentic language use is a key skill in ICC. Nair-Venugopal stated tensions can lead to individuals resisting ascribed norms or prescribed meanings and patterns of behavior of the culture in which they identify. While English may be considered the language of business in organizations, workers in many cases to do not have the English language abilities and comprehension needed to make effective business decisions (Manara, 2013; Nair-Venugopal, 2015; Nathan, 2015).

Acculturation models. Acculturation is a term defined as changes arising in intercultural contacts, such as in a work situation (Van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2012). The global workplace is where employees often engage in unfamiliar cultural and linguistic practices to sell products, negotiate prices, and complete transactions (Ladegaard & Jenks, 2015). Acculturation is based on two dimensions of cultural adaptation to create plural societies (Horenczyk et al., 2013; Oerlemans & Peeters, 2009). Oerlemans and Peeters (2009) used Bourhis et al. interactive Acculturation model (IAM) to predict how, disagreement can affect the quality of intergroup work interactions between home country workers and immigrant workers. Horenczyk et al. (2013) indicated early models of acculturation were largely one-dimensional, and one-directional assuming the direction of acculturation changes from mainstream society. The IAM sought to integrate: (a) acculturation orientation for immigrant groups in a host country, (b) acculturation orientations perceived by host country society against immigrant groups, and (c) acculturation orientations that exist from of interpersonal and intergroup relational outcomes of immigrant and host country exchanges (Oerlemans & Peeters, 2009).

In addition to the IAM, other acculturation models include, the mutual acculturation model (MAM) which attempts to understand mutuality between different groups in three areas: (a) the desire for cultural maintenance by members of non-dominant groups, (b) the non-dominant groups desires to be in contact with the larger host society, and (c) the role of public policy in the larger society toward non-dominant groups (Horenczyk et al., 2013). The concordance model of acculturation (CMA) addresses the consequences of actual attitudes of dominant and non-dominant groups and how members of the dominant group perceive strategies of the nondominant group (Horenczyk et al., 2013, p. 208). Schwartz, Vingoles, Brown, and Zagefka (2014) argued that the fit of group preferences may not be the acculturation attitudes, but group preference leading to harmonious intergroup relations. Using models of acculturation can help to define immigrant behavior in a larger non-dominate society and understand the contact and interaction between cultures working together for a common purpose (Horenczyk et al., 2013; Oerlemans & Peeters, 2009; Schwartz et al. 2014; Van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2012).

Identity theory. Identity is a main domain of intercultural communication (Toomey et al. 2013). An individual's identity is related to his or her own being (Plakhotnik et al., 2015). The communication theory of identity (CTI) focuses on the *self* (Hecht & Choi, 2012). A person's identity influences his or her beliefs, attitudes and behaviors (Hecht & Choi, 2012). Western identity theorists indicate that a person should behave in consistent ways within his or her social groups and social roles through the interpretation of one's self. (Hecht & Choi, 2012). The communication theory of identity is based on the notion of shared group membership and socialization of identity (Hecht & Choi, 2012). One can describe a person's *self*-characteristics in the work environment as: (a) personality, shy or outgoing; (b) abilities, how one performs on the job; (c) ideologies, beliefs on a larger scale; (d) social role, position at work; (e) language affiliation, mother tongue and languages spoken; and (f) group members, where a worker sees themselves in the workplace (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). Identity can help provide a person with a sense of belonging and helps one to locate his or her self in his or her own social world, which is very important in the identity role in the work environment (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). Toomey et al. (2013) posited probing deeper into the meaning of identity can help society understand the struggles of bi/multicultural communication issues.

Incorporating Cultural Values in Communication

Organizations need to meet the challenges of incorporating effective communication and incorporating and accommodating different cultural beliefs of employees in the workplace (Castaneda & Bateh, 2013; Castaneda, Bateh, & Heyliger, 2013; Galvin & Braithwaite, 2014). Developing a valid organizational communication measure is important when looking at incorporating cultural values in internal communication (Abu Bakar & Mustaffa, 2012). Maintaining ethnic identity with strong cultural beliefs, values, customs, and language is important to this measure (Abu Bakar & Mustaffa, 2012). Cultures value harmonious relationships, face-saving beliefs, respected elders, and the feeling of importance and quality of group work (Galvin & Braithwaite, 2014).

Another form of values measurement is Hofstede’s (2001) model of national culture consisting of five indicators to measure values important to a specific country. These five indicators include: a) power distance, b) individualism versus collectivism, c) masculinity versus femininity, d) uncertainty avoidance, and e) long term orientation versus short term orientation (geert-hofstede.com, 2015).

Abu Bakar and Mustaffa (2012) posited that cultural norms are essential to dictate employee behavior in the workplace. Abu Bakar and Mustaffa’s research measured six dimensions of communication: (a) information flow, (b) communication climate, (c) message characteristics, (d) communication structure, (e) group bond, and (f) mutual respect in communication encounters. Abu Bakar and Mustaffa's research of these six dimensions offered internal consistency reliabilities as acceptable for all but message characteristics which was low, indicating that a global outcome of job satisfaction is related positively to these dimensions (Abu Bakar & Mustaffa, 2012).

Communication accommodation theory began by exploring how language diminishes the social distance between people (Galvin & Braithwaite, 2014). The theory is used in research to determine how people accommodate or communicatively adapt to others in an intergroup environment dependent on their *perceived* group membership (Gallois & Giles, 2015; Galvin & Braithwaite, 2014; Gudykunst, Lee, Nishida, & Ogawa, 2005). For example, if two co-workers are engaging in a conversation concerning work, then one of them makes an *offhand remark* this can change the context to intergroup communication, and one or the other may start to engage in accommodative communication (Gallois & Giles, 2015). Both workers may stay in their perceived roles in the relationship, or one or both may accommodate (Gallois & Giles, 2015).

The cocultural theory is extended to include *rationalization* to the communication strategy (Bell et al., 2015). Cocultural group members generally have one of three goals for a communication interaction: (a) assimilation, (b) accommodation, or (3) separation (Gudykunst et al., 2005). The cocultural theory is primarily used to understand ways intercultural group members negotiate their places in an organization and intercultural relations (Bell et al., 2015). Cocultural theory is also used to understand how cultural groups within an organization are marginalized (Bell et al., 2015; Gudykunst et al., 2005). Exploring intergroup relations within an intercultural setting to determine and communication experiences of non-dominate or underrepresented group members is key to this theory (Bell et al., 2015).

Middle Eastern Culture and Communication

Despite economic and political importance of Arabic-speaking countries, a gap exists in the literature regarding how Arabic culture and language relate to communication and business practices (Al-Rajhi et al., 2013; Calza et al., 2013; Suchan, 2014). With limited information, stereotyping and misunderstandings sometimes occur (Suchan, 2014). In the Middle East, societal factors such as politics, religion, national identity, and language are interwoven and can be the key to how individuals think and react in business situations (Ralston et al., 2012; Suchan, 2014).

Some scholars in recent years have tried to fill this gap in research as it relates to cultural knowledge, values, and business practices in the Middle East Arabic speaking countries (Ahmad, 2012; Calza et al., 2013; Ralston et al., 2012; Suchan, 2014). Inexperience in the field of business, lack of technical knowledge, managerial and communication training, and lack of confidence, among others, is challenged in this region especially when trying to conduct business on a global basis (Ahmad, 2012). A limited knowledge base exists of cultural and language interactions (Suchan, 2014).

Rhetorical characteristics of Arabic have yet to be explored in depth by managerial intercultural communication researchers; to provide the business and (non)governmental sectors knowledge on how to interact within the cultural context (Suchan, 2014). Two such studies include Ralston et al. (2012) examined the cultural dimensions of collectivism, individualism, and universalism, to develop a directional hypothesis based on socio-cultural, economic, and political factors that influence business in the Middle East. And, Al-Rajhi et al. (2013) developed an Arabic language scale for measuring cross-cultural adjustment in the Middle East.

Cultural competencies. When operating in a culture other than one's own, cultural knowledge and competence can lead to a firm's business success (Calza et al., 2013; Ralston, et al., 2012). The ability of a firm to adapt to the local culture motivates local workers, builds local business relationships, and finds the best way to communicate with local customers (Calza et al., 2013). Hofstede (2001) described countries in Arab regions are categorized by high power distance, low individualism, and uncertainty avoidance, and slightly high masculinity dimensions. Calza et al. posited that as collectivist societies Islamic countries have lower inclination towards competition and performance orientation and that high levels of power distance and uncertainty avoidance which could be connected with *total submission to Allah* (p. 178). In an analysis of five case studies, data showed that having built cultural bridges in the local culture firms were successful in operating in the Islamic culture (Calza et al., 2013).

Using the dimensions of collectivism, individualism, and universalism Ralston et al. surveyed 989 business professionals working in seven countries as representative of the Middle Eastern culture using the Schwartz Values Survey (SVS). The SVS was designed to rate the importance of scenarios used to measure events in a person's life on a nine-point scale (Ralston, et al., 2012, p. 486). Four primary observations were included: (a) values orientations arose between the business professionals in the various countries in a heterogeneous fashion; (b) the findings of these Middle Eastern countries were in contrast with non-Middle Eastern countries recently studied; (c) future research in these countries should focus on historical roots and sociocultural influences, and levels of democratization of political systems, and (d) age group within the countries predicted younger aged Middle Easterners were more individualistic than older respondents. Ralston et al. (2012) offered Middle Eastern countries were not homogeneous and the counties had their distinct cultural values, that politics of a country influenced culture, and that the ideologies of a younger generation are more open to individualist thinking and values.

Cultural adjustment. Cross culture adjustment uses three independent dimensions: (a) work adjustment, (b) interaction adjustment, and (c) general adjustment to indicate adjustment factors in new working cultures (Al-Rajhi et al., 2013; Gudykunst, et al., 2005). Work adjustment focuses on the adjustment to a new job which includes an individual's new tasks, roles and work environment (Al-Rajhi et al., 2013). Interaction adjustment focuses on how an individual adjusts in work and non-work interactions, while general adjustment focuses on an individual's adaptation of living in a foreign country, housings, food, healthcare, and cost of living (Al-Rajhi et al., 2013). In terms of cultural adjustment to a new or different working culture, Black's (1988) model of adjustment focuses on the degree of *psychological comfort and familiarity* an individual has in a new host country (Gudykunst, et al., 2005). Estimates find that 95% of the Saudi workforce are temporary migrant workers making this cultural adaptation scale very relevant (Al-Rajhi et al., 2013). Using Black's model of adjustment, Al-Rajhi et al. found the cultural adjustments were in line with other survey outcomes of this model that focused on other countries with two minor exceptions. First, the item of *supervisory responsibilities* in the work adjustment category which was also seen in the general adjustment category, could indicate that in societies with a more independent social orientation, social ties between people in a social process may translate from purely work situations to the more general adjustment due to the Arabic society at large (Al-Rajhi et al., 2013). Al-Rajhi et al. indicated the second deviation was the item *performance standards and expectations*, which also related more to the general adjustment rather than the work adjustment category, can be seen as having to adjust to the more rigid Saudi Arabian society as well. Overall, the results indicated that cultural adjustment factors in the three categories of work adjustment, interaction adjustment, and general adjustment tended to be the same for a person adjusting to the Arab Middle East culture as with adjustments to other country cultures (Al-Rajhi et al., 2013).

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 included the conceptual framework for this study which used concepts and theories relating to intercultural communication speaking directly to the use of Martin and Nakayama’s (2015) dialectic perspective. The literature discussion included topics on globalization in business and society exploring research by Axson (2012); Kim (2015); Murmu 2014); Noma and Crossman (2012); and, Ristovska and Ristovska (2014). A second discussion focused on research in English as business lingua franca focusing on research by Du-Babcock (2013); Kankaanranta and Planken (2010); Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta (2012); Nickerson and Camiciottoli (2013); and

Selmeir and Oh (2012). A third topic addressed cultural awareness in internal communication and organizations by looking at research from Beckers and Bast (2014); Cuypers et al., 2014 (2014); Jenkins and Leung (2013); Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2012); Nair-Venugopal (2015); Nathan (2015); Odrakiewicz and Zator-Peljan (2012); Selmer and Lauring (2015); Toomey et al. (2013); Van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martínez (2015); and Van Oudenhoven and Ward (2012). The fourth topic addressed incorporating cultural values in communication and focused on research from Abu Bakar and Mustaffa (2012); Bell et al., (2015); Castaneda and Bateh (2013); Castaneda et al. (2013); and Galvin and Braithwaite (2014). And, the last topic in the literature review looked at Middle Eastern culture and communication centering on research from Al-Rajhi et al. (2013); Ahmad (2012); Calza et al. (2013); Ralston et al. (2012); and Suchan (2014).

The literature was comprehensive on the various topics; however, it did not address specifically the language and cultural challenges for employees who work in multicultural environments. Through this study, I intend to fill this gap in the literature. Chapter 3 includes the research design, participants, methodology, and issues of trustworthiness of this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore what communication competency was needed to communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace. I used the dialectical approach of intercultural communication to explore the cultural and linguistic competency of employees in a small multinational company. Nine employees at one multinational data security firm in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) participated in semistructured interviews sharing their lived experiences of communication competency. Employees communicated and interacted with colleagues in Jordan and the United States as well as colleagues within the Kingdom from various cultural and country backgrounds. I explored the culture and language issues linked to meaning and (mis)communication at this company related to decision-making and problem-solving in internal organizational communication. This chapter includes a description of the research method and design that was used, the target population and sample size, data collection and data analysis methods, and issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

The primary research question for this phenomenological study was: what are the lived experiences of MNC employees who communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace? I designed this study to explore the lived experiences of employee interaction both culturally and communicatively in an MNC work environment where employees use English as a second or third language for organizational communication. I explored both qualitative and quantitative methods for this research.

Qualitative research is grounded in the constructivist philosophical approach and concerned with how the complexities of the world are seen and experienced (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Covell, Sidani, & Ritchie, 2012). Stated to establish meaning behind thought, experiences, or behaviors, a qualitative research approach is appropriate (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). When the research needs a large sample size and can generalize limited responses, quantitative research methods are used (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). This description of quantitative research does not lend itself to the objectives and design of this study.

