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It Takes Two: A Basic Interpretive Study on the Role of Intercultural Communication on Career Development

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

IT TAKES TWO: A BASIC INTERPRETIVE STUDY ON THE ROLE OF
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

ADULT EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

by

Rochelle T. Patten

2020

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

This dissertation, written by Rochelle T. Patten, and entitled *It Takes Two: A Basic Interpretive Study on the Role of Intercultural Communication on Career Development*, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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Date of Defense: July 2, 2020

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Dean Michael R. Heithaus
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Andres G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2020

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my aunt, Jennifer McDonald, whose unwavering faith in my abilities encouraged me to keep going. I cannot count the amount of times I heard her in my head saying, “come on man, of course you can do it, don’t give up, or your uncle and

I are so proud of you.”

Thank you, aunty Jennifer, for being one of my guiding posts.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to Professor Moses Shumow who encouraged me, offered advice, and calmed me down when I first started the program.

R.I.P Moses, thank you for leaving a lasting impression.

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Mommy, thank you for teaching me independence and for forcing me think critically. You're still asking me "what do you think it means or why do you think it is like that?" when I ask you a question. To the rest of my family, and friends, thank you for always encouraging me and believing that I can do anything.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

IT TAKES TWO: A BASIC INTERPRETIVE STUDY ON THE ROLE OF
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT

by

Rochelle T. Patten

Florida International University, 2020

Miami, Florida

Professor Thomas G. Reio, Jr., Major Professor

Organizations are encountering a more diverse workforce as the world experiences an increase in immigration and globalization. Some of these employees are immigrants from Caribbean islands such as the Bahamas, Barbados, and Jamaica. These employees speak English with an accent different from the American standard and oftentimes find themselves at a disadvantage when seeking career development opportunities. Current studies on intercultural communication tend to examine the Asian, European, and African American accent in relation to education, business, and career development. There are no studies that explore the role of intercultural communication, specifically the English-speaking Caribbean accent, on career development. The purpose of this basic interpretive qualitative study is to describe the personal experiences of employees from various cultures with non-native accents and explore how their accents have been linked to their career development. This study used Super's (1950) Career

Development theory and Giles' Communication Accommodation theory to explore the role of accent on career development. Super's Career Development theory discusses the three frameworks (self-concept, life-space, and life-span) that influence a person's career development, while Giles' Communication Accommodation theory discusses the reasons why a person may adjust their accent, speech, and dialect. Structured interviews were used to obtain information from ten participants with Caribbean backgrounds. The participants shared their experiences as employees who speak English with an accent. The information was analyzed using McCracken's (1998) five-stage interpretive process, and Miles and Huberman (1994) analytical method.

Employees with non-native accents believe that their accents influence their colleagues' perception of their abilities, and that their accents prevent them from getting jobs and being promoted. Employees also believe that they are discriminated against because of their Caribbean accents. Because of this perception, employees who speak with accented English adjust their accents so that they are more acceptable in the workplace.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Florida, with its tropical climate and proximity to most of the Caribbean islands, Central America, and South America, is home to many immigrants. Two million, eight hundred and thirty-nine thousand, seven hundred and fifty-two (2,839,752) of Florida's overall population of 18,801,210 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) are immigrants from South America, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean (Migration Policy Institute, 2013).

There are 1,574,514 from Cuba, 204,344 from Jamaica, and 488,021 from other Caribbean islands (Migration Policy Institute, 2013). Other Caribbean islands include Antigua-Barbuda, the Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

The state of Florida is divided into eight geographical regions (Florida Backroads travel.com): Northwest Florida, North Central Florida, Northeast Florida, Central Florida, Central East, Central West Florida, Southwest Florida, and Southeast Florida and the Keys. My paper will focus on the Southeast Florida region, which coincidentally has the three counties with the largest population in Florida. Miami-Dade County with a population of 2,496,435, Broward county with a population of 1,748,066, and Palm Beach County with a population of 1,320,134 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The counties that follow in population size are Hillsborough County in Tampa with a population of 1,229,226, and Orange County in Orlando with a population of 1,145,956.

I examined the experiences of people from different cultural backgrounds. I was particularly interested in how communication with management and peers impacted their career development after being employed in Southeast Florida.

Chapter 1 begins with the background to the problem, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, followed by the conceptual framework, significance to the field, delimitations of the study, definition of terms, and conclusion.

Background of the Problem

Communication

Communication is a process that is symbolic, continuous, irreversible and unrepeatable (Cooper et al, 2007). Schutz (1972) drew attention to the fact that every type of communication includes experiences of others. Spencer-Oatey and Kotthoff (2007) pointed out that understanding is not dependent on complete reciprocity; it is sufficient that a shared meaning can be developed. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (2007) stated that the ethnography of communication provided the insight that culture was essentially a communicative phenomenon constituted through talk.

The ethnography of communication is an approach to language research which has its origin in the development of a view in anthropology, whereby culture to a large extent is expressed through language. There is also a view in linguistics that language is a system of cultural behaviors (Hymes, 1974). Hymes (1974) argued that the study of language must concern itself with describing and analyzing the ability of the native speakers to use language for communication in real situations. The ethnography of

communication is concerned with the questions of what a person knows about appropriate patterns of language use in his or her community and how he or she learns about it. It also involves describing a communication event in terms of the component which make up its content and context (Farah, 1997).

Farah (1997) believed that speakers of a language in particular communities are able to communicate with each other in a manner that is not only correct, but also appropriate to the socio-cultural context. Hymes (1972) suggested that there are eight components for the analysis of speech events. They are mnemonically represented by SPEAKING: (S) setting including the time and place, physical aspects of the situation; (P) participant identity including personal characteristics such as age, sex, social status, relationship with each other; (E) end including the purpose of the event itself as well as the individual goals of the participants; (A) act sequence or how speech acts are organized within a speech event and what topics are addressed; (K) key or the tone and manner in which something is said or written; (I) instrumentalities or the linguistic code such as language dialect, variety and channel such as speech or writing; (N) norm or standard socio-cultural rules of interaction and interpretation; and (G) genre or type of event such as lecture, poem, or letter. Each speech analysis component varies according to the culture. For instance, the dancehall event (G), which is a type of party in the Jamaican culture, is different from a party (G) of the Caucasian American culture.

Culture

Culture is a complicated word to define. As it relates to communication, it is an ongoing negotiation of learned and patterned beliefs, attitudes, value, and behaviors. Culture is also dynamic and can be traced and analyzed to understand society (Primer,

2012). It is also considered a conceptual system that causes people to assess their environment on the basis of a set of beliefs, norms, and values, thereby influencing their relationships (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2014). Primer (2019) also notes “there are recognizable widespread similarities among people within a cultural group” (p. 439).

Culture consists of explicit and implicit patterns of behavior that are acquired and transmitted by symbols (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). The essential core and structure of a cultural group is dependent on their traditional ideas and their attached values (Sarbaugh, 1988). Modern theorists believe that culture is not limited merely to the life patterns of a conventionally recognizable cultural group using the norms, such as nationality, ethnicity, or racial groups (Young Yun Kim, 1988). For example, Forgas (1988) believed that "culture exists in the minds of individuals, and it is individual perceptions, interpretations, and representations of culture which in their innumerable daily manifestations help to maintain or change our stable sense of relevant knowledge” (p. 188).

Otherness

Cordery (2002) defined otherness as something or someone who is different, an essential mechanism in creating “one’s” identity. Ryan (2012), on the other hand, stated that it refers to those who are different from the dominant culture. Ryan (2012) also believed otherness described relationships between objects or people. Court (2018) determined that otherness is multifaceted and somewhat subjective as each person from one culture is an “other” to someone from another culture. Kastoryano (2010) went a bit

further and discussed the notion of “Other.” He posited that the “Other” was a “stranger” who is outside of an existing group that follows codes, categories, and boundaries used to identify outsiders, conformists and deviants. Ryan (2012), in simpler terms, stated that “Other” can be used to describe those who are marginalized or live on the periphery of the dominant culture. One of the terms that derived from otherness was “next best” (Ryan, 2012).

Kastoryano (2010), noted that “the classification of the population by generation, language use, ethnic ancestry, or foreign birth, could be acknowledgement of origins” or a stigmatization of immigrants” (p. 87). On the basis of his research, Kastoryano (2010) determined that otherness is crossing the boundaries, whether they are imaginary or visible. The boundaries that exist within these groups can create social, cultural, and more categories, as well as generate hierarchies among cultures.

Recognizing boundaries, such as identity boundaries, allows people to be aware of the differences in culture, society, and economy (Kastoryano, 2010). He also believed that because of this awareness of the differences in culture, society, and the economy, individuals or groups will adopt identities that are considered relevant and legitimate in situations related to immigration and region, linguistic, and ethnicity. The author reported on studies in the United States that referred to the perception of Otherness as it relates to the switch from race to ethnicity or to diversity. Kastoryano (2010) found that the difference in language was one of the main obstacles between “Others” such as immigrants, and Americans. It was perceived that because pockets of immigrants shared the same language, the universal language of the United States was endangered.

Jandt (2015) also posited that communication had two critical functions in that it: (a) allows people to learn appropriate behaviors and how to control them, and (b) it allows a group of people who share an identity to interact with groups of people from other identities formally and informally.

Identity

Cordery (2002) theorized that by knowing who you are not, only then can you define your position and status in life, thereby creating a sense or image of self. While Cordery seemed to believe that after finding yourself, your identity was fixed, Sherry (2008) argued that identity is flexible and adjustable, rather than unchanging.

Sherry (2008) also believed that identity, which can be individual or collective, is a social process that involves perception and differentiation. Various characteristics of identity include race, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, disability, and nationality (Sherry, 2008). While some people are willing to disclose their identity, there are some who would rather keep their identity to themselves because they view themselves as different from others. Qualitative researchers tend to evaluate the various ways that people change their identities or adapt the identities to situations to “fit into” the social structure (Sherry, 2008).

Culture and Communication

Two authors almost 50 years apart in studies believed that culture influenced direct and indirect communication (Varner, 2000), and that culture and communication were two sides of the same coin (Hall, 1959).

Smith (1966) also believed that communication and culture were inseparable. He posited that culture was a code that we learned and shared, and that learning and sharing require communication. Jandt (2015) also believed that culture influenced perception, and that perception was a requirement for effective communication. According to Jandt, communication and culture were inseparable.

Intercultural Communication

Gudykunst and Mody (2002) pointed out that intercultural communication was generally conceptualized as communication between people from different national cultures. Intercultural communication was viewed as a type of intergroup communication where communication takes place among members of different social groups. Therefore, intercultural communication refers to communication across cultures (Spencer-Oatey & Kotkoff, 2007).

Although there is evidence that globalization and international migration have created the need for those from different cultural backgrounds to communicate, it is more obvious in organizational settings (Deprez-Sims, 2012). A United Nations (2013) study showed that the term international migrants referred to people who were either foreign born or foreign citizens. Deprez-Sims (2012) believed that because of the increasing trends in immigration and globalization, there are more opportunities for people to become exposed to immigrants with accented English. Because of the increase in immigration and globalization, companies are experiencing a more diverse population when it comes to people with non-native accents. Accent has been defined as a unique mode of sound production that is influenced by a speaker's native language (Carlson & McHenry, 2006). A speaker's accent may elicit positive or negative reactions in the

listener, it may trigger ethnic, regional, or social recognition, and the listener may identify the ethnicity of the speaker through language characteristics (Carlson & McHenry, 2006). As a cause for concern, however, Deprez-Sims (2012) also believed that as companies experience a more diverse population, employment discrimination becomes more prevalent.

The United States General Accounting Office (1990) conducted a survey of employers in the United States and found that 10 per cent (461,000) of employers considered foreign accents when making hiring decisions and that an additional nine per cent (430,000) of employers only hired U.S. born applicants (Deprez-Sims, 2012). Furthermore, a telephone hiring audit designed to detect discrimination against a foreign accent, showed that 41 per cent of the employers treated applicants with accents differently than applicants without accents, telling accented callers that the jobs were filled, but telling unaccented callers that the same jobs were still open (Hosoda & Stone-Romero, 2009).

The United Nations (2014) reported that international migration was a global phenomenon that was growing in scope, complexity, and impact. The report also stated that migration was both a cause and effect of broader development processes and an intrinsic feature of our given globalized world.

Effective intercultural communication is increasingly seen as a prerequisite for social harmony and organizational success in today's globalized world of intercultural and multicultural interaction (Primer, 2012). Intercultural communication is often

synonymous with cross-cultural communication; however, according to Gudykunst (2007), that is a misconception. Gudykunst (2007) stated,

cross-cultural research involves comparing behavior in two or more cultures, e.g., comparing self-disclosure in Japan, the USA and Iran when individuals interact with members of their own culture. Intercultural research involves examining behavior when members of two or more cultures interact, e.g., examining self-disclosure when Japanese and Iranians communicate with each other. (p. 316)

Understanding cross-cultural differences in behavior is a prerequisite for understanding intercultural behavior (Knapp et al., 2007). Indeed, today's leaders must be competent in intercultural communication skills because an organization's success, profit and growth increasingly depend upon the management of a diverse workforce.

Managers noticed that a company will experience increased organizational effectiveness if they employ a more diverse workforce from different cultures or identities. The benefits to having a diverse workforce include varied perspectives, approaches, competitive knowledge, design processes, leadership and communication skills (Thomas & Ely, 2001). Cartwright (2002) indicated that managing diversity was about using all of the talents available to the organization without resorting to ethnocentrism, stereotyping, and by extension, a patronizing attitude toward those who speak the language of the majority culture with an accent. One way of creating and managing a stronger workforce is through human resource development (HRD) activities related to career development (McDonald & Hite, 2008).

Career Development

McDonald and Hite (2005) defined career development as a collaborative process. It is a part of human resource development (HRD) that focuses on continuous planning and directed action usually toward personal work goals. For career development to be successful, the individual's goals would require support from the organization through managers, supervisors, and promotional opportunities (McDonald & Hite, 2005).

Arthur (2008), using his work and that of Gunz and Peiperl (2007), defined career as "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (p. 1). Dumaine and Sample (1994) believed that work defines a person, and that a person's self-esteem is hugely dependent on how successful he is in his career. Hall and Las Heras (2012) reported that some cultures believe that a person's professional identity is determined by their career, and that it defines their sense of purpose.

In the book "*Organization Career Development: Benchmarks for Building a World-Class Workforce*," Gutteridge, Leibowitz, and Shore (1993) theorized that organizational career development is designed to link the individual's needs with an organization's operational requirements. They also reported that it is "a process for helping individuals plan their careers in concert with an organization's business requirements and strategic direction" (p. 14).

While organizations and HRD may create opportunities for career development, an individual may create perceived barriers to career development. Lindley (2005) reported that negative and positive outcome expectations can be a perceived barrier to

career development. The outcome expectation occurs when the individual may avoid a career path if they perceive that they may not achieve the goal, or when their job performance does not match the career choice (Lindley, 2005). Luzzo (1996) indicated that a person's self-concept and how they react to the assumed obstacles (e.g., being looked down upon because they speak with an accent; Hosoda & Stone-Romero, 2009) can be a barrier to career development. In other words, an individual's attitude such as anxiety, self-confidence, and their reactions to challenging situations can influence their career decision-making process (Luzzo, 1996).

