The impact of globalisation on organisational communication: an interpretative phenomenological analysis

The Impact of Globalisation on Organisational Communication:
An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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Background

- Communication takes place between two or more people, and is regarded as an interactive relationship (Devito, 2014).
- Culture is a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, law, art, custom, morals and any other habits acquired by man as a member of society (Tyler, 1871), consequently effecting how people eat, dress, speak and move. Perkins (2008) suggests that it is important to learn the cultural practices of an area.
- When communicating within a culture, complexities arise (Agar, 1994). However, when organizations become multicultural, clear communication can become almost impossible (Samovar, Parter & McDaniel, 2007).
- The Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2015) found that the major reason for migration within the UK is due to work. This movement between countries increases the incidence of multicultural communication.
- As culture varies across geographical regions (Agar, 1994), it effects the conveyed meaning being communicated. The aim of this study was to look at the effects of communication on global operations.
- The research question was: What are the communication implications of a global workforce?
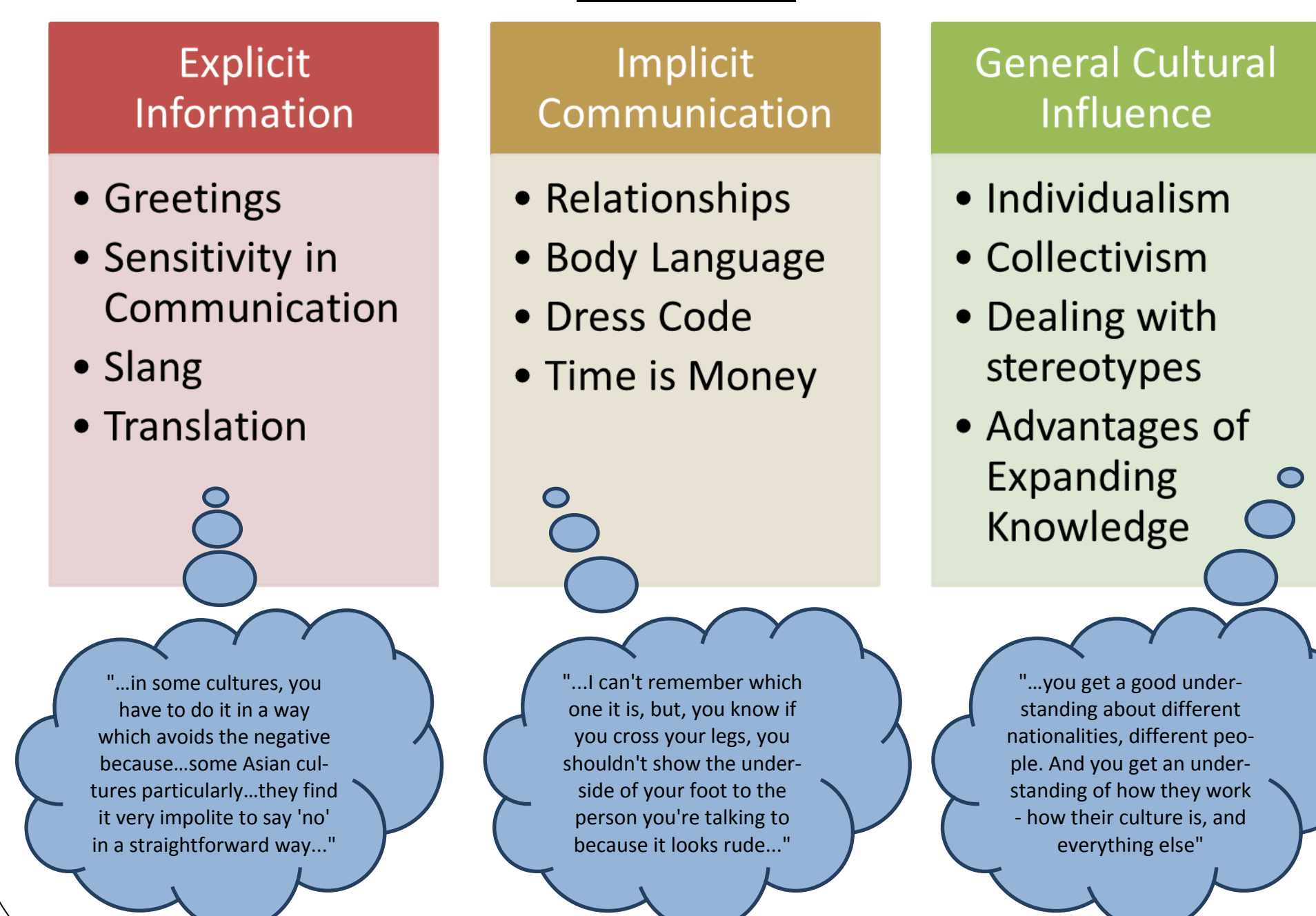
Method

- A Qualitative design was adopted, as it allowed for the exploration of this phenomenon.
- Semi-structured interviews took place with 4 males (mean age = 53) from the same international manufacturing company, lasting approximately 1 hour.
- Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Theme clusters and subthemes were extracted from the data, capturing the employees' experience.

Discussion

- **Explicit communication** suggests that locals have the ability to communicate quickly through slang, however a more modified language is used during global operations, in line with Samovar et al (2007).
- Participants expressed that body language, an aspect of **implicit communication**, is essential to learn and know if an effective global enterprise is going to be run, in line with Perkins (2008) who stated that implicit communication is as important as explicit communication.
- Imperative to **general cultural influences** is the expansion of cultural knowledge, so integrity of business can be carried out.
- **Implications** of this study suggest that global organisations must have a constant and consistent level of communication so that organisational profits increase. The emphasis is on the senior management team to ensure training for their employers are complete.
- **Limitations** of cultural research include the definition differences between nationality, ethnicity and culture.
- A further limitation is having only men as participants.
- **Further Research** includes reviewing other sectors such as the service industry and finance.

Results

Explicit Information	Implicit Communication	General Cultural Influence
• Greetings • Sensitivity in Communication • Slang • Translation	• Relationships • Body Language • Dress Code • Time is Money	• Individualism • Collectivism • Dealing with stereotypes • Advantages of Expanding Knowledge

"…in some cultures, you have to do it in a way which avoids the negative because…some Asian cultures particularly…they find it very impolite to say 'no' in a straightforward way…"

"…I can't remember which one it is, but, you know if you cross your legs, you shouldn't show the underside of your foot to the person you're talking to because it looks rude…"

"…you get a good understanding about different nationalities, different people. And you get an understanding of how they work - how their culture is, and everything else"

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