Bloomberg and Volpe described various research approaches using the qualitative method including narrative, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, and phenomenology. I chose phenomenology as the best approach for this study. As stated in Chapter 1, other qualitative methods were considered. I looked at using ethnography for this study. Ethnographers spend extended amounts of time with the participants both interviewing and observing the culture or organization (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Ethnography is a way to observe and document social life in order to understand an account of the culture for a specific group (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). While this method will let me observe the employee interactions first hand in a natural setting, this method was not possible due to costs and distance involved in traveling to Saudi Arabia and Jordan and the time involved in ethnographic observation.

I also considered a case study design for this study. The case study method is an analysis of one or multiple bounded social phenomena described in rich detail (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Researchers use comprehensive accounts of the case or setting, focusing on participant accounts, issues, themes, and patterns (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The case study method draws from various sources of data; however, using this approach, I could not explore the first-hand lived experiences of the employees as the phenomenological approach would allow me to do. Using the case study approach, I could look into the issues from an outsider’s perspective but not achieve the in-depth information required for this study to explore the lived experiences of the employees using English as a second or third language in the multicultural organization. I did not choose grounded theory or narrative as qualitative approaches. The grounded theory approach is used to discover a new theory, and that was not the aim of this study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The narrative approach is used more for story telling from the participants of the phenomenon being studied (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). I wanted to explore the lived experiences of the participants, so I excluded the narrative approach.

Phenomenology is not only descriptive but also an interpretive process, which permits me as the researcher to interpret the meaning of the lived experiences of my participants. By using phenomenology, I developed both a textural and a structural description of the participant’s experiences to convey the overall essence of the phenomenon. I determined that using a qualitative approach was the best method as I need to have a thick, rich description of the participants’ lived experiences.

Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of lived experience and allows for deeper examination of meaning (Vagle, 2014). Vagle (2014) addressed phenomenology as the way to define day-to-day living in relation to the world as a whole. As a phenomenological method, I used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

IPA explores how participants make sense of their lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). IPA's inductive orientation helps researchers generate new possibilities, deviating from established or already existing categories that can impede understanding (Smith et al., 2009). The IPA approach allowed me to examine the language and cultural interactions as told by the employees communicating in the MNC work environment in a language and culture that is not their own or with coworkers from a different culture.

The aim of the IPA approach is to focus on a person's sensemaking of a particular phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009). IPA theorists address the perceptions and views of the participants, which orients the research towards the objects of interest (Smith et al., 2009). The IPA researcher's aim is to understand the role of participants as he or she make sense of his or her own experiences, which is referred to as a double hermeneutics or the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). IPA is defined by three key areas of the philosophy of knowledge: (a) phenomenology, (b) hermeneutics, and (c) idiography (Smith et al., 2009). IPA draws from the underpinning of researcher Edmond Husserl (Smith et al, 2009). Husserl's (1927) work is important and relevant focusing on experience and its perception (Smith et al., 2009).

It is important to perceive the complex understanding of experience which invokes the lived experience (Smith et al., 2009). The philosophy of the IPA method is to elicit an understanding of a person's view of the world (Smith et al., 2009). The theory of interpretation is a second theoretical underpinning of IPA originating in hermeneutics (Smith et al. 2009). Smith et al. indicated that seminal research by philosopher Martin Heidegger (1927/1962) influenced IPA as being concerned with examining how a phenomenon appears as well as making sense of that appearance. The last influence of IPA is idiography, which is focused on the particular (Smith et al., 2009). IPA operates on two levels: the broad use of detail of analysis and the meaning of particular phenomena which is being understood from the point of view of the participant in context (Smith et al., 2009).

Using phenomenology, I was able to explore the experience of linguistic and cultural interactions between employees in a data security company with workers in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the United States, framed in the context of understanding how cultural competencies and linguistic ability are comprehended using intercultural communication concepts guided by the dialectical approach of intercultural communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2015).

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is understood to be the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The role of the researcher is an ethical person with integrity, which is critical to qualitative inquiry (Kvale & Steinar, 2014). As the researcher of this study, I conducted in-depth, semistructured interviews with nine employees of a data security firm in Saudi Arabia via Skype. I have no professional relationship with this company. I explored the meaning of the participants' lived experiences through the findings of this study. In doing so, I adopted an *etic* or outsider's point of view for this study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) indicated that the role of the qualitative researcher is to: (a) discover or understand the meaning of experience, (b) be open to change and adopt a flexible stance,

(c) be reflective about one's own voice and perspective, (d) acknowledge personal values and bring the researcher's own experiences to bear on the study, and (e) be actively involved in the research. The researcher should actively listen during the interviews for discourse that needs clarification or probing (Bevan, 2014).

Using the technique of bracketing, I reviewed the participants' responses openly to gain a better understanding of his lived experiences. When conducting qualitative research, investigators must be conscious of one's own personal experiences and biases with the phenomenon (Bevan, 2014). Bracketing is setting aside what the researcher already knows of the topic or phenomenon in order to gain a new and open perspective with a phenomenological attitude (Bevan, 2014, Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). This phenomenological attitude is also known as *epoché*, which is to move the researcher out of his or her natural attitude and adopting a critical stance and mitigate any bias on the part of the researcher (Bevan, 2014).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The population for this study was nine employees of a data security firm in Saudi Arabia. Employees were located in the KSA, Bahrain, Poland, and Jordan. The company currently has 18 employees in the three countries. I used the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach for this study as described by Smith et al. (2009). Sampling must be consistent within an IPA approach (Smith et al., 2009).

I selected the employees for this study purposively. Purposive sampling is described as selecting participants who are involved in the phenomenon of study

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Fugard & Potts, 2015; Robinson, 2014). The main criteria for this study was that the employee communicates using English as a second or third language within the work environment. As the company was established in the KSA in 2010, length of employment with the company is not a consideration. I used contacts made via referral from the *gatekeeper* who is the principle of the company that I worked with. According to Smith et al., IPA researchers try to find a homogenous sample to make the responses meaningful.

The size of the sample in an IPA study is usually small and varies as it relates to the research (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Smith et al. (2009) estimated that between eight to ten participants would be sufficiently representative of the population size; however, this depends on size of whole population and those who have experienced the phenomenon. Successful IPA studies can be conducted with one, four, nine, or fifteen participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Due to the thick, rich nature of the data collected, it is important that the researcher not get overwhelmed with data but has enough data to detect themes and patterns in the content (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). The main concern for the IPA researcher is to give a full appreciation of the participant's account of the phenomenon (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

Data saturation is the collection of data in a study until the data becomes redundant (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012). The data is saturated when no new information is being gathered (Fusch & Ness, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012). In a phenomenological study, the data is saturated when no new themes from the participants' lived experiences are discovered (Walker, 2012). Walker (2012) posited that data saturation is specific to the method in which it is used and should be understood within that perspective (p. 37). Fusch and Ness (2015) indicated that data saturation is not the number of participants but the depth of the data. Due to the company size of 18 employees and the criteria of English as a second or third language, I interviewed nine participants for this study.

Instrumentation

For this study, I conducted nine semistructured, in depth interviews via Skype with chosen employees of a data security company that meet the study criteria as the main source of data collection. With the advent of new technology, synchronous interviews over the internet using videoconferencing programs such as Skype let researchers conduct research and interview participants who may have been prohibitive before (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014; Seitz, 2015). Skype allowed for concurrent interactive communication between the researcher and participant (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). Skype allows for the researcher to observe body language or cues from the participant depending on the position of the participant on camera (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Seitz, 2015). I found it helpful to observe the facial expressions to see if the participant is understanding the interview questions and if I needed to explain or probe for more information. Using video conferencing such as Skype allows for me to do this. However, due to bandwidth issues and participant preference, two of interviews were audio only. As the researcher, I was expected to display sensibility and sensitivity and to *be* the research instrument (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Since I was on camera, I chose a buttoned up blue shirt that I thought the male participants would not find offensive.

The majority of the participants worked in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Due to the expense of travel and security concerns of a Western female, this research was not possible without the use of video conferencing for interviews. A possible disadvantage of using Skype as a facilitator of the interview process would be internet bandwidth and speed (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014) which was experienced in Saudi Arabia. The participants were employees of a high tech internet security company which uses advanced technology so concerns of internet connections and bandwidth should not have an issue, however, most of the employees chose to conduct the interviews in the privacy of their homes which did cause bandwidth issues in one case.

I used a software program called Pamela as an add-in to Skype to digitally record audio for each Skype interview for clarity and analysis. As a backup source of recording I also used a handheld digital recorder to record each of the interviews. I provided a written interpretation of the interview afterward to each participant for member checking (Koelsch, 2013). If the participant found that I had not interpreted their thoughts as they had responded, member checking allows for such discrepancies to be reconciled (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). These discrepancies can result in additional exploration with the participant (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Smith et al. (2009) indicated a method to IPA interviews is to approach questions *sideways*, meaning that as the research question is at an abstract level, and the interview questions will be a discussion of the topics answered subsequently via analysis. It is important for the researcher to understand one's life experiences of the phenomena so additional or follow-up question can be administered during the interview (Bevan, 2014; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Vagle, 2014). Moustakas (1994) posits in phenomenological investigation the long interview method is used which is based on data collection from the topic and question. Phenomenological interviews encompass open-ended comments and questions in an interactive and informal process (Moustakas, 1994).

Using my research question as a guide, I developed an interview schedule using IPA methods and the dialectic approach (See Appendix A). In using the interpretative phenomenological analysis approach, the interview questions needed to be open and without assumptions about, or lead the respondent to any conclusion or prejudge his or her experience or concerns (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). The questions focused on the respondents understanding and sensemaking of their experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). The interview or instrument was structured by asking the same questions to all of the participants to aid in saturating the data (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

As indicated in Chapter 2, six dialectics could characterize intercultural communication: (a) cultural-individual dialectic, (b) personal/social-contextual dialectic, (c) differences-similarities dialectic, (d) static-dynamic dialectic, (e) present-future/history-past dialectic, and (f) privilege-disadvantage dialectic (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). The cultural-individual dialectic indicates that communication in culture is shared communication patterns with members of groups to which we belong and is important in relationship building (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). The personal-contextual dialectic focuses on situational context and the person together in relation to the context of intercultural relationships.

Individuals often take on specific roles in the communication process when communicating on a personal level which give meaning to a message (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). The differences-similarities dialectic means that people can be alike and different to one another at the same time (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Differences can be in values, language, nonverbal behavior, and conflict resolution (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Often, many similarities in human experiences can lead to stereotyping and prejudice if one only emphasis similarities in communication and disregards cultural variations in communication that are bound to exist (Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

Martin and Nakayama (2013) suggests the static-dynamic dialectic advocates a static and moving dynamic at the same time in intercultural communication. This can lead to patterns of communication and culture to stay constant, when other areas of culture shift over time, thus considered dynamic (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). The fifth dialectic is history/past-present/future (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). This dialectic indicates the need to understand intercultural communication using both past and present meaning together (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Martin (2015) posited the need to be mindful of contemporary forces where individuals and groups of different cultures enact in realities. Also, one needs to realize the impact our history plays in present or current events (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Martin and Nakayama (2013) posited the last dialectical perspective indicates an individual can be both privileged and disadvantaged at the same time in the same context. This dynamic can be due to gender, age, race, socioeconomic status, and other identities (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Using the six dialectics I framed the script/protocol for this study (See Appendix A).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I used nine employees of a data security company with locations in the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. The company employs workers from various countries at the Jordan and Saudi Arabia locations. The company uses English as the company language and employees must be able to speak and understand English in their daily interactions with coworkers and clients. However, the level of fluency and understanding of English varied greatly by employee. As this is a small company, the company does not use any type of English language assessment upon hiring employees. Most employees have been hired for their expertise in the field of data security and the various jobs within the company. The CEO found that while the employees speak English, their levels of understanding and comprehension has caused problems in the completion of various company projects (personal communication, April, 2015). In addition, the company CEO noted cultural challenges working in a devout Muslim country like Saudi Arabia by employees from nonMuslim countries (personal communication, April, 2015).

Using semistructured interviewing, I explored the intercultural and linguistic competence of employees guided by interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Using a semistructured life world interview, I attempted to understand themes connected to the everyday world of the participants from their own experiences (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). The interview responses provided a description of the participant's world in which they work in relation to the meaning of the phenomena being studied (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). A semistructured interview uses an interview guide that focuses on themes and suggested questions, however, is open to revision, clarification, and probing in context (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014; Vagle, 2014).

I used Skype VoIP to conduct the interviews in February and March, 2016. The company supplied e-mail address of the employee who first language was not English letting me select participants purposively for this research. The online video conferencing interviews lasted 30 – 55 minutes in length and audio was recorded. The time difference between the Pacific Time Zone where I live and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia is 11 hours, and 10 hours for Amman, Jordan. These are the two locations where the interviews originated, in addition to one employee in Poland and one in Bahrain. I respected the work hours for these employees and adjusted my time either early or late to conduct the interviews. The weekend in Saudi Arabia, is Friday and Saturday, so I avoided scheduling interviews on those days. I conducted the interviews over a two-week period to accommodate everyone’s schedule. Each interview lasted between 30-55 minutes to achieve the thick, rich description that is needed (Smith et al., 2009). Once the questions were over, I asked each participant if they had any questions for me or if I needed to address or explain any part of the interview or if they had anything to add that I did not ask. Two employees offered commentary. If no additional information was needed, I ended the call.

I adapted a sequence from IPA research as a strategy for the interview process. I began with an identification of the information that I wished to learn from the participant that is relevant to my study and why I am conducting the study. Next, I honed in on the topics of language and culture related to my research question. Since I was working with participants of different cultures, it was important that I made sure the meaning of each question was understood and on several occasions I had to rephrase the question in a different way for meaning. I made note of which culture the participant was from at the beginning of the interview and as the interview progressed, I noted if meaning or rewording was needed when addressing each question. As noted, I encouraged the participant to tell me what it is like to live in their world to understand the phenomenon of intercultural communication use through interactions on the job.