Problem Statement

The existing research literature on intercultural communication and career development are largely independent of each other. The literature for intercultural communication tends to focus primarily on the following:

1. Preparing expatriates for work assignments outside of their home country by teaching them how to adjust to the local culture of their host country, so that companies can operate more efficiently (Mehra, 2014).
2. Teaching intercultural competence, where Stier (2006) believed that intercultural communication was an academic discipline, and that intercultural communication education was a way to achieve intercultural competence. Intercultural competence occurs when an individual is able to communicate in at least two languages, be able to function in single and multicultural groups, develop an increased sense of professional confidence and self-confidence, and be committed to universal human rights (Stier, 2006).

3. Intercultural communication for college students in study abroad settings, where Kim and Goldstein (2005) found that the number of undergraduate students in the US who participated in study abroad programs had increased, and that these students were more open when choosing careers.

While the literature on career development focuses on:

1. the various theories of career development such as Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, and Holland's Theory of Vocational Types (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2016).
2. articles about women at work in terms of how their relationships affect their career development (Lalande, Crozier, and Davey, 2000), and how self-efficacy affects their career development (Hackett & Betz, 1981).
3. the lifespan of career development where Super (1980) points out that a person holds a sequence of careers throughout their lifetime. The study also showed that previous researchers who wrote about career development were limited by the scope of their task and the variety of variables needing to be considered (Super, 1980).
4. organizational career development, a subject that has been covered in books such as Guttenridge's *Organizational career development: Benchmarks for building a world-class workforce* (1983), and in articles such as Hall and Lips-Weirsmas (2007) who talked about the individual taking more responsibility for their career development and relying less on the organization.

There are many definitions of intercultural communication and career development that have led to a lack of conceptual clarity as to what the constructs of intercultural communication and career development entail. The lack of conceptual clarity may have inadvertently discouraged possible research into the connections between the two constructs. Thus, there is a large information gap as to how intercultural communication and career development are linked. Having this information gap is unfortunate because being able to communicate well interculturally, is a key component of successful career advancement (McDonald & Hite, 2005). A situation where miscommunication occurs because people are unable to express themselves due to cultural differences would seem discouraging; especially for those individuals whose language is not the same as those in the majority culture because of unexamined reasons. The language gap, which can also deter intercultural communication, may limit these individuals' career development. The language and communication gap extend to those who speak the same language but may speak with an accent. Accents may not only limit communication at times, but it may also convey a lower social or socioeconomic status that feeds into the unconscious workplace stereotypes that could affect career development opportunities (McDonald & Hite, 2008). Consequently, additional research is required to discover the possible connections that will help researchers and HRD professionals better understand the theoretical, conceptual, empirical, and practical implications of how and why fostering intercultural communication may enhance or impede an individual's career development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my interpretive study was to describe the personal experiences of employees from various cultures with non-native accents and explore how their accents are linked to their career development.

Research Questions

Using a basic interpretive approach, I answered the following research question:

1. How do employees from various cultures who speak with a non-native accent perceive their opportunity for career advancement?
2. Do employees perceive that a breakdown in communication with employers hinder employees' career development?
3. How do employees with non-native accents perceive challenges when exploring career development opportunities?

Conceptual Framework

The foundation of this study was the conceptual framework derived from Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory and Super's (1950) Career Development Theory.

Communication Accommodation Theory

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), originally known as Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT), was introduced by Giles while conducting a study on accent mobility (Giles, 2016). The premise behind SAT was that speakers used linguistic

strategies to gain approval or to show distinctiveness in their interactions with others.

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) is primarily concerned with the communicative moves that speakers make when interacting in a social or psychological situation; speakers use “linguistic moves” to decrease or increase communicative distances respectively; in other words, people adjust their dialects and accents depending on with whom they are speaking. Gallois et al. also stated that “CAT is particularly relevant to analyzing the complex processes underlying intercultural communication” (p. 158), the reason for this is that CAT deals with communication adjustment.

Communication adjustment occurs when people from different cultures adapt their verbal and nonverbal strategies to the situation (Gasiorek, 2016). Gasiorek also believed that another aspect of CAT is the ability to use communication to manage and mediate interpersonal and intergroup relationships.

Communication Accommodation Theory builds upon Giles’ (1973) concepts of convergence and divergence as strategies that speakers employ to signal their attitudes toward each other. Giles stated convergence involves changing one’s linguistic (language, dialect, vocabulary, speech style) or paralinguistic behavior (tone of voice, speech rate) to be on the same conversational level with another to seek approval, enhance comprehension, or show solidarity; in contrast, divergence means that speakers emphasize differences between their own and partners’ speech. Giles (2016) also points out that maintenance is simply continuing in one’s own style, sometimes without reference to the partner’s speech and sometimes as a deliberate reaction to it.

Super's Career Development Theory

Super (1950) created three frameworks for conceptualizing the constantly evolving nature of career development: self-concept, life-span, and life-space. Super's self-concept approach to career development theory depicts who people are, and what they like, as well as a combination of how we see ourselves, and how we would like to be seen (Tan, 2014).

Super's (1980) life-span, life-space approach to career development uses personal and situational determinants to influence an individual's career decision-making process. The personal determinants include genetic aspects of a person's life such as experiences in the womb, home and community, while the situational determinants include geographic, historical, social, and economic aspects of life (Super, 1980). While these determinants influence career development, they can also influence the way people from different cultures communicate. According to the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (US), the elements of culture include a common heritage and history that is passed on from one generation to another, similar socialization patterns, geographic location of residence, and patterns of dress and diet (2014).

Human Resource Development

Human resource development plays an important role in a company's responsibility to its employees' careers (McDonald & Hite, 2005). Career development is not an independent program or variable, it is part of a process that influences the strategic direction of an organization. Because of the increasing global market and trends in immigration, companies are finding themselves with a diverse workforce. On the basis of

the increasing numbers, it is advisable that organizations create an inclusive career development philosophy. Given today's workplace environment, a strategy "based on formalized career structures and systems is unlikely to cope with the diversity and 'messiness' that is likely to characterize career management in the future" (McDonald & Hite, 2005).

One of the mechanisms that HRD professionals can use as a means of supporting their employees' career development is fairness and equity. Usually the concepts of fairness and equity refers to the imbalance of career development opportunities being given to upper management and none to line staff or hourly employees (McDonald & Hite, 2005). For the purpose of this study, fairness and equity should also refer to the opportunities given to all employees regardless of country of origin, language or accent. Human resource development professionals, in keeping with fairness and equity should always ask the question, "Are all employees made aware of development opportunities and do all employees have access to those opportunities?" (McDonald & Hite). Another mechanism of support relates to environmental issues. There are many environmental issues or factors that impact career development. These include reward structures, organizational climate, leadership, as well as demographics such as cultural values, priorities, race, gender, and language (McDonald & Hite, 2005).

Career development opportunities may also depend on the perception of the employees' peers and supervisors. A non-native accent or accented English is one of the most obvious characteristics of people who are not native to a country or an area. The accent triggers the perception that the person speaking accented English does not speak

the language fluently regardless of their actual competence (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010). The perception that an employee with an accent may not speak the language fluently may prevent the employee from being considered for promotion or given opportunities for career development (McDonald & Hite, 2005). The perception may be that the individual is not capable of professional growth and is content in their current position.

Accent serves as the first point of gatekeeping because we are forbidden, by law and social custom, and perhaps by a prevailing sense of what is morally or ethically right, from using race, ethnicity, homeland or economics more directly. Thus, accent becomes a litmus test for exclusion, an excuse to turn away, to refuse to recognize the other. (Lippi-Green, 1994.) A stereotype is an oversimplified idea of the typical characteristics of an ethnic, racial or cultural group. Stereotypes are also derived from a set of structured beliefs about the characteristics of a group of people. Stereotypes can strongly influence the way people think, respond to, or judge others (Macrae, Hewstone, & Stangor, 1996).

Research conducted by Purkiss, Perrewé, Gillespie, Mayes, and Ferris (2006) has shown that an accent can trigger a negative stereotype. A person hearing an accent may think that the person is mean, unsociable, dishonest, humorless, serious, frivolous or lazy (Strongman & Woosley, 1967). Accents can be an issue in the workplace. In a study of 212 management students, Purkiss et al. found that job applicants with ethnic names and who spoke with an accent were viewed less positively by interviewers, than applicants who had ethnic names and spoke without an accent, and non-ethnic named applicants who spoke with or without an accent. Therefore, the interaction between applicant name (ethnic/non-ethnic) *and* accent was associated with applicants being judged less favorably

by the interviewers, with clear implications for hiring decisions and by extension, career development opportunities and decisions for those with an accent and an ethnic name.

Significance of the Study

My research may enrich what we already know about the two theories presented in this study; that is, career development (Super, 1950), and communicative accommodation (Giles, 1973). For the first time, a combination of these two theories will be used to understand underdeveloped notions of how and why intercultural communication and career development may be linked. Accent was investigated as it relates to both of these constructs. New insights emerged from this research that will inform the theories and contribute to subsequent theory building. Human resource development (HRD) research may also be informed by providing new information about how career development can be shaped by intercultural communication, especially as it relates to carrying an accent. My study will be significant to the field of HRD as it relates to training and career development for a multicultural workforce. The study may provide information that will create a new awareness of how to prepare all employees for career development opportunities, even those with accents and poorer communication skills because of language gaps, in addition to providing HRD practitioners with the information necessary to create programs geared toward career development. The findings of the study may also enable HRD practitioners to become more aware of the perceptions and stereotypes associated with immigrants, as well as provide managers with sensitivity training.

Delimitations of the Study

The scope of the study was limited to immigrants or foreign-born individuals, men and women between the ages of 30 and 75, who are originally from four of the Anglophonic speaking Caribbean islands: Bahamas, Jamaica, St. Croix, and Trinidad & Tobago. The study excluded immigrants from Haiti, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic; countries in South America such as Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela; and countries in Asia such as China, India, and Pakistan as English is not their primary language. The study also focused on these individuals who work in Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach counties in southern Florida where a large population of these immigrants live. Finally, the study focused on white-collar and blue-collar workers in part-time and full-time permanent positions.

Limitations of the Study

There were a few limitations that impacted the study. First, the research was limited to a small number of participants, thereby limiting the generalization of the results. Second, immigrants in other parts of the U.S. may be in some way systematically different from immigrants in South Florida. Selecting participants only from South Florida may limit the results of the study. Third, the study examined white-collar and blue-collar workers, but avoided skilled trade workers who may have differing experiences as immigrants. Finally, one of the limitations is that participants did not always elaborate on their responses thereby placing constraints on an in depth analysis of a theme needed to answer a research question.

Definition of Terms

Accent refers to a unique mode of sound production that is influenced by a speaker's native language (Carlson & McHenry, 2006).

Anglophonic refers to English speaking. Anglo (English) and phonic (relating to speech sounds).

Basic interpretive qualitative study looks at how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their reality from said experiences, and the meaning they assign to their experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Career development refers to an ongoing process of planning and directed action toward personal work goals. Career development “involves reciprocal interaction between employee and employer, and that attainment and/ or enhancement of individual capabilities are not restricted to a particular job, career path, or organization” (McDonald & Hite, 2005, p. 422).

Diversity refers to any mixture of items characterized by differences and similarities; it refers to the collective, all-inclusive, mixture of differences and similarities along a given dimension (Roosevelt, 1996)

Employability focuses on the skills, understandings, and personal attributes that make people more likely to gain employment (Watts, 2006).

Human Resource Development (HRD) refers to “any process or activity that...has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and

satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation, or ultimately, the whole family” (Bernier, 2010).

Immigrant is defined as a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country (United Nations, 2013).

Intercultural communication also known as “cross-cultural communication” is one of the major concepts of international business that seeks to identify, understand, and adapt to communication disparities across different cultures (Communications-Major, 2018)

Intercultural competence occurs when an individual is able to communicate in at least two languages, be able to function in single and multicultural groups, develop an increased sense of professional confidence and self-confidence, and be committed to universal human rights (Stier, 2006).

International migrants refer to people who are either foreign born or foreign citizens who move from one country to another to find work (Oxford English Dictionary, 2006; United Nations, 2013).

Interlocutor is defined as a person who takes part in dialogue or conversation (Merriam-Webster, 2018).

Non-native accent or accented English is one of the most obvious characteristics of people who are not native to a country or an area

Perception refers to the interpretation of what we take in through our senses. The way we perceive our environment is what differentiates us from others (Heffner, 2014)

Phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience (Sokolowski, 2000).

Strategic Human Resource Development Framework for Career Development refers to a cyclical process that includes organizational support mechanisms such as fairness/ equity issues and environmental issues; boundary spanning which deals with informal learning, networks, and mentoring; bounded which involves training, tuition programs, and job rotation; and the evaluation process at the individual level and organizational level (McDonald & Hite, 2005).

Summary

Chapter I addressed the background to the problem, and the problem statement. It also discussed the purpose of the study, research questions, the conceptual framework, as well as the significance of the study, the delimitations of the study, and the definition of terms. The chapter sought to explain to the reader why a basic interpretive qualitative study was conducted on this particular group of international migrants, and how the research findings might impact the AE/ HRD field and improve career development. Chapter II focuses on a review of the literature concerning career development and intercultural communication between employees and management. In Chapter III, a qualitative method approach is used to explore the relationship between intercultural communication and career development.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter I introduced the background to the problem, the problem statement, purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. In this chapter, I provided a review of literature on non-native accent as a component of intercultural communication, and career development as a component of human resource development (HRD). The chapter explored the literature to see if a relationship between non-native accent and career development was reported in previous studies.

The chapter also examined the literature on theories in relation to non-native accents and career development. The theories explored accordingly: non-native accent- Giles' Communication Accommodation theory (CAT); and career development- Super's (1950) Career Developmental Self-Concept theory.

Intercultural Communication

Liu, Volcic and Gallois (2015) argue that intercultural communication occurs between people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, while Klyukanov (2005) believed that it is a "process of interaction between groups of people with different systems of symbolic resources" (p. 10) such as verbal and nonverbal behavior. Piller (2011) and Thurlow (2011) in Sharma (2018) posit that intercultural communication focuses on the similarities and differences between speakers thereby highlighting the inequalities in culture (p. 409). Sharma (2018) reported that "strategies of rapport

management are presented as the essential component of tourist guide intercultural communication” (p. 409).

Sharma (2018) pointed out that tourism workers prepare for interacting with visitors by treating the language, identity, and cultural activities as commodities. They “learn” the language so that their interactions with the tourists are ‘intercultural’ thereby creating a connection with the tourists leaving them satisfied and impressed (Sharma, 2018).

Gao (2017) believed that there is a paradox that comes with intercultural communication. It is believed that individuals may draw conclusions and make assumptions about cultural differences to increase intercultural understanding, thereby creating stereotypes that may prevent mutual understanding (Gao, 2017).

Dooly and Rubinstein (2018) believed that because of the growing changes in communication brought about by globalization, people expect others to be comfortable and willing to engage in multicultural and international situations. Dooly and Rubinstein also report that people in positions such as teaching, translating and interpreting, retail, and multinational corporations tend to have more experience navigating between different cultures and languages. These individuals are called “boundary spanners” because they communicate with people from other cultures thereby moving outside their comfort zone (Dooly & Rubinstein).