Once the interviews were completed, I used a transcription service associated with NVivo software (“QSR International”, 2015) to transcribe the audio interviews. When the transcriptions were completed, I used the member checking technique. Member checking allows for maximum benefit of reliability and validity by the researcher interpreting what the participants shared and then sharing that interpretation with the participant for validation (Harvey, 2015; Koelsch, 2013). A strategy for data saturation and member checking includes the following: (a) review and interpret the interview transcripts, (b) write the research question followed by a succinct synthesis, (c) provide the participant with a copy of this synthesis, (d) ask the participant if the synthesis represents the essence of what he or she meant in the interview or if additional information is needed, and (e) continue the member checking process until no new information is gathered (Koelsch, 2013).

I used NVivo 11 software as the vehicle for data collection and analysis which will be described in the next section and in Chapter 4.

Data Analysis Plan

A phenomenological study uses a thematic system of data analysis and seeks to codify and describe the participants experience with the phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). For this study, I used the data collected from the Skype interviews and verbatim transcriptions to systematically code the information according to themes that were identified related to the research and interview questions (Smith et al., 2009). I formulated themes by introducing the six dialectic approaches previously mentioned, in my interview guide. After analyzing the participant's responses contained within the questions related to the six dialectics, new themes appeared.

I used NVivo 11 software, from QSR International, for coding of themes and data analysis. QSR International provides a service to transcribe audio interviews with a two to three-day turnaround time. The length of interview and number of speakers determines the price ("QSR International", 2015). Using this service saved me time transcribing allowing more time for interpretation and member checking of the interviews. I recorded the interviews using a digital recorder and Pamela software.. All collected documents will be stored by the researcher and destroyed after five years so that participant confidentiality will be ensured.

Analyzing data in IPA is characterized by points of view of the participant, moving from specific meaning to mutual meaning, and from the *descriptive* to the *interpretative*, which are applied flexibly (Smith et al., 2009). A popular method of data analysis that is used, is that of Van Kaan. Van Kaan's method of analysis involved the experience of really feeling understood and this method focused on the feelings of understanding of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Instead the of the participant's feelings, I wanted to explore how the participant made sense of the phenomena and understanding his lived experience using English as a second or third language in the workplace under new cultural surroundings. Using an IPA approach offered me this.

In the IPA tradition, Smith et al. (2009) have suggested eight strategies for a researcher to use to achieve thick, rich analysis of the data. First, the researcher should use a close line by line analysis of the descriptions given by each participant (Smith et al., 2009). Second, the researcher should identify and make note of any emerging patterns or themes within the context noting both *convergence* and *divergence* commonalities (Smith et al., 2009). At this point, the researcher should be familiar with and understand the data in relation to the psychological knowledge that the participant is conveying in a *dialogue* fashion, thus developing an interpretative account (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher must develop a framework between the themes that have emerged to illustrate the relationship between them (Smith et al., 2009). The content should be organized in a manner to allow for the analyzed date to create a process from initial comments to initial clustering and theme development, and finally structure of the themes (Smith et al., 2009).

After finalizing the themes, the researcher should write a full narrative using detailed commentary and data extracts for each theme for support (Smith et al., 2009). A final step is for the researcher to use his or her perceptions and conceptions of the material and processes (Smith et al. 2009). This method is designed to elicit reflective engagement using the participant's account of the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009). The primary concern with IPA analysis is how the researcher thinks the participant is thinking about his or her own lived experience, making IPA a double hermeneutic method (Smith et al., 2009). By using an interview schedule, I was able to obtain a wide range of opinions and experiences using the same questions for consistency to examine. I obtained a wide range of feelings and created sensemaking, the process by which people give meaning to experiences as discussed by Smith et al, (2009), and I was able to determine which of these will be the most appropriate themes in which to focus.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To create trustworthiness from data collected, several measures should take place (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Smith et al., 2009; Vagle, 2014). Credibility, which is the criterion for perception of the participant match the researcher's portrayal of them (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Credibility for a qualitative study can measured by: (a) prolong engagement or observation with a population, (b) triangulation, (c) peer review or debriefing, (d) clarifying researcher bias, (e) member checking, (f) thick, rich description, and (g) external audits (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). In order to establish internal validity and add credibility to my study I am using member checking by e-mailing each participant a written interpretation of the interview in order to give each a chance to check to make sure the transcription adequately interrupts the thoughts and options of each and to allow me to revise, edit, or clarify any of the thoughts or comments. I am also making sure the data has saturated by seeing no new information is coming from my interviews. Following the IPA tradition, I am using thick, rich description from the interview content.

Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which the findings of a study can be used in other situations or with other participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Transferability refers the ability of the content to be used by other researchers in context (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Denzin, 2012; Porte, 2013); however, transferability is always left up to the reader to decide (Porte, 2013). I used rich, thick description in the analyzing of my data. Fusch and Ness (2015) described *thick data* as a lot of data and *rich data* as multilayered data (p. 1409). Also, I used purposive sampling techniques to make sure the participants met the guidelines I had established in order to meet the consistency needed for an IPA study Smith et al. (2009) indicated the analysis of the data should provide a vibrant and detailed transcript of the participant's account of the phenomena in order for readers to evaluate the transferability to persons in the same or similar contexts.

Dependability

The issue of dependability relies on the researcher to use methods that are consistent and reliable over a period of time and across methods and can be tracked to interpret the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). In order for research to be dependable, it must be valid (Koelsch, 2013). One strategy for assuring validity in research is by using the technique of member checking (Koelsch, 2013). Member checking occurs after the interview and transcription of the interview when the researcher provides the participant with a syntheses of the accounts of the interview (Koelsch, 2013). The participant provides additional information or indicate the reflection is accurate (Koelsch, 2013). I made sure that my writing and questions in the interview transcript, data collection, and analysis process were clear and concise and were appropriate for this study including member checking with my participants. Also, I will keep accurate records and digital recordings in good order to enable my research to be recreated or confirmed if necessary. Dependability strategies of a research study include the use of audit trail of procedures and processes and member checking (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Koelsch, 2013).

Confirmability

Confirmability is the extent to which the finding of the study is the product of the inquiry and not from the researcher's bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Confirmability implies the study findings are true and accurate and not due to researcher bias or subjectivity (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Strategies for confirmability are an audit trail, triangulation, member checking, and journaling (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Koelsch, 2013). I am keeping an audit trail of my process and procedures and used the member checking technique after the interviews were completed to demonstrate reflexivity.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical considerations are of the utmost importance when conducting research that involves human subjects (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). I defined ethical procedures for data collection in this study by following the procedures set by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University. For the IRB application, I developed a Letter of Consent and e-mail invitation which was sent to each participate prior to the interview asking permission to be interviewed in which the responses would be used as data in this study. I allowed participants four days to review the form and ask questions and address any concerns. I will obtain approval from Walden University through the Institutional Review Board (IRB). No incentives were offered to participate in this study. The IRB approval number for this study is 02-19-16-0124974 and is valid through February 18, 2017. This form is required by the United States Department of Health and Human Services as an effort to prevent covert and deceitful research.

I assured the interview participants privacy during the interview by letting each choose his location to participate. None of the participants were from a vulnerable population. I reviewed the USA Office of Human Research Protection website looking specifically looking at the 2015 edition of the International Compilation of Human Research Standards related to Saudi Arabia for any special requirements and none apply to this study. For this study, I used an international population, however, and guidelines were established that participants must have an understanding of English and use English as a second or third language for participation. The company of the study uses English as its official company language and employees are required to have knowledge and use English in their daily working environment, therefore the Letter of Consent was to be in English, and no translation was needed. Four participants of the purposeful sample decided not to participate in the research. I allowed participants to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, however each completed the interview. To address further issues of ethical concerns, no therapy was given to the participants. Questions from the interview did not ascertain humiliating or hostile information.

I will keep all data collected via notes, audio recordings, and transcription on an external hard drive under lock and key for five years as recommended as best practices in research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). After the study is completed, I will destroy any paper versions of transcripts via a licensed document shredding company. I will mask any names of participants or identification for storage to assure confidentiality (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). I did not have any conflict of interest with this population.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I described and justified why I chose phenomenology as a qualitative research methodology for this study. I presented an outline of participant recruitment and selection, and participation using a small MNC in Saudi Arabia as my population. I explained the procedure's for semistructured interviews using Skype as a data collection method and I addressed the sequences of my data analysis plan using interpretative phenomenology analysis (IPA) as a strategy for interviews and thematic design to code and described the participant's lived experiences. I also discussed issues of trustworthiness as it relates to credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures. In Chapter 4, I will address data collection and analyzation.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore what communication competency MNC employees need to communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace. I used the dialectical approach of intercultural communication to explore the cultural and linguistic competency of employees in a small multinational company. Nine employees at one small multinational data security firm located in the KSA with an additional office in Jordan participated in semistructured interviews via Skype VoIP to share their lived experiences of communication competency in his role in the company. This research is important to positive social change by shedding light on global business organizations and subsidiaries that employ multicultural and multilingual individuals in the Middle East and the cultural and linguistic difficulties experienced by employees. The ability of employees to communicate effectively in multinational corporations gives these companies a competitive advantage in knowledge transfer and proficiency (Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2012). This research is important in exploring ways to help companies address this issue.

The overarching research question that I addressed was: What are the lived experiences of MNC employees who communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace?

This chapter includes information about the research setting, population, data collection and analysis techniques, and the study results.

Research Setting

I conducted each interview using the VoIP program Skype. I used a recording software program called Pamela to record the audio. I also recorded each of the calls using a handheld digital recorder as a backup solution. Due to the participants' locations in Jordan, KSA, Poland, and Bahrain, I worked across four time zones including my own in California. I put together an interview schedule that included times in three time zones, GMT+2, GMT+3, and GMT+4, asking each participant to choose a few times that worked best for that participant, and I would accommodate one of those times. A few of the engineers worked part time in the evenings only, and most of the sales staff and management wanted interview times during nonwork hours, I accommodated these requests. The interview times ranged from 10:00 PM to 2:00 AM Pacific Time Zone (GMT-7) and 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM Pacific Time Zone, which provided morning and early evening interview times for the participants over a two-week period. I was able to connect via Skype video for the employees in Jordan but due to Skype restrictions in the KSA and low bandwidth issues at some homes, I was only able to connect with two of the employees in the KSA via Skype audio, not video. I did not get a chance to see these two participants face to face with the use of video. Two employees in Jordan used private offices at work for the interview and the other two participated from home, in Jordan and Poland, and one was on vacation but did not specify his location. The three KSA employees and one Bahraini employee all interviewed from home. I participated from my home office.

I established a rapport with each participant and verbally thanked each for taking the time to consent to the interview. I then explained the interview process to each and how I would use the data. I also let each participant know that I would e-mail a copy of the interview write-up for member checking. I asked each participant if he had any questions about the process before we began.

Demographics

Each participant worked for the same data security company headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. As of this writing, the company has 18 employees. The office in Riyadh houses business development and sales personnel. The company has a satellite office in Amman, Jordan where the software engineers work and a presence in Bahrain where a new business development employee works virtually. The U.S. office is located in Chicago, IL. The Chicago office houses global operations and accounting functions with a staff of four employees. The CEO spends several months a year in Riyadh, traveling, and at his home base in Chicago. The company outsources the marketing function to a marketing firm in Chicago. As most Middle Eastern business, by nature of the culture, is done by building relationships and face to face interaction, marketing needs have been minimal to date (personal communication, February, 2016). Due to the nature of the industry, technology, and the locations in the Middle East, the company currently only employs men.

The participants ranged in age from mid-20s to mid-50s. The offices in Riyadh and Amman were established in 2012. Employees' tenure with the company ranged from a few months to four years. Each employee had a background in technology, either via direct work experience or educational degrees. All nine participants stated they began studying English in primary school and continued throughout school or college.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Data

Participant	Gender	Age group	Work location	Title
Participant 1	Male	21-30	Jordan	Network Engineer
Participant 2	Male	51-60	KSA/USA	CEO
Participant 3	Male	41-50	Jordan	Senior Programmer
Participant 4	Male	41-50	Jordan	CTO
Participant 5	Male	51-60	KSA	Regional VP Operations
Participant 6	Male	41-50	KSA	VP Business Development
Participant 7	Male	21-30	Jordan	Software Tester
Participant 8	Male	31-40	Virtual/Poland	Web Programmer
Participant 9	Male	51-60	Virtual/Bahrain	Business Development

Data Collection

Of the 13 employees in the company that fit the criteria for this study, nine consented to participate. The nine semistructured interviews involved a series of open-ended questions intended to evoke exploration of language and cultural experiences in the workplace (Appendix A).

The data collection process began after receiving IRB approval and when I obtained employee names and e-mail addresses from the operations staff. I sent an approved IRB e-mail invitation to each participant along with a letter of consent and a list of interview times spread across three time zones. Once the participants responded to the e-mail invitation and consented to the study, I scheduled a Skype interview time convenient for each in the employee's choice of private location between February 22, 2016 and March 3, 2016. I also sent a list of possible interview questions with the interview time confirmation. One hour before the scheduled Skype call, I sent an e-mail reminder asking if this was still a good time for the interview. I used my interview schedule to ask questions based off of the six dialectics of my study and information on experience. The time for each interview ranged from 30 minutes to 55 minutes. The variation in time related directly to the participant's English speaking ability. Those with better English were better able to give extended examples than those who had to grasp for words and the meaning of the questions.

The Skype interviews were recorded using the Skype add-on program Pamela and with a handheld digital recorder as a backup. I found as I was going through the interview schedule of questions, I was able to elicit additional information from each participant relating to his experience with a specific encounter by asking probing questions relating to his answer. This probing led to thick, rich responses from each participant. Thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting, providing a good description of the events and details of the research, which takes the reader into the setting to be able to see and understand the participants in their environment (Patton, 2015). I also found that some of the questions on my interview schedule could have similar responses and examples. I noted this as I was asking the questions and if the participant had already given an example to a question on the list, I asked the question in a different way or skipped it altogether, depending upon the previous response.

The interviews went according to the plan except for one KSA interview needed to be rescheduled due to bad weather on the participant's end that was affecting the sound quality of the Skype call. I found the participants to be very forthcoming in responses. Due to the short tenure at this company, most participants also related examples from past work experience to the questions.

Data Analysis

After the completion of each interview, I used the NVivo transcription service, *Transcribe Me*! to transcribe the audio of each interview. After receiving each transcript, I went through each correcting spelling mistakes of names that were unfamiliar and acronyms transcribed incorrectly. The service placed a copy of the transcript into NVivo for analyzing in addition to a word document version of the transcript available to download from the service website. I then began to review each transcript to develop an overview of my interpretation of each response for member checking. Seidman (2012) posits the interviewer must come to the transcript prepared to let the interview breath and speak for itself. An interpretive reading of transcript or data involves constructing a version of what the researcher thinks the data means or represents or what researcher thinks he or she can infer from the data and challenges taken for granted assumptions about the phenomena being investigated (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Member checking is a technique used to interpret the thoughts and responses of the participants to note any discrepancies to be reconciled by the participant (Koelsch, 2013). Once I completed this technique, I e-mailed a copy of the questions and my interpretation of each participants' responses for member checking. I gave each participant four days to respond to any edits or changes. I also followed up asking for an additional Skype chat to expand on the member checking responses, the week of April 23, 2016.

I used the IPA method for analyzing my data. Smith et al. (2009) notes there is not one single method of working with the data. IPA is characterized more as a set of common processes moving from the particular to shared meaning and from descriptive to interpretative and a commitment to understanding the participants' point of view and personal meaning of the encounter (Smith et al., 2009).

Smith et al. (2009) suggested several strategies for a researcher to use to achieve thick, rich analysis of the data. First, the researcher should use a close line by line analysis of the descriptions given by each participant (Smith et al., 2009). This step was completed by examining each of the verbatim transcripts to make sure the responses were appropriate for the questions and that meaning was there. Second, the researcher should identify and make note of any emerging patterns or themes within the context noting both *convergence* and *divergence* commonalities (Smith et al., 2009). Here is where I noted similarities between the responses. I noted that those with better English and more work experience had similar responses and examples, where those with less English ability and less experience working in English environments had similar responses and examples. At this point, the researcher should be familiar with and understand the data about the psychological knowledge that the participant is conveying in a *dialogue* fashion, thus developing an interpretative account (Smith et al., 2009). At this stage, I rewrote each interview as it related to the six dialectics in my interview schedule to make sure I had the correct interpretation of meaning for each interview. I then e-mailed each participant a copy of his write up for member checking. The researcher must develop a framework for the themes that have emerged to illustrate the relationship between them (Smith et al., 2009). I used the six dialectics plus experience for initial for analysis in NVivo. Then, I organized the content in a manner to allow for the analyzed data to create a process from initial comments to initial clustering and theme development, and finally, a structure of the themes emerged (Smith et al., 2009).

Smith et al. defined themes in data analysis as phrases which speak to the psychological essence of the information and are both grounded and abstract in nature. Saldana (2013) indicates a theme is a phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and what it means. This focus on themes should be capturing what is crucial in the text and that which you are influenced by. In IPA, themes represent not only the participant's thoughts but also the analyst's interpretation.

I started the coding process in NVivo 11 by setting up nodes related to each of the six dialectics and included a node for experience:

- Cultural-Individual Dialectic
- Personal-Contextual Dialectic
- Difference-Similarities Dialectic
- Static-Dynamic Dialectic

- History/Past-Present/Future Dialectic
- Privilege-Disadvantage Dialectic

Under each dialectic, I created a child node that related to the general areas of the interview questions for each dialectic. I then coded the participants' response to each of the general areas providing a structure or framework for additional themes to emerge. The coding process in IPA should foster a sense of manageability in an analytic process (Smith et al. 2009). After the coding in NVivo 11 had been completed, I printed a summary query of each node and child node. Using these printed documents, I made exploratory comment notes as a process of engaging with the data (Smith et al., 2009). By doing this, I noted themes that were emerging across the participants.

I noted from the responses that the employees who worked in the Jordan office had never lived or worked in a culture other than his own; with the exception of one employee obtaining a master's degree in Italy and one living in Poland working virtually. While the managers in both Jordan and KSA had all lived and worked in the United States for a significant time in their careers and each had adapted to the Western style of management and work culture, the employees had not. When speaking about culture, the Jordanian employees associated culture more with language use than with a lifestyle or set of values or beliefs. This led to the emergent theme of *Understanding*, which was related to how people comprehend both culturally and linguistically. A second important theme that emerged was *Cultural Sensitivity* to or about culture. A third theme that emerged was *Pace*. This theme was associated with the pace of society in general and pace in the workplace. A fourth theme to emerge was *Fitting In*. This was fitting in to the societal hierarchy of culture privilege and power. One more theme to a lesser extent emerged relating to *Rules and Policies.* I decided to use this as subtheme under *Pace.* Data analysis demands an awareness of the data and the open mind of the researcher to explore the common threads in the data (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012).

Discrepant Cases

I noted one discrepant case or outlier in the interview with the business development employee in Bahrain. This gentleman had just joined the company and had not integrated with the employees of the company and worked virtually out of his home in Bahrain. To date, he had only communicated with the CEO of the company on a possible project in Bahrain, so his responses to the interview questions were more from examples in his long career working in the Middle East in the financial industry and in both the United States and the United Kingdom. His English was very good, and we discussed mostly his thoughts of young college graduates from the GCC region without outside cultural experience.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I conducted the data collection process with the utmost ethical standards set by the Institutional Review Board. After IRB approval, I obtained the names and e-mails of the employees that fit my research criteria and sent the approved letter of invitation and consent form to each participate asking to participate in this study. Once the participants responded and consented to participate, I sent each a list of times that worked across three time zones and included a list of possible questions which would give each an idea of information and experiences I was looking for. Since each was participating in a second language, I thought having the questions before hand would help with comprehension.

I used a participant number (1-9) for each transcription and recording to provide anonymity for each participant. Once the interview began, I thanked the participant and told him that I would send a review of the interview within a week for him to check for accuracy and meaning. Participants were free during the interview to provide and share examples.

Credibility

To create trustworthiness from data collected, several measures should take place (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Smith et al., 2009; Vagle, 2014). Credibility relates to the extent at which the data reported is acceptable (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). By providing the participants with a review of my interpretations using the technique of member checking contributed to the credibility of the data. After each interview, I sent the audio recording to be transcribed. Once I received the transcription, I reviewed the comments and rewrote them to how I understood what the participant said and meant. I then e-mailed and followed up with an invitation to speak on Skype, a document containing my interpretation of the interview back to each participant for review and to check to see if my understanding captured the meaning of the responses of the participant. By having each participant check for meaning, this lead to credible outcomes of the responses. During the interviews, I probed for additional information where I could or asked for additional examples to provide a thick, rich description of the participants experiences of the phenomena. I interviewed participants until I saturated the data by seeing no new information from the participants.

Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which the findings of a study can be used in other situations or with other participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). By interviewing a mix or variation of employees, regarding both culture and experience and in a country location the same outcomes can be achieved if the reader decides. Other researchers conducting studies using different geographical locations, different MNCs in different cultures, and purposive sampling can conclude similar results. As Smith et al. (2009) noted, the analysis of the data can provide a vibrant and detailed responses of the participants account of the phenomena for readers to evaluate the transferability to persons in the same or similar contexts. I was able to achieve detailed information of the participant’s account of the phenomena and how each participant comprehends and copes in different situations.

Dependability

The issue of dependability relies on the researcher to use methods that are consistent and reliable over a period of time and across methods and can be tracked to interpret the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Koelsch (2013) indicates member checking is a tool for assuring validity and dependability. To achieve dependable data, I used the technique of member checking, providing each participant with my interpretation of the meaning of each participant’s responses. I sent each participant a written account of my interpretations of what each had responded in the interview, asking for comments on my interpretation of the meaning of each participant's account accurately for dependability. I was able to follow up on Skype with three participants and reviewed comments via e-mail from two more participants. I have transferred all audio recordings and interview transcripts to an external hard drive to keep for a minimum of five years in accordance with best practices and if I need to recreate or confirm any information in the future.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the extent to which the finding of the study is the product of the inquiry and not from the researcher's bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) and Koelsch (2013) point to an audit trail, triangulation, member checking, and journaling as strategies to achieve confirmability in research. I used the strategy of member checking by sending each participant a written account of my interpretation of his responses to check for accuracy and meaning. I was able to follow up with three participants via Skype and two e-mail responses with comments from participants. Participant's comments were applied to ensure the accuracy of the data capture to achieve confirmability and demonstrate reflexivity. During the interview process, I would repeat the participant's response to make sure I understand their meaning. I am keeping an audit trail of my process and procedures and the data collected on an external hard drive in keeping with research standards.

Study Results

The following section details the results of the study derived from the participant's comments and examples. Themes that emerged from the coding resulted in the move from the inductive to larger sections of the transcribed results. The emerging themes of *Understanding*, *Cultural Sensitivity*, *Pace*, and *Fitting In* combined with rich, thick textual descriptions are discussed as related to the six dialectics of intercultural communication. Fugard and Potts (2015) posited that themes are complex and tend to be hierarchical in nature and emerge when the following question can be answered: "What is this expression an example of?" (p. 669).

The relationship of the six primary dialectics to the four emergent themes is reflected in Figure 1.

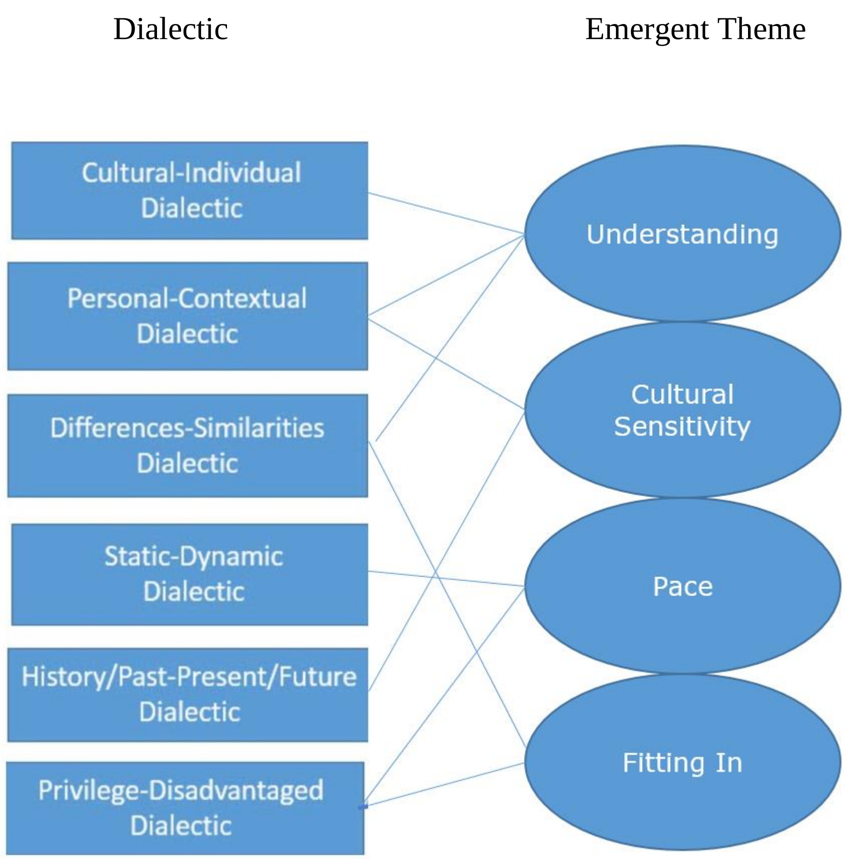

Figure 1. Relationship of six dialectics of intercultural communication to emergent themes

I identified each of the themes by abstraction, contextualization, and examining for function of the interview transcripts, member checking for interpretation, and analysis using NVivo. Each of these themes correlated to one or more of the six dialectics of intercultural communication as related in the conceptual framework.

Due to the participants in this study interviewing in English as a second or third language, the word frequency queries used in NVivo were skewed by the participants use of simple English in responding to the questions. Using a word frequency table, I was able to combine words as they related to the four themes. Table 2 shows the top 30 words frequently used resulting from the member checking interpretations. Words relating to the theme of understanding included: (a) English, (b) language, (c) speak, (d) think, (e) different, (f) understand, (g) communicate. Words relating to the theme of cultural sensitivity included: (a) cultural, (b) think, (c) know, (d) different, (e) Arabic, and (f) someone. Words relating to the theme of pace included: (a) work, (b) cultural, (c) think, (d) know, (e) different, (f) time, (g) one, (h) Arabic (i) office, and (j) office. Words relating to the theme of fitting in included: (a) English, (b) cultural, (c) think, (d) different, (e) people, (f) Arabic, (g) understanding, (h) sometimes, and (i) first.

Table 2

Top 30 Word Frequency Query

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage
work	4	240	1.79
English	7	188	1.75
language	8	192	1.65
cultural	8	188	1.62
speak	5	198	1.34
think	5	187	1.29
know	4	191	1.24
different	9	136	1.15
good	4	182	1.00
people	6	103	0.96
time	4	97	0.91
one	3	91	0.85
way	3	118	0.78
use	3	96	0.77
Arabic	6	81	0.76
understand	10	125	0.75
example	7	98	0.74
want	4	104	0.72
office	6	108	0.67
sometimes	9	72	0.65
make	4	170	0.65
company	7	68	0.63
take	4	190	0.63
yes	3	63	0.59
someone	7	77	0.55
tell	4	99	0.54
first	5	80	0.53
something	9	56	0.52
communicate	13	61	0.51
question	8	69	0.50

Emergent Theme One: Understanding

The theme of understanding emerged in several ways. First, by the participants in comments on getting his point across when not knowing a word or expression to use and when the receiver didn't know English well enough to understand the meaning. Understanding was also reflected in cultural understanding when relating meaning to culture-specific references or linguistic terms used in a culture. Rozkwitalska (2103) noted that cultural barriers are anything that hinders cross-cultural communication which were reflected in these responses. I found that participants used a variety of methods to understand others when speaking in English as a second language. Participants P1, P2, P3, and P5, used confirmation to understand by repeating back what he thought he understood. All participants indicated they had asked speakers to repeat or speak more slowly at some point. Participant P8 indicated he tried to read the speaker's body language to pick up on cues of the conversation (personal communication, February 27, 2016) and the use of eye contact was mentioned by participants P6 and P8. Other participants felt written communication was the best way to convey his point. Participant P3 indicated communicating by e-mail was better for him because he could read and reread text for meaning and understanding (personal communication, February 24, 2016). Several participants, P1, P3, and P7, indicated using Google translate as a means to clarify meaning for linguistic exchanges.