Chen (2017) focused on intercultural communication in social networking sites (SNS). The author reported that human communication has changed because of the

growth of the internet and the expanding usage of various platforms such as YouTube, Skype, Facebook, and Twitter. Because communication takes place over computer-mediated technologies, users from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds need to develop “intercultural communicative competence” (ICC), build an awareness of cultural differences, as well as understand the different values, beliefs, and attitudes to prevent misunderstanding in communication (Chen, 2017, p. 169).

Chen (2017) also reported that ICC was recognized as an important pedagogical step in face-to-face communication. Emerging studies show that ICC is being explored in computer-mediated communication (CMC) such as chats, instant messaging, video games, fanfiction sites, and multimedia online games (Chen). These interactions which extend outside the classroom, often include the international community, thereby allowing users opportunities to learn a second language and engage in authentic linguistic, and cultural situations with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Chen).

Using one participant’s Facebook interaction with people around the world, Chen (2017) was able to determine five themes throughout the data: 1) intercultural knowledge, 2) intercultural interpretation, 3) intercultural discovery and interaction, 4) intercultural attitudes, and 5) critical awareness.

Going to work no longer means going to one location or to the office. Individuals now travel to various national, international, and virtual locations to conduct business (Ladegaard & Jenks, 2015, p. 2). Ladegaard and Jenks (2015) believe that communication occurs in different time zones, across different regions, between

individuals from different cultural backgrounds, all of which create an environment for intercultural communication.

Ladegaard and Jenks (2015) believe that we can only truly understand a person's life by observing their cultural and linguistic practices at work, the way they talk, how they socialize, and perform their everyday duties (p. 1). Socialization is fundamental to building relationships in the workplace. Social actions such as peer-to-peer collaboration, harassment, gossiping, and getting coffee together are all cultural and linguistic norms that occur at work (Ladegaard & Jenks, 2015). Ladegaard and Jenks (2015) further stipulate that one of the challenges of ICC is how non-native speakers interact with coworkers outside of the workplace responsibilities in an informal setting.

Accent

Cargile (2000) reported that research on language attitudes shows that language is socially powerful as listeners tend to recognize the “linguistic and paralinguistic variation in messages” and determine the speakers' social and personal (p. 165). For instance, Americans consider the British accent to be cultured and refined (Cargile, 2000, p. 165). Based on all the studies examining the various reactions to the different accents in the world, starting as early as Strongman & Woolsey (1967) to Wilson & Bayard (1992), to Cargile (2000) reported that accent is the most studied and socially significant tenet of language (p. 165).

Deprez-Sims and Morris (2010, 2013) define accent as a “distinctive way of speaking” based on pronunciation and intonation (p. 418). The strength of a speaker's

accent depends on the stress pattern of their language different to the stress pattern of the native language.

Accents are categorized into standard and non-standard (Cargile, 2000). Cargile (2000) posited that a standard speaker is often perceived to be of higher intelligence, competence, and social status, as compared to the nonstandard speaker who is considered lesser. However, speakers with nonstandard accents are considered kinder and more attractive than standard speakers (Cargile, 2000).

Deprez-Sims & Morris (2010) believe that globalization has created a situation where the workplace has become increasingly diverse because companies are hiring people from different countries. A diverse workforce means that workers are meeting people from different cultural backgrounds with different accents (Deprez-Sims & Morris).

Russo, Islam, and Koyunco (2017), citing the United Nations (2013) report, testified that over 232 million people live in a country different from where they were born. The authors further note that globalization created an increase in communication between people from different linguistic backgrounds (Russo et al., 2017).

Russo et al. (2017) believe that speaking with a non-native accent can result in subtle workplace discrimination. To support this, they studied the influence that non-native accents have on career outcomes by considering the speaker's and manager's reactions, as well as the impact on job evaluation and career advancement. Managers who communicate with employees with non-native accents may judge these employees as

being incapable of performing at an optimum level and may be less inclined to interact with them socially, leading employees to feel undervalued and underappreciated, and more likely to avoid “complex tasks” (Russo et al., 2017, p. 508).

Russo et al. (2017) posited that due to unfair discrimination, speakers with non-native accents were unable to get promoted to managerial positions because of their seemingly low communication and political skills. Poor job performance evaluations and the managers’ perception of the employees’ low cognitive fluency may result in employees not advancing in their careers (Russo et al., 2017). Russo et al. further believe that a lack of career advancement opportunities, low management regard, and the perception of being underappreciated, undervalued, and excluded can lead the employee to develop low self-esteem, thereby causing the employee to not seek professional development opportunities.

In a study conducted by Hopper and Williams (1973, 1993), where they examined the impact of accent on employment interviews for higher level positions, the standard-American English speakers were rated higher than the applicants who spoke with an African American vernacular English accent (Cargile, 2000), Spanish-influenced American English, and Southern American White English (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010). Nonstandard speakers because of their accents were perceived as disorganized, lazy, unprofessional, and subordinate. These speakers were relegated to lower status positions (Cargile).

Deprez-Sims & Morris (2010) posited that during interviews people used accents to determine or assume the speaker’s nationality, or to decide that the speaker was

dissimilar to the interviewer. To determine if this was true, the authors conducted a study that examined the influence of non-native English accents on the evaluation of candidates for a Human Resources (HR) Manager position. The study asked 289 individuals to make a hiring decision and evaluate the applicant based on hearing a segment of the interview (Deprez-Sims & Morris). Participants in the study determined that the applicant with the Midwestern US accent was more hireable than others. Deprez-Sims & Morris concluded that organizations need to be more aware of the impact that accents can have on interview decisions and because the workplace will continue to be increasingly diverse through globalization, find a way to reduce said impact.

Fuse, Navichkova, and Alloggio (2017) stated that ethnicity does not affect the employability of job applicants, but the speaker's accentedness does. Accentedness is defined "as the listener's perception of how precisely the speaker pronounces an utterance in comparison to native speech" (Fuse et al., 2017, p. 38).

Rakic, Steffens, and Mummendey (2011) found that participants in their study perceived speakers with regional accents as incompetent and least likely to be hired because the accent triggered negative impressions of the speakers. Fuse et al. (2017) reported that during a job interview, candidates with regional accents were perceived negatively. Human resources specialists rank job applicants with strong accents lower on the employability scale. Rakic, et.al. (2011) posited that speech differences such as regional accents are usually distinct and indicative of various cultural and social groups, and in some cases indicate that the speaker is from a lower class (p.870). Rakic, et.al. (2011) also found that some accents can activate a stereotype connected to a group (p.

876), for instance, American participants perceived that speakers with a British accent were more intelligent while speakers with American accents were not (p. 870).

Career Development

Baruch (2006) in his study defined career as a moving perspective that allows individuals to make changes according to the social order and the typical progression of activities in the office. The author also defined career as the process of development that occurs as the employee gathers experience in various positions in one or more companies, through employment-related positions, roles, activities, and experiences. Hoekstra (2010) supports the previous author's definition by stating, "a career is an unfolding sequence of a person's work experience over time" (p. 159).

Hoekstra (2010) believed that a career is essential to the individual, their life's journey, and identity. The author believes that individuals create their careers from dreams and motives based on personal experiences that began when they were children or teenagers. Hoekstra also believes that individual career development is inhibited by biological factors such as health, temperament, personality, and mental ability.

Baruch (2006) posits that while individuals own their careers, it is planned, managed, and executed mainly by the organization in which they are employed. Because the responsibility of career development has moved from the individual to the organization, the organization decided to move beyond offering careers characterized by secure employment to providing professional development opportunities for those employees that had personal career goals for their success instead.

Hoekstra (2010) believed that career development occurs when an individual acquires different career roles; that it is shaped daily as those roles are strengthened, weakened, or changed. Further, Hoekstra reports that career roles are a combination of what the employee wants and what the organization wants, they are the “continuous development of *career identity* on the personal side and of *career significance* on the environmental side” (p. 159). Career significance is the value of the career to the organization and its contributions to the organization and community. Hoekstra (2010) also posits that career development is the gradual acquisition of career roles which become a part of an individual’s career identity. The individual ends up identifying with the roles and investing time and effort to become credible.

Lips-Wiersma and Hall (2007) conducted a study that showed two options for career development: 1) the organization withdraws from solely being responsible for career development and makes it a joint responsibility undertaken by both the individual and organization, and 2) that career development is no longer a direct function of HR.

Lips-Wiersma and Hall (2007) reported that employees were taking more responsibility for their career development and that employees who manage their own career development tend to get more help managing their careers. They found that organizations used five management practices to assist employees in their career development endeavors: 1) Developing capacity and employability occurs when HR provides various training opportunities and leaves it up to the employee to find the ones that impact their career path; 2) Strategic and structural integration occurs when employees merge their career goals with the strategic direction of the organization; 3)

Cultural integration happens when employees decide if the organizational culture fit their career direction, and HR makes sure that the employees' goals correlate to the organization's culture thereby creating a collaborative environment; 4) Diversity management allows the employee to create a manageable work/life balance while working toward their career goals, supported by the organization as they provide flexible working hours, structure; and 5) Employees *communicate* their career goals in their personal development plans and discussion with their supervisors.

Hezlett and Gibson (2007) believed that mentoring is a great method that employees can use to further their career development. Employees can either be informally mentored by colleagues who travelled a similar career path or who are in positions that are desirable to employees; or they can be formally mentored by the organization through career-related training.

Cargile posited that understanding general reactions to accents is important not just in the context of the job interview but in other socially significant situations (2000, p. 166) such as interactions with coworkers and supervisors which can affect the employee's career development

Conceptual Framework

This section explored the two theories presented as the framework for this study. The two theories explored are Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and Donald Super's (1957) Career Development Theory.

Communication Accommodation Theory

Communication accommodation theory (CAT) was developed to predict and explain the adjustments that speakers make to create, maintain, and decrease distance (Soliz & Giles, 2014). Rakic, Steffens, and Mummendey (2001) report that non-accommodation occurs when speakers are unwilling to change their accent for others because their accent distinguishes them from others, and maintains their cultural background. Rakic et al. (2011) further state that CAT seeks to explain the possible reasons and the results of changes in speech in different communication situations. Gasiorek and Giles (2012) believe that CAT assumes that individual and group relationships are maintained by communication.

One of the main purposes of CAT is to analyze and develop the intentions and motives of the speaker's reason for accommodation or non-accommodation, as well as to determine how the recipient speaker perceives and reacts to their choices (Gasiorek & Giles, 2012) (p. 310).

Individuals may change their speech patterns based on context. On the other hand, some individuals may choose not to accommodate because they want to distinguish themselves from others or they may not be able to accommodate (Rakic et al., 2011). Rakic et al. report that non-accommodation, non-native accent, can reveal that the person is a member of an ethnic background. The stronger the speaker's non-native accent, the more negative the evaluation.

Gasiorek and Giles (2012) believed that successful interaction is dependent on speakers adjusting their speech for each other. The authors report that speakers who do not make the adjustments appropriately can potentially create serious misunderstandings

Williams (1999) conducted a study on several papers that examined CAT. The researcher reported that Gardener and Jones (n.d.) studied the best- and worst-case subordinate-supervisor communication where they discovered that superiors and subordinates agreed on the accommodation strategies were best-case communication situations but differed in the worst-case communication situations. Williams (1999) also reported that Boggs and Giles (n.d.) studied the way men strategically used miscommunication and non-accommodation in the workplace to prevent women from entering male-dominated positions. The socially acceptable and primary occupations for women are teachers, nurses, and secretaries, positions that were considered less important and of lower social status (Lau et al., 2013).

Singer and Eder (1989) reported a study conducted by Giles and Bourhis (1975) that examined the attitudes of white Englishmen toward black accented speakers. Giles and Bourhis (1975) discovered that black individuals who spoke non-accented or standard English similar to their white counterparts were perceived more acceptable than black people who spoke accented English. Giles and Bourhis hypothesized that accommodation was responsible for this effect because minority individuals who wanted to be accepted by majority groups would change their linguistic characteristics.

McWilliams (2018) stated that code switching occurs when speakers change the way they present themselves to others. It is a dynamic way in which people adjust their

communication based on their audience. Myers-Scotton (2017) believes that speakers use code switching as a way to influence interpersonal relationships. McWilliams (2018) cited Lev-Ari (2010) who reported that people are less likely to believe someone with a non-native accent. McWilliams also stated that code switching is a historical behavior used as a defense against linguistic discrimination (McWilliams, 2018). McWilliams referenced a quote from a Dave Chappelle skit (2015), “Every black American is bilingual. All of us. We speak street vernacular, and we speak job interview.”

Super’s Career Development Theory

Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson (2006) reported that Super’s (1957) career development theory presented three types of image perceptions that shape an individual’s image norms and influence their career decisions.

Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson (2006) further reported that the first set of perceptions relate to occupational stereotypes where the belief is that a certain image will help you get the job. It is believed that in the second perception an individual’s image may influence the person’s assessment of their self-esteem and self-efficacy thereby influencing their anticipated success in their career. Perception three refers to the relationship between the individual’s image and the organization’s image. The organization’s image refers to the way people see the organization or even their reaction to the company’s name (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006). Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson (2006) posit that self-concept is an important tenet to Super’s career development theory as it relates to how people see their abilities, personality traits, values, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.

Throughout the study, the authors found that career development professionals such as counselors encouraged applicants to consider how their perceptions of their own image, an organization's image, occupational stereotypes, and image norms can affect their career decisions (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006). The authors note that the counselors are encouraged to help these applicants navigate the stereotypes, image and norms during the job search, as well as the potential racial, age, and gender discrimination they may encounter (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006).

Huang, Frideger, and Pearce (2013) HR and organizational behavior professionals are now recognizing that nonnative accents affect the speaker's career development and advancement opportunities. The authors state that nonnative speakers face discrimination and that employers overlooked them for managerial and executive level positions (Hunag, Frideger & Pearce, 2013). Russo et al. (2017) state that individuals who speak English well, face discrimination at work because of their accents. Managers and supervisors' reactions to the nonnative accents can affect promotions and other employment-related decisions such as additional responsibilities, pay raises, and bonuses (Russo et al., 2017). This type of discrimination is a "glass-ceiling effect" in the sense that the glass ceiling is a racial or gender difference, oftentimes referring to invisible barriers, that involves inequality in advancing to higher organizational levels, allowing certain groups to come close but never attaining desirable positions (Huang et al., 2013).

Huang et al. (2013) examined nonnative accent and political skills in managerial hiring using 79 undergraduate and graduate students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The researchers found that interviewers were less likely to hire nonnative

speakers for supervisory positions because of interviewer bias and the fact that they lacked the political skills needed to be a successful executive. They also found that the interviewers believe that employees with nonnative accents are immigrants with limited knowledge of the subtle needs and preferences of the stakeholders (Huang et al., 2013). Bestelmeyer, Belin, and Ladd (2014) reported that development research shows that this bias emerges early in life as studies show that 5-year-old children prefer being friends with native accented speakers to nonnative or foreign accented speakers.

The information discovered through the literature review shows that Human Resource Development (HRD) and Adult Education (AE) professionals may not be aware of the various nuances needed to guide employees who speak with nonnative accents toward career development opportunities. The information also shows that managers and supervisors can be biased against nonnative speakers and perceive them to be less intelligent, have less ability, competence, credibility, and limited political skills. Based on this information, nonnative accents diminish an employee's career development opportunities.

This study serves to prepare HRD and AE professionals with the tools necessary to assist employees who speak with non-native accents in their career development. Information in the study will also educate HRD/AE professionals and Human Resource (HR) managers on the nuances and sensitivity needed to interact with employees with non-native (nonstandard) accents as well as equip them with the skills and training to reduce prejudice against employees with nonnative accents. The information will also encourage HRD/AE professionals to create evaluations that focus on an employee's

performance and less on their accent. It will also effectively prepare expatriates from multinational corporations (MNC) to work in host countries, as well prepare countries who have offices in other countries. Finally, the information derived from this study can be used in higher education via the classroom and study abroad programs.

Summary

In this chapter, the role that accent and intercultural communication has on career development was examined through a series of articles. Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and Super's Career Development theory were reviewed in relation to intercultural communication and career development. Previous research focused mainly on higher education specifically study abroad programs, and a few on international business. The significance to Human Resource Development and Adult Education was discussed.

Chapter III explains why the basic interpretive qualitative approach is used for this study as well as the data collection methods used to gather the information. Chapters IV and V describe the findings, explain the results, and state the implications to the field and future research.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Through an examination of a series of articles, the previous chapter discussed the role that accent, and intercultural communication has on career development. Chapter II also reviewed Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory and Super's Career Development theory in relation to intercultural communication and career development

In this chapter, I discuss the sampling strategies, participant profile, data collection, and procedures. The chapter concludes with the integrity measures, and analysis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic interpretive qualitative study was to describe the personal experiences of employees from various cultures with non-native accents and explore how employees link their accents to their career development.

Research Questions

Using a basic interpretive qualitative approach, I sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do employees from various cultures who speak with a non-native accent perceive their opportunity for career advancement?
2. Do employees perceive that a breakdown in communication with employers hinder career development?

3. How do employees with non-native accents perceive challenges when exploring career development opportunities?

Basic Interpretive Qualitative Method

My study used a basic interpretive qualitative approach to gather and understand the research data and answer the research questions. A basic interpretive study allows researchers to observe the hows and whats of an individual's "social reality" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003, p. 215). It focuses on how people construct their experience and find meaning to form their reality (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003). The overall purpose of this interpretive qualitative study is to understand how people make sense of their lives and experiences (Merriam, 2019). Merriam (2019) also reports that the primary goal of a basic study is to reveal and interpret the meaning that individuals assign to their experiences.

A basic interpretive qualitative study aims to seek and understand a phenomenon, and or the perspectives of participants (Merriam, 2002). Merriam (2019) further presents the basic interpretive study as a constructionist approach that seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon. Meaning is constructed by individuals as they interact with the world (Merriam, 2002 p. 37). Constructionism, specifically social constructionism, raises the view that people's understanding of the world is influenced by the way groups of people interacted and negotiated with each other in the past (Galbin, 2014, p. 84). Galbin (2014), quoting Cojocar and Bragaru (2012), states that meaning, under social constructionism, is a result of social, linguistic, and symbolic practices.

Merriam's (2019) definition of basic interpretive qualitative research is informed by phenomenology and symbolic interactionism because phenomenology stems from "the idea that people interpret everyday experiences from the perspective of the meaning it has for them" (p. 37) and symbolic interaction because it focuses on the way the individual interacts with society and applies meaning based on that interaction (Merriam, 2019). Merriam (2019) further posits that from a research point of view "the emphasis is putting oneself in the place of the other and seeing things from the perspective of others" (p. 27). The basic interpretive qualitative research method best fits this study because it examines the everyday experiences of people from English speaking Caribbean islands who speak with an accent, the way they interact with others in the work environment, and the meaning they apply to said interaction. Based on the nature of the study and my shared cultural background I am able to see things from the participants' perspective.

Researcher Autobiography

Documenting the personal lived experience of the researcher is important to the study as it shows understanding of the subject, empathy toward the participants, as well as indicate the interest that the author has in the subject matter.

Journey of a Jamaican to South Florida

To clarify any possible bias that I might bring to the study, the following represents my attempts at self-reflection to create an open and candid narrative with the reader (Creswell, 2014). Self-reflection acknowledges that my interpretation of the findings may be shaped by my background, including my culture, region where I grew

up, gender, and employment history. In qualitative research, this self-reflection process or “bracketing” is where the researcher recognizes and sets aside (but not forsakes) their preconceived knowledge and beliefs with a mind toward analyzing the data generated from their research (e.g., participant accounts) with an open mind (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

Growing up in Jamaica, I was taught at an early age the six national symbols of Jamaica: the national anthem (*Jamaica, Land We Love*); the national pledge; the national flower (*Lignum vitae*); the national tree (*Blue Mahoe*); the national motto (*Out of many, one people*); the national bird (*Doctor Bird otherwise known as the Swallowtail Hummingbird*); and the national fruit or dish (*ackee or ackee and saltfish*). My classmates and I recited the National Pledge and sang the National Anthem every Monday morning in school from the primary to the secondary level. Continuous participation in these activities helped create my identity as a Jamaican.

While English is the official language of Jamaica, patois (pronounced pat-wă), is the national language, and is spoken in nearly every household and social situation. In August 2018, I went to London and Paris, and after conversations with various people, I was asked, “Where are you from?” Because I knew they were referring to the accent, I responded, “originally Jamaica, but I live in Florida.” The comment after that was always “you speak perfect English,” to which I responded, “well, English is our first language.” I remember each time wondering why it was a surprise that I spoke perfect English.

My mother and maternal grandparents were returning residents from England, and my aunts and uncles were teachers and nurses, so I spoke proper English with a slight

British accent, or so I was told. In 1985, my mother moved to Antigua to work and I was sent to live with my paternal aunts and uncles. I basically moved from Montego Bay, a city on the Northwest coast of the parish of St. James, to Brown's Town, a small country town in the interior of the parish of St. Ann. Because my aunts and uncles were teachers, my cousins and I only spoke English in its "proper" form, unless we were doing speech competitions. I can still remember practicing the pronunciation of "three versus tree," reciting the vowels for elocution, and reciting short satires such as:

Student: "Teacher, 'arry tek di 'ammer and 'it mi pon di 'ead."

Teacher: "Child hemphasize your hachies."

(Translation)

Student: "Teacher, Harry used the hammer and hit me on the head."

Teacher: "Child emphasize your H's."

Three years later my mother moved back to Jamaica. A few months later, I moved back to Montego Bay, which is where I was officially introduced to patois. While I cannot remember the exact date, I can remember that I was in primary school, heading home, when my friends decided to teach me how to "speak" patois. I tried to learn, but English was so ingrained in me that to deviate from the language felt unnatural. Jamaicans do not learn patois; they learn English.

In spring 2001, I moved to Miami, Florida, to complete my Bachelor of Business Administration degree at the Florida International University (FIU). Miami was a culture

shock for me as I was no longer surrounded by people that looked, thought, and spoke like me. I remember having to adjust my behavior because I had moved from a culture of handshakes, fist bumps, and cheek-to-cheek greetings or kisses on cheeks between close friends, to a culture where a kiss on the cheek was a standard greeting. The first time I greeted a girl from one of my classes, she leaned in to kiss my cheek and I leaned back and stuck my hand out for a handshake. She took my hand and pulled me to her so that she could perform the standard greeting. As I started to pull away thinking, “okay we’re done,” she pulled me in for a second kiss on the other cheek. I had a “perish the thought” moment because in addition to behavior stemming from my culture, I am not a demonstrative person, and not into the “touchy-feely stuff.” After that incident, I forced myself to adapt and suffered through the greeting of my host culture.

Eight years after graduating as a student, I was back in South Florida. Prior to the move, I had been living and working in Jamaica and New York. Here I was, working in Miami where it was hard to escape the Hispanic greeting that made me uncomfortable. My coworkers who worked closely with me, quickly realized that I was not comfortable having my personal space invaded and that I was not comfortable being kissed or touched. One coworker who was married to a Jamaican understood that the “Hispanic” greeting was not part of my culture. However, because of where I was, I had to adapt to the culture when interacting with everyone else at the company. I do not think it ever occurred to them that people not of the Hispanic culture did not want to be kissed.

During my tenure at the company, I quickly realized that not being able to speak Spanish was a disadvantage; that there seemed to be an implicit favorable bias towards

people of the Hispanic culture; and that status was important. There seemed to be a practice bordering on nepotism where people of the Hispanic culture were hired and promoted quicker than any other cultural group. During meetings, my supervisor would constantly speak to the other coworkers and clients in Spanish, and whenever I got up to leave the room he would ask:

“Where are you going?”

Me: “you’re not talking to me so I don’t need to be here.”

Supervisor: “aye conyo, you need to learn Spanish,”

Me: “you need to speak English, I studied Spanish for 8 years, but what you’re speaking is equivalent to my patois.”

There were other moments during various meetings where I spoke up on the lack of diversity in the classroom and offices. During a general staff meeting, I pointed out that the feedback I received from clients was that one of the products was tailored more for Hispanics. My statement prompted a debate that for me highlighted two things; one, as a staff member, my opinion was not valid until a higher-level staff member agreed with me, and that two, the Hispanic and Latin American culture was more important to the head of the division than creating an inclusive product. In one meeting, I pointed out that most of our non-Hispanic clients were not interested in conducting business with or in Latin American companies and countries, and that we should not be forcing them to “buy” a product that did not apply to them. The head of the division, who was from a Hispanic culture, could not understand why clients did not want to, because South Florida

is the gateway to Latin America and the Caribbean (Chetcuti, 2014). It was not until a few higher-level staff members agreed with me, that he conceded that *they* had a valid point. The staff members were all white and mostly male.

Another moment that stands out was a discussion that occurred in a diversity committee meeting of which I was a member. During the meeting, I pointed out that one of the main things we needed to do was reword the mission statement. The mission statement inferred that the division was only focused on clients from the Latin American and Hispanic culture. The head of division pointed out that we serve Hispanic clients, and I stated that while we do, they are not our only demographic and that the statement excludes other races. I continued to point out that while we were diverse in terms of minorities, we were a form of “reverse” diversity because races and cultures outside of the Hispanic culture were excluded.

One memorable event was when I said “hush” during a conversation with a new supervisor, and she said, “Excuse me!” I looked at her and repeated “hush,” completely forgetting that outside of the Jamaican culture, hush meant “shut up or stop talking.” The coworker who was married to a Jamaican quickly interceded and said “No, she doesn’t mean anything by it. In her culture, it is a word of comfort, like saying there, there.” A group of us were on Facebook commenting on the words Jamaicans use, and the differences in context and meanings in the United States. When I shared my experience with the supervisor, there were so many “dying with laughter,” “laughing out loud,” and “laughing my ass off” comments.

The most recent feedback I received from the supervisor was that I am perceived as being impatient and strict. I responded, “Well that’s a culture thing, so that’s not going to change.” I think my response stemmed from the fact that I am at a point where I am not changing to please anyone from the dominant culture. As it seems that, they are not interested in learning about, adapting their management style to, or respecting the cultural difference. It could also arise from a feeling where it does not seem to matter if I “play the game” or not. I feel that because of my accent and a personality that was formed through my culture, I am perceived as harsh, serious, strict, scary, and I have to constantly make statements such as “I’m not trying to offend anyone, or this comes from a place of love, or I’m just asking,” before continuing the conversation.

My personal experiences, conversations with other employees, and my deep personal interest in intercultural communication influenced my decision to focus on the relationship between intercultural communication, specifically non-native accents, and career development. Based on my experience, I would love to see if other people have similar experiences and how these experiences have impacted their daily lives in the workplace.

Sampling Methods

MacNealy (as cited in Koerber & McMichael, 2008) pointed out that between the two types of sampling techniques, probability and non-probability, non-probability sampling was better used in qualitative research because non-probability sampling could be used in certain situations, events, or instances. There are three non-probability sampling techniques: purposeful, convenience, and snowball (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Koerber and McMichael (2008) state that a *purposeful* sampling technique, which has the characteristics necessary to answer specific questions, allows the researcher to find participants who possess certain traits or qualities that represent the widest variety of perspectives within the range specified for the researcher's purpose. For instance, the research should try to recruit management and non-management employees with varying levels of education and experience. The authors present *convenience* sampling as a technique that starts with a small sample or participants who are readily available and easy to contact. The sample is collected or recruited when the researcher "goes out into the street" and asks passersby to participate (Koerber & McMichael, 2008). A closely related technique to convenience sampling is *snowball* sampling. Snowball sampling allows the researcher to expand the sample by asking each participant to recommend other potential participants (Koerber & McMichael, 2008). This is convenient to the researcher because the population of interest can identify persons who have the required experience or characteristics.

Koerber and McMichael (2008) also used Barton (2001) to develop their idea of qualitative research sampling. Barton found that theoretical sampling, somewhat similar to purposeful sampling in that they have a defined purpose, was systematic in nature as it focused directly on participants that were representatives of the research subject. In theoretical sampling, the researcher identifies a situation or phenomenon that cannot be adequately explained by existing theories, and then initiates a research project to find data that will build and test a new theory. Koerber & McMichael (2008) point out that the researcher changes the theory based on the results of the data.

I used a combination of purposeful, convenience, and snowball sampling methods to find participants. To achieve purposeful sampling, I looked for participants with specific traits, characteristics, and experiences relevant to the nature of the study. These traits, characteristics, and experiences included the participants' cultural background such as their migration from an English-speaking Caribbean country to South Florida, their accent, and working in industries such education, healthcare, business, and health and fitness. I used convenience sampling by asking people I knew and with whom I was acquainted if they could recommend anyone who fit the traits and characteristics of the demographic in my study. Two participants were recommended by coworkers. Snowball sampling was achieved when one of the participants recommended another participant at the end of her interview.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) defined “backyard” research as one where the author studies family, friends, coworkers, and acquaintances. In keeping with the concept of a “backyard” research, the researcher interviewed, friends, acquaintances, and coworkers. To maintain the coworkers' privacy, meetings were conducted outside of work hours in locked offices. This prevented any privacy and disclosure issues that could unnecessarily introduce bias into research (Reio, 2010). Disclosure allows for information to become known to participants which can in turn affect the interpretation, credibility, and value of the information presented by said participants (PLoS Medicine Editors, 2012). Cosgrove

and Krinsky (2012) (in PLoS Medicine) believe that disclosure shifts “secret bias” to “open bias” (p. 1), while Loewenstein (2012) posits that disclosure can cause people to give biased information.

Participant Profile

The researcher interviewed 10 participants from four English speaking Caribbean islands: Bahamas (3), Jamaica (4), St. Croix (1), and Trinidad (2). They were recruited through personal and professional networks such as work, friends, gym, and school. Based on the demographic survey (see Appendix A), four of the participants were in the 30-40 age group, five were in the 41-50 age group, while one participant was over 70. The participants had degrees ranging from bachelor’s to post graduate, and represented industries such as education, healthcare, sales, retail, and health and fitness.