Participants also used various techniques to get his meaning across to be understood. Here participants got creative with expressing their ideas to elicit meaning. Participant P1 noted using a sketch or drawing a diagram to get his meaning and ideas across (personal communication, February 23, 2016). Each participant noted using his hands in conversation, and the use of body language was used to express meaning was noted by P1. Participant P3 expressed that native English speakers were *kind and patient* and let him take his time in expressing his thoughts (personal communication, February 24, 2016). One advanced English speaker, P6 indicated when he saw a person's eyes glaze over he knew he had lost them in the conversation and would switch back to Arabic (confirmed by member checking, April 25, 2016). These example showed evidence of participants using communication accommodation theory for meaning (Galvin & Braithwaite, 2014). Du-Babcock (2013) noted that communication behaviors of speakers from different cultures strategized different techniques to understand a message related to the proficiency of the second language.

Understanding was also noted conceptually. To explore this aspect of the topic, I asked participants if each had to think in his first language (Arabic) before speaking in English. The responses were correlated directly with the amount of time and practice the participant spent conversing in English. Participants P1, P3, and P5, noted each still had to translate from Arabic in his mind prior to verbalizing in English. Advanced speakers of English and those that had lived in an English speaking culture, P2, P4, P6 (confirmed by member checking, April 25, 2016), and P9, had moved on to *thinking* in English in language interactions by knowing and understanding vocabulary, word usage, and meaning.

Understanding also emerged when speaking to a person from a different culture and different first language were both speaking English as a second language. Chen, Geluykens, and Choi (2006) and Cuypers et al. (2014) both noted language form characterizes the *way* a speaker says something, as seen in word choice and tone. The results in this area were mixed and most participants answered that tone, word choice, word meaning, and accent or dialect caused the most problems in understanding. Participant P8 noted having the most problems with dialects from various forms of English for word usage (personal communication, February 28, 2016). Baker (2015) noted the challenges of two NNS speakers using English as a common language since language is often embedded in social situations which may not be familiar in each culture. Verčič, Verčič, and Sriramesh (2012) pointed to the exchange of information between employees and clients, or other outside connections are to construct understanding. If understanding is lost or misinterpreted, problems for the company can manifest.

The emergent theme of understanding is associated with three of the six dialectics: Cultural-Individual, Personal-Contextual, and Differences-Similarities. This theme reflected linguistic ability, cultural behavior, and meaning in the working environment and could impact business decisions negatively from an employees' and employers' perspective. The dialectic perspective between communication and culture assumes these two are interrelated and reciprocal (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). This interrelationship and reciprocity could mean that cultural groups can influence the communication process in which reality in understanding is created and maintained.

Emergent Theme Two: Cultural Sensitivity

The theme of cultural sensitivity emerged from the member checking and transcript examination focusing on comments of working with a person from another culture, taking into consideration the other's cultural background. The cocultural theory and the mutual acculturation model (MAM) were evident in these reactions and encounters. Also, to an extent, some of the examples could be identified with cultural frame-switching. Relating to the Personal-Contextual dialectic, participants all responded that they tried to be flexible and have an open mind when working with individuals from other cultures. I noticed the participants that had not lived in another culture such as P3, P5, and P7 did not put much thought into culture, by definition, but explained their examples as it related to different languages. The participants that have worked and lived in other cultures reflected openness in this area. Participant P8 noted he is very flexible when working with a person from another culture and tries to view the encounter from the other person's perspective if needed (personal communication, February 28, 2016). In general, all participants noted the differences in cultural, was sensitive to and tried to adjust to cultural differences the best they could or knew how to.

The theme of cultural sensitivity was also noted relating to History, Present, Future dialectic which suggests the need to focus on the past, present, and future of intercultural communication simultaneously (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). This theme was evidenced in the employees living and working in Saudi Arabia. For these employees, I explored topics that were related to living in a somewhat limited society such as KSA and whether the employees had preconceived notions about the environment before coming to KSA.

Participant P2 responded that he did have preconceived notions about the country and that he found those notions to be true, however, he would not elaborate on this comments (personal communication, February 24, 2016). Participant P5 a foreign national living in KSA also did not wish to respond to this question in detail. Participant P2 did note examples of how he had to assimilate to the KSA culture and learn to navigate the balance of power and gender in society (confirmed by member checking, April 26, 2016). These examples relate to the co-cultural theory where an individual must rationalize the culture he is in and to adopt a strategy of assimilation, accommodation, or separation to exist (Gudykunst et al. 2005). Coming from strong Western background P2 noted examples of faux paus he has experienced as he tried to navigate a culture that is foreign to what he knows. The cocultural theory also explores intergroup relations which relate to the gender differences in the KSA society. Participants P2 and P6 both related extreme examples of gender differences in the workplace in KSA, noting men and women could not be in the same office and that communication needed to happen via technology means such as video conferencing for meetings, telephone, and e-mail. In these examples, the Mutual Acculturation Model can also be seen. The MAM attempts to understand the mutuality between different groups of a culture as in dominant and non-dominant groups (Horenczyk et al. 2013). Women working in business in KSA have experience and skills but due to past and present history and power and religious differences must stay separate in the workplace.

Through experiences related from participants P2, P5, and P6, examples of cultural frame-switching were noted living in the KSA society. Van Oudenhoven and

Benet-Martinez (2015) noted frame switching occurred when a person uses different cognitive and behavioral frames when in a different culture. Participant P6 recalled experiences of meeting with Saudi clients and having to change (or switch) his known behavior of business in the meeting. He recalled going to extreme measures, to almost being subservient when addressing the proposed client to insure a good impression, something he would never do in a Western meeting (confirmed by member checking, April 25, 2016).

The emergent theme of cultural sensitivity related to two dialectics, personal-contextual and history, present, and future dialectic. These themes reflected the employees' ability to assimilate and acculturate in a culture or society that is different from what they know and also to adjust or identify with coworkers or associates from other cultures in a personal or contextual intercultural encounter at the same time (Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

Emergent Theme Three: Pace

The theme of pace emerged in discussions of differences in work environments. The participants whom had worked or lived in the United States all commented on how the pace of business and pace of society was different than in the West. This emergent theme has caused many issues with deadlines, scheduling, working environment, priority of work, and even genders working together in KSA. Hofstede's (2001) work in cultural dimensions is appropriate to this emergent theme noting the *collective programming of the mind* between group members. Hofstede described Arab regions as (a) high power distance, (b) low individualism, (c) low uncertainty avoidance, and (d) slightly high masculinity dimensions. These cultural dimensions can be seen in the participants' behaviors as noted by participants P2, P4, and P6, and in general cultural comments from P9. Each of these four participants noted the mentality of the work environment in the West differed from the work environment in the Middle East region with an emphasis on deadlines and production time. Participant P6 noted that in region, the need to adhere to deadlines is not ingrained in the culture. There is a mentality of "what doesn't get completed today can be completed tomorrow" attitude causing problems more than once by missing important project deadlines and incentive opportunities (confirmed by member checking, April 25, 2016). Participants P2, P4 and P9 also reiterated the same type of comments. Participant P4 noted that many times the employees put social and family relations ahead of work in this region which also reflected on scheduling and productivity (confirmed by member checking, April 25, 2016). In Saudi Arabia, accommodations had to be made for men and women working together which caused communication problems relating to distances and technology. Participant P2 noted even riding an elevator in a public office building had to be negotiated before getting in if women were in the elevator car (personal communication, February 24, 2016). Participants made comments and gave examples of productivity in the region being different than in firms located in the West. Participant P6 stressed he was not saying there was no productivity in the region just that it was different than what was expected from Western employees (personal communication, February 24, 2016). Participants, P2 and P9, brought up the issues of professionalism is the workplace noting it was different than in the West. Participant P2 noted that in Western cultures the primary approach in assessing problem situations is to discuss the solutions, in the Arab culture there is an emphasis on finding a root cause of the problem and not on the solution (personal communication, February 24, 2016). P2 noted this was counterproductive in his opinion.

A subtheme that emerged out of the Pace theme was that of *Rules and Polices* as related to the Arab culture. Several of the participants P2, P5, P6, P8, and P9, noted in the Arab culture, some organizations prohibit employees from talking about certain topics with other employees and customers. While the company in this study did not have such polices, it was noted that companies the employees had worked for in the past in the region did, and many topics in general are taboo in society. Also noted was the strict gender policies in organizations in the KSA that put extra burdens on businesses, especially MNCs that are not subject to these types of rules in other countries but must abide by them in the KSA to operate. Participant P6 indicated that Western holidays such as Christmas where it is not acceptable for Muslims to participant in office celebrations; it is up to the manager to navigate these intricacies in the workplace with the employees (personal communication, February 27, 2016). Participant P6 also noted that women in the KSA workplace had to be covered with an abaya when stepping out of their offices, in the hallways, elevators, lunchrooms, etc. (confirmed by member checking, April 25, 2016).

These examples of the differences between Western and Middle Eastern cultures is in direct relation to the contradiction or dialectic of the two cultures working together with opposite points of view or cultural dynamics. The two dialectics that focused on the emergent theme of pace were Static-Dynamic and Privilege-Disadvantaged. Static-

Dynamic dialectic suggests that intercultural communication can shift over time but some aspects of the culture and communication patterns remain consent over time while other aspects of culture of an individual can shift over time being dynamic (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). The second dialectic, Privilege-Disadvantaged was seen where aspects of a culture can be both privileged and disadvantaged at the same time and where power relations are a part of intercultural encounters relating to the larger forces of culture and society (Martin, 2015; Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Employees must find a way to work in a cultural by embracing the opportunities and limitations afforded to them. Do we see the homogenizing of cultural practices as indicated by Ladegaard and Jenks (2015) and Nathan (2015)?

Emergent Theme Four: Fitting In

The final theme to emerge in this research study was that of *Fitting In.* While examples of fitting in have been in given in the other three themes, this is unique to fitting in to the societal hierarchy of culture privilege and power. This emergent theme relates to the dialectics of Difference-Similarities and Privilege-Disadvantaged understanding how an employee relates to others in society. Martin and Nakayama (2013) indicated the dialectic perspective of intercultural communication is predicated on cultural, communication, context, and power interconnecting in interactions. This theme explored the employees' ability to traverse power relationships or if he believed power relationships existed. Cultural frame-switching was apparent in these interactions, as trying to *fit in* in different cultural encounters. I asked two questions of the participants focusing on a person's higher or lower status in society and if a person or culture could be privileged or disadvantaged when working within an organization or culture. The responses to these questions differed in two ways. First, participants P3, P7 and P8 whom had not lived in another culture or who were under 30 years old indicated no difference in status among cultures. Second, participants that were older and had lived in another cultures indicated yes there were many differences in status and privilege among cultures. The meaning of the word *status* could have been lost in translation for this interview question. Participant P8 said he “didn’t like to think this way and there is no one higher than another one” (personal communication, February 28, 2016). Participant P6 indicated that every culture as has a place and gave an example of an Indian worker who could have a Ph.D. and be very smart but in this culture he would be looked down upon as a lower status (confirmed by member checking, April 25, 2016). Participant P8 indicated every culture has advantages, American culture, Arabic culture, Indian culture all have advantages (personal communication, February 28, 2016). While P3 equated status within the organization by indicating he spoke to the CEO differently, then he would with a coworker (personal communication, February 24, 2016).

Cultural frame switching can happen when one person representing his own cultural identity, while also having a global multicultural identity (Dehghani et al., 2012; Schwartz et al., 2014; van Oudenhoven & Benet-Martinez, 2015). Participants who acknowledged status and privilege in a culture had developed a global multicultural identity.

Summary

The main goal of this research study was to explore the lived experiences of MNC employees who communicate across multicultural environments in the workplace. I presented the results of the study findings in which four themes emerged. I articulated the participant's demographics, research setting, and data collection. I described the data analysis techniques using interpretative phenomenology analysis (IPA) and NVivo in which four themes emerged: (a) understanding, (b) cultural sensitivity, (c) pace, and (d) fitting in. Each of these emergent themes was related back to the six dialectics of intercultural communication which was the basis of my conceptual framework and various theories and concepts found in the body of knowledge as evidence and support for the themes. I wrote a qualitative reflection of each of the four themes that emerged providing evidence and support relating to the conceptual framework and body of knowledge. I also described discrepant cases and issues of trustworthiness in the data collection and analysis process. I provided analysis from participants' member checking responses.

In Chapter 5 I will provide an interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, and my recommendations for further research. I will also offer implications for positive social change at the individual, organization, and social levels and well as implications for the dialectic perspective of intercultural communication.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore what linguistic and cultural competencies MNC employees needed to communicate across multicultural environments. The dialectic approach of intercultural communication was used to explore the cultural and linguistic competency issues of nine employees in a small MNC company in Saudi Arabia. This research was conducted to explore the lived experiences of these nine employees who use English as a second or third language in their daily work environment. Semistructured interviews were conducted, and data was analyzed using interpretative phenomenology analysis. Four major themes emerged from the data: (a) understanding, (b) cultural sensitivity, (c) pace, and (d) fitting in.

This section will include the interpretations of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendation for practice and future research, and implications for positive social change and practice using the dialectic perspective of intercultural communication.

Interpretation of Findings

Peltokorpi and Vaara (2014) referred to the Americanization of business models and knowledge transfer in global business. The CEO and top management of this company have worked for American companies and lived in the United States. As such, each has a management style and mentality of American business practices, decision making, and productivity levels. This American work style and mentality contradict with the culture and learning of the employees from the Arab region. Therefore, the cultural aspects of productivity levels and deadline expectations are different and have caused frustration in the workplace. While the focus of this study was on employee to employee interaction in the workplace and not at the manager-employee level, I found that in the small offices in both Jordan and KSA interactions between manager and employee were blurred and were on more of a peer-to-peer level, and not on a more formal manager-employee level, probably due to the informality of the organization. This approach is directly related to the casual organizational cultural influence by the American-minded managers, indicating a dialectic or contradiction between *Americanness* and *Arabness* cultures in this working environment. This conclusion was consistent with the findings of Ralston et al. (2012) and Suchan (2014) that societal factors and national identity are key to how individuals think and react in business situations in the Middle East.