The researcher used pseudonyms to maintain the participants’ anonymity. Lee, Cayla, Meryl, Dean, Dayna, and Larissa are directly connected to the researcher; Jayne and Colleen were recommended by acquaintances who were interested in the study but did not meet the criteria; and Carlene was recommended by Cayla. Table 1 gives a breakdown of the participants’ demographic information.

| Participant | Age | Gender | Occupation/Industry | Education | Country of Origin |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|---|------------------|--------------------------|
| Lee | 30-40 | M | Manager in Training/ Sales | Bachelor's | Jamaica |
| Jayne | 30-40 | F | Employment and On Boarding Coordinator/ Education | Master's | Trinidad & Tobago |
| Colleen | 30-40 | F | Coordinator Campus Life/Education | Master's | Bahamas |
| Cayla | 41-50 | F | Advanced Practice Registered Nurse | Post Graduate | Jamaica |
| Meryl | 51-75 | F | Office Coordinator/ Education | Some College | Trinidad & Tobago |
| Dean | 30-40 | M | Associate Director/Education | Master's | Bahamas |
| Carlene | 41-50 | F | Office Manager/ Healthcare | Bachelor's | Bahamas |
| Dayna | 41-50 | F | Associate Director of Compliance/ Media | Master's | Jamaica |
| Oneil | 41-50 | M | Manager/ Health & Fitness | Bachelor's | St. Croix, UVI |
| Larissa | 41-50 | Rather not say | Director/ Healthcare Recruiting | Master's | Jamaica |

Table 1.

Data Collection

Based on the purpose of the study and the research questions, the author used structured interviews as a method of collecting data. The researcher also used questionnaires to collect participants' demographic information. Lee and Schuele (2010) state that demographics refer to particular characteristics of a population. They are classifiable characteristics (NMDH, 2019). The authors further state that characteristics such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, income level, education, geographic

location, marital status, and sexual orientation provide data related to the research participants. Following Lee and Schuele's (2010) assertion that researchers should only collect the demographic information that is relevant to the specific purpose of the study, I used all the characteristics except religion, marital status, and sexual orientation. Although interesting, religion, marital status, and sexual orientation, are outside the scope of this study.

Interviews

Interviews are used as the primary method for collecting data because participants tend to share detailed information that you otherwise might not obtain from questionnaires (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Creswell (2014) states that interviews are also useful when participants cannot be observed. Interviews also allow the researcher to control the line of questioning, when they can provide historical information. The qualitative research interview allows the researcher to gain insight into the participant's perspective on a particular experience (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) report that there are two types of interviews, unstructured and semi-structured. Structured interviews are conducted in an informal conversational style while semi-structured interviews are more focused on investigating a specific subject (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Creswell (2014) reports that interviews can consist of face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations, focus groups, and emails.

While the original plan was to conduct all interviews face-to-face, I was only able to conduct six face-to-face interviews before the stay-at-home, social distancing policies were implemented due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. I conducted the last four interviews via Zoom conference, and phone interviews; one interview via Zoom conference, and three by phone. Each interview was conducted at a time that was convenient for both participants. The face-to-face interviews were conducted in a locked office or conference room at the Modesto Maidique and Biscayne Bay campuses at Florida International University (FIU), and in a secure study room at the West Regional branch of the Broward public library. I recorded all the interviews using a voice recorder app on a second cellular phone that I own. The cellular phone is password protected and was not connected to a telephone network or service provider. It was connected to password protected wireless network.

The researcher used structured interviews that averaged 29 minutes. Before the interview began, each participant was reminded that the interview would take up to 30 minutes. Although the interview had a predetermined time limit, the participants were allowed to share their experiences without the time restriction. This allowed the participant to expand on their experiences. After all the interviews were completed, the audio files were downloaded from the phone to a password protected laptop and then uploaded to REV, a transcription website.

Questionnaires

Frey, Botan, Friedman, and Kreps (1991) assert that questionnaires are the most frequently used data collection methods in social science research. Questionnaires are often used to provide background information for critical analyses of specific communication phenomena (Frey et al., 1991).

Once the participants were identified, I emailed a demographic survey along with the consent to participate in the study. The survey was created in and completed through the FIU Qualtrics survey program. The demographic survey was created to retrieve information about their ages, education, work history, immigration and migration history, and work history. The survey eliminated the more mundane and introductory questions, thereby allowing me to focus on the interview questions. Patton (2015) attests that researchers usually use questionnaires to retrieve background information so that they can get an idea of the participants involved in the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research manages words, language, and the implied meanings gained from reviewing the data (Walker & Myrick, 2006). Data analysis proceeds hand-in-hand with other parts of developing the qualitative study (Creswell, 2014). Walker and Myrick (2006) report that qualitative data analysis seeks to organize the data and categorize it into themes, and then feed into models or theories.

Creswell (2014) provides six steps in qualitative data analysis that should be taken after the researcher has collected all the data. The first step includes organizing and preparing the data for analysis by transcribing the notes from the interviews, documents, and questionnaires as well as cataloging any tables and figures. Step 2 of the process involves reading or looking at all the data to get a general idea of what the participants are trying to convey. The researcher is also looking for the overall depth and credibility of the information. Step 3 is where the researcher will start to code all the data by organizing the data into categories of text or segments. The categories will then be labeled with a term that is familiar to the participant. The codes should also be familiar to the readers. During this process the researcher will discover codes that were not expected. The researcher used codes that were discovered while reviewing the data.

Step 4 in the process is where themes and categories emerge (Creswell, 2014). The researcher will generate a description of the place, events, or people from which codes are created. The themes end up being the major findings for the qualitative study. Creswell (2014) states that in a phenomenological research the themes are organized into a general description. Step 5 discusses how to advance the description and themes that will be represented in the qualitative narrative which is used to present the findings of the analysis. This may include a detailed analysis of several themes that include multiple perspectives from individuals and quotations.

The final step in data analysis, Step 6, “involves making an interpretation in qualitative research of the findings or results” (Creswell, 2014, p. 200). To arrive at this interpretation, the researcher analyzed the themes and descriptions and then asked what was learned, gleaned or understood from the inquiry.

In a basic qualitative interpretive study, data analysis means inductively identifying recurring patterns or themes within the data (Merriam, 2002). The researcher’s interpretation of the patterns in the data is facilitated by the phenomenon of interest (Merriam, 2019).

The researcher used McCracken’s (1988) five-stage interpretive process, and Miles & Huberman analysis to analyze the data retrieved from the interviews.

McCracken Five-Stage Interpretive Process

McCracken (1998) quoting Miles (1979) and Piore (1979) believes that analyzing qualitative data is probably the most demanding aspect of the research process (p.41).

Authors, de la Llama, Voges, Barreto, and Park (2012) report that data in the five-stage process data is categorized, classified, and labelled. McCracken (1988) posits that the object of data analysis is to determine categories, relationships, and the assumptions formed by the participants’ view of their environment in relation to the research topic.

The first stage of the process treats each statement in the interview transcript independently of the other aspects of the text. It calls for the researcher to review the

information without making assumptions and taking the statements literally. The researcher uses personal experience and knowledge as well as information from the literature review as a guide to interpreting the data. The objective of this stage is to create observation (McCracken, 1988).

In the second stage of the process, the researcher conducts an expanded observation by taking the observations gained in stage one and developing them in three ways: singularly, using the information in the transcript, and using the previous literature review. The objective of this stage is to extend the original observation until the implications and possibilities are fully developed, which are then linked back to the transcripts (McCracken, 1988). McCracken (1988) reports that each observation provides a viewpoint from which relationships can be found in the transcripts (p. 45).

During the third stage of the McCracken (1998) process, the researcher focuses less on the transcript and more on the various observations made in stages one and two as they relate to the literature review (p. 45). The researcher refers to the transcript only to double check the emerging possibilities. During this stage the researcher should start to identify the various patterns and themes within the data (McCracken, 1998).

In stage four the researcher reviews all observations and sorts them into themes, narrows down the themes, and then determines how they are connected (McCracken, 1998). McCracken (1998) posits that the researcher also determines which themes are

redundant and which ones can be discarded. At this stage the remaining themes are organized by hierarchy where one of the themes will act as a main theme and others as subthemes (McCracken, 1998).

During stage five of the McCracken (1998) process, the researcher subjects the patterns and themes developed in stage four, from the interview transcript, to further analysis. At this stage the researcher no longer focuses on the individual perceptions expressed in the interviews, but on the general collective perspective of the participants (McCracken, 1998). McCracken (1998) states that the researcher reaches a conclusion in stage five of the analytical process.

Miles and Huberman Analytical Method

de la Llama, Voges, Barreto, and Park (2012) found that in the Miles and Huberman (1994) analytical method, researchers attach codes to interview transcripts in order to identify patterns and themes. Researchers use the method to find observations, compare, group, interpret, and analyze them (de la Llama et al.).

Miles and Huberman (1994) believe that coding is part of the analysis process where researchers assign units of meaning to the information gathered during the study. Codes are attached to words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs, and then used to retrieve and organize the information into identifiable topics. These topics are themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Using the McCracken (1998) and Miles and Huberman (1994) methods as a guide, I reviewed each participant's interview transcript to gain a better understanding of their experiences. I used NVivo to create codes as I reviewed each transcript by using keywords from the interview questions as a guide. As part of the process I double checked each participant's transcript to make sure that their responses aligned with the codes that I created. This process caused me to place content under previously created codes or create new codes. After reviewing and double checking all the transcripts, I rearranged the codes and placed some codes under others. These codes resulted in eight themes: accent, communication accommodation, culture, first time employment, gender, immigration, previous work experience, and career development; and ten sub themes: Jamaican, code switching, African American versus Caribbean, communication style, race, race interactions, identity, state migration, education, and promotion without application. While checking the transcripts and considering the literature review and research questions, I decided that some of the themes and sub themes were redundant and discarded them. Table 2 shows the themes and sub themes that emerged during the initial coding process while Table 3 shows the final themes and sub themes.

| Themes | Sub themes | Sub themes | Sub themes |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|------------|
| Accent | Jamaican | | |
| Communication Accommodation | Code switching | | |
| Culture | African American vs Caribbean | Communication Style <i>(sub themes) Race and Race interactions</i> | Identity |
| First time employment | | | |
| Gender | | | |
| Immigration | State migration | | |
| Previous work experience | | | |
| Career development | Education | Promotion without application | |

Table 2: Initial coding process

| Themes | Sub themes | Sub themes | Sub themes | Sub themes |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------|
| Communication Accommodation | Accent adjustment | Communication Style | Code switching | Culture |
| Career Development | African American/Caribbean dynamic | Race | | |

Table 3: Final themes and sub themes

Integrity, Validity and Reliability

Integrity is a firm adherence to a code of moral values, an unimpaired condition, a state of being complete or undivided (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2018). The Oxford dictionary (2018) in a similar tone defines it as the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles, the condition of being unified or sound in construction.

As it relates to qualitative research, integrity is about honesty, accuracy, efficiency, and objectivity (Steneck, 2007). Steneck (2017) states that information needs to be presented truthfully, findings need to be precise and free from errors, resources used

during the process should be managed efficiently to avoid waste, and that researchers should let the facts speak for themselves without changing them to suit the researcher's purpose. Steneck (2017) also believes that research integrity is about using honest and verifiable methods when proposing, conducting, and evaluating data; adhering to the rules, regulations, and guidelines when reporting the results; and following the commonly accepted professional codes.

Watts (2008) posits that during the process of collecting data for a qualitative study, the researcher runs the risk of being subjective as there may be emotional attachment to the study. To maintain the integrity of the study, the researcher needs to be ethical, honest, open, and morally upright during the collection, analysis, and reporting process (Watts, 2008).

Integrity is needed to maintain validity and reliability of the study. There is also a link between integrity and validity, as validity of a study references terms such as trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility (Creswell, 2014). To maintain validity and reliability, the researcher has to check the accuracy of the findings as well as make sure the approach is consistent (Creswell, 2014).

To determine validity and therefore accuracy, I conducted member checking by emailing the transcripts, received from REV, to the participants. The purpose of this was to follow up and see if the information was correct, or to see if anything was missing or

needed expansion. Two of the participants responded that they were okay with the information and did not see that any changes were needed. The other participants did not respond. Creswell (2014) states that member checking is when participants are allowed the opportunity to comment on the major findings, the themes, and the descriptions. As an additional step to bolster the validity of the study, the researcher used rich, thick descriptions to present the findings. This approach allows the researcher to present the research setting in some detail and offer numerous perspectives related to a theme (Creswell, 2014). The third means of ensuring the validity of the findings was through clarifying the researcher's biases through self-reflection (see autobiography).

After hearing a participant's response to a question, I shared a few personal stories from the autobiography. I was able to bracket personal biases and preconceptions about the overall study by reflecting on personal experiences, and recognizing similar cultural beliefs shared with participants without allowing them to influence the direction of the study. I reported the data from the interview truthfully and allowed the facts to speak for themselves without changing them to fit the purpose of the study (Steneck, 2017). I checked reliability by following Creswell's (2014) recommended steps: (a) checking interview transcripts for obvious errors, and (b) ensuring that there was consistency when using codes.

Summary

Chapter III addressed the purpose of the study, research questions, basic interpretive qualitative framework, and researcher autobiography. It also discussed sampling method, participants, data collection, data analysis, and integrity measures. This chapter sought to explain to the reader the events that influenced my decision to pursue this study, and the sampling methods that I used to recruit participants. The chapter also explained the data collection and analysis methods that I used while maintaining the integrity of the study. Chapter IV focuses on the findings of the study, while Chapter V provides a summary of the study, and the conclusions drawn from the results presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V will also present the implications for the field and the profession, and future research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Chapter III discussed the methods used to recruit participants, their profiles, methods used to retrieve, code, and analyze the data, as well as how the integrity, validity, and reliability of the study was maintained.

The purpose of this basic interpretive qualitative study was to describe the personal experiences of employees from various cultures with non-native accents and explore how their accents have been linked to their career development. In this chapter, the author analyzed the data obtained from the interviews. Using the theories as themes, I present the findings and analysis of the interviews, introduce the subthemes that were uncovered during the analysis, and summarize the results as they pertain to each theme. I also attempt to present this information in relation to Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory and Super's (1980) Career Development Theory.

The interview consisted of questions that were designed to address the research questions (RQ). The following shows each research question with a sample interview question:

RQ1: How do employees from various cultures who speak with a non-native accent perceive their opportunity for career advancement? *Example: Can you share any instances where you think that you were overlooked unfairly because your accent is different from your coworkers?*

RQ 2: Do employees perceive that a breakdown in communication with employers hinder career development? *Example: Can you share any instances in your workplace where you felt that you were misunderstood because of your accent and/or communication style?*

RQ 3: How do employees with non-native accents perceive challenges when exploring career development opportunities? *Example: Can you share any instances where you felt that you were excluded from career development activities and opportunities because of your accent and or communication style?*

The questions asked during the interview were also created to test Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), and Super's Career Development Theory. Using these theories as guidelines, I used NVivo, a qualitative data analysis program, to review the interview transcripts and code the data. I discovered eight sub themes while coding the data: accent and adjustment, code switching, communication style, culture, race, and African American/Caribbean dynamic

Themes

Communication Accommodation

This theme addresses the employee's need to fit in with the social structure at work, as well as the perception that employees from Caribbean cultures who speak accented English must adjust their communication style to minimize any potential misunderstandings at work.

The sub themes, accent and adjustment, code-switching, and communication style emerged while considering the Communication Accommodation theory (CAT) theme during the coding process. As previously discussed, CAT refers to the way a person or groups of people change their dialect, speech style, tone, and rate of speech to fit in and be understood in social and professional settings. Communication accommodation also refers to how a person maintains their speech style without acknowledging the difference in the speech style of the other people with whom they are conversing. The following presents the subthemes in relation to CAT.