As noted in the conceptual framework for this study, a dialectic perspective is a way in which culture, communication, context, and power interconnect with and relate to intercultural communication interactions (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). This definition confirmed the themes that emerged in this study. The theme of understanding captured the understanding of context in both culture and communication as it evolved in the workplace. The theme of cultural sensitivity was important to employees being sensitive to the backgrounds and personal understanding of each other as well as to clients and third parties involved in the business process. The theme of pace reflected the way in which work progressed in the environment and how internal forces shaped the progression to the desired outcome using cultural, communication, and power relationships. The last theme of fitting in identified and spoke to the societal hierarchy of culture privilege and power, fitting into the work environment.

Martin and Nakayama (2013) posited that the dialectics of intercultural communication is based on three approaches: (a) functionalist, (b) interpretive, and (c) critical to understand and give meaning to cultural and communication. Data from this study correlated with the functionalist approach by recognizing the cultural differences in the two dominate work cultures, American and Arab, relating to communication style and approach to work. The interpretive approach emphasized and contradicted the two cultures in the integration of one dominate working style that focused on an approach to increased productivity and the use of a corporate language that isn't native to the majority of the employees. This switch to a more Western style of work performance and communication significantly saw a power relationship of one culture over another culture and featured indications by management that one culture was a superior approach. The third approach of critical understanding of cultural and communciation was the essence of this study and outcome.

In the link between Americanness and Arabness, employees had to navigate between the two cultures, one that was familiar and one that was not, one that embraced the culture and values of childhood and adulthood and one based in many cases on extreme religious beliefs. Employees had to use a global mindset and be open to new experiences in order to adapt, accommodate, and assimilate (Gudykunst et al. 2005). The dialectic between these two cultures was apparent in the working environment and cultural mentality of the employees and the managers. The managers wanted to run the organization based on the decision making and productivity mentality of American organizations while the employees were working in the decision making and productivity mentality of organizations and culture in the Middle East, which moved at a different pace. A viewpoint of fitting in to a societal hierarchy of culture and power was noted. The exposure to multiple cultures and outside influences biased the views of some while employees who had only limited cultural exposure did not perceive a difference in status and privilege (Al-Rajhi et al., 2013). Harzing and Pudelko, (2013) posited the designation of one language as a corporate language can lead to power imbalances within the organization, indicating employees with better language skills have an advantage over those who do not. However, this power structure was not seen on the surface of this small study.

Cultural differences of the employees emerged in American linguistic knowledge, word usage and meaning, expressions, and nonverbal cues. When an employee from the U.S. office visited the Jordan office, the communication and relationship from meeting the individual in person improved the confidence and cultural understanding of the Jordanian employees. Until this meeting, the employees had only communicated with this individual on the telephone or via e-mail (personal communication, February 24, 2016). The U.S. employee had made a connection with the Jordanian employees with the face to face interaction on a cultural level (Bisel, Messersmith, & Kelley, 2012).

A commonality between all of the employees was the technology field (IT). By design, the vocabulary, terms, and descriptions of IT are all in English and very few of these translate into other languages. Thus, when recruiting or hiring for these positions, a knowledge of the IT industry was needed that included an understanding in English of the industry specifics. However, going beyond the technical aspects of the IT comprehension of the corporate language in English is where many of the employees experienced problems. Peltokorpi and Vaara (2014) indicated language-sensitive recruitment enhanced knowledge transfer due to improved proficiency in the corporate language; however, it had the opposite effect on the misalignment between language and business function. In the case of this company, this is a contradiction. Whereas the knowledge of the technology functions was aligned, the proficiency in the corporate language was lacking.

Coote-Martin (2014) indicated that conflict stemming from miscommunication in the workplace can hinder the development of unity among the employees. However, all conflict in the workplace is not bad, as conflict can encourage new ways of thinking about problems and issues that arise in the course of business. A study conducted on culturally diverse teams in the United Arab Emirates found that teams could overcome cultural differences through shared experiences (Coote-Martin, 2014). In the case of the Jordan office, employees were together in an office setting and had much more of a cultural bond compared to those employees in the Riyadh office who were in sales and business development, who worked more independently and communicated via technology or face to face with clients, confirming Coote-Marin’s statements.

While the scope of this study did not include specific reference to supervisor-subordinate communication, there was some evidence of a connection in the findings. The managers of the two offices in Amman and Riyadh had worked in the United States for significant portions of his career, and the interviews with these managers revealed command structures different than those to which the employees in the high context countries were accustomed. This was expressed by both managers when talking about deadlines. Both managers referenced extensions of project deadlines that happened repeatedly and both related this to the pace issues of the region which infiltrated the workplace. Both managers took an Americanized approach to the command language used when addressing the employees, signifying that extending deadlines was not an acceptable practice and that employees needed to do what it took to meet the deadlines. These command structures confirmed Bisel, Messersmith, and Kelley's (2012) statements that indicated command structures in the workplace serve a meaning-making contextual resource for the supervisor-subordinate communication process. The interpretations of the lived experiences of the employees in this company both linguistically and culturally on a micro level signify a need for training and assessment in both areas.

Limitations of the Study

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) described limitations of a research study as potential weaknesses that are out of the control of the researcher. In Chapter 1, I had noted three potential limitations: (a) losing the feeling of intimacy and personalization by conducting the interviews via Skype, (b) working with a small population and achieving data saturation, and (c) language comprehension of the participant and researcher. I did not find that using the internet to interview prohibited any personalization in the interview process. As noted, I was only able to use video interviews for seven of the nine interviews due to bandwidth issues. However, I was still able to get a sense of the person and his responses via audio. I had hoped to interview all 13 employees whom were purposefully chosen for this study; however, four employees did not respond to the invitation. I am not sure if additional interviews would have added additional information. I believe I was able to saturate the data with the nine employees who participated. During the interviews I did not note any language comprehension issues; the few that arose were taken care of by repeating the question in a different way or defining the word. However, as I was working with the transcripts, I did note several instances where the word “conflict” in miscommunication did occur and participant response did not align with the question asked. Not noting this during the interview was due to me being a novice interviewer.

Limitations of this research study that should be taken into account for further research included the small population sample of using one company. To obtain a more comprehensive perspective of this topic, future research should include a company or multiple companies with a larger pool of participants with more diverse cultural backgrounds. Having a more culturally diverse sample could lead to additional insight and provide a different viewpoint of the emerging themes. Prior to interviewing the participants, I did not know that all employees in the Jordan office were Jordanian, so working with other cultures was not seen in that office. The KSA office only had one Saudi employee who had lived in the United States for over 20 years. The rest of the KSA employees were Jordanian or Palestinian. Included in this limitation was the lack of females working at this company to provide linguistic and cultural perspective related specifically to females working in Arab countries. Issues of gender were raised by the male participants working in the KSA as to the difficulties companies had in adhering to cultural norms in a country with the division of males and females in an office setting.

Recommendations

English has become an international language used for global business (Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, & Karhunen, 2015; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2012; Nickerson & Camiciottoli, 2013; Welch & Welch, 2015). As such, MNCs working in a global, multicultural environment must have employees that are well versed in both English as a working language and be open to and predict cultural differences that can manifest (Rozkwitalska, 2013). Results found in this study, point to the recommendation that MNCs should implement assessment and training of employees using a second or third language as the company language and working and communicating with employees and clients of different cultures. This recommendation directly supports the emergent themes of the study, *Understanding, Cultural Sensitivity*, *Pace,* and *Fitting In*. Murray (2013) suggested individuals working in a multicultural environment need to possess the skills of: (a) intercultural competence, (b) interpersonal skills, (c) conversancy in the discourse and behaviors of the domain, (d) leadership skills, and (e) non-verbal communication skills. These skills confirm results and recommendations from this study.

Language is a key construct at the heart of international business and critical to the effectiveness of global competition (Brannen, Piekkari, & Tietze, 2014). Several assessments are on the market that measures English language ability such as the TOEIC, Cambridge, and others both in face to face and online formats. For example, the TOEIC measures English language skills necessary in an international business setting focusing on listening, reading, speaking, and writing (Powers & Powers, 2015). While at first glance, English language proficiency tests are a good measure of skill level, they do not measure knowledge used in decision making in a real-life business setting or address cultural issues. However, these assessments are a good starting point for small companies that want employees to improve English ability and skills and should be the first step for a level playing field in language training assessment.

Similarly, assessments can also examine cross-cultural competence in which the outcomes are broadly defined as adaptation and adjustment (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013). Matsumoto and Hwang (2013) identify the following assessments and objectives: (a) the Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) assesses 59 items of traits and skills associated with adapting to a new culture; (b) the Cross Cultural Sensitivity Scale (CCSS) measures the tolerance levels of cultures to dominate groups; (c) CQ evaluates an individual's capability to interact in culturally diverse interactions; and d) IBA bridges the gap between intercultural knowledge and performance. Also, I noted three assessments in the literature review of this study. First, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) uses the Big Five personality dimensions of (a) extroversion, (b) agreeableness, (c) neuroticism, (d) conscientiousness, and (e) openness to predict adjustment to intercultural encounters (Van der Zee et al., 2013). Second, the Cross Cultural Adjustment focuses on adjustment to work, interaction, and general factors in a new cultural work environment (Al-Rajhi et al., 2013). The last assessment to note, and central to the basis of the conceptual framework of this study, is the Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC). ICC focuses on five characteristics: (a) empathy, (b) intercultural experience and training, (c) motivation, (d) global attitude, and (e) the ability to listen and understand (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013).

Findings from this study indicate a recommendation that MNCs provide employees with appropriate language training as it relates to the individual's language ability and comprehension and provide cultural training by way of assessment methods. Hiring employees strictly on the basis of language and cultural knowledge limits the pool of candidates with the needed technical expertise in an MNC (Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2012). At companies where English is used as the corporate language, MNCs, not individuals, should be invested in the employees to provide language and culture training. Additional business and management training in Western methods, concepts, and theories can be provided to employees through academic degrees and certificate programs, in both face to face and online formats. Intercultural Communication courses and certificate programs can also be taken face to face or online by a variety of educational institutions and private companies.

A corporate language is an organizational artifact of how thoughts develop and then are communicated and discussed (Brannen et al., 2014). A corporate language is used to formulate strategy, produce correspondence, give commands, offer recommendations, and is the lifeblood of the organization (Conrad, 2014; Nathan, 2015; Welch & Welch, 2015). Further research on how corporate languages impacts small MNCs is suggested. Most studies in this area (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010, 2012; Welch & Welch, 2015) have focused on large MNCs, but I conclude that small MNCs enterprises under 50 employees with multiple cultures and limited training resources have more issues and would be a good area of research. The current trend in language research is to decouple language from culture and viewing language as a skill that resided in the individual (Brannen et al., 2014). This trend supports the need for employees to be individually assessed and then offered training to support organizational language functions (Pandey & Pandey, 2014).

Implications

Impact on Positive Social Change

Findings from this research study indicate several areas contributing to positive social change. On an individual level, each of these employees is working in a language other than his native tongue. Which is itself is a stressful endeavor. Ladegaard and Jenks (2015) reflected on a study where the CEO indicated it is up to the individual to make sure his or her language skills are proficient enough to work in a second language environment. If this is true, what would indicate ‘proficient enough”? Should it be up to the individual to know how his or her second language skills stack up against others in a multicultural and multilingual workplace? Positive social change on the individual employee level within a company can happen with providing new and current employees with the language training needed in the company language to make for a level playing field. As corporate communication is perceived as the lifeblood of an organization (Conrad, 2014), it would be in the organization’s best interest to make sure the staff is communicating at a level to be competitive. Peltokorpi and Vaara (2012) posit that employees with proficient second language English skills in the international workplace have greater career options.

On an organizational level, having a workforce that is culturally and linguistically competent provides for better knowledge exchange and productivity in the workplace and less conflict and misunderstanding among employees. Lenartowicz, Johnson, and Konopaske (2014) indicate that in terms of direct costs, lack of cultural knowledge in an MNC costs an organization up to one million dollars a year of lost opportunities, reduced productivity, and long-term relationship damage with clients and partners (p. 1698). Angouri and Miglbauer (2014) and Peltokorpi and Vaara (2012) both indicated that it is to a company's strategic advantage to recruit employees with communication skills that provide for effective decision making and knowledge transfer. However, if a company finds that skills aren't sufficient, then the company should provide the training the employee needs. Noma and Crossman (2012) posited that communication errors are costly to businesses' both linguistically and culturally. Ehrenreich (2010) indicated experienced business people are strategically competent, however may need additional training to reach levels of language competency. Mukherjee and Ramos-Salazar (2014) offered in an era of globalization, employees can easily communicate and network with coworkers and clients around the world from many dissimilar ethnicities using a variety of modern technologies. Cultural exchanges can be complicated if employees do not understand the culture or ethnic behavior. The tone and manner of employee exchanges are also important to an organization as not to offend or discourage potential customers or clients. Thus, having a globally trained workforce is a must for any MNC.

The dialectic or contradiction between employees needing proficient language and cultural skills to work in a multinational company and a company requiring such skills without proper assessment seem simple. However, deciding on the level or threshold is important for a company and assessments are needed to meet this need.

The societal impact of positive social change reflects on the topic of global business as a whole. The push for a *Business English Lingua Franca* to conduct business is seeing rapid changes in MNCs. Multinational companies that are not *American* based are adopting English as the company language and leaving workers that do not have proficient English language skills out of the global workforce (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2011). Findings confirmed the importance of learning English on a global basis. In this study, all nine participants started learning English in primary school and continued through college, however proficiency rates varied greatly.

Impact on Practice

As noted previously, workplace encounters or interactions are sometimes affected by the inability of employees to understand the appropriate communicative meaning and have the linguistic understanding needed to work successfully with colleagues from other cultures (Leong, 2014). The results of the study indicate that organizations need to be proactive in assessing and training employees in language and cultural issues specific to other employees, customers, and client’s nationality. If employees had better comprehension of the specific encounters and could understand why the other person was engaging the way he or she was, then the employee could handle situations more diplomatically. By doing this, companies could have a competitive advantage in overall internal and external communication. This could bridge the communication gap among Western, Middle Eastern, and other cultures specific to the business of the multinational corporation. Training in language and cultural sensitivity can lead to an organizational culture with a global mindset.

Impact on the Dialectic Perspective of Intercultural Communications

Martin and Nakayama (2015) approach to thinking dialectically about culture and communication was the framework for this study. Providing a way for researchers to think about different ways of knowing in a more comprehensive manner, yet rethinking the importance of how individual express knowledge. The dialectic approach offers researchers a way to learn about intercultural interactions as an ever-changing process. In intercultural communication research, the dialectic approach emphasizes the importance of relationships, one person in relation to another person. And, this approach requires two contradictory ideas simultaneously, a contradiction.

Intercultural communication is both cultural and individual. People are both individuals and a member of a cultural group, and intercultural interactions characterizes both. This synergy creates the dialectic of cultural-individual. A dialectic perspective emphasizes the relationship between personal and contextual communication. People communicate in different ways pertaining to the context or interaction. The dialectic perspective recognizes the differences and similarities in understanding communication in a cultural context. These differences and similarities are found to coexist in intercultural interactions. The dialectic perspective notes the ever changing patterns of culture, especially as the world grows more global. However, in contrast, some of these patterns remain stable over time. Thinking about cultural practices as both static and dynamic can help one navigate through new ways of understanding interactions culturally. The dialectic approach suggests we balance and understand both the past and the present and how each impact cultural interactions. And finally, the dialectic perspective looks at power relations between the privileged and disadvantaged, emphasis a person can be both privileged and disadvantaged at the same time in cultural interactions. The impact of the dialectic approach to intercultural communication can be used to explore how these contradictions occur in everyday encounters between people in the workplace when dealing with issues of linguistic and cultural competence.

Conclusions

This study explored the lived experiences of employees using English as a second or third language in a multicultural work environment and the difficulties that were shared both linguistically and culturally. The research drew on a diverse body of knowledge in communication, culture, English as a second language, BLFL, cultural encounters and awareness, and strategies used in knowledge transfer in a global organization. A dialectic perspective of intercultural communication was used in to analyze the language and cultural competencies of nine employees in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The cultural backgrounds of these employees varied from only living in their home country to extensive work and education in western countries of the United States and the United Kingdom. Using the dialectic approach four themes emerged giving credence to the contradictions of understanding, cultural sensitivity, pace, and fitting in, in this organizational culture. Having employees working side by side in a small company, some having an American mentality of productivity levels, deadline expectations, and knowledge transfer, and other employees with a different slower pace of work expectations caused a disconnect in the workplace.

Findings from this study indicate a recommendation that small MNCs provide employees' with appropriate language training as it relates to the individual's language ability and comprehension and provide cultural training by way of assessment methods. Both individuals and organizations working in a multicultural business environment may benefit from the results of this study by recognizing the need for employee training and assessment to improve language and culture interactions and understanding in knowledge transfer to impact positive social change.

References

Abu Bakar, H., & Mustaffa, C. (2013). Organizational communication in Malaysia organizations: Incorporating cultural values in communication scale. *Corporate Communication: An International Journal, 18*, 87-109. doi:10.1108/13563281311294146

Abrudan, C. (2012). New trends in teaching and learning business English: Adapting to internalization. *Annals of the University of Oradea, Economic Science Series, 21*, 170-175. Retrieved from https: http://anale.steconomiceuoradea.ro/en/

Ahmad, S. (2012). Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management, and Sustainability, 8*, 217-232. doi:10.1108/20425961211276606

Ainsworth, J. (2013). Business languages for intercultural and international business communication: A Canadian case study. *Business Communication Quarterly, 76*, 28-50. doi:10.1177/1080569912471186

Al-Rajhi, I., Bartlett, D., & Altman, Y. (2013). The development of an Arabic cross-cultural adjustment scale. *Cross-Cultural Management, 20*, 449-463. doi:10.1108/CCM-12-2011-0120

Angouri, J. (2013). The multilingual reality of the multinational workplace: Language policy and language use. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 34*, 564-581. doi:10.1080/01434632.2013.807273

Angouri, J., & Miglbauer, M. (2014). And then we summarize in English for the others: The lived experience of the multilingual workplace. *Multilingua, 33*, 147-172.

doi:10.1515/multi-2014-0007e

Axson, D. (2012). Globalization reshaping commerce. *Financial Executive,* 65-67. Retrieved from http://www.financialexecutives.org

Baker, W. (2015). Research into practice: Cultural and intercultural awareness. *Language Teaching, 48*, 130-141. doi:10.1017/S0261444814000287

Beckers, A., & Bsat, M. (2014). An analysis of intercultural business communication. *Journal of Business Behavioral Sciences, 26*, 143-153. Retrieved from http://asbbs.org/jsbbs.html

Bell, G., Hopson, M., Weathers, M., & Ross, K. (2015). From "laying the foundations" to building the house: Extending Orbe's co-cultural theory to include "rationalization" as a formal strategy, *Communication Studies, 66*(1), 1-26. doi:10.1080/10510974.2013.858053

Bevan, M. (2014). A method of phenomenological interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research, 24*, 136-144. doi:10.1177/1049732313519710

Bisel, R., Messersmith, A., & Kelley, K. (2012). Supervisor-subordinate communication: Hierarchical mum effect meets organizational learning. *Journal of Business Communication, 49*(2), 128-147. doi:10.1177/0021943612436972

Bloomberg, L., & Volpe, M. (2012). *Completing your qualitative dissertation* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Bloomberg, L., & Volpe, M. (2016). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A road map from beginning to end* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Brannen, M., Piekkari, R., & Teitze, S. (2014). The multifaceted role of language in international business: Unpacking the forms, functions and features of a critical challenge to MNC theory and performance. *Journal of International Business Studies, 45,* 495-507. Retrieved from www.jibs.net.

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2014). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications**.**

Calza, F., Aliane, N., & Cannavale, C. (2013). Cross-cultural bridges in European firms' internationalization to Islamic countries. *EuroMed Journal of Business, 8,* 172-187. doi:10.1108/EMJIB-07-2013-0038

Castaneda, M., & Bateh, J. (2013). Strategies for multicultural management: Communication and a common set of values. *Journal of International Education Research, 9*(1), 1-17. Retrieved from http://www.cluteinstitute.com

Castaneda, M., Bateh, J., & Heyliger, W. (2013). Areas of cross-cultural difference in the workplace. *Journal of International Education Research, 9,* 165-169. Retrieved from www.cluteinstitute.com

Chen, S., Geluykens, R., & Ju Choi, C. (2006). The importance of language in global teams: A linguistic perspective. *Management International Review, 46*, 679-695. Retrieved from http://www.springer.com/business+%26+management/journal/11575

Conrad, D. (2014). Workplace communication problems: Inquiries by employee and applicable solutions. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly, 5*(4), 105-116. Retrieved from www.jbsq.org

Coote-Martin, G. (2014). The effects of cultural diversity in the workplace. *Journal of*

Diversity Management, *9*(2), 89-89. Retrieved from http://www.cluteinstitute.com

Covell, C., Sidani, S., & Ritchie, J. (2012). Does the sequence of data collection influence participants' responses to closed and open-ended questions: A methodological study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 49*, 664-671. doi:10.1016/j.jinurstu.2011.12.002

Cultural Dimensions. (2015). Homepage. Retrieved August 9, 2015 from http://www.greet-hofstede.com

Cuypers, I., Ertug, G., & Hennart, J. (2015). The effects of linguistic distance and lingua franca proficiency on the stake taken by acquirers in cross-border acquisitions. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *46*, 429-442. Retrieved from www.jibs.net

Deakin, H., & Wakefield, K. (2014). Skype interviewing: Reflections of two PhD researchers. *Qualitative Research, 14*, 603-616. doi:10.1177/1468794113488126

Dehghani, M., Khooshabeh, P., Huang, L., Nazarian, A., & Gratch, J. (2012, August). Using accent to induce cultural frame-switching. *Proceedings of Cognitive Science 2012*. Sapporo, Japan. Retrieved from http://cognitivesciencesociety.org/conference2012/index.html

Denzin, N. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 6*(2), 80-88. doi:10.1177/1558689812437186

Du-Babcock, B. (2013). English as business lingua franca: A comparative analysis of communication behavior and strategies in Asian and European contexts. *Ibérica, 26*, 99-130. Retrieved from www.unirioja.es

Fugard, A., & Potts, H. (2015). Supporting thinking on sample sizes for thematic analysis: A quantitative tool. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 18*, 669-684. doi:10.1080/13645579.2015.1005453

Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, *20*, 1408-1416. Retrieved from http://tqr.nova.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/fusch

Gallois, C., & Giles, H. (2015). Communication accommodation theory. *The international encyclopedia of language and social interaction*. doi:10.1002/9781118611463.wbielsi066

Galvin, K., & Braithwaite, D. (2014). Theory and research from the communication field: Discourses that constitute and reflect families. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 6,* 97-111. doi:10.1111/jftr.12030

Gudykunst, W., Lee, C., Nishida, T., & Ogawa, N. (2005). Theorizing about intercultural communication. In *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 3-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Guest, G., MacQueen, K., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Harvey, L. (2015). Beyond member-checking: A dialogic approach to the research interview. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 38*, 23-38. doi:10.1080/1743727X.2014.914487

Harzing, A., & Pudelko, M. (2013). Language competencies, policies and practices in multinational corporations: A comprehensive review and comparison of

Anglophone, Asian, Continental European and Nordic MNCs. *Journal of World Business, 48*, 87-97. doi:10.1016/j.jwb.2012.06.011

Hecht, M. L., & Choi, H. (2012). The communication theory of identity as a framework for health message design. In H Cho (Ed.) *Health communication message design: Theory and practice* (pp. 137-152). Los Angeles, CA: Sage

Heidegger, M. (1927/1962). *Being and time*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hill, C. (2014). *Global business today* (8th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Irwin.

Hoffman, R., & Shipper, F. (2012). The impact of managerial skills on employee outcomes: A cross cultural study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *23*, 1414-1435. doi:10.1080/09585192.2011.581635

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Holliday, A. (2013). *Understanding intercultural communication: Negotiating a grammar of culture* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Routledge

Horenczyk, G., Jasinskaja-Lahti, I., Sam, D., & Vedder, P. (2013). Mutuality in acculturation. *Zeitschrift Für Psychologie*, *221*, 205-213. doi:10.1027/2151-2604/a000150

Husserl, E. (1927). Phenomenology. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. (R. Palmer, Trans). Retrieved from http://www.hfu.edu.tw/~huangkm/phenom/husserl-britanica.htm

Hynes, G. (2012). Improving employees' interpersonal communication competencies: A qualitative study. *Business Communication Quarterly*, *75*, 466-475. doi:10.1177/1080569912458965

Jacob, S., & Furgerson, S. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 17,* 1-10. Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR17/jacob

Janghorban, R., Roudsari, R., & Taghipour, A. (2014). Skype interviewing: The new generation of online synchronous interview in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being, 9*. doi:10.3402/qhw.v9.24152

Jenkins, J., & Leung, C. (2013). English as a lingua franca. *The companion to language assessment IV*, *13,* 1605-1616. doi:10.1002/9781118411360.wbcla047

Kankaanranta, A., & Louhiala-Salminen, L. (2013). What language does global business speak: The concept and development of BELF. *Ibérica, 26*, 17-34. Retrieved from www.unirioja.es

Kankaanranta, A., Louhiala-Salminen, L., & Karhunen, P. (2015). English in multinational companies: Implications for teaching English at an international business school. *De Gruyter Mouton, 4*, 125-148. doi:10.1515/jelf-2015-0010

Kankaanranta, A., & Planken, B. (2010). BELF Competence as business knowledge of internationally operating business professionals. *Journal of Business Communication, 47,* 380-407. doi:10.1177/0021943610377301

Kim, Y. (2015). Finding a home beyond culture: The emergence of intercultural personhood in the globalizing world. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 46*, 3-12. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.018

King, D. (2012). New perspectives on context-based chemistry education: Using a dialectical sociocultural approach to view teaching and learning. *Studies in Science Education*, *48*, 51-87. doi:10.1080/03057267.2012.655037

Koelsch, L. E. (2013). Reconceptualizing the member check interview. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *12*, 168-179. Retrieved from http:ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/view/12327

Koester, J., & Lustig, M.W. (2015). Intercultural communication competence: Theory, measurement, and application. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *48.* doi:10.1016/j.intrel.2015.03.006

Ladegaard, H., & Jenks, C. (2015). Language and intercultural communication in the workplace: Critical approaches to theory and practice. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *15*(1), 1-12. doi:10.1080/14708477.2014.985302

Lauring, J., Klitmoller, A. (2015) Inclusive language use in multicultural business organizations: The effect on creativity and performance. *International Journal of Business Communication*, *50*, 46-55. doi:10.1177/2329488415572779

Lebedko, M. (2014). Globalization, networking and intercultural communication. *Intercultural Communications Studies XXIII, 1*, 28-41. Retrieved from http://web.uri.edu/iaics/ics-content-list/

Lenartowicz, T., Johnson, J., & Konopaske, R. (2014). The application of learning theories to improve cross-cultural training programs in MBCs. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *25*(12), 1697-1719. doi:10.1080/09585192.2013.860384

Leon, M., Halbesleben, J., & Paustian-Underdahl, S. (2015). A dialectical perspective on burnout and engagement. *Burnout Research*, *2*, 87-96. doi:10.1016/j.burn.2015.06.002

Leong, C. (2014). Social markers of acculturation: A new research framework on intercultural adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 38*, 120-132. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.08.006

Lopes, M. (2013). A dialectical approach to positive organizational studies. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management, 3*(2), 1-11. doi:10.4236/ajibm.2013.32024

Louhiala-Salminen, L., & Kankaanranta, A. (2012). Language as an issue in international internal communication: English or local language? If English, what English? *Public Relations Review, 38*, 262-269. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.021