Accent and adjustment

As was previously stated in Chapter II, communication adjustment as defined through CAT, occurs when people adjust their accent according to who they are interacting with and the situation (Gasiorek, 2016). Each participant adjusted their accent in different ways for various reasons. Communication accommodation theory (CAT) is popular because accommodation is prevalent in a person's everyday life. Depending on with whom a person is speaking, the person may choose to change or maintain the way they communication (Lin, 2019).

When participants were asked to share any instances where they think that they were overlooked unfairly because their accent was different from their coworkers, Oneil, a male from St. Croix, responded that he felt that he was overlooked for an Art Director position at an advertising firm because he was from the St. Croix. He said, "there was an advertising agency that obviously passed me by. I got down to the last...it was down to the two of us to decide and they were just asking our backgrounds. The panel asked him

where he was from, when he told them that he was from St. Croix which was a part of the U.S. Virgin Islands, they said, “Oh I didn’t know you were from the islands, because you don’t have an accent.” At that point he dropped the American accent, spoke in his Crucian accent and admitted that, “Yes I do, I generally choose to keep it under wraps.” He believes that they chose another candidate once they heard his accent. One of the reasons for this belief is that Oneil had previous experience as an art director while the other applicant was a recent college graduate with no experience or prior knowledge on how to complete the duties required for the position,

“The other guy was not an art director. He was just still a regular... He was maybe a year or two out of school. He had no knowledge of what it took to be an art director. He just figured that now was a good time to apply for the position.”

Oneil said that he and the guy became friendly during the process, he also said, “He got the job and literally two weeks later he’s asking me, how do I do this? How do I do? I’ve never had to do...”.

Lee, a Jamaican male, working in sales stated, “I think I was excluded.” He shared an experience where after creating a presentation for work, someone else did the actual presentation, he said, “I think it was because of my accent.”

When the participants were asked how they interacted with others who have a different accent from theirs, Lee said that he adjusted his accent daily, he said, “my accent is heavy, so I have to change my tone for people to understand me.” He admitted that he also adjusted his rate of speech since he tends to speak quickly. Because he had an

accent, he would also read the person's expressions to see if they understood him. If they looked confused, he would say, "I know my accent is heavy so let me repeat, or you didn't understand me." Lee realized that people appreciated his openness and willingness to adjust his accent. He also said that customers upon hearing his accent would often ask where he was from, he would reply Jamaica. He found that while they were not always able to recognize the accent, they knew of Jamaica.

Carlene, a female office manager from the Bahamas who works in healthcare, said that she speaks fast, and her accent gets more pronounced when she is excited. She said, "yeah sometimes I get excited, I can just slow it down, you know. Because I probably remember I'm talking to someone who's not from the Caribbean." Carlene also said that during the conversation she will say "okay, let me calm down, let me calm down," at which point the other person with whom she was speaking would laugh. When she told me that, I was able to relate, I told her, "here's what I do, I get excited and start talking fast and they look at me and they go, What? I'm like okay let me slow down." Carlene said that depending on who she was interacting with she would adjust her accent to be understood. She called her adjustment "communicating effectively" since others understood her after she changed her accent.

Cayla, a female nurse practitioner from Jamaica, who works in a practice where most patients are Jamaican, said that she chooses the way she interacts with patients based on what will make them comfortable. "My accent is not pronounced in that setting because I can control when I allow people to hear it, then it becomes easier," said Cayla. She said that adjusting her accents allows her to do her job better. She pointed out that

when she initially started working, it was hard to get patients to see her because they did not feel comfortable with her. She said she saw an increase in patients once she allowed more of her Jamaican accent to come out during conversations. Patients she treated were telling other patients in the waiting room, “she Jamaican, she alright.”

Colleen, a female from Bahamas who works in higher education said that she adjusts her accent depending on who she is speaking with, she would “water it down a bit.” She said she adjusted it specifically when speaking with her white American coworkers. Like Oneil, once she told people that she was from the Caribbean they would comment that they had never heard an accent. Like Carlene, Colleen’s accent would be obvious to her coworkers if she got excited or angry. They would comment that before the moments of excitement or anger they never heard her accent. Colleen also stated that she disliked when people pointed out that she had an accent. Whenever they said, “Oh, you have an accent. I don’t have an accent.” She would reply, “You have an accent. You just don’t think you have one because you think that your accent is the standard, and it’s not.”

Dean, a male, also from the Bahamas and works in higher education, got rid of his accent shortly after migrating to the United States for college. He said that he has always been ambitious, “I need to command a room and I need to make sure they understand what I'm saying and I'm very clear.” Dean also commented that he is often told that he does not have an accent, but he remembers that when he first migrated to the United States, he was told that he had the worst Bahamian accent.

Dayna, an associate director originally from Jamaica, said that she does not think that she ever hid her accent. Although she does not think she has an American accent, she makes sure she says words “the American way.” She said, “whether I say ‘zed’ or ‘zee’¹ my accent is my accent. However, she said that her family members tease her that she lost her accent. She counters that her accent maybe softer, but that people still hear the accent.

One of the most interesting cases that showed accent adjustment was Jayne, a young lady originally from Trinidad who works in human resources. Jayne basically got rid of her accent when she was ten years old. She and her parents moved to Plantation, FL in Broward county, where she attended school. She started school in the fifth grade. She said that when the teacher and principal asked her questions, she was afraid to answer because she felt embarrassed by her strong accent. She further stated, “within a week of me being in school, I assimilated by accent into an American one.” She said that when she was younger it was easier for her to switch back and forth between the Trinidadian accent and the American one, but once she got older it takes her longer. “I have to be around my family, if you asked me to try to do it right now I couldn’t. I have to hear it and be around it, for it (the accent) to come out,” said Jayne.

To determine if accent plays a part in an employee’s career advancement, the participants were asked to share any instances where they believed that they were selected for a position because of their accent. Two of the participants, Carlene from

¹ In Jamaica, the letter ‘Z’ is pronounced “zed.”

Bahamas, and Cayla from Jamaica, both in the healthcare field but in different positions, replied that they believed that they were selected because of their accents.

Cayla, a nurse practitioner, shared an experience she had while she was interviewing with the CEO for a position in his group of companies. The CEO asked her “I know I’m not supposed to ask this, but where are you from?” When she responded that she was from Jamaica, he laughed and said that he was also Jamaican. She said that he admitted that it was the way that she said a word that made him think she was Jamaican, that it was something only a Jamaican would say. Cayla said, “I genuinely think it [my accent] did help, because he started off very serious and I could almost see him relaxing as we continued talking.” She also said that when the CEO was placing her at her current office, he told her, that she was going to fit right in there. The location she worked had a lot of Jamaican patients, she said, “it’s interesting because the patients tend to be more willing to see the Jamaicans because they are themselves Jamaicans.”

Carlene, an office manager, responded with a similar experience while interviewing for her job. She stated that the doctor wanted employees from the Caribbean, “...the doctor there, he’s very particular with who we let in,...like he just wants people from the Caribbean, which is good that he looks out for his own, (but) I think that we also need diversity...I think when Mr. K offered me the job, he thought I would be a good fit because I can relate to him and he can relate to me.”

Code switching

Code switching, a historical behavior used to defend against linguistic discrimination occurs when speakers change the way they present themselves to others

(McWilliams, 2018). The code-switching theme emerged from some of the following questions.

Participants were asked to share any instances where they felt that they had to change their accent to fit in their work environment. A few participants admitted to adjusting their accent in the workplace so that they would be accepted by coworkers, to make communication easier for their colleagues, or when interviewing for higher level positions.

Dean worked at a private university where he managed the staff at a campus restaurant. He said that there was no diversity at all, everyone except for him, was white. He said that the previous manager who was a young Jamaican woman with a heavy accent would sometimes call him to give him tips on how to fit in. According to Dean it was “how do I make sure that they understand what I’m saying?” The previous manager told him that sometimes he would have to put on his white accent. In his position as manager, Dean had to work with a lot of vendors that provided food, beverage, and event planning, “I had to switch to make sure that people could understand me, because we would have miscommunication with orders.” He said he adjusted his accent when there is a group of “White folks that see themselves as intellectual superiors,” because he had to let them know very quickly not to be confused by who they think they were talking to.

Larissa, a director at a recruiting company, believes that you must adapt in various settings, not just at work, “if I go to a doctor's office or wherever, I'm not going to speak to them like how I would speak to you.” She also said,

“...I don’t think I do it specifically just for them at work but guess what? Day in day out, you’re with these people and if you’re going to adjust your accent every time you’re talking to them, then it’s going to be difficult.”

Meryl on the other hand refused to adjust her accent, she said, “nope, that I would resent. But I would certainly be aware that I need to slow down my speech for people to understand. But I would not change it because I don't see (that) I need to do it.”

The participants were asked to share a time when they felt that they had to change their pattern of speech or hide their accent. Cayla, the nurse practitioner responded that she works in different practices. One practice has a significantly high population of Hispanic patients. She said, “so when I’m speaking there, I do my best to speak either in as close to speak standard American English then, with a more American accent.” She also said, “...I think I’m pretty good with languages, so I listen to people and assimilate their accents.” Carlene said that prior to her current position as an office manager at the doctor’s office, she worked in a corporate office. In that organization she found herself practicing before meetings and presentations,

“...having to do a lot of meetings and presentations, I would actually feel like I have to practice before because you want to make sure that whatever you’re communicating, it is communicated across the board, where no matter where the person is from, they can understand where you’re coming from. So then I had to practice slowing down.”

Oneil shared an experience with a woman he met at a barbecue. The woman who worked at an HBCU told him about a job and asked if he was interested. He replied that he was.

She told him that when he went in for the interview, he could not speak the way he was speaking. He said, “don’t worry about it, I get it, I can fake it.”

Colleen responded that she felt she had to hide her accent whenever she was speaking to “white Americans or higher ups.” She also said, that she hid her accent or changed her pattern of speech, because “subconsciously I think I need to because I feel like I may sound uneducated,” “...because if I slip and go full on in my Bahamian accent then it will be like Oh, she don’t really or she talked like...” She also said she does not like repeating herself, to which I can relate, because there are times where I had to repeat a word three times before the other person understood. This never made sense to me because I speak English, enunciate, and sound out my vowels and consonants. On the flipside, Colleen said that when she was growing up because she spoke “proper” English and did not always speak fast, she was told that she spoke white. She would reply, “no, I am just taking proper. I still have an accent.”

As previously stated, without consciously aware that she was code-switching, Jayne changed her pattern of speech when she was a child because she was ashamed of her strong Trinidadian accent.

Communication style

Wilson (2019) states that CAT offers insight into interpersonal communication phenomenon such as competence, relational maintenance and conflict management. Interpersonal communication is goal oriented and involves process that occur between people (Wilson, 2019). Goals such as interaction goals, where the result is coordinated communication with others, occur at a psychological level and a sociocultural level

(Wilson, 2019). Wilson (2019) further explains that interaction goals that occur at a psychological level are about maintaining communication with others, while interaction goals that occur at a sociocultural level are based on cultural values, social roles and relationships.

When the participants were asked to share any instances in the workplace where they felt that they were misunderstood because of their accent and/or communication style, Carlene shared a story where she joked with an employee who did not realize she was joking. The employee asked if she could take time off and Carlene said no. Another employee asked for time off and Carlene replied yes. The first employee came back upset and told her that she did not understand why Carlene told her no when she told the second employee yes. Carlene said she thought the employee realized she was joking because they were not the type of office to deny requests for time off. She said, "I'm sorry. I was just kidding. I was just joking. So, right then I realized like certain cultures you have to be so careful what you say."

Although Jayne does not have her native accent, she shared an instance where her communication style influenced by her personality may have caused a misunderstanding. She said that because she tends to listen and observe what is going on around her, she was told that she needs to work on her assertiveness, and that she can contribute more to meetings. She said that because her communication style is more laidback when compared to her colleagues it is seen as a weakness. Jayne explained, "I'll share if I need to, if I have anything to say, I'll share it with you." She said that people from the islands have more laidback personalities, "we'll deal with the situation, if it happens, it happens,

we'll move on from it and keep going." I was able to empathize with her as an immigrant from an island where the unofficial motto is "no problem."

Jayne also said that she was told that one of her strengths is being a people person and being able to connect with people and make them feel comfortable.

"I think it's much more on a human level, a relational thing versus me coming in as somebody with the numbers and stats, and analytics. I'm much more of a relational person where I'm able to connect with someone and say, hey, this maybe the vision I have or ideas I have..."

Colleen shared an experience where she asked a question in a meeting and it was taken as her questioning the manager's authority. In seeking clarification, she asked why, and it was taken as "why are you making me...?" instead of "why is it done that way?" Colleen explained that in situations where she is misunderstood, she gets anxious and emotional, which in this case caused the situation to escalate. She kept trying to explain herself, "no, you're not understanding me," until eventually she got frustrated and gave up, "okay, I'm not doing this anymore, if you think that's what I mean, alright." She admitted that she does not think she handled the situation appropriately so after a few hours she went back to the manager and said "that I just want you to know that this was my intention, not what you thought it was." After Colleen shared her experience, I shared my experience with a professor. I was in a qualitative methods class and got an incorrect answer. The professor told me I was wrong but did not explain where I went wrong. I asked her to explain to me where I was wrong, and she took it as me challenging her. I kept trying to tell her that I was not challenging her, I just wanted to know where I made the mistake so that I would know not to do it again. Like Colleen, I got frustrated to the

point where I wanted to cry. Eventually I stopped trying to explain because the professor could not seem to understand that I was not challenging her, and the encounter was taking place in front of the rest of the class. At the end of class I went to the professor and told her that I was not challenging her, that I only wanted to know where I went wrong because I wanted to make sure that I did not make the same mistake again.

Dayna, a manager, said that she is direct in her approach, and the people that report to her are not comfortable with her approach. She tried to temper the conversations by saying “hey, how are things going?” but it did not help. She said that because she is outspoken, they consider her to be confrontational. She thinks that communication style is influenced by her culture. She commented, “I’ve never had anyone from the Caribbean say oh my God you’re a bulldog.” Dayna also mentioned that her confidence is perceived as cocky. I was also able to empathize with Dayna because whenever I started to share an idea or my opinion, one of my supervisor’s would adjust herself in the chair, sit on her hands, or sit upright and take a deep breath as if she was preparing for an attack, as if I was about to be difficult. After I made my statement she would exhale and say “oh,” as if to say, “that wasn’t so bad.” This behavior caused me to preface my statements with “I say this with love, or I’m just asking,” usually I make these statements with my arms in the “I surrender” position.

One of Oneil’s experiences where his communication style created misunderstandings occurred when he worked in the public relations department of a private university. Oneil was responsible for publishing information from professors, but the professors would oftentimes not submit their information by the deadline, or they would not follow the process or the format for submission. Because of his frustration of

constantly requesting the information and having to explain the process, Oneil said,

“The accent obviously comes out and it will come across as I was being a little too belligerent or I was talking too... or the words that I said was a little too aggressive. So, I had a lot of, well not a lot, but several complaints as far as that goes by professors.”

When asked how he handled things afterwards, he said that he stopped calling them to ask for the information and started emailing them about everything, even when they had face-to-face meetings, he typed up everything and handed it to them. Oneil said that once he started doing that “they understood a little more of what was going on, what the process was, and I guess they understood better.”

Participants were also asked to share any instances where they think that they were unfairly overlooked because their communication style was different from their coworkers. Of the ten participants, only Oneil had a vivid recollection. The other nine participants either said no or they were unable to think of a particularly defining moment. Oneil was asked to speak on behalf of his sick supervisor who asked if he would give a speech on her behalf. The two of them planned the event so it was easy for him to do it the speech.

“the day before, the vice president of the college came to me and asked me not to speak. I was like ‘well why?’ and he was just like well...first he cited the timing, then I was like ‘well no, we worked it out. The time will be fine. I have it, the time is going to be fine. We’re going to be out of there in more than enough time.’ Well I kind of know what happened. That was around the time the professors

were complaining about my style of communicating with them. So yes, basically, I wasn't allowed to speak," said Oneil.

Effective communication is essential to an organization. Effective communication is needed to achieve the goals of the organization; it is needed to plan and create programs, motivate, and engage employees to achieve objectives (Botez, 2019). Based on Wilson's (2019) article, interpersonal communication is related to conflict management, and according to the participant's responses, their communication style created conflict between them and coworkers or managers. The participants all seemed to find ways to diffuse the conflict by apologizing, clarifying, or changing their methods of communication.

Culture

Culture was an unexpected theme that emerged when discussing the participants' communication style. Noels, Clement, Collins & McIntyre (2019) define culture as a system of symbols, belief, emotions, and rituals borne from social interaction and passed down through generations. Noels, et al, (2019) also state that there has been little consideration in how culture affects intergroup communication and how intergroup communication influences cultural dynamics. Lee mentioned that because we are raised in a British colony his way of speaking and relating with others is different from the way people from the American culture communicate. He said, "I'll communicate with someone differently because every culture is different. Certain things that I may say to you (the researcher) may be considered offensive to someone from a different culture."

Cayla, a Chinese Jamaican, works in a Jamaican practice and sometimes encounters resistance from patients because she does not look Jamaican. She said that

she builds rapport by saying something to break the ice and they realize, “they go, wait, you're Jamaican. And I build rapport that way.” She also stated that most people mistake her for Hispanic. Cayla further stated that acquaintances later admitted that when they first met her, they were upset with her because they greeted her in Spanish, and she responded in English. They also assumed she was Hispanic.

Career Development

This theme addresses the perception that participants have to adjust their accents in order to participate in career development opportunities to further their career. The theme also addresses the interpersonal relationships between coworkers from different and similar Caribbean islands, between immigrants from the Caribbean and Hispanics, as well as the relationship between immigrants from the Caribbean and African Americans. The following sub themes that emerged while considering Super’s Career Development theory as a theme are culture, race, and African American/ Caribbean dynamic. These sub themes that emerged during the coding process and will be addressed in the sections below.

The life-span, life-space aspect of Super’s Career Development theory focuses on the personal and situational experiences that affect an employee’s decision for career development and advancement. Personal experiences include family and community, while situational experiences include location, previous work experience, social interactions, and economy such as financial decisions and salary (Super, 1980).

Before participants were asked questions to help answer the research questions, they were asked to share what they look for when applying for a job. The responses to the

questions varied and overlapped. Two of the participants stated that they looked for something that matched their skillset; two said that stability was important; three said salary including perks and benefits were important; three said that work/life balance was very important; two said that it was important that it matched their education and certifications; three said flexibility; one said something about which they were passionate; and one said opportunity for growth. Based on the interviews, participants had various reasons for seeking career development opportunities. Some of them applied for higher level positions, while some were promoted based on education or performance. All of them worked for at least one company before working with their current company.

The participants were asked if they ever allowed intercultural communication issues to discourage them from seeking career development opportunities. All of them replied “no.” Jayne further clarified and said she did not think so because if they did, she would not have applied for the next job.

When asked if they could explain some of the challenges that they experienced when they were seeking career development opportunities, Meryl responded, “no, I can't say so, because, unfortunately, some of the positions I've had doesn't give opportunity for growth and promotion.” Carlene said her challenge was more personal, as it had to do with education. She wanted to pursue her master's degree but with two sons in college, she did not want to take out student loans.

Dayna's challenge was personally situational as it was due to location. She lived in Georgia and planned to move back to Florida so that she could be closer to her family. She was not willing to accept any position outside of South Florida. This limited the positions that were available to her. She also admitted that another challenge was

communicating with the higher ups about career development opportunities. It was easy for her to have normal conversations with them, but hard for her to address career development opportunities as she feels intimidated by their positions.

“So, I'm saying that's the same when I'm in an interview as well. I don't know how it comes off. I really don't. I know that sometimes my confidence is perceived as cocky, and this is why I have problems with these adjectives, and this is why I'm like, ‘I'm not taking that,’ because if I go in there meek, I'm not firm enough, and if I go in there, ‘Hey, how's everything?’ ‘Oh, my God, you're just too up there.” Carlene felt that her challenges were related to race and because of that she was reluctant to seek growth opportunities. She said, “I felt like they were more clique-ish in terms of that it was a more Spanish base, Latin base. So those are the people you see that they kind of elevate and so forth.”

When the participants were asked how they address issues when exploring career development opportunities, Lee said that he did not bother to address the issue because he did not think it would help; he said “I left it alone because there are certain battles that you just don't want to fight.” Carlene said, “I make sure I am mindful of where I am and try to be less of my natural self by not just responding without careful thought.” Oneil had a slightly similar response to Carlene in that he would not be his natural self. He said that he masked his accent and tried to speak like most of his coworkers because it would be easier for him to get a job that he really wanted. He said,

“I would obviously mask it. If this were a job or position that I want and it'll be easier for me to get the job or the position, if I was easier to understand, I guess.

Or spoke more like most of the people in the workplace. You just mask it.”

Oneil shared a specific instance where he interviewed through a temp agency and masked his accent. His first interaction with Theresa was over the phone. His next meeting with her was in person. He said that he figured that for him to be hired or get a better opportunity,

“...I couldn't change my name. But I could definitely speak like I was, whatever. So when I spoke with her over the phone, she didn't know that I was black, and she definitely didn't know I was West Indian. Because you speak like a white boy, or you speak proper English.”

Participants were also asked to share any instances where they felt that they were excluded from career development activities and opportunities because of their accent and or communication style. Jayne, a trainer in her company, does not believe that she was excluded from any career development activities. She shared a memorable experience where she met with the VP of HR shortly after starting at the company.

“She asked me, ‘what’s one thing that you want to work on while you’re working here?’ And I think I said public speaking, and she said, ‘oh yes, we’re going to have plenty of opportunities for public speaking.’ And literally within maybe three or four months, they were like ‘oh you’re going to do public speaking. If you will, you will do training for us.”

She said she was put in the train-the-trainer program where she was taught how to do the service excellence training. Cayla did not think that she was excluded because of her

accent or communication style; she felt it had more to do with the language barrier and her lack of fluency in Spanish.

Race

This was also an unexpected theme that emerged while discussing accent and communication style. Some of the participants felt that either race or a combination of race and accent affected their career development in the company.

This emerged when the participants were asked if they believed that a breakdown in communication hindered their career development. Some of the participants were unable to answer or did not believe that there was a breakdown in communication, while others felt that it was more about race than a breakdown in communication that hindered their career development. One of Colleen's first jobs as an immigrant was working in a hotel. She said,

“I was the only person of color who worked there. And so, I just felt like I wasn't treated equally as everyone else. But see sometimes I don't know if it's my accent per se or if it's the color of my skin or if we being honest, me not being Latina or Hispanic. When we women and we black and we foreign, and you add all these things and they so intertwined, sometimes you don't know.”

Oneil shared an experience where he interviewed and was really liked for the position. He said that the person who interviewed him was very honest about what he would encounter. Based on Oneil's recollection, the person said, “it is a small town, we are a big company, but it is in a very small town. And I will be honest with you, if you

move here, you will be the third black person in this county.” Oneil said that he declined the job after careful consideration.

The participants also believed that in addition to race, working in South Florida and not being Hispanic played a significant role in their inability to grow within their organizations. Most of them adjusted their accents but felt that it did not help since they did not speak Spanish or have the Hispanic connection. Dayna said, “no matter how good you were, they tend to have some type of nepotism.” She said that whether they were relatives or not, there was favoritism, and that is one of the main reasons that she relocated from Miami to Georgia. Meryl said that it was challenging because no matter how qualified she was for a position, most of the interviews were not in her favor because she did not speak Spanish. “I found that very discriminating,” she said.

African American/Caribbean dynamic

This sub theme also emerged unexpectedly during the interviews when participants were asked if they felt excluded from career development activities because of their accent or communication style. At least three of the participants felt discriminated against by African Americans. Oneil worked at a historically black college and university (HBCU). He responded that he felt excluded by African Americans not because of his accent but because he was Caribbean. He reported that “everybody that worked there in the (HBCU) administration was usually African American, and it’s so funny how a lot of them are very biased toward that (Caribbean people).” It should be noted that one of the ways to tell if someone is Caribbean is usually by their accent. Osei also commented “it’s

like the higher you get an education, supposedly the more white or European English you were supposed to sound.”

Carlene attended a forum called Grown and Sexy. At some point during the event, she said the topic of African Americans not liking people from the Caribbean came up. She said,

“a Jamaican lady stood up and said she doesn’t understand what the issue is. And an (African) American lady stood up and said she worked with many different cultures. She worked for some city, and she said the Caribbean people, they come in and basically we take their jobs, we elevate to a higher level, and we look down, they said we look down on them.”

She also said that once people found out she was from the Caribbean they would say “oh she is not black; she is from the Caribbean.”

Dayna said that sometimes she feels as if she is on the outside looking in. She said, “I am not black American, I am not African American, because to be African American you have to be born in America.” Dean said that a black man from the Bahamas may find it more challenging to grow within a company. He said, “you are going there to fight, and your fight is going to look very different from what you are expecting.”

Summary

Based on participants’ responses to the interview questions they believe that while accent influences their career development opportunities, they also believe that culture, race, and the relationship between employees from the Caribbean, and African American and

Hispanic employees play a role in their career development opportunities. Participants have adjusted their accents to make other people feel comfortable around them, to get jobs for which they are qualified, to fit into their work environment, and to get colleagues to recognize that they deserve to be in the room. As people with non-standard accents they have been called cocky, aggressive, and confrontational; they find that they cannot joke around with coworkers because they are taken seriously.

This chapter presents an analysis of the data gained from interviewing ten people from four different English-speaking Caribbean islands. The participants who work in healthcare, education, sales, retail, and health and fitness shared their experiences working in South Florida. They shared their experiences of having an accent and how they perceived that the accent affected their career development in the company. They also shared how they perceive race, culture, and the relationship with African Americans and Hispanics influence their career development opportunities.

Chapter V discusses the responses to the research questions, the theoretical, research and practical implications to the field of adult education and human resource development, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this basic interpretive study was to describe the personal experiences of employees from various cultures with non-native accents and explore how their accents have been linked to their career development. This chapter includes a discussion on the findings of this study as it relates to the literature on accents, career development, and the perception that managers and supervisors have of employees with accents. This chapter will also discuss the responses to the research questions and the themes that developed in the study in relation to the conceptual framework. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the implications for theory, research, and practice, the limitations, recommendations for future research, and a brief summary of the chapter.

Responses to Research Questions

The basic idea of this study is that the Caribbean accent of an employee may have an impact on a person's career development. The two themes that were presented in chapter IV are Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and Super's Career Development theory. Six sub themes that fall under the two themes are: (1) accent and adjustment, (2) communication style, (3) code switching, (4) culture, (5) race, and (6) African American/Caribbean dynamic, emerged while analyzing the data.

This section will include the themes while discussing the responses to the questions designed to answer the three research questions: 1. *How do employees from various cultures who speak with a non-native accent perceive their opportunity for career*

advancement? 2. Do employees perceive that a breakdown in communication with employers hinder employees' career development? 3. How do employees with non-native accents perceive challenges when exploring career development opportunities?

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) refers to the verbal adjustments that people make in certain situations (Gasiorek, 2016). According to the participants, they adjusted their accents and dialects in meetings, in interviews, when speaking with higher levels of authority, and in situations such as sales where they wanted to minimize any misunderstandings. One participant reported that she got frustrated in a meeting because while she was trying to obtain clarification, her supervisor took it as her trying to challenge her authority.

CAT is built upon Giles's (1973) concepts of convergence and divergence. Convergence is changing one's language, dialect, tone, and speech style, while divergence emphasizes the differences between the speaker and the person to whom they are speaking. One participant was specific in that she had to change the way she joked around with a coworker because the person thought she was serious. She thought her tone indicated that she was joking. The situation made her realize that she could not speak with others the way she spoke with people from the Caribbean. Her example includes aspects of both concepts in the sense that she had to change her tone and that it emphasized the difference in cultures. Giles (2016) also reported that maintenance, another concept, occurs when the speaker continues in one's own style regardless of the other person's speech. One participant said she refused to change her accent because she spoke "proper" English. She said she would resent it if she were forced to change.

Research Question 1: How do employees from various cultures who speak with a non-native accent perceive their opportunity for career advancement?

Russo, et al. (2017) believe that low management regard, feelings of underappreciation, exclusion, and minimum opportunities for career advancement can cause an employee to not seek career development opportunities. Purkiss et al. (2006) found that job applicants who spoke with an accent were viewed less positively by interviewers; that the accent triggered a negative stereotype. During an interview for a position for which he believed, as a previous art director, he was qualified, one participant was asked about his cultural background. When he informed them that he was from the islands, they mentioned that they did not hear an accent. He then spoke to them with his accent. Someone else who had just graduated with his bachelor's degree; who did not have any experience, got the job.

Some participants found it easier to get a job when the person interviewing them was from the same culture or of a similar cultural background. Jandt (2015) reported that culture influenced perception, and that perception had the ability to affect effective communication. Based on this supposition, Jandt (2015) viewed communication and culture as inseparable. Most of the participants also reported that to interact or communicate with their peers, supervisors, and interviewers they had to adapt their Caribbean accent to a more American one.

Research Question 2: Do employees perceive that a breakdown in communication with employers hinder employees' career development?

Chen (2017) believes that people from diverse cultural backgrounds need to develop an awareness of cultural differences as well as understand the differences in values, attitudes, and beliefs to prevent misunderstanding in communication. Gluszek & Dovidio (2010) postulate that an employee's career development opportunities may also depend on the perception of his peers and supervisors. An accent can trigger the perception that the person speaking accented English is not competent (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010). McDonald & Hite (2005) further posit that this perception may prevent the employee from receiving promotions or career development opportunities.

Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson (2006) report that there is a type of image perception in Super's (1957) career development theory that presents the idea that a person's image may influence their self-esteem and self-efficacy thereby affecting their career success. Based on their responses, the participants did not allow intercultural communication issues to discourage them from seeking career development opportunities. One participant said that if she did, she would not be in her current position. Therefore, there is evidence that people who are in industries such as education can navigate successfully between different cultures and languages in their quest for career development (Dooley & Rubenstein, 2018).

The situational determinants of Super's (1980) life-span, life-space approach predict that an individual's career development is influenced by social aspect of life. Social aspect is the study of issues related to social relations from a sociological

perspective (IGI-Global, 2020). In this study participants adjusted their accent and communication style when they were talking to managers, interviewers, to coworkers from different cultures, and as one participant said, “to White people.” Most of the participants slowed their rate of speech because they spoke fast when excited, or “lightened” their accents because it was too heavy.