Manara, C. (2013). The struggle of moving towards EIL: Competing and conflicting narratives of professionalism in an Indonesian context. In *Contextualizing the pedagogy of English as an international language: Issues and tensions* (pp. 150-167). Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Martin, J. (2015), Revisiting intercultural communication competence: Where to go from here. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. doi:10.1016/j.jintrel.2015.03.008

Martin, J., & Nakayama, T. (2013). *Intercultural communication in context* (6th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Martin, J., & Nakayama, T., (2015). Reconsidering intercultural (communication) competence in the workplace: A dialectical approach. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *15*, 13-28, doi:10.1080/14708477.2014.985303

Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. (2013). Assessing cross-cultural competence: A review of available tests. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 44,* 849-873. doi:10.1177/0022022113492891

Mukherjee, S., & Ramos-Salazar, L. (2014). Excuse us, your manners are missing: The role of business etiquette in today's era of cross-cultural communication. *TSM Business Review, 2*(1), 18-28. Retrieved from http://www.tsm.ac.in

Mishra, K., Boynton, L., & Mishra, A. (2014). Driving employee engagement: The expanded role of internal communications. *International Journal of Business Communication*, *51*, 183-202. doi:10.1177/2329488414525399

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Murmu, M. (2014). Cultural diversity in global workforce: Issues and challenges. *Review of HRM*, *3*, 67-72. Retrieved from http://mdrfindia.org

Murray, N. (2013). Widening participation and English language proficiency: A convergence with implication for assessment practices in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education, 38*, 299-311. doi:10.1080.03075079.2011.580838

Nakayama, T., & Martin, J. (2014). Ethical issues in intercultural communication theory: A dialectical approach. In X. Dai, & G. Chen (Eds), *Intercultural communication competence: Conceptualization and its development in cultural contexts and* *interactions* (pp. 97-117). Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Nair-Venugopal, S. (2015). Issues of language and competence in intercultural business contexts. *Language and Intercultural Communication,* 29-45. doi:10.1080/14708477.2014.985304

Nathan, G. (2015). A non-essentialist model of culture: Implications of identity, agency, and structure within multinational/multicultural organizations. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, *15*, 101-124. doi:10.1177/1470595815572171

Nickerson, C., & Camiciottoli, B. (2013). Business English as a lingua franca in advertising texts in the Arabian Gulf: Analyzing the attitudes of the emirate community. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 27,* 329-352. doi:10.1177/1050651913479930

Noma, H., & Crossman, J. (2012). Analogue and digital mindsets: Some implications for intercultural communication between western and eastern organizations. *Asian Academy of Management Journal*, *17*, 115-129. Retrieved from http://web.usm.my/aamj/

NVivo. (2015). Homepage. Retrieved September 12, 2015. From http://www.qsrinternational.com

Odrakiewicz, P., & Zator-Peljan, J. (2012). Innovative methods of cultural, intercultural and managerial competences acquisition for the constantly changing global economy in a new paradigm shift. *Global Management Journal 1*, 127-137. Retrieved from http://globalmj.eu/

Oerlemans, W., & Peeters, M. (2010). The multicultural workplace: Interactive acculturation and intergroup relations. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *25,* 460-478. doi:10.1108/02683941011048373

Okoro, E. (2012). Cross-cultural etiquette and communication in global business: Toward a strategic framework for managing corporate expansion. *International Journal of Business and Management*, *7*, 130-138. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v7n16p130

O'Reilly, M., & Parker, N. (2012). Unsatisfactory saturation: A critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 13*, 190-197. doi:10.1177/1468794112446106

Palmer-Silveira, J. (2013). The need for successful communication in intercultural and international business. *Ibérica*, *26*, 9-16. Retrieved from www.unirioja.es/

Palthe, J. (2014) Cross-level cultural congruence: Implications for managing diversity in multinational corporations, *Journal of Diversity Management*, *9*, 51-62. Retrieved from http://www.cluteinstitute.com

Pandey, M., & Pandey, P. (2014). Better English for better employment opportunities. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach and Studies, 1*(4), 93-99. Retrieved from www.ijmas.com

Peltokorpi, V., & Vaara, E. (2012). Language policies and practices in wholly owned foreign subsidiaries: A recontextualization perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies, 43,* 808-833. Retrieved from www.jibs.net

Peltokorpi, V., & Vaara, E. (2014). Knowledge transfer in multinational corporations: Productive and counterproductive effects of language sensitive recruitment. *Journal of International Business Studies, 45*, 600-622. Retrieved from www.jibs.net

Pietkiewicz, I., & Smith, J. (2014). A practical guide to using interpretative phenomenological analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne Psychological Journal*, *20*, 7-14. doi:10.14691/CPPJ.20.1.7

Plakhotnick, M., Rocco, T., Collins, J., & Landorf, H. (2015). Connection, value, and growth: How employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation. *Human Resource Development International, 18*, 39-57. doi:10.1080/13678868.2014.979009

Porte, G. (2013). *Replication research in applied linguistics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Powers, D., & Powers, A. (2015). The incremental contribution of TOEIC Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing tests to predicting performance on real-life English language tasks. *Language Testing, 32*(2), 151-167. doi:10.1177/0265532214551855

Ralston, D., Egri, C., Riddle, L., Butt, A., Dalgic, T., & Brock, D. (2012). Managerial values in the greater Middle East: Similarities and differences across seven countries. *International Business Review, 21*, 480-492. doi:10.1016/j.busrev.2011.05.007

Ristovska, K., & Ristovska, A. (2014). The impact of globalization on the business. *Economic Development*, *3*, 205-213. Retrieved from http://www.ceeol.com/

Robinson, O. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 11*, 25-41. doi:10.1080/14780887.2013.801543

Rozkwitalska, M. (2013, August). *Effective cross-cultural relationships in multinational corporations.* Paper presented at the Third Annual International Conference on Business Strategy and Organizational Behavior. Singapore. doi:10.5176/2251-1970_BizStrategy13.06

Ruck, K., & Welch, M. (2012). Valuing internal communication; management and employee perspectives. *Public Relations Review, 38,* 294-302. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.016

Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Schwartz, S., Benet-Martinez, V., Knight, G., Unger, J., Zamboanga, B., Des Rosiers, S.. . . Szapocznik, J. (2014). Effects of language of assessment on the measurement of acculturation: Measurement equivalence and cultural frame switching. *Psychological Assessment, 26*(1), 100-114. doi:10.1037/a0034717

Schwartz, S. J., Vignoles, V. L., Brown, R., & Zagefka, H. (2014). The identity dynamics of acculturation and multiculturalism: Situating acculturation in context. *Oxford handbook of multicultural identity* (pp. 57-95). doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/97801997966694.001.0001

Seidman, I. (2012). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (4th ed.). New York, NY: New York Teachers

College Press.

Seitz, S. (2015). Pixilated partnerships, overcoming obstacles in qualitative interviews via Skype: A research note. *Qualitative Research,* 1-7. doi:10.1177/1468794115577011

Selmer, J., & Lauring, J. (2015). Host country language ability and expatriate adjustment: The moderating effect of language difficulty. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 26,* 401-420. doi:10.1080/09585192.2011.561238

Selmier, W. & Oh, C. (2012). International business complexity and the internationalization of languages. *Business Horizons, 55,* 189-200. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2011.11.006

Sifianou, M. (2012). Disagreements, face and politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics, 44,* 1554-1564. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2012.03.009

Smith, J., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis*. London, England, UK: Sage Publications Ltd

Spencer-Oatey, H. (2007). Theories of identity and the analysis of face. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *39*, 637-656. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2006.12.004

Suchan, J. (2014). Toward an understanding of Arabic persuasion: A western perspective. *International Journal of Business Communication*, *51*, 279-303. doi:10.1177/2329488414525401

Taras, V., Steel, P., & Kirkman, B. L. (2012). Improving national cultural indices using a longitudinal meta-analysis of Hofstede's dimensions, *Journal of World Business*, *47*, 329-341. doi:10.1016/jwb.2011.05.001

Toomey, A., Dorjee, T., & Ting-Toomey, S. (2013). Bicultural identity negotiation, conflicts, and intergroup communication strategies. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 42*, 112-134. doi:10.1080/17475759.2013.785973

Vagle, M. (2014). *Crafting phenomenological research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press

Van der Zee, K., Van Oudenhoven, J., Ponterotto, J., & Fietzer, A. (2013). Multicultural personality questionnaire: Development of a short form. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 95*, 118-124. doi:10.1080/00223891.2012.718302

Van Oudenhoven, J., & Benet-Martinez, V. (2015). In search of a cultural home: From acculturation to frame-switching and intercultural competencies. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 46*, 47-54. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.022

Van Oudenhoven, J., & Ward, C. (2013). Fading majority cultures: The implications of transnationalism and demographic changes for immigrant acculturation. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, *23*, 81-97. doi:10.1002/casp.2132

Verčič, A., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2012). Internal communication: Definition, parameters, and the future. *Public Relations Review*, *38*, 223-230. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.019

Walker, J. (2012). The use of saturation in qualitative research. *Canadian Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, *22*, 37-41. Retrieved from www.cccn.ca

Welch, D., & Welch, L. (2015). Developing multilingual capacity: A challenge for multinational enterprise. *Journal of Management.* doi:10.1177/0149206315594846

Welch, M. (2012). Appropriateness and acceptability: Employee perspectives of international communication. *Public Relations Review*, *38*, 246-254. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.017

Wells, C. (2013). Controlling good science: Language, national identity, and occupational control in scientific work. *Management Communication Quarterly, 27*, 319-345. doi:10.1177/089331891348540

World Migration Report. (2015). Homepage. Retrieved August 9, 2015 from http://www.iom.int

Zagefka, H., Binder, J., Brown, R., & Hancock, L. (2013). The relationship between ingroup identification and relative deprivation is moderated by ingroup attributions. *Social Psychology, 44,* 398-407. doi:10.1027/1864-9335/a000153

Appendix A: Interview Guide

This interview guide is developed to provide a semistructured protocol for this study. This guide is meant to serve as a checklist for me to ensure consistency in the interview format. It is based on Martin and Nakayama (2013) six dialectics of intercultural communication in organizational communication.

Experience

- Tell me about your experience with the English language, how you learned English, how you use English, at home, at work, socially?
- Please tell me about your role at this company? How long have you worked there?
- Describe how conflict may arise from cross-culture miscommunication.
- Please describe your most challenging cultural encounter in the past six months? This could be related to language ability, or doing something differently according to your cultural background.
- In this interaction, please respond with your description of your coworker's response to the interaction and if they had a difficult time making sense of this interaction.
- How well do you feel you dealt with issues that were raised during this encounter? What did you learn about yourself?

Cultural-Individual Dialectic

- How does a culture difference influence workplace communication?

- Describe how conflict may arise from cross-culture miscommunication.
- Describe a time in which you had to alter your behavior or language at work to ‘fit in’? Please describe an experience where this occurred and what happened?
- What is it like to balance your cultural differences with the culture of the organization?
- Please respond to why you feel that cultural norms, rules within the organization favor one way of working over another?
- Explain how culture differences could influence nonverbal communication.
- When you talk, can you describe if you use gesture or use your hands to help you express yourself?

Personal–Contextual Dialectic

- Can you tell me describe for me when you are interacting with your coworkers, do you think about how you are going to interact with them in English or in your own first language prior to the interaction? What is going through your mind?
- When you are interacting with a coworker, do you think about how to interact with them as you would in your own culture or do you take into consideration their cultural background? What is going through your mind?
- How do you adapt to one way of working when your cultural perspective dictates a different approach? Please escribe an experience where you have seen this happen to yourself or to another?

Differences–Similarities Dialectic

- Give me an example of when you are listening to a coworker and you have a hard time understanding them? How specifically? Which ones? When the two of you have a different first language, how do you decide use English or a 3rd language to communicate? Why?
- Describe to me if you notice the body language of any of your coworkers while you are speaking with them? How so?
- What tools and behaviors do you think are needed to be an effective intercultural communicator? For instance, in observing your own behaviors and that of your colleagues which behaviors seem to be the most appropriate response to working in this environment.
- What kind of attitude or perspective do you think coworkers need to assume in order to better collaborate with those of different cultures?
- In addition to being appropriate as well as sensitive to others, how do you balance this with being effective? For example, if coworkers socializing and discussing family events at work, how do you balance this with achieving work related results and meeting business goals as well?

Static–Dynamic Dialectic

[These questions will be for the employee working in a culture other than his/her own.]

- How do you learn about the culture of Saudi Arabia?
- What cultural events of this country do you participate in?

- How do you feel about the citizens of this country? Or the culture in general?

History/Past–Present/Future Dialectic

- When you came to work in Saudi Arabia, describe any preconceived ideas about this culture?
- Describe if you found those preconceived ideas to be true?

Privilege–Disadvantage Dialectic

- Describe how when working with your coworkers, you have felt that your culture and background is of a higher status or lower status than your coworker's culture? How so?
- What are any culture or organizational norms which privileged one way of working over another? Can you give an example?
- What would you like to share regarding this topic that I did not ask?

Appendix B: Invitation and Setting Appointment

(This letter presents the e-mail sent to participants asking to set up a time and place for the interview).

Dear (insert name)

My name is Cindy Atchley and I am a Ph.D. candidate at Walden University in the United States. The reason I am writing you is to invite you to participate in a research study. I obtained your name/contact information via your human resources department personnel. You were identified as a potential participant for this study on employees who use English as a second or 3nd language in a multicultural workplace where English is the company operating language. There is no compensation for participation in this study. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a semi-structured interview via Skype, audiotaped with the researcher regarding your experience of working in English as a second language. The interview will be scheduled in a private location of your choice. The duration of the interview will be 45 to 60 minutes.
- Member check the interview data, which is ensuring your opinions about the initial findings and interpretation is accurate.

I anticipate the research may contribute to social change by shedding light on global business organizations and subsidiaries that employ multicultural and multilingual individuals. I will ask you approximately 25 questions regarding your experiences using English in the work place. The questions are not hard and there are no correct answers, they are to explore your experiences.

If you are interested in participating in this valuable research, please e-mail me your reply and any questions you may have about the study.

Best Regards,

Cindy Atchley
PhD of Management Candidate
Walden University