Another example of how social aspects influenced career development is evident in the way some of the participants addressed intercultural communication issues when they were exploring career development opportunities. One person said he did not bother to address it because he did not think it was worth it, while two participants said they were less of their natural selves when interacting with others; one went further and said he would mask his accent if there was a job he really wanted. In doing so, the participants exhibited communication adjustment by adapting their verbal and nonverbal strategies to the situation as well as managing their interpersonal relationships (Gasiorek, 2016).

Research Question 3: How do employees with non-native accents perceive challenges when exploring career development opportunities?

Baruch (2016) reported that an employee’s career is planned, managed and executed by the organization, and that professional development opportunities are available to employees with personal career goals. One participant said that her positions in the organization did not allow for growth. According to Lips-Wiersma and Hall (2007), employees necessarily were taking more responsibility for their careers.

Huang, et al (2017) introduced the *glass-ceiling effect* where employees are discriminated against based on their race or gender. This “ceiling” prevents an employee from going any further in their career. One participant believes that being a black woman who did not speak Spanish contributed to her lack of career advancement.

Some of the participants believed that their accents excluded them from exploring career development opportunities. They were removed from presenting at events although they were the ones who created the presentations. In Rakic, et al. (2011) study, participants believed that people who speak with an accent are considered incompetent. Fuse, et al. (2017) reported that Human Resource specialists ranked people with accents low on the employability scale. Cargile (2000) reported that people with accents were perceived as disorganized, lazy, and subordinate. Russo, et al. (2017) reported that speakers with non-native accents are discriminated against and therefore are unable to get promoted to managerial positions. Managers who communicate with employees who speak with accented English, may perceive these employees as being incapable of performing at a higher level, leading them to feel underappreciated (Russo et al., 2017).

Implications for Theory and Research

The study has theoretical, practical, and research implications to the field of adult education and human resource development (HRD).

This basic interpretative study will inform and enrich what we already know about Super’s (1950) Career Development Theory, and Giles’ Communication Accommodation Theory, and contribute to subsequent theory building. For the first time,

a combination of these two theories can be used to better understand the underdeveloped notions of how and why intercultural communication and career development may be linked.

Super's Career Development Theory

Super's (1950) career development theory is divided into three frameworks focused on conceptualizing the continuous evolution of career development: life-span approach; life-space approach; and self-concept. The self-concept framework discusses who people are, what they like, and a combination of how people see themselves and how they would like to be seen (Tan, 2014). The life-span and life-space frameworks use personal determinants such as family, and situational determinants such as location and social aspects to influence their career development (Super, 1980). Participants' responses were representative of the self-concept framework in how they comported themselves around managers. One participant said that when he walked into a room, he made sure that people knew that he was supposed to be there. One participant said that she found herself not talking much anymore because she felt ignored and overlooked when she shared her opinions.

In relation to the life-span, life-space approach most of the participants chose South Florida because their family was here, because it was near the islands, or because they came here for school and stayed. One participant admitted that when she decided to leave Georgia, she only looked at her company's South Florida locations because she wanted to be close to her family. She also refused to settle for a position that was below her title of Assistant Director.

Communication Accommodation Theory

As Giles (2016) stated, Communication Accommodation theory is primarily concerned with the communication adjustments that people make when interacting in social situations, they adjust their accents based on to whom they are speaking. Employees reflect Giles' (2016) convergence concept by changing their accent and communication style to seek approval, show solidarity, or enhance comprehension. Participants admitted that the only reason they adjusted their accent was to be understood by interviewer, coworkers, and customers.

The findings in this study show that Super's Career Development theory and Giles' Communication Accommodation theory are closely linked in relation to accent and career development. The participants demonstrated that to participate in career development opportunities, to be considered for career advancement opportunities, or to be considered an equal among their peers, they had to adjust their accent.

This theoretical combination may also inform Knowles (1970) theory of andragogy by allowing researchers to recognize the different techniques that immigrants use to conform in the classroom or workplace or make themselves acceptable by their educators and peers. Henschke (2011) defined andragogy as the art and science of helping adults learn. Knowles's theory of andragogy expanded the settings of adult education to include business, healthcare, government, and higher education (Henschke, 2011). Using the theoretical combination, adult educators can better understand that cultural groups communicate and react to others and social situations differently. They

may also be able to recognize when an employee is not being their authentic self in order to be accepted.

In addition to the relationship between both theories, the findings also show that there is a relationship between intercultural communication, specifically a Caribbean accent, and a person's career development. Participants felt that they were denied positions, leadership roles, and public speaking opportunities. They also experienced incidents where they were perceived as being difficult, argumentative, and aggressive based on their accent.

Two insights that emerged from this research are the perception that race also influences a person's career development; and that people from the Caribbean feel discriminated against in the workplace by African Americans. As employees in South Florida, the participants felt that the Hispanic population was given preferential treatment; there was a type of cultural nepotism that did not allow them to advance in positions because they were not Hispanic or did not speak Spanish. Participants also felt discriminated against by African Americans. One participant attended a forum where an African American woman announced that Caribbean people think that they are better than African Americans. Another participant who worked at an Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU) institution said that African Americans were the worst at overlooking a Caribbean employee and discriminating against them in the workplace. He also observed that their accents became more refined and "white" the higher their education.

The findings from these two insights can contribute to further research targeting the relationship between African Americans and people from the Caribbean, as well as the perception of Hispanic cultural nepotism in the workplace.

Implications for Practice

The findings of the study may assist the field of HRD by providing new information about how career development can be shaped by intercultural communication, especially as it relates to the English-speaking Caribbean accent. This study will be significant to the field of HRD as it relates to training and career development for a multicultural workforce because participants felt that they had to be less of themselves or change their accent to move forward.

The findings may also create a new awareness of how to prepare the types of employees represented in this study for career development opportunities. As Williams (2018) said, code switching is a way to eliminate linguistic discrimination. One participant was told to get rid of his accent. Instead of encouraging them to lose the accent, companies may celebrate the differences, and practice acceptance and tolerance. The findings may also help to guide HRD practitioners in creating inclusive programs for the employees geared toward career development; enable HRD practitioners to become more aware of their unconscious biases, perceptions and stereotypes associated with employees that speak accented English. HRD practitioners could also use the information from this study to inform the organization's Title IX training, as well as awareness, diversity, and sensitivity training for their employees and managers.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

In addition to the theoretical, practical and research implications of the findings for this study, as with any study, there are limitations. A sample size of ten participants is too small to provide a completely accurate depiction of the relationship between accents and career development. The study would also need a wider variety of islands.

The study has the potential to be expanded into various types of studies; qualitative and quantitative. First, the current qualitative study can be expanded to include more participants in South Florida; more participants in Florida, and more participants in the United States. It can also include French and Dutch speaking Caribbean islands, such as Haiti and St. Maarten. This basic interpretive study can also be conducted as a phenomenological study, case study, or narrative research.

The study can be transitioned to a quantitative study that looks at the effect of accent on career development. As a quantitative study, the effects of code-switching and communication style on career development can be examined. Another study that can result from the findings of this study is the effect of code switching on interpersonal relationships in the workplace. The two themes that emerged unexpectedly during coding, African American/Caribbean dynamic, and race can be further examined. These studies could be a mixed method or qualitative study examining the effects or influence that the Hispanic race has on career development or career advancement, and a case study exploring the African American/Caribbean dynamic in the workplace. Finally, an ethnographic study could be conducted on the experiences of the Caribbean immigrants

versus the experiences of African Americans versus white Americans in various industries such as higher education, business, and healthcare.

Future research can also include the amount of times that accent is linked with race. A person with a Caribbean accent is automatically assumed to be black, which in turn triggers implicit biases and perceptions. In Chapter IV, the findings showed that participants were either accepted because of the accent or dismissed because of it. This can also create an assumption of the person's ethnicity, capabilities, personality, or aptitude.

Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that accent creates another layer of bias for the participants. Future research can examine the intersectionality of people who speak with accents, who are racial minorities, who are LGBTQ, and white Caribbeans. This group has the added burden of having to accommodate their communication style, speech patterns, and accent to fit into the existing environment. Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in the 1980s, is defined as “the theory of how different types of discrimination interact” (Adewunmi, 2014). Intersectionality is also defined as “the study of how different power structures interact in the lives of minorities” (Adewunmi, 2014).

Summary

In Chapter V, I linked the participants' responses and sub themes to the research questions while relating them to the overall themes, Super's (1950) Career Development theory, and Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory. This chapter also discussed the theoretical and research implications, and practical implications of the findings on the field of adult education and Human Resource Development. It further discussed the limitations of the study and the recommendations for future research.

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**APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE**

Male Female Rather not say

Age: 30 – 40 41 – 50 50 – 65

Country of Origin (Bahamas, Barbados, Cayman Islands, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, etc.): _____

Education (check one):

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| High School <input type="checkbox"/> | Some College <input type="checkbox"/> | Vocational/ Trade school <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bachelors <input type="checkbox"/> | Masters <input type="checkbox"/> | Doctoral |
| Post-graduate <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Years of professional work experience: 0-3 3-5 5-7 7-10 10+

Which of the following industries most closely matches the one in which you are employed?

Check one:

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Real Estate or renting and leasing | Sales | Construction | Engineering/Manufacturing |
| Educational/Educational Services | Wholesale Trade | Healthcare or Social assistance | Retail |
| Arts, entertainment or recreation | Transportation or warehousing | Hospitality/Food and Beverage Services | Information Technology |
| Government | Banking, Finance or Insurance | Utilities | Other |

How many employees work in your establishment?

| | | |
|---------|---------|--------------|
| 1-4 | 5-9 | 10-19 |
| 20-49 | 50-99 | 100-249 |
| 250-499 | 500-999 | 1000 or more |

Current Job title/position: _____

Length of time in the current position (years and months): _____

Have you held other positions in the company? If yes, list your previous positions

No Yes _____

Please provide the best email address, phone number, and time to be contacted

APPENDIX B

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

It Takes Two: A Basic Interpretive Qualitative Study on the Role of Intercultural Communication on Career Development

The following questions were utilized during the interview. The questions were created to address the one primary and three secondary questions. Some questions were eliminated based on the participants' responses to previous questions.

Were you born in the United States?

Did your family migrate from another country?

How old were you when you migrated to the United States?

Did you migrate from another state to South Florida?

What made you decide to move to South Florida?

What was your experience moving to South Florida?

Did you work in another state before moving to South Florida?

How long did you work in (insert State) before moving to South Florida?

Was your experience different after moving to South Florida? How?

How did your coworkers react to you being from a different culture?

Did anyone ever comment on your accent“?”

Would you say that others say you have an accent?

How do you interact with others who have a different accent from yours?

Can you share a time when you felt that you had to change your pattern of speech or hide your accent?

Prior to this position, how many positions in this company have you held?

Have you applied for other positions in the company?

How many positions have you applied for since working with the company/organization?

Were the other positions on the same level as your current position or were they higher?

Why did you apply for the position?

What do you look for when applying for a job?

Can you share a memorable experience of a time when you were selected for an interview?

Why do you think that you got the position or did not get the position?

Can you explain some of the challenges that you have experienced when you were seeking career development opportunities?

Can you share any instances in your workplace where you felt that you were misunderstood because of your accent and/or communication style?

How do you address these issues when exploring career development opportunities?

Have you ever allowed these issues to discourage you from seeking career development opportunities?

Can you share any instances where you think that you were overlooked unfairly because your accent is different from your coworkers?

Can you share any instances where you think that you have been unfairly overlooked because your communication style is different from your coworkers?

Can you share any instances where you believe that you were selected for a position because of your accent and/communication style?

Can you share any instances where you felt that you were excluded from career development activities and opportunities because of your accent and or communication style?

Can you share any instances where you felt that you had to change your accent to fit your work environment?

APPENDIX C



ADULT ONLINE CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

It Takes Two: A Basic Interpretive Qualitative Study on the Role of Intercultural Communication on Career Development

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Things you should know about this study:

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the study is to describe the personal experiences of employees from various cultures with non-native accents and explore how their accents are linked to their career development.
- **Procedures:** If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire and be interviewed.
- **Duration:** This will take about 60 minutes of your time.
- **Risks:** The main risk or discomfort from this research is feeling dissatisfied with your career advancement because of the possible lack of career development opportunities.
- **Benefits:** The main benefit to you from this research is that you may learn to adjust your communication style when interacting with your supervisor or manager.
- **Alternatives:** There are no known alternatives available to you other than not taking part in this study.
- **Participation:** Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please carefully read the entire document before agreeing to participate.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to describe the personal experiences of employees from various cultures with non-native accents and explore how their accents are linked to their career development.

NUMBER OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of 10 people in this research study.

DURATION OF THE STUDY

Your participation will involve approximately 60 minutes (1 hour) of your time. It should take you up to 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire, up to 20 minutes to be interviewed, 15 minutes for any potential follow up to the interview, and an additional 15 minutes for the researcher to discuss with you the results of the study.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in the study, we will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire will include questions about:
 - your age range
 - salary range
 - length of employment in your current company and position
 - the number of positions held in the company
 - which state or country are you moving from
 - your educational background.

2. Be interviewed.
 - The researcher will interview you for a maximum of 20 minutes.
 - The interview will be a face-to-face, one-on-one session.
 - The researcher will record your interview to maintain accuracy of your responses
 - The interview will take place at the Florida International University I-75 campus in Miramar.
 - The researcher may contact you after the initial interview to get more information on previous responses.

RISKS AND/OR DISCOMFORTS

The study has the following possible risks to you: you may feel dissatisfied with your current position and possible lack of advancement.

BENEFITS

There are no known benefits to participation or to society.

ALTERNATIVES

There are no known alternatives available to you other than not taking part in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records of this study will be kept private and will be protected to the fullest extent provided by law. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher team will have access to the records. However, your records may be inspected by authorized University or other agents who will also keep the information confidential.

USE OF YOUR INFORMATION

- Identifiers about you might be removed from the identifiable private information and that, after such removal, the information could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or your legally authorized representative.

COMPENSATION & COSTS

You will not be reimbursed for your participation. There are no costs to you for participating in this study.

RIGHT TO DECLINE OR WITHDRAW

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to participate in the study or withdraw your consent at any time during the study. You will not lose any benefits if you decide not to participate or if you quit the study early. The investigator reserves the right to remove you without your consent at such time that he/she feels it is in the best interest.

RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the purpose, procedures, or any other issues relating to this research study you may contact Rochelle Patten at FIU, Biscayne Bay Campus, 954-607-8864, rpatten@fiu.edu.

IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you would like to talk with someone about your rights of being a subject in this research study or about ethical issues with this research study, you may contact the FIU Office of Research Integrity by phone at 305-348-2494 or by email at ori@fiu.edu.

PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

I have read the information in this consent form and agree to participate in this study. I have had a chance to ask any questions I have about this study, and they have been answered for me. By clicking on the “consent to participate” button below I am providing my informed consent.

Web Consent

I consent, begin the study

I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

VITA

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Born, Montego Bay, Jamaica

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Florida International University
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- 2007 M.A. Corporate Communication
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- 2008 - 2009 Consultant Assistant
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